

Samuel Neaman

ERETZ ISRAEL FROM INSIDE AND OUT



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Reflections

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ISBN.....

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FOREWORD

Samuel (Sam) Neaman's life story begins in the early 1920's at a time when Tel Aviv evolved from a sleepy township on the outskirts of Jaffa into a bustling town. Neaman's extraordinary life story was played out over more than 80 years, in locations as widespread as Israel, France, Syria, the front lines of the Second World War, England, the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America and more. This journey, at times almost unbelievable, is told in Mr. Neaman's own words as they were relayed to me.

Samuel Neaman was born in Rosh Pina in 1913, yet while most of his life was lived outside of this country, he dedicated many years of service defending and promoting the State of Israel. His candid account of his life reveals a deep loyalty to, and love for Israel, with Neaman also being its fiercest critic. In the academic world he became well-known as the founder of the "Samuel Neaman Institute for Advanced Studies in Science and Technology", located at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, in the 1970's, and for his tireless work on behalf of the Technion Fellowship in the United States.

This book focuses on Mr. Neaman's activities on the Jewish and Zionist front on behalf of the State of Israel. His notable successes in the business world in Mexico and the United

States (presented briefly in Chapters 13 and 14) reflect only a small portion of his many diverse interests.

Rafael Bashan and Dov Goldstein spent many hours recording Mr. Neaman as he recounted the events of his extraordinary life. After that, it was my job to adapt and edit this vast collection of material and transform it into a book. In order to complete the task, I was fortunate to be able to meet Mr. Neaman while he was living in the United States. With remarkable vitality and an excellent memory, Mr. Neaman revisited his distant past, recalling times that were often difficult yet always full of hope.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Samuel Neaman Institute for providing me with the opportunity to meet its founder in person, and to take part in recounting his exceptional life story. Every reader of this book will agree that Mr. Neaman holds a rightful place among the illustrious pioneers, builders, and contributors to the settlement of the State of Israel and beyond.

You are invited to turn the pages of this book and join Sam Neaman at the beginning of his story in the provincial surroundings of pre-state Israel.

Dr. Mordechai Naor

TEL AVIV 1926

Starting over. Again. Getting used to new kids, new teachers, and beatings during the breaks. Beatings because I was new and the new ones always get beat up. I was about Bar Mitzvah age at the time. My father had just returned from Poland and the teacher's center or the Zionist management had to give him a job somewhere so they sent him to Tel Aviv. In today's world, it is difficult to understand but in those days you went where you were told to go. No questions asked. Barely 13, I had already lived in a number of locations all over Israel and her immediate surroundings.

Born in Rosh Pina in the Galilee in 1913, I was the firstborn child of Esther and Pinchas Neaman. My mother was also born in Rosh Pina and my father was a pioneer from the second Aliyah. When I was only three years old we started what seemed to be an endless succession of moves from one place to another. It was the time of the First World War and because my father had deserted from the Turkish army, even Rosh Pina was no longer safe. The entire family, my parents, my brother Yigal (one year old at the time) and I moved to Damascus, joining a

large group of uprooted Jews. There, my father taught Bible and Hebrew at the local Hebrew school.

When the war was over, Father was sent to run the Hebrew school in Sidon, which was considered then to be a part of Eretz Israel. For three years we lived in southern Lebanon where I went to school and mastered Arabic. Father was very involved in the community, ensuring that the school developed and cultivating the relationship with the local Druze community.

When it became evident that the agreement between the English and the French left Sidon outside of the borders of Israel, we left the city and headed south to Rehovot, where Father began working as a teacher. I went to a public school and worked at all kinds of agricultural jobs, stringing tobacco, peeling almonds, picking oranges, and gathering grapes with the other children. We lived in Rehovot for several years when, once again, father was sent on a mission by the Zionist organization, this time to Poland.

When he returned, as usual, we moved again, this time to Tel Aviv. By then we were five: father, Yigal, my younger brother Yifrach and me. My mother, Esther, died when I was three and Father married her sister, Rachel, who raised me as her own.

Tel Aviv in 1926 spread as far as Herzl, A'had Ha'am, and Nahalat Binyamin Streets, known today as Allenby Street and Magen David Square. Nordau and Nordiya were in the construction stage, as well as Ben Yehuda and Bograshov Streets. We lived on Nahalat Binyamin Street. For a short time we stayed at the Haim Baruch Hotel, famous as the hotel for newcomers to Israel, but later returned to Nahalat Binyamin.

Father taught school and tutored pupils to increase the family income. Paychecks began coming in, irregularly of course, but life somehow seemed more organized. Mother managed to

save the rather large sum of 80 Egyptian pounds which at the time was a lot of money.

We now lived in our first real house, really a small apartment, which we managed to furnish. It was then that I joined the scouts, and my scout leader was Naftali Kriniansky. I wore the scout uniform and learned how to tie knots and walk with a rod. It was pretty difficult getting the money for the uniform, but I succeeded. In addition, I bought a tie and a whistle. Activities included discussions on idealism and I believed it all. At first, father objected to my participation in the scouts, but he soon yielded.

Life in Tel Aviv was different, and on the threshold of change. Our family began taking “walks to the Yarkon River” the way one goes on a cross-country journey. My situation in school improved greatly after a boy by the name of Ben-Tovim, the strongest kid in the entire school, who later became an engineer in Haifa, took me under his wing. Of course, everyone still wanted to beat me up, but he protected me and I knew I was safe. He even came to my house and taught me how to ride a bicycle. Ben Tovim was my first friend and I admired him because he knew everything. He knew how to play with a ball and, what's more, he was studious.

The years passed quickly and I entered the Herzliya Gymnasium to begin the 10th grade. With the literature teacher, Mr. Harari, I was a success. Despite the fact that all the other students knew Hebrew, he would turn to me after they had all read aloud and say, “Now you, Neaman.” I read and understood every word perfectly. It was the same with Mr. Karsenti, the Arabic teacher. I spoke fluent Arabic and he loved it. Mr. Soferman was the Bible teacher and I knew the Bible like the back of my hand. I got good grades but had a hard time in

physics, geometry, mathematics, and algebra. The English teacher was Mr. Aaron, a former major in the British Army. He didn't like me from the start because I couldn't learn English, but did I care.

I read a great deal and had many friends. One of my friends was Koshevsky. We used sit behind the shack where he lived and talk for hours.

The writer Alexander Ziskind Rabinovitch taught me the *Haftarah*, which turned out to be futile to say the least. The countless hours I spent with him were teeming with inspiration because between the long tedious chapters of the *Haftarah*, he lectured me on the homeland and the Jewish people.

I worshipped A. D. Gordon, the working people, and agriculture, yet at the same time I was aware of the developing urbanity of Tel Aviv for rich families, and things like parlor dancing. At home there was a more liberal atmosphere and I went to Magen David Square on Friday evenings where people liked to gather together. I danced the Hora or Polka until three o'clock in the morning. During that time we would go to Petah Tikva at night, where one group of scouts would attack the other, and we played 'road signs'. I was becoming deeply involved with the group.

While I was in the 10th grade, I came to realize that the Herzliya Gymnasium and the university would not be responsible for building the country, but farmers and farming would. I decided to become a farmer and was determined to study at the prominent Mikveh Israel Agricultural School.

On graduation day I approached my father and announced that I had decided to go to Mikveh Israel. This was the first time we discussed the future and I dared voice my opinion. It was a "black day" in our home. Mother couldn't stop crying. Father was

dumbfounded. He couldn't understand what happened to me. He told me I was to graduate from the Herzliya Gymnasium and learn a profession. Looking back, he may have been right and maybe I should have been a lawyer, but I persisted. It was the first time he saw me stand up for myself and he realized that I had matured.

At 30 Lira a year, tuition fees were expensive and father had no way of financing such a high sum. Nevertheless, to my surprise I was accepted and what's more I received a full scholarship.

In retrospect I realize that it was at that point that my character began to form. I was greatly influenced by the settlers and Haganah forces. I was impressed by those who carried a weapon and if attacked would jump on a horse, venture out beyond the borders of the settlement and wait for the Arabs, rather than idly hang around the public house with women. These were the same men that worked the ploughs all day long. They were not shopkeepers or schoolteachers. This was my perception of the Haganah and settlements. I read the book *The Guardian* at least 100 times. To me, Trumpeldor symbolized the epitome of character, moral fiber, and heroism.

As I said, I was drawn to farming. I worshipped orange packers. The Arab packers came to work wearing long white *sharwals* as if they were attending a holy ceremony. I thought about a different way to pack the fruit and started thinking about modern farming. There was no irrigation in those days. The crops depended on the *Hamsin*, the hot dry weather, which made life difficult. I didn't want to only work in agriculture; I longed to study agriculture, which made all the difference.

Mikveh Israel: From a Boy to a Man

It was my first day of school at the Mikveh Israel Agricultural School. During summer vacation before school started, I sat at home in Tel Aviv with my father in control. That is how life was in father's house and the general atmosphere in the country, but it was not rigid discipline. There were sand dunes, kibbutzim, and a small group of people who thrived on idealism. The rest of the world ceased to exist for us, even though change was everywhere.

With the boost of Polish immigration, two-story buildings were being built. For the first time in my life I actually saw a bathroom with porcelain tiles. Until then people only had showers in their houses. The greatest innovation was stores with huge shop windows. The veteran immigrants had trouble adapting to the change and treated the new Polish speaking immigrants, the "non pioneers", as they liked to refer to them, with contempt.

With 60 new students, the pioneer atmosphere at Mikveh Israel was completely the opposite. Everything was new and strange. I knew only one student, Amitzur, the son of Krauze, a teacher of mine from the Gymnasium and now the principal of my new school. The living quarters were located on the second

floor of a long building. The sleeping quarters had no doors and ran on both sides of the corridor for more than 100 meters. In each room there were four to six students.

It was common for boys from the same background to be assigned the same room. I was put in a room with other boys from Tel Aviv who came to Mikveh Israel not out of a desire to farm and work in agriculture, nor were they members of the youth movement, educated to be independent Hebrew workers! My roommates were excellent swimmers and joke tellers and much more liberal than I was used to from my parent's house. I had nothing in common with them.

It was, on the whole, an awkward beginning. My fellow students were absolutely opposite to me on almost every level. They talked about sunbathing at the beach on the weekend when they went home. This was of no interest to me whatsoever. It was all alien to me.

There was no official reception at the beginning of the school year, nor was there any introductory meeting. We knew that the principal was Eliyahu Krauze, a Mikveh student himself, who was sent to France and returned. Even though my father was a strict man and insisted on discipline, Krauze outdid him on every point. Ours was the first year with everything in Hebrew including our lessons.

Shlomo Hillels, a Hebrew teacher, educator, and author from Poland, was our teacher and the one responsible for us. Having the son of the principle as one of my schoolmates seemed to have potential, but after only one day of school it became painfully apparent that the fact that I knew him from the Gymnasium did not give me any advantage. I was forbidden to visit him at the principal's house or even say hello to him.

All things considered, my adjustment went smoothly. I made friends quickly with my other schoolmates: Gideon (Geda) Shochat from Kfar Giladi, Abraham Yaffe from Yavniel, a boy from Segera by the name of Brovozchevsky, and a boy from Atlit by the name of Grupper. They all came from farming communities and families that barely earned a living.

Food was scarce, but I was used to that so it didn't bother me too much. I could get by with a little. For example, on Shabbat mornings we ate beans that had been cooking all night long in the oven and if I was lucky enough to get a second helping I was delighted. For me it was the food of kings and certainly better than anything you could get in a restaurant.

Life was comfortable but I wasn't spoiled. I never wore long trousers and I didn't own a coat. I wore shoes only on Shabbat. Buying shoes was a special event and literally cost the equivalent of a teacher's monthly wages, so we made our own sandals from tires, using the tire for the sole and the inner tube for straps.

As first year students, we didn't have the nerve to open our mouths or voice our opinions. The third form was the in-group of the school and no one dared speak to them unless they spoke first.

We woke up before dawn and it was always cold, but tolerable. At six o'clock we had obligatory morning prayers and after breakfast we studied for four straight hours. In the afternoon we worked for four hours in different places on the farm. The subjects we studied were varied, but did not include mathematics. The emphasis was on the practical: botany, zoology, and chemistry. Chemistry was difficult, but our teacher, Meir Vinik, was an extraordinary man and I felt drawn to him when he entered the classroom so I paid attention. Most of the students in

the class were not especially studious in the schools they came from, whereas my grades were high in the first semester.

There was field work which wasn't a problem for me since I had already planted tobacco in Rehovot, picked almonds, and harvested grapes. We were always tired. We woke up at dawn and studied for half a day. The evenings were short. We were anxious to go to sleep and in those days, turning off the electricity early was normal and surprisingly, never psychologically damaged anyone. On the contrary, we had our supper, sat and talked for a while, and then went to sleep. The more diligent ones prepared their lessons and the others fell asleep right away.

Nothing exceptional took place at school, at least not the first year. Mikveh Israel was an all boys school; we had no ties to any other school and visitors were not allowed. On Shabbat, we were permitted to go home but there was nothing to do in Tel Aviv so there was no real reason to go. The only reason I went was to see my mother.

My first year was uneventful except for the fact that I was always on the lookout for special jobs. Close to school, only two kilometers away, there was an alcohol factory. The mix of raisins and grape peels that was leftover from the process was called Braga. It smelled horrible but the cows liked it. The barrels of Braga could be collected only at night. Someone would have to go to the factory in wagons drawn by oxen, load the Braga, bring it to the Mikveh, and pour it into different barrels to distribute to the cows. This would go on for all hours of the night and it was work that no one wanted to do. I, however, was eager to do the job and I was regularly sent to bring the Braga.

Working nights in the chicken shed wasn't much different. If a chick had a feather missing, its red skin was revealed and the other chicks would start pecking it until it bled.

Someone had to be on guard throughout the night and make sure the chicks didn't peck one another. I volunteered for this job as well. I also volunteered to feed the mules and horses late at night. If it was necessary to unload 120 kilo sacks of wheat, I went. For me, loading 120 kilogram sacks on my back and stacking them like a brick wall was great.

The same went for pruning the grapes. The knife was so sharp my hands were always full of cuts. No one liked this job either and I volunteered as usual and was among the good "assemblers." What was an assembler? You take an "eye"; place it firmly on a spur under the peel. Very soon I was one of the best "assemblers" at Mikveh and in those days it was a highly sought after job.

I also spent many hours in Mizrahi's blacksmith shop. He would play his hammer like a violin. Mizrahi made hoops for bicycles by heating the iron until it was glowing red and then placing it on the anvil. By tapping it with a small hammer he created music. After he played his music on the anvil with the hammer he would hit the heavy hammers right on the mark.

I would observe how the "clique" of third form students would stand in groups of twos and threes, hitting with the heavy hammers on the hot iron. I quickly became one of them. To be more precise I was, you might say, Mizrahi's most important worker. Mizrahi asked for me because I could hit with the heavy hammer better than anyone else. He would "play" for me and I would hit with the hammer and together we would forge the iron.

During this time I began to develop physically, but as a first year student, I suffered at the hands of the "clique." For example, once when I was walking through a grove, I met one of the "clique" boys, Bezalel Ha'levi. I suppose I didn't move aside fast enough or didn't greet him properly and he slapped me.

Beside my own father, no one had ever slapped me. My ears rang from the force of it for years to come. I swore then that it would never happen again because if it did, I would kill the person immediately.

In the second year, we didn't suffer from the "clique" like we did before. My name preceded me. A student always accompanied a worker to work and the best ones constantly requested me. The "clique" viewed me as someone who liked to study. Most of them were good guys and when they saw that I was willing to work hard they appreciated it. Once, when a cow was calving and someone had to sit and wait while everyone else had gone to sleep, I sat on guard with a guy from the "clique". The first time he let me watch. The second time he let me puncture the sac. The third time he let me carry the calf. The fourth time I was his assistant.

I was allowed to milk the cows which no first or second year student could do. I wanted to be a professional and looked for jobs that demanded skills beyond sitting and waiting. I was not sent to weed out spiders. That was for the idle, not for me.

With summer coming, some students found themselves a place to sleep outside as it was scorching hot inside the building. Some built huts and others slept in the vineyard. Although forbidden, the administration turned a blind eye. Among other things, a new combination of students developed and this is how I found my group. This was a group of agriculturists that was forming, and not just farmers. In other words, this was the "bourgeois", who were not destined to work in Petah Tikva or Zikhron Ya'acov.

We discussed the options of kibbutz, commune, or cooperative settlement. After a hard day of work, I ate quickly and then went to join my group, which was always in the middle

of impassioned, idealistic discussions. One fellow suggested going to Kfar Giladi and someone else supported going to Yavniel. A third mentioned Segera as a possible site for us, and yet another mentioned Kfar Yehezkel.

The first youth guides arrived with representatives from every one of the country's youth movements. The school administration did not like the influence the youth movement guides had on us, but were powerless in thwarting it. I was interested in two things: my future profession in the orchard, dairy, or *falcha*, the field crops, and finding a suitable agricultural setting, either a kibbutz, a commune, or a communal settlement.

In school I started learning a profession. We had to choose a main profession and a secondary one and the majority of students from the city went for the orchards, which were at the time the “gold” of Palestine. I chose the dairy and the *falcha*, which was the ultimate declaration of idealism and in reality, encompassed the most laborious and least profitable jobs. The boss in the orchards made seven lira a month as opposed to the *falachim*, or field crop workers, who didn't make one lira a month including food.

In those days there were no machines for milking and a dairy worker lived in the dairy round the clock. The dairy worker's job was his life, 24 hours a day. There was talk of training when they started bringing cows from Holland. Some students from the class ahead of ours went to Holland to learn about dairies and returned as experts and told us fantastic stories about milking machines and how in Holland they even bathed the cows.

I chose two of the most difficult subjects, the *falcha*, and the dairy, and I worked with Kappuller, an agronomist who brought new species to the country and cultivated them in the

vegetable garden. I worked hard at those two jobs and never neglected any of the other jobs I had. I worked in the vegetable garden with Kappuller, the vineyard with Hochberg, and the orchards with Yedidia, who was one of the most difficult people I had ever met in my entire life. He arrived from Poland by way of California and because he had studied citrus growing, he observed the world from a higher place.

I knew the *falcha* well. I knew when it would rain or when there would be an Indian summer. I knew ahead of time what the next day's weather would be. Moreover, I was an expert in harvesting with a scythe.

During the summer vacation of my second year I went to Binyamina to visit a relative of mine from Mescha. She had married a Bulgarian man by the name of Ben-Ezra who towered to a height of some 1.90 meters. He was an expert farmer and had completed his studies at Mikveh Israel some years earlier. He greeted me rather unpleasantly by saying, "Another good for nothing mouth to feed." The evening of my arrival he hitched a wagon to a couple of mules and we rode along the Crocodile River to Zikhron Ya'akov to pick clover. I said nothing. He sharpened his scythe and cut with ease like a master playing a violin. Afterwards he asked me if I wanted to try. I had no experience with clover but when I picked up the scythe and started cutting, he was amazed by my work. That was the beginning of a wonderful relationship. He had several cows and only I was permitted to milk them. Even his wife was forbidden. Moreover, he gave me the cows and through the mud and sand I delivered flour to Pardes Hannah.

Three beautiful words - I was a farmer! From a small wisp of a boy I became a strapping farmer. I knew how to work, I loved the work, and I was a professional. In fact it is the only

work I ever knew how to do better than anyone else to this very day.

I was a simple young man living a Spartan way of life. It had its drawbacks, but the advantage of this way of life was that you accepted things the way they were without contemplating or asking questions. I never asked questions as a child or as an adult. When I was reprimanded at home while taking care of my baby brother Yifrach, who would cry his eyes out, I never grew angry but simply comforted and calmed him. I led my life without "why", and preferred "because." Nothing complex there. I was by no means a complicated person. Certainly in Mikveh this was true. I never tried to be better than others. I never approached Ben Ezra saying, "Let me show you how I can scythe the clover." He asked me straight out, "Do you want to try?" I took the scythe and showed him that I could do it.

In the third year of school we started to arm wrestle. I never bragged about my strong arms but it was Geda Shochat and I who remained in the competition. Geda had an iron arm. I was short but stocky and I didn't give in. He didn't get the better of me nor did I, him; he was the strongest one of us all. I didn't brag about being able to lift 100 to 120 kilograms. Thanks to my childhood education I never showed off. I was taught not to be pushy and to listen to what others had to say and learn from them. Until this very day I do the same: first do - then be discovered.

Sometimes things happened without help. I helped Tennenbaum, the stable boss, who once worked for the Czar of Russia (at least we wanted to believe that because of his age and experience). There was a filly by the name of Ahashverosh who was never saddled. One evening as I entered the stable, Tennenbaum said to me that it was time to put a saddle on Ahashverosh. We weren't cowboys and didn't watch westerns,

but when Tennenbaum said put a saddle on, I did. Then he ordered me to mount the horse. I was surprised. I didn't realize he liked me. Letting me be the first to ride Ahashverosh was like pinning six medals on my chest. I mounted the filly, which began to run and jump until I lost my breath. We galloped into the fields and back. I even succeeded in remaining in the saddle without falling off. When I returned, Tennenbaum looked me over and nodded his head as if to say, "Okay, okay, you know how to ride a horse."

Looking back now I realized I wasn't fully aware of my achievements but undoubtedly those days were filled with successes as well. Everything I did, I loved and everything I loved to do I did well, regardless of who the teacher was.

The first American who came to teach how to raise chickens was Nathan Fiat, from California, who did not speak Hebrew (and afterward became the Principal of the "Kadouri" School). He tried to persuade me to work in the chicken shed rather than the dairy and *falcha*. Nathan didn't want to give up on me and honestly believed that my desire to work in the dairy and *falcha* would yield disaster. He was the first teacher to ever invite me to his house. He tried to persuade me to go to California to learn about chicken sheds so that I could build and develop chicken sheds all over the country.

My relationship with my teachers was excellent, as it was with the workers, who didn't usually like the students. For the most part I was very satisfied with my studies and work at Mikveh Israel.

In my second year of studies, my father went to the United States where he worked as a secretary for the Hebrew Teachers Union in New York. I would go home on the weekends during that period since mother was left alone with Yigal and

Yifrach. I could tell she was happy to see me. I was different from my father. I was a man who functioned well at work as well as in the kitchen and home. She didn't need to tell me to wash the dishes. I would tell her to go take a nap and that I would cook, which made her very happy. She loved to go for walks with me. On Shabbat afternoons I would invite her to go for a walk on the beach.

During that time I developed an interest in soccer. In Tel Aviv there were two teams, "Maccabi" and Allenby, which later became "Hapoel." I didn't have enough money to buy a ticket to see a game so like many others, I would dig a hole under the fence to get into the field. Later, when I returned to Mikveh, we would stay up all night and argue about the games. The Tel Avivians were "Maccabi" fans and the Labor Movement people were "Hapoel" fans. More than once arguments turned into fist fights as a matter of honor. This was the center of our lives. We had no money and we didn't play cards. Soccer, "Maccabi" and "Hapoel", the fights, meant everything to us.

In the third year, one group formed and went to a settlement known today as Bet She'arim near Tiv'on and out of the ten who went, four still live there. We had doubts. We read about the kibbutz, the collective settlement, and the cooperative settlement (moshav). I decided to go to a cooperative settlement and not a kibbutz. It seems I gravitated towards the cooperative settlement not because of any idealism I may have had, but because my friends went there, all except for Geda Shochat who returned to Kfar Giladi and Abraham Yaffe who decided to join the Young Guard (Ha'shomer Ha'tza'ir). The rest established the core group of the cooperative settlement and I joined them.

Above all, I learned how to work at Mikveh Israel, live a cooperative life, share, and not grab everything because even

though I had something that day, the next day I might not. That day I would share what I had and the next, if necessary, I would gladly give it away. I even became accustomed to taking communal showers without feeling ashamed, in contrast to my home where a naked body was a disgrace.

Once at the Mikveh there was an incident involving two Arab students from the Bides family of Tul Karem, one of whom later became the mayor of that city. Samir Bides studied with us and his brother Zuhdi, being too old to study in class, was a practitioner. Shalom Aleichem's son also came as a practitioner. The practitioners studied and worked with the students, but did not receive diplomas or take examinations and were not considered laborers.

Samir studied with us for only one year. Because I knew Arabic, my relationship with him was good. I didn't hate the Arabs, but knew all too well that I must be equal in strength with them, and later in life I was to face difficult challenges. I learned that I must be careful around them as well. Zuhdi Bidas was much more friendly and civil than Samir, and spoke Arabic beautifully. At the Mikveh he made friends with everyone. After the events of 1929, we were shown a picture of him taken by the Haganah passing on information to a British policeman. The snake we reared had bitten us. I realized then that if I break bread and salt with an Arab, it does not mean we made a pact. We are not the same.

I joined the Haganah at the end of 1928 or early 1929, at the beginning of my second year. One day someone approached me and told me that Mussa, another worker, wanted to talk to me. His real name was Moshe Brenner but everyone called him Mussa. I didn't ask what he wanted. I knew what he did. We met outside and walked around the grounds and the grove when he

said, “We have been observing and examining you. Right now we are organizing a new group in the “Organization”. Are you interested in joining?” What a question!?! Two nights later, I entered a small room. On the table two candles were burning. Next to them were a Bible and a gun. I was sworn in to the “Organization.” Yitzhak Ben Aharon and Mussa were the inductors. During the ceremony my blood froze.

Twice a week I slipped away to attend night training. When I was sure everyone was sound asleep I got dressed quietly, took my sandals in my hand and snuck out of the room. I gave the password and entered the winery deep in the ground and learned, “Take arms!”

The activities in the “Organization” were covert. We had no idea that our teacher, Shtickelberg, the only teacher who was a commander, was a member of the Haganah. We also didn’t know that Davidka Leibovitch, who invented the Davidka mortar, was second in command. In fact, we knew very little. I knew that Mussa was a guide and Shotz taught us how to use a parabellum gun. We didn’t have rifles. For an entire year we never saw one single rifle, only parabellum guns. We took apart and assembled the parabellum over and over again, in the light and with our eyes closed.

Because training took place in the cellar of the winery, we could not perform foot drills. Instead we theorized about how to handle a real attack. We were bombarded with ideology and we disassembled the parabellums over and over again, but we never fired a shot. Trainers arrived from Tel Aviv and we met under a sycamore tree at night, usually when Shabbat was over. It was the only day we could go to sleep whenever we wished.

In those days we called people by their family names. One day I heard (Abraham) Yaffeh call me, “Neaman, go see

Mussa.” I went right away and it was the first time I saw where the weapons were hidden. There were six guns. Mussa told me to take the six guns and go into the orchard and wait until someone came to get me. He told me not to move until I heard the signal and even after that to stay put. I was to give them the guns only if it was two particular people (he told me who they were). Whatever happened I was not to move from the spot.

It was raining. I took the guns and ran to the orchard. Crouching down in the mud, the hours passed by. 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock in the morning. Finally I heard the password. The British showed up to search the Mikveh but didn't find anything. Later I found out that Zuhdi Bidas had informed them. Zuhdi never came back to the Mikveh. His brother also left, even though he wasn't involved. It turned out that Zuhdi wanted money and his rich father wouldn't give it him so he became an informer.

As time went on, Principal Krauze softened up and his son, Amitzur, invited me to his home. Krauze wasn't at home, only his mother. I stayed there for an hour. Two months later Amitzur committed suicide.

Later when our class became the “clique”, we played a trick on Krauze. He would wake us up to go to synagogue for morning prayers and as usual we tried our best to avoid it. One morning we attached an electric wire to the door handle. The stairs that day were wet from the rain and the principal got electrocuted. His hand stuck to the doorknob and he screamed until someone disconnected the wire. From that day on no one came to wake us up and attending services was no longer obligatory.

We were fairly mischievous. One evening when I returned with Geda Shochat from a soccer game in Tel Aviv,

Geda said he was hungry. He was always hungry. We went to the chicken shed and stole some chickens, and it wasn't the first time. We slaughtered the chicken and Geda stuffed it under his shirt. When we got back to our room we invited some of the others to join us and eat.

Because we were hungry all the time, we started to demand better food. For example, we never received oranges because they were to be sold at the market. We admitted that the market was important, but felt that we deserved a good turn once in a while. The oranges that weren't good enough to go to the market, the "left over ones", could have been given to us at meals, but they sold those as well. We didn't get oranges for a long time. To take revenge on the principal, we decided that if they wouldn't give us any, we would steal them. One evening we went to the orchard and a fellow from Bet Alfa, another one and I filled four sacks of oranges. We brought them back to my room and spilled them all over the floor and they rolled around from wall to wall.

In the summer we stomped grapes. After the harvest the grapes were placed in huge vats and we stomped them with our bare feet. In the middle of stomping, we heard old man Pariente, who was already 80 or 85 years old, say that in the basement there was wine from the Karl Neter days. We decided to see for ourselves. We planned a covert, military style mission including having keys made at the blacksmith shop, posting a look-out guard every few meters, and creating a password.

With candles in hand we went down some 50 meters below ground into the wine cellar and chose the oldest wine. We removed the bottles, went up to the roof and drank. After drinking quite a lot we started singing and were heard on the other side of the Jordan River. To be brief, we were drunk. There was an

investigation into the robbery. It wasn't too hard to figure out but since we were good students we were forgiven.

Additionally, we used to steal 50 to 60 eggs from the chicken shed and take them to the alcohol factory. We gave 30 eggs to the guard's wife so she could make us scrambled eggs. Four or five students ate a hearty 30 egg meal.

Our antics included the discovery of a common wall between the shower and the kitchen. We broke down the wooden wall and got to all the good food. For example, we helped ourselves to some meatballs made mostly from bread and a little meat prepared especially for the Shabbat meal. At Shabbat lunch we were served a king's meal of meatballs, and once we devoured at least 300 of them, causing quite a commotion.

At one point we decided to raise the culinary level of the meals. Instead of having margarine one morning and the next morning jam, we asked to have margarine and jam together every morning. We would take the margarine and eat half, stashing the rest in a hiding place inside a table made from rocks. The next day when we got the jam we mixed it with half of the margarine. For us this was ambrosia, food of the Gods.

Then there were the beans. We had beans every day, mainly in a horrible soup made with very little beans and a lot of water. Only on Shabbat were we served baked beans. Devorah, the kitchen manager, was like a mother to some 300 people and she cried as she served that horrible food because that was the best she could do with the ingredients they gave her to cook with.

Our group, Greenberg, Davidson, Geda Shochat, Abraham Yaffeh and I, were known as the "Zeppelins" because we lived on the roof of the stables. We decided to organize a strike and we convinced everyone to join us. We went to the dunes nearby, where the city of Holon is today, for the entire day.

We were starving and didn't have a drop of water to drink. We returned at night after everyone had been searching for us all day long. We never revealed where we had been. After dinner we fasted one more day and posted a manifest on the doors explaining why we were leaving, why we were not working or eating, and what we really wanted.

The end result was a great improvement in the food. We decided to celebrate this victory by having a party, complete with a play depicting life at school. We wrote songs, skits, and stories about our teacher and Krauze. We asked permission to put the show on in the hall normally used for films, but were denied. Instead we had the show at the Shlomit School in Tel Aviv, in front of the entire school, our friends and family.

We went home happy, but then chaos broke out. Hillels demanded to know who organized the party. We informed him that there were no organizers in our class and we were united. He was less than satisfied and demanded full details from me. How could I answer? I told him it was the entire class. If he liked he would have to punish us all.

First there was the strike and then the party incident. He knew about the jokes and the skits and he was furious. This behavior was not tolerated in those days. You could laugh at the *Two Kunilemmels*, but to do skits and make fun of teachers and the principal was unheard of. As a result, all 60 of us were expelled.

There were some boys who had a place to go. Geda could go to his father, Israel Shochat, who was a lawyer in Tel Aviv or to Kfar Giladi, but there were others who had no place to go. We approached Neta Harpaz, the manager of the Agricultural Center Union, and explained that we weren't allowed to complete the school year. We asked for permission to work as farmers without

receiving a diploma as we were close to the end of the school year and were in fact genuine farmers. We even had several good recommendations, including one from the mayor of Tel Aviv, Meir Dizengoff and Barshad from the Anglo-Palestinian Bank, whose son studied with us.

After two weeks we were allowed to return to Mikveh. Right before Kiddush the next Shabbat it was announced that Samuel Neaman, Shimon Pinnes, and David Linderman were permanently expelled. Out of the three, Linderman was never even involved. Shimon Pinnes was not a part of the organization but had a big mouth. He was a liberal with a revolutionary spirit which is why he was always singled out. Me, I was definitely among the more proactive.

We met to find out who the informant was. A scandal erupted. It was clear to me that the information about me as the organizer of the strike and the party reached Krauze's ears from Hillels. The class decided unanimously to quit school at once. Some tried to persuade us that it wasn't the best thing to do as there were only a few months left until the end of the school year and we would not receive our diplomas. Barchard was worried about facing his father. We were invited to Barchard, the banker's home, and he and Dizengoff tried to convince us to give in. Their rationale was that 60 students shouldn't suffer because of two or three.

We went to Kiddush, ate dinner, and when the director came in and greeted us with "Shabbat Shalom" all three sections banged on tin plates until he left. For the first time, Krauze and our teacher did not take part in the Shabbat Kiddush. Instead Shappira, one of the teachers, did the Kiddush. The next day, on Shabbat, we left.

I arrived home in Tel Aviv. Father was in America and mother was crying because I had been expelled from school. In those days, getting expelled was a catastrophe and a disgrace. She asked me what happened and I told her. For her it was an absolute tragedy. The son of Neaman the teacher expelled from school! What would people say? What would happen to me? She went into mourning.

I appealed to Neta Harpaz once again and he sent me to Ekron to work for a farmer by the name of Hellzner. The Palestinian Jewish Colonization Association paid a lira and a half to each Jewish worker who took a farmer to work. He paid me a lira a month and gave me a place to eat and sleep. Hellzner had four Arab workers, a son and a daughter. I slept on a sofa in the hallway. At three o'clock in the morning I got up to milk the cows, took them out to graze, hitched the mule, and then went back to the house for a breakfast of tomatoes, a piece of bread, and some olive oil. Afterwards I went to Rehovot and worked the plough all day long.

For a worker with a pair of mules and plough, Hellzner received half a lira day. At lunch I ate bread with oil. In the evening after a long ride on a couple of mules I returned to Ekron. The cows returned from the pasture, I milked them, churned the milk, and took the two-day old milk to the store. I came back, checked on the mules and the cows and if everything was all right I went inside, ate more tomatoes with olive oil and bread. The Hellznerns and their son sat in front of me while I ate and told me the same story in Yiddish every night.

I couldn't speak Yiddish because in my house it was forbidden to speak a foreign language. They adorned the stories with a few words in Hebrew, but I didn't understand a word they said. Later I went to the basement for a Haganah lesson and more

training on the parabellum as I took it apart, put it together, stood at attention, and practiced my army style 'right turn'.

A few days later, the Hellzner's fired the first Arab worker and within a week they fired the other three, leaving me as the only farmhand. The father, an old, sick man, didn't work. They bought a bicycle for the son which was unusual in those days. He rode around on the bicycle all day long while I worked. Hellzner received a lira and a half from the Palestinian Jewish Colonization Association and for each day I plowed in Rehovot he got a half a lira - a real fortune. I received only one lira a month.

During the season, I harvested the wheat and brought it to the barn, then brought the cows to tread on it. After that we mixed the stems with the stalks so the wheat would crumble and the kernels would fall out. At 12 noon, in the sweltering midday heat, I took the pitchfork and turned over the stems trodden by the cows. This is work only Arabs knew how to do and if I didn't do it well, the seeds would remain in the stalks and the harvest would be devalued.

Inside of a month I was the topic of discussion in Ekrone. Horowitz, a year ahead of me at the Mikveh, thought it was absurd that I was the only Hebrew work there. He thought I went too far and was sacrificing myself for absolutely nothing. I didn't understand him. I felt great and enjoyed working and did it willingly. I could have returned to Tel Aviv at any time but chose not to. I was satisfied with life in Ekrone. Then something new started.

Hellzner's daughter, Michal, came back from Tel Aviv and Hellzner started telling me about his farm in Gedera and that he needed someone to work there. If I married Michal, he said, I would get the farm and two cows. He told me he would buy two

mules and that I would be the owner of the farm. I didn't like this arrangement at all, and I asked Michal what she thought. She told me she was a communist and berated me for allowing her bourgeoisie father to take advantage of me.

Suddenly, one day Horowitz told me that the Mikveh teacher's council decided to reinstate me at school. I returned to Mikveh and found that Shimon Pinnes had gone to South Africa and Linderman, to America. Shimon died sometime later in South Africa and Linderman was making children's shoes in Chicago.

The whole episode including the work in Ekron lasted for six to seven weeks. After a short time I figured out why I was reinstated. The teacher's council, consisting of Kofler, Vinik, and other teachers, claimed that it was unheard of that the best student in the whole school should be expelled because of such a ridiculous incident. All the same, they did not want to give me a diploma. When I finally received my diploma I was quite offended because my grades were excellent. For leadership, in other words, behavior, I received the grade of 'excellent', and for my work, dedication, and various subjects I also received 'excellent'.

The "Zeppelins" were the *crème de la crème* of the school. Geda came from Kfar Giladi, the son of Manya and Israel Shochat. We knew his father had left the kibbutz and there were many stories about him. I cannot say that Geda had any impressive ideas. He was the first child born in Kfar Giladi which immediately bestowed upon him special status. He was a man of few words, but insistent.

The uprisings of 1929 broke out when we were at the end of our second year. Many Jews were murdered, especially in the settlements of the Upper Galilee. We wanted to go and volunteer to guard in the Galilee. Krauze refused, claiming we were too

young. He said we were still his responsibility. We tried to persuade Hillels. It was up to me, the teacher's favorite, to represent the group because I spoke Hebrew fluently. I tried to convince him that if we were not allowed to go as a group, we would go individually.

Hillels spoke to Krauze and convinced him that it was a good idea, then told him to send me first because my father was in America and there was no one to grant permission. Krauze said he would take responsibility for me. I reminded them that I had a mother. It was decided that if my mother sent a letter stating that she released the school from any responsibility, I would be allowed to go.

When we arrived in Tel Aviv she already knew. Every morning a wagon with passengers, the Dilligene (carriage), went to Tel Aviv with the mail and to bring supplies. The carriage driver was sent to tell my mother to send me back to school. The situation in the Galilee was bad, but it was also bad at the Mikveh and we were too young to go. I told my mother that I wanted to go to the Galilee and that I would not be coming back to Tel Aviv or near Tel Aviv. I begged her to sign the letter. This was a tough time. She was from Rosh Pina and with her sympathy for the Upper Galilee, she agreed to sign. I went back to school and brought the signed release with me. I handed it over to the school, releasing them from all responsibility.

Krauze was proud of me and of all the boys from my class who followed me. He was a French student from the Alliance, but had a great deal of Jewish pride. Outwardly he could not reveal this, but it was evident that he was extremely proud that a young man of 16 volunteered to protect the settlements in the North.

Through Mussa we made contact with the Haganah and the whole group was sent to Degania. We arrived there at night and entered a large room. Two people were waiting for us, Pinchas Shneurson, who replaced Trumpedlor at Tel Chai after he was injured, and another, short man. I had read about Trumpeldor thousands of times and remembered the sentence: "Shneurson, you are the commander." Yet I saw the short man speaking assertively to Shneurson. This had an enormous impact on me, especially as Shneurson was three times taller than his colleague. The short man was Ya'acov Pat, the Haganah commander in the Galilee. He came to talk to us and later that night we got on a wagon headed to Yavniel, a group of children 16 years of age taking arms. These were not the parabellum guns we were used to. We were given rifles.

When the residents of Yavniel saw who had come to protect them, they were shocked. They put us in the school and we went out to guard. My position was next to the Berndsteter house, the last house in the settlement at the top of the hill. The settlements in the Galilee were built from black basalt rock and the houses on the last row were connected with a rock wall. I guarded one of the locals, a Russian immigrant who had converted. He played an ocarina, a Russian folk wind instrument, and my soul took flight. It is possible that the Arabs planned an attack but didn't proceed because they heard the music.

When we reached the Lower Galilee, the attacks had mostly stopped but there were still a few instances of shooting. For that reason, some of us were relocated to the Upper Galilee and volunteers were needed for Kfar Giladi. I was the first to volunteer because I wanted to see Geda.

We arrived at Kfar Giladi in the middle of the harvest. They gave us three pairs of mules and, armed with weapons, we

went to the valley at the foot of Mount Hermon to load sheaves. During the day we harvested and at night we guarded. I worked nearly 24 hours a day with barely two hours of sleep. When the tension eased somewhat, the commander, Nahum Shadmi, summoned me and gave me the best present a person could receive in those days. He patted me on the back and told me he was going to Rosh Pina and that I could go with him. I was filled with pride. That evening I ate in the Kfar Giladi dining room with people I had only read about. I was only 16 years old, working side by side with people I revered.

We were in for about a month and in Kfar Giladi six months before

I went home. I wanted to see my mother so she could see that I was alive. I laid down on the floor since that is what I had become used to and slept for three straight days and nights. My mother told me that she tried to wake me and couldn't. She fed me soup in my sleep so that my stomach wouldn't be empty.

The events of 1929 did not bring the Arabs the results they had hoped for. It started with shouting, then robbing, then murder and after it was all over, the tension remained. Kfar Giladi was never attacked. There were gangs who came from Halsá (Today, Kiryat Shmona) but they didn't get close and never fired a shot. We went out to the fields to work and they never shot at us.

I returned to the Mikveh dairy and the *falcha* for the third year. I was a good worker and knew everything there was to know about the *falcha*, the dairy, the chicken shed, and the vegetable garden. You could say I was an expert in all the important agricultural branches. I read all the "Field" agricultural magazines I could get my hands on.

In the second year class there was an incident with Benny Eddelman, a rich boy from Canada who dressed nicely and was the only one who owned a smoking jacket. On Saturday afternoons he went dancing at the fancy Platina Hotel in old Tel Aviv. We would dirty our shirts at the blacksmiths on Fridays or intentionally rip brand new shirts and put patches on them because that was the “in” way to dress. Eddelman raised the collar on the ordinary blue shirt and pants we wore at the Mikveh to look more elegant. When we went to the movies after that, we saw the Americans and the British raised the collars on their shirts.

Eddelman was a smoker. Smoking to us was hedonistic, like slow dancing. We weren't jealous when he went to the Platina. He didn't belong among us anyway. What was he doing there anyhow? The following year two more Canadians arrived, bringing with them baseball and basketball. They were folksy types and Eddelman was a snob. His sister would bring him back in a car on Saturday nights. He had privileges that I didn't have because I didn't pay tuition and his father paid 50 lira a year.

One evening we were sitting on our beds in his room after lights out. I watched as he lit a cigarette and smoked. My father didn't smoke and neither did I or the others. Eddelman offered me a cigarette to smoke. I took it and said to myself if I didn't like it, I wouldn't keep smoking. He lit a match and handed me the cigarette. I brought it to my mouth and at that moment Hillels opened the door to see what we were doing and to check if we had turned out the lights.

Without thinking I extinguished the cigarette on my arm. Benny, the authority on smoking, put his cigarette out on the bed and threw it away. Hillels asked if we were smoking. The room reeked of cigarette smoke. Eddelman sat there innocently and said

nothing. Hillels ordered me to show him my hand. He let me have it. Benny kept his mouth shut. It was a quick way to learn who was a friend and who was a traitor.

I also learned about the world via movies and romance novels, which enlightened me about life and love. We settlement farmer types weren't infants. Four idealistic Polish Youth Zionist Movement students from Pinsk and Bialystok who made Aliyah taught us all about the real world. They came from wealthy families who paid for their education and they told us all about anti-Semitism from firsthand experience. We had only read about it, but had no idea what it actually felt like to walk down the street and have someone spit in your face. They made it sound all too authentic and for the first time anti-Semitism was tangible.

Mikveh was a first-rate school. All the graduates walked away with a good education which contributed a great deal to the Haganah. Without the solid foundation rooted in schools and institutions like Mikveh Israel, it would have been impossible to draw on the necessary training, discipline, and self-sacrifice the Israeli army required. I also believed that without conviction, the State of Israel would never have come into existence.

If I have to evaluate my life up to this point, I would conclude that before I arrived at Mikveh Israel, I was just an ordinary teacher's son who wandered from place to place, from one type of community to another, a physically weak and underdeveloped child. The Mikveh transformed me into a person who could do physical work, be independent, make decisions, and shaped me at a young age into the 'tsabar' (*Sabra*) concept of a true man.

At Mikveh I acquired a profession I loved and excelled at. I developed a nationalist belief in a new kind of society, what was referred to as the 'Jewish settlement'. Even though I was

familiar with this kind of society only in theory, I believed it could be created. I wanted to be a small part of a much larger structure that would craft new relationships between people.

At Mikveh I experienced how meeting new people gave you the opportunity to see how different your real life is from your ideal of life. My faith did not waver and I began to appreciate that different people react differently and that, while many opinions coexist in one society, people with common interests gravitate to each other.

I learned to be easygoing in my relationships with others and not wait to be approached. I learned that there is no shame in wanting friendship and that sometimes I needed to take the first step. I realized, of course, that the world is not just, nor am I. Even though I was raised on idealism, I harbored both flaws and weaknesses.

A FARMER

I graduated from Mikveh Israel in 1931. Towards the end, my eagerness to go to a moshav had dissipated. From the beginning we all planned to go to the moshav together, although my joining the group did not come from any special motivation.

Apparently there was no available land for us and we were to live together until land was allotted. During that time we visited a group from a class ahead of ours that had planned to go to a moshav. They were also waiting for land and a budget, and in the meantime were working at various jobs. We learned from them about the difficulties they faced, which stirred up second thoughts. It is possible that if we had been told there was some land in Beit She'arim and that we should '*go remove the rocks*', perhaps I would have gone. But we had to wait and be content and establish a core group that did outside jobs.

At the end of every school year, the agricultural division of the Histadrut searched for suitable graduates to fill vacant positions, and that is how they found me. The offer I received was to manage a moshav for a moshavnik from Moshav Atarot near Jerusalem who went to work for "Tnuva". This was perfect

for me as I had just finished school and immediately went to work. Hillel Tzur, a “Beitarnik’, with whom I had nothing in common, went with me.

I did not make informed decisions at that stage, but I was the right person to work on a farm, especially in the orchards and the dairy. “Tnuva” wanted Ben-Yehuda from Atarot to work in Jerusalem and they were looking for someone young and serious to fill his place on the farm. This was a good opportunity to experience life on a moshav, which was an excellent alternative to belonging to a group that was working at odd jobs and waiting for a grant of land.

I bid my Mikveh friends goodbye. Most of them went back home to their kibbutzim, moshavim and villages. The only place to meet was in Tel Aviv because the Tel Aviv group went back to the city and didn’t work in agriculture.

Those who made it to Tel Aviv found ways to get together. No idealistic conversations there. All they wanted to do was spend time together and have fun. When I came to Tel Aviv every three or four months to see my family, I would meet them. Tel Aviv was small and when someone came into town the word spread quickly. Within an hour everyone got together at someone’s house. Our time spent together consisted of reporting on what we were doing with our lives and walking down Allenby Street till we reached the seashore.

When I got to Atarot, I went to Ben-Yehuda and, as it would happen, on the first day another fellow showed up at the same time. I arrived from Mikveh and a Latvian man by the name of Glick from Binyamina arrived from Beitar. It was the first time I had to compete for a job and I was unprepared.

At the Mikveh and the Agricultural Institute, they had pressured me to go to Atarot immediately after school ended

without taking a vacation. They said it was urgent and they were expecting me. Ben Yehuda requested a worker for two months but there was no one available, and then suddenly two of us appeared. For the first time, instead of being a student who received a pat on the back if he did what was expected of him, I now had to pass a test whose outcome would be my chance of earning an income.

Unemployment in the country at that time was rampant. The prosperity of the Polish Aliyah at the end of the 1920's waned by the fourth Aliyah. The state of affairs where one person was employed and the other was not was difficult for Ben Yehuda. He was a wonderful man, serious yet ill-at-ease, and didn't know what to do except tell us: "It's time for the midday milking. Go and milk the cows."

I was only 17 and a half years old and the other guy was much older than me. He was from Binyamina and was experienced in farm work while I was fresh out of school. I got stuck with the most difficult cow to milk, a cow that barely had any udders. But after milking, my bucket of milk was fuller than Glick's and had almost as much as Ben Yehuda usually got from the same cow. The foam was white and clean without a speck of dirt. In short, it was obvious who the professional was.

While Ben Yehuda and his wife were involved in a conversation, I played with their son. I felt good and wasn't nervous. I got the job. For the first time I competed without any help, just good old efficiency. Glick was a good worker and a good dairyman. Later I got to know him well, but now I had the advantage.

Getting a job gave me a sense of satisfaction. Not only was I a Mikveh graduate – I was a worker. The title, 'worker', was to me what "doctor" was to someone else and I was a worker

in the full sense of the word. Glick, who didn't get the job, was not bitter or angry. On the contrary, he told me I was a good dairyman. Later I asked Ben Yehuda if anyone on the moshav needed a worker because in those days, hiring workers on a moshav was forbidden. Ben Yehuda thought about it for a moment and said he would talk to Shpillman. Shpillman had mitigating circumstances. His wife was ill and according to moshav law he was allowed to hire a worker. Glick began to work for him and everyone was happy.

Life at Atarot was difficult but it didn't alarm me. I was a part of the family: husband, wife, a young child, and the farmhand. The husband woke early in the morning and went to Jerusalem while the wife prepared me breakfast. I worked all day long milking pure-bred cows, which takes special care. There was also a chicken shed. We had to bring the water in barrels from a well near Ramallah, 10 kilometers away. I would have to load two very heavy barrels onto the horse hitched wagon, travel 10 kilometers, fill the barrels and bring them back and use a measuring stick when the farm, animals, and family members needed water.

There was also a fruit orchard to attend and new trees were planted all the time. In order to plant new trees it was necessary to quarry the rock filled land. Making 1.20 meter holes so that the roots would take and have room to grow was difficult to say the least. Quarrying a hole like that in rock had to be done with dynamite. I had to do all this without any help. Each time I had to plant trees I sweat like a pig.

I had a group of friends, Hillel Tzur from my group, Glick, and me. We were the only three workers on the moshav. During the day I worked and at night I normally guarded. The moshav was built in the round and every Wednesday night it was

my turn to guard from sundown to sunup. After a long night of guarding I couldn't sleep because I had to go to work in the morning. It was no wonder everyone was always tired.

The work was hard, the price of milk was low and profits were almost nil. The only place the moshav residents used to get together was in the milk shed when they brought the milk in the mornings and evenings. They would say one or two words to each other and then return to work on their farms.

There were endless incidents of attempted theft. There was no telephone and the only connection with the closest city, Jerusalem, was by use of an old car, the "lorry" which transported the milk. I don't remember ever reading a newspaper during my time at Atarot.

I didn't stay long at Atarot. Ben Yehuda never got used to working at Tnuva because of never-ending problems with the manager. On the weekends he worked with me on the farm until he decided to quit Tnuva for good. Even though I could go to work for the moshavnik who took his place at "Tnuva" I contacted Mikveh and let them know that I would be taking a new job. They notified me by mail not to pursue this idea because they had a job offer for me.

In those days it was customary for the Mikveh to look out for its graduates, especially those with no connection to a particular farm. I was told that an elderly Jewish man from Eastern Europe, a grain importer by the name of Yanovsky, had decided to be a farmer. He bought an orchard, house, chicken shed, and dairy in Herzliya, but knew nothing about farming and was looking for a farmhand who could manage the farm for him. The Mikveh handled the negotiations and was successful in securing a high salary for a worker on a private farm: seven lira a month, a liter of milk a day and four eggs. The wages were

considered high for a farm of 15 dunams, orchards and a few cows. I decided to go to Herzliya.

I was considered a working farmer. Once again I was rising early to milk the cows, take out the flock and donkeys, take the hoe and go to the orchards to weed crabgrass. At three in the morning I woke for the first milking. This is where I learned about capitalism. Yanovsky, who was older than me, didn't sleep much at night. He would knock on my door and say in Yiddish, "Shmil, Shmil, you have to get up and go to work." I woke up, looked at my alarm clock. It was two in the morning. I still had one more valuable hour of sleep. Yanovsky would wake me up like that every single morning.

After I milked the cows and let out the flock, I ate breakfast and went to work in the orchards. At ten or ten thirty, in the middle of the day, I looked up and on the hill I saw Mr. Yanovsky lying under a tree watching me. I never said anything the first, second, or third time, but then I finally asked him why he was keeping an eye on me since he didn't know anything about this kind of work. He stopped after that but it left me feeling uneasy.

In the evening there was the milking and churning to do. I also had to make cheese, go to the shop, do the books, and bring the money for what I sold. Through all of this Yanovsky never once invited me to have dinner with him.

At eight o'clock one evening after an exhausting day at work there was a knock on my door. "Shmil, kim shpielin beinblach" (Yiddish for "come and play beinblach). I had no idea what he was talking about. The Yiddish bothered me because we were never permitted to speak Yiddish or any other foreign language in my house. I went in. I thought that "beinblach" was

dominoes. I had never seen dominoes and had no idea what the game was.

He said, “Shmil, let’s talk.” He spoke Ashkenazi Hebrew mingled with Yiddish words that he would translate. We understood each other.

Two weeks later he started to take care about my future, although he never came straight out and talked to me about it. Here was a man who had worked all his life, made money, made Aliyah, bought a farm with no help at all, not from the Jewish Agency or anyone else, and he wanted to make me an offer.

I waited for the end of the first month when I was to be given money or ration tickets for “Tnuva”, but the month ended and there was no money. One day passed, then another and nothing. I told him that if he didn’t have the money, he should let me know when he could pay. I had no real need for money. I ate eggs and milk, but still I asked him to let me know when I would be paid my seven lira. I was eager to send the money home. I had clothes that my father sent me from America during my last year at the Mikveh. I had several shirts and a short leather jacket. I felt like the son of a millionaire.

Yanovksy sat me down and explained to me that he had money but what did a guy like me need with money? He would give me one lira a month so I could buy halva and bread every day at the baker’s; the eggs and milk I received anyway. He said he would pay me one lira and the remaining six lira he would save for me. In the meantime, the orchard was young and there was no fruit yet. When it started to yield fruit in four or five years from now, he explained, I’d have some money saved and he would give me three dunams and make me his partner.

The next evening he called me in for another conversation and started by suggesting I marry the woman who

comes to wash the floors. To make it sound more attractive, he told me that she would cook hot meals for me. We could both work for him, save some money, and get five dunams of orchards. This went on for several evenings until I had enough of it.

One evening I went in to the kitchen and told him I wanted my money for the month's pay plus seven days. I didn't want to be an orchard owner, I was a worker. I did the work that was expected of me. It was time to pay me. He stubbornly replied that he would not pay me and I got angry and took out my anger on a stack of dishes, flinging them on the floor. I looked at him and at the broken dishes and told him we were even and I left.

Shimon, a boy I studied with who emigrated from the United States, lived in Herzliya. He came to Israel with his mother and they had a small farm. That same evening I went to his house and told him what had happened. He offered me a place to sleep in the roofless chicken shed they had in the yard. I took a large sack of straw and went to sleep. It was winter time and it started to rain. I didn't think it unusual and I wasn't angry at Shimon that he hadn't offered me a place to sleep inside the house. I had no demands. I decided to live my life in the country and I thought it was nice of Shimon that he could spare me a bit of room in his chicken shed.

My conduct was a direct reflection of the way I was raised and of my years at Mikveh Israel. I was motivated to build a country, a difficult country whose destiny was to be "the land of milk and honey." I emphasize that I approached this task not on my own, but as something we would build together. We were a movement of workers who went to build the roads and work for the community for no pay at all. I was one of a large group of workers: a pioneer among pioneers. The pioneer spirit carries with it an element of sacrifice that is both personal and shared,

and all those people who sacrificed themselves brought about the changes. It's true there are those who lived a bourgeois way of life like the people who built Gedera and Rosh Pina. They used Arab workers and we saw them as vultures that devoured practically everything but neglected the core. We did not forget.

We were never jealous of the Gymnasium students in Tel Aviv who finished school, went to university, or became well-to-do city people. On the contrary, I always thought of myself as much more successful and more satisfied than they were. Or so I thought. I believed I was doing something different, creating something new, and they were just wallowing in their bourgeois lifestyle. The education that I received made me intolerant of extremists on either side -the Beitar right-wingers or the Communists on the left. I was geared to the center. We were workers, pioneers, building the country, oriented neither to the right nor left.

This sort of education contributed a great deal to the establishment of the country. Maybe the boys didn't become politically involved and most of them remained simple folks, but that was the true power of a country where ordinary people didn't flee from the settlements and stayed to work even though the city lights beckoned them. I wasn't jealous of the bright lights.

Melancholy came over me at times as I yearned for home and Shabbat. I saw the standard of living rise, teachers earning wages on a regular basis, and wages increase. A teacher with 20 years seniority made a decent living and in schools there were curtains and even a piano. But the standard of living did not interest me because I "built" the country and the settlements, and the bright lights of the city were foreign to me and did not enchant me.

When my father returned from America he tried to convince me to go study agronomics in California, which I had no interest in doing. I wanted to be a worker. Looking back now I can say that the rainy night in Herzliya with the sack of hay made me strong. I wasn't the least bit frustrated even when I didn't get one day of work in Herzliya. I went to the employment office, traveled from farm to farm, offering my services with a hoe and hoped to get any agricultural work I could. It was impossible! I couldn't even get a half days work but I was still happy because at night there was a place we would all get together and dance the Hora.

During that time I don't remember having any girlfriends. Girls didn't exist for me or my friends. I noticed them of course, but felt nothing. I was a part of a huge group that wanted only one thing: to work and build the country. Everything else was trivial. It wasn't a land of innocents. There were many who provoked trouble and rebellion. The group that I was connected to didn't listen to the incitement and wasn't interested in any political party, nor was I a member of any political party.

I was a member of the Federation of Labor but not registered with the party. I don't recall any particular pressure to join a political party besides the "Histadrut". I was, however, internally motivated as a result of my education and conversations with people, but not from randomly attending some meeting where an overzealous person delivered a fiery speech.

We hated the Trumpeldor Pact. When Jabotinsky arrived in Israel, we went to Jaffa and ran after his car all the way to Tel Nordau past Ahad Ha'am Street. We did this out of admiration for Jabotinsky, the man in charge of the Hebrew brigade, the Zionist, not Jabotinsky the politician. The group that I belonged to set

limits: we don't believe in your politics, but you are a great person.

Not far from my house in Tel Aviv lived a guy by the name of Leibovitz who became a successful businessman. We were the same age and used to play together in the street, but when he joined the Trumpeldor Pact I couldn't talk to him anymore. In my opinion he was making an enormous mistake. During that time my brother Yigal was at the Gymnasium and my younger brother, Yifrach, who was six years old, was emerging as a gifted violin player. This was a trait he inherited from my mother who was also a gifted musician. She sang beautifully, played the mandolin and also taught piano. But she was also the mother of three and didn't have time to develop her talent.

Yifrach was truly a great talent. He learned how to play the violin and performed with a French musician whose name I forget and the person to whom all good Jewish mothers brought their talented children for lessons. He listened to them playing at the Shlomit School of Music and decided that Yifrach had an extraordinary talent for the violin. He would practice for hours on end while the other children were free to play outside on Gala Street.

Amidst all this happiness I took my backpack and told my parents that I was going off to look for work. I left Tel Aviv and walked all the way to Metulla. For several weeks I walked from village to village and from settlement to settlement. Some nights when I reached a settlement I would knock on the first door and ask for work, and sleep in the houses of complete strangers. I ate, slept, and in the morning went on my way. I managed to get by and sometimes I was kindly given a piece of bread in the morning when I left. In those days everyone was like one big family.

I traveled all over the country from Tel Aviv to Metulla. I didn't get any work, but I didn't starve either. I never asked or begged for anything. That doesn't mean I wasn't hungry. I was familiar with hunger.

I knew that two of my classmates were working in Bitanya, not far from Degania, on a farm belonging to the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PICA). On my way back from Metulla I met them. On the farm there were orchards, a dairy, and *falcha*, managed by PICA representatives and the Baron from Tiberias, Mr. Zur. There was a supervisor, Mr. Lev, some married workers and two friends of mine who were bachelors. They asked Mr. Lev if there was any work for me, but there was none. Nevertheless my friends urged me to stay.

For a small fee, the bachelors ate in a common dining room. The first few days my friends paid for me. Since there were no available beds, I slept on a table in the dining room. On the farm there were four workers. One of them was Galperin, an exceptional man who later worked for Bank Leumi in Tel Aviv. He came from Russia and in the evenings liked to read in Russian, which he could translate straight into Hebrew. I sat by a lantern next to him while he would read an entire story. The image of him reading in Russian and translating into fluent Hebrew is one I will remember my entire life. He introduced me to stories I would never have encountered without this amazing ability.

But I still had no work. It was clear I wouldn't be able to stay in Bitanya for much longer and I needed to keep searching. I was worried because I had combed the entire country and couldn't find any work, not even for one day. After three or four days I went to plant trees with my friends at a spot where five or six pairs of mules were plowing in the middle of the planting.

They were told to be careful and not damage the trunks or branches. I joined them but most of the day I sat on the side or relieved my friends for an hour or two.

The same day a farmer arrived from the Kinneret village with two wild mules that he had brought from Jordan. Apparently there was a decision to bring in new mules to finish the plowing for the day. It was the mules' first day of plowing and a fragile looking young man with red cheeks was responsible for them. He looked like a child from a prestigious family in the Diaspora.

The farmer, Nachum Levin, left the mules hitched to the wagon and they constantly kicked. He took off the plow, secured it in the rut and gave the reins to the new guy so that he could start working. The farmer wanted to go back to his farm and leave the worker in the field. It was overwhelmingly clear that it was his first day at work. The minute he touched the reins under their tails, the mules jumped and the plow came out of the rut, nearly throwing him over. He tried again just when the supervisor arrived and witnessed the entire event. The disruption prevented everyone from working.

There was a great deal of yelling. The whole time I sat and watched the drama. At a certain point I asked the overseer if I could try since I was, after all, a first class *fallach*. I took the reins in hand, firmly secured the plow in the rut and said what I said to the mules, tied the reins to the plow, and held them with one finger. Everything went fine. The farmer, Nachum Levin, was happy and took his guy and left. He left me with the mules and asked me to return them when we were finished.

I felt bad for that young guy, a new immigrant, failing on his first day of work. That afternoon Lev, the manager, returned and asked me to stay on for 15 grush (the lowest value of currency) a day and work on the threshing machine. My friends

jumped with joy. In the evening I returned the mules to Levin, who offered me a job but I had already obligated myself to work in Bitanya. However, I took the liberty of suggesting that he give the young immigrant the old mules to work with so he could learn. He offered me higher wages but I turned him down.

I went back to Bitanya and worked the thresher. On the ground two men stood with hoes and hoisted the hay after dispersing it into the opening with the iron teeth. If you weren't careful your hands could get caught in the teeth. If you threw in a whole stack, the teeth would cut it.

The heat at the end of the summer in the Jordan Valley was severe and we worked 15 minute cycles on a rotation system. I worked on the Berbern. I was a good worker and after a week I was chosen to be on the Workers Committee. A few days later an Agricultural Committee convention was held for the agricultural workers in the country and I was chosen to be the representative.

Every now and then Mr. Zur from Tiberias arrived. He would come in a car and then get on a horse and ride through the farms. He would talk only to Lev, the manager. Zur lived in a palace in Tiberias. For us, Tiberias was the big city and we went there when the Habima Theater performed *The Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare. On our way back we saw his magnificent white house on the side of the mountain.

After a few weeks of working on the thresher, Lev notified the Workers Committee that PICA had instructed him to fire everyone. The budget was finished and the farm would have to close for a year until a new budget was allotted. That was the first time I had ever seen an initiative by organized leadership. Lev was managed from a distance, but he was a worker who had risen to the level of manager. The termination of workers hurt him because he loved the fields and the animals and he couldn't come

to terms with firing the workers and ceasing work on the farm. He told us that according to the orders he received, all the workers had to go except three who would stay to feed the animals. I asked how much money was left in the budget. He told us there was 1000 lira which had to last until the end of the year. This was enough for a manager and three workers, as well as the feed for the animals and some minor expenses.

At a meeting of the workers I suggested that Lev inform Zur that we were all willing to stay and make do with whatever money there was left so that no one would be fired. The married workers would only eat in the common dining room and the women would cook for everyone. This would save on expenses and food and we would try to finish the season with the money in the budget. We would relinquish our pay, but we would all stay and work until the new budget was allotted. Perhaps the following year we could plan the budget so it wouldn't be used up after only nine months. Everyone agreed. I was only 18 years old at the time but people trusted me.

We informed Lev of the plan and he passed it on to Zur who also agreed. We all remained and worked. Those were good days. During the day we worked in the sweltering heat of the Jordan Valley and at night we went to the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). That is where I met Jenia. It was the first time I spoke at length with a girl. We sat on the shore of the Kinneret and talked until three or four in the morning, and then I went straight back to work. I had no need of sleep. I already said those were good days for everyone. We solved problems, worked, and there was peace in the country.

One morning I was standing on the Berbern with a pitchfork and heard someone calling my name. I recognized my father's accent immediately. He was standing by the machine. He

had come to the Kinneret to give a speech. I went to hear him speak. When he was done delivering his speech he told me I had to come home because he was going abroad with Yifrach, who was a gifted musician. He didn't want to see such a talent develop under his roof and not cultivate it. I asked him why I needed to go home. He explained that my mother was pregnant and because I was the oldest, I had to take care of her. He said that there were jobs in Tel Aviv too. I told him I would have to think it over.

I went back to Bitanya and worked one more day. In the evening I took my backpack on my shoulder, received my pay, which was a pittance and just enough for a bus ticket on an Arab bus from Tiberias to Tel Aviv. I didn't explain to my friends why I was leaving. Sentimentalism was frowned upon in those days. No one was happy to see me leave since I was the heart of the group.

The plan was that father would go to France with Yifrach and, after checking things out, would look into bringing mother there. My brother Yigal finished his studies at the Gymnasium and was about to enter the Technion. I would need to stay for several months. I felt compelled to obey, not because of Father, but for my mother. My little sister, Odeda, was born before Father left.

There was no work in Tel Aviv and Father received compensation from the teacher's union in the amount of 100 lira for 25 years of service. In Tel Aviv I met some of my friends from the Gymnasium, among them Moshe, Geula Cohen's brother, and some others from Mikveh Israel. I didn't do anything but take care of my mother for weeks, perhaps even months, until I received an urgent message from the Haganah that I was to report to the Police.

The British tried their best not to recruit Jewish police. However, the Jews, or the Haganah to be precise, put pressure on the Police to allow Jews to serve on the force so it would not only consist of British and Arabs. Recruiting Jews to the Police Force became a national campaign. During this time Commander Kingsley had left his position and in his place a new commander, Spitzer, arrived. He agreed to let a limited number of Jews enter the Police Force. And that is how I became a Palestinian Police officer.

A POLICEMAN IN THE PALESTINIAN-JEWISH POLICE FORCE

I was enlisted into the Police Force at Kishla in Jaffa. I showed up wearing white pants and the classic blue shirt and red ribbon of the Working Youth. Major Broadhearst inspected the group he called the “beasts” and selected those he approved of. I was one of them. Maybe because I was tan and sturdy; I had no idea why he chose me.

After that I was transferred to an Arab Sergeant because I spoke fluent Arabic. He said to me, “Inta watani. You are a son of the people. Ahalan Wa’sahlan.” That was the beginning and end of my interview. I received a date to report for training in Jerusalem.

I put mother, Yifrach, and the baby Odeda on a boat that would take them to a ship anchored in the Jaffa port. Tears were everywhere. Father promised us the moon and the stars and his letters were full of assurances that Uncle Max would help. Uncle Max, whom mother was fond of, was a relative who had studied in Beirut and instead of returning to Palestine, went to Paris to become a lawyer. Actually he was a cousin but everyone called

him Uncle Max. He was the relative everyone relied on for support.

We said our goodbyes and I continued on to Jerusalem to the Russian Compound. We were five Jews and seven or eight Arabs. We were issued uniforms and began a long six month period during which we were trained to be policemen in Palestine. The commander was Suleiman Effendi, who later became a general in one of the Arab armies, and Shawish Nur, the Sergeant in command and an extremely cruel and sadistic man.

We all lived in one large hall. As a Haganah trainee I already knew how to use a rifle but pretended not to. I knew several words in English from the Gymnasium days. Every evening there was inspection. We had to present clean shoes, the bandalora, (the bullet belt), the rifle belt, and more than anything else, the copper buttons which had to shine.

We ate some pretty bad Arab food in the police school or else we could eat out for five lira, which was our monthly income. The Jewish recruits went to a restaurant that gave credit until the end of the month. Like the Arabs, I ate the local food and in the evening when all the Arabs undressed and put on ‘sharwals’, the traditional Arab trousers before starting to work on shining their shoes, I undressed and worked right alongside them.

The Arab men's eyes were full of hatred. On one side of me laid Marzook, an Arab who could devour a wolf. On the other side was Tukan, the black sheep of the family from a wealthy clan. Luckily for him he had relatives in the Police Force.

The Arabs were amazed by me as I sat there and polished my shoes. They spoke Arabic and never for a moment did it occur to them that I understood every single word they said. Marzook said to Tukan, “The Jew.” I answered him immediately in Arabic, “Shu be-hi-mak?” (What do you care?). After that we got along

great. There was no love or brotherhood, but we learned to appreciate one another.

The Arabs gave me a new name, ‘Sammy’, Sammy Neaman. In the evening we would review everything we learned that day. Some of them caught on and for others it was difficult. One evening we sat polishing shoes because we wanted our squad to be the best in the morning inspection. Shawish Nur was no fool. He had spies working for him. He understood right away that I helped his friends, the Arabs, and appointed me as the Right Marker. I was first in line and behind me the rest of the lineup.

Two weeks later, Inspector General Spitzer arrived for his first visit. We were told that every room had to choose a “copper”, a new recruit who was in charge. The responsibility went to an Armenian guy who we later learned was planted as a spy. The Armenian tried to appear Arab but failed. We discovered this early on because he was a complete idiot. He told us the British Intelligence (CID) recruited him and told him to join the Police Force, get to know the people, and pass on information about them. In return they promised he would join the CID. In the end the CID rejected him since he was too uncivilized.

The Jewish police officers were suspicious of me because they thought I was Sephardic and couldn’t understand why I was sitting with the Arabs. They invited me several times to go out and eat with them or go see a film. The only problem was the film ended at nine thirty and curfew was nine o’ clock. One night I decided to go with them. We went to Schulman’s restaurant where a woman cooked home style food which was better than anything we were eating. They treated the Jewish police officers well and I had a great time.

Time flew by and all of a sudden it was five minutes before nine. I ran and reached the gate at nine o’ clock! If I

entered through the gate I would have to sign in. I looked around and saw on the bottom floor a wireless and a man operating it who looked British. He asked me if anything was wrong and if I was late for curfew. I admitted I was. He asked me if I was Jewish, and I answered that I was. He told me his name was Tobianski and that he was also Jewish. He opened a window for me and I jumped in without having to go by the gate. I later found out that he was Meir Tobianski. We were together in the British Army in Naples and I heard that during the War of Independence, he was executed by mistake.

But the Armenian was waiting for me. He was the 'copper' on duty that night and it was his job to check and see if everyone was present and accounted for at curfew. I was written up and despite all my shouting, I was demoted back to the rank of private. Nevertheless, my status wasn't damaged.

We began to learn the law with Bechor Shitrit, who later became the first Minister of Police. He knew me from Tiberias where his career in the Police Force began. Once he asked me my name and if my father was a teacher. I told him and after that he acted like he didn't know me. In the lessons he recited the hunting laws, the incarceration laws, and other laws and regulations. He spoke both languages fluently, and Arabic even better than Hebrew.

Every lesson began with a quiz on the material we learned in the previous class. I remembered every word and chapter of all the laws. At one point he handed me the next day's lesson and told me to prepare it. He told the class that I would read the material to them. I replaced him in class and he would show up from time to time.

After six months it was time for the final examination. I was still the Right Marker of the squad: eight Arabs and a few

Jews. Inspector General Spitzer came to observe and conduct an inspection. He was told he was coming to see the ‘natives’, and to his surprise, he saw the ‘squad’ at its best. He came to inspect our cleanliness, spotlessness, polish and shine, and even our shaving. As it turns out he had never witnessed such perfection, even in the British Army. Everything shined. We had invested the maximum effort, especially on the metal parts, with buttons polished with tons of Brasso.

We went to the firing range in Shuafat. The only one who didn’t like me was Suleiman Effendi, the Arab captain. We shot from a distance of 100 meters while standing, 200 meters while crouching, and 400 meters lying down on the ground. The captain was sure that a Druze policeman would win.

I fired at the target. From a distance of 100 meters while standing, I hit five bull’s eyes. I did the same from 200 meters. I had 20 points more than the Druze policeman from 400 meters while lying down.

Suleiman Effendi left the Druze and stood over me with his legs spread. The backside adjuster was set at 400 meters. The first bullet hit too high and the second a bit lower. I checked the backside adjuster and by mistake I positioned it over 600 meters. I showed it to Suleiman Effendi who ran to Stafford, the British Inspector, and explained to him that there must have been a mistake and that I should be allowed two more shots. Stafford refused and said that there was nothing to be done since in battle, a person pays for such mistakes. I repositioned the backside adjuster to 400 meters, fired three more bullets, all bull’s eyes. The Druze won by one point.

From that time on I appreciated Suleiman and the other Arabs. They were proud of me and I became one of them - “watani”, meaning son of the country.

Examinations began. Stattford was the examiner and because most of the men didn't know how to write, the tests were conducted orally. Stattford was fluent in Arabic and understood a little Hebrew. Shitrit helped with the translation. When the examinee spoke Arabic, Stattford understood all the answers. When the examinee spoke Hebrew, Shitrit translated. When my turn came, I answered in Hebrew. After I finished, Shitrit asked Stattford if he wanted to hear me speak in Arabic. The British officer retorted, "But he is Jewish!" Shitrit told him to question me on any law in Arabic. I had no problem at all and recited the law in Arabic.

Shitrit heard about the firing range and knew that the best private received Inspector General Spitzer's baton. At the time, he was being transferred to the CID and he whispered to me that at the end of the examinations he wanted me to go with him. That is why he wanted me to succeed. He was sure I would impress Stattford if I spoke in Arabic and that way he would remember me. That was a mistake. Most likely Stattford didn't like a Jew speaking Arabic, not to mention one who could shoot so well. Despite all this, at the end of the course I received Spitzer's baton.

I was an exceptional cadet and was stationed in the Old City of Jerusalem, where Jews were never stationed. My number was 1402. I was sent to the downtown section of the Old City. I lived with Arabs at the Saraya police station. We had everything, homosexual intercourse, beatings, bribery, and more.

My job was to patrol the streets of Jerusalem night after night, visit the pothouses, and get to know all the thieves. I don't recall one incident where anyone harmed me or intended to. After two months of service, I was transferred. That was the method. Every few months policemen were transferred to a new station. I was sent to the Mea She'arim police station, where the

senior officer, Elias Haddad, was a Christian. The Christians suffered from the Moslem police just as the Jews did and the situation was uncomfortable. Here my name preceded me.

In Mea She'arim, I met British policemen for the first time. The first night a British policeman and I went on patrol together in the neighborhood. Recently arrived from England, he was a graduate of the British Police Academy at Mount Scopus. He treated me like a 'native' and, demonstrating his contempt for me, told me that this wouldn't be the kind of patrol to sleep on or eat at the bakery.

He was new but I was familiar with the area so instead of going straight, I led him into the alleyways. In the morning he collapsed from exhaustion. He turned to me and pleaded for coffee, a piece of bread, and a place to rest. I answered that while on duty, it was impossible. The next night as we prepared to go out on our rounds, he told me to patrol my way. We went into the bakery, ate some fresh hot bread, warmed up, and drank coffee until six o'clock in the morning.

On the third night, he told me his life's story. He was unemployed, never graduated from school, slept in parks, and then decided to come to Palestine. He talked all night long. When we returned to the station in the morning and I said goodbye, he didn't answer me because all the other British policemen were nearby looking on. The next evening I ignored him. He tried to explain his behavior to me. "Don't be angry. I've had enough trouble with the others. I couldn't allow myself to speak to you. That's how it is. Let's be friends where and when we can and ignore each other when we can't be friends."

The second week I worked the day shift. Spitzer decided that the day shift started at six o'clock, with exercises and foot drills. Everyone was obligated, including the elderly Arabs who

had served in the force for 35 or 40 years. Across from the police station in Mea She'arim was an empty lot where we exercised and did gymnastic exercises, running, resilience, and jumping.

The Arabs and especially the elderly didn't understand the instructions. I whispered the instructions to an old Arab policeman and the instructor got annoyed. "Who is talking in line? Quiet!" I whispered again and he starting cursing me. I was new on the force and didn't know that the word "f***g" was used on a regular basis in the army and the British Police Force. I turned around and said, "You are f***g." He went berserk and yelled at me, "Don't tell me f***g. I am f***g you" and added that he would punish me for my insolence. I told him that my self respect was more important than his punishment and I wouldn't serve in the Police Force if he continued his inferior treatment.

I was put on trial before District Officer Winart. In court, they asked me if I wanted to speak in Arabic instead of Hebrew so that the officer in charge would understand, and if necessary they would translate to Hebrew. I was escorted in and the 'copper' told his version quite differently than he did at the time in question.

Winart was a very impressive, tall, white eye-browed Englishman. I knew that the translator had already explained to him what happened. He stated that the accusations made against me were serious. He ordered me to speak and I told him that this issue had two parts. First of all, it was a serious personal insult to me and secondly, the use of particular words was highly inappropriate. In this country, if two Arabs spoke like this to each other, one would wind up dead. If two Jews said such words to each other, one would be in the hospital. I wouldn't repeat the words that were said.

He listened to me and said, "I was raised in the Army, and if you have something to say, say it." I repeated the obscenities in Arabic and used the word nowadays known as the 'f' word. I continued that I wouldn't tolerate being called a native and that it made no difference to me if someone was a Moslem, a Christian, or a Jew. Repeating myself, I said that I was not a native in the British derogatory sense of the word. If I was a policeman and obligated to keep the peace, I needed to possess an identity, and a sense of dignity. If my superiors had no respect for me, and I did nothing about it, then I had no self-dignity. It didn't even take five minutes and he announced, "Case dismissed." My belt was returned to me. The translator came out and kissed me. The Sergeant received a warning and I was transferred to Kishla in the center of the country.

After a few weeks I went on the night shift with an Arab policeman and we patrolled near the current city hall. Next to Barclay's Bank there was a row of shops. An Arab sergeant approached us and told us that in half an hour, two people would come break the doors down and shots would be fired. One of the burglars would run in one direction, and the other toward the Old City. We were supposed to stand in the direction of the Old City and catch him.

This made a great impression on me. What an extraordinary sergeant! He knew beforehand about a crime about to take place. I was rather naïve at the time and actually believed he had a sixth sense. I expected to catch my first criminal and that is exactly what happened. Two people showed up and started working on the lock. A shot was fired. One man ran in the direction of Machane Yehuda market and the other ran towards the Old City. We caught them and arrested them. I took out my

policeman's notebook and wrote down an account of what happened.

The next morning the two of us, the Arab policeman and I, went to report to Shauki Bay, the District Commander, and a three star officer who worked for the secret police. As we were waiting, the Sergeant who spoke with us arrived and I asked him how he knew a crime was about to take place. He asked me what I meant by that. He assured me the man was a thief. Five years previously, he had caught him and he was sentenced to five years in prison, swearing he would kill the Sergeant when he got out. Yesterday morning he was released from prison. The Sergeant told me how he had arranged the whole thing with one of the informers so we would catch him easily. Now he would be in the slammer and we would all have peace of mind.

I didn't like this at all. I understood that the man, who was Arab, had no intention of stealing but was led into a trap. He had just been released that morning and was already back in prison. When I went in to testify, the Arab Sergeant told me, "Tell them everything, except what I told you would happen. That part you don't need to tell."

Shauki Bay asked me what happened. I had to testify under oath in a court of law against the thief. I said to Bay, "Your honor, I may have to tell you everything I know before this case begins, because if I have to do it under oath, I will tell the true story." I told him what happened. It was clear I was between a rock and a hard place as the Sergeant had committed a clearly illegal and immoral deed of entrapment. Shauki Bay was an honorable officer and decided to change the charge against the man and that I would not testify.

The case was closed, but the Sergeant was furious. I wasn't just any policeman anymore and my name had become

well known. The District Arab Commander, one rank below the British officer, said to me, “Boy, in three months, you have made more history than others do in 30 years. You have many fans and you are honest, but you also have many enemies. Be careful.” He added, “I have to get you out of here. I am sending you to Katamon, to the Christian area of the city.”

So off I went to Katamon. Sergeant Christie, the officer in charge of the station there, knew my record. I was treated respectfully and no one referred to me by a number, but rather, ‘Constable’ like the English policemen. The British usually referred to their policemen by numbers: ‘520’ or ‘402’, but I had earned the title, ‘Constable Neaman.’

One evening I was sent to an old shanty neighborhood in East Katamon that had no roads or street lights. At ten o’clock I had to make rounds and the British officer who was supposed to go with me had called in sick so I was on my own. One of the British officers explained to me that the area was dangerous and that I should take a weapon. Usually we only took batons, but I signed for a gun and went to make my rounds.

It was pouring rain when I reached the area and I made several rounds. The other policemen usually took a nap after midnight and woke up around three in the morning, made another round, and napped again. During one of my rounds I discovered Sergeant Christie hiding behind one of the shacks. Soon after that, he was promoted and became a senior officer in the force.

I realized I was being followed and didn’t like it. It was a bad sign. It was muddy, rainy, and windy and the shacks rattled. I signed the board every half hour as required and each time, the Sergeant was there. This went on for several nights. I was being watched all the time. In the morning when I returned the guard boards, they let me sleep and if I didn’t shower even once, they

checked me. They checked to see if my belt was clean. I had the feeling that the entire British Police Force was checking on me. The Arab officer couldn't help. He told me straight out that he couldn't do anything. I reassured him and told him not to worry because they would get tired of it before I did.

After a few weeks Christie was promoted to Senior Officer and the Arab officer was promoted to Station Commander. I decided I had had enough of the night shift. I was ordered to join the Police Force. What did I need it for? All I did was walk around all night in Katamon, the Old City, or Mea She'arim. What kind of security service was that? I had no life, no girlfriend, nothing. I worked at night and slept during the day.

I asked to see the Arab commander and requested to be transferred to the Mounted Police. Since the days of the Turks, the Mounted Police was entirely Arab and everyone had large moustaches. Bedine Bay, the Arab commander, said he would speak to Fawzi Bay Idrissi, the Commander of the Mounted Police, who came from a well-known Libyan family.

I joined the Mounted Police without going through any preparatory course. As was customary, I bought a horse like everyone else with the help of a police loan which was deducted from my monthly salary. I received a special uniform, including britches, special riding trousers, a blue belt, and a rifle.

In all of Jerusalem there were only three senior Jewish Mounted Police. The first was Hanoach, who afterwards was in the Israeli Mounted Police. I can't remember the name of the second man, who later opened a casino in Bat Yam, or the third. I first met Hanoach in Kishla. He took pity on me and explained to me that the problem wasn't riding the horse but rather getting instructions in English: how to turn right, how to turn left, how to

walk stride and more. He gave me two private lessons and then simply said, "God will help you."

Fawzi Bay Idrissi told me that he knew my case by heart but that there, they had no business with the British police. "We don't ride with them. They have British mounted police at the other stations like Hartuv." He told me I would be going into the villages alone but shouldn't have any problems. But I should remember! If something went wrong 'Idak be-chzami.' In other words, your hand is on my belt and you can come to me whenever you want.

I rode into Arab villages like Nabi Samuel, Abu Dis, and others. Every day they sent me to a different village and sometimes I went to three or four villages in one day. In the beginning, I went several times with Arab policemen and I saw how they conducted themselves. They came to the village, entered, and asked for the *Mukhtar* (the head of the village). The *Mukhtar* received 30 bows, allowed them to enter the Madafa, the meeting place for guests. They took the horse, fed it, filled a sack with enough hay for three days and put six or seven covers on mattresses. After this ceremony they sat down and ate fried eggs, *samna*, goat's cheese and olives. A meal fit for a king. Then the coffee was served and the village elders entered and began to talk. 'Keef Khalack.' 'Keef sakhtack', Arabic for: How are you? Is everything okay? We sat around as they told stories about the days of the Turks and the amazing miracles that took place. Then we continued to the next village.

My fluent Arabic and authentic accent were an advantage and the conversation flowed. I remember one interesting evening in Nabi Samuel with a Communist village member. The villagers didn't understand this Communist who didn't believe in God. Sometimes when I arrived at the village there would be a

wedding, with Debka dancing, fantasy dancing, and shots fired into the air as was customary in celebrations. My riding was unrivaled. In short, I had a great life.

If I stayed in the village overnight, I slept in the Madafa. I spoke Arabic well and therefore was accepted warmly. I was never asked if I was Jewish. I was a policeman and a policeman was a king. Not a regular king either: the only king! Only the Mounted Police went to those villages. The British never showed their faces there. All in all my life was quiet. I rode from village to village. Sometimes I had to inform the *Mukhtar* that he had to do something like appoint people or bring documents.

After a few weeks I was on cloud nine. Fawzi Bay, who never asked to see regular policemen, asked to see me. He said he had a job that normally wouldn't be given to a Jew. I was to go to Abu Dis because the government had decided to build a school. The building had begun and the village hadn't paid the money to complete the building. It was my job to force them to pay the money. The people said they already had a place to study, a Kuttab, next to the mosque and they didn't need a school. Besides, if the government decided on a school, then the government should pay for it.

Nikola Sabba, the Christian District Officer was in charge. He wanted to prove to the British government that he had influence among the Arabs and requested a policeman to accompany him. Fawzi ordered me to go with him to Abu Dis. I reported to Nikola Sabba's office and saluted. He asked me what my name was and spoke a few words in Arabic then asked me if I was Moslem or Christian. I told him I was a Jew. He was a short man, but elegantly dressed. When he heard my answer he banged on the desk with both fists and said, "What is with Fawzi Bay? Doesn't he know where I am going, sending me a Jew?" I told

him that he should know Fawzi Bay, and that he never made a mistake in his entire life. I told him that, with me as a body guard, there was no need to worry.

Entering the village, my rifle was by my side. We arrived at a two story house owned by the most influential and wealthy family in the village. They received us like royalty. In our honor they served coffee in golden cups. There was enough food for everyone sitting in the dining room and for the entire village. I joined them and the District Police officer who didn't treat me like a police body guard. This treatment was passed on to the guests who also treated me with respect. They were the wealthiest land owners in the entire area. We spoke about everyday things and slowly we got around to the school issue.

I sat quietly while Nikola Sabba spoke. During the conversation he turned to me and asked my opinion. Taking the floor I explained to them the value of an education. Among other the things I said, "Look how the Jews do it. Look how much we invest in education."

My remarks stunned them. Until that moment it never occurred to them that I was a Jew. They thought I was a Bedouin, or Moslem, or a Christian. But since I was a guest nobody made any comments. The children peeked through the windows and heard every detail and quickly passed the information along to the villagers waiting outside. They sent a Christian district police officer and a Jew came with him. Inside the conversation carried on quietly.

For some reason, probably to bring a file from the car for the District Officer, I went outside. The house was located at the edge of the village. There were no roads and in the alley next to the house some young boys about 15 or 19 years old were standing around. One of them approached me and said something

belittling like, if you didn't have a rifle and a uniform, you Jew, you wouldn't leave this village alive. Without thinking I threw my rifle down, took off my belt, removed my police cap, the *kolpak*, and I said, "*Ya iben sharmoota*", son of a bitch, now I am not a policeman. I don't have a rifle, "*ta'al hon*" "come here." He moved back a bit. I approached him and grabbed him by the collar and slapped him so hard he flew backward.

There was a lot of yelling and the head of the family came outside and saw me without my rifle, belt, police cap and the Arab guy on the ground. He asked what happened and if I had been offended. I told him everything was all right and it was just some rowdy young kids behaving badly. I assured him he was a wonderful host and we went back into the house.

Outside there was a lot of excitement. The owner of the house was furious because his guest was offended. He approached Nikola Sabba and told him the school would be built. The building would be completed within three months he said, and added, "Sayed Nikola, you have nothing to worry about." Then he turned to me and said, "Sammy, ya Effendi, whenever you want to come to the village come to my home. It is your home." We started out for Jerusalem and Nikolai Sabba said that Fawzi Bay Idrissi would never believe what happened and how I changed the entire course of the meeting. He couldn't stop complimenting me all the way back to Jerusalem.

In the beginning of the winter, Fawzi Bay told me he wanted to transfer me to the Dead Sea. They had started to build a salt mining factory there. They had a lot of Jews there and only Arab policemen. The commander's name was Ali, a black officer who was Fawzi Bay's servant in the Turkish army.

I rode on horseback to the Dead Sea and on the way I stopped at the Jericho police station. I reported to the black officer

who, as it turned out, came from a Sudanese family and during the Turkish rule was a servant or slave for the Idrissi family. Fawzi Bay brought him and later he became a policeman and was appointed as officer in Jericho.

In Jericho the Police Force was made up of three Arabs between 58 and 60 years of age. They grew up on horseback during the Turkish rule and they all had imposing moustaches. They lived in a tent on the banks of the Dead Sea, cooked for themselves, and baked bread without any help from women or servants. Apparently they had wives and families in one of the villages. I am sure if they weren't policemen they would have been thieves and probably were at one time. Sometime later they were recruited into the Police Force. Then suddenly I show - up a young guy joining them near Kalya where the potash factory was built.

Around 11 o' clock the first night they woke me up. Hurry up. Smugglers. Get saddled up. The police station was located on the shores of the Dead Sea in the middle of a wilderness of salt, about two kilometers from Kalya. The station consisted of three tents, three Arabs, and me. Night time. Darkness. I went with the horse beyond the spot where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea to catch the smugglers. The three Arab policemen rode in front of me. Soon we came across some Bedouin with 20 donkeys smuggling goods into Jordan. There was shooting and yelling and moaning until finally we caught them. For each donkey we got a reward of one shilling.

That is how it was night after night. They knew I was a Jew but made no big deal over it. In a couple of days we became friends and they let me in on all their professional secrets. The only thing they didn't tell me, but which I quickly discovered,

was that catching the smugglers was no accident. They knew when there would be an incident. They had informers.

I have to admit I was afraid. However, I had been in the Police Force almost a year and every few months I changed both place and position. I fit in everywhere. There wasn't one situation where I didn't get along with an Arab policeman on a professional level. I shot better than the Druze, rode better than the Bedouin, and could punch hard when I had to. That doesn't mean I wasn't afraid of life in the isolated tent with that particular threesome.

Once a week we had to ride to Jericho to have a lesson on law from the black officer, Ali. The three Arab policemen had a problem: they had to call the slave 'Effendi' - friend. They could not read or write but Nasser decided that we had to come once a week for lessons.

One of us would stay behind in the tent while the other three went to the lesson in Jericho. We walked up to the classroom on the second floor. The horses were left down below. In the classroom, the *kateb*, the secretary of the police station would be reading some law. A typical question would be: When does the season begin when hunting is permitted for 40 or 50 minutes? When he was finished, Ali, the officer, entered to test us. He asked two or three questions and those old guys answered whatever they knew, while fawning over him with expressions such as, "*Na'am ya sidy*" (Yes, sir).

He then turned to me and said, "You are learned. You are from the police academy." I answered him, "Yes, *ya sidy*." He asked, "When is it forbidden to collect eggs laid by deer or fawns?" I answered him, "You can collect the eggs only after they begin to fly." His black face went pale and he left the room fuming with rage. After the lesson I went downstairs and he came

out of his office and stood by the railing. I was in the yard by the horses. He looked at me and said, "You are a Jew." All of the Arab policemen of the Nabi Samuel police station, Jericho, and the Dead Sea stood and watched us. I answered rudely: '*Ya Abed, ya mal'un abi lanta. Ya mal'un abuk malkestew al sid* ". In other words: Oh, the slave of slaves. Damn your father, if you have a father and if you have a grandfather. That was the worse curse for a black man.

The policemen broke out laughing and the black officer, Ali yelled, "Arrest him!" I didn't wait around and got on my horse and yelled back at him, "If you want you will have to catch me."

Fawzi sat in the room with a serious look on his face. The black officer and the *kittab*, the secretary, entered and read the accusations against me. On such and such a day, at such and such time, in the presence of so and so, you insulted an officer of the British Police Force. They didn't state the insult in detail. Fawzi Bay asked, "Guilty or not guilty?" I answered, "Not guilty!" He yelled, "How can you be not guilty? There are witnesses". I said, "Fawzi Bay, may I say something?" I continued, "Let me begin by saying that I am a graduate of the police academy. We are all experienced policemen here and I am a child next to them. A *jachsh*, a young donkey, who is supposed to learn from them, and what do they do, sir? Disrespect me in public. Am I not a human being? Do I not have a moustache? He degraded me by asking the question about the flight of the doe."

Idrissi couldn't control himself and started laughing. That is what happened? I told him that after we left the lesson I went downstairs and the officer shouted, "Jew." Is it a disgrace to be a Jew? What's more, to yell at me in front of all those people, "*Inta*

Yahoodi". You are a Jew." I answered him, and I repeat, "*Ya Abed.*" Slave.

Fawzi Bay was angry and amused at the same time and said, "Take the horse and go to Jerusalem." A few days later I was transferred to Hartuv. In Hartuv there were five of us. At first the British policemen ignored me. I lived with them in the same tent, but they never even said as much as hello to me. Actually they totally ignored me. The Sergeant responsible would order me to go into the village, when to return, when to write a report. The British never went anywhere. All day long they practiced bayonets and removed stakes as preparation for the upcoming annual competition at Mount Scopus.

One story that can attest to my character happened at *Bab-el-Wad*. In *Bab-el-Wad* the British police officers would go on buses and travel without paying bus fare, which was customary at the time. When I was in Hartuv and I had a day off I would go to Jerusalem. On my salary, I couldn't waste money. I would reach the *Bab-el-Wad* junction and get on an Egged bus to Jerusalem without having to pay. One day the bus driver told me I had to pay. I reminded him that policemen don't pay. He got very angry and told me not to get on his bus next time if I couldn't pay. "We don't owe you a free ride," he was pleased to tell me. So I paid my fare, went to Jerusalem, and went straight to see the manager of Egged. I made a complaint, but he justified the bus driver's behavior and claimed there were no seats and if there were, the fare for them paid for the gas and taxes, and therefore I must pay. I demanded to know about the British police, and if they paid. He answered that it was none of my business.

One day not long afterwards, I was again standing near *Bab-el-Wad* and I stopped an Egged bus. For the next two days I wrote them 50 traffic tickets, for violations that included a

package left in the wrong place, a broken headlight, speeding, and more. I knew the law and a policeman could write tickets. I handed in the tickets to the office and asked them to save time and have all the hearings on the same day. This meant that all the bus drivers had to be in court on the same day and the entire bus line was going to shut down. The bus company panicked, forcing the manager of Egged to intervene. The company management appealed to the Jewish police officers and asked them to use their influence. I held my own. A British officer could ride for free because they were afraid of him and he made more money than I did. I wanted the same rights. Weren't the laws the same for everyone equally? I paid for each and every bus ride and even when they wanted to exempt me from paying, I refused. But I taught them a lesson: I was a Jewish policeman and they were obliged to treat me the same way they treated a British policeman.

The Hartuv police station was under the authority of Innab (Kiryat Anavim), near Abu Gosh. The officer in charge was Ahmed Effendi. I never got to see or hear him, but only spoke with him over the phone. I made friends with his secretary, Nasser. My job was to patrol the villages.

Near the *Bab-el-Wad* junction was a coffee house, known locally as a '*khan*'. I went there on occasion to eat and drink and always paid my way. The *khan* was on the second floor and below it were stables. The owner of the *khan* was half black. More than once when I went there I heard him talking on the telephone with Ahmed Effendi, the police officer from Innab. These conversations sounded suspicious so when I was on patrol duty in the villages, I started asking questions. I heard rumors that Ahmed Effendi put pressure on the villages and on the owner of the *khan*, apparently his partner, to buy fruit and vegetables at

half price, and that he had all kinds of shady business deals going on the side.

On Yom Kippur, a war broke out in Beit Mahsir between two clans. Who had to come and solve the dispute? The native. I rode one and a half hours to the village, arriving in the afternoon. The village was quiet. I went to the *Mukhtar* and asked what happened. He told me the situation was bad. He went on to explain that a boy from one clan looked at a girl from another clan and her brother saw it. What did he do? He attacked the boy and beat him up. Then a fight broke out between the two clans. Now everything was peaceful, but at night, the two sides swore there would be blood. Then he added, “Ya, Sammy Effendi, do what you see fit, but know that tonight there will be blood.”

I told the *Mukhtar* that I would stay. He looked at me and asked what I was planning on doing all by myself. He explained that there were two fighting clans but there was no third clan to straighten things out. There were other families but they didn’t dare interfere. I told him I would take them both to *Bab-el-Wad* and call Ahmed Effendi. We would get on a truck and go to the police station at Innab. After an investigation we would hold a *Sulha* (traditional Arab reconciliation ceremony). After all, the boy didn’t touch or harm the girl. He didn’t even speak to her. A few days later the situation calmed down.

The *Mukhtar* helped me get the two children out of the village and no one interfered. We went down to *Bab-el-Wad*. Half way down the mountain, far from the village, when no one could hear I said to them, “Listen and listen good. Now finish this business between you. Did he look at your sister? Smack him. Did he hit you? Smack him twice.” Rolling around on the ground they hit each other until there was blood. Totally exhausted they asked to go back to Beit Mahsir. I refused. I took them to the *khan*

at *Bab-el-Wad*, took them into the stable, closed the door, and called the station at Innab. I didn't dare call Ahmed Effendi but instead spoke with the secretary. I explained to him how I took them, how they beat each other up, and that everything was okay. However, I added, it might be a good idea for him to take them up to Innab and let them sit there for a day or two. I would return to the village and reassure the families.

Ahmed Effendi was pleased. He told me he would send a truck and take them to Innab. He praised me by saying that for a new policeman who isn't Arab, I had done a good job. I went outside and sat on a rock near the *khan*. The road was completely quiet. It was Yom Kippur and no buses passed. Across the road some camels were sitting and next to them were Bedouin from Jordan who were transporting wheat. I sat and waited for the truck. After a short time the owner of the restaurant came out and yelled at the Bedouin, "Ya, Moslems, do you know what went on here? The Jew is holding believers of Mohammed in the *khan*. He beat them, cut them, and arrested them. Those Jews are all over us." It was a vicious speech and the Bedouin got up from their spots and took interest.

I turned to him and told him to shut his mouth. He said, "Did you all hear what he said to me, the Arab? He told me to shut my mouth." The first Bedouin bent over searching for a rock and all the others soon followed. It was completely quiet and there was no point in waiting for a bus. It was Yom Kippur. What was I supposed to do? If the first rock flew I was a goner. I raised my rifle. I put a bullet in the barrel and cursed the restaurant owner every single curse I knew in Arabic. Then I yelled to the Bedouins, "The first one who moves will be shot." He yelled, "Are you scared?" I said, "They are not scared of me, they are

scared of God.” Two rocks were thrown and the Bedouin sat and continued chewing like the camels. I saw death in front of me.

The truck arrived at eight o’clock and I put the two boys on it. I followed with the horse to Innab where a surprise was waiting for me. Ahmed Effendi attacked me, “Who are you to curse and speak of the prophet? You also hit Arabs. You belong in the slammer.” They took my rifle, put me on the second floor, and locked me in a room. I was under arrest. Here I couldn’t use Ali. Here I had to deal with Ahmed Effendi, a police academy graduate who knew the laws inside and out.

He ordered statements to be taken from everyone. They brought people from the village and the restaurant owner and took my fingerprints. Nasser, the secretary, wrote down the statements. However, what Ahmed Effendi didn’t know was that Nasser and I were friends. I sat in a cell for seven days as the accusations mounted against me without knowing what was going to happen. I was accused of everything: hitting the children, attacking the village, cursing the prophet, disrespect of the officer behind his back, and more.

Nasser came into my cell and told me that Ahmed Effendi was in Jerusalem with my file. He said that someone had come and said he was my brother. The door opened and my brother Yigal walked in. He told us he couldn’t stay too long because somebody might see. In the meantime all my possessions were brought from Hartuv. I gave Yigal what I had and told him that I would never get out of there alive and most likely would be sent to jail for 15 or 20 years. I gave him some pictures, money, and clothes and asked him to go to the Machane Yehuda station in Jerusalem and see a man by the name of Feldman. He was to tell Feldman what had happened and that he should go to someone called Moshe Cohen. Cohen would go to Yitzhak Ben- Zvi who

would call Fawzi Bay Idrissi and tell him that I want only him to try me in court. I requested that he be the judge at the trial.

Fawzi Bay came in person. Before the trial I asked to speak with him alone for five minutes and told him I was innocent. True, according to British law it is forbidden for a policeman to suggest that one person physically attack another, but it did solve the problem. I did what I had to do. I told him that Ahmed Effendi and the owner of the restaurant at *Bab-el-Wad* were in cahoots. I knew he was obliged to follow the law. Then I said, "I want you to tell Ahmed Effendi something I cannot say to him: that I have proof of his illegal dealings in writing between him and the restaurant owner at *Bab-el-Wad*, about land taken from widows."

Fawzi Bay was surprised. He asked me if that was true. I told him to just tell him that I had an entire file on him and if I was brought to court I would open that file for all to see. Fawzi invited Ahmed Effendi to a meeting and relayed my message. Twenty minutes later, the whole thing was over, on the condition that I return to street duty and leave the Mounted Police.

I sold my horse and went back to street duty. This time I was sent to Machane Yehuda. There were Jewish policemen there under Commander Langer. He examined my file packed with the records of all my transfers and warned me that I had better not be a wise guy. I told him I never was. I did my job and within two weeks he saw what kind of policeman I really was and that I didn't cause trouble. He gave me the best promotion a policeman could get without permission from a higher up, and permitted me to work in civilian clothes. I worked like this for two or three months and we even became friendly.

During those months in Jerusalem, my name preceded me among the criminals. One of the better known criminals was

Dudu. If I let it be known in the Bucharim neighborhood that I wanted information about who was up to something, Dudu came to me and we returned all the stolen goods without involving the police or the courts.

It was then that I received a letter from my father telling me that things in France were not good. He had gotten into trouble and asked me for help. Evaluating my life I wondered what was to come of me. What was the purpose of the service? I informed Langer that I was resigning. He was surprised and asked me to postpone my decision for a few days. A day later he came to me and said that according to Spitzer, while there were no promotions without completing police school, he had the approval of the Regional Commander, who had reviewed my file and decided to make an exception and grant me the rank of Corporal without police school. They also offered me an officer's course, but I refused. Langer tried to persuade me by saying that my future was in the Police Force and that I might even be a high ranking officer one day. I showed him the letter from my father and asked him how I could consider a career after receiving a letter like that.

After 16 months in the Police Force, I resigned. Despite all the problems, I learned a lot. The Police Force taught me a lot about Arabs, how to handle thieves, about making peace among quarreling families, and more. I learned how to value life from a different perspective and realized that a person has to overcome his problems, recognize his weaknesses and maintain dignity at all costs. If you could do all that skillfully, you had a good chance for success. The wisdom lies in maintaining dignity.

My life as a policeman was over. I should point out that in the end I was the only Palestinian who played right end in the fully British Palestinian-Jewish Police Force soccer team. In one

of the games, I made the first goal and Commander Spitzer shook my hand after the game. He told me that he remembered that I was the first one to get, “Spitzer’s baton” at the end of training.

Intermezzo in France

At the end of 1932, without a dime to my name, I decided to go and see my family in France. My brother Yigal was attending the Technion in Haifa. I returned to Tel Aviv where I met an old friend, Yitzik, who had worked with me in the Police Force in Jerusalem and quit before I did. He was a construction worker and lived in a room with a tiny bed. I asked if I could stay with him for awhile. He worked four days a week and lived in near destitution, but was kind enough to agree. He would wake up in the morning, make coffee, eat a piece of bread, and always left some coffee for me on the burner and some bread too. He also left me some money.

I walked the streets with nothing to do. I spoke with some friends and tried to get some money because a fourth class ticket to Europe on a ship cost two or three Israeli lira. Nobody had that kind of money. The second week I was living with Yitzik, I told him that I couldn't take advantage of him anymore when he barely had any money of his own. I decided to look for construction work and maybe save some money. Then something happened which determined whether or not I should go to France.

My uncle, my mother's brother, lived in Tel Aviv and operated a very prosperous and successful British, Italian, and French material business. I went to see him and he told me, against his better judgment, how bad he felt for my mother because of my father and what he was doing to her. He had visited them in Paris and was shocked at what he saw. I didn't know what he was talking about. He said that my father had a small knitting or weaving machine, sat in a small dark room in the middle of the day and ate his meals and had started drinking wine in the office. He was worried that my father was becoming an alcoholic. I knew that father drank wine at Kiddush and what was left over he poured straight back into the bottle. The suggestion that he was an alcoholic and could drink a whole bottle in the middle of the day was difficult to believe.

I wandered around Tel Aviv and here and there, someone gave me 25 grush or 10 grush. Little by little I accumulated money. Some of my friends from Mikveh Israel and friends of friends who I didn't even know gave me money. Still one half a lira short. I booked a fourth class ticket on a ship. One Saturday night, ten of us got together and made a decision. A ship was sailing the following Monday and we had a little time to get the rest of the money. The best place to collect money was the ticket counter of the Moghrabi movie theatre. We went and stood in front of the theatre and approached anyone we saw and asked for money. We started collecting during the first show at 7:00 in the evening and continued with the second show at 9:00. At 9:15 we had enough money for my ticket.

Luckily, we had collected more than enough so we bought a few bottles of cheap wine and went to someone's house to drink, dance, and have a good time. On Monday morning I took my knapsack, packed a few shirts, put on my black boots and

my favorite britches, and went to Jaffa Port to board with my fourth class ticket. The voyage was rocky and everyone was vomiting. There were a few other Jewish passengers who brought food with them because no meals were included. Being so weak they couldn't go on deck on their own, I helped them and sat with them in the fresh air. They offered me some of their food which I gratefully accepted.

I arrived in Rome in the morning but the train for France left in the evening. My ticket was for Brindisi in Southern Italy, and from there I would continue to France. I had to wait one whole day with no money so I roamed around the streets leaving myself mental reminders of return routes to the train station. Literally starving, I stood outside a restaurant at midday, salivating as I watched the people eating. A man who noticed me standing and staring coatless in my black boots, britches, and black shirt came out of the restaurant. He probably noticed my ravenous eyes and motioned to me. He took a few lira out and offered them to me. At first I refused. He motioned once again as if to say, one day you will help someone too. His generosity and the first plate of pasta I had ever eaten saved my life.

I arrived in France with the usual 24 hour border pass granted to people coming from Palestine. I found my family crowded into a one and a half room apartment with one bedroom and a divider down the middle that they put up at night where Yifrach and Odeda ate and slept. There was another sofa where I slept.

I went to what my father called a "factory" and found two automatic knitting machines, the newest models from Dubied of Switzerland, bought and paid for on installment in return for tutoring lessons. An expert Swiss machinist from the Dubied factory operated the machines, in addition to a female machinist

who operated the woolen spools. All of this was housed in two small rooms.

In order to save money, lunch usually consisted of a long loaf of bread, cheese, pate, and a bottle of wine or beer from a nearby grocery store. It was a typically French way of life and I quickly learned to take pleasure in wine and cheese and enjoy a good glass of wine or two. Over the years I learned to finish a bottle, but in the beginning I drank very little.

My father was an excellent teacher but a bad merchant. Uncle Max was a successful lawyer with a big office full of clerks and assistants specializing in commercial law in Paris. He asked my father how much money he had. Father told him that he had only 100 lira. My uncle put my father in contact with a religious Jew from Poland who later became a well-known benefactor in France and was successful in the sweater business. He suggested my father buy the most modern knitting machines and compete with the other Polish Jews who had a monopoly in the sweater business, but were still using old fashioned machines. He offered my father the latest model machines that could knit patterns. The agreement was that Father would invest all his money and the merchant would underwrite the rest, which Father was to repay on a monthly basis and the merchant would buy the products. The plan was that Father would do the knitting and the finishing would be done at a different location. In short, promises.

Father supposedly would be able to finance the machines in a very short time, make a profit, live a good life, and of course become a business tycoon in the process. With Father persuaded and without understanding the legal documents, which were written entirely in French, he signed. In the meantime, mother arrived and they purchased a modern house with a bathroom and something they had never seen before, hot and cold running

water. In addition they bought furniture on installment and waited for the knitting machines to arrive. Once the machines arrived, they realized that a professional from Switzerland was necessary to operate them because in France no one knew how to operate this type of machine. Finally, production got underway.

A tutor was hired for Yifrach to prepare him for his audition at the Conservatory. The competition was difficult, with tens of candidates vying for the coveted places. To our delight, Yifrach passed and was accepted to the Conservatory in Paris. The knitting machines were momentarily forgotten amidst the excitement of Yifrach being accepted to the prestigious school. His teacher was a wonderful old Russian Jew who loved my brother. Yifrach was a good student whose life focused around the violin. He didn't attend school, so a private tutor was hired to teach him French and mathematics while Father went to tutor other children in Bible and Hebrew.

Several months passed and Father heard that the market was slow and merchants who were supposed to get their goods from Father couldn't pay him the price they settled on. They claimed the agreement they made with him did not explicitly state that the price was to remain the same. Father realized that if he sold at the price they wanted, he wouldn't be able to make the monthly payments on the machines and all would be lost and sold at auction.

He decided to seek out new buyers, but he couldn't speak French. His mistake was turning to the Yiddish speaking Jews, who wanted to skin him alive and receive their merchandise at half price. He decided to purchase wool on his own but they demanded payment in advance without credit. When the situation became utterly unbearable, he wrote asking me to come to France.

I arrived with my boots and a 24 hour visa, never giving a thought to the necessary permits. Every morning I went to the factory in a mostly Polish Jewish area and tried to learn how to operate the machines. The Swiss machine operator was wary of me, thinking I would take his job away from him. Father tried to explain, in his inarticulate French, that he had nothing to worry about and that when I learned how to operate the machines, we would be able to run them for 16 hours a day, on two shifts, and decrease expenses. The work was difficult and we sold at a loss, but father managed to meet the monthly payments and the threat of being repossessed was lifted. The official blue and red repossession letters kept arriving, which infuriated Father who deeply regretted having trusted anyone.

I went to see Uncle Max, who made me wait hours in the waiting room before he would see me. He remembered how to speak Hebrew, but liked speaking Yiddish better. I understood a little bit of Yiddish but not too much. He explained to me briefly that a teacher shouldn't be a merchant or a manufacturer. If Yifrach could play the violin he should play in Palestine and he himself was a lawyer and not banker. He did what he could and was never paid for the contract. He said to let the business go and the people who got Father involved would buy the machines, continue paying, and Father should look for something else to do or we should all go back to Palestine.

I didn't understand everything he said. I wanted to know if this meant bankruptcy. In the contract it said that we could take possession of the machines without paying our part of the investment. The whole thing was vague. What did it mean to buy the machines? On installment? From him? Not from him? Who would take them? How could they lift and transport the machines?

Several days before that meeting, I went for my first tour of Paris. Father gave me five Francs and I went to a coffee house. I had some coffee and did what everyone does: I sat and watched the passersby. On my way back I came to a square full of policemen who were stopping people and asking for papers. I had heard about these papers: the right to return papers, the right to work papers, and about policemen who stop people in the streets. Needless to say, I was in danger because if they asked me about papers or a license, I had none. If I was caught, I would instantly be deported and no one would know what had happened to me.

As an experienced policeman, I knew I couldn't turn back and if I did, I would be approached. What was I to do? I walked a bit faster, passed the first policeman and pushed his shoulder as if by accident, but hard. I used one of the three French words I knew, '*pardon*': excuse me. I tipped my hat in the French custom and repeated: '*pardon*'. The policeman raised his hand to his cap and said: '*bien*' (good, okay) and I went on my way. That is how I got through the spot check. Was I afraid? Absolutely, because my mother, who wouldn't know what happened to me, was already living in terror.

Two days later I went to Max and told him that I knew he couldn't help, but I demanded he get me a visa and a work permit. I told him he had two choices: either get it for me or kick me out. He shouldn't try using force, nor tell me to come back for it later. They might take the machines and they might not. We might succeed and we might just as well fail. It was none of his business. I was there then and I demanded the necessary permits. If it cost him money, so be it. Then he would never have to see me again. He looked astonished and said three words: *Jaony, Jaony, Jaony*: the Arab name for Rosh Pina. A few days later I had my permits.

The Swiss worker taught me how to operate the machines. We worked 16 hours a day and paid all the debts. I learned how to speak French faster than I thought. I became familiar with the streets and I reached the clothing and wool center. I quickly learned how to negotiate and got a line of credit. I befriended a Greek merchant who spoke Arabic. He ran his business from a coffee house while a taxi with the meter running was always waiting for him. He was a Greek Jew who once lived in Egypt and later came to France. He had a brilliant plan: bankruptcy. He asked me what I needed. I told him I needed wool. He gave me a note and sent me to a yard where I got wool and he paid for it.

For the next six weeks, life consisted of working all day and all night and he paid. We made the merchandise and he took it. At one point I realized that something was wrong. I had information from other Jewish people and I found out that he paid the wool people, kept buying wool, and the more he bought the more credit he got. He kept paying and selling the merchandise cheap. One day he stopped paying the manufacturers and merchants, took the money and disappeared. I went to see him and he told me to come back the next day. The next day I brought him some merchandise and again he told me to return the next day. The next day it was all over. He told me to take all the merchandise and I would get all my money because he was starting a new business. I did as he asked and I got all the money that he owed me.

I had a hard time deciding whether to tell my father, who in his eternal naiveté believed things always worked out. We decided to look for other business opportunities. The economic situation in France was bad and we couldn't find work, and the official repossession letters kept arriving. One day Max called

and told me that it was all over. The next day at three o'clock we were to meet him at a lawyer's office and the Jewish man we had involved in the business would be there as well. If I didn't bring the entire payment for the machines for the three year period, the collateral would be retracted and the machines would be sold with or without us.

Father was desperate. I didn't know the Jewish man and according to father's account of him, it didn't seem like a good idea to meet him. I decided to go anyway, hoping to for an extension. I entered the notary's office and saw a man dressed in black like an undertaker, and next to him stood a bearded Jewish man, whom I did not know. I started talking and he answered in French. I spoke in the little Yiddish I knew and told him, "*Eich kanish Frenchis*": I don't know how to speak French. Tactlessly he said that anyone who was unable to speak the language shouldn't get into the business.

Max arrived and told me to stop arguing. There were two small square pieces of paper on the table. In keeping with a French custom, two candles were lit. We had three minutes, the time it took for the candles to burn out, to produce the money or lose the business. I grabbed the Jewish man by the neck and choked him until his tongue hung out. The notary and Max pulled me off of him with Max yelling that I would wind up in jail. They lit the candles and after three minutes they burnt out. No money was on the table and we lost the factory.

I went back home with no factory, no sweaters, nowhere to go, nothing. My parents returned the furniture to the store. It was decided that no matter what, even under these circumstances, Yifrach would continue to play the violin. Mother wept, Yifrach continued to play, and we only had enough money for six weeks at the most.

In the meantime I settled in, met new people, learned about life, and improved my French and Yiddish, speaking both languages well enough to hold a simple conversation without feeling like a foreigner. I made sure not to get involved in political conversations and stick to everyday things.

At one point I decided to be a peddler and buy merchandise from wholesalers at 300 Francs and sell it in the market. Paris was a city of markets and I found a guidebook with useful information on the locations and times the markets operated. However, I needed a license which was not easy to obtain because the streets of Paris were teeming with peddlers. I went with Father to the central police station to fill out an application for a license. Father filled out the form in his beautiful French handwriting. I went to the desk, took out my identification papers, and slipped in 50 Francs among the application papers, which was consistent with the customary rules of bribery. If the clerk asked me about the money, I would tell him that it was mine and if he wanted it, he knew what to do. Five minutes later I had a signed, approved application and was a licensed peddler.

This was an act of ultimate desperation. What else could I have done? We had nothing to eat and the head of the family was a teacher who wanted to be a merchant and had failed, signed contracts without reading them, and gotten involved in disastrous business dealings. I knew I couldn't leave and would never get a work permit. Construction work or any work was preferable over being a peddler.

The first day I went to the wholesaler's street, bought socks and then went to the market. I observed the other peddlers. When they shouted, I shouted. I went to see who else was selling socks and stood nearby to listen how he lured the buyers. Then I went back to my spot and did exactly the same thing. A few days

later I decided I wanted a permanent spot, but decisions of that kind were determined by a clerk who gave the best spots according to his personal preference. Those peddlers came with cars stocked with all their merchandise. Having connections with the clerk got you the prized spots near the successful peddlers. Then there were the beggars like me.

On the first day, I was at the corner of the street and didn't earn even 10 Francs. This continued for several days. Mother cried and told father to send me home because she couldn't stand to see me suffering. She didn't want me to be a peddler. I was angry and depressed and it annoyed me that others were successful and I was a failure.

Fortunately, I was prepared for an incident I had never had to face before. There once was a boxer I admired in Tel Aviv named Emile. Because of him, I decided I wanted to learn boxing. My father agreed that I could take lessons from Emile. He came to see my first lesson, stood outside, and watched through the window. When I arrived for the first lesson, Emile put boxing gloves on me and sent me into the ring with a guy he instructed to hit me. Emile told me to protect myself. I never became a great boxer of course, but I learned enough. I learned how to use a front 'left hook' followed by a 'right hook'. Through the window my father watched, bursting with pride over how I used my muscles.

On the fourth day I went with my father to the market and got into a fight because of anti-Semitism. As we started collecting the merchandise, four young Frenchman passed by and pushed my father and said something I had never heard before, "*Sal Juif*" Jewish leper. Without thinking, I punched the guy who made the remark and sent him flying three meters. My 'left hook' landed in the Frenchman's chin and he went flying. Instantly, there were hundreds of people around watching me fight against four guys. I

let them have it from all angles. After five minutes I was still breathing. Two or three of them were bleeding, my lip was swollen but I wasn't bleeding. Then one of them hit me from behind with a stick and the other three tried to attack me from the front. Suddenly one of them was stricken by a sense of fair play and said, "No! Four against one isn't fair." The crowd growled, "Vi." Okay. In the end they had broken bones and I was all beaten up, but okay. I put the packages on my shoulder, took my father, and left.

I was told that I would do better at a spot outside the market. I looked for someone with a car who could take me every morning. I awoke at three in the morning while everyone was still asleep and got dressed in the total stillness of the house. Mother woke up with me and wept. For an entire month I traveled hundreds of kilometers with nothing to show for it. In the meantime, Father looked for work as a Hebrew teacher and found a job in a town of 60 Jewish families some 400 kilometers from Paris. His salary was 600 Francs a month and he lived on water and bread to pay for our lodgings in Paris and for Yifrach's violin lessons.

I decided that if he returned to teaching, there was no reason for me to stay. I couldn't help out and I couldn't work. Teaching was considered religious education and so it was allowed. I wasn't going to be a teacher and if Father could support the family, it was enough. My mother made my life miserable. She told me to return to Eretz Israel.

Totally by chance I met Ibrahim Pasha, an Arab from Jerusalem. He told me he was a government clerk on sabbatical. He came from a well-to-do family and his father was a carpenter. He arrived about 10 months before and like me couldn't work and couldn't go to school because his visa was going to expire in two

months and he had no money. He lived in a hotel and asked me if I wanted to live with him. I agreed and we lived on what little money he had left. Sometimes we would visit other Arabs.

One of the Arabs we met was the son of the mayor of Jaffa, Abu Al-Huda, whose family paid for his medical education. He was 1.80 meters tall, had a large black moustache, was very good looking, and always dressed in the latest Parisian fashions. Because he had more money than us, we used to eat with him. The women loved him and the Parisian women he had affairs with made up for the things he didn't get from home.

If I wanted to return to Palestine, I had to get a job and make the fare back. I tried everything and even used the connections that Abu Al-Huda set up for me with other Arabs. Ibrahim wrote home and told his family he was out of money and he wanted to come home with a friend. He asked his family to send him enough money for two tickets. A week later they sent enough money for only one ticket. He told me to take it, but I refused. He persisted and told me if he went they wouldn't give him any more money to send to me. His plan was that I should take the money, go see his mother, and tell her that her beloved son was all alone in Paris and living like a pauper. He knew that would cause a commotion, but they would send the money.

I did as he said and used the ticket money his parent's sent. When I arrived, I went to see his parents and told them the truth, hiding nothing. They took it rather well. His mother was proud of her son and told me she knew he had a good heart. I agreed. The same day they sent him money for a ticket home.

Years later I met Ibrahim in Los Angeles. He had been living in America after escaping from Ramallah during the Six Day War. We hadn't seen each other for over 30 years. When I was in Israel in 1968 at an economic conference, I went to

Ramallah with my friend, Baruch Yekutiel, to look for Ibrahim. His sister lived across the street from the house where we ate. That night she was not at home but a short time afterwards, she sent me his address in Los Angeles. I decided to call him.

- *Masa el khir Ibrahim.* (Good Evening, Ibrahim)

- *Min hada?* (Who is it?) - Sammy

- *Shu Sammy?* (Sammy who?)

- *Sammy Neaman.*

- *Ya, achey.* (Hey, friend)

It was as if time stood still. He told me about his life and how he worked in a bank for 80 Dollars a week. He had a son who was studying medicine in Germany, a daughter who married a doctor in Egypt, and in Los Angeles he had four more daughters. I brought him to New York, gave him money, and continued to do so. I never forgot how he had given me his money without knowing if his parents would send him more. How can you forget a thing like that?

Syria, Eretz Israel, and Back to France

I returned to Eretz Israel. The year was 1934 and my brother Yigal had a few tutoring jobs, studied at the Technion, had nothing to eat, and was living in a basement.

I met a friend, Arieh, who worked with me at the chicken shed in my first year at Mikveh Israel and whose father shipped oranges from Jaffa Port. In those days the “Pardes” plant was a syndicate and the sole private marketer. Every morning, hundreds of Horanian Arabs gathered outside the port, waiting to unload the crates of oranges from the boxcars on the landing and carry them on their shoulders to the pier, tie them with ropes, and load them on the ship. Arieh, a former “clique” member spoke with his father, Mr. Bressler, and I got a job as foreman at the port.

I lived with the Bressler family and went to the port every day. In those days, Jews didn’t work at the port. The Syrian Arabs resented a Jew working in their territory so for protection I carried an Arab dagger under my shirt. Among the few Jews working at the port were Tuvya Arazi, who later became a consul, Berkowitch, whose father ran the Atlit train station, Arieh and me. We were in charge of the Horanians. At the Pardes plant there

were also a handful of senior Jewish clerks, but the supervisors were Arabs. We were the first Jewish workers at the port.

It wasn't easy to be in charge of the Horanians. If a Horanian didn't work and you pushed him, the other Horanians would kill you. If you didn't push them they wouldn't budge all day. They moved only by singing and we had to keep the beat and learn the song. Each crate weighed at least 30 or 40 kilos and the experienced workers maneuvered them easily using only two fingers. To gain their confidence, we had to prove that we could do the same, which involved placing the crates correctly so that they would not break and spoil the fruit.

I worked that entire season in a virtual lion's den. Business was declining because the important customers belonged to Pardes and the syndicate. Furthermore, Bressler had serious problems including payroll, which for us was the most important thing.

I rented a room with my brother Yigal. I bought two beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, and a closet. I would leave money for Yigal in his closet, but at first he refused to take it. I also had credit at a restaurant on Pioneer Street and Yigal ate there. I worked at the port day and night, sometimes returning at midnight. In the morning I would leave before he woke up and we hardly saw each other except on Shabbat.

When the local fruit season was over, Bressler decided to purchase fruit from Syria. He opened a shop and called it *Pirion* (bounty). Bressler, a talented and skillful merchant from Odessa, was among the few Jews who were members of the Wheat Stock Exchange. He had boundless energy and was a master at figures. He added, multiplied, and subtracted like a calculating machine and was a man of vision. He decided to be a vegetable and fruit wholesaler and open a chain of fruit stores. It was my job to go to

the Arab market in Haifa every morning and purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. Shortly after that, he decided to buy fruit and vegetables in Damascus. The business was to be handled by phone and I was to let him know when I was returning so he could get the best prices. Until then the business was entirely in the hands of Arabs.

I went to Damascus where I knew absolutely no one. I went to an Arab hotel and asked where the wholesale market was. There were numerous small stores and I walked into one and asked the owner how to buy fruit in the city. I told him I was from Haifa and wanted to buy a car load of fruit the following morning and promised him a commission. The deal was that I tell him what I wanted, he would purchase it, send the car, and I would pay him the commission for the car load. The next morning he bought apricots and plums and filled the car. I called Haifa and sent the car. The arrangement worked well and the fruit sold profitably.

I made friends with the Arab merchant in Damascus and we became partners. We woke early in the morning, shipped merchandise, went to sleep, and in the afternoon we traveled out of the city to see fruit orchards that were like nothing I had seen before. There was good food too. One day he came to the hotel and asked for *Sayed Sammy*. The man at the hotel asked if he meant the Jew from Palestine. As I came down the steps I heard two smacks land on the man's face. He couldn't believe I was a Jew.

A week or two later we decided it wasn't necessary for me to remain in Damascus because he could ship the produce by himself and could contact me by telephone if necessary. Because business was good, we decided to open another store on Mount Carmel where there were day camps, convalescent homes, and

many German "*Yekkim*" who lived there. This store sold top quality products and each apricot was individually inspected. It was the beginning of the German Aliya so I hired two German speaking girls to work in the store.

The "*Yekkim*" had a good life. Instead of buying fruit from the Arabs, they bought from us because our merchandise was the cleanest and most attractive. In Damascus, I learned how to polish the apples with a clean rag and a touch of oil to make them appear more appealing.

After opening two stores in Haifa, our next target was Tel Aviv. I was Bressler's employee and he promised to compensate me sometime in the future. The store in Tel Aviv was located on Ben Yehuda Street near the corner of Bograshov Street. It reminded me of the fruit and vegetable shops I saw in Paris. I went to Jaffa and found an Arab carpenter and gave him a drawing of the kind of shelves I wanted. The sign I had made showed a waiter holding a box and I would leave a piece of fruit in it every day.

There were two produce wholesalers in those days, one in Tel Aviv and one in Jaffa. The one in Jaffa opened at three or four o'clock in the morning. The one in Tel Aviv opened a bit later. I decided to go to Jaffa. In Damascus I had learned the ropes, but in Palestine the code of behavior was different. When a crate of fruit was up for auction, the auctioneer would yell the price, "*two grush*", "*three grush*", "*four grush*". If he banged the gavel three times it was sold, but sometimes he banged only twice. I tried to figure out where he got the signals from and I noticed the owner of a small produce store standing next to the clock. He stocked only the best quality produce.

He was a good hearted Arab with a large moustache. I told him I had been to Damascus and had brought back produce,

that I had opened a store in Tel Aviv and he was invited. He had never been to Tel Aviv. When he arrived I put a stool in front of the store and he sat down while I served him Turkish coffee, to his great pleasure. From then on we were the ones getting two knocks of the gavel. My new friend had arranged it with the auctioneer. When I heard the two knocks I knew we had won the produce and all of it was top grade. The ones on the top were always Grade A and the ones on the bottom were Grade C that sold with three knocks of the gavel. I also went to the wholesale market in Tel Aviv to purchase fruit and vegetables from the Jewish merchants. They also knew that the best fruit went to me.

One morning I was late getting to the market in Tel Aviv and they told me that a crate of new fruit had just arrived and they didn't know what it was but that some grocer from a neighborhood near Tel Aviv had bought it. They had waited for me but I didn't show up. I ran the few kilometers to the store and paid one lira for the crate without even knowing what it was so that everyone would know that all new fruit was destined to reach my store.

I chose Ben Yehuda Street because hotels were being built nearby. I added some sweets and the business took off. The furniture in the store was European style and I handled the fruit like I learned in Damascus, with each piece given individual attention. I already had a chain of stores: two in Haifa and one in Tel Aviv and I made sure to maintain my connections with Damascus.

Then an urgent call came from Haifa ordering me to sell the store because money was urgently needed. They didn't tell me why. It took about five minutes to sell my store. I sold it for 100 liras, which was a small fortune at the time. The new owner was a Middle Eastern man who had been a classmate at the Herzliya

Gymnasium. He arranged the papers so that in 24 hours I was in Haifa with the money for Bressler. He had decided to go into the organic manure business and had contracts with orchard owners from Petach Tikva to supply the manure at a predetermined price. They, in turn, would send their citrus fruit to him at the beginning of the season. He was one sharp Jewish businessman.

The plan was to bring manure from Jordan but because hoof and mouth disease was rampant in the country, the government prohibited its import. Bressler had signed agreements with the orchard owners and he would go bankrupt if he didn't find other sources for manure. The Bresslers sold their stores and searched for manure. His son, Arieh Bressler and I went to Arab villages deep in the mountains where the people had never seen a Jew. I found century old caves full of sheep manure that had accumulated to a height of approximately 1.5 meters, and all prime material. The Arabs removing the manure were stark naked.

Wandering those mountains and remote villages, not as a policeman but as an ordinary citizen, was something unique. We bought the manure, transported it with camels, and loaded it onto trucks. The contract demands were high and no matter how much we dug, we couldn't supply the manure. Eventually, Bressler went bankrupt.

I learned a lot from that period. I learned how to make a person work hard and love it. I learned how to make a profit without a partner, but the loss was shared by us both. Bressler had lost everything, but Mrs. Bressler continued to feed me.

My brother, Yigal, was a member of the *Beitar* Sport and Youth Organization, which I detested, so we avoided discussions on politics. He introduced me to Nachum Levin, who later became a member of the Knesset. At that time, Levin was an

engineer and I began working for him as a land surveyor. On the first day he acted as if he hired me as a favor to my brother, but quickly promoted me to foreman. I wasn't satisfied because I didn't like surveying fields and yards all day, and some days there was no work at all. When there was no work in the field, I worked in the office. At night I tried to help Yigal design houses for Professor Ratner of the Technion.

I heard about a tailor who was looking for an accountant. He had a rather complicated story. He was in a partnership with a Jewish man who married a Christian girl. He lived in Australia and came to Palestine. The Jewish man's daughter married an English tailor who made suits for the British police. He argued with his son-in-law and decided to go into partnership with the Jewish tailor. The tailor needed an accountant to do his books.

In those days there were few people who could afford a tailor-made suit and pay the exorbitant sum of three lira. The British police paid seven lira for a suit, on installment. I took one lesson in accounting after which I presented myself to the tailor and told him I could do his books. I felt like an expert because in the first lesson, we were taught about debit and credit columns. In France, I had learned about business, and I was wearing a nice French suit. It made an impression on the tailor and I got the job.

Two days later I convinced him that he didn't need an accountant and it would be better if I went along to examine both the contracts and the man. He liked the idea and for several months we went into police stations where I took measurements for suits, marked repairs, had the policemen sign the contracts, and collected payments. It was not easy. When we came to sell the suits they were friendly, but when I came to collect the money, I suddenly became a 'native'.

The tailor fawned all over them. He bowed his head and spoke softly which I didn't like. I read the contracts and checked their commitments. The contracts included strict clauses stating that, in the event they were not paid, he could go to the police management and collect the money directly. I cautiously mentioned that I understood the arrangement and gradually I started going there myself.

To my surprise I discovered that Arieh Bressler had moved to Tel Aviv and I was all of a sudden out of a job. He had a wife and child and was trying to get into the produce business. He rented a store in the market, but it failed. His father couldn't help him because he was penniless too. I went back to Tel Aviv and took Arieh to Jaffa to meet the people I knew, and to get him the right business connections.

My friend immediately walked out of the store and we went to drink coffee in a nearby coffee shop. I told him what happened and he asked me if we had a store in Tel Aviv. He pointed to an Arab orchard owner who was sitting at a nearby table. It was the end of the winter and he said that he would arrange it so that the orchard owners would sell us the fruit that was unfit for export. He brought the Arab over and we had coffee together. The next day a car arrived from Gaza with oranges. We spilled the oranges on the floor of the empty shop. We didn't have any money to pay the Arab.

It was the end of the season and nobody had fruit. In a half hour, the word got out that we had oranges. We started selling at the regular price and quickly raised the price. We sold the entire shipment in two or three hours and didn't give everyone the amount they wanted. For the next two weeks the Arab from Gaza collected all the leftover oranges he could get his hands on so that we were the only ones selling citrus fruit. Arieh made

some money and became well-known in the wholesale business for a while. During the entire time I never took anything from him except the meals that were offered me. Ours was a real friendship, with one friend simply helping another.

I returned to Haifa, where I received an encouraging letter from my father. He wrote that his job at the school was going well, the family was living nicely in Paris, and that every three weeks he went home for a visit. He also wrote that one of the wealthy Polish Jewish men he had taught was coming to Palestine and wanted to purchase some land.

While I was working for Nachum Levin, I met a Dr. Suskin, a land owner from Haifa. The Jewish man from France arrived and I took him, with Suskin, to Nahariya to purchase some land. The guest observed, examined, and spoke in superlatives, but in the end did nothing. He enjoyed his visit in Palestine and the night before he left he asked me why I chose this kind of life, with my father working in some small town and the family living in Paris. If I were to come to France, speaking French as I do, I could come to his sweater factory and he would open a factory for me and we would be partners. I listened and said nothing.

Changing jobs was exhausting me. I wasn't a farmer or a merchant. I had no idea what I was. I got a letter from my father trying to convince me to join him in the town where he worked. He was there a year already teaching Torah and Zionism to the local Jewish people in the '*heder*'. The Jews there had large businesses. There were 40,000 people in the town and 40-50 Jewish families who worked together. The man I met was a successful businessman and wanted to go into business with me. Besides, I should be allowed to do something for my family as my father wasn't making enough money working as a teacher. In

short, I ought to return to France. This time I would be successful and help him. He couldn't live alone and Yifrach still had four more years of study in the Conservatory. When he was done teaching he went to buy leftover wool, check it, and make some more money.

Yigal had a steady job with Nachum Levin and was making a nice living. I felt independent. Those 10 months in France had a great influence on me. I had been bitten by the "bug". This time around, I had the money to purchase a ticket. I went to the town where my father worked and found him living in a small hotel room that had a bowl and a pitcher of water and the bathroom outside. He cooked his food on a small burner. When he finished working and tutoring the children, who weren't interested in learning, he went to the warehouse where he collected wool and separated the red from the blue.

The big factory owners were not Jewish and Father went to a Gentile man who sold in bulk to big companies and tried to buy some defective wool. The man refused but my father discussed religion and the Bible with him. The Gentile man couldn't believe that my father knew the Bible. How could a Jew know the Bible? My father spoke French with a heavy accent. He told the man to take the Bible and point to any part and read two words out loud. The man did as father told him and my father continued reciting the passage by heart in French. Needless to say, no one could buy wool there after that and my father had a monopoly on the leftovers. He left teaching and went into business.

The Jewish man who had visited received me warmly. He reminded me that we were going to open a huge business together. He said we shouldn't bother competing with the sweaters made here, but that we should go to Troya where the

machines worked faster than the regular ones. We traveled to the factory to see the machines and the products and I walked alongside this 120 kilogram Jewish man who carried himself like an army of soldiers.

I remembered the thickness of the sweaters in Paris and these were much thinner. I told my new partner that it wasn't worth it. He thought they were excellent for women and that was how it should be. We discussed the cost and then we were asked what size machine we wanted to order. The size he wanted required a custom built machine. Without hesitation, he told them to build one. He turned to me and said that I should sign because it was mine. I didn't like this arrangement as it was too similar to the previous machine incident. He took out a check for 5,000 Francs with each machine priced at 60,000 or 65,000 Francs.

It was decided that I was to stay in Troya while the machine was being built so I could learn how to operate it. Before he left, he gave me 100 Francs. From my previous visit in France, I could speak some French but not enough to handle technical language. I found out I needed to stay in town for eight weeks and wondered if I could live on 100 Francs for that period of time. I rented a cheap room in a hotel attic with one bed. I ate one meal a day and lived for eight weeks with the workers who were building the machine. The longer I sat there, I realized the problem: the machine was for underwear, not sweaters.

When the machine was finally finished, it was loaded on a truck and I went with the mechanic to the town where my father lived. In the meantime, he had found a dilapidated house that was once a factory and had stood empty for 20 years. It had once been the property of a rich, aristocratic French family that had dealt in scrap metal. There was no heat and we brought the machines in through the broken windows.

I made friends with the mechanic who built the machine and learned how to operate it. I had no idea what it could do, but I knew how to take it apart and assemble it. My partner was both pleased and impressed that he was the first one to purchase a round machine. Now it was time to start producing and the mechanic asked if we had cotton. My partner jumped up and said, “What cotton? Wool!” This machine ran on cotton number 40 which couldn’t be found anywhere in the area.

We ordered a crate of cotton from the north of France which arrived quickly. The first piece we made came out colorless. The mechanic looked at it and said we needed another finishing machine, not to dye but to vaporize the knit so it would take shape and be more durable. That second machine would cost 10,000 Francs. We ordered the machine and the mechanic left. I was on my own. The cotton merchant took one look at the machine and said he didn’t know what we were going to do with it because it was a new industry in this area, but he wished us well. In the end I ordered 10 crates of cotton.

The vaporizing machine arrived and then it turned out that we needed to dye everything white because there was no one in the area who knew how to dye such a thin knit. The man who rented us the house was an unemployed accountant. He came to see what I was doing with the machines and if I needed help with the accounting. I remembered when I worked as an accountant in Haifa and told him that I did need an accountant but I couldn’t pay him until we made some money. He said the money didn’t bother him, and that he would work half days, learn the business, and that I shouldn’t worry.

I solved the vaporizing and dyeing problem and began manufacturing underwear sized 65 which no woman wore. Then we needed to buy a sewing machine. I signed all kinds of

promissory notes amid talk of new industry in the town. I got hold of some sewing machines and searched for workers to operate them. My Jewish partner who had invested some 30,000 to 40,000 Francs began to panic. Until then we were on friendly terms and sometimes dined together, but suddenly he stopped taking my calls.

I went to see him in person and he didn't want to see me. So I waited. Finally he agreed to see me and explained that he had become bored with the business and that he was finished with the whole thing. If I paid him the thousands of Francs, fine. If not, fine. If I signed the papers, fine. If not, fine. He didn't want to get involved in a new business with never ending investments.

I reminded him that he was the one who persuaded me to come and had promised me the world. He said, "Why fight over it? Do I demand anything from you? I invested and now I decide when to get out. I tried to tell him that I had no money. He told me flippantly to get over it and that he had also been a pauper when he arrived. He would not be involved as a partner anymore.

I went back to the factory. The accountant commented that I didn't look good. I told him about my break with the partner. Then he admitted that he had been too uncomfortable to offer before, but he wanted to lend me 30,000 or 40,000 Francs and that he would work without a salary. Whenever we had the money, I would pay him with interest. In time maybe he would become a partner. I looked at him like he was crazy. He took out his checkbook, wrote a check for 30,000 Francs and handed it to me.

From that day on he was responsible for payments and was the only one who went to the bank. I never went to the bank which was a good strategic decision. The bank was sure that we had a respectable business and that I was at the forefront and the

money belonged to a partner who had invested millions. If he was my courier, than I must be a business genius.

I wrote letters to underwear factories and sent questions to the Chamber of Commerce. I went 80 kilometers to the nearest large city where this type of merchandise was sold to see how they worked. It became clear that the biggest mistake was purchasing the wide machine. I spoke with the Frenchman and told him that I might need more money to buy two more machines. We bought the machines. We trained workers because we only found non-professionals and the industrial center was in the Pyrenees, some 500 kilometers away. It was under these conditions that we began manufacturing.

I found an old man who once operated similar machines. He worked the 12 hour day shift and I worked the 12 hour night shift. After wandering around the stores in town where they sold underwear, I decided to conduct an experiment. I dyed the material dark colors like blue, black, red, and grey, added rounded collars, and made shirts. Instead of selling the merchandise in bulk form, I decided to market them in cellophane packages with the name of the firm clearly visible.

I worked day and night. In those days products weren't packaged and the name of the manufacturer didn't appear on the packages. Where I lived, most of the goods were sold to Algeria and Tunis. Real fashion was made in Paris.

In the meantime, I needed to make a living. My undershirts were not a success and to market them successfully, I needed a car but I didn't know how to drive. I found a 20 year old car and told the owner that I wanted to see how he drove it. I watched him, recalling how they drove cars with gears in Palestine, and I felt I was almost an expert. The owner took me to the outskirts of town and then back. I paid him next to nothing,

some 200 or 230 Francs and got the junker from him. Then I drove off without having had one lesson. After I had some driving experience I got a license and went to the nearest town to sell the merchandise at a lower price than what it cost me to produce it, helping me avoid bankruptcy and keep the business until I could manufacture my shirts instead of underwear.

The worst day was Friday. Shoppers would come because they knew the workers were paid on Friday evenings. As doors opened on Friday mornings, people with hands loaded with Francs entered the office without so much as a hello. They would toss the money on the table and my eyes popped out of my head. They took what they wanted at whatever price they wanted. Having no choice I agreed because I had to pay the workers their salaries.

I worked a 12 hour night, slept for two hours, and hardly ate. At the corner of the street was a small bistro where I ate and drank some wine. One day I worked 20 hours until I finally managed to manufacture shirts and cellophane packages. I designed a logo for the firm and began selling. Business bloomed. On Saturdays and Sundays I experimented. Instead of doing the finishing and dyeing, I bought colored thread, attempted making lines, and became an artist.

I was now an industrialist - an innovator. If I wanted to drink, play, or have a good time I would escape on Sundays, some 80 or 90 kilometers away where no one knew me. There I could be someone else and enjoy life. When I returned to the town, I was the successful industrialist everyone knew.

Father had finished teaching. He kept working with the leftover wool but concentrated on buying and selling merchandise. Mother still lived in Paris. That was my life until 1937. That year Yigal came for a visit. He had finished his studies

at the Technion and it was the first time he had left Eretz Israel. He wanted to work as an architect in Europe, especially in Italy and France. I gave him money and told him to come and see my factory and the 80 people I employed. I asked him to come work with me as my partner and we could build the factory together. He refused because he was only interested in architecture and didn't want to live outside of Eretz Israel.

I decided it was time for me to get married. At the end of 1937, there was an international exhibition in Paris where I met someone I knew who was studying medicine. He showed me around Paris and introduced me to his cousin, Cecile. Twenty-four hours later I told Cecile that I wanted to marry her. She looked at me like I was crazy. Two weeks later we were engaged and six weeks later we got married. It was January 1938.

Cecile impressed me like no woman had before. She was born in Switzerland and although she had no idea about Judaism or the Bible, she walked around holding a Bible. She spoke only the truth. I never met anyone like her in my entire life. Her parents opposed the wedding and fought fiercely to prevent it. Marry someone from Palestine? He could go back there and then what? But she decided to marry me and nothing could stop her.

Those were extremely difficult times but there was joy in our home. Yifrach won first prize at the Conservatory. I, however, had a dilemma on my hands. Should I remain in France and be a Frenchman, become a citizen, and go into the army, or go back to Eretz Israel? I told Cecile to go back to her parents or live in Paris with her cousin. If I did enlist, it would be in Eretz Israel. After that, we would decide what to do

A SOLDIER IN THE BRITISH ARMY

In the winter of 1939, I returned home and went to Rehovot to visit Yigal, who was now an engineer. The unmistakable tension so pronounced in Europe was not felt in Eretz Israel. Having nothing to do in Rehovot, I decided to go to Haifa and was surprised to discover that Bressler had returned to the produce business at the port. Times had undoubtedly changed and the Horanian port workers had been replaced by Saloniki Jews.

I got a peculiar job counting crates as they were loaded on the ship for wages of one grush an hour. I worked 48 hours straight without any sleep until the ship was loaded, and received the huge sum of 48 and a half grush. Then we waited for the next ship to load. I worked through the end of the season, until mid April 1939. I couldn't find any work after that. Under these conditions I didn't want Cecile to come. She wrote me that everyone was being drafted and the economic situation was very bad.

I had a room in a hotel on Kings Street and ate at the Goldberg Restaurant near the port. Hostility and bloody violence continued and Jews did not go into the Arab part of the city. I

looked into service in the Haganah, the armored forces, the Guard, but nothing came of it because I was a foreigner and had no connections. A new generation was on the rise.

I decided to enlist in the British Royal Navy which was recruiting men to travel the most treacherous routes ahead of the convoys to detect land mines. They checked to see if I could translate from English to Arabic because they needed a translator for their Arabic English discussions. The British Sergeants who tested me decided I didn't know Arabic, but my English was okay. What I didn't know was that paying a lira would have gained me entry into the unit.

Several months passed and while the world was literally on fire, I sat by and did nothing. I debated enlisting in the French army but I couldn't since I wasn't a French citizen and I certainly didn't feel the need to fight for France. The little money I had left over was gone and I was unemployed. I went to live in a room with eight other people who trusted me to pay them when I could. Goldberg's Restaurant had given me one month's credit, but later told me that they were in a bad way too. Because they were good people and wouldn't let someone starve, they fed me and hoped I would pay them back one day. That was typical of the atmosphere in Eretz Israel at the time. Here were some wonderful people who though poor themselves, who owed me nothing, let me have two free meals a week.

I tried getting a job as a taxi driver and failed at that as well. I waited for the new recruitment, hoping that by then my problems would be solved. There was an Armenian man in my room who worked as a cook at the British base and we became friendly. Once we went to eat at an Arab restaurant and I wore a small Arab hat. He loved the suspense. His Arabic was unlike the locals' and he was easily identified as an Armenian Arab. There I

was sitting and eating in an Arab restaurant with people who never suspected I wasn't an Arab and who, within an hour or two, would go out and attack Jews.

I began to overhear things. No one asked me to eavesdrop or spy on the Arabs. I did it on my own, hoping to hear something important.

One time we went to a pothouse. We walked into a murky room where people were smoking pot and passing the pipe from one to another, when three British and four Arab policemen raided the place. They asked questions and demanded that everyone identify themselves. My Armenian friend was rude and tried answering in broken English and got beaten up pretty badly as a result. They asked me questions and my answers apparently satisfied them. The pot didn't interest them as much as the particular suspects they were looking for. No one suspected me because I spoke perfect Arabic. In an Arabic accent I gave them my name, *Sammy Neaman*, injecting some authentically sounding Arabic.

Finally in October of 1939, after the Second World War began, I read in the newspaper that recruitment had begun. As I entered the recruitment office, I saw about 50 to 60 people, several British officers, and one citizen who, as it turned out, was Beillin from the Jewish Agency. They asked us several questions and some people were sent into one room and others to a different room. Furthermore, I noticed that more people were sent to one room than the other. I become aware that very few were actually being recruited and that the hallway separating the two rooms served some function. I walked out into the hallway as if I was leaving and entered the room with the smaller number of people through a different door. Sure enough, the larger group had been dismissed and they were recruiting the smaller group.

We went into the street where we were counted and suddenly there were 13 men instead of 12. The officers left and the Sergeant was ordered to take only 12 men, but he had no list. It was already evening and the Sergeant decided that it made no difference if there were 12 or 13 'natives'.

That night I found myself at the Sarafand Base (today Tzrifin) among a large group of Arabs. When we reached the barracks, 50 men were already there and we were directed to the other barracks. We went to get our uniforms and I met quite a few Jews. Among the 70 men, there were more Jews than Arabs. We each received two blankets and work clothes. The Sergeant arrived with the Corporal and we were taken to the barracks.

We went into the canteen and the British officer came to talk to the new recruits. He looked for a translator and then commotion broke out. Voices, noises, and suggestions as everyone volunteered for the job. About 30 or 40 men were trying to volunteer, all except me. Early on I learned to wait and not to push. I believed that if I was good enough, I would be noticed sooner or later.

The next day we had our first day of maneuvers. I had a great deal of experience from the Haganah and the Police Force. After all, I was the one who received "Spitzer's baton." I knew all the orders by heart, but as usual I didn't lift my rifle exactly right. I waited to be taught. I figured there was no big hurry. Perhaps because of this, the Sergeant felt I was indifferent. I assumed he disliked me because most of the time I was sent to peel potatoes and wash dishes in the kitchen. Every morning at lineup he would choose someone for kitchen duty and I was always on the list while others were replaced. I was in the kitchen every single day until one day I was sent to the Officer's Club to wash the floors and do general cleaning. As I polished the floors, an officer,

amazed at the good cleaning job I did, asked me my name. He said he would talk to the Sergeant and arrange it so that I could permanently work as an orderly at the Officer's Club. I thanked him and let him know that I would take whatever the army had to offer. I wasn't interested in acquiring expertise in another field.

Five weeks of training passed this way. I didn't stand out, nor did I try too hard. One day, new recruits arrived and among them was a man from Me'ah She'arim who turned out to be the main informant. In addition, a young Polish guy arrived and told everyone that he was an officer in the Polish army. Not to mention, the two brothers who were recently released from prison. In short, it was a zoo. There were very few ordinary men from ordinary families. Most the men were difficult cases, either out of prison or just offensive. All in all, they were a negative group of guys. If you didn't watch your mouth in that crowd or said the wrong word, chaos would break out.

One week before the end we had a soccer game. At the end of the game the Sergeant was extremely pleased because his 'natives' scored two goals against the opposing Sergeant's 'natives'. After the game we lined up in threes to return to our barracks. To his amazement the Polish guy, the favorite, was told to take us back to the base. It was the first time that a 'native' was put in charge of the unit. He froze and was struck speechless. The Sergeant was annoyed and told him that if he couldn't do it, the potato peeler would, and he summoned me. I walked out of the lineup and began giving orders. The Sergeant discovered that I knew all the commands and delivered them like he did by swallowing the second half of each word and pronouncing each word perfectly from the stomach to the chest.

The next day I wasn't sent to peel potatoes. On the way to the lineup, he asked me if I was afraid to show that I knew how to

use a rifle because then I would be asked how I knew how to use it. I told him I wasn't afraid and that I had learned when I served in the British Police Force.

My last week in training was fantastic. After training one day, the Sergeant came to me, sat at the foot of my bed and told me about his early days in the army and how ribbons were distributed and in each unit it was usually a 'native' who received the ribbon. I told him that if he stopped calling me 'native' he wouldn't be able to give me the coveted ribbon and wouldn't even be able to talk to me. I told him he should start calling me a 'Palestinian' and even better, a 'soldier'.

He quickly apologized and said it was unintentional and that anyway he had already nominated me for the position of first Lance Corporal. He offered me the opportunity to work with him when the next group of trainees arrived. The examinations were simple enough for new recruits. I received the ribbon and was promoted to Lance Corporal in the British Army. The new recruits arrived and my new position as Lance Corporal required that I take charge. Yigal Caspi was in another department and a few other Eretz Israeli soldiers had similar positions.

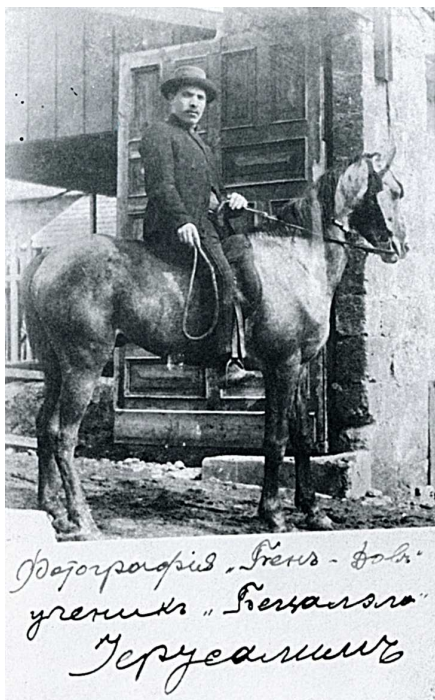
The Sergeant Corporal had complete faith in me. On the first evening, around 15 or 16 new recruits arrived. Until there were 50 new recruits, training would not begin. The ones who arrived were sent to work temporarily in other bases and it was my responsibility to make sure they did their job and not something else.

One evening a large group of Arabs arrived and they were sent to my barracks. It was winter time and the nights in Sarafand were freezing, but the army regulations dictated that all windows remain opened. I didn't blame the British Army because the stench in those barracks was unbearable. Lights-out was at 10



A Wedding picture of Samuel's Parents – Pinhas and Esther

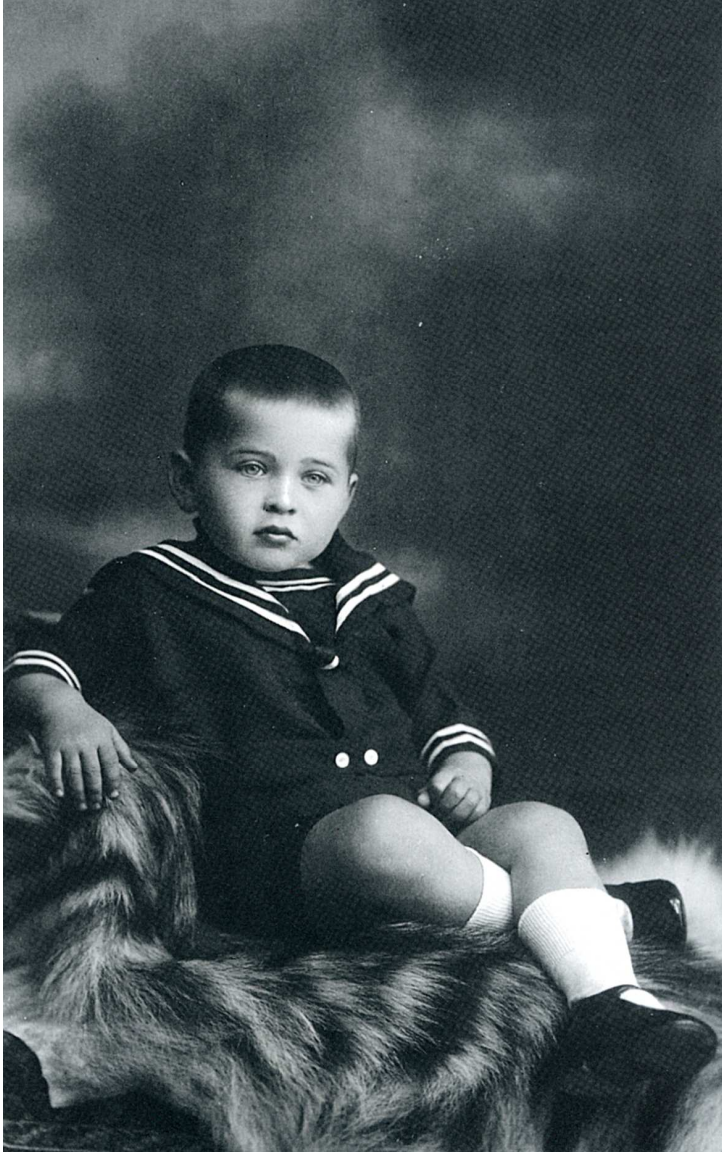
Father, Samuel Neaman
at Mishmar Hayarden
(Moshava)



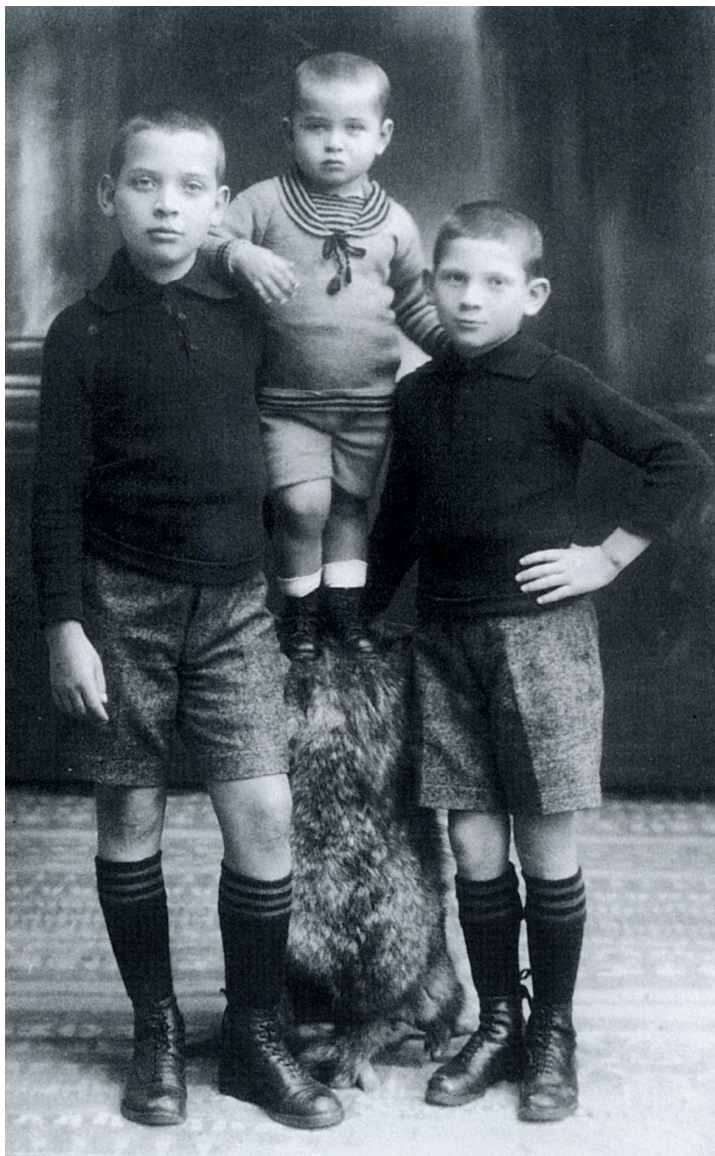
Esther, Samuel's mother (right) farming at Mishmar Hayarden



The Neaman family at the beginning of the 20's: Father Aharon (left), his wife Rachel and their two sons, Samuel (left) and Ig'al. Aharon's brother (stands, right)



Ifrach at the age of three years old (1925)



The three Neaman's sons: Samuel (left) Ig'al (right) and Ifrach



The three "deported" students from Mikveh Israel: Linderman, Pinnes and Neaman



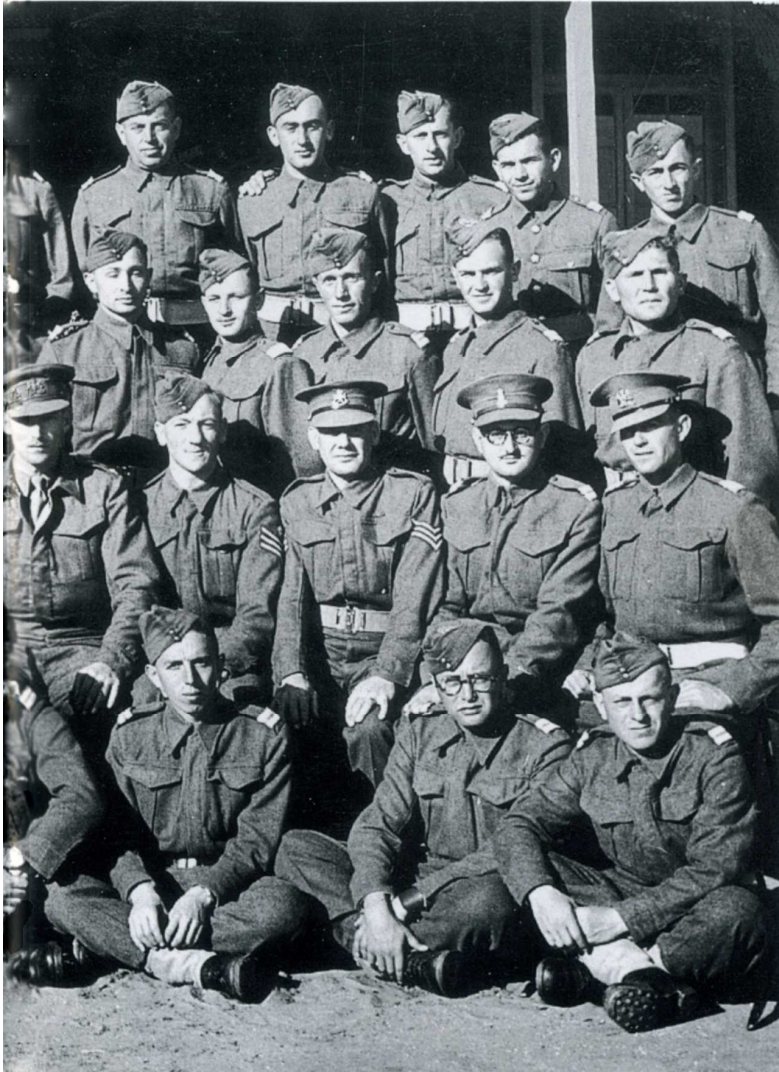
Samuel Neaman as student at Mikveh Israel



"The Zeppelins", the trees residents at Mikveh Israel. Samuel Neaman was one of the band's pillars.



Samuel and Cecile Neaman on their wedding day in Paris.



Picture taken at the graduation of first officers course in Zerifin (Sarafand) 1942. Lieutenant Neaman (second row, sitting second from left). Among graduates was also Haim Laskov, Israeli Defense Forces Chief of Staff (1958-1961) upper row, in the middle





British army induction poster



Lance corporal Neaman
at a military formation



Samuel Neaman on his induction
day, October 1939, receiving his
first army equipment



Sergeant Neaman and his wife Cecile, France, 1942



Neuman, the Arab soldier Madani, and the Scottish Logistics Sergeant Major Jock Rose at the studios of "Kol Yerushalaim" (The voice of Jerusalem) after their arrival to Israel from the evacuation in France.



Neuman as Sergeant Major at Tel Aviv Central Station , 1942.



First picture of Neuman as military officer.



Captain Neaman at the front of 650 trucks military company, prior to the long journey to Bagdad.



Captain Neaman and Captain Frois with the local Haganah representative – Enzo Sereni. Seen at background – King Faisal tomb.

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

מספר

כב' אייר תש"ד
15.5.44

ת.ד. 92
ירושלים

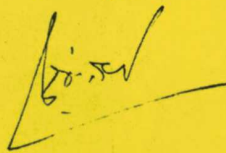
לכבוד
מאי"ר ש. נאמן
חיל השרותים המלכותיים.

נאמן יקירי,

מר שרתוק הביא לנו את הידיעה
על העלאתך לדרגת מי"ר וקבלתך את
הפקדו על פלוגה 650. הנני ממהר
לשלח לך את מיטב ברכותי ואיחולי
הלבביים.

ע ל ה ו ה צ ל ח !

שלך ב' 13/3/44



Blessing from Eretz Israel on the occasion of Neaman promoted to the rank of Major and to the of 650 Military company command.



The Badge of 650 Transport Military company; A clock placed inside The Star of David showing the hour 6:50



The Haganah badge – approved of many years of Neaman's activity at the organization.



Volunteering badge to the British Army that Neaman has been awarded with from Israeli Ministry of Defense.



Decorations of various battles that Neaman has been awarded with during his six years of military service at the British Army

o'clock at night. I slept on the first bed next to the open windows. I was half asleep when I noticed someone close the window. I got up from my bed of planks and yelled out, "Who closed the window? Open it at once!" Whoever closed it didn't answer me. From one bed came an answer in Arabic, "I ordered him to close the window." I yelled back, "Who are you?" '*Ana Bordi*', I am Bordi, he answered. I repeated myself and ordered the windows opened. Bordi refused saying the windows would stay closed. He announced that he was a gang leader and that his gang had come with him and from now on he was in charge. Halili, who closed the window, was his second in command and he did whatever Bordi told him to do.

I had to demonstrate to the entire unit who was in charge: Bordi the gang leader or me. I knew that fighting among the soldiers meant jail time and a Lance Corporal cannot hit soldiers so I decided to try diplomacy. I told him if he was the head of a gang he shouldn't order them to close the windows. "Are you afraid of the cold?" "No", he answered, "I was cold and I am a bit ill." "Why didn't you mention that earlier", I asked. "If you are sick that is really dangerous. Let's go to the infirmary. There is a doctor there who will give you some pills so you can get better." Bordi agreed and said he would get dressed right away. I told him it wasn't necessary to get dressed. The infirmary was only a few steps from the barracks. He came out barefoot in an undershirt and underwear. I took him 300 meters to the base office and told him that I was going to get the key for the infirmary. I told him to wait for a few minutes and I would be right back. I went back to the barracks and went to sleep. All the windows stayed open that night. The next morning Bordi told me that he had waited outside in his underwear for me for almost an hour, shaking and freezing,

waiting for the doctor to come. From that moment on there was no gang leader in the base.

Training began. The “squad”, a department of 50 men, guns and Arabs, physically drained the Sergeant. He ordered, “left turn” and no one knew whether to turn right or left. I translated, “*dor a-shimall*”: turn left, but that didn’t help much since most of them didn’t know the difference between right and left. Then the real circus started. I told the Sergeant to let me give the orders my way. His answer was, “Take them to hell.” I put a tomato and a cucumber in front of them, with Halili as head of the department and told them I was going to give the commands in English and when they heard them, not to move. I told them that when I said “*dor el hiyarah*”, they should go towards the cucumber; “*dor el bandura*” meant go towards the tomato.

They were insulted, but learned that *hiyarah* meant go to the left and *bandura* meant go to the right. Little by little they understood the commands. The Sergeant put me in charge of the department which was almost 80 percent Arab.

One day Halili decided he had had enough of the army. That day they were practicing left right, left right, and he went right left. I asked him what was wrong. He said he had a stomachache. I asked him why he didn’t say anything. I stopped the whole unit and commanded them to stand at ease. I turned to Halili and told him that when someone’s stomach hurts that is usually a sign of diarrhea. I asked him if he knew what happened when a person gets diarrhea. You get the runs. So he’d better start running. He told me his stomach hurts. I repeated myself, telling him that when your stomach hurts you run, but that he would run around the field instead of running to the bathroom, and that I was going to run with him. He ran and so did I. He ran until he fell to the ground. I picked him up and he kept running, fell, got up, and

kept going. The entire department watched the show. After three rounds of the field he was out of breath. I asked him what was easier, walking or running. He answered, "*Bimshi ya sidi, Bimshi*", I will walk. I agreed and ordered him to enter the line and keep walking.

They trusted me and felt connected to me. When I told them to wake up in the morning, they did. When I ordered them to arrange their beds they did it perfectly. On Saturdays an officer came to inspect the barracks. After being in the Police Force I knew the ropes and wasn't satisfied with just the cabinets shined with sandpaper. In my barracks you could measure the blankets with a ruler and the boots shone. A row of perfectly organized rocks was organized to British standards outside each barracks. But I did more. I had some Arabs dig up some young palm trees and plant them in front of the barracks so when the officer arrived on Saturday, there was a surprise waiting for him.

I had a good reputation in my unit and the base. When lessons began, Sergeant Carter was looking for a Hebrew and Arabic translator to explain anti-gas warfare. He had a book in English which he knew by heart and asked for Lance Corporal Neaman to translate. So I reported, got the book, and translated the theory of the British Army's use of gas into Hebrew and Arabic. It wasn't complicated, especially the part on Einstein's theory. In a short period of time the Arabs and the Jews learned the theory with my help.

One day there was a rumor that we were to be transferred to France and that a new unit was being formed: Officers, Sergeants, and a Quartermaster arrived. The unit organized itself into what we thought was a battalion. As we were preparing, we heard that one of the Palestinians was being promoted to Sergeant. The question on everyone's mind was where the new

Sergeant would eat his meals. Would he be allowed into the British Sergeant's Mess Hall, into the inner sanctum itself?

I was concerned whether the local soldiers would be considered equal to their British counterparts, or beneath them. Most of the English believed that we were inferior 'natives'. The exception was Jock Rose, the company Quartermaster from Scotland, who didn't agree with the other British Sergeants. We discussed this extensively. He was the senior officer and had already served 21 years and could have retired from service. When the war broke out, he couldn't serve in a fighting unit and that is how he arrived here. He didn't accept the idea of being in charge of the 'natives' and the British separately. He believed that in wartime, being a good soldier was all that mattered. He cursed the British from sun up to sundown because he was Scottish, but he cursed the Palestinians and the Australians too.

Rose helped me learn the King's Regulations: the King's rule book for army matters. He used to tell me that if I knew the book by heart, no one could do anything to me because the British Army lived by the book. I took his advice and learned the book from back to front. He also told me that most of the soldiers and officers in the army weren't educated and they only knew bits and pieces of it. He always referred to Section 109, Chapter 320 and said, "In such and such a way you will be able to handle any problem." He was right.

We sailed to France and arrived at a town in Normandy called Reine. About 20 kilometers from town there were large tin barracks where we were stationed. The next day, after we got organized, we were sent to unload food crates, ammunition, and equipment from a train. By evening we were exhausted. Another company was sent to dig holes. Our morale was bad.

The Major's morale was even worse. He came to fight and triumph over the Germans. His chest was full of medals, he was the Queen's cousin, and he was sent to France to manage workers. He embarked on a war of his own:

The British officers would not eat meals with the Palestinians. Major Kaiter saw that he had a clever Quartermaster who stuck to the rules and had a Jewish Sergeant at his side who controlled the men. He never spoke directly to me. He would enter the barracks where I lived with the Scotsman, sneaking in at night to speak to him. He would ask questions, then I would give the answer to the Quartermaster, and he passed it on to the Major. Equality existed no more. I believed that during wartime everyone was equal as we all wore the same uniform; we all had the same rights and obligations. As a Sergeant in Sarafand I ate in the British 'Sergeant-Mess'. Anyone who didn't want to sit and drink after a meal went to the canteen, or to their room, but there was only one 'Sergeant-Mess'.

In France, the men who came to be heroes wound up as regular workers. The Major kept looking for a war to fight. He decided to talk to the entire company and give them a morale boost. He gave his speech and I translated. Whenever I didn't understand a word or sentence, I thought he was making a joke so I explained in Hebrew and in Arabic that whenever I say '*ohh ahh*' everyone was to laugh as hard as they could. It worked. In the end I understood what he was saying and I translated it for the soldiers. He told me after that he didn't know what I was saying to the soldiers, but it sounded much better than it did in English.

A working day was hard for simple diggers. Nevertheless, the Major decided was going to prepare for war. He thought that if we behaved like a fighting unit, the Headquarters would treat us as such. We didn't rest for a minute. We had training and more

training and at night we patrolled. The next day was more of the same.

The Major wanted to open a large canteen with everything a man could want, including chocolate and beer, like in the exclusive British units. The unit treasury came from the canteen profits and the Major wanted to use the money to purchase soccer uniforms in order to start a team. I saluted and told him, “Yes, Sir. We will organize a team.”

The canteen was my responsibility. The soldiers came, ate, bought chocolate and little by little we saw a profit. We bought the uniforms and we even had some pretty good players. The most famous was Nudelman who played extreme left for *Ha’Poel* Tel Aviv and was one of the most outstanding players of the time. In our team he was a genius. There was also a guy named Yanai Proctor, who played for the junior team in *Ha’koach* Vienna and now played with *Ha’Poel* Haifa. These two guys and a few others made up the team, which was pretty good. I didn’t play because I was too old. We played a few times and even won several games.

The Major was happy and then got a new idea: An orchestra. I asked Doctor Brown, who knew about music, if he would join the orchestra. He said he wasn’t a maestro, but he would do it. I informed all the Sergeants that they should find musicians among their ranks and ask them which instruments they had. The enthusiasm was unmatched and inside of one day we had clarinet, horn, and trombone players.

I went to the local conservatory and explained to the principal that we were a Palestinian unit of the British Army and wanted to start an orchestra. I told him we had soldiers who needed musical instruments and I wanted to purchase some, but didn’t have a lot of money and asked if he could help us out. He

was enthusiastic and told me he would get us some instruments at a fair price.

One day, to my great surprise a large truck filled with brand new musical instruments arrived at the base. That evening we distributed all the instruments, but not one of the "musicians" knew how to play. What they did know is that if they played in an orchestra, they would be released from hard work. I had 70 musical instruments and no orchestra, so I had no choice but to return them.

The Major came in having already heard about the incident. He took a tuba, I took a drum, and the fat Sergeant, the Quartermaster, took a horn. We sat in the middle of the barracks around a coal stove and banged out some music. He took the whole incident light-heartedly. It was the first and only time that I saw any flicker of humanity from Sergeant Kaiter.

With the orchestra idea now defunct, he came up with a new idea: espionage. He wanted to operate the espionage effort in the entire region. He knew I had lived in France and could speak French. I worked every day and it wasn't easy. I learned all the gimmicks of the British Army. For example, how you could come into the center of town and even though the locals told you there wasn't anything there, in the end you got what you wanted. At 11 o'clock at night we met in the fields with the *Gendarme*, the local French police. They exchanged information and I translated from French to English and vice versa. They loved the whole thing because they received a bottle of whiskey and two cans of beef and made a good friend.

One day the Major told me that he didn't understand why it was so peaceful between the Jews and Arabs. What he didn't know was if there had been a fight at night between the Jews and the Arabs, and if they had come to me to administer some

discipline. Everyone knew that if a Jew or Arab got into a fight they would get extra work plus three extra nights of all night guard duty. I made certain that discipline was harsh and the commanding officers never knew about it. The Major, who had no idea at all, was thrilled that the Jews and Arabs were cooperating and there was no fighting.

How did I accomplish this? When we first arrived, the Arabs didn't want to walk on the cold nights to the bathroom. The bathrooms in the base were nothing more than a ditch covered with lime. Because it was so cold, they would go outside and relieve themselves by the side of the barracks. The Sergeants yelled and the Major raised hell. My solution involved Bodri the gang leader. The next day he pointed out one of the Arab men. I ordered the entire unit to form a lineup in front of the barracks. I also requested the military police and the Sergeant to be present. The military police took the man and pushed his head right into his own excrement. Suffice to say it never happened again.

The Major had a new idea: A unit flag. He wanted to create a flag with the traditional Jewish blue and white colors and a Jewish Star, the symbolic half moon of the Arabs, and of course the British Union Jack. He ordered me to find an artist who could combine the three flags into one. I found a soldier by the name of Goldberg who had worked in a porcelain factory. He painted something really hideous and as a result, the flag affair was a complete failure.

The next idea the Major had was to build a house. He wanted to plan a castle on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem with four different entry ways. In the middle of a great hall there would be a large table where peace talks would be held after the war, hosted by the Arabs and Jews of our unit. The four entries symbolized the British, Moslems, Christians, and Jewish faiths. The three of

us, the Major, the Quartermaster, and I, and listened to all his ideas and daydreams. He used to leave the Officer's Mess Hall and come drink beer with us in the evenings. One evening he spoke to me directly and said, "Okay, they don't know how to paint or play, but they can play soccer well. What else can we do? We have to fight. I won't finish this war as a manager of a group of workers." I assured him that the Arabs and the Jews both wanted to succeed, and quickly. I suggested we attempt to give them contract jobs. For example, unloading 100 box cars and after that everyone returned to the barracks. The idea was that after 80 cars were unloaded at six o'clock in the evening, 100 would be unloaded by 12 noon the next day. When they were satisfied, anything could be done with them including on the battle field. I was thinking of something heroic.

The Major didn't answer me. Until then I was nothing more than a toy to him, but this time he told me, "You are a true British soldier." One day he went to Paris and came back saying nothing. My Quartermaster, the Scotsman who drank non-stop, awoke in the morning, took a beer bottle from under his bed with his eyes still closed and drank it. At night he would drink until his eyes were glazed over and he drank everything in sight: beer, whiskey, and wine. He told me once in a drunken stupor that the Major had gone to Paris to meet Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, to get me a British passport. He told me that in my file at the War Office there was a British passport with my name on it.

Cecile was in Paris and after things settled down I wrote her a letter. I couldn't let her know where I was, only the military post office box number. I wrote her and asked her to come to Reine, to a particular hotel. About 24 hours later she arrived and I would slip out of the base to see her, which wasn't easy. A few

days later I moved her into a hotel in the country which was 20 minutes closer to the base. Someone informed the Major and from then on I was dead to him. He couldn't accept that I had a wife and an existence outside the military, in other words, someone who knew the location of the base.

During that time the Germans were advancing and the news from the front was not good. Belgium was occupied, the Germans had entered northern France, the Pencher Division, the tank division, and airplanes began appearing in the skies. We hadn't been bombed yet, but their presence was clearly felt. I told Cecile to return to Paris and go to the British Consul and demand to be taken to England. This had nothing to do with my new British citizenship which I never understood why the Major had gotten for me. I simply knew the King's Regulations and the rights of a British soldier's wife. She had the right to go to England under the protection of the British Consul. Cecile didn't believe that the Germans would ever reach us, but a week later she returned to Paris.

Thirty days after Cecile returned to Paris, the Germans marched into the city. We received orders to move and the evacuation of Dunkirk began. We were told nothing and one day we were ordered to gather our gear and began a rearguard fight. The British bases were filled with weapons and the Arab soldiers were dizzy with joy. Everyone took two rifles, guns and some even carried machine guns. We had enough weapons for three battalions. We didn't retreat - we advanced to the rear. We retreated in military order and the entire time I never saw a German.

The withdrawal proceeded according to the rules of military drill. The company commanders spread out and covered each other and reported what they saw. Dunkirk had fallen and we

were still in France. We reached the port of Saint Malo where a freight ship was docked. The Major took over and ordered the French captain to take us to England. We behaved like a gang of thieves with machine guns, rifles, and hand guns. Every two men carried a box of ammunition.

We still hadn't seen any Germans but there were *Shtuckot* diver planes in the air, and over the radio we heard that the Germans were five minutes away. When we were two miles from shore the Germans bombed the port, completely destroying it. A half hour later and we would have been killed.

When we reached England the newspaper headlines reported on the Palestinians who had returned from France with enough ammunition and weapons for a battalion. In those days every rifle was important. For the first time in my life I had no idea where my wife was. I knew that Paris was occupied but didn't have a clue what happened to Cecile or if she had succeeded in reaching England.

In London I was given clean clothes and a pass for the evening. David, the Quartermaster, said we should go see the city. We went to Piccadilly Circus and entered a restaurant. Because of the compulsory black-out, everything was dark, but the restaurant was filled with customers. There was plenty of food and drink and each table came to welcome us because of the article in the newspaper, and they treated us like heroes. They fed us and gave us drinks and carried us on their shoulders.

Upon our return to the barracks, we found that a Chaplain, Rabbi Bernard Chirnick, who later became President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, had joined our unit. He came to us straight from rabbinical school and for the first time in his life wore an army uniform. Everything was strange to him. Jews in Eretz Israel were, for the most part, non-believers, but he was a

British Jew who spoke Hebrew and wanted to help. I told him that I wanted to know what happened to my wife. With any luck she had listened to me and gone to England. He went to the war office and within 24 hours returned with information that my wife was indeed in England.

When the Germans entered Paris, she left on foot. At first she walked a great distance and then took a train to Bordeaux, a distance of hundreds of kilometers. In Bordeaux, she went to the British Consul and demanded her rights as the wife of a Palestinian soldier. They put her on a boat to England and we met later in London.

Our company remained in England at a seaside town. The Major would disappear and reappear every now and then, having no interest in the company whatsoever. We were told we were to go to Aldershot, a major military center, and after some reorganization we were to return to the Middle East and to Egypt.

At first I stayed with Cecile in London and later she came to live near me at the base at Aldershot. I gave my entire Sergeant's salary to Cecile, leaving nothing for myself. She stayed in Aldershot and then went to work at a French newspaper in London. I said goodbye to her and boarded the Queen Mary for a six week voyage via the Cape of Good Hope to Egypt. There were 3,000 British soldiers aboard the ship, New Zealanders, Australians, and our company, the Palestinians. We couldn't stay in the Mediterranean because of the German bombings. The ship sailed almost half way to America via the Atlantic Ocean and then turned south.

Every morning there was a company parade. The Colonel was followed by the Major and the Captain. For us, the Palestinians, the Major led and then the Colonel. The Colonel said to the Major, "Yes, Sir." That was the authority of Major

Kaiter who had fought in the First World War. On the journey, one of our men, a Hungarian, jumped ship in an attempted suicide. The Major used his authority and the Queen Mary was halted until he was pulled from the ocean.

We reached Cape Town, which seemed like something straight out of the Arabian Nights stories, and remained there for three days. As usual I took a walk with my friend, the Quartermaster Jock Rose. At first the South African soldiers took us into their Mess Hall and got us drunk. Later on, in the street we aroused interest and admiration. All the cars stopped and people dragged us home with them to feed us. The Australian soldiers went wild. In the middle of Cape Town, they stripped the traffic officer who stood on his platform. Armed with rifles they wouldn't allow anyone to approach the officer and no one dared complain.

The local Jews took care of us as if we were angels from heaven. It was the first time they had ever seen a unit of Jewish soldiers. I was invited to meet Sir Oppenheim, a diamond tycoon, and for the first time I saw what real wealth was like. I was greeted by a black servant and was led into a large hall where my host was seated and we had drinks. I couldn't believe my eyes. After having fled France, the blackouts in England and the war, I was finally experiencing some peace, beauty, and a real palace. We had a drink and went into the dining room. The room measured 25 meters and the dining table was 20 meters long. Sir Oppenheim sat at the head of the table and I was facing him a mere 18 meters away. Five or six waiters served the food. It was thrilling to sit opposite an internationally renowned person.

The Jewish community held a reception in our honor. The entire community attended, there were profuse amounts of food and drink, and mothers offered us their daughters while the men

conveniently forgot about their girlfriends. We felt like we were in heaven, and the citizens of Cape Town treated us as if we had descended from there.

The last night in town, Rose and I went to a soldiers club. There were soldiers there from all over the world: Australia, New Zealand, England, and Scotland. Everyone was standing, yelling, drinking, and having a good time. Suddenly someone said something and the first bottle was broken. After that, war broke out in the club. My Scottish friend said simply, "Sammy, up the wall!" We climbed over high windows with screens and looked down at the hall where we watched 300 people beating each other up with broken bottles and breaking chairs over each others' heads. Everyone was hitting someone else and all hell broke loose. It was a war to the death and by the time the military police arrived, there were bodies everywhere. It was truly beyond description. Ten minutes later everyone was drinking as if nothing happened.

We returned to the Queen Mary and continued our voyage. We made friends with the New Zealanders who were really very pleasant. In the meantime, back in Aldershot, I was promoted and received a crown with three ribbons. I was now a Quartermaster and equal to the Scotsman who was also promoted.

We arrived in Egypt and were transferred to Ismailia where the plan was revealed to us. The Major had convinced Headquarters to choose people from the unit to create the first Mediterranean commando unit. For two months he hadn't spoken a word to me and suddenly he summoned me. He granted me a 10 day leave to go to Eretz Israel and told me that I was authorized to speak to whomever necessary about the commando unit and explain that reinforcements were needed. The Major added that he would even accept prisoners and arrange their early release. He

was ready to include people in the underground with no questions asked. The only thing he was interested in was that they were suitable for commando fighting.

I went by train via Kantara to the Sinai and entered the country. I met with Moshe Sneh from the Haganah and told him about the plan. If I recall correctly, he told me that if the “43” were released from prison (imprisoned since 1939, among them Moshe Dayan, Moshe Carmel, and other Haganah activists), it could happen, but in the end nothing came of it.

I returned to Egypt and the commando training began. Each soldier received a knife with a brass knuckle similar to an Arab dagger and intensive training began. The Major chose the strongest and most robust, and he only chose Jewish men. One soldier had been in prison for seven years for stealing before the war. He was a total sycophant and shined my boots when I was promoted to Sergeant. He reported that when we were in England, I had taken a bribe to give passes, which was impossible since I had nothing to do with passes. The Major took care of passes, but he was disappointed and angry I hadn't accomplished what I was sent to do in Eretz Israel. Without an investigation, I was put in the prison tent with a 24-hour guard and forbidden to have books or newspapers so I was bored to death. I asked for shoes and I polished them to pass the time.

During that time, I discovered positive qualities about Arab soldiers. On the first night I heard digging under the tent. A head appeared and then hands carrying food and drinks. It was an Arab soldier who told me that he would be at my service both day and night. I asked him who sent him. Bodri and his gang was the answer. Seven days passed before the investigation. The soldier was there day and night and brought me food, drinks, and took my clothes to be washed and starched so I was always nicely

dressed. The military policeman, who resembled a rat, guarded the opening to the tent. It is possible the guards knew what was going on, but since they never spoke to me I wasn't sure.

My Scottish friend, the Quartermaster, was promoted to Lieutenant. He convinced the Major that it was impossible to keep a soldier imprisoned without an investigation, so three officers were appointed to form the committee. The soldier who reported me was first to testify which is how I discovered the entire story. I asked him,

“What was the destination of the pass?”

"A town in England."

“What day of the week was the pass for?”

He threw out a day.

“What time did you request?”

"In the evening for the morning."

“How much did he get?”

"A lira"

“How?”

"In two half liras, 10 shillings each."

There were four or five witnesses. Each one mentioned a different day, coin, and destination. Later I found out that some of the soldiers appealed to the Major and claimed that the whole thing was a lie and if Headquarters in Cairo heard about what was going on it would be disastrous for his career. Nevertheless he ignored their warning. A week later the Major was reprimanded by the military lawyer for imprisoning me for seven days without holding the required investigation within 24 hours of my arrest. Moreover, he was accused of ignoring the obviously false testimonies. An explicit order was given to release me immediately and transfer me from the unit.

I was released and the next day forced to leave. The distance from our base to Ismailia was at least five kilometers. The Arab soldiers carried me on their shoulders the entire distance as they danced and cheered. The Jews did not even say goodbye.

The next day my duffle bag was returned to me and I was sent to the western desert to the 36th Sanitary Company. There were a few tents, an officer with the rank of Major, a few Sergeants and me, the Quartermaster. One day passed, two days passed, three days passed and there was absolutely nothing to do. The British got drunk all the time and didn't work. The Major had no officers and since I didn't drink, he sat in the room and talked to me.

One morning he told me that the base must be kept clean because the regional commander was coming for a visit. Colonel Trenton was my former Major's superior officer and had suffered because of him. When his car appeared he got out and saluted. He looked at me, hugged me and said, "What are you doing here. Where is that crazy Kaiter?" The Major looked at me in surprise and led the Colonel into his office. He said, "Tell me about him." He hated Major Kaiter with a passion and asked, "What can I do for you?" I told him that all was well, but I would like to see some real action. He took me to the second digging unit. It turned out that when I was in France, another Eretz Israeli unit was created in the desert near Marseh Matrukh.

I arrived at the unit and a problem arose. I had three stripes with a crown which was a rank no Palestinian had. In the unit there was a British Quartermaster and one British 'Sergeant Mess'. The Eretz Israel Sergeants ate with the soldiers like at Sarafand where there were 'natives' and the 'lords'. The 'natives' were mostly Jewish and the Arabs were in the minority. There

were a few Jewish Sergeants. One of them was Israel Carmi. They were all destined to be like the soldiers. No equality. The unit was not in France.

The Commander summoned me and told me that he didn't know or care what happened in my previous unit. He let it be known that I was now in a different unit with different rules and he had no need for two Quartermasters. Thanks to the Colonel, I was to work as a Quartermaster subordinate to the British Quartermaster, not because he was British, but because he received the position before me.

The British Quartermaster gave me a hard time. He constantly ordered me around. One time he slipped and called me, 'Sergeant.' I reminded him that my rank was Sergeant Major. I was unhappy in the unit, but I knew better than to rebel. During the German bombings I laid in the trenches. I don't know what caused me to jump from one trench and run to another. As soon as I did a bomb hit it.

TO GREECE AND BACK

I heard that my friend the Scotsman, Rose, was transferred to Headquarters in Cyprus. I sent him a message telling him where I was stationed and that I wanted to see him. A few days later he arrived. He was in charge of the Cypriot and Palestinian unit of diggers. Within a few days I was transferred to the Cypriot Headquarters too. There a Senior Quartermaster was a Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant with a crown instead of three stripes with a crown. Lieutenant Rose apparently found fault with his Quartermaster and a week later he requested a transfer. Rose recommended me for both the position and rank. Bestowing a rank of this kind on a Palestinian was in direct opposition to War Office regulations and highly unusual. There were Jewish Eretz Israeli officers but the professional rank was different. The Sergeants, the Staff Sergeants and Sergeant Majors were the backbone of the British army.

Rose taught me some important things. He told me that in India when he was on maneuvers for 30 days, the soldiers ate everything and the storeroom was totally empty. The Colonel requested champagne so he would raise his hand, close it, bring it

down, and when he opened his hand a bottle of champagne would appear. He always told me to anticipate things six months ahead of time. He said always be prepared for the most illogical things. If the commander wants silk underwear in the middle of the desert, you supply them. He didn't tell me however, about my promotion.

One evening he informed me that the following day I would be going with Captain James to visit the Cypriot units in the western desert. I traveled with Captain James from unit to unit for three days and three nights. I didn't say a thing except "Yes, Sir. No, Sir." I drove in the sand. I wasn't familiar with the roads and using a map we didn't get lost even once and even managed to remain on schedule. Wherever we went he had everything he desired ready and waiting for him. In every unit there were hired Sudanese men who did the laundry for the soldiers and officers so when he woke in the morning he had his uniform ironed and starched. If he desired beer or whiskey he received it immediately. His food was covered and wrapped so that not even a grain of sand could penetrate it. Years later when I was an officer, we met in Tel Aviv. He told me he didn't think there was anyone like me in the whole world and that he had learned a great deal in those three days we spent together.

We went back to Marseh Matrukh. The next morning I was summoned to the Colonel's, who I had not yet met, and received the rank of Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant, while the Englishman was sent to a different unit. I was put in charge of the 10 Cypriot units, which meant dealing with knives, cards, fighting and homosexuality. One day Rose proposed a visit to the Palestinian unit so I took the car and driver and went. I appeared in front of the commander, saluted and he congratulated me. I told him I had come to inspect the storerooms and I hoped he had

informed his Quartermaster beforehand. He assured me that everything was in order as his Quartermaster was extremely organized and there was no need to inform him of the inspection.

I entered the familiar storeroom and took out the books and documents. The British Quartermaster received me respectfully. He referred to me as “Sir” befitting my rank. My inspection revealed that six pairs of briefs were missing. Also, the shoes were not British made. He tried to fool me by offering me a pair, but when I tried them on, I instantly noticed that they were Italian-made shoes. I told him that they were not regulation issue and I knew they were made in Italy and very good for the Italian army. I ordered him to take them off. I wrote my report and went to see the Major to report the matter. He told me not to push the issue and that I had made my point. I answered him that I was leaving my report and I expected the next inspection to meet army regulation standards.

Within a week the Quartermaster was dismissed and demoted and the storehouse was organized according to regulations. My status in the unit was excellent and I got along with the Cypriot soldiers simply because I wasn’t British. I ate with the Sergeants in the Sergeant Mess and I treated them like human beings. When they had complaints they came to me.

One day in the spring of 1944, two Cypriot units and Headquarters boarded a destroyer and were transferred to Greece. We reached Athens and less than a day later traveled in convoys on the snowy roads towards Mount Olympus. At the top of one of the mountains we stopped at a small coffee house. The soldiers ate and drank and then we began our descent into the valley as it started to get dark. We did a head count and discovered one soldier was missing. Someone said they had seen him at the mountain top. The Colonel ordered us to go find the missing

soldier. I took a car and went to the mountain, found the soldier, and brought him back. By then it was midnight. The outcome was that all the soldiers knew they had a Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant who was second to none.

We continued our journey and reached the outskirts of Larissa near Mount Olympus. The Germans had already reached Mount Olympus and the British soldiers were leaving the mountain so there was no need to bring the Cypriot diggers. We remained in Larissa for several days and then returned to Athens. We didn't get too close because the Germans had completely bombed the city, so we made our way to the Corinthian Channel which had only one bridge. The Colonel ordered us to park at a specific place and wait for our turn. One of the Cypriots remarked that they wouldn't unload the trucks because we had to continue and cross the channel before the Germans arrived anyway. I knew if we overlooked this type of behavior, we would lose our influence as commanders. I went up to him, took out my gun, put the barrel into his mouth and in the little Greek I knew I yelled at him, "Unloading or not?" He answered, "Yes, Sir" but I didn't remove the gun from his mouth and two of his teeth were knocked out. After that no one said they wouldn't unload.

The next day we crossed the Corinth Channel. We went to the seashore and at a beautiful gulf there were thousands of soldiers: English, Australian, New Zealanders, and French. The Germans continued to toy with us. Their planes dove 100 meters above us, sometimes even 60 meters and shot at us. I lay on the ground as the bullets landed right next to me. There were rumors everywhere and no one really knew what would happen. In the evening the Colonel announced that it was every man for himself and ordered us not to surrender.

My friend Rose was completely drunk. He told me he wasn't going anywhere. I told him that being a Jew, I could not under any circumstances fall into enemy hands. The Colonel disappeared, which left me with James, Longridge and Reed, three British officers, as well as Rose, a fourth officer, a few Cypriots, and sergeants from the Cyprus Headquarters. The others disappeared into the mountains. As Greek Cypriots, they spoke fluent Greek. Some Turkish Cypriots who knew some Greek also disappeared on the way. The only ones left from the headquarters were the ones with me.

Some of the other soldiers deserted into the mountains also. On the shores there were tens of thousands and we were just one small unit in the middle of all the confusion. The British officers did not know what to do. They were merely ordinary citizens who had enlisted after the war broke out. I kept saying I would not be a prisoner of war. The four officers were totally petrified. They told me that now there was no more army and that they were taking off their stars. It was every man for himself, but if I wanted to take command, they would follow me. As a result the command of the unit was handed over to me.

We got hold of some gasoline and headed south. I didn't have a map of Greece so we went as far south as we could. The British soldiers ran into the mountains on foot or sat and waited to be picked up so there was little traffic on the roads. We reached a fishing village. At first we had to ascertain if the Germans were already there. I sent one of the Cypriot Greeks into the village and he came back and reported that the Germans hadn't arrived yet.

We went into a coffee house and with the Greek money that we had, ate and drank coffee. In broken Greek I started a conversation with a young waitress. She told me that we could stay in the village and they would hide us and if the Germans

came they would help us escape into the mountains. I thanked her and told her I wanted a boat. She went out and returned with a message: I could get a boat for 10,000 Drachma.

My friends stayed in the coffee house and I went to see the boat. Luckily enough it was a motorboat. The owner of the boat had gasoline and we had a few cans in the car. The agreement was we would pay him 5000 Drachma before we left and the rest upon arrival in Crete. We decided to wait for darkness to leave.

I took the group and we situated ourselves among the rocks on the outskirts of the village and waited for nightfall to board the boat. At dusk I saw a group of five R.A.F. officers walking toward the boat and I approached them. The senior officer asked who the boat belonged to. I told him it belonged to us and that I had rented it. He introduced himself as the Wing Commander and announced he was taking the boat. He continued by saying it was more important to save five British pilots than simple diggers. I told him that I understand his point of view, but in my opinion it was more important to save one Jew than five pilots. I promised him they could join us, but he hesitated. I told him not to worry and that it was my boat and I was the only one taking a risk. They hid nearby so that if the Germans came we wouldn't appear to be a large group.

When it got dark I noticed the pilots making their way towards the boat. I gave orders to take out weapons and we approached and surprised them. Their leader admitted I was a better soldier than him and I told him he was nothing more than a cheat. Nevertheless, we took them and all got into the boat. Ten minutes after we sailed, a German plane shot at us but no one was hurt.

With fourteen men crowded into one flooded boat we reached a small island and decided to hide out. There was a deserted British Army camp on the island full of food, drinks and gasoline. In the evening we boarded the boat again. The Greek boat owner didn't know the way because he had no map. He steered the boat in the general direction of south but he had no idea where we were actually headed. We could have already passed Crete and been on our way to Tunis in North Africa.

After two full days at sea we reached land but had no idea where we were. We decided to go ashore and started climbing the mountain when I noticed a small boy who had spotted us and run away. We followed him into a village where there was someone waiting for us with gun in hand. We also had weapons and if the Cypriots hadn't been with us and started communicating in Greek, a small war would have broken out. The villagers thought we were a German rescue team. When they heard we were British soldiers, they laid out a royal welcome.

We had in fact arrived in Crete. The villagers gave us an old car and we were able to reach the first town on the island. We reported to Headquarters and were given a portion of an olive orchard already occupied by thousands of soldiers. Some of them were sent to protect Crete, but most of them arrived in different ways from Greece. There were huge olive orchards and thousands of soldiers sat in small tents with no plan, and absolutely nothing to do. There were also Jewish units from Palestine but we hadn't met them yet.

At first it was quiet and I was mainly occupied with making sure there were enough provisions and bringing them from the main storehouse on the other side of the town. We were ordered to dig trenches for protection. There were rumors we were to be transferred back to Egypt. The units were completely

disorganized. We were a solitary unit made up of various units: British, Australians, New Zealanders and others. All of us were deserters who were taken out of Athens via Piraeus and brought to Crete instead of Egypt. We were nothing more than thousands of soldiers with no organized unit, divided randomly into groups according to rank.

One morning we heard screaming. The soldiers were running in the direction of the base yelling that the Germans were parachuting on to the island. We grabbed our rifles, ran to the car, and in a few minutes discovered that it was a false alarm. We returned to our tents and routine. This went on for several hours because in the afternoon the Germans started bombing.

I have a powerful memory from that bombing. There was a trench with enough room for three or four men. When the Germans began bombing, several officers jumped into the trench and each one tried to get under the other. The trenches were not deep enough to protect us. I saw them push under each other. I sat on the side and reported like a sports commentator. "They're come in from the right, now from the left, they're down, and the bombs are falling 250 meters from us." Was I afraid, you ask? Of course I was, but I forced myself to cope.

In Greece I had a similar incident with a couple of Eretz Israeli guys, one of whom attended Mikveh Israel with me. It was rather unpleasant, but clearly demonstrated that I knew how to behave. On one of our stops in a Greek village I found out that there was a Palestinian unit. In my search I reached a large courtyard with tens of thousands of Palestinian soldiers and among them was someone I knew from Mikveh Israel. He was a settlement boy and at Mikveh Israel he was considered a hero.

As we were catching up on lost time, the bombing began. We had nothing to protect us and the German war planes were

right above the rooftops. At first they threw hand grenades and then switched to machine guns because all we had were rifles. My friend was on the ground shaking and crying as if the world had come to an end. I laid on the ground, trying my best to do what was necessary, but the sight of a soldier laying on the ground in a fetal position, paralyzed in horror, crying and shaking, made me freeze. I started yelling at him. When there was a break in the bombing the man let me have it, "What kind of creep are you? What kind of cheat? Standing there brave like a hero?" For years after that we never spoke to each other. When we did meet years later, he still hadn't forgiven me.

During that time I was witness to people in their weakest moments. One incident occurred when our convoy was attacked as we passed by a cemetery. We jumped from the cars and lay on the ground. It was like something from a Hollywood Western when Indians on horses surrounded the cowboy camps. We lay on the ground and the pilots taunted with us from above. They circled overhead, like the Indians, and bombed us from the air. It was as if we could hear them laughing from the airplanes. I was sure we would never make it out alive, being totally exposed with no cover.

The British Army did not use that kind of cover. The British planes were sent to Egypt because they didn't want to waste them in a losing battle. It was 1941 and every plane was valuable. In Greece and Crete, it was a cat and mouse, life and death game. We were totally unprotected and mocked at by the enemy.

I took the car to load food rations. We had no idea where to go, having no maps. We were an unorganized bunch of deserters. I drove about 10 to 15 kilometers to the other side of the island to the train station where there was a storehouse.

Rumors were circulating that the Germans were parachuting on to the island. Rose and the other officers were worried that we would run out of food and gasoline, and that we wouldn't be able to continue our journey. They were counting on me to bring something back, otherwise there was no point to the entire journey.

The unit there had a few cars they found on the island and each unit got two or three more cars. Of course, no one wanted to ride with me. On the way I was bombed, but managed to reach the station where there was a British soldier who was responsible for the storehouse. I told him I came to load the car with food because we were going south. He told me had received no orders and wouldn't give me anything. Then he softened up. He wanted to know how many men were in the unit, took out a book, wrote down the name of the unit and number of people, and estimated how many rations for the next 24 hours.

It was extraordinary. I was in the presence of a real soldier who went completely by the book. The train station was bombed out and he stood in a half destroyed storehouse with supplies strewn all over the place and he went by the book. He didn't have orders and wouldn't release supplies for seven days. While we were talking bombs dropped and I succeeded in convincing him that not only would we both load the food into my car, but that he would come with me. Since I outranked him, I was giving him the orders and I was responsible.

I returned to the orchard. Six or seven of the Cypriot Commanders remained and we headed south. We rode through the mountains as thousands went by foot. Some rode, some were on donkeys, and everyone was headed to who knows where. This was a vagabond army, an army that had fallen apart, and not a pretty site by any means. I don't remember how long it took, but

it seemed like a full day before we reached the most southern point of the island, to the Mediterranean and the border. The military police told us they would alert us when a ship arrived. We parked the car, unloaded the food, and someone guarded the car. The mountains, like in Palestine, were solid rock with no forest and only a few trees.

That evening a soldier approached me and told me that not far away, 40 Australian and New Zealand soldiers were hiding in a cave. They had seen us unloading the food and were planning on stealing it that night. They were drunk, had no food and we needed to watch our backs. The soldier was British and he joined us. I went to the cave and asked who the officer in charge was. The Australians, as usual, paid no attention to their commanding officer. I entered the cave and one of the Sergeants told me he was in charge. I asked him how many they were and he wanted to know why I was asking. I repeated my question and he said they were about 40 men. I told them I would give them 40 rations for dinner and breakfast, for as long as the supply lasted, but only half rations so that the food would last.

That night the Germans attacked. They fired flares and the mountain tops were bright as daylight and the bombing began again. A rumor circulated that there was a boat, then there wasn't a boat, a boat was on the way, then wasn't on the way. There was no headquarters, no one to turn to, and no one to ask. We sat and waited.

At midnight a man dressed in civilian clothes approached me and said that he was in the cave with the Australians and saw me give them food. He was Greek but sounded 'pro-allies'. He spoke very good English and told me he was a banker in Athens and that he had three million lira sterling. The Australians had gotten him out of Athens without telling the authorities about the

money. The Australians were known for having no discipline and they took a civilian along with them. He told me he had heard them saying in their drunken stupors that they knew he was rich and they should kill him at night and take his money.

I didn't buy the story at all. At first I thought he was a traitor. Who walks around with three million lira sterling? I took him aside under a tree and told him to prove it. He took out a flashlight and showed me his passport and papers proving he was the owner of a bank. He also had a bundle of checks from Barclay's Bank for money withdrawn from a bank in Egypt. I gave him a uniform so he would look like one of the Cypriot soldiers.

Another day passed and no ship came. This went on for days and the soldiers knew in their hearts it would never come. On the third night, the military police ordered the severely wounded to be taken on stretchers and then the wounded who could walk to shore. A ship would be arriving at midnight and the wounded were to board first. Nighttime, darkness and that night the Germans didn't light up the sky while we were waiting on the shoreline.

Into the ship 1,600 men were packed like sardines. We were among those lucky enough to get on board. We breathed a sigh of relief but knew full well that some 7,000 soldiers remained behind. Under no circumstances would I ever be taken as a prisoner.

We boarded the boat of the Royal Navy whose sailors were exhausted. There were 1,600 men on board, and as a result of the chaos, not one of them had a proper rank. If a fight broke out among the soldiers, the first one to be held responsible was the commanding officer. However, you could not know if the man in the uniform wasn't a bully himself.

Everyone ran around like crazed animals looking for food. Over the loudspeaker they announced that there was enough food for everyone and to form lines, but no one listened. I went up to one of the officers and told him I was an officer too. He looked at me gratefully and asked me to help. He wanted me to help get everyone into a line because there was enough food for everyone. He showed me where he wanted the line to begin. I started yelling orders from the lineup area. A few lined up while others rushed ahead and, with the help of a few sailors, we got the situation under control. Little by little, other ranked officers started appearing, mostly Sergeants. The lines started forming and the food was handed out. I think it was four in the morning by the time we finished and I was worn out.

One of the officers came and asked me to go with him because I deserved something. He led me into the Officer's Mess, which was against regulations, and gave me a Bombay oyster made from an egg yolk and gin. It was the first and last time I ever drank that drink. I was on my feet instantaneously and the hair on the back of my neck literally stood up. The exhaustion and depression were immediately gone and I felt like a new person.

I don't recall if we sailed all night or until mid day before we reached Alexandria. The Greek man with the money came to me and wanted to give me a few thousand lira sterling. I pushed him away and told him to get lost and that I never wanted to see him again as long as I lived. I told him that if I wanted the money, which had occurred to me several times, I wouldn't take it, but he had better remember who saved his life and he better let everyone know.

We disembarked at the pier, the Cypriots, officers, and I. Everyone was wearing their stars and ranks. Captain James turned

to me and said, "Sergeant Major, you report to me. We are back in the army." I saluted him. It was a rude awakening.

The officers went to the Officer's Club and I went to the barracks. I took a shower and got a new uniform. Usually a man in my condition would need some sleep but Lieutenant Jock Rose and I went to Alexandria. I didn't know where I was. I woke up the next day in someone's house. The last thing we remembered was lying in the street, but after that we had no idea what happened. We had lost eight hours of our lives. Until this day I have no recollection of what happened.

Officer's Course

The report to the officers forgotten, I was sent to a large base with thousands of soldiers in Cassini, Egypt. Day after day absolutely nothing happened. Then I heard that two soldiers, Longridge and Reed, who were with me in Crete, had recommended me for a medal of the highest honor. Meanwhile there were some important developments. A Cypriot unit arrived from the Western Desert and a rumor circulated that the unit was to be sent abroad since two Cypriot units had been lost fighting in Greece. The soldiers went wild, burnt and destroyed the barracks and what they couldn't burn they broke. We had nothing to do with them. We were just six guys who had returned from Crete and Greece who were interested in maintaining peace. Two months later the Officers told me a letter had arrived from Headquarters in Cairo that I would not be awarded a medal because of the Cypriot unit uprising. That is how I lost my chance of getting a medal of distinction.

The confusion continued and we had no idea where we belonged. My Officers were concerned and we decided to do something about it. I went to the Officers and informed them that

no one would be giving us orders. I made it clear that we were there to establish the Headquarters of the Cypriot forces. Along with the Senior Officer, Captain James, two Captains, a Lieutenant Quartermaster, and two Cypriot soldiers, we decided to cross the road to the base where every building and plot was designated for a particular unit, complete with offices, a storehouse, a stove for cooking and tents. I noticed there was an empty plot that didn't belong to anyone. We got organized and put up a sign that we had kept from Greece: "Main Headquarters: Cyprus Regiment". The Officers claimed that we were forbidden to hang up the sign and ordered us to remove it. We told them that no one told us not to, so at the most, they could tell us to get out. Who could prove we weren't the main Headquarters of the Cyprus Regiment? The Officers found it difficult to agree, but that evening, after several shots of whiskey, they informed me that we would be transferred, even though we had no transportation, utensils, tables or chairs.

I went to the head Quartermaster and told him I wanted to visit the army warehouse at Tel al Kabir and that I needed a car. I told him I would bring him back two bottles of whiskey. I spruced up my uniform, took a Cypriot soldier and boastfully walked into the office and requested forms for equipment. My list consisted of a car for the Commander, a three ton truck for equipment, tents, tables, beds, and so on. I went to Tel Al Kabir with the papers and signed according to rank; Rose signed as the Quartermaster and James signed as Captain. After all we did nothing illegal but acquire much-needed equipment.

The stories about our adventures in Greece and Cyprus sounded good in English and made an impression on the Quartermaster at Tel al Kabir. I told him all about our escapades and how at Headquarters in Egypt there was no place to sleep. At

night I returned with a convoy and they even lent me drivers. I heard that the next morning in the Officer's Mess, someone asked who had come the previous night with a convoy of new cars.

You could see smoke coming out of the Headquarters of the Cyprus Regiment kitchen. We had an office, forms, and typewriters. We informed the neighboring Cyprus unit to send us drivers. Captain James was pleased. Previously he was one of hundreds of officers, now he was a king.

Now that Headquarters was operative, the neighboring unit belonged to us. I told James we needed to find out who was responsible for the uprising and that a report needed to be filed. I also suggested he request a meeting with the base Commander, Colonel Prine, and present him with the report so that everyone would know that main Headquarters was established for important matters and that we were going to deal with the unit that caused all the trouble.

Captain James requested an interview and when he returned, he told me that the base Commander didn't even seem surprised and only wondered why he hadn't thought of it before. It was now official. We were once again established as Headquarters. The Colonel sent a telegram to Cairo that the Headquarters of the Cypriot Regiment was once again in full operational status after surviving in Greece and Crete, and all the dispersed units in the Western Desert and various bases were under its command.

After several days of joy and celebration I told the officers that we were moving. Our unit was to be transferred to Ismailia to re-group as they had been in the desert for a long time and new troops had arrived from Cyprus. A request had been made to relocate the Headquarters to Ismailia.

Captain James appealed to the base Commander once again and when he returned I could tell something was wrong. I asked if they had refused the transfer. He answered that everything was okay, but there was a small problem. The Headquarters in Cairo had checked the list of the men who returned from Greece and saw there was a Palestinian among them. In front of my name the letter 'P' appeared, and because there was a regimental classification order in keeping with the new ranking system, the rank above Sergeant could not be given.

James had tears in his eyes when he told me. We consulted the other officers, but no solution was found. I can't deny that I was offended. I told James to appeal to Colonel Prine, the Base Commander. Three officers went to see him while I waited outside. They were told the Colonel was too busy to see them. The Major came out and I saluted him. The officers from my unit were standing next to me. He said he was Major Richmond, the second in command. I asked him if he knew about the rank issue. He said he had received notice from Cairo that I was to return to my former rank. He then glanced me over, went into the Commander's office and told the Colonel to give me ten minutes. I entered the room and Major Richmond and Captain James went in with me. I stood at attention and saluted.

The Colonel was about 60 years old with a lot of medals and extremely indifferent. He told me to stand at ease. I told him that what I had to say needed to be said while standing at attention. I spoke for two hours and told them all about the British and the 'natives', the British Empire, and the way they treat people from other nations. I told him that I received my first crown in England after the evacuation from France. My second crown I received in the Western Desert and the highest rank, that

no one owes me, I received from my own unit, the Cypriot Unit, which was there in its entirety.

The truth was there was only one real question. I told the Colonel that he was there because he had no choice. He wasn't asked to volunteer. I was there because I volunteered, which I didn't have to do. I received my rank in the battlefield and I intended to keep it. I went on to say that I wanted a decision in this matter, and I hoped that it was understood that even if by law it was denied, life more often than not determined things differently. The Colonel didn't stop me and asked no questions; he never even blinked an eye. I made it clear that if the war wasn't about superior and inferior races, then there was no point in me remaining in the service.

I finished speaking and left the room. Captain James said that I was headed directly to a court martial and prison for what I said in that room. We waited. Five minutes later Major Richmond, Colonel Prine's second in command, looked at me and said that after listening to me for two hours, he believed everything he had ever heard about me. I had taken a huge risk and won. The Colonel decided not only to write a reply to Headquarters about demoting me, but rather asked to see General Wilson right away. His response, which I was told never to repeat, was if I was demoted, then he should be demoted as well. The next morning the Colonel went to Cairo. That same day he returned with a letter saying a clerical mistake occurred and my rank would remain for the duration of the war.

We received orders to move the Headquarters to Ismailia. The day before we left, Major Richmond came and said he wanted to talk to me. I entered his office, saluted, and he informed me that I was to remain in that unit. I agreed. After all, I was in the army and followed orders. He told me that he was

about to be appointed the Commander of the Cypriot forces and I would be working with him. On the occasion of the transfer, Richmond received the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In England he was an insignificant bank clerk. He enlisted at the end of the First World War as a commissioned officer and now he was in the reserves and didn't have the first idea about the army, and furthermore, the Mediterranean was new to him.

My life was perfect. The officers in Headquarters were promoted and appointed to Cypriot units. The new team of officers arrived and I remained. I didn't go to the Officer's Club but after finishing dinner, Lieutenant Colonel Richmond would come to sit and talk. In fact, all the management decisions were in my hands. Shortly after that, Sudanese soldiers joined our unit in addition to the Cypriots soldiers. It was difficult and complicated administrative work with eight Cypriot units, approximately 2,400 men, and between 8,000 and 10,000 Sudanese.

I remained as Quartermaster with the rank of Regiment Warrant Sergeant and even though I wasn't an officer, nothing was done without me.

One evening, the unit officer, Captain Thomas, went to Ismailia in an army vehicle. He took a driver with him, got drunk and on the way, hit a wall and wrecked the car. Completely drunk, he knocked on my door and told me he wasn't going to wait until the following morning to be thrown into jail. He wanted me to lock him up immediately. I put him to bed and we took the car to the garage to be repaired and kept the whole thing quiet.

For the first few months I enjoyed working beside someone who had complete faith in me, but I soon began to feel uneasy. In the British Army, the regular army, it was typical for Warrant Officers to know all the rules and army traditions and to give advice. They were treated with respect because of their status

and knowledge. In my case it was exaggerated and I began feeling uneasy.

Richmond was a force to be reckoned with, but he was aware of the fact that he wasn't a professional. One day he received orders to report to the Headquarters in Cairo concerning civilian workers. He ordered me to accompany him to Cairo. When he went in to see the General, he told me to wait outside and stay put. Ten minutes later he came out and showed me the questions he was asked. I gave him the answers and he went back in. This went on for some time. At one point the General asked him if he kept going outside because the file on the case was out there. He admitted the file wasn't, but his advisor was. At that point the General told me to enter.

The General put forward technical questions about the efficiency of the workers, what should be done with the Cypriot units, and if they should be relocated to the desert or transferred altogether. He wanted to know what I felt and what I thought about these issues. This was a difficult period for the British Army after the defeat in Greece and retreat in North Africa.

At that time I found out that a new Palestinian officer's course was about to begin. I requested to attend the course and in a manner arousing pity, Richmond asked me why I wanted to. He told me there was no point in it because even though he was the Officer, I was the one who was really in charge. After listening to me for two hours, he tried to persuade me not to begin another war on behalf of the 'natives' and the whole discussion became awkward. I liked working with him and in the end he sounded like he was no more than a puppet, which was completely false. I knew full well he had authority, he made decisions, and I assisted him whenever I could. In the end he wrote me a letter of recommendation and sent me to the course, but he was annoyed at

me for going. He couldn't come to terms with the fact that I was leaving.

I went back to Eretz Israel, to Sarafand, to the same buildings, soldiers, and recruits where I started my military career in 1939. They knew who I was and before the course even began, prepared my living quarters with the British Non-Commissioned Officers and not with the Palestinians. I went into the Sergeant-Mess because after all, I was a Senior. The situation had changed for the better, but recruits were still treated like 'natives' and I had authority as a N.C.O., which was higher than the rank of Sergeant. There were one or two with higher ranks, including Regimental Sergeant Major, which was the highest rank, but I was among one of the three or four Palestinians with the highest rank, which discomfited the British.

Several days later I arrived at Officer's School. We removed our ranks and received white cadet stripes. The Captain, the commander of the course, told me my situation was complicated. They had my file and thought I was an exceptional case because I had the highest rank among the Palestinians, having been a Sergeant with the authority of Warrant Officer in addition to which I had served in France, Greece, Crete, the Western Desert, and came from a Palestinian unit. They made it apparent that I needed to be aware that from then on, I was simply a cadet and should disregard my regular rank. I would not be addressed according to rank during the course. He assured me that if I were British, the treatment would be the same. This was a result of my meeting about the demotion with Colonel Prine, and not discrimination because I was Palestinian. If I had come to Aldershot and was British, I would be treated the same. He repeated that I was just a cadet like the rest of the men. I was not

impressed. I had been in different units and knew all this first hand.

We called the course The Jewish Agency Course, and it was extremely difficult. There were 60 or 70 civilians who went straight to Officer's course without having served one day in the army. Among them were Haim Laskov, who later became Chief of Staff, Yehezkel Saar, (Sacharov), who became the first General Commander of the Israeli Police Force, and others. There was also an Arab Sergeant by the name of Mahadani who had been with me in France. There were one or two others who served in the unit. Our instructor was from the Scotch Guard, a first class athlete about 25 years old by the name of Frasier. He could stand for three hours straight without moving and knew his job inside and out. He also had an incredibly filthy mouth. I had never heard language like that, even after being in the army for several years.

At the beginning of the course there were 120 cadets, 70 of whom were civilians. Only 10 Commissioned Officers would receive the rank of officer. The Commanders knew this but didn't tell us at first. In order to determine who would receive the rank of officer, the weak had to be filtered out, which was a difficult task. So every morning in Sarafand we ran to Rishon LeZion and back.

Haim Laskov was a young man with classic Greek athletic features. He was in the first row and set the pace for the others. At 29, I was considered old and running every morning before breakfast to Rishon LeZion and back at Haim's pace was close to impossible. I ran that first week in total exhaustion. The other men would support me under my armpits so the Sergeants couldn't see, and helped me for a few seconds so I could catch my breath. Those who served in the British Army heard about me and knew I almost collapsed.

Frasier made it as difficult for me as he could. An hour didn't go by without him reminding me that I was not an expert on the army and the fact that I had served in France and Greece was insignificant. I wasn't a Sergeant Major there and I had a hard time getting his approval. I wanted to give him a piece of my mind but I knew better than to get involved with him.

I wasn't doing well in physical education classes. Shining shoes was what I knew how to do best. When everyone went to the Canteen, Mahadani, the Jewish Sergeant who served with me in France and I preferred to shine shoes and belts. Physical training broke a lot of us and after two weeks, 50 cadets were dismissed from the course. There were 70 men left in the course and two weeks later another 50 were dismissed. Only then did squad instruction, reading maps, and infantry officer training begin. The "Bufs" company, otherwise known as the infantry, was organized and it was obvious that some of us would be assigned to that company as Officers. In fact, we all thought we would wind up there.

The entire six month course involved running every morning and physical training. I began to blossom in military theory and weaponry lessons, hand grenades, night maneuvers, and more. In field maneuvers, I was myself again. The entire time, Mahadani leaned on me. In fact, I guided him through the whole course. For him it was an impossible task. He only had an elementary school education and the course presented insurmountable difficulties for him. Many times he considered leaving or requesting a discharge.

At one point Darwish Errikat, an Arab from Abu- Dis, arrived. He came from the house I visited when I was a policeman in the Christian district. He was Kamel Errikat's brother, who received the rank of Officer without attending a course and later

became the senior commander of the Jordanian Legion. Luckily, he didn't remember me or the visit, which was fortunate because he was a disaster. He arrived as part of a British decision to recruit Arab officers. Then they were dealing with someone who was anything but military material. However, I realized that Frasier, underneath that hard shell, was a human being. After Darwish barely finished one day of training, Frasier approached me, took me aside and told me he knew I was helping Mahadani who was at least willing and able. He wanted me to take Errikat and see what could be done with him. So, every evening I would take him to the outskirts of the base and train him again to drill right, left, and what a rifle was. It was difficult, tedious work and three weeks later, he gave up on a military career.

During that time I had absolutely no social life. I barely went to Tel Aviv and hardly ever saw my brother Yigal in Rehovot. All of my time was devoted to army maneuvers and I worked day and night.

During the course I became friends with a nice guy named Haim Laskov. It was quite an extraordinary thing because during the course it was difficult to make friends and there was intense competition among the men. Some worked hard, couldn't speak English, and had to struggle with everything. I had no special problems except for physical stamina. For the first time I had to do exercises and somersaults. Sergeant Frasier helped me and wasn't interested in revenge anymore. When it was my turn, he grabbed my hand and helped me finish the move.

Inspection time arrived. The classes lined up on the field with rifles and each cadet had to lead his class for several minutes. Sergeant Frasier stood by the scoreboard and recorded the points. There were about five or six men ahead of me. I left ranks and began giving orders. Frasier, in order to examine me

more closely, took an unusual course of action and stood in my place. He wanted to scrutinize closely if my orders were given at the correct time.

That was my clue that I should give the attention order right then. I turned to him and started spitting out insulting slurs, telling anyone who could hear where his mother and father really came from and in which garbage dump he was born, in the same way Frasier would talk to us. I added, "Sergeant Frasier, what do you think of your village of pigs? Look at you, still standing there with your notebook!" He was in shock, but being a good soldier he didn't react. The entire company stood still on the field and watched. Captain Leslie, the course Commander, stood at the Command building and several seconds later the base commander, Colonel Lester, also came out. It was high drama that day.

I shouted at him to throw down the board. He threw it down and I saluted him. He didn't make one move without me insulting his parents and entire family, and I added that if he still thought the Scottish Guard knew how to execute drills, he'd be much better off coming to learn from the diggers. It was one hell of a circus that day.

I led the class into the trench that surrounded the lineup area and at the last second, turned about face and sideways and everyone went wild. They had never seen anything like it before. Sergeant Frasier was in the middle of the show. Everyone stood around watching and no one dared move. This went on for 10 minutes. Finally I stopped them, went to Frasier and stood at attention. I asked him if I might be dismissed. He answered affirmatively without adding one more word. That evening he called me outside and we went to one of the corners of the base.

From under his coat he took out two bottles of beer and offered me a drink.

After that there were examinations in writing and field navigation. Each man received a map and had to pass five or six points. From Sarafand we walked to Rishon LeZion, Beit Hanan, Nes Ziona, Kfar Aharon and other places. Each man was assigned a different direction and at each point a British Sergeant or Officer was waiting to record the hour the cadet made it to the designated point.

For me it was like a walk in the park. I was familiar with the area and reached all of the five points quickly. At the last point the Captain and the course Commanders, Sergeants Frasier and Hunt, were waiting. I was the first to reach them and had one more point to go. The Commander asked me where it was and asked me to show it to him on the map. I pointed to a tree about two and half kilometers away. He told me I could sit down and that I didn't need to continue.

After that were the field tests around Ben Shemen. I did a stupid thing. I had a pair of shoes and one of them was a bit torn. I sent them to be repaired just before we were told we were going on maneuvers the following morning, and all I had to wear was a brand new pair of shoes. They were shiny parades shoes for Saturday morning lineups and the most inappropriate shoes to wear on field maneuvers.

I walked from Sarafand to Ben Shemen and my heel began to chafe. We arrived and put up two large tents where we spent most of the day and the night. Every two hours a different group went out with one of the cadets for maneuvers. On the second day it started raining and didn't stop for two days. On the third night everyone who was called knew they were a candidate for Officer rank and very lucky. Everyone was called but me. I

knew it was all over. Was it possible there was something wrong with me? We knew all along that there were only going to be 10 officers and my heart was broken, my shine parade shoes scuffed, and my foot destroyed. I could barely move.

At ten o' clock that night, one man had to command the others. It was raining and in the marshy, boggy mud and we had to attack the grove. There was a group hiding there whose job it was to defend the grove. All of a sudden I heard a voice, "Neaman, take command." Until then the person being tested didn't give commands. He must have taken pity on us as we were all slouched over. When the Captain ordered me to take command, the first order I gave to the company was to lay down in the mud and crawl. The whispering began. I told them in Hebrew, that anyone who says anything, even if I heard a whimper, I would break his head open right there on the spot. I gave orders to attack the post opposite ours and do what I told them and not let out so much as a sigh. I knew how to command.

We conquered the post in the grove. We crawled, advanced, we shot from the flanks and the Captain was satisfied. He told me to let the men go to sleep. The men started talking and I exploded and told them I didn't want to hear a sound because the enemy was still out there. Everyone entered their tents, got undressed if they wanted to, and went to sleep without making a sound. The Captain told me we had captured the grove, but he did not say explicitly, "You are dismissed."

We settled in the tents, wet to the bone, and no one dared make a sound. At six o'clock in the morning, he still hadn't dismissed us. We got up and went out of the tents. The Captain was standing with the Sergeant and told me to get the men organized on the road because two cars were coming to collect them and take the equipment back to Sarafand and the men were

to walk back. In the pouring rain I organized the men in threes and told them to sing with all their might. Rain, no rain, we were tired and the rest didn't matter. Sing! My voice sounded like a mouse or like Donald Duck. I started to sing and the whole company joined in. The Captain and the Sergeants didn't believe what they saw. After three days, these exhausted soldiers were standing and singing in the rain.

From Second Lieutenant to Captain in Three Months

Disappointment was waiting for me from the beginning. I was sent to the 68th Squadron Transportation Corps after I had been hoping all along to be an officer in a fighting infantry unit. It was a difficult blow for me, but in the army you follow orders so I went. Located on the other side of Sarafand, it wasn't too far away. For the first time in my life, I walked into the "Officer's Mess". I decided I would keep my mouth shut, at least in the beginning, in order to avoid saying something stupid. I was provided with a butler, and there were special drivers.

I felt uneasy in my new unit. I was thinking of my future and what awaited me. Would I be sitting somewhere training drivers? You recall I learned how to drive in France and now I had a car at my disposal and I was expected to teach soldiers how to drive. This wasn't a job for an officer, but there wasn't another job that suited me at the time. The other man who had come with me from the course requested to work in the garage. He had good hands and was mechanically inclined, while I knew absolutely nothing about cars. I taught the men how to drive and change gears on a route from Sarafand to Holon. It was total boredom. In

the morning there were lineups, all day long I was in a car, in the evening there was another lineup and then a long, endless night with nothing to do. I went to the Officer's Mess and couldn't find anyone to talk to. I went back to my tent. Yes, we were living in tents. I would usually read a bit and when the other officer came in wanting to go to sleep we turned out the lights and went to sleep.

I have been asked many times, what happened in Crete? How was it in France, in Greece? I usually didn't speak much about my adventures in the army. I felt that in wartime some people participated in battles and others didn't and not everyone has to know exactly what happened.

Then one day everything changed. Hundreds of recruits arrived and there was total chaos, most of which took place in the dining hall. It was impossible to feed everyone because there was a shortage of Sergeants to supervise and the kitchen collapsed under the burden. The new recruits went wild, grabbing bread and food from one another. Havoc broke out everywhere.

The Colonel summoned an Officer's meeting and I was the only Palestinian present. The other Palestinian officer was working in the garage and didn't attend. The Colonel banged his staff on the table, "How is it that in the British Army we are not capable of organizing the Mess Hall at meal time? What did the Officer in charge do?" All the Majors and Captains and Lieutenants sat literally shaking in their boots. I sat in silence. At the top of his voice the Colonel said, "Well, what do you have to say for yourselves?"

The Major said to the Captain, "You are the Mess Officer, Captain, what have you got to say?" The Captain answered, "The situation is unacceptable. There are no cooks, no one knows how to cook, there aren't enough products, and there

is no one to serve the food.” He looked around and suddenly noticed me. He said, “I haven’t heard you say anything. Do you agree with what has been said here?” I answered, “Yes, Sir, but…” He said, “Well, what do you have to say?”

I had plenty to say. I told him that I was sure that among all of the recruits someone must know how to cook, and there were probably waiters too. Instead of using hired civilian Sudanese and Arab workers, we would have to find people who had some idea about food. Instead of everyone entering at 12:30 into a small area that seated 400, it would be better to divide the 1,200 men into three shifts. We would end drill earlier. Instead of getting food for a 24 hour period, we would request from the D.I.D. (Office of Provisions) to supply us with food for two days until we adjusted to the new arrangement, so that we could open tin cans and put the bread out beforehand.

The Colonel listened and said, “What’s your name?” “Second Lieutenant Neaman, Sir“, I answered. He said, “Lieutenant Neaman, from now on you are the Supply Officer.” That is how I received my second star. He promoted me in a tick from Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant, barely three weeks after I received my first star. He explained to me that as of then, I was the acting Lieutenant and after three months I would receive a permanent rank.

I walked out of the meeting stunned. It was my fault. Why did I open my big mouth? I was the Supply Officer and I knew nothing about the job. It was now my responsibility to feed 1,200 soldiers three times a day. I ordered the Sergeant to get all the recruits prepared for a lineup. I went from company to company to find out who was a waiter or a cook in civilian life. This was strangely like the orchestra fiasco, but I knew there had to be some waiters and cooks among the men because who

wouldn't want to eat after a hard week in training? Ten minutes later I had 40 and 50 volunteers. I told myself that I could do it with these men. I noticed two men who didn't volunteer and kept my eye on them. One of them was Danny Galmond and the other was a man by the name of Horowitz. Because they didn't volunteer I put them in charge of the storeroom where most of the robberies were.

Three days later, the meals were served in three shifts a day and the food was served properly. And no less important, I didn't have to teach driving. Things went smoothly more or less. It wasn't the Waldorf Astoria and it wasn't an organized unit where the food is good and always on time, but it worked. The Colonel came every once in a while to have lunch to see how the Mess Hall operated. The food line was perfectly straight, especially after I made it clear that anyone who got out of line wouldn't go to prison, but would have to deal with me instead.

I stayed in the unit for a little more than a month and then was transferred to Unit No. 468, the truck transportation unit. It was a new unit, but the participants were experienced soldiers. We encamped not far from Kibbutz Givat Brenner. By that time I was a two star Lieutenant and still taught driving, together with other freight transportation duties. We had freight trucks and transported military equipment from the large bases near Beit Naballah.

Most of the officers in this company were British. Major Raymidge was the commanding officer and Captain Cherkam was his lieutenant. There were several British Lieutenants and one or two Jewish officers. However, all of the soldiers, drivers, and recruits were Jewish.

A short time after I arrived at the unit I got a call from Yehuda Arazi, a Haganah purchasing agent, and we started taking

weapons at night from Bet Naballah to the Haganah warehouses. Even though they were British Army weapons we were giving to the Haganah, I didn't feel I was doing anything damaging to the British Army. The only good reason I can offer is that Palestinian Eretz Israel was a part of the British Empire, albeit far from London, where the great problems of government were handled. There were many problems that went unsolved because of the distance and disinformation, so average people took initiative and began preparing for the future. That is exactly how I would have behaved if I was an officer serving in Habbash or Sudan. I would initiate activities the main headquarters in London never even considered. That is what Kitchener did when he fought in Sudan at the end of the 19th century. Following this train of thought, I was acting for the good of the British Empire because we had security issues. We didn't know if the Germans would reach Eretz Israel and the British government was not giving this corner of the world too much consideration. In addition, the people they sent certainly showed no resourcefulness if they couldn't organize 1,200 recruits at meal times. In my opinion, my initiative was beneficial.

We were like Robin Hood taking from the rich and giving to the poor. The British, with their mountains of weapons, were the rich and we were the poor. My relationship with the British officers and the Commander was proper. With the Sergeants it was standard, cold, and distant as expected. You went in, ate, got orders, and gave orders.

Then there was the ambitious Lieutenant Commander, Captain Cherkham. He would stand and comb his hair for a half an hour every morning, then put on aftershave with a scent that carried for kilometers. He always had stories and jokes to tell. He was a bit of a snake and the Commander could not stand him. One

day out of the blue, he went to Jerusalem. A long time earlier, when he first arrived in the country, he had worked at the Headquarters in Jerusalem. When he returned, he took his clothes, attending assistant and car and moved to Haifa. A new transport unit, 650, was established and he was appointed the Commander. After three months as an Officer, Captain Cherkham left and I received his position and rank. Later I was told that the Commander knew that in three months when I finished the Officer's course, I would be promoted to Captain. He was so sure he even bet on it.

Within a month I received orders to report to Transport Unit 650 in Haifa and to Cherkham. It was the first time I saw the subdued Commander Raymidge angry. He spoke like the Sergeants, cursing and swearing at Cherkham. Even though he knew there was a shortage of men he requested I be transferred to serve as his deputy commander.

But orders are orders. I took an army car with a driver and went to Haifa. I went into Cherkham's office and saluted but he didn't look up from his papers. When he finally raised his head and asked me what I was doing there, I showed him my transfer papers instructing me to report as his Deputy Commander. He looked at me and said, "You are a Captain? That was fast." He claimed that I must have had connections in high places. I didn't answer. I stood at attention with my baton under my arm befitting a British soldier. Needless to say, I was under a lot of pressure.

Major Cherkham raised his moustache and said, "Come, let me buy you a drink and I'll tell you everything." We walked to the Canteen and he told me that I shouldn't be under the impression he requested me because he needed me. As we walked along the path, where no one could hear us, I said, "Bullshit. You went to Jerusalem, requested me, begged for me and Raymidge

refused. You argued with him about it. Major Wallace sent me to you because your unit is in total chaos and you can't handle it." I also told him that if he wanted me to get the company in shape, fine. If not, then he should give me orders and I would get back in the car and return to Headquarters in Jerusalem. I told him that we both knew that Major Wallace was the commander of Company 468 and he was transferred to Headquarters in Jerusalem. I made it clear that I knew he had been there, that Raymidge had been there and he wanted to please them both.

What really happened was that Wallace went to see Raymidge and right after that I was promoted to Captain. Wallace knew me personally, so I told him to stop playing games because he wouldn't be able to fool an entire unit. I also told him I would deny everything on a stack of Bibles.

Major Cherkham wanted to know if I could handle the unit, realizing they were all riffraff. They wouldn't stand in line, they couldn't drive cars, they couldn't speak, and there were only three months to turn them into soldiers. Impossible?

Now the truth was out so I invited him for a drink. We went into the Canteen and over a few drinks, I told him to give me 24 hours and I would let him know what he had to do. I left the Canteen to meet the Sergeants. There was a British Sergeant Major who was appointed to work at a prison to deal with the prisoners and not as a company trainer. There were a few Jewish Sergeants and Corporals who were good men and weren't about to bow down to anyone. Some of them were far from innocent, yet there were some excellent men among them. There was Al Caprovov from Kfar Giladi, Sergeant Lee, who was a Jewish guy who had won motorcycle races in Hungary and knew how to dismantle and assemble any car with his eyes shut. There was also Dov Goldstein from Rosh Pina, a great guy, and some other

ranked soldiers, one of whom later in life became a regional Judge, and another an ambassador. I talked to them and it was anything but love at first sight.

I walked around the base for a while and by the next morning I thought I had the feel of the place. I went to Major Cherkham and demanded from him to dismiss the British Sergeant Major and then a few weeks later appoint a Jewish Sergeant Major. I also told him not to worry because I would do his work for him. He told me I had free reign. I told him that at nine o'clock every morning the lineup would be flawless. I told him that from then on, he would be able to retire to his office and devote time to the day's trials. Each and every file would be ready with the necessary documentation and recommendations. All he would have to do was make decisions and then enjoy his leisure time.

We had 10 weeks until the general inspection to prove whether or not we operated like a convoy, could repair cars, if the garage was functional, and how the paperwork was handled. I told Cherkham he had no choice and couldn't do it by himself. In the meantime, I worked as usual. I awoke at six every morning and at ten at night we were still shining the cars. I worked alongside the soldiers wearing an overall, and went under the cars. I knew all about British official procedure. In the garage there was a British Sergeant who knew the ropes and wasn't interested in anything else except fixing cars. He knew it by heart and I asked him to teach me.

I had English speaking men at all levels and stages of jobs. I told the men that if we passed inspection, we would be a working British unit and sent to the front. I also told them that if they had enlisted to have a good time near Haifa, that was fine, but if they came to move, act, and get to the front, we only had 10

weeks to prepare. The British Army demanded efficiency, but shine as well. They learned how to paint stones and shine cars better than usual. That was the result of taking action. And one more thing: no freebees. I was not about to make any allowances. I was familiar with every last word of the King's Regulations. I only explained things once, maybe twice and whoever disobeyed the rules was punished.

Ten weeks later our sponsor, Major Wallace, arrived. The inspection lasted for three days. Wallace went first with Cherkham in tow, and I walked three steps behind them as required. Wallace examined the company and was satisfied. A short time later we were geared up to move. We were transferred from Saint Lucas on the Carmel to Jalameh across from Kfar Hassidim.

For the next ten weeks I met Yehuda Arazi on Ha'halutz Street in Haifa. A result of those visits was that two trucks went for 'spins' and a lot of special deliveries arrived for the Haganah.

Something else happened right before inspection. One evening, one of the soldiers approached me and said that a civilian was waiting for me outside the base so I went to see who it was. A man who knew my name, and who later became a well-known figure in Israel, was waiting to see me. He told me that people were waiting for me in Tel Aviv and that I had to report immediately. I left the base without informing anyone.

When I arrived in Tel Aviv I was escorted into a room on Rothschild Boulevard for a meeting with the top man (Eliyahu Golomb, the head of the Haganah). The man explained to me that there was an important mission and that I had to send two cars from the unit. I refused. He was taken aback and wanted to explain. Rather upset, he said it was not a question of *why*. I explained that we were in the midst of a difficult inspection so we

could finally be considered a legitimate active unit and at that point I didn't want to take one car or one man. If I did, the entire unit would be at risk.

He said my response was grounds for a trial. I said, "Yes, Sir" and left the room. Five minutes later he came out patted me on the shoulder and said, "Okay, don't get upset. There is a lot of pressure on everyone; there is a lot at stake. Nobody is aware of it like me. When there is such a dire need, it is hard to hear a negative response, but you convinced me. Let me know when you are ready and the guy who brought you here, a communications man who lives in Haifa, will take you back."

At the Jalameh base we were sent to do gravel work at Haifa Bay when we received orders that the unit and 140 cars were to go to Baghdad.

I passed the message on to the Haganah and they instructed me to contact Enzo Sireni, a Haganah messenger in Baghdad. We started our journey from Haifa to Baghdad without any problems. The men were professionals, driving ambulances, stopping, reorganizing, waking on time, cooking, eating, and continuing on our way again.

We met Sireni in Baghdad. We brought him communication equipment, illegal of course, and some other top secret things he needed. We met at the home of a Jewish family in Baghdad. It was a pleasant evening because Sireni was an extraordinary and humble man. He told me that he needed more men. I told him that it was too complicated. The trip took a week and we were camped at a British airbase near Habniyah. I had a driver, an alternate driver, and in each car there were management level people and a cook. How could I possibly explain additional people? Sireni was adamant. So I invented excuses to overcome these difficulties. After all I was once an army Quartermaster and

I knew how to get equipment and army coats and even blank identity cards.

We supplied the Jewish boys with uniforms, got them identity cards, and brought them to a meeting one night. We got them into the cars on top of the barrels and packages of equipment that we were bringing to Haifa. The British Major was with us the whole time and had no idea what was going on right under his nose. He never noticed that we had more people than usual and he never caught on because I made sure he received whiskey and stayed drunk.

The Iraqi men were bored, didn't move or make a sound, and didn't relieve themselves before we made the late night stop. We arrived in Eretz Israel and handed them over according to the instructions we were given.

Three days passed and Major Cherkham returned from Headquarters in Haifa with a face as red as a tomato. He didn't want to talk with me in his office.

We went outside and he was so angry he was shaking. He told me that he heard at Headquarters how our convoy was supplying weapons to Baghdad and transporting Jews from Baghdad. He told Headquarters that this was impossible because he was there the entire time and saw nothing. Then he added that he had just then found out he was Jewish. I said it was no big deal. He was still pretty agitated and I told him that we didn't do anything. We didn't bring weapons or people. He did. He was the Commander and the one in charge. I was only a Lieutenant Commander. Under regulations he was in charge of the entire operation.

He was shocked. He kept repeating that he wasn't even there and never saw anything. I held my own. I reminded him he was the one in charge and he was going to make my life very easy

from there on out. I informed him that whenever possible certain things would be done with the utmost caution. If they accused him in Headquarters that he transported weapons for Jews, why didn't they take any action against him? It seemed as if they didn't know and someone informed them. We were pretty sure we couldn't find out who the informer was, but from then on I would let him know when we were going on a mission of this kind and he was ordered to keep his mouth shut. If he wanted to call it extortion, so be it.

I told him he was officially in charge of the convoy, gave me orders to do it and I didn't dare disobey because he was my Commander. I added that he had a good unit and should enjoy it. I assured him that everything would be fine and now he could learn for the first time how to depend on himself. I told him not to hide and that I would let everyone know he was Jewish. He tried to resist but I stood my ground. I said, "I will tell everyone you are Jewish! They will love it, and they will be proud of their British Jewish Commander." He didn't answer me. I told him that if they asked him, he should tell them that nothing of the kind ever took place. It was all nonsense. Nothing happened because if it did he would have known. I repeated that if there was evidence against him, he would have heard by then. They simply didn't have anything.

After a short time, the entire company was sent to the Sinai to transport freight between train stations when the long awaited orders arrived to go to Egypt. Egypt was the gateway to the war. We worked in Egypt for some time. Montgomery had arrived and there was a lot of preparation and concern over if the Germans would be successful in invading Cairo and continuing on to Eretz Israel. How should we act, what should we do? What would happen? All unanswered questions.

The company got organized and left. Besides Cherkham, only two British officers remained, Lieutenant Gum and Captain Price. In the garage there was one other British Sergeant. In addition, there was a Jewish Captain, named Pervis. Later he served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the IDF and if I am not mistaken he was also a part of a purchasing delegation to Paris. As for Cherkham, well, I told everyone in Haifa that he was Jewish and they thought nothing of it. He changed a bit as a result and with us he seemed prouder, but outwardly he retained his typically British behavior.

One day we were put on a ship to Tripoli. We had no idea what was waiting for us there. I decided that having the company start training would be beneficial. We went on a 10 mile hike with full gear and kit bags and I walked at the head of the company. We sweat like pigs. The training was important so the men would stay in shape. The men were toughened up by the training. It was a first rate military unit. The British Commander who came to inspect this spectacle of a Palestinian unit couldn't tell the difference between a regular British unit and ours.

In the Officer's Mess I was formal even though two of them were members of the Youth Guard (Ha'Shomer Ha'tsair). One of them was from Kibbutz Gan Shmuel and one from Kibbutz Dahlia. They learned that in my unit they had to behave like Officers. We were in the British Army. It didn't help me that the Officers in our unit and other units liked me. One of them once asked me why I needed all this. Why are you so tough? I told him I wouldn't loosen the grip because we were in the middle of a war. Then it was quiet but the next day we could be on the battlefield. Weaklings and cowards would cost us dearly. I had soldiers in good condition who were ready for anything at any

time. They would act on command, instinctively without asking questions.

There were times when discipline was an issue. When we were in Egypt, one of the drivers said that working for Egged Bus Company was better. He thought that if he appeared to be crazy, the army would release him. He went to the sand pit and sat down with his hands held in front of him like he was fishing. A Sergeant approached him and asked him what he was doing. He answered that he was fishing. He sat in the sun fishing from the sand pit. I was told he had lost his mind and something needed to be done about it. My advice was that if he was crazy and harmless then we should have pity on him. At least he was enjoying himself. I told the men not to give him any food. He could cook the fish he caught. I even offered to start a fire for him and told him that after he caught some fish he should fry them in the frying pan.

Late that afternoon he stopped fishing in the sandpit. Afterwards, in Italy, he became my personal driver. He proved to be a brave soldier and saved my life on several occasions. We got along great. What happened in Egypt was a result of his poor state of mind. Another Commander might have brought a doctor to see him.

The truth was that the other soldiers were angry with me. Why were we torturing ourselves with this backbreaking training? But I walked in front. I walked in front and they followed me and so it was until the big day.

Discharged From Service After Six Years and Seven Days

One day we were told we were going to receive the greatest gift ever. We were going to be deployed as a rescue team in the Allied invasion of Italy. We were issued cars and joined the landing forces. The long suffering and strict discipline were about to pay off.

All of our 140 trucks were loaded onto American ships. The journey lasted several days and as I was standing on the bridge one night with the Captain, he remarked that he noticed I gave orders in English, spoke English, but with the soldiers we spoke another language among ourselves. He wanted to know who we really were. I told him that we had Stars of David and we were the Palestinian Unit. We were Jews from Eretz Israel. The Captain then whispered secretively that he was Jewish too. He came from Charlestown, in the southern part of the United States. Why doesn't anyone know, I asked him? That is the way we are raised, was his answer.

He told me about life in America, about anti-Semitism and how Jews are not allowed to join certain clubs. I asked him how he could live like that. He told me that his father taught him

not to impose himself where he is clearly not welcome. He suddenly became quiet and then told me that it was impossible to imagine what he felt when we boarded the ship. He saw the Star of David and heard us speaking a foreign language. He thought it might be Hebrew, but he wasn't sure.

Several days later we approached the beach at Salerno. The canons fired and the first round of shooting began. The Germans returned heavy fire. It was the beginning of the invasion of Italy and we were in the middle of all the confusion. We disembarked with the ammunition we were delivering to the infantry. It was a difficult landing because the Germans knew we were expecting an invasion and they were waiting. The cars kept getting stuck in the sand, bombs dropped all around us, but fortunately we didn't get hit and no one was injured. Everyone obeyed the rules and was fully prepared. I didn't have to give orders, yell, or push. Everyone knew where to go and what to do. The men performed brilliantly, first-rate all the way, and the unit was organized.

Several days later, the Germans retreated and we entered Salerno where our Headquarters were, including Sergeant Major Barker and a kitchen. Incidentally, many years later I received a medal from the War Veterans Organization and Sergeant Major Barker was present. Here is the story.

The Organization of Jewish War Veterans bestows medals on veteran soldiers. Until this very day only six or seven have been awarded. Among those who received the medal were President Kennedy, Omar Bradley, General Hutchison, and one year it was given to me. The main speaker in the ceremony was General Gunther, the United States Army Head of Operations in the invasion of Salerno. When I walked onto the stage I was blinded by the spotlight. Suddenly the lights went out, and when

my eyesight adjusted I thought I was back in the Second World War and that I was sitting in my office in Salerno. I was astonished at the sight of Sergeant Major Barker, in full British Army uniform and beret, standing and saluting me. He had a special way of saluting that hadn't changed after all that time. They flew him in from Israel as a surprise guest. He was a Colonel in the IDF and in my honor he wore his army uniform.

That same evening General Gunther stood on the stage and said, "If I knew in Salerno that I would meet the Commander of the unit that would land on the shore on D-Day I might not have come because on that night, if he would have met me, he most certainly would not have greeted me with a kiss on each cheek."

My unit in Italy conducted itself well. During the time I didn't serve in the Palestinian unit, I adopted the approach that I must excel. I moved into the most beautiful house in Salerno with a large garage for the cars and decided that it would be Headquarters. We situated ourselves in a vacated school, so the soldiers would have a place to sleep inside the city. While the General Headquarters was getting organized I was already enjoying all the necessary comforts.

Back in Tripoli I decided that two Sergeants and two Corporals would get to work as soon as we disembarked. Their job would be to locate in Amalfi, on the Riviera not far from Salerno, a rest home where groups of 10 men would go for one week of rest and relaxation. Cherkham was the Commander and I was the Deputy Commander.

In Italy I improved the soldiers' living conditions. They didn't sleep on the ground or in the mud like before. I wanted to build them beds that were similar to cots made from canvas and wood, but we didn't know where to find the necessary materials. I

found the owner of a large carpenter's workshop who knew where to find wood. I traveled 200 kilometers with him and after a short disagreement he let me take two truckloads of wooden planks for free. After several days each soldier in the unit had a folding bed of his own stored in the car. I took care of my men as if they were members of my family, but I demanded discipline in return.

After two or three weeks in Salerno, Cherkham was transferred to Headquarters. I was appointed unit Commander and promoted to Major.

We had a special way of life. Every Saturday evening we would get together and a soldier, Matthew Arielli, organized parties and shows for the whole unit. The Canteen had excellent resources and I decided to be lenient. For example, we purchased fruit from the local market. After the company was dispersed the platoons were stationed in various cities and worked hard. About two months later we were so proud when we received brand new trucks. Originally we had three ton trucks and then we heard that our Unit 650 was getting a six ton vehicle with a trailer, and the impact was huge.

We were considered a particularly capable unit and did not transport food, canteen merchandise or general freight. We transported ammunition to the front lines. Other units argued about who would drive, who would work in the kitchen, or who would sit in the office. For us that was all trivial. For my men, being a driver was the greatest honor because I succeeded in instilling them with a deep-rooted sense of team spirit.

We transported weapons to the most dangerous places like the landing point at Anzio. The orders for this mission expressly stipulated that the transport was to be carried out by Major Neaman's unit. It was total hell and I know what that was like because my men and I went through hell in Anzio. The

British landed on the beach and the Germans were waiting for them. They absorbed unbelievable amounts of gunfire 24 hours a day. It was our job to bring the ammunition and time after time we succeeded in doing so without injury. We were lucky, but I am certain that following orders had a lot to do with it. The men conducted themselves strictly by the book. They automatically and intuitively drove, parked, and unloaded.

A popular newspaper by the name of, *Tsioney Ha'derech* (Landmarks), whose copies can be found in the national library today, wrote all about our unit. The editions were thick because many people donated material and I appeared in each edition. I was also a member of the Soldier's Treasury and the "After the War" organization that established a freight co-op after the war was over. I was determined to instill in the men the perspective that the army was not obligated to anyone and if they didn't have expectations they wouldn't be disappointed.

I also had to take care of personal problems. One time a soldier fell in love with an Italian girl and wanted to get married. I was informed of the situation and immediately went from Naples to Salerno with him to meet the woman and her parents and convince both sides that it was a bad idea and it would never work out. Whenever there was a problem, the men came to me. I felt they respected me. I didn't have to silence them or call them to attention; my presence was enough.

In my company there were some pretty exceptional men, like Shalom Lavi, one of the founders of Kibbutz Ein Harod, Lipsky from Bet Alfa, and other kibbutz philosophers. We had all kinds of men from all walks of life: Communists, Revisionists and city people. One of my friends from the Youth Guard Movement gave me some advice in Naples. He said that I should belong to something so that I would be backed up if it was ever

necessary. I told him that I didn't need to because I was, after all, the Commander of the unit. He explained to me that he was suggesting it for my own good, so that when I was criticized, someone would be standing behind me.

We were in Naples on Passover and I gathered the unit together. We ate a good dinner, drank wine, and then I told my men that whenever I got them together it was usually for official purposes. But that night was a holiday so I told them to sing and be happy, but if they wanted a half hour to ask questions, it would be “off the record” providing it remained civilized. I told them I was not prepared to hear any insults from them, just as no one insulted them. I urged them, however, to speak their minds. The men asked why they were stationed there and other questions that I could tell were not sincere, but rather because I, their commanding officer, told them to feel free and ask questions. One of the soldiers, who was drunk, asked for permission to speak. He asked rather critically, “Major Neaman, do me a favor for once, just once, don't be right. It is very difficult for us when you are right all of the time.”

The same is true today. I don't speak unless I am sure I am right. If I ask someone to do something, then I will do it first. I always got along with my men and for some reason they never hid the fact that they were proud of their unit and Commanders. Someone once told me that during the siege of Jerusalem in 1948, when things were really bad, one digging partner said to another, both from my unit that, “If Sammy were here everything would be okay.”

A person who takes on a task should not expect praise or love. I am without a doubt not the first person to say this, nevertheless it is true. I never demanded the love of my men, but if I wanted to maintain my position, my subordinates needed to

value me. Like everyone else, I have my weaknesses, but my men admired me because I took responsibility and I took care of them. In return they accepted my demands and performed at a higher level in comparison to other units. The men in my unit believed that serving in Unit 650 bestowed more honor upon a soldier than other units. Whatever anyone else thought or believed about a unit where soldiers still saluted and cars were shined from morning till night I really have no idea. I only know that in my unit men did not ask for transfers unless it was to go into the parachute unit. In every case except one, the requests were denied. There was a man in the unit by the name of Swoot, who time and time again requested to be transferred to the parachute unit so that he could return to Yugoslavia and kill some Germans. Finally, his transfer came through and he was gravely wounded, losing both legs.

I received many letters, most of which were filled with praise and others with insults. I received letters from high ranking officers, including Generals, who admired my work, the drivers' conduct, their courage, their spirit of volunteering and devotion. One person wrote a particularly insulting letter where he detailed why under no uncertain circumstances did he believe that we were a Palestinian unit. Our unit had an excellent reputation of professionalism and efficiency of the first order.

Our cars were rarely involved in accidents, hardly ever in the garage for repairs, and our output was the highest of all the British transport units. Our good reputation even reached Eretz Israel. My father's brother, Aaron, told me after the war that Moshe Shertok (Sharet) returned from Italy elated because of our unit. He said something to the effect of, "There is only one army Commander like that." He dined with us one Shabbat and it was very pleasant. From then on we had a good relationship.

My unit also participated in some difficult battles in Italy, including the battle at Monte Casino, south of Rome. For six months the British were unsuccessful in breaking through German lines there. During that time we began taking care of some 400 Jewish refugees. We fed them, got them set up, and even gave them jobs. We had to do this with the utmost caution so that no one could claim that we demanded extra food, and if my men wanted to share their food it was their own business. It was a purely humanitarian act. We also helped hungry Italians, but for the Jews, we had to go to special lengths. We had to find them, bring them to the base, and give them clothes to wear.

This story has been told many times. We were just a small part of a vast machine which accomplished all of this. We followed orders and did our duty as Jews. At first the activity was sporadic and later I ordered two or three of my men to take care of the refugees on a regular basis. They were ordered to collect people, give them first aid, and then bring them to the base. Sometime later, an organization was established to take care of the Jewish refugees.

We were in Naples and Salerno for about three months. Remember we were considered a first rate unit. I will go far as to say that we were a model British Army unit and even American officers came to observe us as a prime example of the British Army. And we were only Palestinian... After Monte Casino we went to Rome and continued north to Assisi. This is where I first met Meshulam Riklis.

We were in Italy for a long time, up to the end of the war. After V Day the British Army was in no hurry to release recruited men. I got an offer to stay in service with a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, and to serve in Germany. The high rank didn't appeal to me, but I did want to serve in Germany. I mulled

over the offer for several days and finally I informed my superior officers of my decision. I chose to be discharged. It was exactly six years and seven days that I'd been in the service.

I was sent back to London, but before I tell you what happened in England, it is time for a brief synopsis of my life and especially the war years.

With your permission I will start back at Mikveh Israel where I learned to accept life as a given. The most important thing I learned through working the land is that nature is a part of everything. The rain for some is annoying and nothing more than a means to clean the streets from time to time. But for me it is nature's way of irrigating the land to prepare it for plowing and planting. That is how I came to see life as a combination of callings. A cow will stand still motionless all day long, except for one thing: perpetually making milk. My experience in Mikveh Israel blessed me with the ability to perceive things realistically rather than romantically.

I had been in France, witnessed the collapse of the Czechoslovakian reign as Hitler conquered it without a fight, and I saw what happened to Chamberlain and his peace policies. I saw a country prepare for war and a country that remembered 1918. I knew there was only thing to do: fight. Therefore, when war broke out and even earlier, I had no doubts or internal conflict: I enlisted. It was nothing special, just a way to deal with the facts. When there was a war, soldiers go to fight. I was the right age therefore it was my duty to serve in the army. I knew that I needed to find my place in the army structure, a structure which I needed to fit into and not the other way around. The army is all about structure and I was the construction material. I never stopped being a Jew or a Palestinian and I never let one person beat me down if I could prevent it. I believed that if I had the

power to act and carry out a task at a high level, I should be the one to do it. And if I got an army rank in the bargain, I should accept it.

The British Army taught me automatic, but not blind discipline. What I mean is that I did what I needed to do without asking questions, but not without reason. Therefore, when they tried to demote me because I was a Palestinian, I fought it from within, believing in the system and the law.

I learned all about people in the British Army. At Mikveh Israel, the Moshav, the Moshava, and in the village, we were all friends. I've had my share of disappointments, but each person was a friend first. The army taught me to observe people and decide what kind of person they are once I really got to know them. The army also taught me to live on my own, to be alone and lonely.

This is especially true for Commanders. I saw how some suffered in units where they tried to be both Commander and friend to their men. Only certain people were able to accomplish this. I was not one of them and if I wanted to be a Commander, I knew I would have to sacrifice this aspect of human relationships. I had no friends and at the end of a working day I would seclude myself in my tent and read. Outside the tent I was an Officer and what happened behind closed doors, or tent flaps, was no one's business but my own. The outside world saw only an authority figure in a uniform and rank. I wasn't a hero, but I had to be a role model and when I was afraid, I bit my lip and put on my poker face.

In the army I learned that it isn't essential to be loved, but respect is requisite. You respect a person because of their position or profession, not merely because they are a human being. I was a professional. I was a professional farmer and in the army I was

considered a professional as well. I learned how. If I had to learn from books, or to stand at attention for two hours, I did it with extreme professionalism. This approach to life molded my future character and today I am as I was then. I execute all jobs professionally. If I had to sweep the streets tomorrow I would make every effort to do the best I could.

In the army I learned that you can mix all kinds of people and by integrating them into a unit, they lend a hand, work together and constitute a unified group. Each one is a different and separate entity, tall or short, strong or weak, but together they can accomplish anything. My experiences in Mikveh Israel and in the army taught me to extract the maximum effort from people. When I was a child a doctor once told me that I needed to drink a lot of water because that is what the body needs. I was capable of living in the desert for months with a canteen half full of water per day and that amount was enough to shave with, bathe with, and wet my lips.

The army taught me the meaning of organization, order, and how to take punches. I had fled France, Greece, and Crete. I learned that fleeing and retreating is not the end of the world. A person can retreat, be beaten, and come out triumphant. All of this left an indelible mark on me. What's more, I learned to plan ahead. At the end of months of training, a Colonel could ask for a bottle of Champagne and after 30 days in the mountains we had to be able to provide it. All of this is deeply embedded within me.

Those experiences enriched my character and heightened my intuition about people. I learned to observe people and figure out what makes them tick so I would know how to talk to them, because I firmly believe that there is a different approach for each person. Army and life have shown me that anything can happen. You shouldn't let it go to your head when you are at the top, just

as you shouldn't despair when you are down. More than anything, I learned to trust myself, especially when others put their trust in me.

I learned how to talk to people and mastered the art of persuasion.

For example, when Eretz Israel was in its infancy, my British Army unit camped near Kibbutz Givat Brenner and there was a play showing in Rehovot in the largest theater of the time, the Bet Ha'am. Naturally, the entire Moshava attended and soldiers came too. I was a Captain and I came with my Company. Some of the soldiers sat in seats that belonged to someone else and the people whose seats they sat in demanded they get up. Chaos broke out in the hall and the show couldn't begin. The soldiers enjoyed the luxury of the theater, but they took the seats of the local people and no one did a thing. I went on stage and announced that all the soldiers were to stand at attention immediately. They did so and I ordered the soldiers to vacate the seats at once and go to the back of the theatre. They obeyed. I asked the locals to please return to their seats and thanked them. No one sat down. The local people invited the soldiers to sit. The local people then went to the back of the theater and stood and watched the show. They gave up their places to the soldiers willingly. Then the show finally began. I also learned that today's friends may be tomorrow's enemies and today's enemies may very well be tomorrow's friends.

The army was an excellent lesson in international relations. I noticed that one Frenchman felt he was superior in every way to the British guy and the British guy thought he was much more aristocratic than the Frenchman. The Belgian looked at both of them with contempt and thought they were both complete fools. The Belgian believed in himself, his initiative, and ability. He thought the Frenchman was a shadow. The

Belgian was enterprising and hardworking and produced results. Each one thought they were the cream of the crop. This multinational meeting of men, or so I hoped, diminished my prejudiced views. I didn't see myself as one of the "chosen people" and understood that every person perceives himself to be part of a selected group. I witnessed men in their strongest moments and their weakest moments. I knew heroes and cowards from all nationalities.

These events deprived me of the peace I knew as a farmer, as well as the ability to adjust to routine. I can no longer live a routine way of life. I must be actively involved in something.

As the years passed, I came to the conclusion that there are two constants in my life: heredity and environment. With one's heredity, a talented person can be a good soldier and banker and at the same time one can become a thief or a good policeman. A person is molded by their environment, and heredity bestows their inborn talents.

Now back to the end of the army story. I was released in 1945, exactly six years and seven days to the date after I enlisted. My army service was very long. Toward the end I still walked around in my uniform in England. The sight of a Jewish Major from Eretz Israel was, at the very least, an exciting spectacle for the Jews in England.

Working for UJA and Ampal

Cecile and I had only been married for a few months when I enlisted in the army so the first thing I did in England was to go see my wife. All in all, I had only seen her one week in France during the war and for two months in England when I was on leave. We were married for seven years and for all intents and purposes, we were strangers.

My father went to Argentina on the eve of the Second World War while Odeda and Yifrach went to England. Mother became ill and was hospitalized in England so Odeda was sent to a boarding school. Yifrach continued his studies and worked at a factory because in England during the war, all residents were obligated to be employed. His music had now taken second place in his life because of his full time work and he only played when he had free time.

I received a letter about Mother's illness and asked Commander Cherkham if he knew someone in England who could help Yifrach find a place to live. He looked into it and, as it turned out, his father and sister lived in the same city. Yifrach went to live with them until I returned to England.

Odeda was in boarding school and Father was in Argentina. At one point he wanted to return to Israel or to England, but went to South Africa instead and became the Director of the Jewish Studies Department, similar to his job in Argentina. He was not permitted to enter England and could not join the family so afterwards he returned to Israel.

For reasons I can't remember, I met Moshe Shertok, the head of affairs of state for the Jewish Agency in London. It could have been when I visited Great Russell Street 77 where the Zionist Agency was located. I had no idea what I was going to do in the near future. My first thought was to return to Eretz Israel. My reason for going to England was to get my wife and return to Israel. For me, going to Israel was returning home but for Cecile it was something quite different because she had never been there before.

Moshe Shertok looked at me in my shiny Major's uniform. I was on discharge leave, but still in uniform. Because I spoke good English and had received medals, he wanted me to work with him in uniform as a mediator between the totally introverted British Jewry, who were anything but pro-Zionist. It was a good offer and I began working as spokesperson.

Buckshtensky was my direct superior in the Jewish Federation (Histadrut) and together we visited all the key British Jews no one from Eretz Israel had ever met. I went everywhere in my uniform and shiny medals and baton and conducted myself as an Officer and a Gentleman. I was the quintessential image of a British officer, complete with a blonde moustache. A Jewish officer from Eretz Israel was certainly a novelty, not to mention an attraction.

It was November, the beginning of fundraising season. Buckshtensky sent me to meet some important people he had met

with before and instructed me to get straight to the point: money for Eretz Israel. My mission was to go wherever I wanted, but return with results. The rich Jewish organizations were full of people in the textile business like Sam Goldstein, Alek Warner, Charles Clor, and Lou Mintz who were too old to go into the army during the war. Sir Simon Marks was the patron of the United Israel Appeal of Canada.

During that time I met with Military Rabbi Cherick, who had located my wife. He was serving as the Director of the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet) in London. I had great respect for him because he was a learned man and I sensed he was an extremely sincere person. In his opinion the offer I received wasn't too bad, money was undeniably needed and the fact that I was a Major was also important. There were Jewish Majors, but no Palestinian Majors from Eretz Israel.

That is how I began my work in the UJA. Most of my military service was with the British so I was familiar with their mind-set and at the risk of sounding egotistical, I was very successful. Starting from scratch, I organized the entire enterprise like a military operation. Until then contributions were made door to door. The existing system wasn't working so I decided to try an alternative method. I spoke with Goldstein, who purchased material from Shmulevitch and had him invite Shmulevitch and some other people to his home where I spoke with them about contributing money. In a short period of time I had raised unprecedented amounts of contributions in British pounds.

For me this was a temporary undertaking I did as a favor for Moshe Shertok and I certainly had no plans on making fundraising a career. I continued until 1947. By then I had organized countless meetings and conferences and among those

who wished me success was Aubrey Evan, better known as Abba Evan.

I recall in particular one fundraising meeting at the Dorchester Hotel in London. The Chairman was Simon Marks, who arrived with the *crème de la crème* of London's Jewish society textile people. Moshe Shertok was the speaker and he knew how to deliver a speech. When he was finished speaking he shook everyone's hand and then we went for a walk in Hyde Park. I reminded him that we started with the English Jewry, then the UJA, and that it is was getting to be just too much. I told him plainly that fundraising wasn't for me. In the meantime I had started training some young people and was afraid it was turning into a full-blown career with meetings, extra classes, and business contacts. This was fine and good, but I wanted to return to Eretz Israel. He listened to me and then asked me how much money was raised that night. I reminded him that he was there and knew. He put emphasis on the fact that it was a great deal of money.

I was concerned with the situation in Eretz Israel. It was a time of great strife and the British were anything but interested in their relationship as our ally. I asked Shertok who had an inside line if we had a chance to triumph over the British Empire. In the London cold of Hyde Park he spoke quietly and told me how the barefoot refugees of the Holocaust, from southern Italy to the Mediterranean, would reach every corner of Europe. He spoke of how they would come in the thousands, tens of thousands, and even hundreds of thousands and the British would not help them at all. Trying their best, they wouldn't succeed in drowning them at sea. The sound of feet headed for the south would force the British to open their gates. Not guns, not bombs, but money was needed and lots of it. He said he had no control over me and I could return to Eretz Israel tomorrow morning if I wanted to. But

there weren't many people like me who could succeed at what I do. It is possible that history will not remember Shertok-Sharet as one of the great Prime Ministers Israel ever had. I don't want to judge him, but he unquestionably had the power of persuasion. The next day I went back to work.

In every practical sense, I was a British subject. Upon discharge from the army I received British discharge papers and a British passport. In the meantime, Yifrach moved in with Cecile and me and after Odeda finished school she joined us as well. Things were difficult for us. Despite the fact that I had an income from fundraising, the Jewish Agency had no money to pay salaries so we made due with very little and Cecile helped with her salary.

It was during that time that that a well-known journalist by the name of James Egger discovered Yifrach. He had heard him play for soldiers during the time he worked all day long and performed at night. One day we opened the Daily Express newspaper and on the front page was a large picture of Yifrach and a caption that said, "A Musical Genius." After that he performed in concerts in England, South Africa, and the United States and his career flourished. In the beginning he didn't make any money because traveling was expensive and he was a beginner. But the world opened up for Yifrach. His agent, Ivan Phillipe, explained to me that a career develops slowly and Yifrach, like his name, was a flower in bloom. At that time Yifrach, Odeda, Mother, who was hospitalized, and I were in England. Father was still in Eretz Israel.

In early 1949, the UJA decided I should go to work in the United States. I was refused a visa because according to them, *"too many Jews are trying to get into the United States and they are unwanted."* I felt as if my head exploded when I heard this. I

laid my passport on the counter and started to yell, “You will issue me a visa right now and if you don’t I will force you to repeat what you just said to me to the newspapers.” Needless to say I received my visa, but it was limited to six weeks. When Cecile and I arrived on the Queen Mary to the United States, Cecile was ill. She was lying in bed with fever and an immigration officer would not allow us to enter even though we had visas. Yelling wouldn’t help me now. The American clerk made it clear that I wouldn’t be allowed to enter the country with a sick wife. He could care less about the visas. He was the one who determined who entered and who didn’t.

As an act of compassion and perhaps because there was a chance we might be deported to England, the ship’s agent came to ask what happened. I explained the situation to him and he went to speak with the immigration office. A few minutes later he came back and said everything was okay. I wanted to know how he reversed the decision and he told me to go see the immigration officer and get the answer straight from him. All the other passengers had already left the ship and I was alone. I handed him my passport and he asked me why I hadn’t mentioned I was Jewish, and did I think that he would let the very same British who destroyed the United States enter the country? He said that because I had a British passport. How cunningly odd it was that in London I was refused entry to the United States because I was Jewish and in New York they refused me entry because I was British.

New York made a great impression on me as it does on anyone who sees it for the first time. We arrived at night and strangely enough, our taxi driver was also Jewish. He had heard that we were Jews from England and Israel and refused to take

money from us. Before he dropped us off at the hotel, he gave us a tour of Broadway and Times Square for free.

I went to the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) offices and found an extremely well run organization. On the first day I received my itinerary. It turns out I was well-known as “Mr. Neaman”. They also arranged a series of speeches in the southern part of the United States. There were approximately 15 or 16 speeches scheduled over a two week period in as many cities. Very quickly I realized that delivering a speech in the United States was quite different than in England. In England I had to speak, to say the least, with great care. It wasn’t decent to discuss money outright. Speeches were about needs and obligations. In the United States it was more like a production line. You spoke straight to the point and got the job done.

I was sent first to New Orleans. At the airport I was greeted by the local representative who handed me my instructions and telephone numbers and told me to call him at nine o’clock the next morning. I arrived at a very modest hotel in the traditional southern town of 1949 New Orleans. In the lobby of the hotel a black woman was sitting and playing the piano. After the army, England, and ration stamps, I found myself in a cradle of plenty. No ration stamps here and what was left over could have very easily fed three entire families.

The next morning I called as instructed and my presence was requested at the office. A woman greeted me and told me to tell her all about myself. She was brief and I followed suit. Where were you born? *Rosh Pina*. Where is Rosh Pina? *In the Galilee*. Where is the Galilee? *In Israel*. Where did you work? *In agriculture*. Were you in the army? *Yes, I was a Major*. Which army? *The British Army*. What else can you tell me? *Nothing*. Give me something exciting. I told her that was all I had. I wasn’t

exactly Gary Cooper. She was annoyed as I clearly wasn't meeting her expectations. It was all very different from what I was used to. It was business, pure and simple. No sentimentality in this organization.

They told me I had to make a speech at a luncheon for about 20 men's clothing factory owners. I wasn't prepared and knew absolutely nothing about the people and what was expected. I was seated next to the Chairman and the organization clerk, whose only explanation was that the meal was first, I would speak, and then pledges would be made.

The food was good and I ate plenty. Then the Chairman stood up and read off a scrap of paper that my name was so and so, I was a Major, and added a few other carelessly taken exaggerations from the organization brochure that had nothing to do with me whatsoever. There was a pitiful round of applause and I spoke in English about Israel and what was needed there. It was 1949. Israel had had its first triumph, independence, which seemed like a good start but more help was needed. I never once mentioned the word "money". I reached them by using reason. I spoke for about 15 minutes and the applause was even weaker than before. People got up and walked out.

The representative stared at me in rage and asked me if I had ever given a speech before. He made sure I knew that it was solely my fault that a great deal of money had been lost that evening and reminded me that they had paid for the meal, brought people, and no one donated any money. He told me I was completely unfit to be a fund raiser.

We went back to the office. The regional manager had already heard what had happened. He actually cried in front of me. *Why had they sent me? I had ruined the entire evening.* In my presence he dictated a 60 word telegram to the UJA manager in

New York. It went like this: *You sent me a complete failure and I have no choice but to send him to another meeting tonight in Tampa, Florida. From there he will be taken back to New York. I don't ever want to see him again because he singlehandedly is destroying all the good work we have accomplished here so far.*

I wasn't used to this kind of reaction, but I saw the people walking out on the speech and I knew I had failed. I had no idea what I was doing wrong. I succeeded in the past and had collected thousands of Pounds Sterling. What was the difference between the British Pound and the United States Dollar? Why were the people here so unwilling to listen?

Feeling awful, I flew to Tampa. A Hungarian Jew by the name of Schwartz was waiting for me. In anticipation of my arrival, I could see misery written all over his face. He was new at the job and the meeting he arranged that evening was his first. He drove me to the hotel in his car and on the way he said to me, "Major, may I be frank?" I told him I would be happy if someone would be. He explained that he knew what happened in New Orleans and that he really wanted to succeed that night. In that town there were only 50 Jewish families and they would all be in attendance. If I failed, he would be ruined because a whole year of work would have gone to waste.

I was also frank and I knew he heard that I had failed but he didn't know why. He explained that my problem was that I didn't inspire or stimulate people's need to contribute. According to him, what I needed to do was emotionally motivate people and target their feelings. We continued our conversation in the hotel and I asked him who would be attending. His answer was brief. "Major, you have to speak *Tsu den hartz* (Yiddish for "from the heart"). He told me to speak straight to their hearts and their pockets would open.

I asked to him to take me early so I could see the hall. I wanted to know where I would sit and who would be sitting next to me. He told me I could have whatever I wanted. "*Just don't kill me tonight*" was his answer. He showed me around the hall and until the meeting began I prepared myself. I walked around the building that faced the ocean. I walked along the promenade facing the ocean and practiced how to inspire people. I was upset. I remembered how I was accepted in New Orleans and became so upset that I couldn't eat dinner. I know myself and when I am hungry I get tense and that night I forced myself to be tense. I didn't hear them introduce me or what they said about me and I didn't care.

When I finally began my speech I was magically transported back to Rosh Pina, sitting with my Grandfather on the rocks. I described how I had built houses, plowed fields, and paved roads. I spoke to their hearts. The hall was completely silent and then I noticed tears in the women's eyes. I not only spoke to the heart, but from the heart. I told them what happened in New Orleans and how I wasn't trained to speak and didn't know what was expected of me. When I was finished the crowd gave me a standing ovation.

They opened up to me because I had given them what they wanted.

That evening not only did they donate money, but the donations increased. They gave \$1,500 for the Major, \$3,000 for the Major, \$5,000 for the Major and so on. Schwartz was ecstatic. After that I was invited to someone's home and asked to continue the story I had started at the hall. I told them I had spoken enough but they wouldn't let me go. So I kept on telling stories until 3 in the morning.

As a result of my success, the UJA began to fight over who would get me. The man from New Orleans claimed he was the first who wrote about it in the telegram to New York. I don't mean to boast, but everywhere I appeared, the UJA donations doubled over the previous year. As I traveled from city to city, my reputation always preceded me. An interesting thing happened in Edinburgh, Mississippi, about 500 kilometers from New Orleans. After speaking one evening and collecting a large amount of money, a man who spoke Hebrew approached me. He spent the entire evening with me and told me that the next day he would take me to my next appearance in New Orleans. I told him that it was a seven hour drive but he didn't seem to mind. During the entire trip I learned more about the United States than I did in the next six months.

I appeared with Rabbi Straus, the Chaplain of the United States Navy, in front of a group of acculturated Jews and then I realized why they brought the Chaplain. He was a Reform Rabbi. Until then I didn't know what it meant to be a Reform Rabbi in the United States.

Upon my return to New York, I was treated completely different. They sent me to meetings with famous people like the Vice President of Berkeley University, government ministers, and once with the secretary of the United Nations, Trygve Lie. They were all top notch people who drew in audiences. They spoke first, then the Major, and my reputation always preceded me. Offers came in from various cities. *Send us the Major!* Later, high ranking generals and officers from Israel arrived but I was still a first class attraction. I was the first ever to appear with British rank.

Once I arrived at a city in New Jersey at mid day. The organizer was waiting for me and took me to the Chairman of the

UJA who was very worried. He told me he thought we might be in trouble because he had gotten all he could from the Jewish people there in 1948. Getting more money seemed to be an impossible feat. As was customary in the United States, I asked him what business he was in and he gladly told me. We talked about the UJA and I heard some familiar stories about problems with the pledges. The Jews made promises but until they actually handed over the money it sometimes took another six months, eight months, and sometimes even a year.

He told me that he was solving this via bank guarantees. He worked with a particular bank and had a good relationship with the bank manager. However, there were limitations because the manager was not prepared to give a great deal. I asked how much was pledged the previous year and I also wanted information about the community. He told me that there were synagogues, a community center, and a lot of rich Jewish people with property in the city. I suggested he go to the bank with a few of his friends and that they meet with the bank manager and give him a guarantee from the members of the committee. I explained to him that the bank is in business to make money and this was not a private or business loan but for an organization that raises money. In English it sounded better: Charity. It was also good for the relationship with the bank. I asked if there was competition between the banks. The answer was yes. It was clear that the bank we chose would not be taking any risks. I told the UJA representative to collect the pledges and inform the contributors they were obligated to deposit the money in the bank.

This was a new approach for him and he liked it. That very same day he invited several top UJA representatives and they phoned the bank managers they knew. The previous year they collected \$300,000 so I told them to ask for a \$150,000 loan.

This amount would definitely be collected and simultaneously provide an extension to gradually pay the loan back. And so it was. Before the meeting that evening, the UJA had a check in their hands for \$150,000 and the next morning I took the check to New York. It was incredible. Nothing like that had ever happened before.

The next stop was New Haven, Connecticut. The UJA manager there was a rich and pleasant Jew who owned a chain of laundromats. I showed him a copy of the check from New Jersey. He looked at it without hiding his amazement. He said it was a good idea because it gave us extra time to pay. The obligation was to the bank and we didn't have to argue with people in the community to collect the money.

The meeting in New Haven was held in a restaurant that was jam packed and in one corner was a table for 20 people. In the midst of all of the commotion in the restaurant I managed to appeal to their emotions. I did not do this gently or rationally, but out loud and straight to the heart. I *sold* Israel to them and they donated. And this time they didn't give a check. The manager of the UJA promised me that we would get the loan from the bank immediately and that is exactly what happened.

I continued on to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where I learned for the first time about the struggle between the needs of a particular community and the needs of Israel. According to an agreement, the UJA funds collected were not intended only for Israel. The evening prior to the meeting, I entered the management board room and it was explained to me that they were in favor of Israel but they needed to first see to the needs of the community and the schools in town and there was a struggle over how the money would be allotted. At that point I wasn't involved in internal matters. In Milwaukee there was no local

UJA Director, but from time to time a representative would come from Chicago. Then again there was a hired Director who took care of community issues and that is exactly what he did.

Issues pertaining to Israeli were becoming tedious there and I needed to have a conversation with the “big guns” in that town. That title belonged to a man who was an iron scrap metal merchant, a very busy man who I discovered by chance. I asked him to phone all the supporters of Israel he knew so that the evening’s results would be in the UJA’s favor.

One meeting was on Friday night and the second was on Saturday night. For the second event, hundreds of people were invited and the guest of honor, UN Secretary Trygve Lie, was present. He spoke with cautious diplomacy and I allowed myself to deal in politics. I posed the question, “What does the U.N. do for our little country?” Waves of applause kept interrupting my speech. It was an unforgettable moment. At the end of the evening the General Secretary of the U.N. told me in his official capacity he thought I did the wrong thing, but as a private person who has spoken in front of crowds, he was willing to hear me 10 times more.

The UJA story continued for 10 months. I learned a great deal, but after awhile I began feeling uneasy. It was 1949 and Israel was experiencing severe austerity, civilian allocation, rationing, and overwhelming difficulties. While the immigrants were living in tents and canvas huts, I was traveling from city to city speaking about charity and donations and how it was better to give than to receive.

I was well known and met with donors and tried to reach potential donors who weren’t on the UJA list. For example, in Milwaukee I approached a well known Jewish lawyer who was president of the local Republican Committee. He was a successful

lawyer who lived the American dream but was not involved with the Jewish community. This was during the Democratic Presidency of Harry Truman and I was informed that the Republican lawyer couldn't appear at a Jewish event. I asked to meet him anyway. We sat for two hours and in the end he agreed to appear. He came, took a seat, and listened carefully. That particular evening he didn't donate any money, but I was told that later he did donate a substantial amount of money.

One time, in a place called Grand Rocket, the local activists there told me no money would be donated because they had given everything they had the previous year. I organized the meeting myself and went from house to house to convince them to come hear me speak. They came and they donated more than in 1948.

On our way back, a UJA representative told me that near Chicago there was a small town that no one had ever gone to because the richest man in town, the owner of an iron factory where most of the townspeople worked, was anti-Israel despite the fact that he was Jewish. I took it upon myself to persuade him at least where we were concerned. I got to the town and the man refused to meet me. I asked for directions to his house. I went there and waited and was told that he would return home at five o' clock. I rang the doorbell and the maid answered the door. I told her that Mr. Sones asked me to wait for him and he should be arriving home shortly. I went in and sat down. He returned home and saw the person he had refused to see sitting and waiting for him in his living room.

He was rather annoyed but was polite. I started speaking and didn't finish until six thirty. He invited me to stay for dinner and I kept on talking. Afterward he took me to his five-year-old son's room. It was more like a hall than a child's bedroom. There

were wall to wall closets and each closet was filled with toys and things his son would use when he was six, or seven, or until he was 21 years old. At eight o'clock in the evening I called the UJA representative who was waiting for me at the hotel and told him to gather the Jewish community and tell them that Sones would be arriving. The representative said that they wouldn't believe it. I asked him to tell the people that I would be having dinner with the man and when we were finished I would bring him to the meeting. In fact, I had no idea if he would be joining me at the meeting or not.

After he showed me all of his possessions and riches, we continued our conversation and he let the proverbial cat out of the bag. Apparently, in 1948 he wanted to do something for the new country. He traveled to Israel and was treated badly and decided "*the hell with it.*" I showed him the five fingers on my right hand and told him to look at them carefully. I asked him if any two were exactly the same. I told him that in my opinion if someone in Israel treated him badly it doesn't mean that all the people in Israel are the same.

Eight thirty, a quarter to nine and I still hadn't mentioned the meeting. At ten o'clock I saw that I had probably worn him out and he hadn't changed his mind. But I continued. At that moment, in one of the homes in the city, about 15 to 20 Jewish people had gathered to hear me speak and they all had a place in their hearts for Israel. I asked him to call a taxi for me. He was insulted at the nature of my request and said he would take me there. He arrived with me and ran the entire evening. I gave my speech and he opened the UJA and gave what 10 other people didn't give. After that things changed in town. An organized Jewish group was established with Mr. Sones at the helm and the donations poured in.

I appeared in large cities to great ovations. I spoke to the most important people in the United States. I learned from each one of them how to begin a speech, end a speech, and especially how to construct a speech. I learned the most from an author by the name of Morris Samuel. We sat at a dinner and while he was eating his main course he took a napkin and wrote a word on the top and another word on the bottom. In the empty space in the middle he wrote five or six more words. With the help of that napkin he gave an extraordinary speech.

At the end of the evening I asked him if I could buy the napkin. I saw how he built his speech on six or seven words. He explained to me that when he comes to give a speech he has no idea what he will speak about other than the beginning and the end. He explained that when he has the beginning and the end, he can connect to the words he wrote. I kept my eye on him all evening and every word reminded him of an idea. I realized once more how a person must be an expert in his or her chosen field.

To every meeting, two representatives would attend: one who would attract the people, usually an internationally known person, and one, in this case myself, who was called the “the hammer”, or the one who attracted the prey. In addition to those appearances, I had some extraordinary experiences. One time a car parts factory owner took me at midnight to his factory so that I could advise him on how to overcome some of the problems he was having. This would happen because before the meetings, I made sure to spend time with the important citizens of each town and listen to their business insights. The car factory owner saw by my reaction that I knew something about management. At three o'clock in the morning, I was giving him advice on how to solve his problems with General Motors. He sold them some parts and they had him by the throat.

I had many successes and met fascinating people, who were usually interested in helping, but each event was indistinguishable from the others and I soon realized that I couldn't keep repeating myself at the meetings. I was not happy because I didn't like hand-outs and I was preoccupied with the thought of what the future held. If I continued for another year, what would happen? I had already become accustomed to the unexpected and I had to get used to the idea that things would not always go my way. What would happen if in one year's time it would be impossible get people interested in the immigrants and pioneers building the new state of Israel? The whole time only one thing bothered me: Why don't they invest in Israel? Why just be involved with donations?

My salary was a modest 96 dollars a week but that didn't bother me. What bothered me more was that, with all my wonderful achievements, in effect I had nothing of lasting value. Cecile and I lived in a small two room apartment in New York. Cecile decided to study styling and work in a hair salon. In London she was a journalist, but in New York there was not much need for her French. As a Frenchwoman, she thought that being a hair stylist would suit her.

In the United States I bought my first car. I had the money I got from the army when I was discharged, but I couldn't transfer it to the United States. I solved the problem with the help of my brother Yifrach. He was paid for a series of concerts he came to give and he left me the money and I gave him half the money I had in Israel so in the end I had \$3,000. The idea for the car came from Cecile. She said we had a furnished apartment and I was on the road all the time so when I was home on Saturdays we could go to the beach by car and wouldn't have to travel on the subway.

At the same time I met a man I knew in England. He came to the United States before I did to work for the Keren Kayemet. He told me that if I was interested in investments, there was a rich Jewish man I should see by the name of Dickenstein who owned an investment firm. I looked him up in the phone book, then called and asked to see him. I told him what I did for a living and how I got involved in fundraising. I also told him that I heard that he too was involved in investments for Israel and I was interested in getting into this field. He was very indifferent and wanted to know who I was and what I knew. I suggested he send a telegram or letter to Moshe Sharet, the Foreign Minister, who knew me, to get references.

Dickenstein was not impressed with me but he wrote to Sharet and got a reply that must have made a good impression on him because he called me at home. When I went to see him he told me happily "*you are one of us.*"

I notified the UJA that I was quitting and began to work with Mr. Dickenstein. I reviewed his balance sheets and he explained to me that he was selling stock at five and a half dollars a share in a company he established by the name of "Ampal", which was an American company connected to the Jewish Federation in Israel, actually Bank Ha'poalim. He told me that he had worked in the past in the Cooperative Bakery in Hadera and then went to the United States via the Far East. During the war he had gone door to door selling shares of Ampal.

The man was very creative. He hired me because he decided to sell a series of Bonds for Ampal. He told me that in New York he had people. He had contacts with the ParBonds, a canopy company of refugees from various Polish and Russian towns connected to the Jewish Federation. In Milwaukee and in other cities he also had people. He even sent someone to Los

Angeles and paid them a great deal of money, but within a few months the man failed. Perhaps I would be successful there.

He gave me the names of two friends of his, Charlie Brown and Julius Fligelman. Charlie Brown owned a man's clothing store and Fligelman had a furniture factory. Cecile remained in New York and I received a plane ticket and had a hard landing in Los Angeles. The UJA provided their workers with very good conditions. There was always someone waiting for you with a car when you arrived or you could take a taxi. But Dickenstein counted every cent and wouldn't send a taxi. I had to either walk or take the bus.

I phoned Brown and he invited me to his store. He was quite an extraordinary person. He had a son who had died in the war and now he lived alone with his wife. His entire life had been dedicated to the Jewish community in Los Angeles and he leaned toward the labor movement. He worked for the good of Israel via the UJA in the community and told me that he agreed to meet me only because I showed up but he had already informed Dickenstein that after the last attempt, it was a shame about the money. He was not about to purchase any more Bonds. He had bought shares in Ampal and that was all he was willing to invest.

Brown was your average German Jew and very opinionated. I knew that it would be a waste of time to try and persuade him so I asked him to call Fligelman and set up a meeting for me. He tried to get out of it, but I was adamant and he finally consented. He picked up the telephone and I heard him say, "Julius, there is a guy here from Israel who wants to see you." Fligelman said he was sorry but he was leaving for Arizona. I asked Brown to tell Fligelman for me that it was a shame because I was already there. If he agreed to see me, I would know if I should return to New York immediately. It was a pity for each

dollar lost. Brown liked this approach and told him that he should meet with me.

I went and met with Fligelman at his furniture factory. He was very different from Brown. He was a loud American, pleasant, liked to hug people and spoke politely. After two minutes I could tell that his word was like a house built on the sand. I told him that I had come all that way and that it cost me a lot of money. I asked that before he sent me back to New York, maybe we could get 20 people together for a luncheon. I gave him my word that I wouldn't ask for money. You and Charlie Brown could give me just one thing, the opportunity to speak for just half an hour to 20 people. After that, I promised I would leave him alone. If after the meeting he decided that we had nothing further to discuss, I would leave immediately.

Julius Fligelman called Charlie Brown and forgot all about Arizona. The two decided to gather 20 people for lunch the next day and split the cost of the meal so that Ampal would not have to foot the bill. They gave me the one half hour that I requested figuring they would be finished with Dickenstein forever.

Lunch was in the hotel where I was staying. There were 20 complete strangers present and I had no idea how to talk to them. I could talk to them separately like I did with Brown and Fligelman, but I had no idea how to talk to the entire group. I spoke about one subject only: Bond's that bear interest from a company that would lend money to Israel. During lunch I overheard a conversation between two people that it was unnecessary to branch out into new areas because the loans would definitely ruin the UJA and so on. When it was my turn to speak, I put my watch where I could see it. On purpose I stopped speaking in the middle of a sentence when the half hour was

finished. I told them I had promised I wouldn't speak for more than 30 minutes and I wouldn't even finish my sentence in order to keep my promise. The audience begged me to go on. I continued speaking for another 45 minutes.

It has been many years since that night and I don't remember everything I said. I spoke about how the time had come to decide if they believed Israel was capable of genuine independence, and if so, she would be able to pay her dues. If they didn't believe it, then they were throwing the UJA money to the wind. If we didn't do something small, here, in this group, nothing would come of nothing. If we failed, the Bonds could be exchanged to a donation in two or three year's time. If we succeeded, we would be helping Israel and making a profit.

A Jewish man by the name of Sirotta, the owner of a large department store, was there. He opened his wallet and handed me his card. He explained that his secretary would not let us enter so he wrote on the card, "Essential for business purposes" so we could get in. As a result all the people gave us their business cards.

After the meal was over I had 20 business cards in my pocket. Charlie Brown approached me and said he was taking back everything he ever said and that I could stay. He told me he was sure I would be successful there. I asked him who the most difficult nut to crack was. His answer was Sirotta, the man who wrote the first card. If I was able to get something out of him, then I was on the right track.

His store was right next to Brown's. People left the hotel at two o'clock in the morning. At 2:15 I was at Sirotta's place. "Here already?" he said. I told him, "I know you are the hardest nut to crack. If this is true and you are the most difficult person in town and getting a dime from you is nearly impossible, that

means that if you help, so will others. I am dependent on you. If you buy from me I will have something to show in other places. If you don't, it will be bad for me. But I won't give up. You, Sir, are my key to the city."

He looked at me in surprise and asked me if I wanted a job with him. I told him I wasn't interested, but I did want \$10,000 for Ampal. The words were stuck in my throat. I shocked myself that I dared ask for \$10,000 because someone who sold five shares or ten shares at \$25 or \$50 was usually satisfied. Mr. Sirota opened a drawer and took out a check. He didn't give it to his secretary, but personally handed me a check for \$10,000. I took out the form and told him that this was not charity, it was a loan. I asked him to fill out the form the same way he filled out a form for a United States Savings Bond. I needed both papers: his personal check and his signature that he approved the loan and that he purchased a Bond from a company that works for the State of Israel. That was more important to me than the \$10,000. He asked me if I was sure I didn't want the job.

From that group in Los Angeles I collected close to \$100,000 in checks. Every morning I would buy the *Wall Street Journal*. When I came to the meeting I started with the latest financial news and the current situation, companies, and general financial news. I learned all the West Coast commercial and investment terminology.

I called Dickenstein immediately after my first success with the group of wealthy people. He was furious that I wasted money on a phone call. I told him that I had \$100,000 in checks and he nearly fainted.

Los Angeles became the driving force. There I reached a completely different league of people. I went to the UJA representatives, the *Farband*, Yiddish speaking Jews who were

good people but couldn't afford to buy Bonds for \$500. Later I showed them that they could donate as well. They were hospitable and friendly to me and had good Jewish spirit, but they had no money.

I also found a group of liberal millionaire Jews. It was the McCarthy Era in the United States with the infamous blacklists and people were living in limbo. In those days being a liberal and a millionaire did not mix. One of them took me and his wife out of town so that we could talk in private without being overheard and he told me about his upbringing and his feelings. He was a liberal left winger who amassed a lot of money and he wanted to know what I really wanted from him. He wanted to know what a person from Israel could give him. He said he didn't believe in nationalism or in God. I answered that if he didn't believe, I wouldn't be teaching him because I didn't know myself. To provoke him I told him that if he believes he is a Jew he should ask the first Gentile person he meets if he is a Jew. In Israel he would be able to belong to a country that would never disown him. He could live in a place where he could fight for what he believed in. I emphasized that he was not really wanted here. I put in plain words how at his club I had sat next to Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and other millionaires: all Jews. I didn't see any Gentiles. That was some classy ghetto, but it was a ghetto nonetheless. Did I convince him? No. But I had no choice. He was born a Jew and the Jews didn't even want him.

I remained in Los Angeles for seven months and brought Cecile out there. In the meantime I went to other cities and met with industrial and business people. In addition, I went from door to door to ordinary Jewish people. I learned to ask the legendary \$64,000 question. In other words, a question whose answer nobody really knew. I was willing to speak but at the end I

expected a decisive answer, Yes or No. If 'yes', give me a check, not a promise. I learned to reach the correct people and finish a deal. I worked 12 or 13 hours a day. The more hospitable Jews invited me to their homes in the evenings. The others I would meet in offices during the day. For 20 or 30 minutes at the most I would introduce myself, discuss the issue at hand, ask questions, give answers and do my best to conclude the meeting in a positive way.

I checked out San Diego, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. I went all over California, Oregon, and Washington State to the border with Canada. All of the people I met gave me names of potential contributors. The work was hard and a flight from Los Angeles to Seattle lasted for five or six hours.

In Seattle I received the name of a Jewish man who invited me to meet him during a card game with some of his friends. These men were there to play cards and not listen to talk about investing in Israel. When the host served coffee I initiated a conversation on the issue. They never finished their card game that night.

I knew Israeli economics and I read every word printed on the subject. I asked Dickenstein to get me information on topics like economics, industry and export, not immigrants or canvas huts. Millions of dollars were made every year from the export of citrus fruit from Israel.

I wasn't immediately successful everywhere. There was one occasion when I met a rich Jewish man who made his fortune from scrap iron. He told me that he didn't want to discuss money. He invited me to his office the next day and intended to buy a Bond there. The following morning when I arrived at his office he didn't purchase anything and told me that we were only talking and hadn't obligated himself.

At his home I met a friend of his who didn't want to talk to me so I went to his office. His secretary wouldn't let me go in to see him so I phoned him from an internal telephone and he told me he had no time to for me. Not wasting time, I walked straight past his secretary and directly into his office. The door was stuck so I turned the handle, locked the door, and put the key in my pocket. The color from his face completely drained out. I told him to sit down and relax, that I didn't come to rob or kidnap him. I told him that after meeting him at his friend's home the previous evening, he could at least grant me five minutes of his valuable time and hear me out and then refuse. I wasn't about to force him to do anything he didn't want to do. I told him that I would never have treated him that way.

He asked me what I wanted. I reminded him that we had spoken the previous evening and that now I wanted to know how much money he would donate, and that he could easily give it to me by check. I told him it wasn't a donation and that he was just lending money for which he would receive interest. I made sure he knew that his friend from the previous night, his business competitor, gave a certain large amount. In the end he gave me more than I got the night before. He gave me \$25,000.

After that I went to Portland, Oregon. I met a suitcase factory owner who once went to New York to buy leather and during that time he had purchased some shares of Ampal. I discussed suitcases and airplanes with him and how important it was that suitcases were light to make it easier when traveling. He saw that I understood his business and then took me for a tour of his factory. We went out to lunch and continued to discuss his business. I asked him how to get started in that city. He told me that he knew I usually began with the most difficult person and that he would give me the name I wanted. The man was a German

Jew and would contribute, providing the donation went toward community activities and not to Israel.

Later he gave me some more details about the man, who owned a large department store and had a booming business. He told me about the man's family and his daughter's divorce. I asked what bank the man worked with, and he told me the Bank of America. He wanted to know if I also used the Bank of America. The man turned out to be a Gentile Italian. I requested he set up a meeting with the bank manager. He was rather surprised and wanted to know what I wanted with the manager of the bank. I reminded him that I hadn't asked him for money. The only thing I wanted was to meet the man. He called and set up the meeting and even took me there and left.

I sat in front of the bank manager, Frank Belgarno, who I knew was a liberal progressive man, and told him the entire story: Israel, loans, difficulties, contributing. He was astonished. He said he understood my mission but asked what I wanted from him. I told him that I was not familiar with the city and the only person I had been to was nice but not a financial power. The Bank of America had many Jewish clients. What would happen if the bank purchased several Bonds at \$10,000 apiece?

He listened as I continued and told him that I understood that he was also new in town and competing with a different bank. I was familiar with the Bank of America in San Francisco, Los Angeles and other places that I had visited. I told him that as manager of the bank, he was probably interested in more Jewish clients. He refused, but I didn't give in. We argued and he softened up. He agreed to buy a \$10,000 Bond. If the bank in San Francisco would not approve it he would take it to the Holy Land in person. I thanked him and told him that now he was my partner and he should call the German Jew, his client, who told me I

wouldn't succeed in getting a contribution from him, and ask him to meet me.

The bank manager called me and set up an urgent meeting. I walked into a 30 meter office filled with valuable paintings. At the far end of the room, the Jewish man was already waiting and said, "What can I do for you?" I asked to speak to him. He interrupted me. "I am a very busy man." I told him I was aware of that but since I was already there, would he please give me a half an hour. We spoke about parents and children, the hardships of raising sons and daughters. He was very open and spoke freely. A half hour passed and then an hour and we were still talking about children, education and how much he would donate and how much money he had. At the end of the long discussion he said, "It was a pleasure talking to you, but why are you really here?" I told him that now that we knew each other and understood one another, I wanted to discuss the issues he opposes. He stopped me and suggested we have lunch together. I, of course, agreed happily.

During lunch we talked about Israel. I explained to him why a fourth generation Jewish American should remain connected to Israel. I told him that in America his daughters were divorced. Maybe something is missing from their lives. I suggested he convert and then he might be able to give them something. He flew into a rage, "*No, I am a Jew.*"

I stayed in town one more day. The next day at noon, the city's finest arrived at his office, including the bank manager. My host introduced me and I spoke briefly. I knew I was holding all the cards and then the bank manager announced that he had examined my offer from a purely business aspect. He made it clear that my approach to the contribution issue was rational. He told them that as Americans, they should learn to give money not

only to France and Germany, (that was the information I gave him), in the amount of 5 million to France and 4 million to Germany. We needed to invest - instead of donate - and then our relationship would improve and we would be perceived as sincere benefactors like the beloved "Uncle Sam." He had one more announcement to make. He had gone to the bank manager in San Francisco and purchased a Bond worth \$10,000 and he handed me the check. He stated that he intended to suggest to the board to give Ampal a credit line for \$500,000.

My hosts joined in and announced that after meeting with me, it was decided to purchase a bond for \$50,000. After that a parade of contributors began and Portland, a small, warm and caring community, became my key base of activity.

Each city had a story. Once I went salmon fishing with an elderly rich Jewish man. On the way we talked about Ampal and he purchased Bonds for a great deal of money. In San Francisco I found a group of rich Jewish people who used to study the *Gemarah*. I sat on the side and listened until it was my turn and then I sold them some Bonds.

Dickenstein was ecstatic as new avenues opened up. In all modesty, he had no one else on his team who got the results I did. On the West Coast alone I collected five or six million dollars. Dickenstein asked me to see him and informed me he was sending me to Chicago. I took Cecile with me. On the first day I began with minor customers. The first was a widow whose husband had owned a small candy shop. I sold her a \$500 bond which for me was equal to \$3 million. I also saw big and small businessmen, Rabbis, and merchants.

Because of my success I returned to New York and Dickenstein offered me a job as his assistant. I started working for him for \$100 a week and soon got a raise to \$175. I also became

his advisor. It was 1950 and I decided to analyze the method we were using. He was taking money and loaning money. What he needed was to take money from the bank and pay interest. He needed collateral for the Histadrut and the way we treated those we lent money to, for example, the purchasing agent for Israel, was not good. I proposed that we change the whole system. My idea was that we should invest. That is what I came here for after all. Now that he knew what I was really capable of, I suggested we put my real talents to work.

He was alarmed, to say the least. *"What do you mean invest? What if we lose money?"* I explained that I read the Wall Street Journal every day and in my travels I spoke with hundreds of business people, and I knew more about their businesses than they did. *"Why didn't we start our own project?"* I asked. Not in the United States. In Israel. We could invest \$5000 and take a loan for \$20,000. I was willing to travel to Israel to look for potential investors.

Dickenstein wasn't convinced. He told me about a financial company in Israel, the P.E.C., which had invested many times and failed. I disagreed and told him the reason they failed was because they were mismanaged. In Israel there was no backer. They purchased land, got involved in businesses and had no one to manage them. We would have the support of the Histadrut and the kibbutz movement.

Finally he was convinced and let me go to Israel to meet the heads of Bank Ha'poalim, Abraham Zebersky and Itzhak Bareli. I met them both at their office. I liked them at once. They were conservative banker types, but wonderful. Zebersky invited me to his home on Saturday morning and Bareli invited me for lunch. Not everyone receives this kind of treatment so I must have been all right in their eyes.

They began searching for suitable projects. At the time they talked about the Sefen factory in the Jordan Valley, Tarit Sardine Factory in Ein Gev, and Phoenicia Factory in the Negev. I sat in the bank day after day and met people. I went to meetings with heads of state and high ranking financial people such as the Secretary of the Treasury, Eliezer Kaplan, and spoke about all kinds of projects. The Histadrut, for example, wanted to open a hotel in Haifa. I also met with the Cooperative. Wherever I went people wanted to invest.

Before the visit was over, Zebresky and Bareli invited me for a serious discussion. They said they were getting old. The management committee was divided into four parts: Jack, from Kibbutz Ashdot Ha'Meuhad, Bareli, Zebresky, and one more man whose name I forgot. They asked me to join the Bank management as secretary and acquire experience in the process. They knew I didn't belong to any specific political party and had been a Histadrut member since 1930, since leaving Mikveh Israel. My Histadrut membership would be renewed as I was a veteran member, even though I wasn't even 40 yet. I told them that America meant nothing to me, but I had accomplished quite a great deal in a few short months. At that point nothing was decided.

I returned to America and Dickenstein called a meeting of the Board of Directors. He was still indecisive, but he had a financier's mind. I learned from him, as I did from Bressler in Haifa years earlier, that he was not going to take any risks. If he had, we might have created a huge investment machine. He was cautious and the antithesis of the American dream.

Our first factory was Sefen, which made Celotex boards which used a material for coating walls and partitions instead of using wood. Mitia Krechmer from Kibbutz Afikim brought me

some of the material they used at the factory. In Los Angeles I met the Vice President of Celotex, a Jewish man who helped with the technical aspects. He examined, altered, advised, and finally purchased a \$25,000 Bond. When I went back to Dickenstein with the check from the first Vice President of Celotex, he had no more problems with me. You must remember that Sefen at that time didn't exist yet. At that point it was merely a concept Mitia Krechmer wanted to advance.

Later, when it became common knowledge that Victor Tabak called a meeting with Sammy Neaman at his home, no one was allowed to attend if they didn't pledge \$25,000. After that there was another meeting that 100 wealthy people and millionaires attended with their wives. They heard a lecture about investing in Sefen in the Jordan Valley in Israel. Anyone who pledged \$25,000, purchased \$20,000 in Bonds and the remaining \$5,000 were a donation. I told everyone to take into account that they are losing \$5,000 and not to complain later that they lost it outright. They could all afford to lose \$5,000. I compared it to purchasing shares of Chrysler and that the shares decreased eight points. That would be a loss of \$5,000, but \$20,000 was a loan from Celotex and Ampal and that they would get their money back with interest. If the investment was successful, for the \$5,000 donation they would be getting a Bond and shares in a company that operates at a profit. I was not inventing anything new. I learned it all from them.

After Sefen we focused on the Zim Shipping Lines. Zeev Shind arrived from Israel and I went with him on a 17-city sales tour. We traveled during the day and at night we met with groups of investors. After 17 days I told Shind that I never got tired of listening to him because he never repeated himself.

One stop on our tour was in Washington and someone brought a rich Jewish man who was blind. I didn't eat before a lecture which was a habit I began in Tampa. This blind Jewish man ate heartily. I asked him if he minded that I didn't eat and offered to cut his meat for him. I had both his fork and mine and I cut the meat and gave it to him with one of the forks and then prepared the next piece and gave to him with the other fork. He ate heartily and said to me that he had been blind for 20 years and had a caretaker who never fed him like that. Now he was able to eat continuously. "If your innovative nature extends to your business, I will invest \$50,000 in your project", he said. That is how I got my first \$50,000 in Washington.

On another occasion a rich Jewish family invited me to their home in Los Angeles for a party. It was an impressive affair. The home and grounds were extensive, the food was endless and the Champagne flowed like water. Amidst all of this luxury there was no mention of Israel or Judaism. That is how the host and guests spent their evening and I felt like an uninvited guest. I told my host that I wanted to meet him in private. He agreed and told me that the next evening his wife and children were going to the movies and I could come and have dinner with him.

I arrived and we ate and talked. I asked him to tell me about himself. He was a lawyer in Chicago who moved to Los Angeles and went into the real estate business. For hours we discussed his business, his family and his daughters. At 11:30 at night I began to talk about my business. At midnight he said, "Okay, Sammy you are a good listener, but you are a good salesman too. I don't know you, but the entire town is talking about you. Within one half hour you have done an amazing job. You have \$200,000."

I asked him for a check. He was insulted and said, “Don’t you believe me? Come to my office tomorrow and I will give you a check.” I told him about what happened in Seattle when I spent an entire evening with someone who promised me a large sum of money and then nonchalantly told me that we were just talking. He said that it was the middle of the night and he couldn’t give me a check because his check book was back at his office. “No problem”, I said, “let’s take a ride to your office now.” He was stunned and told me that I belonged in Las Vegas because I liked to gamble. He had never seen anything like it before. “I should be insulted. What if I told you, no,” he said. I told him, “I have been sitting with you for hours. You wouldn’t say no to me.” We went to his office at midnight. I studied the pictures on the walls of my host with famous people. At the end of the visit he gave me a check for \$200,000.

But not everything was good. Sefen and Trit, the factories we established in Ein Gev, were in trouble. The disagreement between me and Dickenstein deepened. I thought if we were taking money from people to establish businesses in Israel, we needed to open an office in Israel. If the people we had were unsuitable we should bring them from the United States. The gap between us was vast. Dickenstein wasn’t interested in factories and investments. He was a financier and not an entrepreneur.

It was 1951. After two years of partnership, we parted ways. When I entered he sold a share for five or five and a half dollars. Now his business was worth millions. I established a large scope of operations at Ampal. He was angry with me and I decided to make an effort so as to not totally destroy our relationship. I told him that we should part as friends since I was like a son to him, his right hand man, almost his heir.

I left. He kept on managing Ampal alone for decades because he didn't want anyone by his side that was strong enough to overthrow him.

Five Years in Bonds for Israel

I searched for a new job. I phoned one of Los Angeles' richest people, Julius Cezanne, and told him that I had left Ampal. He told me it wasn't necessary to explain because he knew me well from the countless meetings in his home where I had collected large sums of money. He told me that he had also invested in Ampal and perhaps should be angry, but wasn't since he was aware that Dickenstein and I had different points of view. He was involved in several companies that were established with the help of Ampal, like the Alliance Tire factory.

Cezanne advised me to go see a Jewish man named Sugarman who was born in Israel. He had just taken on the position of President at P.E.C., the Palestinian Economic Corporation, based in Israel. Sugarman was born in Gedera, educated in the United States, and was an expert in labor law. I told him I didn't care for the P.E.C. He told me that Sugarman had free reign and that the company was independent and I would have a free hand at potential investments in Israel. He promised to talk to Sugarman and ask him to offer me a job. A few days later I received a phone call from Los Angeles and at the end of

the conversation I was the Vice President and personal assistant to the President of P.E.C.

Sugarman invested quite a lot in Israel. He purchased “Jerusalem Shoes” and later purchased the “Avna’al” chain of shoe stores. He accepted the Presidency of P.E.C, for reasons of his own and served for one week.

I arrived at the P.E. C. offices and I couldn’t believe my eyes. The Chairman of the Board of Directors was Robert Szold, a conservative and very privileged man. The board members had absolutely no connection to Israel. The Minister, Dov Joseph, who had arrived from Israel asking for a loan of one million dollars, was received with extreme indifference and disinterest. As I told Sugarman, it seemed as if things were getting progressively worse. At Ampal at least there were some Jewish workers. Here I sensed genuine hostility toward Israel. He told me that we should go to Israel and perhaps we would have more success there.

We went to Israel and I spoke with Zebresky from Bank Hapoalim. He was surprised that I had approached Sugarman. He said I was with the Histadrut and shouldn’t be looking for anything in the right wing camp. He couldn’t make any sense out of it. I roamed the country and checked out banks and companies. Sugarman, in the meanwhile, got into trouble with Jerusalem Shoes. The financial atmosphere was not to my liking, but I tried to fit in as best I could.

I returned to the United States and I thought that it might be possible to arrange some kind of investment plan. Near Haifa there was a large carpet factory called Gav Yam. I suggested we start building industrial structures for rental purposes.

A short while after I returned, I received a telephone call from Hans Meyer, a P.E.C. board member who was the head of

the investment company "Lehman Brothers". He told me that the company was failing and that I should be prepared for a call from Szold. He wanted me to be President of P.E.C. We discussed it and some were against it because I had previously worked at Ampal and was affiliated with the left wing. He said that he and Szold believed I was the right person for the job and would be able to handle the task.

Sure enough, Szold invited me to his Wall Street office. He didn't say much, but invited me to his home the following Saturday and it was there he offered me the Presidency. I thought about it briefly and refused. I refused not because I had worked at Ampal, but because it was clear to me that I would fail to change the internal relationships of the management and their relationship with Israel. Moreover, Szold was not the kind of person I was in a hurry to work with.

Once again I was out of a job so I went to see Henry Montor. He had left the UJA and established State of Israel Bonds, which was an enterprise that still issues Bonds for the economic development of Israel. He tried to convince me that the project would be a huge victory and due to my success and record with Ampal, I was the right person for the job. I checked his offer out and even though it didn't involve investment in Israel, it wasn't charity either. So I consented.

The beginning was a failure. I began giving speeches again and later organized areas and trained people in how to build a business. I covered the United States and Canada and had my share of some pretty amazing experiences. One time I arrived in a city in Canada on a Thursday where a Bonds meeting was set for the coming Saturday evening. It was an incredible 30 degrees below zero. I met a Bonds representative there with the disappointing news that the meeting would not be taking place

because no one wanted to attend. This wasn't a Bonds city, he declared. So, I decided to arrange the meeting myself.

As usual I did my homework and discovered that there were three brothers who manufactured pipes for oil lines and had purchased Bonds in the past. I asked to meet with them in order to figure out what to do by Saturday night. I got the usual answers: "We have already bought Bonds; we are too busy to meet with you". I asked them to give me just one hour. They agreed, but repeated that they were very busy.

I wanted to know how many Jewish people lived in the city and to hear stories about the more prominent ones. When people started talking about themselves, their city, and surroundings they forgot about the time. So did the three brothers. They told me about a local Jewish man who left the community even though he was one of its leaders. The reason was he had separated from his wife and was living with a local woman. He had two grown sons who were married with children who he never saw. He had made a fortune in oil, but was a lonely man. He was 60 years old and seemed like the kind of person I should get to know.

I phoned him and asked if I could meet with him. He said he was too busy and not interested. The standard answers. I also had a standard response, that I had traveled thousands of miles and wouldn't take no for an answer. I asked him to at least meet and look at me. "You can't see the color of my eyes over the phone. Maybe it doesn't interest you, but look me straight in the eyes and then tell me 'No'." This type of *chutzpah* usually worked and it did this time as well. The man promised me a few minutes of his time.

His home and office were in the tallest building in the city. I went up on the elevator and from the floor he lived on I

could see the valley and mountains all around. He told me briefly about searching for oil. In response I told him about Biblical Samson and how it is written that it was all for the best. He was quite annoyed by this and asked me if I traveled all that way just to tell him that. What did I need five minutes for anyway, he wanted to know? As far as he was concerned I had only come to see him to get money. "Get to the point," he said.

I told him why I really came. I pointed out to him that he didn't always locate the exact spot he was looking for but kept on digging for oil. He didn't leave the war to find a new place to live. That was what was happening in Israel. Just like he found a place in the world, the people of Israel deserved one as well. I told him it was my job to get financial aid for Israel because the Prime Minister cannot come in person to meet him and ask for a loan, nor can the President of Bank Leumi come to meet him. They sent me instead. I told him what happened when I arrived in the city and no meeting was organized. It was like finally finding an oil well only it was stone dry. Now I wanted to drill again next to that dry well because the experts said there is oil there.

He and his wife hadn't seen each other for 20 years, I reminded him. He hadn't seen his grandchildren and he ran into his own sons by chance, if at all. He wanted to know how I knew all that about him. I told him I had asked around town and it was common knowledge. Then I returned to the business at hand. I told him that if I could bring a well known personality from Israel who could make an appearance at the community center and speak about the young country of Israel, I would, but I couldn't. My solution was to make it known that he would appear at the meeting because the needs of Israel moved him to contribute and take care of his grandchildren by purchasing Bonds. We would announce that he was planning to purchase the Bonds at the

meeting. People would come not because of Israel, but purely to see the best show in town. They would come out of curiosity to see him after 20 years. That would be drama at its best.

He looked at me and said, “Listen, let’s drill for oil together. You get straight to the point in a way I have never seen before. You are right. I left them a lot of money in my will, but to announce publicly that I will invest such and such an amount for my grandchildren in Israel is worth every red cent, mostly because I am the subject of gossip all over town. That would be true satisfaction”. He told me what they said about him. In the end he sighed and said, “Maybe they will come.”

I told him that people love a good show, which is exactly what they would get at the meeting. If you can’t beat them, join them. I told him I was going to bring his wife and sons. He was sure she would never come. I said he could trust me and that she would be there. No one thought he would meet me and no one knew what I was going to do. I promised him that his wife would see and hear him speak and to leave what happened after that up to me.

He agreed to attend and buy some Bonds. He wanted to know if there was a certain amount he should purchase. I told him the amount wasn’t important. What was important was his participation. At the end of the meeting he promised he would be present.

I went back to the three brothers and didn’t tell them everything, but I did reveal that I had met the man and he promised to donate a large sum of money. If I had dropped the bomb then, the explosion would have been weaker. I didn’t even have a chance to finish the story and the three had already rushed to the telephone and told their wives, who called tens of their friends and acquaintances and told them what was going to

happen at the meeting on Saturday night. They made sure to mention that the same man would be making an appearance after decades of being cut off from the community.

I asked the three brothers to tell me about the man's two sons. It turns out that one of them was a doctor and the more empathetic of the two. I called him, introduced myself and told him that I had visited his father and wanted to meet him as well. We made an appointment and I went to meet him. I told him his father would be attending the meeting and publicly purchasing large Bonds for his grandchildren and his sons and his brother's children too. I told him that his father was my problem, but he had a job to do that was no less important. I explained how I had seen a picture of his mother when she was young and beautiful. I told him that I wanted him to bring her to the meeting. The entire town would be there and perhaps some Jewish people from towns close by. It was his job to make sure she arrived. I promised him that at the end of the evening, he would see his mother and father kiss in front of everyone. Getting her there was his job. He thought for several seconds and then said he would speak to his brother and see how to handle it. I didn't let him go until he promised me he would bring her to the meeting.

And that is exactly what happened. The entire town attended the meeting. The tables were set, the two sons and the mother sat near the head table. The man, whose name I deliberately don't reveal, sat next to me at the head table. In the meantime, I learned all about the Jewish people in the town and told them briefly about the head of the community and its respected citizens and how this wonderful Jewish community was built in the snowy wilderness that is Canada.

At one point I turned to the man and asked him in front of everyone why he decided to attend the meeting. He said that he

came because he wanted to give his children and grandchildren State of Israel Bonds. Dollars! I turned to his ex-wife and said, “Now, Grandmother, are you willing to hear that and not respond to my humble proposal?” The woman wanted to know what I wanted from her. I asked her to kiss the man in public. Without a moment’s hesitation she hugged and kissed her ex-husband in front of everyone.

The entire town didn’t sleep that night. All night long we went to people’s houses, door to door collecting money. I truly sensed that the Jewish community understood that for 20 years they had been participants in and witnessed the destruction of a family.

The next morning one of the brothers told me that what I did would someday be a legend. When I had first arrived, they told me they were too busy to meet me and now I was taken anywhere I wanted to go. He took me to places where no one ever went, where only five Jewish people or even one Jewish person lived. He knew everyone because the oil pipe business reached far and wide. He promised to escort me and be the one who opened doors for me so I had the chance to talk to people.

He took me to a Jewish man he knew who leased land to farmers. Three months a year he lived in a far out location and the rest of the year he lived in Florida. He made a fortune. He had no money or possessions. Everything he owned was leased and others farmed the land. He believed he discovered Marilyn Monroe and I had to sit with him and listen to the story for hours on end. He took me into a cellar that he used as a screening room and the walls were covered with pictures of Monroe. He was a man obsessed. He had created the Monroe legend and I came to hear all about it and in the process sold him a lot of Bonds for Israel.

From there he took me to a village and introduced me to a strapping Jewish farmer who owned several farms and a large shop nearby. The man told me immediately that he opposed loans. He donated to the UJA and that was all he was willing to do. I didn't let it go like that. I followed him to the store while he waited on customers. I followed him from counter to counter and though I spoke to him, he didn't answer me, but he didn't kick me out either. Suddenly he asked me if I wanted to go with him for a ride out of the city. We reached a ranch with 600 milking cows and all the workers treated him like a king. He went over to a haystack and lifted a 50 kilo stack of hay like it was a feather and he was already passed 50 years of age.

At that moment something happened to me. I stopped talking about Israel and desperately wanted to milk a cow like I did at Mikveh Israel 25 years before. The man was surprised that I even knew how to milk a cow. He told me he had modern milking machines. I told him I wanted to milk and use a pitchfork. He looked at me in total disbelief. He couldn't believe that there were farmers in Israel. I told him about agriculture in Israel and we discussed cows, milking, and different kinds of fodder.

That was a unique meeting. Even though a long time had passed, my professionalism as a farmer was still intact. Of course, there were some things I had forgotten and others I hadn't thought of for years, but it all came rushing back to me in the magical farm setting. We really clicked and the results for Bonds were positive.

We reached a small town where five or ten Jewish families lived. The woman in the first house invited everyone for food and drinks and the more you could drink the better. That evening was a great success. I reached rich Jewish people in the

most God-forsaken places. It was those visits that gave me the most satisfaction because it wasn't all about the money, but the opportunity to come into contact with *real* people.

When I returned to Canada, Henry Montor asked to see me and told me that on the agenda then was South America. Until that point the Bonds hadn't had much success there. In some countries you couldn't get money out legally, but in Uruguay a loophole was discovered. Montor asked me to go there to see if it would be possible to open a center that would be connected to nearby Argentina.

I went to Montevideo with only one name, that of a Dr. Hazan. I didn't speak Spanish and people were not too enthusiastic about speaking English. I had no idea how to begin and didn't even know which hotel to go to. In the end I found a hotel and with great difficulty communicating, I phoned Dr. Hazan. He was a very nice man, not wealthy, and he loved Israel in theory only.

In Uruguay I discovered the Jews of South America. Dr. Hazan furnished me with the basic information I needed: there was a Jewish community from Eastern Europe that was not organized. There were also some Mediterranean Sephardic Jews. Among them were Jews from Baghdad and Salonica.

Hazan did not encourage me. He appreciated my motivation because Montevideo was nothing like New York, to say the least. The UJA was active, but opening another avenue for income was difficult. There were several rich Jews in the community and each one of them could certainly afford a State of Israel Bond for several thousand dollars. Later, when I learned about the business there, I understood why it was worth their while.

The head of the community told me that if I wanted to get started, I should appeal to the Jewish Committee and meet with the Chairman of the Board, Don Hakovo Golobov. A smile still comes to my face when I remember the name of Don Hakovo Golobov. I went to see him. He was a Jewish man from Eastern Europe, a kind of dictator, who told me plainly that I had absolutely no chance with him. The UJA: fine. The Bonds: never.

Don Hakovo Golobov was a wealthy businessman. I spoke to him a bit in Yiddish. I didn't beat around the bush and said, "What right do you have? Who do you think you are to tell me where the State of Israel should or should not borrow money? Who the hell are you anyway?" He let me know in no uncertain terms that what I said was unimportant and there was only one boss in Uruguay and it was him. I told him that if he called a meeting of the committee and allowed me to present the issue, it could be that people in the community who don't get along with the Jewish establishment there might be convinced to buy Bonds. He cut me short and said, "You will damage the UJA." I told him that he was doing just that. There was enough room for both and this was already accomplished in many countries and he wasn't the one to decide. Confident his committee would support him, they invited me that very evening.

The members of the committee sat in a semicircle and scrutinized me as I sat facing them in what was eerily reminiscent of a court of law. I spoke in pretty bad Yiddish. I learned to speak Yiddish properly years later when I was in Mexico. They told me right away that I had no chance whatsoever. I talked for hours and quickly realized that I was not having any affect on them at all. I decided to take a risk and use the business aspect to reach them. I asked if there were many Jewish citizens in the community and if they would donate to the UJA. The answer was negative. There

was a Jew from Greece there, a wealthy banker who never donated anything, and there was also a German man, the wealthiest man in Uruguay, who never donated. A Don here and a Don there, and not a cent.

“Okay, I said, “Let’s make a deal”. Give me a table and a chair in the community hall. I won’t phone anyone because I don’t speak Spanish. I suggested the secretary sit with me because he had a list of all the people who wouldn’t donate to the UJA. Did anyone have any objection if I tried to get money out of those people? They all agreed and I only approached people who had never donated.

Within two weeks I had a committee and sitting at the head of it was Don Miguel Karev, who had been to Israel six times. He was angry at the local Jews because of internal disagreements over the cemetery and the synagogue and had left the community. He owned a sanitary accessory factory. He was a pleasant Jewish man, but he didn’t get along with the committee.

Don Miguel Karev loved Israel. Three days and three nights he worked with his wife and he agreed to be the Director of the Bonds in Uruguay. He opened the door to the Jewish banker from Greece and other doors, and after three months of work, Bonds for Israel was on the map.

And there was more. When I flew from New York to Montevideo I sat next to a man by the name of Professor Fabrigat, who had been the Uruguayan Ambassador to the United Nations during Israel’s struggle to establish a state. We talked throughout the long flight. He was fluent in English and I told him where I was going. He said that officially he couldn’t help me, but if I wanted to meet the President, it would help if the newspapers knew what I did and he would be happy to help me with that.

When things started to develop, I called him and he arranged a meeting with the President. Later I rented the largest cinema in the city and held a meeting where a representative of the government, the Ambassador to Israel, Moshe Tov, and Professor Fabrigat sat on the stage. There were Jewish school children, flags of Uruguay and Israel and even a military orchestra. Ambassador Tov gave a speech and the whole evening was especially impressive. The evening was not about collecting money. It was an evening for Israel.

The success of that evening led to other events in private homes. In Uruguay dinner invitations were normally for 10 o'clock at night. Guests would usually arrive after 11 and at 12 or 12:30 food and drinks were served. I didn't start speaking until around 1:30 in the morning. In all modesty, it was a great success. Don Hakovo Golobov joined the special committee that coordinated the work of the UJA with the Bonds. I opened an office in the community building and started working in Argentina as well. I organized what was required to get money out of the country. The head office of the Bonds in Montevideo still operates today, as do the Bonds offices in Brazil, Peru, and Chile.

I returned to New York. At the same time a *Shaliach*, or emissary, had been sent to Mexico and made a bad impression. Montor called me. To persuade me he told me that Mexico had 30,000 wealthy Jews and that no one had been successful in getting them to purchase Bonds. He wanted me to go there and do my magic.

In 1954, I went to Mexico. Until then Cecile usually waited for me in New York. Since this time I had to go for several months, I took her with me. I met the Israeli delegate, Joseph Caesary, in Mexico City. He was very formal and all my attempts

to persuade him about the Bonds failed. He told me that he had had a bad experience with Bonds. An envoy from Bonds had come there and he allowed him to use the delegate's office. The same envoy brought people and unfortunately he spoke to them like an army general, leaving a negative impression about Israel as a result.

I begged him not to refuse because I was there on behalf of Bonds for the State of Israel and not for myself. I assured him I was not interested in selling Bonds to the delegates, as that would be improper. I also told him that he shouldn't have allowed it the last time. I asked him to please help me because he was the Israeli delegate and besides, if he didn't remember, we were once neighbors in Haifa.

When I left the office, a man named Yaron, the first secretary of the delegation, walked by. Before he introduced himself, I asked him if he was Colonel Lustig who had served in the army during the British Mandate. Surprised, he invited me into his office which, as opposed to the delegate's office, was warm and friendly. He too said I would fail. I asked him to help me decrease the resistance of the delegates.

The next day when I went back to see Caesary, who was a gentleman and much more forthcoming, he asked me to act cautiously and report my every move to him, while never mentioning the name of the delegation or the house. Later Yaron invited me to his home and introduced me to the Mexican Jews. I learned about the key communities and I heard all about the Histadrut and Zionism, Poalei Zion, Herut, Yiddish and Hebrew schools and even about the organization of the Jews from Baghdad, Damascus, the Halabim and the French.

I learned that at the head of the main body of Mexican Jewry was a prominent man by the name of Shimshon Feldman,

who was the supreme authority and whom the government recognized as head of the Jewish community. He was the most important person and handled all births and deaths and was literally everywhere. His entire life centered on the Jewish community. He arrived in Mexico when he was a small orphan boy and for years was extremely non-religious. When his father died in Poland, he became religious and then Orthodox. As far as Zionism was concerned, he wasn't exactly against it, but he believed that the parties were too conflicted.

I went to meet Rabbi Shimshon Feldman and his response to Bonds was a flat no. He was head of the community and he was not willing to deal with Bonds for Israel. He was a wealthy man even though no one knew where his wealth really came from. He wasn't affiliated with the Zionist Federation and he usually donated to the UJA. For him, Israel was the Holy Land. I argued with him and he said repeatedly that under no circumstances could he be persuaded to contribute because it was illegal to sell Bonds in Mexico.

I went to the Zionist Federation and tried to persuade the head of the movement to make the necessary allowances. Again I met with a negative answer, re-stating that sales of Bonds were illegal and that it would damage the UJA.

I returned to Rabbi Shimshon and we considered the legality of it all. I suggested selling "Banknotes" printed in English and opening a "Banknote" office which would assist tourists visiting Israel to get information about business opportunities and export and import between Mexico and Israel. I also understood his apprehension as head of the community to act as Chairman and receive an appointment from the Israeli delegation. Honor and authority were of utmost value, and delegates were said to possess these traits. The majority of

Mexican Jews came from Poland, Russia, and Romania. They worked inconspicuously and some were received by the President. They also participated in diplomatic ceremonies and considered themselves kings. It was crucial to them that Senior Caesary, the Israeli delegate, invited them to diplomatic parties.

I offered Shimshon Feldman an attractive deal. I told him that he would receive an appointment from the delegate of Israel to be the director of the Banknote enterprise in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands. He would attend meetings and negotiations in the United States, Uruguay, and Argentina and participate in international activities. There would be no connection to the UJA or the Jewish Federation. I had worked in Uruguay and found the way. We would not approach contributors to the UJA, but we would be supplemental to the UJA. If he would come with me to the Zionist Jewish Federation and he, not I the foreigner, told them that we were working with those who do not work with the UJA, they wouldn't refuse.

Rabbi Shimshon was still not convinced. He told me that all this was well and good but that no one would purchase Bonds. He reminded me what happened to the man who preceded me. I told him that things were different now and we would accomplish things by negotiating. I was willing to bet that we could find ten people in town in the next two weeks and each one would buy \$10,000 worth of Bonds. If so, he would then be part of a vast movement or I would leave and never bother him again. I only asked that he grant me two hours and accompany me. I planned to go every day to see one person on the list of those who wouldn't donate to the UJA.

I went to see Caesary, the Israeli delegate, again and told him that recruiting Shimshon Feldman for Bonds depended on him. Feldman had done nothing for the Zionist movement. If he

would appoint Feldman director of the Banknote enterprise, we might have a chance. What did we have to lose? If we succeeded: good. If not, I would leave. I asked for two weeks.

I suspected he got an opinion from Jerusalem. In the meantime I spoke to New York and they spoke to Israel and to the Minister of the Treasury, Levi Eshkol. Orders were given and he agreed: Rabbi Shimshon was on his way.

We went to the most difficult people. It was like Moses crossing the Red Sea. The people weren't afraid of giving to Israel, but they didn't want it to become common knowledge that they were wealthy either. The most opposed was Elias Sourasky, who owned three banks. But we didn't give up. We went to see other people and we began collecting large amounts of money. At first we received \$10,000 which was equal to 125,000 pesos. Nine people purchased \$10,000 worth of Bonds, making the grand total \$90,000. As a consequence, what I had achieved in less than two weeks took the UJA an entire year to accomplish. The previous year they had collected 1million pesos, less than \$80,000.

I needed one more person to make it a quorum, a *Minyan* in Hebrew (group of ten required for religious prayer in Judaism). I told him that we should go see his brother, Mickey an extremely wealthy man who owned a bank and an iron business. He refused because his brother would never agree to see us if we forced our way in. He suggested I go alone so his brother would not turn him down.

I managed to persuade him after all. Together, we went to see his brother the banker, without making an appointment. In contrast to Feldman the scholar, Mickey was a simple man. Shimshon Feldman introduced me to his brother and left. I began speaking in my broken Yiddish and Mickey insisted I be brief and added that he knew all about me. "*Me'zugt ein Shtat*" (Yiddish

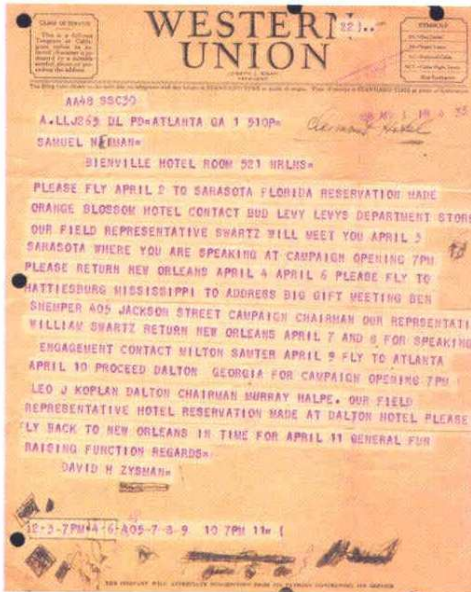
for: *They say in town...*) that you have accomplished a great deal in town and that you already have nine people in your pocket who purchased bonds for \$10,000 a piece. He added, "All you want is money from me. My brother probably told you that I wouldn't give you any money so I will give you \$15,000." I refused. He flinched and his face went red. "Do you want more?" he asked. I explained to him that if he did give me that amount of money, much more than the others, he would be done with me forever. My plan was to come back in January or February of 1955 and get a larger amount. He looked at me and said, "Mr. Neaman, you are a true merchant." Instead of saying, "Ir" (3rd person) he addressed me in the friendly "Du" (2nd person). Now I was sure he liked me.

From then on my life was much easier. I combed the city and its Jews. I gathered the Baghdad Jews with the help of an old Jewish man named Atari who was the wealthiest among them. I began my speech in Arabic. *Sadi wa Sadati, Aleykum A Salaam. (Ladies and Gentleman, may Peace be with you)* and they went wild. I did the same with the Salonikian Jews. I went from house to house and even opened a four room office. The head clerk was a British Jew named Greenman who was a Hebrew school teacher. I invested a lot of time and effort until Shimshon agreed to allow Greenman to come and work with me.

In my first year in Mexico I raised \$900,000. This was ten times more than the UJA. To conclude the fundraising season, I requested a Minister from Israel. They sent Dr. Joseph Burg, the Postal and Communications Minister. Military guards were expensive in Mexico, but I arranged for one to greet him at the airport. He was received with all the pomp and circumstance befitting a Minister, and traveled in a long black limousine. I made sure that all the newspapers published the picture of the first



Samuel Neaman – the 60th



Along telegram sent to Neaman during his Magbit (Jewish fundraisin organization) time in the U.S. (1949). It looks like he worked too hard...



Samuel with Cecile during a visit to Nice, southern France.



Samuel Neaman has made close contacts with Israeli leaders and Emissaries. Here with Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. – Yitzhak Rabin



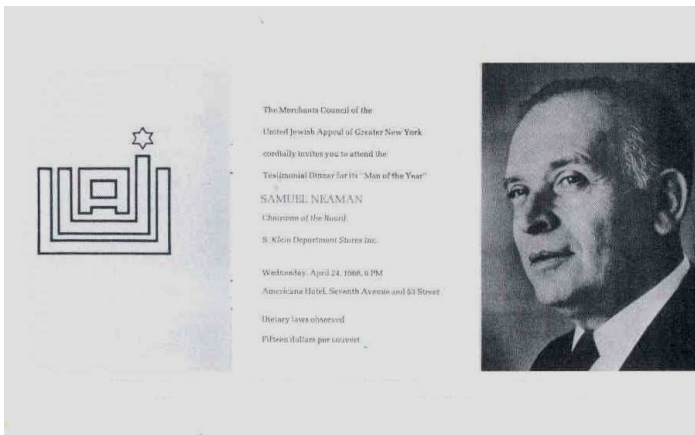
A letter from Israel's Minister of Finance to Neaman upon the beginning of his job as Israel's Bonds director in Europe.



A Photo Opportunity with Igal Alon



With Minister Yoseph Borg, a long time friend since the days of Israeli Bonds in Mexico.



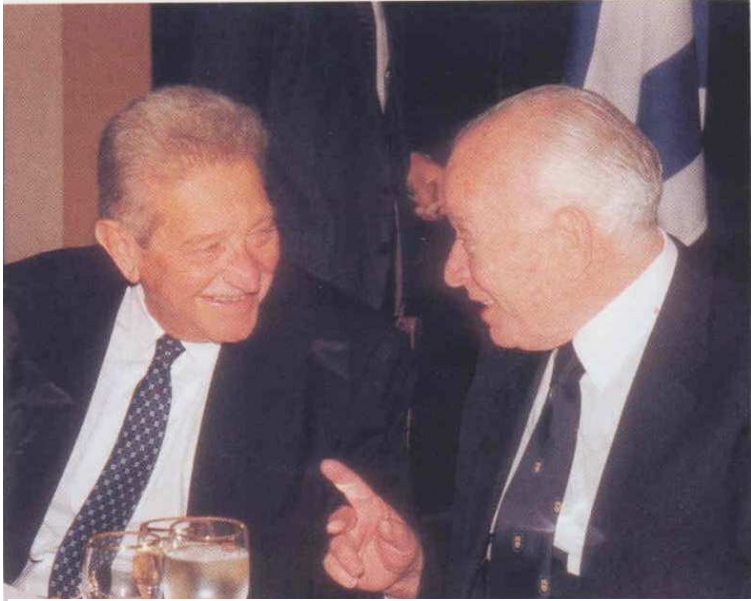
"Man of the Year" of the Magbit (Jewish fundraising organization) in the U.S., 1968



This flower was named Tsiv'oni (colorful) as a gesture of a Dutch firm to Samuel Neaman who helped it market Dutch flowers to the U.S.



With Trade and Industry Minister Gideon Pat (right) and Israel economic attaché, Shmuel Ben-Tovim (middle), N.Y. 1983.



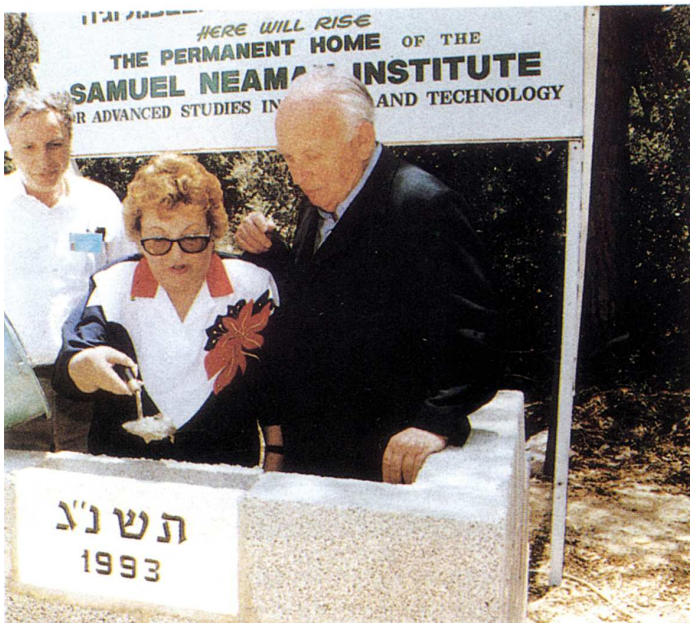
With an old friend, Israel's President Ezer Weizman



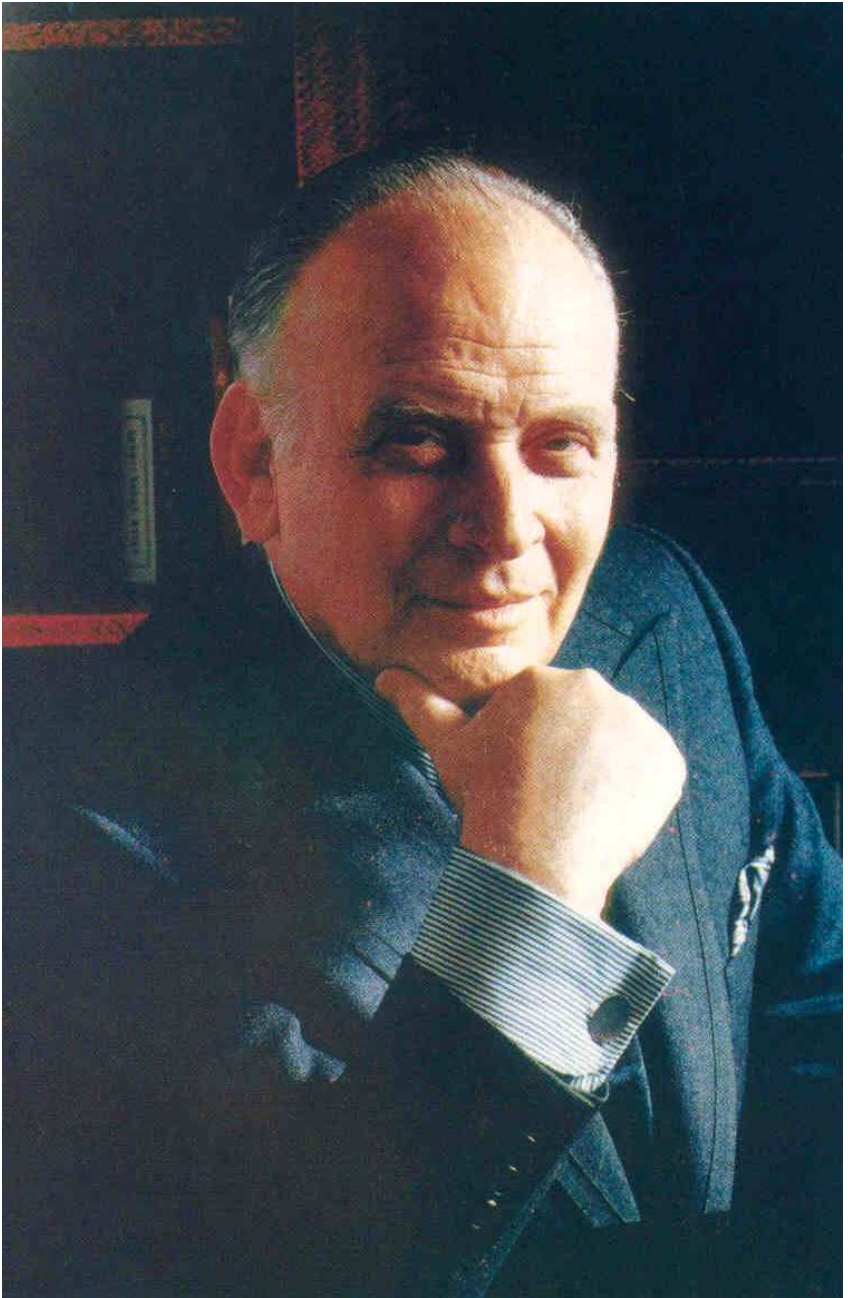
With the Technion's guest in Haifa, former President of U.S.S.R., Mikhail Gorbachev.



The official sign of Samuel Neeman Institute at the Technion, Haifa.



Samuel and Cecile at the corner stone ceremony of the permanent building of SNI, 1993



Samuel Neaman

Israeli minister to visit Mexico. The next day I accompanied him to Don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, the President of Mexico. All of the newspapers reported the event and the Mexican Jews were ecstatic.

There was a Mexican family by the name of Kasel. The daughter had married a man named Pushka. They built two adjacent homes with the mother and father on one side and the daughter and her husband on the other. In the middle of these two palatial estates was a swimming pool made of pure marble like in the movies or in the Arabian Nights. Fortunately, they took very good care of Cecile who lived with them most of the time.

The Kasel family owned a clock business. I told them that when Minister Burg arrived, a dinner with 300 guests would be held in his honor. I asked if they could recommend a restaurant that could hold such an event. The Kasel's were genuinely insulted and insisted that the dinner be held in their home. Mrs. Kasel prepared a kosher meal on golden plates for 300 people and those who weren't invited were offended.

The second year, 1.5 million dollars worth of Bonds was purchased in Mexico. My "empire" expanded and I went to Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Curacao. Currency laws were different in each country. In Cuba, for example, there was a sizeable devaluation and Jews who owned Bonds had money. In Mexico it was permitted to take out money, but forbidden to sell notes of a foreign country, so I had to find a solution.

I was in great demand in Mexico. Caesary invited me to all the diplomatic events and celebrations and I was always seated next to him. Pinchas Sapir, the new Minister of Trade and Industry, arrived from Israel. I sent a large group of Bonds owners to Israel. When they returned, I held a party and each one

described for five minutes what they saw. I went from table to table and signed those present for more notes.

I improved my relationship with the Zionist Jewish Federation and continued working for two more years. I went to exciting and exotic places such as the Caribbean Islands. Once, in order to meet a Jewish man, I flew into the jungle in a Piper to a small town in central Honduras. The man was married to a Christian woman and he had two sons. He had built himself a synagogue. Most of the citizens of the town were Christian Arabs from Bet Jalla and Bethlehem. He took me to meet the wealthiest merchant in town, who came from Bethlehem, so I could sell Bonds for Israel. That is exactly what I did.

When I returned to New York, Schwartz, who had replaced Montor, was having some trouble in Europe and I had to go to Paris. We had a license to operate in France, Holland, and Switzerland, but were not successful.

We moved to Paris. The envoy who preceded me said I would fail because the Jewish people didn't attend the meetings. Working in the office were two men who did absolutely nothing from the moment they arrived in the morning until they finished in the evening. It was 1956.

The first order of business was a meeting with the Israeli Ambassador, Yaacov Zur. He too was pessimistic and his trade advisor felt the same. I had no real hope to cling to at the time. The powerful organization representing Jews in France, the Constitutoir, opposed the Bonds.

I traveled to Switzerland and met with the same problem. In Amsterdam I met a local lawyer and sold him some Bonds in a single visit. I spoke with anyone who would listen, which was hardly anybody. I surveyed my "empire" and realized that in reality I had none.

In Paris there was a Jewish man from Poland named Kalman who purchased Bonds so I went to see him. He told me, “Monsieur Neaman, you have no chance. This isn’t America. There are no organizations that will support you and the Jewish people do not usually invite each other to one another’s homes.”

As usual I decided to grab the bull by the horns. I decided I wanted to meet Baron Guy de Rothschild, one of France’s wealthiest men and head of the Jewish community. When we met I spoke English. He stopped me and told me to speak in French. I told him that French is too delicate a language and what I had to say would sound too subtle in French. What I needed to say had to be conveyed effectively. He smiled and I noticed that, like all wealthy people, he was used to people bowing their heads in his presence, especially when they spoke on behalf of their fellow men.

I explained that the Constitutoir would not permit me to enter synagogues and other Jewish communities. The Jewish Federation operated via the UJA and disapproved of the Bonds, just like what had happened in South America. I told him I didn’t come to sell Bonds, but I did ask the Constitutoir to permit me to speak at a meeting. Perhaps I would fail, but at least they would listen and I would be heard. I understood the limitations with the Constitutoir being a religious organization rather than a financial organization. Nevertheless, I wanted them to listen to me at least once.

In addition, I asked that someone in his family be at my service and take it upon themselves to act as President of the Bonds. He asked me if I had anyone in particular in mind. My answer was Edmund de Rothschild. He smiled and told me that he couldn’t speak for his cousin. I told him that with his recommendation, it would be difficult to refuse. At the end of the

meeting, Guy de Rothschild promised me that the secretary of the Constitutoir would invite me to a management meeting. About Edmund as President, he would let me know.

I came to the meeting of the Constitutoir and requested a kind of Balfour Declaration. In other words: favorably. I told them they wouldn't be involved but they would inform the community in the city and periphery that the Constitutoir favorably viewed French financing for Israel. The Government of Israel borrowed money for this purpose and would return the loan in American dollars.

An argument ensued and finally a letter of intention was drafted which was nothing like the Balfour Declaration. The contents stated that the Bonds people could appeal to the heads of the community and each reserved the right to decide as they saw fit. After all, investments and loans are private business.

Later I met with Edmund de Rothschild and we had a lengthy meeting. This is what happened when two grandchildren sat in the same room: me, the grandchild of the man that Baron Edmund de Rothschild appointed to settle Rosh Pina and he, the grandchild of the "Great Benefactor", Baron Edmund de Rothschild, managing what was established years ago.

This was our conversation.

-What do you want from me?

I want you to be the President of the Bonds of Israel in Europe, in all of Europe.

- What does the job entail? I am a very busy man.

I will do all the work. I only want you to do two things. One: let me use your name. Two: appear at a few meetings. Not too many, you have my word.

-What else?

I want you to purchase \$100,000 worth of Bonds so that Israeli students are granted scholarships and will come to learn business and industrial administration.

I received a check and a letter. He agreed to both of my requests. A short time later I arrived in New York for the annual Bonds meeting. There were some very important people there and I presented the check from Baron de Rothschild. It made a stellar impression. When I got back to France I heard that the Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharet was coming to France. I sent him a telegram and requested he make an appearance at a luncheon. I promised him that the host would be Baron de Rothschild. It worked. The *crème de la crème* of French Jewish society attended. Moshe Sharet spoke straight to the point. We didn't ask for any money because I employed the European approach that night: kid gloves. The meeting opened the doors to the homes and hearts of the Jewish people who previously wouldn't give me the time of day.

An even bigger success took place with the Minister of the Treasury, Levi Eshkol. He met with the wealthiest Jews from Eastern Europe. He spoke Yiddish the entire evening and touched their hearts. The UJA and the Bonds had found a way to cooperate. I brought some good people like Ethan Shafir and other people from Israel to continue what I had begun. I worked in Switzerland and Holland in churches and with the help of priests.

During the time I worked in Europe, I recruited many Israeli politicians for the Bonds. The leader of "Herut", Menachem Begin, once accompanied me to Antwerp because I was having trouble with people in his party. He agreed with me about Bonds not having any political preferences and acting solely for the benefit of Israel, and then money started to arrive

from Belgium. I went to Spain in an unorthodox way. I even sent someone, a native Tunisian, to Tunisia. I tried to add Great Britain to my “empire.” I worked hard to get a British visa but failed. The year I worked in Europe, \$3,000,000 was made for the Bonds, which was a remarkable amount for that time. This laid the ground work for the future.

I returned to the United States and was appointed to head all the offices I established in South America and Europe. During that time I visited Israel twice. The entire political and economic elite knew me personally, but I was frustrated. I sat in an office in New York and waited for reports to come in. Beside that I did nothing. I am not the type of man that can sit in an office all day long. I was bored to death. I went to Schwartz and told him that after ten years of fundraising for Israel, I didn’t want an office job. I needed to be active. He didn’t understand and tried to tempt me with travel to various countries. I refused. I knew I had done all I could so I quit and left. It was the summer of 1957.

At that point I had no job offers. I debated whether or not to return to Israel. I knew all the people in the government and had a very good reputation. I met with Levi Eshkol’s private aid, Ori Shapiro many times. Having heard I was quitting he said, “Enough, Sammy. Come back and work with me.” I was glad to hear this. He didn’t mean just any job. He wanted to give me a job on Levi Eshkol’s staff.

I didn’t give him an answer, but I knew it wouldn’t work out. I visited Israel frequently, but I was a man of the world and I knew I could never lead a run of the mill life. I couldn’t imagine myself counting pennies and being frugal. I had to have a mission or a business. Office work was not for me. What’s more, I was leery of a life in politics.

I toyed with the idea of going back to Mexico. I knew I had a very good reputation there. I told Cecile that I didn't know what we would do there, but I could probably find something. If we didn't succeed there or somewhere else, we could always return to Israel. On the other hand if I started in Israel and failed, what could I do, run away? The idea was that if I succeeded in Mexico and made a fortune, I could return to Israel and not depend on politics for a living.

In hindsight I don't think I could have succeeded in Israel because I wasn't affiliated with any particular political group, movement, or institution. I wanted to return to Israel financially secure, stable, and independent. I was fully aware of what was happening in Israel and I didn't want to find myself in a situation where people would pat me on the back and call me 'one of the guys'. I wanted to unearth some opportunity. But mostly I yearned to create the opportunities.

14.

Epilogue

Business Success and a Life Devoted to Israel and the Technion `

Samuel Neaman's entrance into private business signified yet another new chapter in his full and diverse life. Over the years, Neaman's business initiatives took him to Mexico, Israel, and later on to the United States. Yet wherever he established himself, Neaman's remarkable ability to recognize opportunities, devise creative solutions to complex problems, strive for excellence and understand human nature all contributed to his exceptional business success.

Business in Israel and Abroad

Cecile and Samuel Neaman returned to Israel in 1959 and over a period of 18 months he built the first hotel in Israel consistent with international standards. It was a difficult task for him, dealing with contractors who were not prepared to work in keeping with his high standards and demands. Furthermore, Israel's complex and intricate bureaucracy undermined what

could have been a continued success. Neaman, however, did not despair. He built the hotel by outmaneuvering the bureaucracy and enlisting the help of people like Levi Eshkol, Pinchas Sapir, and Teddy Kollek to get the job done. In March 1960, the Sheraton Hotel in Tel Aviv opened its doors to the public and the world.

Despite his good relations with Israel's leadership, Neaman's hopes that he would integrate into the country's upper economic echelons were repeatedly thwarted. Furthermore, the values he had been raised on at home and at Mikveh Israel, were conspicuously absent as he looked around at the State of Israel in the 1960's. And Neaman had much to offer. Over the years he had spent as a pioneering farmer, policeman, officer in the British Army and fund-raiser, Neaman honed his instincts for working with people of all types, and devising innovative business strategies. As he had frequently dispensed business advice in the course of cultivating donors, he continued to share his acumen and insights. In the 1970's, in appreciation of his assistance to the flower export business in Holland, Bartman and Koenig of Amsterdam, flower growers and marketers, named a hot red tulip with eight petals, the "Samuel Neaman Tulip" in his honor.

In the United States the situation was different. As I reached key trade and economic positions, there was no end to the invitations I received. I was offered endless positions as a member of committees, federations, and organizations which worked toward the development or research of American economics or to advance the retail sales profession. The N.R.N.A approached me year after year to join and I eventually consented to serving on their Board of Directors.

This had nothing to do with money. They were interested in my knowledge and what I had to offer the organization.

During that time, the deep ties that Neaman had established during his youth, walking and working the land of his birth, continued to provide him with his most meaningful pleasures.

My favorite things to do were to take the car on Saturdays and ride to the rocky and wild area of Bet Guvrin. I would return from those excursions feeling more excitement than if I had visited the beautiful and green mountainous areas of Switzerland, France, or South America. On other occasions, with guests from abroad I would take them through the Yizreel Valley toward Nazareth and from there to the Upper Galilee and return via the northern road on the border with Lebanon. Once I traveled to the Dead Sea. I would also return from those trips excited and thrilled with a feeling I never experienced any place else in the world. I have seen the world and all its beauty, but experiencing the beauty Israel has, as one who was born and raised here, with a connection to the land was more than thrilling.

Far-Reaching Ties to Israel

Wherever his business activities took him, Samuel Neaman was always in constant contact with Israel, and his ideological commitment to the Jewish state remained a defining feature in his life.

I was always involved and up-to-date on what was going on in the country. I read all the newspapers regularly, so I could remain informed of what was happening in Binyamina,

Pardes Hanna, or some far away settlement in the Negev. I was raised knowing that Jews were spread all over the world and that for tens of generations they felt inferior, having no homeland or independence. There were Jews who excelled at science, politics, economics, but the Jewish people had no national homeland.

When you are called a Jew abroad, it is not necessarily a compliment. Jewish people may have breached obstacles individually, but as a group they were considered inferior. The longing to get to Zion has lasted thousands of years and each generation of Jews around the world dreamed of returning to the Promised Land. The first time this was attempted in great numbers was at the end of the 19th century with the first, second, and third waves of “Aliyah”, when the land of Israel was in its inception and being rebuilt. Israel was not just a place for refugees seeking asylum but also a place for those who were not being persecuted. There were those who came especially to build a new society. They established kibbutzim, settlements, worker's moshavim, cooperative moshavim, villages and cities, as well as Histadrut organizations affiliated with the Workers Union. All of this activity eternally pursued rectifying society and the relations between peoples.

When I was a youngster, there was no question of a connection between a person and his or her homeland. I was not religious, even though in our home I would don *tefillin* and go to synagogue and the mikveh, not out of a belief in Judaism per se, but rather as carrying on the tradition of a learned people. I was more involved and interested in the

relationships between people. How would people possibly learn to live together? Different opinions were acceptable, but above all there was the “common cause”.

One fact is that I am Jewish and all the people who know me know I am Jewish. Without the State of Israel I could not exist as a Jew with the same comfort as I do today. This does not mean that everything connected to Israel affects me in some way. A good day for Israel is a good day for Jews everywhere; just as a bad day for Israel is a bad day for every Jewish family. Israel has interjected a new dimension for every Jew and every Jewish household.

Neaman's support of Jewish causes was legendary. The following is only a partial list of the institutions and organizations Neaman personally contributed to in the United States: The Jewish Federation of New York, The Jewish Hospital in Denver, Colorado, The Albert Einstein College, The Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, The Organization for the Preservation and Development of Land in Israel, The American-Israel Chamber of Commerce, where he served for many years as President, and the Bonds for Israel in New York, where he served as Acting Director.

Technion and the Creation of a Research Institute with a Vision – A Life-long Commitment

In 1972, Neaman began his association with the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, which would develop into a major and life-long commitment. Together with the Minister of the Treasury, Pinchas Sapir, Neaman spearheaded the plan to

establish an institute that would apply scientific research approaches to evaluate and guide national policy. It was decided that the most appropriate academic institution to house such a research institute was the Technion. At a convention of the American Technion Society in New York in 1972, the establishment of The Samuel Neaman Institute was announced, in the presence of 100 leading American economists, industrialists, and marketing companies, along with 14 Nobel Laureates.

The Institute was officially established in 1973 and commenced activity several years later, with a mandate to research and formulate national policy in a broad range of areas including science, technology and economy; infrastructure, environment and national planning; and academic education and use of human resources. Samuel Neaman served as Chairman of the Board of Director of the institute bearing his name, and was a powerful driving force for its myriad activities. Neaman's involvement continued throughout his lifetime and he was in daily contact with the Institute. This connection was guided by Neaman's personal philosophy, that Jews of the Diaspora should not only donate money to Israel, but also obligate themselves to be actively involved, volunteering their personal knowledge and valuable experience.

When asked about his vision for the Institute, Neaman replied as follows:

It is my desire to contribute to and create an academic environment where side by side, citizens, researchers and scientists can identify problems that impact the lives of both individuals and society as a whole. I want to grant them the

opportunity to take action, recommend suitable researchers from Israel and around the world who will conduct research and contribute to the search for the much needed solutions of these all-encompassing problems. My vision is that the Samuel Neaman Institute will provide alternative solutions to universal problems and allow the suitable solution be chosen that will serve the needs of the country, not a particular individual or political party.

The establishment of the Samuel Neaman Institute further reinforced Neaman's ongoing connection with the American Technion Society. He served on all the key committees of the ATS and served as its President for one year. He was among the few lay leaders who, aided by a talented management team, transformed the ATS into a modern and highly effective fund raising organization. .

Neaman's contribution to the Technion was carried out in additional capacities. From 1983 he served on the International Board of Directors of the Technion and from 1993, he was Vice-Chairman of the Board. In grateful acknowledgement of this dedication, the Technion bestowed upon him numerous awards, including an honorary doctorate in 1982 and the Technion Medal in 1997, the two most prestigious awards that the Technion can offer.

A Life Devoted to Building a Nation

Samuel Neaman and his wife Cecile visited Israel at least once a year, to participate in the Board of Governors Meeting at the Technion. His relationship with Israel was deep and complex,

yet it was always clear to him that his upbringing in pre-state Palestine formed the man he came to be.

I was born in Israel under Turkish rule. I was raised on the knees of Zionism which was at the time socialistic-left and not extreme. I left the country for reasons dealt with in depth in previous parts of this book and since 1931 I lived, most of the time, outside of and far away from the land of my birth. Nevertheless the core of my life and activity were at all times directed to and for Israel.

After being absent for many years and upon returning, I realized the situation was similar to the United States. Most of Israeli society is based upon an economic foundation and most people seem to be wondering where the basic values have gone. Clearly, without Israel, a Jew cannot exist in the world. Israel gave the Jewish people new enemies, but also respect. If we look at me as an example, in my private life I live day in day out, moment to moment with the attitude that I don't need the love of the people I work with, but I do require their respect.

I have often wondered what would have happened if I had remained in Israel and become a *moshavnik* like many of my friends from Mikveh Israel who settled in Beit She'arim in the Yezreel Valley. A few years ago I met up with several of them and we had a nice long conversation. Their lives seemed trouble-free, uncomplicated, and moreover much more satisfying than mine, even though they had to wake-up at three in the morning to milk the cows and more often than not only enjoyed the fruits of their hard work

way down the line. I don't know what kind of problems they have, but who doesn't have problems? One who searches for fulfillment will find it in the place they were born and raised, together with the problems involved.

Cecilia Neaman died in August, 1999 and Samuel Neaman in November, 2002. They were brought to rest in the Old Cemetery of Haifa on the lower slopes of the Carmel Mountain, facing the sea.

Eretz Israel from Inside and Out Reflections

In this book, the author Samuel (Sam) Neaman illustrates a part of his life story that lasted over more than three decades during the 20th century – in Eretz Israel, France, Syria, in WWII battlefronts, in Great Britain, the U.S., Canada, Mexico and in South American states. This is a life story told by the person himself and is being read with bated breath, sometimes hard to believe but nevertheless utterly true. Neaman was born in 1913, but most of his life he spent outside the country and the state he was born in and for which he fought and which he served faithfully for many years. Therefore, his point of view is from both outside and inside and apart from the love he expresses towards the country, he also criticizes what is going on here. In Israel the author is well known for the renowned Samuel Neaman Institute for Advanced Studies in Science and Technology which is located at the Technion in Haifa. This institute was established by Neaman and he was directly and personally involved in all its management until he passed away a few years ago. Samuel Neaman did much for Israel's security and as a token of appreciation, all IDF's chiefs of staff have signed a megila. Among the signers of the megila there were: Ig'el Yadin, Mordechai Maklef, Moshe Dayan, Haim Laskov, Zvi Zur, Izhak Rabin, Haim Bar-Lev, David El'azar, and Mordechai Gur.

