

// Yochai Avrahami

I woke up in the dark on brown Formica tables, in a room the size of which I was unable to determine at that moment. It was difficult to identify the blinking images on the computer screens cast about, pointed upwards. Flickering lights were reflected on the ceiling amidst unlit fluorescent bulbs. Scores of photographs were scattered in between the screens. I got used to the dark, and tried to assess the room which was lined with glass cases filled with books all around, from the floor to the high ceiling. I didn't know where I was. The windows looked Templer in style, but also Mediterranean. It could be eclectic architecture. I must improve my position to know more, I thought to myself, and fell asleep again. The fluorescent starters' attack woke me up once more. A series of noisy red sparks within small plastic units dragged in its wake a set of flashes. It culminated with a fluorescent rectangular row flooding the room with cold, bright light. Daylight in the windows exposed green branches and creeping ivies

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which could be seen through the granular-textured glass interwoven with a mesh of ultra-thin wires. More details were gradually revealed: a magnifying glass and a video camera were placed on the table next to me. I lifted up my body to see better what was happening on the tables. Countless images switched in varying speeds on the screens: elderly people, sculptures, gardens, paths, landscapes, weapons, and works of art. The photographs scattered in piles amidst the screens are aerial photos. fig 1

The Collection Houses, Jaffa

The Collection Houses (IDF History) Museum exhibits weaponry and spoils from Israel's various military operations. Matti Hemed is the curator of the Small Arms Wing – a giant hangar presenting the evolution of hundreds of weapons inside glass display cases, reminiscent of the Marine Animal wing in a natural history museum.

We enter a small lecture hall. Matti gives in to the camera and begins to talk.

- My connection with the Uzi is this: In 1950 I moved to the Quartermaster-General Corps GHQ. During that time, Uzi was referred to us at the Arms Equipment Wing, and we referred him to Israel Military Industries (IMI), where his submachine gun could be developed according to specifications determined by

the Chief of Staff. Uzi himself participated in the Infantry Platoon Command course in 1949 with Lieutenant Colonel Meir Zorea; he reported with a submachine gun which he had made in Yagur, which resembled an MG34.

- The Czech...

- It's not Czech, it's

German! Because an MG34 is a *Maschinengewehr vierunddreißig*. The Germans name a weapon by its year of production – 1934. Later on they issued the MG42 in 1942, which everyone calls the Spandau, I don't know why. It looks very similar to the MG34, but its rate of fire is much greater. While the rate of the MG34 is 600-800 rounds per minute (RPM), and when you fire a burst, you hear taktaktaktaktaktak, the 42 can fire 1200, and you hear a simultaneous rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr sound. But let me get back to Uzi. Lieutenant Colonel Zorea liked the submachine gun Uzi built on the kibbutz. When he came to us, he realized that his submachine gun, which was similar to the MG34, must be reworked to meet IDF needs; and then he was given

a place to work in, a corner of his own, in IMI.

- A workshop.

- A workshop. He was assigned a tool operator who helped him physically, also in terms of contact with other departments, when he had to bend or twist steel, etc., and there he also built the prototypes. Two units: one with a hoe's stock, and the other with an ordinary triangular wooden stock of a standard gun. Later there was a competition, and the IDF decreed that Uzi's submachine gun was preferable. That Uzi is still in use.

We enter the Small Arms Hall. The large hall is empty of people, save a maintenance man who opens the showcases one by one, oils the guns, and returns them to the display. We naturally approach the showcases containing the first Uzis, and those of his competitor – Kara.

- Can you zoom in without getting the lamps? [He points out the reflections of the lighting in the glass vitrine].

- I get a bit of lamps, but it doesn't bother me.

- This is the K12 which competed with the Uzi. They chose the Uzi. Period. You see. After the prototypes, five models were manufactured initially.

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- In the prototype, the sights hadn't been rounded yet.

- Here it's still straight, and here, and here. Only later they began to round them, to make it stronger. This is my bullet collection. You have every bullet, from this caliber to the small Russian caliber, 5.45 of Kalashnikov. The previous one is 7.62, very similar to our 5.56.

- It's like a stamp collection.

- True. Here you have all sorts of things, dozens, countless, all sorts of calibers, the Kalashnikovs of North Korea, of Romania, everything is loot taken from the Syrians, partly from the Egyptians. You see, Iran; an Uzi with Arabic inscription... It's hard to see without opening. It's from the Shah's regime.

- I can see.

- Did you manage? Look, a rifle was already manufactured back in 1943. A popular one. It was called *Volksgewehr*. Look at the bolt, look at the simple barrel. This one was made by Speer!! That one... Look at him, look at the way he puts the oil!... How much oil?!... That's terrible!!! Why does he put so much oil?!?!?

- Like models!

- Terrible. fig 2

The pair of heavy wooden doors painted in glossy white oil paint knocked noisily. I turned my eyes, but could see nothing, apart from the motion of an opening door. I raised my eyes and saw a strange fairy: a short, plump, smiling lady with wide-open, curious, great big eyes, equipped with dragonfly wings. A video camera was attached to her head, like a miners' lantern. She circled above me, gliding horizontally over the tables like a hawk, and then vertically, up the display cases, like a honey sucker.

- What are you looking for?
Can I be of any help?

- Yes please! But could you remind me what I am doing here?

- We must go on a mission!
She continued flying; the flap of her wings casting transparent shadows on the tables. Her words reinforced my feeling – I was in a military facility. There was a smell of machinery and gun-oil and plastic and metal there. Cleanliness for the purpose of lubrication.

- What's this smell of oil?

- Things must be ready for receipt of command.

- And what then?

The questions led to riddles rather than answers. I let it go. I stretched my awakening slowly, and enjoyed my semi-dreamy state. Reality was not necessarily the one thing I needed at that moment.

3



In the summer of 2007, while staying in Weimar, I learned that Uziel Gal, the inventor of the famous submachine gun Uzi, was born in that town. During that week I participated in a course on the origins of the Bauhaus. I first became acquainted with the evolution of the school's building, which began operations in an art deco structure in Weimar and evolved into the famous Bauhaus edifice with the clean lines in Dessau. During the war, the Nazis wanted to demolish the building in Dessau, but ultimately changed their decision, and instead opened a school for the SS command in situ. During the war Dessau was bombed due to its famous airplane factory, but also because of the sugar processing plant, one of whose products was Zyklon-B. The ruins of that factory are located some 700 meters from the renowned school, whose white walls were painted in camouflage colors in fear of bombings. fig 3,4

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I contacted Iddo Gal, the son of Uzi (born Gotthard Glas) to locate the house in which the famous weapon inventor grew up. Iddo gave me the address; 45-47 Am Horn street. He told me that Uzi's father, Erich, was an aerial photographer in the German air force during World War I, and that after he was injured, he studied in the Bauhaus during the school's first years in Weimar. I didn't succeed in finding the house that summer. Since my return to Israel, I have been meeting with Iddo and others. We have been sifting through vast amounts of archival material, gliding at random over piles of aerial photographs, motivated by the intuition that this piece of weaponry inherited the Bauhaus genes. The gun's design, the materials, as well as the scarcity and simplicity of the constituent elements and operation, are a fractal in the aforementioned chain, in the symbiosis between self-defense and creativity.

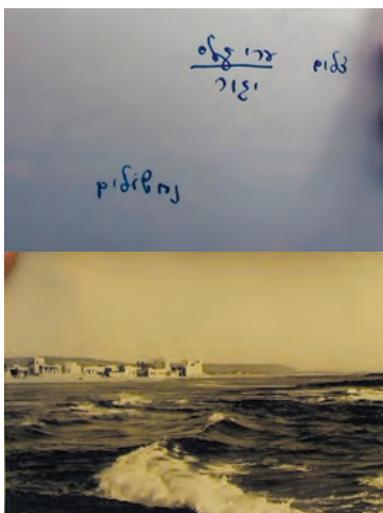
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The Gal Family Home in Haifa

We open a wooden box containing etchings created by Erich as a student in the Bauhaus. Then I start wandering with my camera over contact-sheet albums from the years in which Glas lived in Acre after 1956. Iddo shows me sights from which Eri drew inspiration for his later Orientalist paintings. We move back to photographs taken during the journey to Palestine. One album after another, scores of contact sheets. The Munich beer cellars; a photograph of fishermen in Trieste, from where they left by sea to Palestine; aerial photographs from the Jordan Valley fig 5; a photograph of beehives;

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Kibbutz Yagur appearing like a cemetery or a deserted village against the backdrop of Mount Carmel; a photograph of a seaside village, taken from the sea. The word "Nachsholim" (Heb. large waves) is inscribed on its rear, and it is hard to tell whether it refers to the waves at the foreground or predicts the building of Kibbutz Nachsholim on the ruins of the Palestinian village Tantura. fig 6

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Erich Glas was born in Germany in 1897. He never met his father. When his mother, an actress, was hospitalized, he moved in with his uncle and aunt, who were also in the theater. During World War I he participated in one of the first flights to engage in aerial intelligence gathering photography. After sustaining an injury, he began painting the atrocities of war, was discharged, and began studies at the Bauhaus in Weimar. fig 7 As a young artist he aspired to reach the high technical proficiency of the German Old Masters, and therefore focused on etching, lithography, woodcuts and linocuts – areas which required an exceptional level of precision. He married Maria, a Christian hailing from a family with a Jewish background, and their son, Gotthard, was born. The family lived on Am Horn Street. Several years later they divorced, and Erich moved to Berlin. Gotthard stayed

Kiryat Ono

in Weimar with Maria and her partner, Etta, who had a collection of old weapons from the days of the Prussian army. When the Nazis rose to power, Gotthard was transferred to boarding school in England. In the meantime, Erich studied under Hermann Struck and Max Liebermann in Berlin; he was influenced by his Surrealist-Expressionist friend, Alfred Kubin, and taught at the academy. In 1933 he fled with his new family to Palestine and settled in Kibbutz Yagur, where he changed his name to Eri. The young Gotthard continued his studies in boarding school, until one weekend in 1936, during a home visit in Weimar. Etta's brother, who was an SS officer, recommended that Maria send him out of Germany as soon as possible, and he was sent to Palestine, to his father in Yagur.

Berlin-born Ruth Rapaport lived in Yagur during the 1930s, and knew Glas. Today she is 97, living in a modest house in Kiryat Ono. She looks very old, is hard of hearing and has difficulty walking.

- He was given a fine welcome. They gave him a studio in the center of the kibbutz, where he worked. What did he do? He taught art and painted... One of the things I think he did in terms of work

was take pictures. Very few people owned a camera in those days, and the members were given credits for having their pictures taken by Erich. In 1933-34 we came from Germany, we were a group of people, and he invited the 'yekkes'¹ for tea. He was a very nice man. He could tell stories and engage in conversations....

As far as I remember, his color paintings weren't his strong point... His graphic works were very good, weren't they?

- With regard to the color, I agree with you, I didn't think this was his forte.

- Let me tell you one more thing. Since he came from Germany, and he was there, in the army, during World War I, the old guard in Yagur accepted him to the Hagana²; he must have known more than they did about war. There was some quantity of bullets that got wet, and it was a

shame to let them go to waste; there was a bakery in Yagur, and he thought he would dry them... He put the bullets there after they finished baking, and they started firing from the heat... (She laughs).

- Where did you work in the first years?

- At first I washed dishes in the kitchen. One of the worst jobs was to go to the henhouse, take a live chicken and look for someone to slaughter it. The best one was a Druze from Usfiya. There is a wadi there that goes all the way down to Yagur. He had a good knife, and I told him, 'Kill it'. Then they discovered I was good at weaving, and this was where I stayed, in the factory.

- Do you remember anything about him? How he behaved, how he fit in?

- He assimilated very well, because everyone wanted their pictures taken. Also, the guys from the Hagana were with him, he was considered someone who knows things...

- Eri studied at the Bauhaus. Did you know anything about the Bauhaus?

- Oh, the Bauhaus. It's the first time I hear that Erich studied at the Bauhaus. We had two women-immigrants who studied there. One was

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called Bella, and the other – Ruth. They helped us create beautiful weaving patterns that they learned there. Bauhaus is a concept, not just a word. It was a style... you know, when you entered a flat in Berlin, you had some piece sticking up, you know... all kinds of... and the Bauhaus put an end to that, and made everything straight and logical. Look. I'm 97 now, and I have the loom by my bed, and I'm really sorry that I don't have the strength to use it anymore. Recently I worked alone making so-called art... scarves and other articles of clothing... tablecloths... In the good times I had three workers. It gradually diminished.... Now I'm like that, all alone. Everyone has already passed away. fig 8

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During World War II he knew what was going on in Europe. His correspondence with Maria bypassed the censor. In 1942 he published a book of linocuts entitled *Nights*: 28 prints depicting a young artist waking into a nightmare with surrealistic scenes of the angel of death, bats and ravens. The sights are replaced by real images of rioting, destruction, and fire, culminating in acts of violence, punishment, barbed-wire fences and watchtowers in concentration camps. The book was published during the war (although it is customarily believed that the Jews in Palestine were unaware of what was going



on). It ends with a prophecy: the prisoners collect the arms, rebel, and leave the camp with the sun beaming behind them. fig 9,10,11,12

The knowledge he gained in aerial photography was later utilized, when he was drafted to take aerial photographs for Hagana intelligence as part of the so-called "Village Files."³ The aerial photographs which remained in the possession of the family portray mainly Jewish settlements and "Tower and Stockade" groundbreaking acts.⁴

Early military aerial photography by Jews in Palestine was a by-product of Glas's art classes at the kibbutz. Moshe Goren, who



was his pupil, remembers that Glas talked about his past as an aerial photographer during World War I in class. Goren later joined the Hagana, and became Chief Scouting Officer. He realized the strategic need in aerial photography, and harnessed Glas. His subordinate, Itzhak Eran, wrote about it in his book *HaSayarim* (The Scouting Patrol). Eran describes the first test flight, the type of camera which Glas chose, and the people on the plane: his wife as a "decoy" in an ostensible pleasure flight, which covered up the military aim, and Yigael Yadin. 5



The fairy continued flying in the room, fetching literature about weaponry, military tactics and strategies, and mainly information about analysis of aerial photographs. I realized we must prepare for an operation involving flight overseas. She seemed to have substantial information, yet surrendered very little detail, and things unfolded as in a psychoanalytic process: she was high above, and I was below, barely able to see her. I mainly hear her voice and the flapping of her wings behind me. At some point she ordered me to get up. I slid off the messy table, and could finally see her clearly. She was dressed



in khaki uniform.

- Time to leave.
- Where to?
- Follow me.

She opened the door, and the smell of lubricant grew stronger.



Ramat Gan

I received the transcript of Moshe Goren's testimony, where he maintained that Glas already flew over the Middle East during World War I. Goren's house is located in the

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Paratroopers Neighborhood. An Asian man opens the door, leading me to a living room with a wooden ceiling, leather sofas, and a state-of-the-art sound system playing Mahler. An old man is seated on the sofa. Piles of remote controls and medication lie on the table.



- How did you begin thinking about the aerial photographs?
- Let me take you to the beginning. I was Chief Scouting Officer in the Hagana, and during that time we set up an entire system of aerial photography which was nonexistent theretofore; I introduced the change. We

had this basic problem, and decided to introduce aerial photography in order to obtain better information on the targets themselves, and not just how to access them. The Palmach⁶ was only interested in access routes; they patrolled nearby, but what was in the aerial photograph solved the problem for us. And then I remembered Eri. How he told us that in Germany he was...

- How old were you?

- I was 13. It's been 70 years since then... Yes. And he...

Every Friday we had an hour with Eri. We learned to read paintings: to view a painting and analyze it, and he also told us that story... For some reason, I don't know why, it remained stuck in my head on the way back from school. I finished the regional school in Yagur, and worked my way up the Hagana ranks to Chief Scouting Officer.

- Before we return to the aerial photographs, can you remember what he was like as a teacher?

- Every week we had painting and music lessons. The school wanted to broaden our horizons... to bring us closer to culture. He used to tell a lot of stories. He said he knew the terrain, etc., etc., and that he toured the area where Jordan is now located back then. I

don't remember much apart from that story.

- He said that during World War I he toured present-day Jordan?

- Who?

- Eri.

- The territory was Jordan; the British were there, but the territory he talked about was there.

- During World War I?

- World War I, that's what we are talking about!

- Because I asked the family about this, and they know nothing about him flying over the Middle East.

- That's what he told me!

I didn't make it up. Also... we were very interested in painting. He was just a very gentle man and a good teacher.

- In the family archive I found many photographs he took, in your time obviously, but it's the first I hear about him coming to the Middle East during World War I.

- It's a fact! Now, regarding the aerial photographs—here we had a problem; because of the British we couldn't get vertical shots. Every shot was diagonal, and each part of the

photograph had a different scale. We managed to find a solution; it wasn't ideal, but it worked.

- Stories have it that Eri Glas taught about camouflage techniques, things he had learned in Germany, and that he painted guarding posts in the kibbutz.

- I don't know about that.

At any event, he emphasized visual art because he was an artist.

- How many flights did you have with Glas?

- I don't think I ever flew with him, not with him... I flew with Yigal Alon.⁷

- I know there was one flight with Glas.

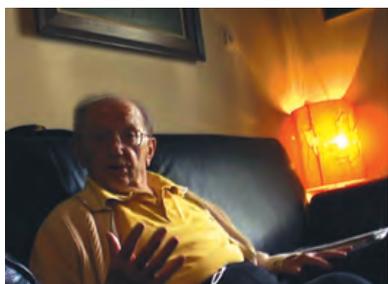
- I don't know. It wasn't with me.

- You never flew with Glas?

You mean, you only made the contact with him and other people flew with him?

- 'With him' is two different things, I am trying to differentiate...

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- So please explain again...

- I wanted to tell you what I know about Glas; so, among other things, he told us that he photographed from the air in the territory that was then Jordan, the British. I don't know more than that.

- But didn't you later invite him to take photographs for the Hagana?

- No!

- But in the book it says that the first photography flight was with Glas.

- I don't remember, perhaps it wasn't in my time... it wasn't in my time, surely...

- Eran writes: "The initiator was Moshe Goren, who was Chief Scouting Officer since 1945. Goren sought an aerial photographer, and he found Eri Glas from Kibbutz Yagur"...

- It's all imaginary. fig 13

She opened the large door, and we went to the entrance of an endless hall with a row of houses at its center. They differed slightly from one another, but all had clean lines, mainly horizontal, and protruding balconies, rounded in part. Some were reminiscent of submarines, due to the round windows in their stairwells. The design was simple, aside from the green camouflage colors that covered them. As we progressed, the smell of lubricant grew stronger. At the end of the avenue stood an impressive building, similar to the other houses, yet much bigger. The rounded balconies were located on the

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roof, on either side, casting a silhouette of two arches. A small barrel-like structure that looked like a water tank was also located on the roof, closer to the left-hand balcony. The building with the metallic façade seemed to hover on two columns: one, plastic-coated, was where the entrance was; the other was metallic-constructivist, and supported the building on the right. A long, large pipe emerged from the left side of the building, like a launching apparatus leading outdoors from the vast hall. There were fences all around and heavy security. fig 14



Kibbutz Kfar Giladi

In the foyer of the Museum of Hashomer (The Jewish defense organization 'The Guard')⁸ we meet Batia Guy, the Museum's director, who had studied with Glas as a young girl. We walk amidst Batia Lishansky's⁹ sculptures, and climb the stairs to the roof. On the way we see broken glass – a reminder of the recent war fought in the summer. Batia tells us about the location of the museum which functioned as a watchtower. We enter a large room, which served as the office of the Shochats who were among the leaders of Hashomer. The walls are lined with pictures from the Shomer days, paintings by Israeli artists, and Joseph Trumpeldor's¹⁰ rifle proudly installed in an elegant wooden frame adorned with green velvet. *fig 15*

- In the kibbutz, everyone always knew he was a pilot and that he had studied in an art academy in Germany. No one knew about that specific school or about the Bauhaus style at the time. He was very impressive with his high stature, his dignified gait. He was considered an authority, a very pedagogical figure. There was also something mysterious about that studio above the children's house. After you called me, I began to think about the affinity between a military museum and art. It is a field that I have been studying ever since I started engaging in art. Throughout my career I have linked history and art. I tried to think of what I learned from my art teacher. Creativity and curiosity. Even if you create a weapon, it's an artistic act. The function it serves,

that's another matter. It's very present in art. As I said, you have a blank page, and something emerges from it. I can say about the problems of artists on the kibbutz, that they were considered idlers.

- Parasites.
- Yes, parasites, I didn't want to use such a word, but it's... until the Kibbutz Movement set up a committee whose function was to evaluate the quality of their work, and allot certain "art days" to the kibbutz. An artist could get an art day on his work schedule, because he was given a permit to make art. In support of Yagur I can say that they always treated art as a cultural asset, and therefore I began by saying that he was a teacher like any other.

Once we passed by the guard, we entered a tall and narrow metal shaft. Entry was through a strange elevator, where instead of standing up, you had to lie down across the compartment and ascend horizontally, one atop the other in zigzag. I lay down as well, while the fairy-soldier hovered on the outside, accompanying my ascent which was made in jolts, like bullets climbing up a magazine. I was led to an elongated, rectangular conference room with massive walls. To the right of the façade was a wide window with rounded corners, and the ceiling descended from its highest part to the rear wall on a slant. On the right was a round door, and inside – the elongated table. Left of the façade was a small round shut window with a round latch and a slit which looked like an emergency exit. On either elongated side, at the bottom,

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was a rim on which soldiers sat, speaking enthusiastically about rabbits that must be rescued. Several letters were engraved on the wall on which they leaned. We entered the room and heard a lecture delivered by a short, chubby man with a beard, a moustache, and a peaked cap, who spoke about the importance of national art and design for defense purposes.

fig 16

17



East of Goethe Park, at the end of Am Horn Street, is the first Bauhaus house worldwide, built as part of the school's exhibition in 1923. North of it, between the third and fourth houses, a small path climbs uphill, winding left and then right, embracing a cultivated plot on the slope with vegetable crops such as lattice, carrots, and kohlrabi. Further along there are several huts, a wooden greenhouse with a smoking chimney, and the family home at the far end. I visited the place in summer 2008 and met the owner, Mr. Tipelt, a nice dwarf with a small moustache. He recalled Maria, from whom his father had purchased the house in 1973, with enthusiasm. Mr. Tipelt was proud of his father, who until a year before continued to raise vegetables and sell them in the City Square, as Maria had since the 1920s. fig 17

18



Sadness spread over his face, but it was soon replaced by proud gaiety. He said that he himself grows rabbits for food, and boasted his major client, Prof. Dr. Volkhard Knigge, Director of the Buchenwald Memorial, who is renowned for his gourmet cooking. I recalled that the previous year, before leaving Weimar in the summer, we were invited by Dr. Knigge for a farewell dinner. I was promised rabbit, and anticipated the dinner with mixed feelings of excitement and fear, but it was cancelled. fig 18

In one of our conversations Dr. Knigge recommended that I visit the Jewish Cemetery in Erfurt, and on the morning after my meeting with Mr. Tipelt, I went there. At first it gave the impression of a typical Jewish cemetery, with gravestones bearing Stars-of-David and inscriptions in Hebrew. I was afraid to be disappointed and feared the imminent rain. I climbed uphill to the funeral home, which had a portico in front, with two locked heavy doors at the center. The doors were flanked by two large marble plates bearing the names of local Jewish soldiers who died in World War I, decorated with helmet reliefs and gallantry medals. I hastened my steps downward, and then, as in a German Expressionist science fiction movie, oblique gravestones, with odd angles, prisms and cuttings emerged, calling to mind diamonds or pine cones. The more I studied this section, the more daring the style turned. These were gravestones from the 1930s of a specific bourgeois class within the Erfurt Jewish community, whose rest was penetrated by design extracted from cinema and art. Some looked like spaceships, others like the logos of industrial

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20



19



plants fig 19 or parts of machines and décor. I was especially impressed by one large angry-looking gravestone made green by moss, with a spiky central part protruding upwards, and another part sticking out like a nose. I felt as if I were in a fictive air force base dominated by the souls of this middle class, which has covered itself with spikes, prepared fortifications for wartime, as if fear had given rise to a belief that art can offer protection. fig 20, 21

Okay. Now. Do you have information about that German rifle?

- What German rifle?

- The German rifle from 1934...

- From 1934?

- Yes, what you told me, the one like the first submachine gun Uzi made at Yagur...

- Oh, the machine gun!

- The machine gun, yes, my mistake. MG34 was a machine gun first produced in 1934. It was air-cooled, like other machine guns, but it was lightweight. Its initial design was conceived by Heinrich Vollmer, during the time he worked at the Maschinenfabrik Geipel plant in Erfurt, which no longer exists.

- And that weapon which inspired Uzi, does it exist?

- It doesn't exist at all, and I have never seen it, but from the data I gathered in my research I reached its size, magazine capacity, feed system; and when I saw the picture, I knew this was it, because it fit the data.

- You say there was an IDF specification according to which Uzi developed the weapon... What did that specification contain? What were the criteria?

- The size, that it wouldn't exceed 3.5 kilos in weight, I think, that its rate of fire wouldn't exceed 400 RPM, its general length...

- Is the rate of fire an economic consideration?

- Some developers want to have as small as possible a rate of fire to obtain better accuracy so that the weapon won't run wild... but the Germans even produced one with 1200 RPM.

- You say that he created the prototype in the kibbutz metal shop. Did he have knowledge in welding?

- He graduated from a vocational school, and he always fixed spare parts for the Hagana. He had a knack for such things. From childhood, I guess.

- Did he tell you about his childhood, or...

- Look, Uzi was a very reserved man. He never initiated talks about his developments. Since he was both a technical man and a soldier, he always knew what to do in terms of human engineering, what kind of a trigger mechanism, which blowback apparatus, how to fix jams... Now I am ready to show it to you. You need a permit from the Manager in order to take pictures. They are all in a showcase, and there is glass. This one you may shoot, but if you are using

a flash...

- No. no. I need the flash.

Can't you take the Uzi out and disassemble it, say....

- Here on the table?

- Yes.

- I can. Let me bring it here.

- So perhaps we should start with that.

- I'll bring it... You can sit and wait.

Matti left the room and went to get the Uzi. I waited,

excited, and after several minutes he returned, holding a plain wooden box. He placed it on the table and opened it. Inside was an Uzi submachine gun which looked brand new.

- Do you want it on a bright or a dark background?

- It doesn't matter.

- What do you want to do?

- I want you to explain about the various parts.

- I will explain, look. The weapon is based on the blowback principle. It has a heavy bolt, and when you pull the trigger, the bolt runs forward, issues a bullet

by turn, feeding it into the barrel. Here is the return or recoil spring, which means that when I want to cock the weapon, the bolt is pushed here. Here is the safety-selector, it's hard to see: automatic, semi, and locked. In locked position I can do nothing. In semi I take it foreword, and it is now cocked. Imagine there are bullets inside; I pull the trigger, and it fires. The finger is still pressed, and the bolt moves backward by itself. It pushes the bullet forward, and the bolt backward. Is that clear?

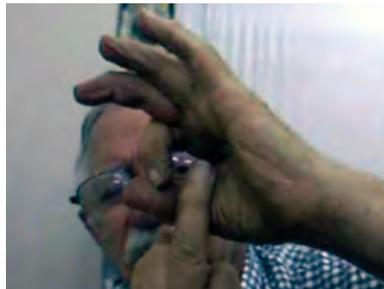
- Clear.

- Now, in automatic, which is like that – I'll demonstrate as if there are bullets, OK? I cock the weapon and it's ready to fire. When I pull the trigger, the bolt runs, the trigger is pressed, but it doesn't stop, it runs forward, fires the second bullet, and the third, and it does the movement. The bolt itself moves, but the cocking handle remains in place.

It doesn't move. That's the underlying principle. Now it's me, firing from the hip, but if I want to aim, I can aim. This is the front sight and this is the aperture-type rear sight. Come see.

- And what is the front sight, this is just the pointer?

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- A pointer! I can see it inside. I bring the end to the center, and if I lift higher, I lift the entire machine gun to fire there (Matti demonstrates: he makes a circle with the fingers of one hand and a pointer with the other, and threads one into the other). *fig 22* Can you see what they have done here?

They put this weapon out of service. If I had real bullets... It is neutered! That means I cannot take the barrel off. Can you see that the firing pin is fixed, but what did they do? They ground it down so as to disable this weapon. Now let's put it together....

- Wait a minute. I would like to dwell a little longer on this story. What is this?

- It's an arrangement that when it gets here, this hits that and not the metal.

- And what is this material?

- It's a type of plastic, something very durable. It is intended to cushion the impact, it takes all the recoil.

- It feels like cardboard.

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- Yes, and this one feels like Bakelite or cardboard. Not fragile. It is a fact that it endures. Look at the mechanism, you can't see anything here... You see... It was in semi-automatic mode, clear?

Matti fires multiple shots, and I photograph the movements in the chamber.

- So this is the weapon. Only five parts: the body, the return spring, the barrel, the bolt, and the cover. Look how easily it closes: boom, and it's already down.

- And the box...

- They did it for the present. He received it from IMI. It's not from us. *fig 23*

The Hagana Museum Archives, Rothschild Blvd., Tel Aviv

A bronze relief by Batia Lishansky is installed in the entrance, depicting a group of young men and women in work clothes, possibly armed, on the move, looking straight ahead. The archive contains six brown Formica tables with computer terminals. The archivist sits at the entrance. A smiling woman with the energetic gestures of a librarian, she happily answers any question and climbs the ladders to fetch books from the higher shelves lining the room. She has been working in the archives for over twenty years now, since she was a young soldier. The noise of a gardener's saw is heard from outside. I am handed a pile of original aerial photographs from 1921-1948. I have filed a request to video the photographs from either side, because they bear handwritten inscriptions on the back, which may help me prove that these are photographs

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taken by Glas. Following my meeting with Moshe Goren, who refuted the argument that Glas took photographs for the Hagana, I did not invest much effort to prove otherwise. I mainly enjoyed toying with the photographs before the lens: small and glossy manually printed black-and-white images, threaded on light blue Bristol paper squares pierced at their corners, much like an old photo album.

A photograph of largely unpopulated terrain, partly cultivated, with rural houses on the right. The cardboard bearing the photograph reads "a photograph of enemy territory, July 1948." I turn the photograph around, and on the verso it says in English "original" with a double underline. Terraced olive groves. I zoom in further, trying to capture the houses. The reflections of fluorescent lights in the room interfere. The next photograph is very beautiful, fig 24 almost abstract: an

agricultural territory divided into squares, occasionally crossed by dirt roads which interrupt the geometry. Each plot has a different texture, attesting to different crops in different phases of cultivation. I detach the photograph from the cardboard and zoom in. At the center of the field there is a house with an inner yard which could have been a strategic target. This photograph was taken from the airplane's belly, a vertical rather than a diagonal photograph. It could have been taken during 1948, without British supervision.

The archive manager, whom I asked for permission to take pictures, enters the room. She sends threatening looks, talks about me with the archivist, making sure I am aware of the rules. She briefly looks at the lens. At the bottom part of the frame there is a glossy aerial photo, and it appears immersed in a grayish puddle. I sense danger, lift the camera, and go on with my work.



The lens cap swings, revealing the inscription "Tel Aviv – Reading." From amidst the sands, the airport's landing strip bursts forth, the Dov Hoz Airport built by the Aviron Company, where Glas flew. Next to it is the famous Israel Electric Company building, which has recently hosted contemporary art events, running for the title of the Israeli "Tate Modern." The camera lands on the table. The Formica ridges lead from it in perspective onto the horizon. fig 25

A vertical photograph of a village in very high resolution. A magnifying glass makes the details clearer; and then comes a three-dimensional surprise. Some of the houses are inclined in relation to the lens. On the one hand, it is a two-dimensional image featuring a sequence of roofs, roads, and courtyard sections; on the other hand, it is three-dimensional, featuring façades with arched doors



and windows. The organic subconscious erupts through the slits of the geometrical at the village center. In the rural areas, the opposite happens: crowding of organic, round and oval forms – grain barns. fig 26 The geometric bursts forth from amidst the barns in the form of small booths, tin huts. The camera hovers hypnotized, and then tires and once again lands between the brown Formica clods.

I arrange the photographs in a pile with a strange feeling of research disappointment. I leave the building on Rothschild Boulevard, and head north, towards the ruins of Tel Aviv's "culture plaza."

Notes

1 A term denoting Jews hailing from Germany.

2 An armed Jewish militia active in Palestine during the British mandate period until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. One of its strongholds was in Kibbutz Yagur.

3 A vast intelligence project of the Hagana, as part of which extensive material was gathered about the largely rural Palestinian population.

4 A unique settling method of pre-1948 Jews in Palestine. A set of poles and a folding watchtower made of wood were driven to a given location by night, and within several hours a small settlement was erected, delimited by wooden fences, with a watchtower at its heart, thus introducing a new reality in situ, despite the objection of the British mandate and the Arab neighbors.

5 Head of Operations during Israel's War of Independence; second Chief of Staff of the IDF; an archeologist and a politician.

- 6 A scouting unit which evolved from the Hagana in the early 1940s.
- 7 Commander of the Palmach, minister in the Israeli government, and acting Prime Minister of Israel.
- 8 The first armed Jewish militia in Palestine.
- 9 Recipient of the Israeli Prize for Sculpture. Created busts of leaders and memorials embracing a wide spectrum of feelings ranging from oppression to revolt, defense, and creation, in social realist style.
- 10 A renowned Jewish fighter killed in the battle of Tel Hai. Attributed the maxim: "It is good to die for our country."
- figures:*
- 1 Yochai Avrahami, *Orly in the Archive*, 2008, linocut
- 2 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed holding a copy of Uziel Gal's first submachine gun*, 2008, video still
- 3,4 Unknown photographer, *Bauhaus campus in Dessau: painted camouflage in the 1940s*, the Bauhaus Foundation, Dessau
- 5 Erich Glas, *Aerial photographs from Israel's north region*, 1940s, black & white photographs
- 6 Erich Glas, *Tantura village* (today Kibbutz Nachsholim), 1940s, black & white photograph
- 7 Unknown photographer, *Erich Glas wounded and adorned by the Iron Cross during WWI, sitting and drawing*, 1920s
- 8 Yochai Avrahami, *Ruth with Her Cat and Loom*, 2008, linocut
- 9 Erich Glas, *Retreat; The Death Say*, 1942, from *Nights*, linocut print book
- 10 Erich Glas, *Flames; Pogroms*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book
- 11 Erich Glas, *Concentration Camp; The Race of Lords*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book
- 12 Erich Glas, *Get Up and Fight!; To the Weapon!*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book
- 13 Yochai Avrahami, *Moshe Goren in his living room*, 2008, video still
- 14 Yochai Avrahami, *BauGun*, 2009, linocut
- 15 Yochai Avrahami, *Trumpeldor's rifle in Hashomer Museum*, 2007, digital photograph
- 16 Yochai Avrahami, *Outside the Conference Room*, 2009, linocut
- 17 Unknown photographer, *Maria Zacarias in the Weimar Market*, 1925, black & white photograph
- 18 Yochai Avrahami, *Vegetated Bunnies*, 2008, linocut
- 19,20,21 Yochai Avrahami, *Gravestone in the Jewish Cemetery of Erfurt*, 2007, digital photograph
- 22 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed demonstrates the Uzi sights*, 2008, video still
- 23 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed demonstrates the Uzi disassembly*, 2008, video still
- 24 Yochai Avrahami, *Neon Reflection over Village*, 2008, video still
- 25 Yochai Avrahami, *Furrows of Formica*, 2008, video still
- 26 Yochai Avrahami, *Threshing-floors*, 2008, video still