

“The liberation of the whole country from the rule of imperialism ...”: the Hungarian(-Jewish) ethnic vote and Israeli party politics in the early years of the Jewish state

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the ideological/party preferences of Hungarian Jews who emigrated to Palestine/Israel in the early years of the Jewish state and their integration into the new world. Tibor Scher, Director of the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Palestine (Hungarian State Cultural Institute and Library) even conducted a kind of poll among the Hungarian Jewry of the Yishuv, in which he examined these preferences. The Hungarian version of the right-wing radical Lehi (Lohamei Herut Yisrael) manifesto, which was forming into a party, is also included at the end of the study, which was discovered and translated by Attila Novak. This source (probably dating from the autumn of 1948 or 1950) which shows that the group, which was formed as a party in 1948, tried to recruit members from the local Hungarian Jewish community.

KEYWORDS

Hungary; Palestine; Israel; Yishuv; Zionism

The enumeration and identification of the various large ethnic (read: diversely Jewish) blocks of the Jewish state began decades ago, and knowledge of the smaller linguistic-cultural groups that have contributed significantly to the overall picture has grown significantly. The opening of the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv (1978) or – to take a more Hungarian perspective – the founding (1986) and then opening (1990) of the Memorial Museum of the Hungarian Speaking Jewry (Safed, Israel) illustrate the way in which the transformation of the unified Zionist Jewish narrative has specifically identified the ethnic groups involved in the founding of the state and placed them on the physical and intellectual map of the country. The beginning of this process is well illustrated by David Ben Gurion’s letter of reply to the Hungarian-speaking journalist Tomi Lapid in 1954, in which he writes that since “there is no difference between countries of origin,” Hungarian Jews must also “be integrated into the nation and participate in the building of the state.”¹ This kind of unified position, which did not consider ethnic differences to be important, was soon to become one of the two poles of the struggle for the politics of memory, with the other pole represented by those who did wish to talk about these differences.

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This process shows the social and identity changes taking place in Israeli society, in which certain elements of the melting pot remain important. In the case of the Jews who emigrated *en masse* after the Holocaust, ethnic differences had to be acknowledged if the message of the Yishuv (and later the state of Israel) was to reach everyone.

The next step in this process was to identify the Jewish ethnic group (or grouping) that had made the greatest contribution to the establishment of the state and to the creation of Israel as a whole. Israeli historians and sociologists have long been interested in how these larger “units” (e.g. Ashkenazi and Sephardi/Mizrahi Jews, or Russians, Poles, and Moroccans, etc.) variously contributed to the great project of the state, what the social implications of these differences were, and how their transformation from a minority group to a part of the state took place. The study of internal Jewish ethnic groups has been complemented by an analysis of non-Jewish groups in Israel, with other studies assessing ethnic identity from external perspectives, such as the participation rate of different groups in the labour market, their occupational structure and its social significance, or the ethnic affiliation to political parties and its possible determinants. Between the beginning and the end of this whole process, there have been numerous stages, both at the individual and group level.²

More and more sources are also emerging on the Hungarian “colours” of the political life of the nascent state, and this may be important not only for Israeli but also for Hungarian and other academia and the wider public.³ Accordingly, we will later discuss the role of Tibor Scher (1912–1975), Hungary’s cultural attaché to Palestine who conducted public opinion polls among local Hungarian immigrants.

In Israel’s early years, Hungarian Jewish public life (the Hungarian Yishuv) was not immersed in ideological debates, but was motivated instead by addressing the state of affairs that sought to explore the reasons for the relative political failure of the state in comparison to other immigrant groups. Immigrants arriving from Hungary and Hungarian-populated areas felt that they were not adequately represented in the labor market and were not getting the jobs they deserved.

This was also explored in a famous article by Ernő Marton, a Transylvanian-born newspaper editor and journalist, in the February 1950 issue of *Új Kelet*, which generated much debate.⁴ Marton presented an “objective” and a “subjective” reason that contributed to the development of the situation. According to the former, Hungarian Jews arrived late in the country, that is, when state institutions were already well established and thus did not play a role in their operation. As a subjective factor, he highlighted the fragmentation of Hungarian Jewry and its inability to organize. Marton believes that the solution would be for the community to organize itself within the framework of the *Hitachduth Oley Hungaria* (Organization of Hungarian Olim/Immigrants), the Hungarian organisation. In other words, the leader of the Hungarian Jewish community in Palestine ruled out the possibility that the Hungarian diaspora was not successful in their new country as a result of discrimination.

Although there are documents showing that Israeli parties reacted sensitively to these issues,⁵ there is very little evidence that Hungarian-speaking Jews were taken into account in the electoral process. A Hungarian-language source (probably from the fall of 1948 or 1950) that I found in the Hungarian State Security Archives shows that the right-wing radical Lehi (Lohamei Herut Yisrael) group, which was formed as a party in Israel in 1948, tried to recruit members of the local Hungarian-speaking community.

This potential source of members was identified when the Lohamim party was founded in the summer of 1948 and was approved by a large majority at the meeting.

The Hungarian translation of the Platform, the Declaration of Principles, was conveyed to the Hungarian diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv by József Halmi (1893–1967), a Hungarian Jewish journalist living in Palestine, and forwarded to the Hungarian diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv.

Lehi was founded by Avraham Stern in 1940, after the split in the Irgun (Etzel). With the outbreak of the Second World War, Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the revisionist movement, ordered a pause in military action against the British, which was opposed by a group in the Irgun led by Avraham (Yair) Stern. In February 1942, British police shot Avraham Stern and arrested several Lehi leaders. In November 1943, twenty Lehi leaders escaped from Latrun prison. Lehi also carried out propaganda activities, publishing newspapers entitled *Hazit* ("The Front") and *Ha-maas* ("The Deed"). In November 1944, two Lehi members, Eliyahu Hakim and Eliyahu Bet-Tzuri, assassinated the British Minister-in-Residence, Lord Moyne in Cairo, and the two assassins were hanged in March 1945. In November of the same year, Lehi, Hagana, and Irgun, under the leadership of Nathan Yellin-Mor (Friedman), founded the *Tnuat Hameri Haivri*, or the Hebrew Resistance Movement. During these turbulent times, Jewish assassinations and British reprisals occurred in quick succession. In March 1947, Moshe Barzani, a Lehi leader, and Meir Feinstein blew themselves up with a hand grenade smuggled into their cell.

Now we will examine how Lehi attempted to transform itself from an underground militant organization into a legal political actor after the establishment of the State of Israel, and how internal ideological divisions ultimately undermined this endeavor.

Lehi, which had previously been an armed movement of Jews who were dissatisfied with the central Zionist revisionist movement, wanted to integrate into the new Israel when the Jewish state was proclaimed. In the lead up to the elections of January 25, 1949, it established a separate party, Mifleget Halohamim (Party of the Fighters). Its formation as a party was decided simply because, with the proclamation of the Jewish state, the existence of the various paramilitary formations – even by their own standards – had ceased to make sense, and Lehi, as an armed force, was inevitably merged into the Israeli army.⁶ At the same time, the members who wanted more than armed "politicization" and assassinations against the British, tried to form a legal political formation. It was at the first meeting in Ramat Jair on July 28, 1948 that the former Lehi members decided to become a party, a decision underlined by the Altalena incident just a month earlier. The list (*Resima*) was headed by the veteran Nathan Yellin-Mor (Friedman), followed by Matityahu Smulewitz, then Yakov Banai, then Geula Cohen, mother of the present-day Likud politician Tzahi Hanegbi. On September 17, Lehi-affiliated gunmen assassinated Count Folke Bernadotte, a UN mediator, resulting in the arrest of many Lehi militants, including the list leader and runner-up. It was not the British who made the arrests this time, but the authorities of the Jewish state, which branded Lehi a terrorist organization and disbanded it along with the Irgun.

It was at this meeting, after much debate, that the Platform was adopted and translated with minor changes into Hungarian.⁷ Part of it was then sent to Hungarian diplomats, thanks to József Halmi.⁸

Israel's first election, in January 1949, saw a landslide left-wing Mapai victory. This organization won almost 36% of the vote, while the even more left-wing Mapam won

14.7%. The Lohamim list eventually won 1.2% of the vote with only 5363 votes. The religious party (Hazit Datit Meuhedet) gained just over 12%, while the right-wing Herut received 11.5% of the votes. The 1% of votes received by Lohamim was worth only one seat in the Knesset, so Yellin-Mor went straight from prison to parliament. Incidentally, all the Lehi fighters were released from prison in a general pardon. The party was organized, and after its first public commemoration, (*azkara*) dedicated to Jair Stern, a two-day conference was held in February 1949, at which 121 delegates were elected, in addition to selecting the party's central body, the council, and committees. Yellin-Mor was elected chairman of the party, while the future Likud politician and prime minister Yichak Samir was elected general secretary (*mazkir klali*).

Within the party, there were serious disputes between the left wing led by Yellin-Mor (supported by Shamir) and Yisrael Eldad, who rejected its socialist-collectivist ideas. Yellin-Mor called not only for the liberation of Jerusalem and the return of the Jewish people to Israel, but also for the creation of a classless society which would take part in the worldwide struggle against "imperialism" in the hemisphere, and for achieving national goals to be accompanied by collectivist socialist conditions. Eldad, however, would have preferred the Lohamim to aim at the "liberation" of Eretz Yisrael, which was imbued with Jewish symbolism. The majority of the party supported Yellin-Mor's position (49–19), which pushed Eldad and his faction into open opposition, and they were therefore excluded from the party institutions.⁹ Eldad also promoted his theocratic and dictatorial views in his newspaper *Shulam*. Later, when the disputes between Yellin-Mor and Samir were already flaring up, the party further fractured, before ultimately disbanding. It did not participate in the subsequent elections to the Knesset in 1951.

In any event, the leader of the ruling Mapai party, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, was proud of the fact that neither the Maki, the Israeli Communist Party, nor the right-wing Herut of Menachem Begin were in the government, and later he managed to keep them out. Although it was far from egalitarian, the little Lohamim party did not even make it onto the Prime Minister's black list, although Ben Gurion did manage to stop Eldad from teaching in Israeli schools as an "enemy of the state."¹⁰

Lohamim's manifesto, which is reproduced as an appendix to this paper, paints a picture of a nationalist, in many respects right-wing but in some respects explicitly etatist-collectivist-socialist, political organization in which anti-British sentiment is expressed in the fight against colonialism, but which itself also seeks to "colonize," since it claims more territory than the then-nascent Israel could offer, and offers the population as a solution. The radicalism of the group remained, although it was no longer directed against the British. It is no coincidence that many believed that (former) Lehi activists may have been behind the 1953 bomb attack on the Soviet Union's embassy in Israel, which was provoked by a real factor, the rising Stalinist wave of anti-Zionism.¹¹ Yisrael Eldad's ideology later appeared in the post-Six Day War settlement movement, Gush Emunim. 27 Allenby Street in Tel Aviv, which is actually the corner building at the intersection of Allenby and Pinsker Streets,¹² was the Lohamim secretariat (Mazkirut) at the time and these offices certainly functioned throughout the party's existence.¹³

What proportion of Israel's Hungarian-speaking communities in the late 1940s would have been subject to this new political experiment, in the event of a Lohamim victory, can be guessed from only a few sources. One source is a letter by József Halmi. We need to familiarize ourselves with the unusual life story of József Halmi, who lived in Palestine.

Halmi was a former émigré, formerly a staff member of the daily newspaper *Független Magyarországnak* (Independent Hungary), then an editorial board member of *Vörös Katona* (Red Soldier) (1919). Later he was a columnist for *Bécsi Magyar Újság* (Hungarian News of Vienna), then *Párisi Újság* (Paris News), and in the post-WWII co-location period, the correspondent of *Világosság* (Light) in Palestine and later in Israel.¹⁴ He subsequently ran a kind of one-man news agency. Halmi hinted in his letter that a Hungarian group of the party should be established because many Hungarians were involved in Lehi, and (allegedly) there were plans to publish a Hungarian-language weekly in Tel Aviv. However, the fact that Halmi, who was sympathetic to Lehi and was aware of local conditions, still refers to the group as Lehi suggests that it is not certain that this Hungarian-language material was produced in the autumn of 1950. This in turn suggests that the political movement may have reached out to more immigrant groups precisely in order to increase its base. Although it can be said that Hungarian Jews tended to be left-wing and liberal in their socialization and political outlook (even in the Hungarian Zionist movement), there had always been Hungarian-speaking members of radical Jewish military organizations (Dov Gruner, Yakov Weiss, etc.), both those aligned with the Irgun or with Lehi. At the same time, the specific identification and recruitment of Hungarians as an ethnic group, now tailored to the group's needs as a budding parliamentary party, is new in the history of Lehi.

Further insights into the Palestinian/Israeli political affiliations of Hungarians can be gleaned from a survey of local Hungarian Jews conducted by Tibor Scher, Hungary's cultural attaché to Palestine between 1946 and 1948 and also a rabbi and scholar who graduated from the Rabbinical College.¹⁵ Tibor Scher, whose entire dossier is preserved in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security,¹⁶ was an interesting figure in the Hungarian Jewish "public sphere" of the time. He graduated from the rabbinical seminary and the Faculty of Humanities in Budapest, became involved in the Zionist movement as early as the 1930s, and was later deported to Bergen-Belsen.¹⁷ It is assumed that he went to Palestine in the winter of 1944, a fact which he "concealed," and then, after his first return to Hungary, entered the service of state agencies. According to his own biography, "... the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (V.K.M.) commissioned me to inform Jews abroad about the news of the Hungarian Republic, with particular reference to the peace treaty to be concluded. At the same time, I was given a special mandate by the Council of Ministers to inform the Jewish community in Palestine."¹⁸

In December 1946 he represented the Hungarian government as an observer at the World Zionist Congress in Basel. He was also awarded the post of cultural attaché in Palestine by VKM (Ministry for Education and Religious Affairs) State Secretary Albert Bereczky, which he held from January 1947. After a long break (he had allegedly joined the Communist Party in the meantime), he was reinstated in the summer of 1948.¹⁹ As head of the institution, which was known as the Hungarian University Institute and Library in Jerusalem, from July 1947 onwards, he was extremely ambitious. On December 24, 1947, Scher received the news that the President of the Republic had awarded him the Order of Merit of the Republic.²⁰

Tibor Scher had a very strong political bias, which coloured his longer reports.²¹ In his correspondence with the Hungarian Marxist philosopher György Lukács, to whom he sent three reports, he refers not only to his visit to him on August 23, 1947, but also to his representation of him at the Palestinian Workers' Book Publishing House (Sifriat Poalim,

which published one of Lukács' studies on Prussians) in the case of royalties. He also demonstrated his ideological credentials.²²

"There are big things to be done, and many things" – Scher writes to Lukács, "because international big business is tainting whatever it can. They spread the wildest rumours about our party, but I am trying to counteract their soul-poisoning activities by means of the good relations I have built up. So far, they have not succeeded in creating a civil war because the Jewish and Arab workers have not reacted to their numerous provocations."²³

In his reports, the author, who is otherwise highly knowledgeable and sensitive to the problems of the new state, attributes the escalation of the whole situation to Anglo-American imperialism. The Palestinian Hungarians, in his view, have become the spokespeople for the anti-communist campaign of Nagy Ferenc and his "associates" in America.²⁴ Nagy had been the Prime Minister of Hungary, a democratic politician (a member of the Smallholders' Party), who was dismissed by the Communists during his absence abroad in June 1947. More generally, however, Scher also noted that all the Palestinian political parties had issued leaflets in Hungarian to attract Hungarians, and that there were many Hungarian speakers on the Jewish National Council in Palestine, but that they were not represented in line with their numbers, and that "mostly the extreme parties are favoured, partly left-wing and partly right-wing."²⁵

Scher divided the Hungarians living in Palestine (native Hungarian-speaking Jews) into five groups according to occupation. The first group, which has "considerable wealth," rejects the "what for?" and is "a willing instrument of all anti-left propaganda." They must be isolated, Scher argues, although this is difficult because they are the employers. The second group, the middle class, "benign or indifferent," can be influenced: "It is only a question of time and effort to persuade them and to direct them towards the right course of action and to activate their good will in action." The third and fourth groups, the urban workers and settlers, are "valuable material" but lack a comprehensive outlook and a more general political education. On this basis, even if this group cannot be used as a tool under the influence of the aforementioned malicious propaganda, it often lends credence, for the reasons given, to the information gained by these employers. The fifth group, the "unemployed from dubious businesses," is useless, "a burden on the Palestinian Hungarian community and we can safely state for any community that wants to work."²⁶

Scher's precise and sensitive analyses were written in the spirit of the new Hungarian left-wing state political system, the only (and major) difference being that he takes a clearly negative view of the Palestinian Arab movement, describing it as conducting terrorist attacks on the civilian population by "gangs of soldiers from the surrounding countries, mostly led by European Nazi and Arrow Cross officers, brought here and paid for with Western money."²⁷

An even more important source than Scher's letter to Lukács, however, was the empirical study he carried out as the head of the Cultural Institute of the Hungarian Jewish community in Palestine. Scher's study, dated February 8, 1948, was entitled "The Impact of Anti-Communist Imperialist Propaganda on the Hungarian Population in Palestine." It was published by the Hungarian State Cultural Institute and Library, as Scher called his Jerusalem institution. The series of 30 topics it addresses were mainly intended to explore Hungarian Jewish attitudes in Palestine towards Hungary as a country that had become a democracy. Scher describes it as a "not very large-scale" survey, and does

not say in what context it was conducted or how many people were interviewed, nor the basis upon which the subjects were selected. He states only that not many people were interviewed and that the answers were evaluated on a “hundred” basis, with the respondents holding various occupations or no occupation. However, it turned out that, contrary to his expectations, anti-communist sentiment among the Hungarian Jewish population in Palestine was much higher than might have been expected.

The series of questions asked in the survey revealed the ideological and political convictions of its author rather than a genuine interest in the political and ideological attitudes of the Hungarian population in Palestine. They refer to Anglo-American imperialism, which comes through newspapers, magazines, and the “whispering propaganda” of the press (with the exception of the communist *Kol Haam* and *Al Hamishmar*, the Hashomer Hatzair newspaper), as well as make many negative claims about Hungary as a member of the “Slavic bloc.”²⁸

84% of respondents said that there is no free labour market in Hungary, 60% said that the situation of Jews is bad, and 64% said that the livelihood of the “worker” in the country is very bad. 70% thought that there was no freedom of religion in Hungary, while 77% thought that the Soviets had not allowed the country to adopt the Marshall Plan, and 72% thought that housing conditions were intolerable. 56% of those surveyed thought that Zionists were persecuted in the country, while 36% thought they were only tolerated. Opinions were more divided on reconstruction in Hungary, but 60% of respondents felt that there were no opposition parties in the Hungarian parliament at all. In the end, Scher also concluded that Palestinian public opinion had been influenced by “Anglo-American press propaganda” due to British rule and the increasing American influence, as was the Palestinian Jewish press. The exceptions to this were the communist *Kol Haam* and *Al Hamishmar* newspapers, which belonged to Hashomer Hatzair, which was Mapam-oriented from 1948 and was a tool of Soviet and communist-allied propaganda. “Because of their bourgeois orientation, the Hungarians living here tend to give credence to the controlled Anglo-American propaganda,” Scher writes in his report.

Tibor Scher’s perspective – as far as the political orientation of the Hungarians in Palestine was concerned – was quite different from that of Lehi and Lohamim. Moreover, his survey, which probably relied more heavily on the more religious and traditionalist elements than on others and was therefore not representative of the entire Hungarian-speaking population in Jerusalem, may have been heavily biased. Some of the opinions given in the “opinion poll” suggest a great lack of information about the current state of Hungary due to the respondents’ earlier arrival in Palestine. However, it is certain that the Hungarian community in Palestine in the late 1940s was more politically divided than might have first been assumed.

Lehi also had Hungarian members,²⁹ and in the first half of the 1950s, Hungarian members of the Israeli parliament usually belonged to right-wing or centrist parties.³⁰ The conclusion that Scher’s study is not representative – even for 1948 – can also be surmised from the fact that between 1947 and 1949 the number of inhabitants of Palestine/Israel from Hungary, or from the territory of historical Hungary, increased about threefold, from around 30,000 to 90,000, and in 1950 it exceeded 100,000.³¹ The proportion and composition of the Israeli population was in constant flux and change during these years. Among the new arrivals from the Hungarian-speaking areas, there may have been a strong presence of those that had become Zionist after the tragedy of the

Holocaust and had been brought up in the various left-wing Zionist institutions, and arrived in an organized way.³² Hence, the number of left-wing Jews and their participation in kibbutz life may have been significant, which made the potential roots of the Hungarian branch of the Lehi fundamentally questionable. This is true even if, after 1956, the left wing of Lehi was still involved in a political formation (Semitic Action/*HaPeula Hashemiti*) that envisaged a regional federation between Israel and its Arab neighbours – based precisely on the struggle against the colonialists and imperialists.

While the representation of the anti-imperialist struggle and centralized planning may have found a sympathetic ear in the Hungarian Jewish immigrants, the combination of this with the suggestion of the violent secular messianism which also permeated the text of the Lohamin manifesto, along with the idea of Arab-Jewish population exchange as a possible ethnic solution, may not have sounded good to immigrants leaving post-war Central and Eastern Europe.

In the propaganda and phraseology of Hungarian state policy abroad, which was increasingly under communist control – as is evident from Tibor Scher's reports on the subject – there were also attacks on Anglo-American imperialism. However, this was intended to strengthen the new Hungary against the old, and to explain the motivation of those who opposed socialist measures and nationalization. In fact, this tone became stronger after the communist take-over, when it became an explanatory principle – even in the courts.

In the Palestinian arena, the situation was completely different: for Jewish Palestine, which was also at war with the British, anti-imperialism was primarily a struggle against the British colonial empire and this could be interpreted as involving sympathy for the Soviet Union. After the establishment of the State of Israel, however, the stakes were considerably lower, even for mainstream social democrats. Even so, the right's anti-imperialist struggle was doomed to failure, as the driving force of ideological convergence was removed by political reality. Although the Israeli Communist Party, which was unpopular with the Soviet Union, won several seats in the first elections, it did not win the election (which was won by Mapai, which was the dominant party in Israel), and the small Jewish state moved closer to the Western powers and further away from the Soviet Union.

This process also affected the right wing, weakening the anti-imperialist wing of the revisionist right. Moreover, as Israeli historian Yaacov Shavit noted, Lohamim's desperate adherence to Marxism, which sought to outflank the left-wing Mapai, was poorly positioned, as there was no direct connection between the aspirations of the working class and the territorial demands formulated by Lehi/Lohamim. Lohamim's program alone was not acceptable to the majority because Mapai better articulated and fulfilled its pragmatic goals. Indeed, Israeli citizens at the time, living under the social democratic Mapai-led Israeli government, accepted their existence in a divided Jewish state and resigned themselves to a state that was not based on "historic" borders.³³

Notes

1. "Letter from David Ben-Gurion to Tomi Lapid (Sde Boker 4 September 1954)" in Szalai, *A Kárpát-medencétől*, 679. The book was also published in Hebrew, see: Szalai, *Me-agan hakarpatim*.
2. See e.g. Hartman and Eilon, "Ethnicity and Stratification;" Spilerman and Habib, "Development Towns;" Smooha, *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict*; Svirsky and Bernstein: "Who Worked Where."

3. See Olosz, "A magyar ajkú zsidóság."
4. Olosz, "A magyar ajkú zsidóság," 152 ff.
5. For example, there is a well-known Arabic-language political event announced for May 28, 1951 by the Jerusalem group of the Cherut party, which deals with the situation of new immigrants in the new state. Professor Yosef Rivlin and Sassoon Selah participated in the event on the political side.
6. Association for Commemorating the Legacy of the Freedom Fighters of Israel (Lehi), "Mifleget Halohamim."
7. In the domestic policy section, the whole the last point about health was left out of the Hungarian translation. The reason for the omission is not known.
8. Ben-Tor, *Sefer Toldot*, 322–326.
9. Eldad later became a Hebrew translator of Nietzsche's works in the 1960s and 1970s.
10. Eldad appealed to the courts, and the Supreme Court ruled in his favour, but schools refused to employ him as Ben Gurion had branded him an "enemy of the state." He was finally able to take up a post at the University of Haifa in 1962, and from 1982 he taught in Ariel.
11. On February 9, 1953, a bomb attack was carried out on the Israeli Embassy of the Soviet Union. Isser Harel, one of the great founders of the Israeli secret service and the reigning head of the Mossad from 1952 to 1963, suspected Lehi of being behind it. See Pedahzur and Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism*, 49–51.
12. The official address is 2 Pinsker Street.
13. Lohamim had two more offices in Jerusalem. I thank the Director of the Archives of the Jabotinsky Institute in Tel Aviv, Amira Stern, and her colleague Miri Yahalom for their help with this information.
14. Also in the "Halmi József Memorial Book," 1–4. 406408.
15. Rendszerváltás Történetét Kutató Intézet és Levéltár (Research Institute and Archives on the History of the Regime Change) (hereafter: RETÖRKI), Smallholders' Archives, K 1 Óállag, 17.d.173.őe.
16. Tibor Scher Personal File. 3.1.5.O-9324. Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security) (ÁBTL), Budapest, Hungary.
17. "Report of January 5, 1950. Prepared by Second Lieutenant Rék (Vilmos), ÁVH." Ibid.
18. "Autobiography of Dr. Tibor Scher, probably dated June 5, 1950." Ibid.
19. József N. Szabó wrote about the history of Hungarian cultural diplomacy in Palestine at the time in "Magyarország kulturális."
20. Letter from Tibor Scher to János Péter. Jerusalem, December 24, 1947. RETÖRKI, Smallholding Archives, K 1 Óállag, 17.d.173.őe.
21. Tibor Scher's reports (in Hungarian) can be found in RETÖRKI. These are "Vázlat Palesztina általános képéről és helyzetéről (Sketch of the general picture and situation of Palestine)" (December 1947); "Lapszemle (Review)" (January 1, 1948); "Levél Péter Jánosnak és Lapszemle (Letter to Janos Peter and Review)" (January 14, 1948); "Jelentés az 1947. XI.16-XII.16-ig terjedő időszakról (Report on the period 16.XI.-16.XII.1947)" (December 17, 1947); "Palesztinai zavargások az Egyesült Nemzetek (UNO) 1947. november 30.-i döntése után (Unrest in Palestine after the United Nations (UN) decision of 30 Nov. 1947)" (January 23, 1948); "Az arabok és az UNO döntés (Arab lapszemle.) (The Arabs and the UN decision (Arab Gazette))" (February 1, 1948); "Közvéleménykutatás (Public opinion poll)" (February 8, 1948); "Fekete Mihály rektor (Jeruzsálemi Héber Egyetem) 3 beszédének elküldése (Sending 3 speeches by Rector Mihály Fekete (Hebrew University of Jerusalem))" (February 6, 1948); "Levél Péter Jánoshoz (miniszteri tanácsos, VKM) (Letter to János Péter (Minister Counsellor, VKM))" (March 16, 1948); "Amerika és a Közel-Kelet (jelentés) (America and the Middle East (report))" (March 30, 1948); "Havi jelentés. (Monthly Report)" (March 1948). See RETÖRKI Kisgazda Levéltár. (Smallholders' Archives) K1 Óállag, 17.d.173.őe.
22. Letter of December 18, 1947. Available in the Lukács Archive's digitized material: http://realms.mtak.hu/20586/1/Lukacs_Lev_36_1178_Scher_Tibor_1.pdf (Accessed January 20, 2021). Later, the Sifriat Hapoalim published Lukács's Letters on Literature in Hebrew. See *ibid.* The connection was probably established between György Lukács and Tibor Scher with the

help of the Foreign Relations Department of the VKM, State Secretary Dr. Zoltán Bassola. Bassola, at Scher's initiative, told Lukács that one of the publishers (apparently Sifriat Hapoa-lim) would translate a book Lukács had indicated into Hebrew. Lukács Archive, The Library and Information Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. https://real-ms.mtak.hu/17296/1/Lukacs_lev_03_0101_Bassola_1.pdf (Accessed January 4, 2024).

23. This letter was written on December 18, 1947 and can be found in the following collection of the Lukács Archive: http://real-ms.mtak.hu/20586/1/Lukacs_Lev_36_1178_Scher_Tibor_1.pdf (Accessed January 4, 2024)
24. "Report on the period 16 XI-1947-16 XII" (December 17, 1947). RETÖRKI, (Smallholders' Archives), K 1 Óállag, 17.d.173.őe.
25. "Sketch of the general picture and situation of Palestine" (December 1947). RETÖRKI, (Smallholders' Archives). K 1 Old State, 17.d.173.őe.
26. RETÖRKI, (Smallholders' Archives), K 1 Óállag, 17.d.173.őe.
27. Ibid.
28. a./ The Iron Curtain is stronger than ever in Hungary. People heading home for the Centenarium are subjected to the scourge of the political police. Currency and jewellery are confiscated.
 - b./ Private property has disappeared in Hungary.
 - c./ Shops, factories, and workshops have been taken away from their owners.
 - d./ Bank deposits have been frozen or confiscated.
 - e./ Clothes were taken away, everyone was allowed to keep only two suits of clothes.
 - f./ There is also a travel ban within the country, travel from one city to another is only possible with a permit.
 - g./ Night and day raids make life completely insecure. The raids are carried out by the economic police, who search for hidden goods.
 - h./ Those who oppose the "system" are interned by the thousands.
 - i./ No reprisals of any kind have been taken against Nazis and Arrow Cross activists.
 - j./ They persecute priests and prevent the free exercise of religion.
 - k./ There is a dictatorship of the proletariat, the instruments of which are factory committees and workers' courts.
 - l./ Large numbers of deportation trains are leaving for Siberia." Ibid.
29. See Veszprémy, "Sztálinista szélsőjobb."
30. In 1953 there were three Hungarian-born Kneszet MEPs: Dr Adolf Deutsch (Avraham), Slomó Lőrincz, and György Flesch. The first two belonged to the Agudat Yisrael group, while Flesch was a member of the General Zionists. The *Hatikva* newspaper described their careers. *Hatikva*, May 1953. (Thanks to Levente Olosz for making the newspaper available to me).
31. Olosz, "A magyar ajkú zsidóság," 143–151.
32. Taking the 1970s as a starting point, Levente Olosz distinguishes five major groups of Hungarians in Israel according to the date of arrival. The first are the old religious Jews, the second are those who left the territory of Trianon Hungary, the third are the colourful members of the Hungarian-speaking Zionist movement between the two world wars, and the fourth and fifth are Holocaust survivors. Ibid.
33. Shavit, *Jabotinsky*.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Budapest Zionist trial”) (Budapest, 2020); *Pilgrimage and State-Security: Visiting the Tombs of Tzadikim in the Socialist Hungary-Before 1989*. Contemporary Jewry 2024/2.

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Appendix: Manifesto of the Lohamim Party

Program

During the British occupation, the Freedom Fighters of Israel (LEHI) created the Hebrew resistance and began to expel the enemy.

Israel's Freedom Fighters laid the ideological foundations of the freedom struggle, pointing out the imperialist nature of foreign rule, stating the specific goal – to expel the enemy – and pinpointing the allies of our freedom struggle. The ideology and actions of the Freedom Fighters of Israel were in perfect harmony. They fought heroically and did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for their ideals.

However, the elimination of direct British dominance and the creation of the State of Israel in part of the Homeland have not yet achieved their goal. Much of our homeland is still under foreign rule. The struggle for freedom is not yet over. However, the basic conditions for independence have already been met. Within the borders of the State of Israel, the Freedom Fighters of Israel have abandoned the covert struggle to fight openly for the ideals that crystallized in the days of the underground struggle – the national and social liberation of the Jewish people. This Programme is a summary of our ideas in the days of open political struggle and propaganda.

We will fight for this program, to realize it for the people and with the people, with the masses that will join our ranks.

I. THE GOAL

The Freedom Fighters of Israel movement is a movement for political freedom – fighting for the creation of a Jewish State that embodies the national and social freedom of the entire Jewish people throughout the whole of Eretz Yisrael.

The tasks are:

- (a) To liberate Eretz Yisrael from all foreign domination within its historical and natural borders, to declare Jerusalem the capital of the Land, to create the political, social, military, and economic conditions that will ensure our independence.
- (b) The return of the Hebrew people from all the countries of the Diaspora – to their homeland.
- (c) The realization of the rule of the people as a condition for the development of the creative power of the nation.
- (d) The establishment of a system of state ownership of the country's natural resources, thus preventing the exploitation of man by his fellow man.

II.

The above objectives cannot be achieved except by revolutionary means. The condition of the country, the dispersion of the people, and the critical world political situation require the rapid realization of this goal.

III. THE CARRIER OF THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

The bearer and fighter of the struggle for freedom is the people as a whole. Above all it is a matter for the workers, for the little people, the industrialists, the retailers, the small landowners, the working intelligentsia, and the exploited millions in the Galut and here. The freedom of the fatherland and the independence of the nation are the prerequisites for full social liberation. The Freedom Fighters of Israel will organize these strata as the vanguard of freedom. They will be the first to do their duty, the first to enjoy their rights.

IV. THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL

The Freedom Fighters of Israel see in the spiritual values of the Hebrew people the special character of the people and the country, the foundation on which to build the future spiritual life of the nation.

V. THE HEAD OF THE ARMY

In all the formations and rifles of the Hebrew army, the most important idea must be the pursuit of national goals as a guarantee of the security of our people.

Equipping, training, and strengthening the fighting spirit of the army should be the primary task of the Hebrew Government.

VI. THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Freedom Fighters of Israel strive to make the State of Israel, created by the partition, an effective instrument for the struggle of the Jewish people to dismember the whole country.

VII. DOMESTIC POLICY

The Freedom Fighters of Israel strive to devote our internal policy to the following major goals – the liberation war, the reception of returnees, the development of the State, and the raising of the standard of living of the population.

Ways and means of achieving this:

- (a) A national planned economy covering all sectors of economic life.
- (b) The expropriation of the country's natural resources and its priority industries in foreign hands as a matter of priority, so that they do not serve as a basis for the exploitative ambitions of the imperialist oppressors.
- (c) Nationalization of the country's natural resources and primary nationalization [sic!]. Without this, the development of the working class and the working nation cannot be assured.
- (d) Nationalization of resources and their public services (transport, electricity, oil).
- (e) Placing foreign trade under state control within the framework of a planned economy.

Private initiative

- (a) Promotion of private enterprise and private initiative in secondary industry and trade within the framework of a national planned economy.
- (b) Mobilization and involvement of Jewish capital from the Diaspora in the economic life of the country.

Land tenure and agriculture

- (a) Development of agriculture through the use of technology and science to increase population density and make production more economical.
- (b) Expropriation of fallow land and large estates for the purpose of planned planting.
- (c) State aid for smallholders, farm workers, and agricultural cooperatives.
- (d) Soil improvement and state control of the country's resources.

Work

- (a) Creation of a single trade union to secure the professional interests of the worker and to eliminate competition between workers. This will make the workers' trade union the decisive factor in the struggle for internal and external freedom.

- (b) To eliminate unemployment and secure work for all citizens by placing all workers at the service of positive creation.
- (c) The eradication of all forms of price inflation and chain trade.

The Abolition of Poverty

- (a) The elimination of slums by the economic and cultural reintegration of the destitute into normal social life.
- (b) Implementation of a national building programme in towns and villages.

Taxes

Introduction of progressive taxation.

Education

- (a) Introduction of compulsory education.
- (b) Free primary and vocational education for all; free secondary and higher education for gifted students.
- (c) Introduction of uniform state education.
- (d) Creation of conditions for the development of creative powers in the humanities, arts, and technology.

VIII. FOREIGN POLICY

The aim of Hebrew foreign policy: to liberate the whole country from the domination of imperialism, which still prevails, directly or indirectly. To ensure the political and economic independence of the country.

- (a) The Freedom Fighters of Israel wish to pursue a policy of alliance with all those in the Middle East who are fighting against imperialism and who are resisting the desire to make this area a field of exploitation of foreign monopolists and a battlefield for the next war. The Freedom Fighters of Israel are striving to neutralize this zone, to eliminate the influence of the local agents of imperialism.
- (b) The Freedom Fighters of Israel wish to pursue a policy of alliance with all the peoples and states of the world which support the liberation struggle of the Hebrew people, a policy based on the principle of the people's struggle for freedom and world peace.

Minorities

- (a) The equality of all citizens of the Kingdom without religious or national distinction.
- (b) The Freedom Fighters of Israel see in the exchange of populations between the Arabs of Israel and the Jews of the neighbouring states the most appropriate way to establish good relations between the Hebrew and Arab peoples. This solution would put an end to the old conflicts and bring peace between us and our neighbouring states.

General Secretariat Allenby 27 II.

Source: Herzl Tivadar – Cionista szervezetek, (Herzl Tivadar – Zionist organizations) 3.2.5. O-8-301/1. Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security Service (ÁBTL).