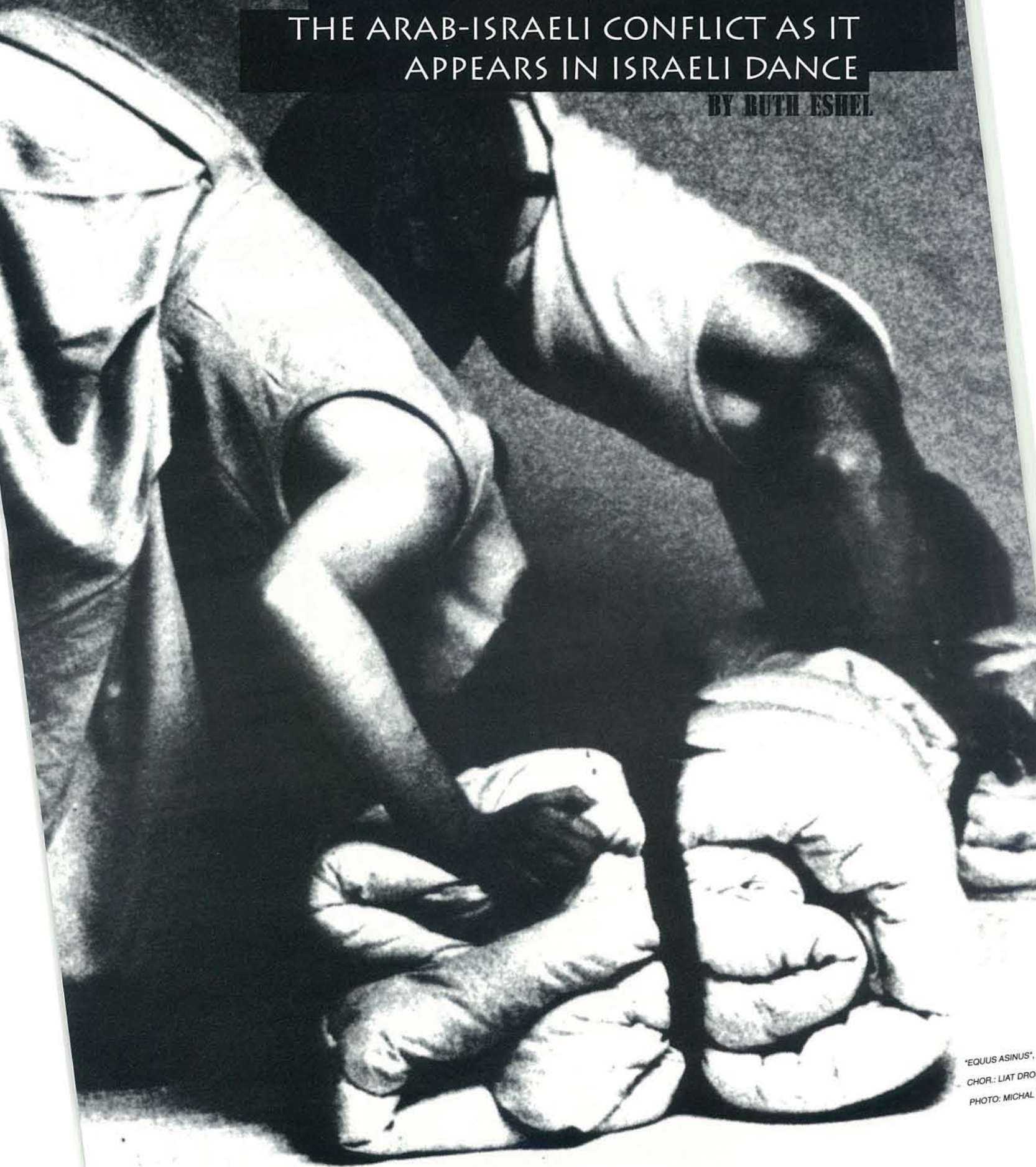


TO DANCE WITH THE TIMES

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AS IT
APPEARS IN ISRAELI DANCE

BY RUTH ESHEL



"EQUUS ASINUS",
CHOR.: LIAT DRO
PHOTO: MICHAL

Despite the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is ubiquitous in the life of the country since Jews began to arrive in Eretz Israel about a hundred years ago, and is an integral part of the personal experience of each inhabitant, the choreographic works dealing with the subject are few. Such paucity of artistic reaction to one of the most fundamental topics of Israeli life demands an explanation.

Perhaps the answer lies in a certain reticence when dealing with topics about which there is no national consensus. On the other hand, it may well be a reaction akin to the average Israeli's reflex of zapping the news to turn to more pleasant TV programs to escape unpalatable reality. But I think the real answer is different; most dance artists spend their best years sequestered in the hermetically isolated studio, busy with their race against time, using the short span of years of their maximum agility to the hilt. Anyhow, most of them hardly read the newspapers and are indifferent to party politics.

In the 1920's and 1930's, when most modern dance artists of the Ausdruckstanz style, fleeing from Nazi persecution, arrived in what was then called Palestine, their attitude was quite different from what would be typical of today's dance artists. They were well aware of the political situation and eager to participate in the Zionist endeavour of building a new country, a national home for the Jewish immigrants arriving from the diaspora.

Gertrud Kraus - perhaps the leading modern dancer of that period in Eretz Israel - was a person very much attuned to the times. She created and performed a number of anti-war solos: One being her impressive solo "Tired Death", in which Death itself refuses to go on carrying out his grim task; another, her "Unknown Soldier", in which a prisoner of war crouching in a dungeon awaits execution by his captors. Both these dances were choreographed in Vienna in the mid-1920's, as a reaction to the slaughter of World War One. In the 1930's the captive soldier became a fighter against Franco in Spain and turned into an anti-Nazi partisan in the 1940's, without Kraus changing the choreography, but just writing up-to-date program notes. (See Manor, 1978).

In Israeli art of the 20's and 30's the prevalent attitude towards the Arabs was rather naive and romantic. "A mixture of genteel aristocratic behaviour and rather off-putting primitiveness is typical of the portrayal of the Arab in the visual arts of Eretz Israel of the period, which was created mainly by immigrants from Eastern Europe. Arabs [were observed] as a facet of fantastic reality, but also as part of a land full of dangers facing the immigrant from Europe. Sometimes the Arab is like a feature in the landscape, sometimes part of the difficulties inherent in the harsh climate, the maladies lurking

in the swamps and the general primitiveness of the land." (Orian, 1978:21).

In the choreographic works based on biblical themes, such as those by Rina Nikova, Arab garb and gestures were used to portray ancient Jewish patriarchs. The local Arab resident was seen by the Ausdruckstanz dancers as representing the ancient Jews as farmers in biblical times. Yardena Cohen, the Ornstein sisters and Rina Nikova presented him as a mixture of the fanciful with the primitive. The exception being Baruch Agadati, the first Israeli modern dancer who already, as early as 1926, created and performed his solo "Arab Jaffa", which is a portrait of an effeminate dandy, who in spite of his quasi-sophisticated suit and a flower he daintily carries, at the end of the dance relieves his bladder against the stage backdrop.... An ending which caused raised eyebrows and caustic comments in the press.

In the late 1920's - after the Arab atrocities of 1929, in which Jews were killed by Arabs - and due to the Jerusalem Mufti's support of Hitler, the romantic-naive attitude of the Jews towards the Arabs waned. The figure of the Palestinian Arab disappeared from Israeli art, dance and theatre.

From then on, during nearly 15 years - the period of World War Two, the War of Independence and the years of austerity in the early 1950's - dance became escapist, a means of forgetting the hardships of reality.

IN THE LATE 1920'S THE ROMANTIC-NAIVE ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS TOWARDS THE ARABS WANED. THE FIGURE OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB DISAPPEARED FROM ISRAELI ART, DANCE AND THEATRE

GERTRUD KRAUS IN "TIRED DEATH", VIENNA, 1920'S



It may seem strange, but the first serious attempt at depicting the Arab-Israeli conflict on the modern dance stage was the work of a guest choreographer. In 1950, the American Talley Beatty worked for several months in Israel and created his "Fire in the Hills", which tells the story of a Jewish community attacked by Arab enemies.

During the 1950's only a few Israelis were able to travel abroad and thus become aware of new trends in art. The local painters and sculptors got their information from illustrated journals. However, there were important artists, such as Dani Karavan, or Yochanan Simon who managed to combine their political awareness activities with their artistic output.

Israeli dance artists had an early opportunity to become acquainted with American modern dance, when Martha Graham brought her company to Israel in 1956. The founding of the Batsheva company in 1964 put an end to the European Ausdruckstanz school of dancing in this country. A steady flow of leading American choreographers brought with it the preoccupation with "inner landscapes" of the Graham school. Twenty years later Post-Modern dance, mainly of the Cunningham school, also arrived at these shores.

Examining the repertory of Israeli dance companies from 1964 to 1977 clearly shows that the Ausdruckstanz solo-recital had altogether disappeared from the Israeli dance stage. The Ausdruckstanz credo of expressing the "time-spirit", of depicting the present, was superseded by modern dance, influenced by neo-classical ballet, abstract choreographies and the enhancement of movement technique which was regarded as a priority. The treatment of local topics was not in fashion, so surely there was no place for dealing choreographically with such a loaded subject as the Israeli-Arab struggle.

When the War of Independence of 1948 was over, most Israelis regarded the Arab minority as a potential "fifth column". "An enemy-image... fear and distrust caused the policy of keeping Jews and Arabs apart." (Orian, 1996:33). According to Orian, the turning point in relations between Jews and Arabs came after the Six-Day-War (1967). The victory over their adversaries gave the Israelis a feeling of security which expressed itself in the realisation that perhaps from then on the Arab inhabitants of Israel would see themselves as sharing a common fate. "Military rule" which kept the Arabs in Israel under severe surveillance since 1948 was finally abolished, and the integration of Arabs in Israeli society began. The development and change of attitude of Israeli artists and theatre people towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in that period may be explained by these changes.

Symbolically, a year before the Yom Kippur War of 1973, a group of Jewish artists used to meet

regularly for a period of four months in a valley between the neighbouring kibbutz Metzer and the Arab village of Masser to work and create. It was a rare meeting of art, territory and politics.

Between 1970 and 1973, several theatre productions dealing with the Israeli-Arab conflict were staged by Israeli theatres. Dan Orian: "Until then, the subject was taboo, but from 1980 and onwards it became a central theme in all the arts [in Israel]. [...] The artists' attitude may have been the expression of fears and of wishful thinking accompanying harsh reality, at first just as hints, later becoming overtly stated [ideas]." (Orian, 1996:6). According to Orian, during the years 1982-1994 more than a hundred productions by Israeli theatres had an Arab character among their protagonists, representing the Palestinian side of the conflict.

During the 1970's, the leading dance companies - Batsheva and Bat-Dor - were busy with mutual acrimony, competing with each other in inviting famous choreographers from abroad, vying for the attention of audiences. The dancers were busy enhancing their technique, teaching after rehearsals in order to earn money to

compensate for their meagre salaries. There were hardly any active Israeli choreographers and the individual struggle of the few, such as Oshra Elkayam or Mirali Sharon, was about their very right to create in the framework of the professional companies. The Kibbutz Dance Company was just finding its bearings. The other modern dance company then active, Koldemama, was working only with its founder, Moshe Efrati. None of the companies and their choreographers were interested in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Only in the 1980's - ten years after the Israeli theatre and visual arts - Israeli dance began to be aware of the burning political problems of Palestinians and Israelis. Most of these tentative beginnings may be described as belonging to dance-theatre. In them, the conflict isn't represented by showing the atrocities of war or in attempts to engage the cheap sentimental reaction of the spectator. The choreographers did not attempt to present both sides of the conflict, but dealt mainly with the Israelis' inner moral conflicts accompanied by a deep-felt sadness about lasting conflict, for which no solution was to be seen.

ONLY IN THE 1980'S - TEN YEARS AFTER THE ISRAELI THEATRE AND VISUAL ARTS - ISRAELI DANCE BEGAN TO BE AWARE OF THE BURNING POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS. MOST OF THESE TENTATIVE BEGINNINGS MAY BE DESCRIBED AS BELONGING TO DANCE-THEATRE



In these works one may find empathy for the Palestinian side, expressed by symbols and context pointing to a certain parallelism between the two nations; they are refugees just as we were refugees. Our children dance with the national flag on Independence Day, so do the Palestinians with theirs. For thousands of years we were persecuted in the diaspora, so are the Palestinians scattered all over the Middle East.

Orian: "Often Israeli Jews, themselves a nation of refugees, felt empathy for the Arab refugees. But as a nation surrounded by enemies, in constant danger of war, they tended to ignore the dilemma. Therefore, there were only very few works of art dealing with the tragedy of a people that lost its homeland and soil due to the founding of the State of Israel." (Orian, 1996:126).

Anxieties feeding on the memory of the Holocaust, of living in a permanent siege or the fear of another war breaking out any minute are evident in some of these works. All this and the threat of the Palestinian refugees dreaming of returning to Tel-Aviv coupled with the steady stream of Israelis emigrating to America and other foreign countries, were lurking beneath the surface.

In 1982 the first performance of a dance concerned with the political situation in Israel took place. "A Story Like a Tale" ("Issa Mytlilikizby") was choreographed by two Batsheva dancers, Amir Kolben and Ofra Dudai. It was conceived after the Lebanon War - the first full scale war about which there was no consensus in Israel.

In 1977 the first showcase performances of experimental "fringe" dance took place. But most of the young choreographers involved were exploring a new, individual movement language, not looking for objective, political subject-matter or forms. The innovation of Kolben and Dudai's duet was it being a politically oriented dance as well as its being created in a workshop framework of the mainstream Batsheva dance company.

When still an adolescent boy, Amir Kolben had rather radical, leftist, even Marxist views. He was among a group of members of Kibbutz Kerem Shalom, who left the kibbutz in 1977, because it was not involved enough in political activities. Kolben and some of his friends founded a commune in Tel-Aviv, which existed for about a year. At that time "Batsheva 2", a young ensemble affiliated to the mother-company, was founded. Amir, who had studied dance in a regional studio as a high school student, went to the auditions and was accepted.

The present writer was also a dancer of "Batsheva 2" at that time. There I first met Amir Kolben, and I vividly remember how on the day President Sadat of Egypt arrived on his historical visit to Jerusalem, we all sat down

after rehearsal and enthusiastically discussed the recent developments and imminent peace. Amir, usually a rather quiet and softspoken young man, began arguing in favour of a future Palestinian state. Such views at that time seemed extreme in those circumstances, bordering on treason. Soon he stopped talking, because, as he told me recently (1996), "I was paranoid, afraid to talk openly about my political views with the company."

He later joined the Batshva company as a dancer, and when they toured the U.S.A. in 1978 he stayed in America for three years, returning to Israel in 1981. A few months after returning and re-joining Batsheva, the Lebanon War broke out. His colleagues in the company were unaware of Amir being one of the demonstrators in the city square, handing out leaflets opposing the war.

About his duet, Amir Kolben relates: "Moshe Romano [the Artistic Director of Batsheva] instigated the showcase performances, in which company members could present their own choreography. Ofra Dudai tried her hand at creating a dance but she 'got stuck' and asked me to join her and finish the work. While working together, I discovered the creative talent I possessed, which I was not aware of until then. Till that time I thought of myself only in terms of just dancing."

The duet in question is based on a song by the Palestinian singer Marcel Chalifa, who lives in Lebanon, entitled "Tayara" ("Kite"). The dance is about two children, a boy and a girl, who play at 'being dead' when suddenly an aeroplane appears in the sky. The boy, thinking it is a toy, runs towards the plane calling "Tayara! Tayara!" but the aeroplane drops bombs on the village which hosts terrorists, and the boy is killed. The girl, his playmate, thinks this too is just play-acting. But the boy really is dead....

By comparison with what was acceptable at that time in Israel, this duet had several innovative aspects: the movement material, though still showing Graham influence, was much more violent than was usual. A new sort of contact with the audience was established, as the dance starts with the oud-player (Achmed Masry - an Arab musician from Jaffa) begins playing and singing while strolling among the spectators. He then climbs on-stage where, like a troubadour, he continues to tell the tragic story. In the end, when the girl (Ofra Doudai) finally realises her playmate is dead, she descends into the audience and repeatedly throws herself violently against the stage proscenium.

The presentation of grief on the Arab side of the conflict, by means of a song sung in Arabic, and the joint performance of Jewish and Palestinian artists on the same stage, was very innovative.

The duet was well received critically, and was awarded the annual Yair-Shapira Prize.



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However, it was not included in the regular repertoire of Batsheva. Amir Kolben: "It was quite clear to me that the Batsheva company would not risk any explicit social or political statement. They [the management] wanted rather vegetarian dances, perhaps some soul-searching works, but no comment on reality and nothing topical."

At that time a group of young actors took off from Haifa where they worked at the Municipal Theatre, with the management's blessing, and went to stay and work at Kiriath Shmona, in the far north of Israel, which suffered from terrorists attacks. The group was directed by Nola Chelton, an American stage director who lives in Israel, an alumna of the "Actors Studio" in New-York. This project went on for a year. Their goal was to create performances based on actual happenings in the local society. It was clear to Amir Kolben, that no such thing could happen at the Batsheva Dance Company. And that there was no place for a socially and politically oriented choreographer like him at Batsheva.

His opportunity came when a group of former Batsheva dancers, some of whom he had worked with in New York, most of them born and educated in kibbutzim, decided to form an independent dance group of their own, called TAMAR (Teatron Machol Ramla). The head of the group and its driving power was Meira Eliash-Chain, who was in charge of production and administration. Also among the founding

members was Zvi Gotheiner, another former kibbutznik and Batsheva dancer who had worked in New-York, having danced with the Eliot Feld and other companies.

Kolben: "It is a normal event for a dancer to leave a company. But a group of dancers leaving in order to form their own outfit is another matter altogether. It was somewhat like leaving the kibbutz. As if we were traitors...." During a radio program broadcast in July 1986 Meira Eliash-Chain stated: "... the TAMAR dancers were ready to take the risk; there was something very Israeli there. They did not invite some well-known choreographer from New-York [as other dance companies in Israel habitually did] but wished to really get involved with local material, to deal with topical subjects, with problems that they, as Israelis, could identify with."

Nominally based at Ramle, a smallish town not far from Tel-Aviv, TAMAR was active from 1982 to 1984; after a hiatus which lasted for several years, when most of its dancers were busy abroad, it reconvened in Jerusalem, where it continued to create and perform from 1987 to 1992. But this is not the place to tell the story of TAMAR dance company. What is relevant is that more than any other dance outfit in Israel, it had produced work based on or connected with socio-political subjects. Amir Kolben was one of its chief choreographers and later its artistic director. Most of his works were sometimes flawed because of his political views, as



"RESERVIST'S DIARY", CHOR.: RAMI BEER

PHOTO: VIVIENNE SILVER

expressed in his choreography, took precedence over aesthetic and dance aspects. "True, TAMAR shows a strong political commitment, engaging in attempts to protest and shock, especially so in Amir Kolben's works.... And if you agree with his political ideas, naturally you will support him. But there has to be a clear separation between art and political protest." (Tikva Hoter-Yishay, *Yediot Achronot*, 4.4.1989).

Among the best works presented by TAMAR was the dance/performance piece "Via Dolorosa", premiered in 1983 at the Tel-Hai visual arts event and later performed at the Acco Other Theatre festival. The work dealt with a group of refugees - both Palestinian and Israeli - as symbolized by the colours of the robes they wore, which were in the colours of the Israeli as well as the Palestinian flag. (Using the P.L.O. colours was, in those days, a courageous if not altogether illegal thing to do. Translator's remark.)

The refugees proceed in a column, slowly stepping one behind the other and carrying all their possessions with them - a small folding chair and some cooking utensils - they began their trek in the old courtyard of Tel-Hai, where Joseph Trumpeldor, one of the most famous pioneers of Jewish settlement, was killed. Then they stopped to plant some olive tree seedlings. The whole journey had 12 "stations" (like the way of Christ's stations of the cross). The final station was in the form of a last supper. (The message was clear, but in those days equating the the Palestinians and the fate of the eternal Jewish refugee was close to sacrilege. Translator's note.)

Another work by Kolben, "Slowly, Slowly the Children Learn to Hate" (1988), deals with brainwashing: in the sense described by the Austrian zoologist Konrad Lorenz about youngsters being formatted or programmed in early childhood. Using dance-theatre methods, Kolben depicts how family and society mould children to become obedient citizens. After his daughter Danielle was born he thought a lot about how to educate his offspring in the way he believes - hence this piece, where there is a lot of sometimes rather funny aggression.

In 1989 at the height of the "intifada", the Palestinian uprising, when most young (and not so young...) men had to perform police actions during their military reservists' service, Rami Be'er created for the Kibbutz Dance Company his full-evening piece "Reservist's Diary '89". This was based on a series of poems by an officer in the Israeli army about his exasperating, ambivalent experiences in the West Bank (ancient Judea and Samaria or the "occupied territories" depending on political point of view). The work deals with the conflicting emotions and soul searching of young soldiers caught in an impossible predicament. On the one hand being fearful of getting hit by stones, while on the other, being disgusted by having to use batons and tear gas.

The stage is separated from the spectators by a wire-mesh screen, which shields the audience from the stones hurled against it by the dancers. Next to the proscenium sits the commentator, who reads aloud the poems by Zvika Sternfeld. "How does one tell apart the persecuted from the persecuter? Running, running is determining all."

The metal proscenium screen makes the stage into a holdingpen for prisoners. In front of it is an Israeli soldier, clad in a white caftan or nightshirt, a steel helmet on his head. His movements are circular, those of a person in doubt, torn between conflicting emotions. But the Palestinian women, holding the torso high, are brandishing whips and lashing out. A world of absurd extremes. A prisoner in a rectangular cell created by a single light source, dances in handcuffs to the beautiful, exulted sounds of a Bach cello sonata. Palestinian women throw "stones" towards the audience in a dance full of primitive power. Most of the scenes are danced in quick tempi - a constant allegro of mutual fearful agitation.

The Israeli soldiers have to refrain from expressing their anger at being subjected to insults and swearing by the local population. This is expressed in a dance by "cripples", who have one arm tied to their body. Palestinian children dance with flags, just as Israeli youngsters do on Independence day. One of the most moving scenes starts with four soldiers dragging a female form to centre stage and what looks at first like a brutal attack and rape turns out to be a lesson in first aid, of resuscitating by mouth-to-mouth respiration, practised on a dummy (actually an inflatable sex-doll). The horror is resolved in bitter laughter.

The performance ends on a surprising note: a well-known Israeli song written by Shaul Tchernichovsky many years ago, about "dreams one should not laugh about" is sung, but in Arabic and with an oriental musical accompaniment, so it takes the audience some time to discover what they are hearing....

"TONIGHT WE DANCE", CHOR.: GABY ELDOR, 1991.
PHOTO: ELDAD BARON



Be'er was successful in so far as he transmitted his message without recourse to propaganda. As opposed to Kolben's work which anticipated its time, the atmosphere in Israel during the intifada was ripe to receive the ideas that moved Be'er.

In 1992 Gabi Eldor and Igal Ezrati staged "Tonight We Dance", premiered at the Acco Theatre Festival. This is a dance-theatre piece which depicts eight periods in the history of a coffee house in Jaffa. Commencing in 1919 (after the British conquered Palestine from the Ottoman Empire) going on till 1991. All the changes are expressed in terms of social dancing, which is typical of each era and how the relationships between the dancers change accordingly. Writes Eldor about her work: "Not a word is uttered in this show, but one scream is heard. It is the shouting of an Israeli soldier who lost his eyesight in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when he arrives at the cafe in 1977, just before the general elections which brought the [right wing] Likud party to power. Another voice is that of the Arab owner of the place, as he laments the death of his daughter." (*IDQ*, April 1993).

Since they began choreographing in the late 1980s, the couple Liat Dror/Nir Ben-Gal were attuned to developments in Israeli politics. Their movement materials and energies were gleaned from their actual surroundings. Says Nir Ben-Gal: "We are influenced by the smells, sounds, colours, the actualia [of life in Israel]. Had we worked in Europe, for example, we would do different things." (Talking to R. Eshel in September 1996).

Their donkey duet "Equus Asinus" (1988) deals with a sisyphian task carried out by a man and a woman, who carry heavy packs, their burden wrapped in dirty blankets - a life-sentence of hard labour. They carry out their asinine assignment clad in khaki work clothes - the typical drab garb of the pioneers and early settlers. A large canvas sheet of similar colouring serves as background as well as a stage-cloth. All this is in the typical hue of Israel in late summer. Some spectators felt the sisyphian toil made them think of the endless sweat of dancers. Arie Yass wrote: "Poor creatures [meaning: dancers] who work like these crazy asses." (*Ma'ariv*, 2.10.1988). The late critic Hezi Leskly wrote: "To be human means being a donkey. Not only carrying sacks full of gravel, but also the assinine insult. In other words, toiling under an external as well as internal burden.... Man is a sort of donkeyish dancer or perhaps the dancer is an assinine human being, which has to be well trained all the time." (*Ha'ir*, 4.11.1988).

In my opinion, this work also has political connotations. In our country, pedigree horses as well as donkeys indicate the Arab inhabitants. It reminds one of Arab kids driving on small lean donkeys struggling under heavy loads by beating them with sticks. Of course ass is also used as a



"FIGS", CHOR.: LIAT DROR & NIR BEN GAL, PHOTO: VARDI KAHANA

swear word denoting someone stupid, stubborn or insensitive. This work also uses Arab music and pelvic movements, typical of oriental dance.

In 1993 Nir and Liat created a dance piece entitled "Figs", which explores the idea of territoriality. It has general but also real connotations of soil, independence and even the eternal struggle between the sexes. But 'the territorial principle' is of even wider significance; each one lives in a staked-out personal, national and social territory. One's personal, autonomous freedom versus the will of society or of 'the other'.

"Figs" begins not with the proverbial peace dove and olive branches being carried on, but by a metallic bird (a seagull) carried high up on a long thin pole across the bare stage, as many light sources illuminate the bird from all angles. The dancers, men and women, carry the shining seagull with small steps, changing weight from one foot to the other - reminding one of the 'donkey' movements. But this time the huge packs are lowered to the floor and unfolded to form a whitish canvas stage covering. Wherever they are going, these people are carrying their territory, even if it is folded, on their backs with them.

This is disputed territory, far from an idyllic homeland. One of the women refuses to dance on it, using the well-worn dancer's complaints: "The floor is too smooth, it is too uneven." But this is also the biblical territory of "each under his vine and fig-tree" or, if you will, oriental life, when in summer so many farmers live in huts and arbors, guarding their vineyards and orchards from being vandalized, munching their fruit.

The people's drive to expand their territory makes the dancers do more and more pieces of apparel, in the end snatching the garments of one girl. She begs them to spare her, but they remove her shirt leaving her bare-breasted and shivering. The shirt is tossed from one dancer to another making the naked girl miserable and insulted. A struggle ensues which ends with three dancers carrying a burden off stage, similar to the one they started with. Only this time they are the dead bodies of three human beings.

The most recent work by Nir and Liat "Enquiry" (1996) deals with the difficult topic of torture and interrogation. It is based on materials gleaned from testimony of a Holocaust victim and the annual report of *Be't zellem*, an organization which monitors what is going on in the prisons in the West Bank.

Orian: "The Holocaust as a dramatic topic came to Israeli theatre rather late. Prior to 1980, Israeli plays tended to deal with the problems posed by the influx of new immigrants and the memories of the Holocaust. [...] Ten of the Israeli plays produced since the 1980's presented a parallel between the circumstances of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Arab conflict."

In Orian's opinion, this exaggerated analogy had the purpose of fighting against the Israeli 'cult of fear'. The parallel "Holocaust-Arab threat" is viewed as invalid and they [the dramatists] refuse to see it as a valid excuse for Israeli policies against the Palestinians. (Orian, 1996:145).

"The Enquiry" is a powerful, very physical piece of movement-theatre, perhaps the most virtuosic work they have produced until now. But in spite of the violent topic, there are no stage atrocities or any deliberate pandering to the spectator's sentiments. There are several violent encounters between the interrogator and his female prisoner, achieved without hardly any physical contact between them. And where there is contact, it moves along the demarcation line between gentle stroking and carressing, which soon becomes threatening and aggressive. Massage and mutual manipulation between two dancers and some blows and slaps, which may be part of massage, become a real inquisition by touching.

The Oslo Agreement lowered the heat of the conflict and enhanced the prospects of peace between Arabs and Israelis. It is to be seen how this development will find expression in Israeli dance in the future.

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