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"YOUR OBLIGATION TO THEM: SIMPLICITY IN YOUR KITCHEN": WAR AND HOME IN ADS FROM MANDATORY PALESTINE'S HEBREW MAGAZINES

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on advertisements for domestic products dated from the years of WWR II, which included a direct reference to the war, and appeared in Hebrew magazines of Mandatory Palestine. The objectives were to find out what massages were conveyed to women through the ads. Using content analysis and semiotic models, the ads were decoded and four strategies were found: describing the conditions of war, which influenced the product; "the glamour strategy", stressing the homemaker's role as a "home-soldier"; women's chat as a domestic communication constructing an economical homemaker; alerting the homemaker not to harm her family ignoring wartime circumstances. All strategies constructed an image of a homemaker who should share the effort of war from home.

Keywords: advertising, homemaker, Yishuv, Mandatory Palestine, wartime, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

This research paper focuses on advertisements for domestic products dated from the 1940s, the years of WWR II, which included a direct reference to the war in their text, and appeared in Hebrew magazines of Mandatory Palestine. These ads, usually centered in the representation of the homemaker, whether verbal or visual. The objectives of the paper are to explore the massages conveyed by advertisers to women regarding the expectations of them as homemakers and mothers at home, and to extract the techniques and strategies advertisers used to construct the desirable Hebrew woman in wartime. After doing so, I would like to find out whether these massages reflected the situation of most Hebrew women who lived in Mandatory Palestine during that time.

In Mandatory Palestine, a period called in Zionist historiography the *Yishuv* (Halamish, 2009), like in other developing societies and economies, women, who immigrated with a vision of creating a new society, lacked their equal share in the emerging Jewish national home. Research has proven this to be the reality, in spite of a socialist ideology which was carried out by dominant Zionist

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institutions, declaring equality for men and women. During Mandatory period, the rate of immigrating women was similar to that of men (Alroey, 2010: 91). Most of the *Yishuv* population (80%) was urban (Halamish, 2009), and settled in cities and towns (Ben-Porat, 1999:77). Women lived within traditional families and were mainly homemakers. Despite many women's aspirations to change life patterns and establish an equalitarian society, the work division within the Hebrew family remained the same, and men's expectations were that women would carry on engaging in traditional feminine jobs (Bernstein, 2001:116, 121). Those women who worked concentrated in traditional, highly segregated professions, held jobs requiring lesser skills and earned less money than men earned. Women's disappointment led them to strive for a better involvement in the *Yishuv's* life both in the socialistic sector as agricultural workers (Neumann, 2009: 16-18), or as doing welfare educational medical and legal jobs in the civil society.

Women of the wide political range got together in order to improve their living conditions including fighting for a right to vote for the political institutions of the *Yishuv* which they won in 1926[1]. Of all the women's organizations the two major ones starting in 1920, were The council of Women Workers whose aim was to take care of women *Histadrut* members (Margalit-Stern, 2001:294-295) and Hebrew Women's Organization which promoted women's status in Palestine and engaged in philanthropic activity (Diskin, 2011:65). However, Labor policy' led by the *Histadrut* (The General Workers Federation), not always improved women's status. It sometimes weakened women's position in the labor market. Taking into consideration the volatile state of the Jewish economy, women workers were expected to put aside their aspirations for a better position, arguing that the time for such changes had not yet arrived. Therefore, they had to place national interests before their own. Searching for acceptable solutions, women workers had to overcome immense obstacles seeking for alternatives. In 1920 Hanna Maisel Shochat initiated a women's training project aiming to turn household and yard tasks into a profession (Carmel-Hakim, 2007:72). Parallel to expending women's options to acquire training and be incorporated as household workers both in villages and in towns, a new organization, Working Mothers in their Household, was founded in 1929, in the hope of equating homemakers' status to that of women working outside their homes (Margalit-Stern, 2006: 324-326). Hebrew housewives had to cope with distress and scarcity, small crowded apartments and poor household means.

The Hebrew woman of the *Yishuv*, was expected to become a desirable one, preferably contributing to the Hebrew society from home. This perception was strengthened during WWR II, when the *Yishuv* was under austerity and in danger of the German army proceeding towards Palestine.

Advertisements for domestic products in the hebrew press

[1] For further reading on the battle for the right to vote, see: Safran, 2006.

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Advertisements featuring representations of homemakers first appeared in the Hebrew press of the 1920s, and continued to develop widely along the decades. Analyzing ads from the *Yishuv* period is a significant tool to study the social and cultural development of the Zionist Hebrew community on its path towards the establishment of the state of Israel (Author, 2012). The appearance of ads in the press and in popular literature reflected a process of cultural flowering, which was characterized by increasing population and rapid economic growth (Helman, 2007).[2] Immigration waves from central Europe in the 1930s had a crucial contribution to the development of economy, society and culture (Gelbar, 1990, 385). The field of advertising marched along with industry and manufacturing, as suppliers of bourgeois consumerism culture, centering in Tel-Aviv.[3] At the end of the 1930s there were twenty five advertising agents in Tel-Aviv, producing advertisement to local brands as well as imported goods, sold in the local market. In the 1940s, following World War II, many industrial plants were set up and thus the product and advertising market expended too (Helman, 2007:23).

Until the 1920s, Hebrew press ads lacked illustrations almost entirely and contained verbal text specifying the product's virtues (Author, 2012:306) .Later in the 1920s the first illustrated ads emerged many of which featuring women's representations in different locations of the domestic space. There were seven brands creating approximately twenty different images of female figures in the domestic space. These ads of the 1920s promoted food, hygiene, health and beauty products. Like the products, the ads too were imported and placed in the Hebrew press with their text translated into Hebrew, and the illustration remained untouched. It seems that the local advertising companies adopted the foreign ads since they considered them suitable for the Hebrew consumers regarding ideas, norms and lifestyle. Ads dated from the 1930s provided about one hundred different representations of women in the domestic space, promoting products of hygiene, health, beauty, food, and kitchenware.

During the 1940s the amount of ads appearing in the Hebrew press increased tremendously, with about sixty-five brands producing over one hundred twenty different images of women at home.[4] About two-thirds of those ads were transferred to the Hebrew press from Western magazines. One-third were local ads, produced in Palestine, of which about twenty-five (62.5%) were mentioning

[2] Between 1920 and 1948 the *Yishuv* increased tenfold and counted 650,000 people just before the establishment of the state of Israel. The two major immigration waves during the British Mandate were the fourth Aliya (1924-1926) and the fifth Aliya (1933-1936). The latter years significantly changed the image of the *Yishuv*: Domestic production grew 2.5 times; the city of Tel-Aviv grew threefold hosting about 40% of all Jewish immigrants during that period. Helman, 2007: 11.

[3] Similar development occurred in advertising in Arab press within the country and in neighboring Arab countries such as Egypt.

[4] Since it was a representative sample, there is always the possibility an ad was missing from the count.

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the war in their text. In what ways was the war mentioning? What was described about the war? How was the role of the homemaker linked to the war?

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on a broader research of about one hundred and fifty different representation of women taken from Hebrew magazines and manuals from Mandatory Palestine.[5] In this article the focus will be on those twenty-five ads, which mention WWR II in a direct way in their text, dating from the years of the war. The ads will be analyzed with several examples discussed in details, with the assumption that extracting meanings and massages inherent in them is the key to understanding the worldviews prevalent in the *Yishuv* during war years, both with their creators and with the target audience, they were aimed to (Bartal, 2013: 137-147). This premise is based on perceiving the ad as a text aiming for an effective communication with its audience, so as to maximize selling the product by referring to the ideologies then accepted as normative (Agam-Dali, 2010: 41). In this study I will decode these ideologies through analyzing the ad text according to the theory of structuralism claiming that cultural meaning is to be found in cultural structures and the human consciousness conceiving these structures (Beeri, 2004: 57).

The ads researched have been collected from the three major Hebrew dailies of Mandatory Palestine: *Davar, Ha'aretz* and *Ha'tzo*fe, and from women's magazines published in Hebrew in the 1940s. Choosing these three dailies stemmed from the wish to create an ideologically wide corpus: Each daily belonged to a different political stream: *Davar* – The socialistic sector, *Ha'aretz* – The liberal sector, and the *Ha'tzofe* – The religious Zionist sector. They were scanned, three different months each year. As to women's magazines – all published during that period were fully reviewed in order to get a wide picture of addressing women from various sectors. Manuals included consisted both of major *Yishuv* institutions' publications and books published by private authors or commercial publishers.

Out of all ads for domestic products centered in a female representation – verbal or visual, twenty-five were extracted. The methodology I chose combine content analysis of each ad, inspired by Ervin Goffman's study of ads from a gender-oriented point of view[6], with semiotic theories and models. Each ad was at first rear following Roland Barthes's definition of the ad as a mini-narrative, a kind of a meaningful sign sequence (Barthes, 2006: 71-72). As such, the ad has three

[5] Author, 2016.

[6] For studies based on Goffman's parameters, see: First, 2001; Bell and Milic, 2002; Vestergaard and Schroder, 2004. I would like to stress that not all of Goffman's parameters were relevant to each ad.

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key points of the plot: [7] breaking of the balance thus creating instability, the hero/subject fighting the forces of evil and resuming the balance by resolving the conflict (Fiske, 1990: 139). The narrative ideology exists within the conflict of imbalance and its resolution, and through identifying the values involved in it (Todorov, 1977: 10-11) The point of imbalance, will be fixed by a hero whose job is to reinstall order. Based on these principles, Algirdas Julien Greimas developed his *Actant Model,* which contains six agents: the sender, the object, the subject /hero, the antagonist/opponent, the assistant/helper and the recipient (Vestergaard and Schroder, 2004: 414-415; Liebes and Talmon, 2004: 331; Hebert, 2006: 1-3; Mishkis-Haber, 2009: 29-30). A sender, who appoints a hero who, in turn, through obtaining the object, is supposed to resume order, motivates the narrative plot. On his/her way, he/she will meet both helpers and opponents whom he/she will overcome until finally achieving the desired object. There are three axes at the basis of each narrative: the axis of desire – where the hero acts to achieve the object, the axis of power – where the helper and opponent act and finally the axis of knowledge – the one lying between the sender and the recipient.

At the paradigmatic level, two models will be used: the Griemas model and that of Claude Levi Strauss (Fiske, 1990: 138). The latter suggested that there is a universal way of grasping the world by mapping existing values as a system of binary contrasts used as anxiety reducers.[8] Contrasting values will be juxtaposed along the narrative sequence where it is the reader/viewer's job to decode them in order to reveal the ideology underlying the text. Levi- Strauss defined the binary contrast – nature versus culture – as the basic contrast underlying every text (Fiske, 1990: 116-117). Following him, John Fiske expanded the binary model to include metaphoric values conveying contrasting forces – order vs chaos, man vs woman, and good vs evil (Liebes and Talmon, 2004:333).

The content analysis is based on a series of questions and indices formulated and inspired by Goffman: Is the female representation verbal or visual? If verbal – how is it applied in the context of the ad? The written text's format (Zeevi, 2010: 223-224): repetitive terms, the language of address, the manner of address (imperative or second person), the tone of the text (e.g. warning, threatening, etc). Regarding the visual representation, several examinations were taking into account:

[7] Vladimir Prop created a model for narrative analysis. While analyzing one hundred Russian folk stories he found in them a repeated narrated structure containing 32 functions which he summarized into six: preparation, conflict, change, battle, returning and release. John Fiske argued this model could be executed for every cultural narrative. Fiske, 1990: 136-137.

[8] Levi Strauss leaned on de-Saussure's theories as well as on Freud's dream theory while developing the theory of the binary contrasts. Mishkis-Haber, 2009: 28.

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1. The female's position and location: alone or with another person, active or passive, standing or seated, cooking, cleaning, eating, feeding, sleeping, etc.
2. Female versus male depiction: Size and pose difference, job division of man and woman: being displayed next to one another in the same scene. The relationships among family members: how close is the woman to her children, to her husband? How is the relationship between husband and wife depicted regarding look, touch, etc.
3. Does the body appear whole or partial? Does the woman touch feminine objects or parts of her own body?
4. Interaction between spectator and woman: Does the woman look straight at the spectator or does not look at him/her all? Is she close/far from the spectator?
5. Visual image and written text (Martinec and Salway, 2005: 337-340): What is the relationship between the two elements? Is the former illustrating the latter?[9]

FINDINGS: Domestic Products, War and the Homemaker

In 1940 the daily *Ha'aretz* initiated a section entitled "For the Homemaker", in which the editorial staff would give advice to homemakers in regards to household managing, especially recipes and tips for cooking and backing during wartime (fig. 1). In the rectangular illustration framing the section homemakers are depicted cooking, shopping, taking care of children and sawing.

Fig. 1: The Title Strip "For the Homemaker". From *Ha'aretz* (1.9.1943) p. 4.

There were three local brands manufactured domestic products in Palestine during the 1940s, which specifically mentioned the war in their ads: 'Shemen', 'Yitzhar' and 'Blue Band'. The first two companies, were originally local (built by Jewish immigrants in Palestine) when the third was a local branch of a German company. The three started manufacturing in Palestine during the 1930s, and therefore the years of WWR II were an early stage of their development, when they had to determine an ideological agenda to be associated with the brand and its product/s. Within the

[9] Barthes argues that visual images are an un-stable chain of signifiers, enables the viewer to choose some and ignore others. The aim of the written text is to establish the visual image within a category of meaning, and to lead the viewer to a "preferred reading" of the ad. Fiske, 1990: 110-111.

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variety of ads, about twenty-five focused on the war as a main element in their text, promoting food and hygiene products. No ads originated abroad were modified to include a text regarding the war, in spite of some other modifications that were occasionally made in regards to various topics of the local situation (such as the weather, diseases of Palestine, etc.). The ads reflected the condition of most women in the *Yishuv* being homemakers, but also referred to women as soldiers in a metaphoric way, applied on the situation of the minority of women who volunteered to serve in the British army during the war. All of the twenty-five ads emphasize the division of the two spheres – the private home and the public arena. Unlike American ads of the war years, persuading women to take war jobs in addition to their familial obligations (Snyder, 1997: 2), Hebrew women were expected to join the national effort from home, being devoted homemakers and mothers who make economical and smart decisions for their family, and therefore, for the Hebrew nation in Palestine.

Advertisers made use of several techniques and strategies making the war a convincing element for the woman as the potential buyer of the product. One strategy was describing in details the conditions which led to a specific situation linking them to the product. The second was "the glamour strategy" (Snyder, 1997: 6), portraying the two spheres separately while stressing the homemaker's role as a most important "home-soldier". The third strategy was stressing the economical choice of products as national, and constructing an identity of a rational saving Hebrew woman. The forth strategy was alerting the homemaker and mother as to the harm she could cause her family members choosing not to follow wartime conditions and circumstances. All strategies constructed the identity of the Hebrew woman at home in regards to her attitude towards her household chores in time of war.

Conditions of War Effecting the Product

Ads of Mandatory period were characterized by a long verbal text, usually describing the advantages of the product. The reader of that time was used to invest time and attention in the ad, as part of experiencing the magazine, and as a means of getting to know a new product in the developing market of the *Yishuv* (Zeevi, 2010: 221) This characteristic could serve the advertiser to explain the potential buyer how the war was effecting the product. In a 'Blue Band' ad for margarine, dating from 1943(fig. 2, left) we find a long text expressing the need for supplying the allies with food products as an excuse for the lack of margarine in the *Yishuv*. The text addresses a male reader, since the verbs are in the male form (in Hebrew), explaining that in times of war the army comes before civilians: "If you find it hard to get Blue Band, Don't be angry. Remember this is your share in the war effort". It is surprising the detailed text is written in the male form whereas the subtitle in the bottom reads "Treat it Economically" in the female form. The lack of uniformity could be a translation error, as some of the Blue Band ads were transferred to the Hebrew press from German magazines of that time. In the Hebrew language, male and female forms are

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different, and often we find translation that addresses both male and female readers inconsistently. Another interpretation of that duality in language could be the advertiser's assumption that explanations regarding the war were more suitable for male readers than for women, whereas actual instructions were to be addressed to the homemaker. Therefore, she is requested to use the margarine economically. The advertiser stresses that the quality of the product remains the same as "in peace time", even when raw materials for its production were scarce. The most dominant visual part of text in the ad is the upper title "In 850 Ships" which makes the beginning of the war description the key element of the ad, aiming to convince the potential buyer to feel solidarity with the army, and therefore to stick to 'Blue Band'.

In a similar ad to the same product, the margarine itself is depicted as a ship, sailing away with a sailor standing on it (fig. 2, right). In this ad the company declares a substitute margarine due to the needs of war, promising the homemaker, that the original product shall return to the market while victory is achieved. The text is written in the first person form, personifying the margarine, which addresses the homemaker as if it was a friend, or a helper in the kitchen. But the margarine not only represents the homemaker's helper, it also represents the realm of war, since its temporary lack in the *Yishuv's* markets was due to the use of it (as well as other basic products) by the soldiers in the battle fields. The inscription on the right hand upper corner reads "Farewell, Madame" referring to both the soldier who is depicted waving good bye from the margarine-ship and the product itself. The narrative of war is compared to the narrative of economical domesticity. An effort of the allies, supported by supplies, is analogous to the effort of the homemaker to use the best product wisely.

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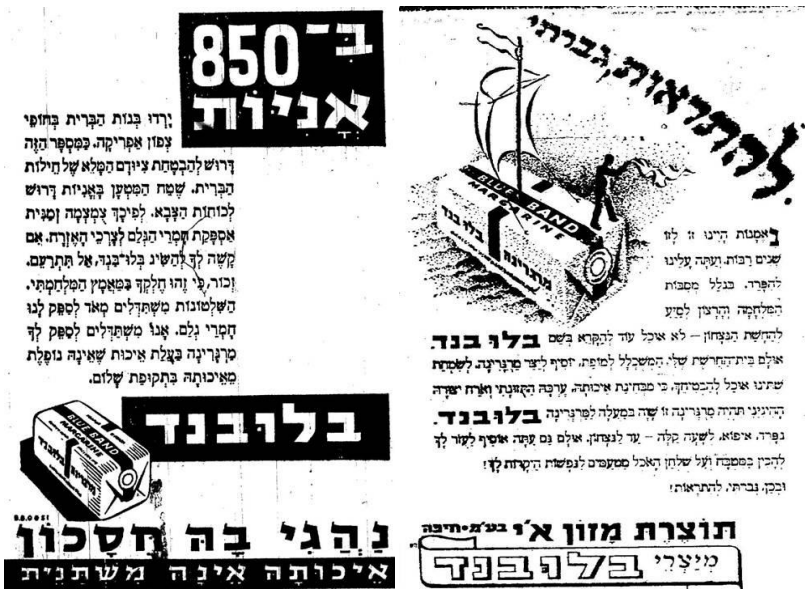

Fig. 2: Ad for 'Blue Band' Margarine. Right: from *Ha'tzofe* (19.1.1944) p. 3. Left: from *Ha'tzofe* (14.5.1943) p.7.

In an ad for cooking oil 'Leshed' by 'Yitzhar' company, a Jewish family is depicted, dinning the Passover meal (fig. 3). The upper inscription reads: "I made it…", a sentence spoken by the oil bottle, which got a humanized figure. The bottle figure alludes to the character of Eliyah, the biblical prophet, who is traditionally expected to show up in every Passover meal of any Jewish family who celebrates the holiday. The appearance of 'Leshed' in the figure of the prophet, is linked in the ad to another narrative – that of the war. The text explains that transportation difficulties have made it hard for peanuts to arrive to the *Yishuv*, but after they did, the homemaker could cook the dishes of the holiday, as if it was peacetime. Mentioning the conditions of wartime, serves the advertiser to create an over appreciation of the product and its manufacturers, who succeeded in overcoming all obstacles to achieve a healthy and happy Jewish family practicing the holiday of Passover. The use of Passover meal has a symbolic meaning in regards to the war; it tells the story of the Israelites' victory on their journey from slavery to freedom implying the victory of 'Yitzhar' company to maintain quality products, even in times of war. Using the actant model, the imbalanced situation of concern regarding the ability to prepare a traditional meal, was solved by the arrival of the oil, which is the main helper to the homemaker. She is constructed as a heroine, overcoming the obstacles of war, which is perceived as the opponent. The axis of desire was a happy, well-fed family, who was able to perform Passover meal normaly, and that was achieved by the homemaker.

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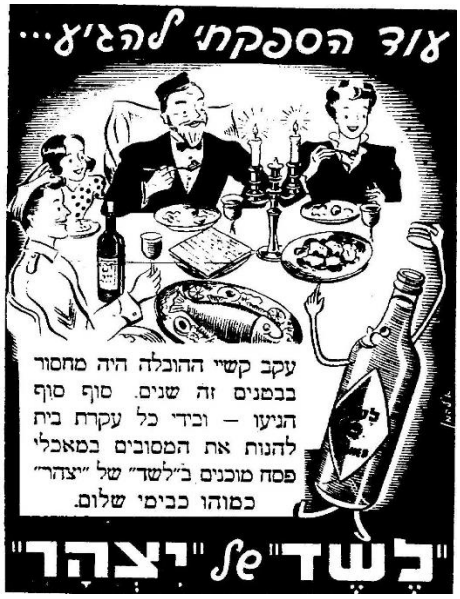

Fig. 3: Ad for 'Leshed' cooking oil, 'Yitzhar', from *Ha'tzofe* (6.4.1944) p. 3.

The Glamour Strategy: Homemaker as Soldier

Since the war caused shortage of food products, homemakers found themselves in a constant battle to get supplies for their homes. In 1942 *Hadassah* Organization and *Olam Ha'Isha* women's magazine published Lilian Cornfield's book entitled *How to Cook in Wartime*, which guided homemakers to maximize their food production in times of austerity (Cornfield, 1942). In 1944 the ministry of food inspection of the Mandate, collaborated with women organizations to carry out an exhibit of products available in Palestine during the war. The exhibit was accompanied by a booklet of recommended recipes, entitled 'The Homemaker's Front'.[10] The same ministry also produced posters to be published in Hebrew magazines encouraging women to make smart choices shopping and preparing food. In one of them the battle field is depicted, soldiers holding rifles lying down behind fences. The inscription reads: "Your Obligation to Them – Simplicity in Your Kitchen" (fig. 4, left). The missing visual image of the homemaker is represented by the verbal text referring to her as the target audience of the ad. By depicting soldiers in the front and referring to homemakers in their kitchen, the two spheres diverge but at the same time band together forming an ideology of unity for the sake of strengthening the *Yishuv* at wartime. The woman is asked to feel obliged to keep her kitchen simple as an act of solidarity with the soldiers who participate in the battles' front. This is an emotional manipulation linking battle field to the kitchen, and male soldiers to female homemakers.

[10] It was published for the occasion of the exhibit. *Food Exhibitions*, 1944.

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Glorifying women's traditional domestic roles was used as a means of guiding and directing mothers and homemakers to become the 'desirable' Hebrew women in the *Yishuv*. This rhetoric constituted a framework into which the values of Hebrew nationality were cast (Author, 2016, 203-205). Advertisers for domestic products used this rhetoric as a sales promoter strategy. In a 'Shemen' company ad for 'Meged' cooking oil, the homemaker is depicted as a soldier-woman expropriated from her private home in favor of an external territory. (fig 4, right). She is portrayed as a young woman neatly dressed, wearing an apron around her waist and a pot-like hat, while holding a ladle as if it was a weapon. In the background, a row of similarly looking homemakers is seen, lined up as soldiers, holding their ladles, too. At the front there is a text that reads," Every homemaker would wish to receive a commendation from her family in the form of praise and admiration for every serving brought to the table…" Fiske explains how an ad functions as a site where two separate syntagmatic systems meet to merge into one image (Fiske, 1990: 103-104). Here, the military and the domestic scenes were juxtaposed so as to generate a newly created situation combined of features belonging to the two distinct worlds.[11] The public space contributes its status and prestige by rendering the commanding officer's authoritative image while the domestic one – through the woman's ability to feed her family. An additional signifier relates to the historic consequences, namely the recruiting of women to the British army during World War II, when this ad was created. Women of the *Yishuv* volunteered to the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service), and to the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force), an unprecedented act in the Jewish or Eretz Israel context.

The 'Shemen' company did not call on women to join the army but fused the value of serving in the army into the homemaker's representation thus equating the two subject matters.[12] Levi Struss claimed that the process of understanding a text passes through revealing its binary contrasts (Fiske, 1990: 116-117). The male cook versus the woman homemaker, the mail cook as an officer in command – versus the woman as his junior, the private space versus the public one – all these portray the homemaker as subjected to male authority and to the public space laws embodied by this authority. The text tells about her subordination to her family. Her exceling at making the food (while the oil serves as her helper) is conditioned by her accepting the military laws, which are pure representatives of the establishment, mainly the culture. This juxtaposes another pair of binary contrasts: nature versus culture, as the need to eat and the woman as provider of food are linked to the sphere of nature while the food to be prepared via the processed product and the way

[11] Avivit Agam Dali analyses ads from the 1950s pointing at the woman in her domestic space described as a soldiers in a battlefield. She claims that the war situation in reality led to the creation of images taken from the world of war. See: Agam-Dali, 2005.

[12] During World War II, 3200 *Yishuv* Jewish women soldiers served in the British army, starting 1942, which is the year of this ad. Cohen, 2005: 12.

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to prepare it are linked to the sphere of culture (Ortner, 2007: 25-45). Cooking is depicted as a victory of culture over nature and is linked to the national ideology suggesting that appropriate feeding is the basis of a healthy nation (Bromberg, 1941: 3).

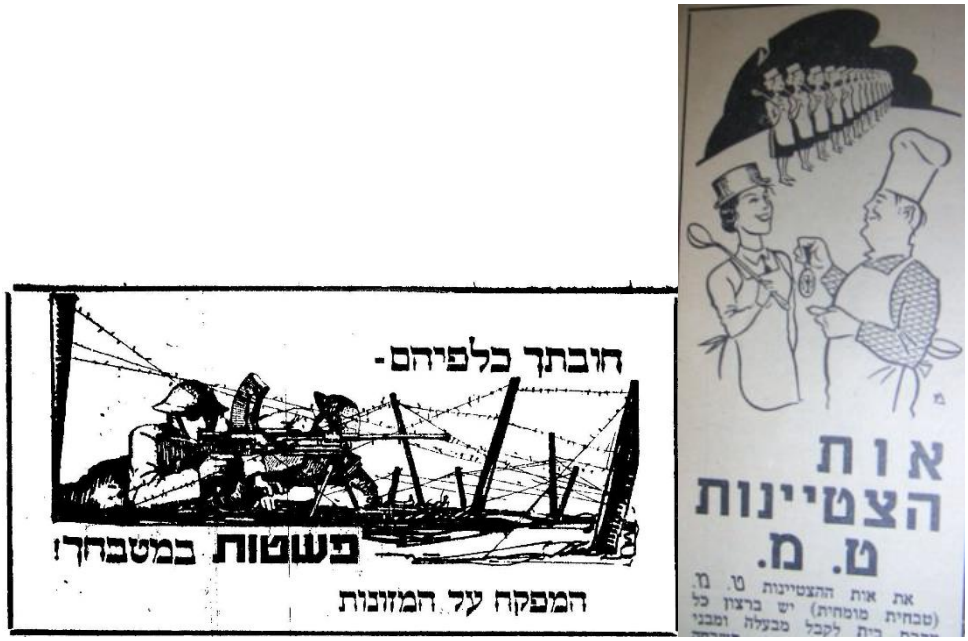

Fig 4: Right: Ad for 'Meged' cooking oil. From the *Olam Ha'Isha* (14.1.1942) Left: "Your Obligation to Them: Simplicity in Your Kitchen". From: *Ha'aretz* (15.4..1943) p. 1.

The image of the male soldier versus the image of the female homemaker, was a juxtaposition used by 'Shemen' to promote its product in wartime. Two ads from 1943 focus on exchanging letters between husband and wife during the war (fig. 5). In the right ad a soldier writes a letter to his wife, who lives in Tel-Aviv. The title "A Hebrew Soldier Writes Home" with a picture of the wife on the desk contributes to portray the remote home. Most of the composition is occupied by the letter itself, describing several products of 'Shemen'. The handwriting of the soldier is followed by tiny illustrations, which interrupt the verbal text, providing some cartoon-like features representing the life in the military base. The soldier thanks his wife for sending him a package full of hygiene products, asking her to send him some more. In another ad, which functions as a response to the first one, the wife writes a letter back to her husband. Her private soldier, David Cohen, is the one depicted in the first ad. His name is a generic one, and his location is mentioned as "Somewhere", implying to a secret base of the army. These general characters of a Hebrew soldier and a Hebrew wife by the popular name, Rachel, maximize the ads' appeal, portraying a common situation of a couple in the *Yishuv* of that time. By using the format of intimate letters, with a personal tone of expression, the advertiser manipulates the reader emotionally, creating a high rate of solidarity and identification. The ads become a continuous narrative, like a literary episode for readers to follow

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with curiosity. The wife, in her letter, mentions the products of 'Shemen', which she had sent to him in the package. Illustrations of the domestic space appear between the lines. Their child is represented twice – being depicted getting his cloths dirty, and by a letter he himself wrote to his father, at the bottom of the ad. The two letters represent the two spheres – soldiers in the base camp and mother and child at home. The inscription "A Hebrew Soldier Write's Home" (fig. 5, right) accompanied by the two portraits of the soldier and his wife, aims to parallel and make equal their national significance. The wife is being praised twice: by using the appropriate products and by taking care of her private soldier, sending them to him. The two acts construct her as the desirable Hebrew woman in wartime.

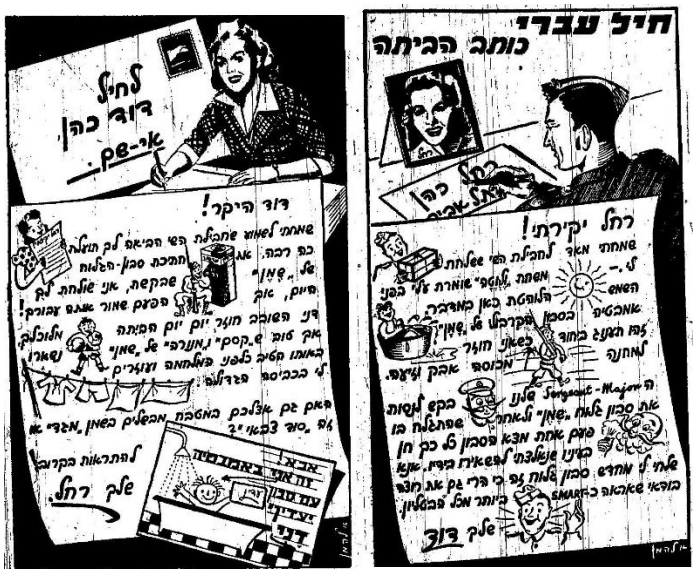

Fig. 5: Ads for 'Shemen' products. Right: from: *Davar* (15.6.1943) p.4. Left: from *Davar* (16.6.1943), p. 4.

Women's Chat about the War

Consumerism was described in ads as a feminine scene and women discussing their shopping habits as well as their household chores with one another were turned into an image supposed to promote proper feminine behavior. Out of all the ads featuring homemaker representations, about fifteen show two or more women engaged in an intimate scene which I call "women's chat".[13] In those samples there is a close encounter between a homemaker engaged in one of the typical

[13] Vestergaard and Schroder call these situations "gossip ad". They present several types of ads using close and friendly relationships among women. See: Vestergaard and Schroder, 2004: 416-417.

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household chores (laundry, shopping, cooking, storing in the fridge) and her counterpart performing the same action of a friend who dropped by for a visit and a small talk.

In two 'Kessem' laundry powder ads, the advertiser mentions the war in order to create a tension between two women who have to cope with conditions of scarcity (fig. 6). In both ads we find the ambivalence of feminine empowerment mixed with women's rivalry, which characterizes many of the ads using the strategy of women's chat. The advertiser uses quotation marks to indicate the figures' direct speech, which appears bold and noticeable at first sight. The expressions "How Sweet" and "Between you and I" create a sense of intimacy, which aims to attract women readers and to strengthen their emotional engagement with the ad (fig. 6, right). The women are chatting about a baby's clean clothes. The friend is asking the mother how come she could afford to buy new clothes in times of war (WWII) and the mother explains she didn't buy new clothes but simply used 'Kessem' laundry powder. The surprising response given by the assertive mother, instantly renders her an 'ideal' homemaker, not wasting money when she is supposed to save it. She is portrayed as a modest and rational woman, negating her friend's implied accusation. The accusing tone of her friend is a gossip-like element which made the strategy of women's-chat appealing for both advertisers and consumers. In another 'Kessem' ad dating from WWII, two women are shown (fig. 6, left). The accompanied text unfolds the virtues of the product stressing the fact that 'Kessem' powder prolongs the underwear lifetime thus indicating its quality and its being economical. The advertiser used the general public atmosphere in the Hebrew *Yishuv* at that time which preached for austerity due to shortages of basic food supplies. Here an element of tension is added to the women's conversation as one of them suspect her friend of purchasing luxury goods (curtains) while all the homemakers were called on to consume less during the war. The word "luxury" gets a negative connotation here being unsuitable to the socialistic ethos of austerity which was a crucial issue of the public discourse. When the friend explains that she has not bought new curtains but washed the old ones using 'Kessem', the powder is immediately associated with properly consuming ethos. In that way not only the Hebrew homemaker is identified as behaving nationally properly but the product seems to fit this ethos and as such gains credit with those women who wish to be identified with austerity so as to support the *Yishuv* national strength in wartime.

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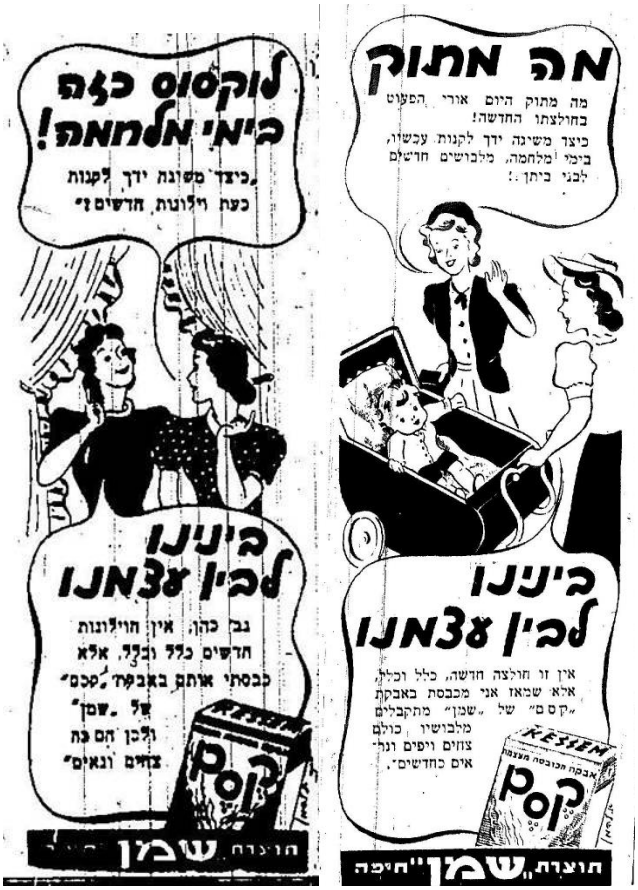

Fig. 6: Ad for 'Kesem' laundry powder of 'Shemen'. Right: from Haaretz (17.19.1942) p. 4. Left: from *Davar* (6.10.1942) p. 3.

In a laundry soup ad 'Menora' of 'Shemen' company (fig. 7), a homemaker is displayed hanging laundry while a friend approaches her and embarrasses her in front of the viewer saying: "Didn't you really know, Mrs. Levi?" This direct question followed by a question and exclamation mark (meaning "What? Are you out of your mind?") Along with the woman's panicking face shown as a separate image at the bottom of the scene, serves as connotative means for the structuring of the homemaker's inferior status. The imbalance point of the narrative is having used detergent, which is not 'Menora', thus ignoring all the positive virtues embodies by this detergent. According to the actant model, this woman is the protagonist whose journey for achieving the balance in the plot is ahead of her. The relationship between the text and the images are extremely interesting. This ad has three parts: the upper one with the woman's conversation, the middle one where the soup virtues are specified and the lower part with the 'Shemen' logo and the 'Menora' symbol appear together. The ad is laid out with the upper part describing the imbalanced narrative scene since the friend reprimands Mrs. Levi for her wrong behavior. In the middle part the written and visual texts

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appear combined while tiny illustrations emphasize the words. The information is supposed to pave and guide the heroine's way like within a maze. What will finally be achieved is using the 'Menora' detergent who's virtues are reliability in the long run, scientific quality, its being Kosher and harmless for clothing or skin. By the actant model the company acts as the helper representing the sender – the advertising company, and actually the whole *Yishuv* society. Additional helpers are the chemist responsible for the soup quality and the physician measuring the child's height. It is interesting to know that 'Shemen' picked the menorah as a logo because actually there is no associative connection between them. The connotation aroused in the audience was probably that of the temple menorah – a historic and ritual symbol of the Jewish people. The menorah burned using olive oil; an ingredient used to make 'Shemen' soaps. This is an attempt to establish a national association between the homemaker and the products she uses.

Fig. 7: Ad for 'Menora' soup of 'Shemen', from *Olam Ha'isha* (May, 1941)

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The Threatened Homemaker

Many domestic products' ads of the *Yishuv* portrayed uncomfortable situations, dominated by a threatening tone towards a woman figure. This type of ads included all areas of domesticity, with an illustration of a homemaker or mother depicted in unease, stressful situations as a central image. The text referred to the woman representation in imperative form, whereas the illustration showed a frightened expression, and an apprehensive gesture. In some cases, the illustration featured a child /children, while the woman figure was absent altogether. This phenomenon included a few war-mentioned ads, using the war as an extreme condition the homemaker should take into account while performing her chores. It seems that the war justified these exceptional representations, implying for an inferior image of the Hebrew homemaker, which was perceived as common.

In a 'Shemen' company ad for 'Meged' cooking oil (fig. 8), typically edited with four elements – headline, illustration, detailed text and a slogan (or name of the product), we encounter the alerting strategy. The upper headline is bold and is directed at the homemaker in imperative: "Do not buy with your eyes shut!" Below a homemaker is depicted going shopping blindfolded with a piece of cloth. She is holding a purse in her left hand and scouting her way in the right. The covered eyes imply uncertainty, an un-known path that the homemaker is supposed to walk along. She seems lost. The covered eyes also indicate that someone was trying to fail or mislead her, maybe the shopkeeper shown as a black background figure juxtaposed with her figure. This person mentioned by the text, tried to sell her a lower quality and cheaper cooking oil. The long text includes five paragraphs, four of them referring directly to the homemaker in second person, while only one of them describes the oil in question. The text tells her how she should behave during war times – be extra-cautious and avoid fake products, (*meziot* in Hebrew), which flooded the market of the *Yishuv* in those days. These substitutes function as the opponents in the narrative. They represent the enemy of the homemaker, parallel to the enemy countries fighting in the war. The text uses standard language explaining to the woman: "You are not a chemist, therefore you cannot check the quality of this product…but after a while the stomach will indicate what the eye could not tell at shopping time…" The assumption that the woman is not a chemist was based on a perception, which excluded women from the world of knowledge and science. In this ad, it seems that the lost homemaker is surely not eligible for taking any part in the 'real' world, since she is portrayed as a clueless figure. Women popular literature of that time were associated with physical sensations, which did not always help them manage their domestic space. The situation depicted in this ad is what Goffman defines as "The clown body" (Goffman, 1979: 50; First, 2001: 28) meaning female figures described in ridicules poses, indicating their being embarrassed. (Doring and Poschl, 2006: 176). What is understood by this example is that the incapable, intimidated and humiliated homemaker was perceived by the *Yishuv* society as normative, and thus served as a selling image.

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The paragraph ends in a threatening tone: "…and the small saving of buying the cheap oil would cost you a lot – the health of your family!" The woman is described as the person responsible for shopping for the house, but here she is depicted as incapable of doing so successfully. At the bottom of the ad appears a small illustration of a tiny male chef, personified as the product itself (fig. 8, right).

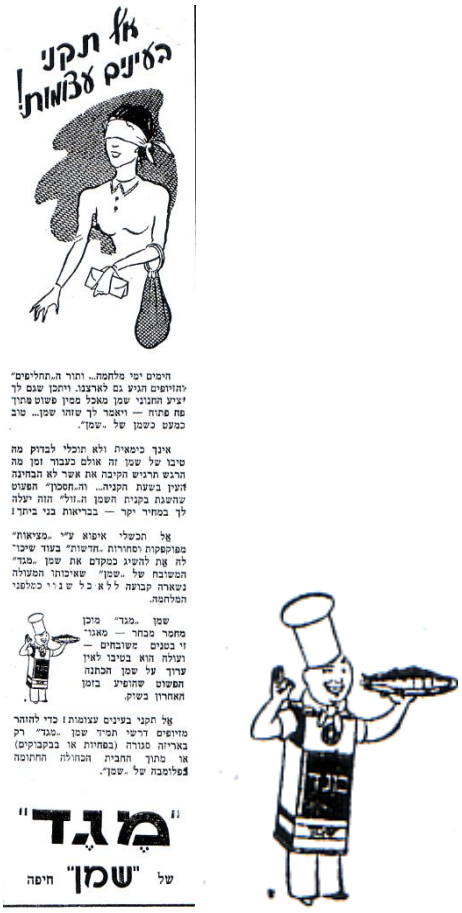

Fig. 8: Ad for 'Meged' cooking oil. From: *Olam Ha'Isha*, 10, 1940, p.14. (right: a detail enlarged).

A chef is holding a tray, full of food cooked with 'Meged' oil while on his box-like apron the product brand name is written. Placing the homemaker's hesitant representation together with the chef's satisfied image contributes to constructing contradictory values of an incompetent homemaker versus a successful chef, an unsecure woman versus a confident man, as also stressed by the text. Here she is an alerted figure, and the mentioning of the war contributes to amplify this alertness, hoping it would increase the sales of the product.

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CONCLUSION

Most Hebrew women who lived in the yishuv were married, had children, and continued to perform traditional feminine roles at home, in spite of the vision many of them shared, to gain equality and shape a new society in Palestine. The Hebrew woman of the *Yishuv*, was expected to become a desirable one, preferably contributing to the Hebrew society from home. This perception was strengthened during WWR II, when the *Yishuv* was under austerity and in danger of the German army proceeding towards Palestine. Ads for domestic products reflect this situation, by stressing women's roles at home.

This research paper focuses on advertisements for domestic products dated from the years of WWR II, which included a direct reference to the war in their text, and appeared in Hebrew magazines of Mandatory Palestine. Using content analysis and semiotic models, the twenty-five different ads were examined to decode their meanings. Advertisers made use of several techniques and strategies making the war a convincing element for the woman as the potential buyer of the product. All ads addressed the Hebrew woman as a homemaker who was expected to take part in the effort of the war by performing well at home. This meant accepting the conditions of war, which caused either changes in the products, or a temporary shortage, and a rational and economical choices regarding the products. A few strategies were found repetitive in conveying these massages. One strategy was describing in details the conditions, which led to a specific situation linking them to the product. The second was "the glamour strategy" (Snyder, 1997: 6), portraying the two spheres separately while stressing the homemaker's role as a most important "home-soldier". The third strategy was using women's chat as a domestic intimate communication to convey a massage of the importance of making economical choices to keep the household functioning well in spite of the war. The forth strategy was alerting the homemaker and mother as to the harm she could cause her family members choosing not to follow wartime conditions and circumstances. All strategies constructed an image of a Hebrew woman that should share the effort of war from home.

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