appeared — The Seventh Column, about the efforts of seven Nazi generals who were war criminals to escape at the end of the war. This was followed, in early 1946, by An Embassy Arrives at Herod’s Palace, about international intrigue in contemporary Palestine involving Jewish, Arab and British characters.

With Moon in the Ayalon Valley, which also revolved around current intrigue, Yediot mounted an intensive promotional campaign, prompted by the appearance of a competitor in the evening newspaper arena — Hadashot Ha’erezv. This new paper, published by the Mapai Party, presented a sober image and at first eschewed the institution of the serialized novel. It soon relented, however, in view of market realities, and in October 1946 launched Between Distant Shores by an unknown, apparently pseudonymous, author, Raphael Menasheh. The story, published at the height of the anti-British struggle in the Jewish yishuv, further entrenched the trend toward imbuing the genre with a message. It centered on a young Jewish woman from Palestine who marries a British man, cannot acclimate in England, and decides to return to Eretz Yisrael.

The ostensibly remote theme of a novel serialized in Yediot at the start of 1947, The Adventures of Lucius, King of Cyrene, focused on the annals of the Jewish rebellion against Roman rule that took place in ancient Libya and Egypt — an event with clear parallels to the extant situation under the British Mandate. This was followed by a new story begun in July 1947 shortly after the real-life drama of the arrival at the Palestine shore of the ship Exodus with its human cargo of 4,500 Holocaust survivors. The new series, Jula Leaves the Camp, was subtitled “The tortured route of the Displaced Persons in Europe — a novel based on facts.”

Thereafter, with the outbreak of the War of Independence in Israel, the serialized novels both in Yediot and Ma’ariv were explicitly message-oriented, reflecting the life-and-death struggle of the Jewish state in formation. Ma’ariv ran two series side by side in February 1948 — The Lost Platoon and Point 23 is Silent. They appeared sporadically, however, and were eventually discontinued, possibly shunted aside by the immediacy and sheer volume of the reportage on the war itself. Thereafter, Ma’ariv apparently decided that it was sufficiently well established to do without serialized sensationalist literature, although it ran serializations of serious fiction and nonfiction.

Yediot, hard hit by the secession of its staff and the emergence of Ma’ariv, continued running sensationalistic fiction. Amnon has not Returned to his Base — “A novel of Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora” by an unknown author, Aryeh Gut, appeared in February 1948, to be followed by Path of Victory by the same writer in 1949.

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