

## ABSTRACTS

### History Textbooks of the Ultra-Orthodox Society: The First Generation

Kimmy Caplan

One of the tools that are used in order to form the collective memory of societies in the modern era of institutionalized education is history textbooks. Based upon a variety of primary sources, this article discusses two history textbooks for *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox) students that appeared in the mid-1940's. One of them was written by Rabbi Dr. Moses Auerbach and its three parts were published within three years (1944-1947), and the other, written by Rabbi Meir Scheransky, consists of eight parts that were printed over a span of 26 years (1946-1972). Our aim is to set forth the historical, social, and educational circumstances within which these books were written, to present their authors and their motivations for writing them in these contexts, and to trace certain characteristics of their books. By doing so, we uncover several unexplored dimensions of Israeli *Haredi* society in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

### In a Naked World

'Death', 'Life' and Politics in J.H. Brenner's *From Aleph to Mem*

Boaz Arpali

*From Aleph to Mem* (1906) is considered an alleged memoir that reports what happened during a few days of staying with a prisoner convoy and in Russian prisons. The story's interpretation presented hereby seeks to pull out the deeper meaning of the story from under the superficial. This thought stretches between two poles: certainty of death and the irrational will to live.

## ABSTRACTS

The narrating hero decides to commit suicide but pulls back. Life, as he learns, does not need to be justified. Life is simply all that is not death. The hero will keep on living, even though his life has no meaning and one cannot put a finger on its flavor.

In prison, values and human emotions lose their validity. The narrative presents life in prison as a true model of human life in general – a model that reveals the true essence of human existence, dictated by blind existence. This essence, which religious, moral and philosophical doctrines wish to daze, is eternal. Changes and political revolutions may alter the outer shell, but they are none but other manifestations of the same essence which they try to change.

This derives the principal criticism over the ideologies which are allegedly based on reason and rationality, but are not up to changing a reality that in nature is sensual and irrational. The will to live, according to the story, does not let those who withstand the monstrosity of living end their lives; furthermore, it leads some of them to the path of trying to give meaning to a meaningless world.

### Between Allegory and Symbol, between Laughter and Tears: Mendele the Book-Peddler and the Negation of the Diaspora

Amir Banbaji

This article re-examines a common and long-standing interpretative practice, which many critics employed for interpreting the Hebrew works of Mendele the Book-Peddler (Shalom Yaakov Abramovich, 1835-1917). Consistent with a softened version of the ideology of negation of exile, this political-literary practice established Abramovich's Jewish *Shtetl* as a canonical epitome of expressive-realist accomplishment. According to this view, Abramovich wrote a definitive literary depiction of the 'real' *Shtetl*, while at the same time allowing modern Jewish readers to criticize that form of life from a safe, modern, 'territorialized', position.

Following a symbolic line of argumentation, followers of that tradition contended that Mendele the Book-Peddler used his unique position vis-à-vis the *Shtetl* for providing us a tidy object of historical and political knowledge. Once rigorously objectified by Mendele's sharp discourse, the *Shtetl* is then delivered to the modern readers for 'post-exilic' criticism. Thus, the typical Jewish town becomes both an object of nostalgic passion and a target of political criticism. The symbolic

harmonization of those two poles facilitates the reconciliation of past and present, a necessary condition for the progressive nationalist-idealist project.

While significant work has been done within this line of thinking – most recently by Dan Miron and Gershon Shaked – my contention is that Abramovich’s Hebrew works rebuff some basic traits of realist representation. Focusing mainly on the narratorial functions taken on by Abramovich, I try to trace some of the ethical and political content that his fractured literary form could suggest to a differently-oriented readership.

### Between Autonomy and Community

Shimon Dubnow, Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith on Nationalism

Joseph Gorny

The article is trying to compare three theoretical concepts of nationalism: that of the famous historian and thinker Shimon Dubnow, the leading political scientist Anthony Smith, and the popular sociologist-anthropologist Benedict Anderson.

The comparison between them is made despite the hundred year old historical and cultural gap between Dubnow on one hand, and Smith and Anderson on the other. The article finds a resemblance between Dubnow’s and Smith’s primordial concept of nationalism and its perennial process. As for Dubnow and Anderson, they both express sympathy towards cultural modern nationalism; and, paradoxically, Dubnow expressed the idea of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ in the modern era in spite of principal theoretical differences between them.

It should be mentioned that the common denominator of the three of them is that nationalism as a spiritual feeling, culture, and ideology is a product of a historical process. The part that they cannot agree on is when the process began.

## On Land and Eretz Israel in Lévinas's Thought Questions for Zionism

Hanoch Ben Pazi

Emmanuel Lévinas's (1906-1996) philosophy, as a deontological system that seeks to accord primacy to ethics over metaphysics, makes it possible to philosophically reconsider some of the formative principles of Zionist consciousness in the Land of Israel. His mode of thought attempts to bring to Western philosophical deliberation Talmudic Jewish wisdom, its ethical principles, and its attitude and approach to the other.

Lévinas re-examines basic concepts that bear significance in a Zionist context, such as land, history, sanctity, and homeland. Part of Lévinas's discussion of Zionism takes place through the re-examination of religious concepts, such as 'the Holy Land', 'graves of the patriarchs', 'land of our ancestors', while another part of the discussion occurs within European philosophical discourse, in response to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.

This article attempts to outline Lévinas's arguments, examining the philosophical way in which he chooses to employ Talmudic – and Jewish – concepts and arguments. The questions and themes to be explored: Eretz Israel as the Jewish people's homeland, the sanctity and uniqueness of Eretz Israel, Utopia as a question, Eretz Israel as an ancestral homeland, the ethical question of the idea of conquest, and the metaphysical perception of Eretz Israel as the center of the world. We will pose the question: does the totality of these topics form a coherent stance that testifies to Lévinas's attitude toward the Zionist idea?

## The Hermann Cohen-Martin Buber Dispute over Zionism

Joseph Turner

In 1916, an intense debate between Hermann Cohen and Martin Buber on the topic of Zionism appeared in the pages of two important German-Jewish journals. Cohen was a fierce anti-Zionist who felt that Jews and Judaism must remain in the Diaspora so that the destiny of Judaism as a religion will be fulfilled. Buber identified himself as a Zionist who viewed the Jewish society then being built in Palestine as the

way of the Jewish future. The present essay takes issue with much of the existing scholarship on this debate, by presenting its shared historical context. In the course of discussion, we demonstrate the intricacies of positions and attitudes held by both Buber and Cohen regarding the meaning of Jewish existence vis-à-vis European culture, the significance and viability of the modern nation-state, as well as the meaning and character of Jewish ritual and family life in the post-emancipationist period. We then show how the intricacies of each position lead to their respective Zionist and Anti-Zionist attitudes. Finally, we inquire as to the lessons that may be learned through a re-consideration of these issues in the present day.

‘End of Jewish Existence’ or ‘Social Identity in Conflict’?  
Two Forms of Assimilation in Early Social Sciences

Amos Moris-Reich

In this article I seek to demonstrate two separate but interconnected arguments pertaining to the meeting of social science history and 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish history. My first argument is that it is possible to abstract two competing conceptions of Jewish assimilation from German and American social scientific discourses of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first conceives of assimilation as the gradual disappearance of the Jews as a particular group and the second as a social form of alienated individual identity. My second argument is that these contrary understandings of Jewish assimilation are embedded in and closely intertwined with specific anthropological or sociological epistemological considerations. Through this line of argument, I attempt to call attention to the importance of social science history for 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish history. In other words, to point to the fact that different understandings of Jewish assimilation are closely tied to conceptual developments in specific fields of knowledge.

## Israel and the 'Demographic Bomb' The Story of an Erroneous Myth

Onn Winckler

Since the onset of the Zionist movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and following the establishment of the state of Israel 'the demographic issue', namely, the balance between Jews and Arabs constituted one of its 'top priority agendas'. This issue was given many names, such as 'the demographic bomb', 'the demographic danger', and 'the demographic threat'. The main thesis of the paper is that Israel indeed suffers from a 'ticking demographic time bomb'. However, this 'bomb' does not relate to the balance between Jews and Arabs, but rather to the stratification of the Israeli society. Specifically, the article examines Israel's natal policy from the broader aspects of both macro-economic and employment policies. The success of the Israeli natal policy should be examined first and foremost in the area of its influence on the fertility rates of its Arab citizens, particularly the Muslims, for the past two decades. The main conclusion of the paper is that the Israeli natal policy largely failed. The major reason for this failure, it appears, is not only that in practice the Israeli natal policy was excluded from the broader aspects of the macro-economic and employment policies, but also was largely opposed to them.

## Segregated and Integrated Oriental Intellectuals in Israel

Yitzhak Dahan

This paper discusses the variety of ideas and strategies that have taken shape in an era of cultural shock (1950-1970) and adopted by Jewish oriental intellectuals.

The research delineates four main attitudes prevalent among these intellectuals: assimilationists, radical-separatists, ethnocentric-separatists and integrationists.

The discussion is focused on describing and analyzing the main concerns and strategies of the integrationists. These intellectuals are characterized by a critical attitude toward the old Israeli establishment (which identifies with the Ashkenazi elites). At the same time, those intellectuals deeply oppose the separatists (who reject the Zionist idea and reject the concept of a nation state). In addition, the

research identifies three sub-categories of integrationists – each emphasizing one particular value as a source of political legitimacy: pluralism represented by the poet Erez Biton, Jewish Nationalism represented by the Hakak brothers and Religious Ethnocentrism represented by Yosef Dahoach-Halevi.

### ‘Drafted in Death’

Bereaved Parents, Secrecy and the Challenge of Military Hegemony

Udi Lebel

This article illustrates the process of democratization and clarity in the Israeli national security arena throughout the years and the penetration of ‘military monopoly’ concerning security policy design by civil social movements. It is viewed in the broader context of a trend from collective to liberal values and civil society’s permeation of the state’s public policy arena. Those institutional developments are being illustrated by observing the case study of bereaved parents-military relations in Israel. Three models of public behavior exhibited by parents of fallen soldiers in Israel: the ‘hegemonic bereavement model’ that emerged after the War of Independence (1948); the ‘political bereavement model’ that appeared in the wake of the Yom Kippur War (1973); the ‘no-confidence model’ that materialized following major accidents and revelations of negligence during the 1990s. These paradigmatic behaviors emerge in the wake of crisis situations that took a heavy toll in military dead and wounded. The article traces the public initiatives of those bereaved parents who, following their personal tragedy, became social and media activists and formulators of public consciousness.

### A Breached Contract

The State and Labor in Ofakim, 1955-1981

Shani Bar-On

Research on the social history and historiography of labor in the pre-state of Israel – in essence, the very roots of the society – is nearly nonexistent. Most of the research that has been conducted has dealt primarily with the Mandate period,

## ABSTRACTS

finding the material and economic sphere to be constructive for workers' experience, which in turn influenced the available ideology, politics, and institutions of the Jewish community. The current study proposes an implementation of this line of investigation with a focus on the period after statehood.

The research was conducted on Ofakim, a new town established in 1955 in the western region of the Negev Desert in Israel. The article aims to explore the 'social contract' that was breached during the process of economic liberalization in the early 1980s. It opens with a discussion of the prior conditions already in place for Ofakim, which became apparent as early as 1949. It then discusses the central characters of the labor market in the late 1950s. From 1959 onwards, the state took responsibility for full employment of the workers through industrialization, by giving support to private owners. The last section of the article explicates the 'social contract' as the Ofakim workers came to understand it, through which the residents were expected to provide their duties as 'population dispersers', and in return, were guaranteed full employment by the state. This 'social contract' became particularly visible in times of its violation, and when a number of factories were closed in Ofakim, these actions were met with 'closure strikes' by the workers.

### Constitutional Court

#### A Structural Solution to the Misruling Problems of the Political System?

Gideon Doron, Assaf Meidani

At the beginning of January 2002 the Israeli parliament rejected a primary bill, served two years earlier for establishing a constitutional court. This article will elaborate on the legislation process and place it as a phase in the development of a public-political discussion on the demand for a special constitutional court, outside the judicial system, that will be exclusively engaged in constitution criticism.

This article focuses on the question of the necessity of a special constitutional court from the political point of view: the factors putting the subject on the public agenda, and the process in which political players wish to set a public policy, meaning a structural change in the ordinances of government.

The main claim in the article stresses the deep rips in society, and the existence of an alternative political culture together with the existent institutional structure, present difficulties on the political system when trying to cope with problems

complying with the design of public policy – a problem named in literature as ‘misruling of the political system’. The difficulties of ruling have developed a pattern of increased appeals to the High Court of Justice, for help in the public decision making process or compelling the politicians to change the existing institutional structure. This article strives to find solutions that will advance the ruling capabilities of the political system, in a way so that public policy can be formulated also in matters that are considered principal to the Israeli society.

In the existing political culture today, a constitutional court will not be a solution for a misruling problem of the system. At most it will be a mechanism that will probably face a varied amount of resistance from different interest groups that will not be happy with the quality and quantity of the supply of policy.

## The Big Breakthrough Menachem Begin and the ‘Waiting Period’

Amir Goldstein

This article spotlights the relation between Menachem Begin’s mode of action on the eve of the Six Day War, and the political and personal crises he suffered in the summer of 1966. *Herut* movement was shaken by a serious internal crisis between Begin and Shmuel Tamir, who publicly criticized Begin’s leadership. The growing closeness between *Gahal* and *Rafi*, manifested by the thawed relationship between Ben-Gurion and Begin, the two historically intransigent rivals, is presented as the zenith of the process that brought together the two opposition parties, which were disappointed by their paltry performance in the elections to the Sixth Knesset. Removal of Levi Eshkol from his position as Minister of Defense is presented here in a new light, alongside the clarification of Begin’s strategy, which abandoned the concept of an alternative to the government and temporarily converted it to the concept of a corrective in government, as a necessary stage on his way to heading the government. Presented here is a chronicle of a carefully thought out political process, which succeeded by taking advantage of deep processes in the Israeli political system, and in the Zionist Right, and brought the leader of the *Herut* movement to a new stage in his fascinating political career.

## The Polish U.N. Delegations' Activity with Regard to the Palestine Question, 1947

Neli Oren

The article discusses the Polish involvement with the Palestine Question during the special seat of the U.N. in 1947, and the reasons for its initiatives and activities in favor of the Zionist cause and the promotion of the interests of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. Poland worked within the general framework which was drawn by the Soviet-Union, but nevertheless, didn't hesitate to deviate in its activities and initiatives from the general line held by the soviet block and U.S.S.R itself.

The popular anti-Semitism and the murders of Jews caused a wide-spread Jewish immigration which concentrated in the refugee camps in Germany. These factors also created an unfavorable public opinion about Poland in the west – especially the Jewish public opinion. The new Communist regime's belief in the power of the American Jewry had a significant weight in the formation of the Polish attitude towards the Jewish minority and the Palestine Question as well. The polish policy of immigration towards Jews was directed, also, by the ambition to realize the principle of a uni-national Polish state and to reduce significantly the number of Jews. Therefore, Poland's activity for the sake of finding a solution for the Jewish refugees, and for the realization of their national aspirations in Palestine was, eventually, a self-evident consequence resulting from this policy.

## 'The Plow Determined the Border' The Israeli-Jordanian Border 1922-1994

Gideon Biger, David Schattner

The international border between Israel and Jordan, established in 1994, is the outcome of a long process that began in 1922. The borderline went through four stages:

1. The British mandatory line, 1922.
2. The Armistice line, 1949.
3. The Cease-fire line, 1967.
4. The Peace line, 1994.

The first three stages were discussed in the past, but even though some research was conducted much had not been said concerning the problems and solutions made during the peace negotiation, which is the focus of this article.

The main question concerning the new international line was: are the two sides willing to create a new line, presenting the changes, which have been done along the line between 1949-1994, or should they adopt the British 1922 line that has never been demarcated. As Israeli farmers cultivated some plots of land east of the armistice line of 1949 and some changes occurred in the Dead Sea's surface, Israel asked for a new line that includes the agriculture land, while Jordan tried to copy the Israel-Egypt border model, which is the old British line.

Finally, Jordan agreed to create a borderline 'based on the British line' but not copying it. Israel and Jordan exchanged some plots of land but nothing was reported concerning this activity. Only careful examination of the maps published before and after the Peace Agreement can reveal the changes made along the line.

## Who Owns the German Colonies? The Law of German Assets and the Compensation of the Templars for their Assets in Israel

Yossi Katz

When the Reparations Agreement between Israel and West Germany was signed (1952), both countries signed an additional agreement: an agreement of principles regarding compensation to the Templars for their assets in the German colonies in Israel. This agreement was an imperative condition made by the Germans before paying reparations to Israel. The negotiations lasted for 10 years – during which heavy pressure was laid by the Templars in Germany and Australia regarding the amount of compensation to be paid to them. In return, Germany – as the representative of the Templars in Germany and Australia – recognized Israel's full ownership of all the real estate of the Templars in Israel.

The paper examines and analyzes the policy of the State of Israel regarding the lands left by the Templars at the time of its establishment; the law of 'German Assets' (1950); the reasons which led to the formulation of the special agreements and it explains why such a strong linkage was formed between the Reparations Agreement and the treaties signed between the two governments concerning the Templars' assets.

*She'erit Hapleta* in the Israeli Historiography

Dalia Ofer

The article studies the development of the research and writings on *She'erit Hapleta* in the D.P. camps. The topics discussed include the organization of the survivors in the camps, the *Briha*, the roll of Zionism in the reconstruction of life, the youth movements and issues of education, and the participation in the war of independence. The important topic of illegal immigration was excluded because of the voluminous research which merits a separate article.

Narratives of different historians are presented in relation to both the generational identity and the changes in history writing which moved from the political to social and cultural history. Public discourse is another factor discussed that impacts the historical narratives.

The survey demonstrates the divergence of historical writings and that many topics await further research. Up to now, historiography did not integrate the narrative of the survivors into the two major events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.