

Abstracts

Myths Surrounding the Rescue of the Jews of Denmark during the Holocaust

Omer Berkman

This article reviews some of the myths surrounding the well-known story of Jews of Denmark being “smuggled” out of Nazi-controlled territory and onto the safe shores of Sweden in 1943. More than 7,000 Jews were able to escape from Denmark in fishing boats and were thus saved from death. Denmark has been given a place of honor in the collective memory of the Jewish people, and is associated with human kindness and heroism. However, over the years, other aspects of the affair have come to light, which depict a more complex reality. Current historical sources paint a sobering picture of the events in question, and recent studies have adopted a critical stance toward Danish policy during WWII and its alignment with Nazi Germany. Unlike previous studies on the subject, the historical facts presented in this article are strictly designed to illustrate that the above-mentioned myths are not pieces of folklore developed in response to heroic acts, but rather the result of Danish public relations on one hand, and Jewish gratitude on the other. Arguably, these myths might also be a tool in the hands of those who claim that more could have been done against Hitler.

The Poetics of Disassembly in the Works of Shoshana Shababo

Adi Isha

During the 1930s and 1940s, Hebrew literature was predominantly concerned with the cultural and social changes taking place in Israel at the time, and was particularly focused on Jewish nationalism. As a result, Hebrew literature sought to glorify the image of the "new Jew", a "pioneer" who represented the antithesis of the Diaspora Jew. The pioneer was characterized as a burly man, brave and well-built, a symbol of the Jewish people's resurrection (Newman, 2009). A similar image of the pioneer woman did not exist. Tamar Hess (1995) attributes the pioneer woman's lack of inclusion in the symbolic order of this period to the fact that this right was reserved for those who appropriated Israel's physical space, which represented the images, icons, and signs of the Zionist narrative.

Shoshana Shababo (1910-1992) was the first known Sephardic woman writer in Israel until the early eighties. Shababo was a seventh generation descendent of a family that had immigrated to Israel from Persia and Morocco. She was born in Zichron Ya'acov, studied at the local primary school, and later at the Levinsky Seminar in Tel Aviv. Shababo began writing when she was only 16 years old and published only two novels: *Maria – A Novel about the Life of Nuns in Eretz Israel* was published in 1932 when she was only 22, and *Love in Safed* was published a decade later. In addition, about forty short stories by Shababo appeared in various press outlets of the period.¹

Shababo's works centered on Sephardic society and the status of the Sephardic woman, avoiding the topics commonly identified with the Zionist collective. Even in the few stories in which the "pioneer" archetype appears she handles it differently than the typical Zionist literature of the period. Shababo's writing was formed through dialogue with canonical Western literature and other Sephardic writers, generating a feminine poetic protest that was far ahead of

1 E.g. *Bostenay*, *Doar Hayom*, *Hadoar*, *Ha'artez* during 1928-1942.

its time and seen as a challenge to dominant discourse.

At the time, her literature was perceived as pulpy, one-dimensional fiction. However, thorough research indicates that Shababo's Zionist stories are allegories designed to create a female character that is distinct from the accepted model in Jewish society (both Zionist and Sephardic). In fact, Shababo's writing has two dimensions: the allegorical side that answers to the male voice, and another side that undermines it.

This article examines the ways in which Shababo violated national power and patriarchal structures through six of her short stories. The article also presents Shababo's "poetics of disassembly", which undermine the Zionist myth on human perception and reality and offer alternatives to it.

Matchmaking Adverts in Israeli Press during the 1950s

Eyal Ginsberg

This article examines the phenomenon of matchmaking as reflected in the Israeli press during the first decade of statehood. The newspapers of the period contained a great deal of information about matchmaking, matchmakers, love, and marriage, through either content articles or advertisements on finding a partner via personal initiative or professional matchmakers. These materials are a treasure for those seeking to trace the atmosphere and everyday life of this formative period. Nonetheless, this subject has yet to garner comprehensive academic research in a historical context.

With this point of departure, my work discusses who required matchmaking services at the time, and what led them to do so. Its primary question is: What can the characteristics single men and women were seeking in romantic partners teach us about Israeli society during this period? In order to answer this question, I analyze three popular newspapers that addressed a secular and adult audience: *Ma'ariv*, *Davar*, and *La'isha*.

In addition, I use sociological theories on the subject along with research and literature on relationships and love, as well as general historical background on the State. Based on these sources, I claim that the search for partnership through matchmaking adverts and matchmakers was not solely in pursuit of love, but was driven by other factors such as building a family and upgrading one's social and economic status, which meant potential partners were required to have appropriate economic, social, and personal qualities.

Describing the past by better understanding the behavior of individuals opens a channel into a history that is meaningful not only to researchers of Israel's first decade or to those interested in the stories of its citizens. This type of investigation also contributes to readers who wish to expand their horizons and deepen their historical knowledge and insight regarding everyday life during this period at large.

In the Face of Emergency: American Jewish Leadership and the Bergson Group, 1943

Yuri Keum

Scholarly and public discussions regarding the rescue effort of the Bergson Group and the responses of American Jewish leadership to the Holocaust have been widely polarized. The subject often invokes a dichotomous comparison between two main figures: Rabbi Stephen Wise as a representative of American Jewish leadership vs. Hillel Kook, the leader of the Bergson Group. While the schism between the two men was evident in the pre-war years, the animosity between them intensified even further during the Holocaust – leading to a bitter legacy that remains the subject of heated historiographical debates to this day. Through a content analysis of archival documents from the Hillel Kook Collection, the current article offers an in-depth analysis of the Bergson Group and the American Jewish establishment; primarily by examining the Emergency Conference to Save Jewish People in Europe, led by the Bergson Group (July, 1943), in relation to the Wise-led American Jewish Conference (August, 1943). Eschewing the consequence-oriented approach that stems from historical hindsight and the prevalent discourse of “missed opportunities”, this archival examination not only highlights the motives of the Bergson Group and its activities for the doomed Jews in Europe, but also critically discusses the multifaceted emergency that faced American Jewry during the years in question. It is precisely because of this emergency, and not despite it, that both Kook and Wise clung to their respective approaches and attempted to advance their separate agendas, leading to an intensely competitive and divisive reality in the American-Jewish arena during the agonizing, pivotal year of 1943.

The Other Brother in Arms: The Representation of the Gay Solider in the Films of Eytan Fox

Amir Locker-Biletzki

The Israeli film *Yossi & Jagger*, directed by Eytan Fox and written by Avner Bernheimer (2002, Israel, Lama Films), finds gay love in the most unlikely place—an Israeli military outpost on the Lebanese frontier, where the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) has been battling the Lebanese Shi'a organization *Hezbollah* since the ill-advised 1982 Israel invasion of Lebanon.

The current article analyzes the above-mentioned film, an earlier film by Eytan Fox titled *After*, written by Fox along with Natan Brand (1994, Israel, Ronit Ben Menachem), and finally *Yossi*, the sequel to *Yossi & Jagger*, written by Itay Segal (2012, Israel, Lama Films). The following analysis of these films is informed by three theoretical frameworks: The first is Queer Theory, generated by both Israeli and non-Israeli queer theorists; the second is homonationalism, which is associated with the queer theorist Jasbir K. Puar; and the third is the critical study of film history in Israel by Israeli scholars Ella Shohat and Yosef Raz.

Using these interpretive concepts, I analyze the narratives of these films as well as their key scenes. The purpose of this study is to elucidate how the films in question create a homonormative and homonationalist liberal discourse that rejects more dissident queer interpretations of the place that soldiers and the army occupy in Israeli society, and that, to a certain degree, negates the possibility of queer radical politics in the Israeli context. In generating this discourse, the film becomes part of Israeli “pinkwashing” – a tactic meant to portray Israel as a Western liberal democracy.

Memories by Jewish Emigrants from Post-1979 Iran

Claudia Dietrich

In 1979, Iran's monarchial regime was replaced by a theocratic regime that enforced the Islamic Sharia laws as a society-wide standard. As a result, significant restrictions were placed on the rights of women, as well as those of minorities such as the Jewish community.

The current study addresses the effects of the 1979 Revolution on the Jewish community in Iran from a qualitative perspective. It presents personal accounts of life in the throes of a revolution that made a massive impact on Iran's entire population, giving voice to Jews who emigrated after 1979 by focusing on their memories of pre and post-Revolution Iran.

This research draws upon oral history via narrative interviews. The life stories and personal traumas suffered by the interviewees, and the monumental and life-threatening external changes they endured, are crucial elements of this work. The personal accounts, memories, and perspectives of the interviewees give insight into the life of the Jewish community still living in Iran, and will help shed light on this persecuted minority.