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Ben-Gurion's Attack on Mapam, 1953: Ideology as Politics

Tal Elmaliach, Danny Gutwein

In January-April 1953, under the pen name 'Saba Shel Yariv' (Yariv's grandfather), Ben-Gurion published a series of articles in the newspaper *Davar* titled 'On Communism and Zionism in Hashomer Hatzair.' The series launched a fiercely disparaging attack on the leadership of the Mapam party, Hakibbutz Haartzi and Hashomer Hatzair youth movement owing to their docile support of the Soviet Union.

Current research considers BG's articles in the series as an ideological and educational move in his struggle with Mapam over the hearts and minds of Israel's elite youth. However, this view is disputable since it fails to take into account the political and ideological weakness Mapam demonstrated in its near-blind support for the Soviet Block.

Our contention is rather that Ben-Gurion's main political concern at the time was not left-wing Mapam but the rise of the right-wing Zionim Klalyim (General Zionists) party which had channeled public dissatisfaction with Mapai and the 'Bolshevik' policies of the Histadrut. Hence, Ben-Gurion lashed out at Mapam in order to portray Mapai under his leadership as a bulwark against Communism and Stalinism and the only bridge between Israel and the West.

Likewise, Ben-Gurion used the series to take on the influential Me'orer circle of Mapai which was challenging his socioeconomic policies from a socialist pioneering point of view.

Keywords: David Ben-Gurion, the Doctors' Plot, General Zionists, Mapai, Mapam, Meir Yaari, the Prague Trials, 'Saba Shel Yariv' (Yariv's grandfather)

The Canaanites Following the Assassination Attempt on Minister of Transport David-Zvi Pinkas in 1952

Itzhak Pass

The attempted assassination of David-Zvi Pinkas, Israel's Orthodox cabinet Transport Minister, to protest his efforts to prohibit driving on Shabbat, was a prominent case of political violence in the early years of the State. Although both suspects in the attempt, former Lehi members Amos Kenan and Shaltiel Ben-Yair, were immediately apprehended, the criticism was aimed at the Canaanite group of which Kenan was a member. The Canaanites had returned to their pre-State activities which included the establishment of the newspaper *Alef* and the foundation of a semi-political movement called the 'Center for Young Hebrews', which promulgated radical anti-religious views. The assassination attempt was followed by heated public debate and a delegitimization campaign against them. For the Canaanites, the affair served as a catalyst for radicalization towards a positive view of political violence. The plans for their acts evince the radical stage they had reached, and conversely, their weakness and failure in the public arena. The Shin-Bet which had scrutinized them from the start, viewed them as an 'underground' movement and was cognizant of their plans. The assassination attempt and the radicalization of the movement and of those who opposed them impacted its activity and were a primary cause of its dissolution.

Keywords: Amos Kenan, Canaanites, Center for Young Hebrews, David-Zvi Pinkas, Maxim Ghilan, political violence, Shin-Bet (Security service), Shmuel Ariel

The Etzel Propaganda Trials during the Revolt, 1944-1948

Chen-Tzion Nayot

In February 1944, the *Irgun* issued a 'proclamation of revolt' that ushered in a new era in the organization's attitude toward the mandatory government. In its publications, the *Irgun* called for a revolt against the mandatory laws, but in its directives to members, it was more moderate and measured. The legal defense in the weapons trials was centralized and managed by the legal organization of the

Irgun, which functioned in conjunction with the law firms of Seligman, whom they considered trustworthy, and with Levitsky. Unable to engage in active warfare, the imprisoned members of the *Irgun* decided to turn the trial into a propaganda arena as the focus of an alternative struggle. A recommended line of defense was offered after their personal situation had been checked out and their legal status verified by the lawyers.

The same considerations that led the *Irgun* to craft a political line of defense in many of the weapon's trials led to a legal line of defense for the vast majority of the propaganda trials. The understanding that the propaganda trials did not attract a high degree of resonance in the media, the extreme youth of the defendants, and the possibility of getting them acquitted or at least of largely reducing their sentences, tipped the scales in favor of the decision to adopt a legal line of defense. The decision to continue delegating authority for the propaganda trials to the legal departments of the district was in keeping with the preference for a legal line of defense that did not require centralized and coordinated management.

The *Irgun's* approach in the legal arena was graduated, complex and measured, ranging from adherence to its intrinsic goals and objectives to a concern for the life and freedom of its fighters.

Keywords: Etzel, *Irgun*, propaganda, trials

Film Censorship in Israel and the Cold War, 1948-1967

Giora Goodman

The article examines the impact of the Cold War on film censorship in Israel during the first two decades of the state and sheds light on the Israeli Film Censorship Board's collaboration with other government bodies, above all the Foreign Ministry in the censorship of western anti-communist films, and to a lesser extent, Soviet anti-American films. Such Cold War-related film censorship was carried out in response to domestic criticism but also to prevent any possible damage to Israel's diplomatic relations, particularly with the Soviet Bloc, owing to the large number of films imported from the United States. In addition to discussing film censorship policies and practices, the article demonstrates the crucial impact of Cold War culture on the political world in Israel, particularly during the early years of the state. The

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article's main argument is that the diplomatic impetus for censoring Cold War films attests to Israel's insecurity vis-à-vis its international status prior to the 1967 War as well as to the ultimately unsuccessful attempt by the government to preserve what was left of its deteriorating relations with the Soviet Bloc.

Keywords: censorship, cinema, Cold War, Hollywood movies, USSR

Lea Koenig and Miriam Zohar: Theater Actresses as Memory Agents

Roy Horovitz

The art of theater takes place, as a rule, in the 'here and now' of the present, yet all participants in a theatrical production (first and foremost the actors) contribute their personal and professional 'past' to this 'present.' Both 'first ladies' of Israeli theater, Lea Koenig and Miriam Zohar, are Holocaust survivors and ninety years old.

Throughout rich careers which span over seven decades, Lea Koenig and Miriam Zohar have been cast in 'Holocaust Plays.' This essay examines the way they incorporated personal biography in their theatrical performances and their interpretations of dramatic texts.

An examination of the different projects in which they were involved reveals that each of them made use of a different strategy to address the memory of the Holocaust in Israel. Their personal cases can both teach us about the role of the artist as an agent of memory within the society in which he or she lives and performs and exemplify more general patterns in Israel's memory of the Holocaust.

Keywords: collective memory, history, Holocaust, Israeli art, Israeli society, theater

Bedouin Settlement in Arab Towns and Villages in the Galilee, 1918-1948

Tomer Mazarib

The article reviews the historical events that prompted the Bedouin population to settle in existing *Fellahin* towns and villages in the Galilee during the British Mandate period, 1918-1948, in Palestine. The process began with the migration of Bedouin tribes from the Arabian Peninsula to Iraq and Syria, forcing local tribes to migrate west, and continued under the Ottoman rule with the laying of infrastructure for Bedouin to settle in the Arab towns and villages of the Galilee. This trend continued under the British Mandate which ended in 1948.

The aim of the article is to analyze the dynamic circumstances that led to the migration of Bedouin communities into *Fellahin* towns and villages. It argues that Bedouin settlement during this period was affected by centralized government policy; by the influence of Zionist institutions on land acquisition; and by the ways in which local pressures on intra-tribal and rural relations played out.

The study rests on archival sources, research literature, and seven in-depth interviews with Bedouin and *Fellahin* inhabitants of various Arab towns and villages in the Galilee, conducted between the years 2013-2015.

Keywords: Bedouin, *Fellahin*, Galilee, integration of Bedouin into *Fellahin* towns and villages, permanent settlement

National and Transnational Trade: Israel and the Jewish-Yemeni Diaspora at the Red Sea

Shaul Marmari

During the age of imperialism, hundreds of Yemeni Jews settled around the Red Sea, forming a Jewish-Yemeni trading diaspora. The study examines the fate of this diaspora after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the mass migrations thereto. While the first part of the article is dedicated to the inherent contradiction between the diaspora and the Zionist project, the second part argues for their symbiosis. As the Red Sea area assumed a strategic importance for Israel,

the young Jewish state relied heavily on the established Jewish diaspora in the region to consolidate its power; the diaspora, for its part, was able to find in the Israeli enterprise a measure of compensation for its lost, pre-national trade. The alliance between the two, argues the article, allowed the diaspora to persist beyond the rupture of 1948.

Keywords: Israel–Diaspora relations, Israeli–Ethiopian relations, Red Sea, State of Israel, trade, Yemeni Jews

Shaul Pinchas Rabinovich (Schepher)
and the Pantheon of Heroes of Hibbat Zion

Asaf Yedidya

Like many ideological movements, Hibbat Zion sought to construct a pantheon of historical heroes who would legitimize its modern message and attract a wide audience to its ranks. The first leader who deliberately and methodically engaged in this effort was Shaul Pinchas Rabinovich. Rabinovich regarded the Jewish national movement as a necessary stratum of the moderate Haskalah movement he advocated. To this end he set up a pantheon of national heroes, historical figures noted for their national and Haskalah framework of values: general education, love of mankind, affinity for Eretz Israel and the Hebrew language, knowledge of Jewish law, and a practical understanding of Jewish solidarity. He did so as editor of the Hebrew periodical, *Knesset Israel*, the organ of Hibbat Zion, as the Hebrew translator of Zvi Graetz's comprehensive *History of the Jews*, and as the author of historical monographs and biographies which served to promote Hibbat Zion ideology.

Keywords: Ahad Ha'am, Hibbat Zion, Jewish Nationalism, Post-Haskalah, Shaul Pinchas Rabinovich (Schepher), Zvi Graetz

A. D. Gordon's Green Zionism

Asaf Shamis

The article seeks to identify A. D. Gordon's thought as a distinctive type of 'green' Zionism. As opposed to the common tendency in Gordon scholarship to focus on symbolic aspects of his conception of 'nature', the analysis here focuses on its concrete values. Refocusing the analysis on biophysical 'nature', suggests that very much like contemporary environmental thinkers, Gordon sought to shift the ontological and ethical weight from the human realm to the interrelationship between the human and the non-human environment. Yet, unlike present-day environmentalists, Gordon anchored this shift in a comprehensive theory of nationalism. The Jewish nation he believed must transform its characteristic alienation from nature into an avant-garde force that will lead the human effort to rehabilitate the relationship with the natural world. In broader terms, my analysis calls for a reassessment of Gordon's relationship to Zionism and indicates that while he shared the Zionist desire to return the Jewish people to Eretz Israel, he was highly critical of the widespread Zionist view of the land as a readily available resource for use by the Jewish nation. The analysis thus identifies an eco-nationalist approach underpinning Gordon's critique of the utilitarian, statist and militaristic bent of the Zionist movement. It suggests that Gordon saw these trends as indicative of an ill-intentioned drive to subjugate and exploit the natural environment. To rectify this, Gordon developed an eco-Zionist ideology which held that the primary means for Jewish national revival is the protection and conservation of nature in Eretz Israel.

Keywords: A. D. Gordon, environmental thought, exile, green nationalism, Jewish nationalism, nature, Zionism