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Sadat's Peace Initiative - Still Topical 40 Years Later

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On November 19, 1977, the aircraft of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt landed at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv. The following day, Anwar al-Sadat addressed a festive session of Israel's parliament, the Knesset. A first serious peace process started between Israel and an Arab government. Sadat presented before the Knesset his vision for a peaceful settlement of the Zionist-Arab conflict; the Egyptian-Israeli dispute being only a part thereof. It was a speech full of hope for a better future between Israelis and Arabs, but it was also a clear statement about the present and the price to be paid for peace.

The Triple Handshake

Sadat was the first to present what in the last 40 years has become known as the formula of 'land-for-peace': complete Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied since June 1967 in exchange for peace with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon; and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Peace guarantees stability, prosperity and security. In their speeches, Prime Minister Menachem Begin and opposition leader Shimon Peres emphasized Israel's desire for peace, security and normalization with the Arabs; both, however, refrained from directly relating to Sadat's

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call for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Yet, Begin wisely delivered a message that enabled the parties to open political negotiations. "I propose," he declared, "that everything will be negotiable. […] No side shall present prior conditions. […] We shall conduct the negotiations as equals. There are no defeated and there are no victors."

The negotiations culminated in the Camp David Summit (September 5-17, 1978), where the most controversial aspects of the Israeli-Egyptian dispute were discussed along with issues relating to the entire Israeli-Arab conflict. The framework agreement concluded at Camp David resulted in Israel and Egypt signing a peace treaty (March 26, 1979). The Palestinian issue had little chance of being resolved as the PLO rejected the Camp David blueprint, and Israel and the USA would not deal with the organization (because it refused to recognize Israel and used terror in its struggle against Israel).

The 1978 Camp David Accords signed by Sadat, Begin and Carter were a watershed in the history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, including the Zionist–Palestinian

one. They shattered one of the most deep-seated assumptions shared by Arabs and Israelis, namely that it was impossible to reach political accommodation based on painful concessions by the two national communities. For decades, both sides had made much of "zero-sum game" rhetoric, the bottom line of which was that "there is no one to talk to and nothing to talk about." Camp David demonstrated both the model for resolving the conflict with Israel and the cost of attaining peace. The package deal for the accommodation included: mutual recognition; Israeli withdrawal and borders; security arrangements and normalization; implementation schedules and guidelines.

In the international arena and particularly among large sectors of the Arab public there was increasing awareness that the conflict's resolution would oblige the Arabs to recognize the existence of the State of Israel and its right to live securely within its borders prior to the war of June 1967; and oblige Israel to cede its control of the Arab territories it had occupied in the Six Day War and agree to an accommodation for the national aspirations of the Palestinians.

Above all, the political significance of the Camp David Accords was the negotiators' ability to translate Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967 into consensual frameworks to facilitate future arrangements between Israel and the Arabs, including the Palestinians. Yet, this breakthrough would have been impossible without addressing the issue of formal recognition by the former adversaries and without removing all sorts of preconditions prior to the peace negotiations.

Almost four decades ago, President Sadat declared in his historic address to the Knesset in Jerusalem that "When the bells of peace ring, there will be no hands to beat the drums of war. Even if they existed, they would be soundless." The Camp David Accords put an end to the bloody wars between Israel and Egypt, but they failed to produce the much-awaited comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The escalation on the Israeli-Palestinian front after the collapse of the Oslo Agreements hovers like the sword of Damocles over the peace treaties Israel signed with Egypt and Jordan. Indeed, over the past few years, more than the bells of peace, it is the beating of the war drums that can be heard. Their echoing sound evinces the lack of leaders of the stature of those paving the way to the first Israeli-Arab peace treaty almost forty years ago. ◈

President Sadat addresses the Knesset

Albuquerque and the Neck of Venice
On the "Oceanic Turn" in Middle East Studies

An international workshop aiming to rethink the Middle East was the Chaim Herzog Center's main event this year. It was held in January 2017. How should the Middle East be studied? What are its borders? How is it defined in research and what are the research delineations in the field? The Chaim Herzog Center invited **Prof. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite** from New York University, who participated in the organization of the workshop, to give an introductory lecture as a prelude to the workshop. The lecture opened in a festive atmosphere and was attended by research students and faculty members. Prof. Ben-Dor Benite, who until recently headed the Department of Middle East Studies at NYU, focuses in his research on the interaction of religions and cultures in a global historical context. The central thesis of his lecture was that there is room to rethink the way we conceive of the Middle East and its connections to other regions of the world. He pointed to the numerous links between the Middle East and the Indian Ocean and other, not necessarily, European regions and convincingly elaborated the implications thereof for research on the Middle East and a thorough understanding of developments there. For years research on the Middle East has focused on the connection between all the region's social, economic and political phenomena and similar ones in the "West," and

especially in Europe. Prof. Ben-Dor Benite suggested instead to shift the research focus to the East and to start dealing with the enormous importance that the Indian Ocean had for the Middle East.

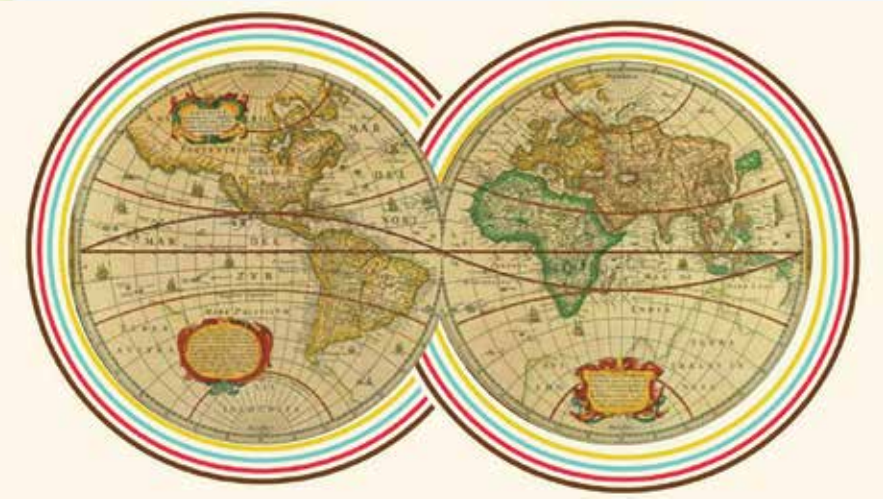
In 1500 the Portuguese understood that the trade in the Middle East, serving as a transitional region between Europe and Asia, depends on the freedom of movement in the Indian Ocean, and therefore they entered the Indian Ocean and conquered large territories in South Asia. Following the conquest, General Alfonso de Albuquerque, the admiral of the Portuguese army in the region of the Indian Ocean, declared that he was now "breathing down Venice's neck," which was at the time Portugal's greatest political rival. Albuquerque's statement demonstrates Prof. Ben-Dor Benite's main argument, namely that people at the time made no distinction between the Middle East and the region of the Indian Ocean and instead saw the two territorial entities as one. Also in contemporary texts on the Middle East, written at the time mostly by the elite, the two regions were perceived as one space. Changing our conception accordingly enables us to understand the Middle East also as an area of movement, namely the intensive movement of goods and people in conjunctions with the movement of languages, cultures, and religions. This was highly important for the development of the region. The connection between the Far East and the Middle East did not end with the rise of Europe as central power, but continued into the twentieth century. This is well illustrated, for example, by Sultan Abülhamid II's connections with China; the ties between the Muslim communities in China and al-Azhar University; or the respective translations of Confucius on the one hand, and

the Qur'an and the writings of Hasan al-Banna on the other.

According to Prof. Ben-Dor Benite, the connections between the Middle East and other non-"Western" regions was overlooked in the research literature due to the general development of Middle East studies in the twentieth century. This was mainly due to the rise of area studies which divided this space into various regions. The development of area studies stemmed from an interest in the US after World War II to enlarge the knowledge base for each area in which the US administration was interested, for one reason or other. The administration openly encouraged the establishment of separate departments and even funded many research projects in the field. Researchers in area studies were in dialogue with their colleagues researching the same area, and often focused on the connections between the area and Europe (especially in the wake of the development of research on the colonial and post-colonial eras). At the same time, however, they neglected the dialogue between researchers studying different areas. As can be understood from Prof. Ben-Dor Benite's lecture, the connections between the Middle East and the region of the Indian Ocean, which lasted for many centuries, are not less important for our understanding of the Middle East, than the region's connections with Europe, and that they warrant attention in research. ◈

International Workshop: The Middle East Reconfigured, World History and the Middle East

The Chaim Herzog Center's main event this year was an international workshop dealing with World History and the place of the Middle East within it. The aim was to discuss the constituting questions of what World History is, how we define it, where we locate the Middle East within that framework and how changes in perspective affect our definition of the Middle East. Internationally eminent scholars in World History and Middle East Studies were invited to the workshop to address the issue of World History and the conception of the Middle East in geographical, historical, political, social and cultural terms.



Prof. Yoram Meital opened the workshop by warmly greeting the distinguished group of speakers, who accepted the invitation to come to BGU and submitted the papers that form the basis for the discussions in the workshop. He also highlighted the contribution of the co-organizers **Prof. Israel Gershoni** (Tel Aviv University) and **Prof. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite** (New York University) thanking them for their valuable contribution.

Prof. Meital pointed out that in the last three decades, empirical studies on social, cultural and political transformations have repeatedly suggested that the histories of the Middle East far exceed its national boundaries. Historians and scholars from diverse disciplines have questioned the very "location" of the Middle East in time and space. These interventions show that the Middle East was, and still is, shaped not only by its negotiations and exchanges with Western forces, but also by Eastern powers such as India, China, and sub-Saharan Africa. Recent studies focusing on science and technology, the environment, economy and society, race and religion(s), slavery, revolutions, and the transfer of ideas, have begun to reconfigure our conception of the Middle East and rescue it from the East-West dichotomy within which it has been locked for too long. He concluded by saying that very few would doubt that in today's world, time and space have been compressed in an

unprecedented fashion. Yet, it is worthwhile noting that the roots of this compression reach far into the past. The development of vessels from sail to steam, reducing distance and duration, forms one thread of this progression. The invention of the telegraph, the laying of cables, the introduction of the telephone, and then radio communication represent another wave of giant changes.

In his opening address **Prof. Israel Gershoni**, from Tel Aviv University, spoke about the need to reconsider the relations between local and various kinds of micro-history, on the one hand, and the new thriving current of global or world history, on the other. He also dealt with the tension between national and transnational history. Prof. Gershoni noted that as a student of Israeli Orientalism, he had studied within an essentialist methodological framework that rejected a global history approach with the argument that the history of Islam and the modern Middle East is essentially different from other histories and that it must be understood as a closed system, the essence of which can only be deciphered if we understand it from within. He discussed Orientalist approaches preventing the possibility of searching for parallels and of studies comparing between the history of Muslim and Arab societies and the history of other regions in the world. Moreover, Prof. Gershoni noted that from the 1960s to the 1990s the field of history was dominated by local micro-history and cultural history approaches as well as area studies. All these currents worked against the attempts to write a global history of the entire human race. In contrast, he presented the new trend of world or global history arguing that it warrants serious consideration in order to revise the way we place of the Middle East in a global context: the relations of the Middle East to Africa, to Asia, to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and of course, to Europe and the Americas. To his mind, the new global history opens many exciting possibilities for us to reconsider the history of Islam and the modern Middle East.

Prof. Chakrabarty Addresses the Workshop

The keynote of the international workshop: *The Middle East Reconfigured*, was delivered by **Prof. Dipesh Chakrabarty**, Distinguished Service Professor of History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, at Chicago University. He is a founding member of the editorial collective *Subaltern Studies* and of *Postcolonial Studies* and the series *South Asia Across the Disciplines*.

Prof. Chakrabarty opened his talk sketching the main contours of the history of India, the categories of which differ from those of Arabic language and culture. It is impossible to study South Asia as a whole, given that Pakistan and Bangladesh on the one hand, and India on the other, have their own distinct history and nationalism.

In a preliminary discussion Prof. Chakrabarty tried to answer the question what history is by distinguishing between two historiographical trends: For one, a faceless history, in which the individual is anonymous – an approach based on the assumption that there are historical phenomena that can only be explained by structural explanations of long-term processes, such as the development of legal systems; and the other, a history of heroes, employing the revised conception of "hero" as historical agent, as it emerged in the wake of the growing importance of historiography as developed by E.P. Thompson, for example. According to this approach, any average person can be the hero of the story. That is also the story of India: the attempt to find national strength also based on ordinary people. Every idea will be understood differently when one tries to translate it into practice, and its realization will be different in every society; that holds also true for human history.

Later on, Prof. Chakrabarty suggested to discuss the category "global" in two contexts: for one, Global History; and the other, Global Warming. Although both concepts deal with something global, happening worldwide, many see global warming as related to climate issues only. Interest in the topic emerged and became popular in the 1980s and

Yoram Meital, Israel Gershoni

1990s. In this context, the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) gained in relevancy and popularity.

The two contexts of the term "global" have in common that both global history and global warming affect the Human Condition, each in its own way. Prof. Chakrabarty argued that dealing today with the question of "freedom" primarily requires clarification of these two fields. The main difference between the two is that global history is actually the history of modern capitalism, while research on global warming is directly related to the human condition. Yet the field's most significant innovation is its attempt to shift the research focus from human beings as particular biological creatures toward an examination of the development of the environment and the different species from a broader perspective. Prof. Chakrabarty suggested to call what we know as World History "Earth History." Thus, history would be linked to a relatively new science branch that emerged in the 1980s, namely *Earth System Science*.

Prof. Chakrabarty described how the writing of world history has been linked to science and human conditions during the last four decades, due to the state of affairs of the world and the earth. Already in the 1950s it became clear that all human action affects the planet, by pollution, water use, etc. This understanding led to a new concern, namely the question how the planet reacts to the actions of those living on it. Its very attempt to maintain the climate system constitutes a reaction. These questions led to the understanding that biology and geology are always connected to each other as well as to human conditions. In addition, he noted that Biopolitics, that is the link between biology and politics, is another important issue discussed in the context of world history, since the state has an interest in the proliferation of human beings.

When dealing with global history and with global warming we need to think beyond human beings, about life in general. Human beings are creatures that appeared very late in the history of evolution, and therefore the examination has to go beyond human beings and explore other forms of life as well. Already in the 1970s, Michel Foucault argued that animals pay a price for human attempts to develop and progress and that it is necessary to deal with the damage inflicted. In part this also goes back to human attempts to turn wild animals into urban ones.

In conclusion Prof. Chakrabarty argued that there is still time to try to fix things before the crisis gets deeper. It is our responsibility. As part of the entire debate on Earth System Science, on Earth History, and on the suitable conditions for inhabiting the planet in general, we need to remember that we have an impact on those very conditions. The history of human beings and their actions is thus related to their future, to science, and to global warming. Therefore, despite the two different uses of the term "global," they should be seen and examined as one.

The first session dealt with World History providing a sort of introduction to the workshop. Drawing on their own experience as authors of textbooks and as teachers of World History, the two speakers showed the importance of their methodological experience for the development of their thinking about the field.

In the first part of his lecture, **Prof. Robert Tignor**, from Princeton University, asked why professional History departments have never dealt with World History despite the fact that over the years humanity wanted to know where they came from, who they where, how they were different from other people. In his opinion, World History was removed from the mainstream of History departments in the nineteenth century. Many universities left this to philosophers and sociologists like Hegel and Marx. By the end of the nineteenth century World History was no longer on the mainstream agenda of History departments. Only a few individuals were interested in World History, such as Max Weber and Arnold Toynbee. Prof. Tignor mentioned that when he joined the History Department at Princeton University, they had no World History. In his assessment,

this has changed after the Cold War, as globalization increased. Prof. Tignor mentioned the historian William McNeill who attracted scholars interested in the rest of the world, as well as other historians, such as Alfred Crosby, who set the stage for turning World History into an important topic in historical studies.

The second part of Prof. Tignor's lecture dealt with the radical changes in the way World History was taught. In his opinion, the traditional five continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and South America), which served historians and geographers as basic research units, were replaced by a new geography: Afro-Eurasia as a primary field of intense connections; sub-Saharan Africa largely separated from Afro-Eurasia until early modern times; and the Americas, a world apart from Afro-Eurasia until the sixteenth century. In this framework, the Middle East does not emerge as a viable historical-geographical category until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Another shift in research perspective pertains to pastoral nomads. Now the focus is on their role as transmitters of commodities, religious ideas, travelers, disease, and much else, and hence they are a major element in World History. By contrast, earlier historical works, starting with Herodotus, regarded nomads as "barbarians," largely outside the purview of historical studies.

Prof. Tignor concluded his lecture by noting that studying important historical questions, such as the origins of the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution in Britain, and the great economic divide separating the developed from the less developed world, within the framework of World History has led to substantial revisions of once prevailing interpretations.

In his lecture, **Prof. Carter Vaughn Findley**, from Ohio State University, dealt with the way the Middle East has been studied and with the spatial and temporal reordering required when the Middle East is placed in World History. Noting that the study of World History is relatively new, Prof. Findley referred to William H. McNeill, a founding father of the field, who emphasized that World History is a study in large-scale pattern recognition. This raises the "macro-micro" issue, which explains why some historians detest World History like the plague.

Based on a comparison to other civilizational regions (Europe, South and East Asia), Prof. Findley argued that in its coherence as a unit of analysis for historians, the Middle East has less in common with Europe than with the others. The debate of whether or not the Middle East is a meaningful unit of analysis will continue, also in the long run. Ever since the rise of Islam, the region has taken shape both as an area with a certain coherence and as the center of something much bigger than itself. The persistence of that central coherence over time, through the rise and fall of empires, through successive revolutions in communications, seems likely to continue in future. Prof. Findley concluded his talk saying that if Egypt were located in Asia rather than Africa, 'Southwest Asia' would seem as meaningful a concept as South, Southeast, and East Asia.

The second session dealt with the cultural and colonial influences on the Middle East with regard to identity, culture and the way of thinking in the Arab world in the twentieth century.

In his lecture, **Prof. Yoav Di-Capua**, from Austin University, discussed the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism on the Arab world. From the end of World War II until June 1967, Sartre was the uncontested champion of the Arab intelligentsia. Sartre's existentialist philosophy nourished the post-colonial quest for a new Arab subjectivity, or, as they called it, a "New Arab Man." Existentialism served three purposes: for one, engagement (*iltizam*) in the sense of commitment, implying that intellectuals had to be politically involved; second, political freedom in the sense of the freedom to follow one's own path of development, thus undermining patriarchal structures; and third, Sartre's political globalism. In his political

writing Sartre expressed his unflinching support for the cause of Third Worldism, thus framing the liberation struggle against neo-colonialism, imperialism and, most importantly, Zionism. His influence on Arab thought and action and his two-way relationship with an important circle of Arab thinkers were therefore very significant. Tragically, this relationship ended abruptly when, on the eve of the 1967 War, Sartre threw his support behind Israel. For Arabs, this painful episode was, and still is, a story of an iconic betrayal.

Dr. Lior Sternfeld, from Pennsylvania State University, examined the development of a Third-Worldist discourse in Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq, through the early struggles of de-colonization in Abadan and Suez, and beyond. In 1951, as the age of decolonization was dawning, Middle Eastern countries and societies were struggling with Western consortia and governments which controlled a significant share of the region's infrastructure and natural resources. Britain controlled the oil industry in Iran and Iraq, the Suez Canal in Egypt, and myriad other enterprises in the realm of infrastructure. France controlled and had been the ruling power in North Africa, and had invested in infrastructures in Lebanon and more. Following Iran's complete nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951, the Iranian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq presented a vision in which Middle Eastern countries–in the broadest definition–would unite and become a counterweight to Western domination of their respective economies. While leaning on India as a model and a possible partner, Mosaddeq also reached out to countries like Egypt, Iraq, and India, but also to opposition movements in Lebanon, Morocco, and official and unofficial elements in Israel.

The prospect of such transnational and transregional collaboration ignited the imagination of many in the Middle East and beyond, and set in motion events that led to the Bandung Conference of 1955. The connections continued and expanded in the conferences of the Second International and other venues of the Non-Alignment Movement. Prof. Sternfeld gave an overview of how Third-Worldist thought was taking shape in the Middle East on the eve of Bandung.

Continuing the issue of identity conceptualization discussed among others in the second session, the third one dealt with Jewish identity in the context of geographical aspects in Jewish history.

Dr. Menashe Anzi, from BGU, tried to articulate a Jewish geography that goes beyond political borders. He suggested a new concept of "transnational community" and "diaspora community" in the Indian Ocean. He offered a different perspective on the history of Jews in modern times, based on the close ties that existed between Jewish communities along the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Rather than adhering to the traditional geographical division of the Jewish world between the North and the South Mediterranean, his lecture included hitherto barely examined areas along the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Dr. Anzi provided a unique framework for conceptualizing modern Jewish history from a non-European perspective. This framework highlights relationships between Jews in the East that were based not only on Zionist national solidarity, but also on shared space, commercial ties, and common language and culture.

In his lecture, **Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotskin**, from BGU, referred to the location of Jerusalem in terms of a geographical definition. He considered the meaning and advantages of viewing Jewish history as a "world history" and suggested to see the term "Jewish history" not solely as history of the Jews, but as Jewish perception of history. Prof. Raz-Krakotskin focused on a digital project, mapping modern Jewish histories that has been developed by the I-CORE (Da'at Hamakom). This led him to ask where Jerusalem is – in the West or in the East. Nationalist

historiography views Jerusalem, Zion, as the center of the Jewish people, but as part of the West. By contrast, in the alternative approach, the (diasporic) World History of the Jews, Jerusalem preserve its status as a center, but as an inclusive one, one that links Eastern and Western histories.

Another angle from which the Middle East is conceived and studied, is the cultural-artistic one, including the way European artists have perceived the Middle East.

In her lecture, **Prof. Eve M. Troutt Powell**, from University of Pennsylvania, dealt with the visual presence of Ottoman eunuchs of African descent in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. She sketched the way in which European painters like Jean-Leon Gerome and John Lewis represented these men in their "realist" Orientalist painting, and how these harem paintings were received by Ottoman viewers, painters and photographers, many of whom were trained in Paris and later established photography salons in Istanbul and Cairo. Prof. Troutt Powell also examined the effect of photography on Ottoman eunuchs and other slaves or formerly enslaved Ottoman subjects in the last decades of the Empire. A visual culture of eunuchs in particular was also a feature of the brightly colored pages of popular journals at the time, as eunuchs increasingly came to be viewed as outdated artifacts of a corrupt and despotic political system by those who wished its reform. In addition, Prof. Troutt Powell examined how Ottoman medical treatises pathologized the bodies of eunuchs just as they were forced out of the palaces of Sultan Abdülhamid II, and how such treatises painted as vivid a picture of their anatomy and sicknesses as any oil painting could.

In the same session, there was also an interesting discussion on scientific and technological developments that allow to see the Middle East in a different political and economic context. **Dr. On Barak**, from Tel Aviv University, discussed underground and underwater connections in the Middle East that inflect our received terrestrial wisdom and open new ways for understanding the region's political, economic, and theological arrangements. He argued that existing spatial imaginaries of the Middle East are anchored in the two dimensionality of the map. For example, the shift from the route around the Cape of Good Hope toward a direct eastward route via the Suez Canal reconfigured the connection between "the West" and "the Far East" by offering a new middle ground. But exactly as these changes were taking place, the region gained new importance for submarine telegraphy and for the extraction and use of coal and later oil – fossil fuels whose subterranean origins escape the conventional perspective of cartography.

Eve M. Troutt Powell, 'All Eyes on the Eunuchs'

The fifth session addressed the question whether the Middle East constitutes a useful unit of study by focusing on the colonial situation and decolonization in the Middle East. In her lecture on the New Woman in the Middle East, **Prof. Mona Russell**, from East Carolina University, explained that by WWI Middle Eastern women had emerged as actors on the national stage demanding rights in the upheaval surrounding the downfall of the Ottoman and Qajar Empires; and they participated with their Western counterparts in international conferences. In the era of state-building that followed, formerly politicized New Women became marginalized in an ever-increasing "global" market. Lacking space in the political realm, the country's New Women became consuming girls. In advertising, this "modern girl" was not Middle Eastern, nor did she necessarily uphold traditional standards of beauty: she was thin, fair, and fine-featured. This trend in marketing and depoliticization was not unique to Egypt or the Middle East, but could be seen worldwide.

Prof. Russell argued that in Egypt, after 1936, and in particular during and after WWII, a hybridized beauty emerged to challenge the more Westernized modern girl of the previous decade. The expansion of the *effendiyya*, the continued occupation of Egypt, and the anxiety over women's bodies in public spaces created a demand for a more authentic

Carter Findley, 'The Middle East in World History'

form of beauty. The hybrid beauty would convey a sense of glocal mediation in which local marketers and advertisers situated a variety of goods in familiar, yet tantalizing desirable settings. The emergence of cheaper, popular magazines, the ability of more Egyptians to attend cinema and inexpensive theater performances, and increasing literacy helped to convey competing images of beauty in a marketplace of new and old commodities.

Prof. **Haggai Ram**, from BGU, examined the extent to which the (underground)world of hashish traffickers and hashish consumers in Mandate Palestine was affected by the expansion of international and British imperial efforts to prohibit, control and regulate the trade and use of cannabis. The interwar years were a formative phase in the global fight against the flow and use of cannabis, as is evidenced – for example – by the 1925 League of Nations Opium Convention that introduced a limited ban on international traffic in Indian hemp. By focusing on Mandate Palestine and the Levant in general, Prof. Ram investigated some of the local and regional reverberations triggered by the reversal of the course of "the psychoactive revolution," a global revolution that made psychoactive substances pervasive in human societies from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The last session continued the line of inquiry and dealt with recent changes in the post-colonial Middle East, with the rise of ISIS and the emerging new socio-political order, as well as with the geographical borders of the Middle East.

In his lecture on "The Inheritance of ISIS," **Prof. Faisal Devji**, from Oxford University, argued that with the establishment of a "caliphate" in the Levant, the very idea of the Middle East as a region defined by ethnicity and geography has been transformed. He examined the implications of the invitation to Muslims from around the world to emigrate to the global caliphate in the region. He also considered the implications of the establishment of such a state for political thought and explored the way in which it emerged from older narratives of Islamic militancy, while at the same time radicalizing them.

Prof. Devji suggested that despite its establishment of a state, ISIS is still characterized by the old Islamist obsession with society or social order and self-regulation. But then this is not so unlike the neoliberal state of either Muslim or Western vintage. That might be the reason why its claims to sovereignty are so ambiguous, from a largely silent caliph attributed with little or no command and charisma, to violence exercised in ways that do not distinguish between the social and the political, and indeed refuse to lend the latter any autonomy.

Prof. Haggai Erlich, from Tel-Aviv University, argued that the "Middle East" is not a geographical term, but rather a historical, political, and cultural one, that changes accordingly. He used the Nile River as an example: Is it "the river of Egypt," or is it "Africa's greatest river"? According to Prof. Erlich, it is surely both, and has been so from time immemorial. Egypt depends on the river's African sources, mainly on the Ethiopian Blue Nile, which supplies about four fifth of its water. Ethiopia, for its part, is similarly dependent on Egypt. Though they have no common border, Ethiopia and Egypt have remained ever meaningful to each other.

Their mutual relevancy has grown in recent years. In 2011 the Ethiopians started building the Great Renaissance Dam, scheduled to be finished during 2017. They claim the new dam will create a win-win situation, enabling them to finally defeat hunger, and provide energy and proper water-control for all riparian states. The Egyptians are understandably anxious, worried, alarmed. Prof. Erlich discussed the renewed dialogs with old mutual concepts and addressed the implications for the wider Middle East and Africa. He tried to show that whatever the future holds, the Middle East we know begins also in the African sources of the "eternal river." ◈

Symposium: Umm al-Hiran, On Rights and Principles

Academia as an institution of knowledge, research and innovation is not disconnected from society, and one of its tasks is to facilitate a critical discourse on a range of topics. In the wake of the events in the unrecognized village Umm al-Hiran on January 18, 2017, the Chaim Herzog Center initiated an open debate on the affair that enraged the Israeli public and especially the Bedouin community. The state had decided to demolish Umm al-Hiran, forcing its Bedouin inhabitants to move to a quarter in the town of Hura, and to establish instead a new village, called Hiran, for Jewish inhabitants. The Bedouin inhabitants of Umm al-Hiran reject the government plan. The struggle culminated in the tragic events during which a village resident, Yacoub Mussa Abu al-Qiy'an, and a police officer, Erez Levi, were killed. The police fired at the car of Abu al-Qiy'an, who lost control over his vehicle and hit the police officer. The tragic result was two dead. These events were widely covered in the media, in the framework of which officials rushed to declare that Abu al-Qiy'an was a terrorist – a claim that later turned out to be totally unfounded.

The Chaim Herzog Center contacted several government spokespersons and representatives of the Or Movement for Settlement in the Negev inviting them to participate in the debate; but they refused. The debate was held about a week after the events. Despite the short notice, the hall was filled to the last place by a diverse audience: scholars, students as well as Jewish and Bedouin citizens living in the Negev. Part of the event was videotaped and made available on social networks reaching thousands of viewers.

Umm al-Hiran

The conference opened with a review of some historical, cultural, economic and political aspects of the unrecognized villages. The session was chaired by **Dr. Halleli Pinson** from the Department of Education at BGU. The first speaker, advocate Khalil al-'Amour, resident of the unrecognized village al-Sira, presented the history of the people living in Umm al-Hiran. He stressed the absurdity: The state issues an eviction order to remove them from an area, to which the state itself had decided to move them in the 1950s. Ra'ed Abu al-Qiy'an, head of the Umm al-Hiran council and nephew of Yacoub Mussa Abu al-Qiy'an, explained that the Arab-Bedouin population in Israel feels threatened by the state harassing them. He called for unity in Israeli society and warned against damaging the social fabric that has evolved between Arab and Jewish residents in the Negev. In his talk Ra'ed Abu al-Qiy'an stressed their commitment to coexistence and peace and ask to see actions on the ground.

Prof. Moshe Arens, who in the past served as defense and as foreign ministers in Likud governments, expressed his shock about the events in Umm al-Hiran. Addressing an economic aspect, he noted with regret that Israeli governments have

Prof. Moshe Arens

abandoned and neglected that sector of the population and failed to assist them in their transition to life in an industrialized country. The former minister stressed that what happened in Umm al-Hiran is a tragedy that must not be repeated, and he called on the government take a decision and commit itself not to evict families from their homes by force. Advocate Rawiya Aburabia argued that the events in Umm al-Hiran are part of the chronicle of ethnic cleansing under the cover of the law. Comparing the situation of Jewish and of Bedouin residents in the Negev, she found discrimination against the latter by the authorities and the media, who see the Bedouins as a demographic threat. **Prof. Oren Yiftachel** from the Department of Geography at BGU spoke about the refugee tragedy afflicting the residents of Umm al-Hiran. He reviewed injustices faced by such communities such as expulsion, discrimination in the granting of building permits, and planning flaws that find expression in the attempt to settle Bedouins on the periphery, far away from the urban center in Beer Sheva. He also stressed the problematic aspects of law and planning, pointing out that the building laws are not applicable to villages that already existed before these laws were passed. Therefore, the solution is to recognize these villages. ◈

Nationalism, Anti-Nationalism and Rebellion: Options of Modern Jewish Identities in Arab-Muslim Societies, Homage to Simon Lévy

In cooperation with the Department of Middle East Studies, the Chaim Herzog Center organized a symposium in memory of Simon Lévy (1934-2011), a Jewish Moroccan leader who served as member of the Casablanca city council and as director of the Museum of Moroccan Jewry in the city. Faculty members, students and Beer Sheva residents were in the audience. In her opening address **Dr. Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli** noted that the symposium is held in light of the silencing by the Israeli establishment, of voices in the East that do not fit into the Zionist narrative. Moreover, when the establishment deals with Eastern Jewry (as for example the Biton Committee), it does so while uprooting it from its Arab context.

In the opening lecture, entitled "I am Egyptian and therefore I stay: Shehata Haroun's struggle and his heritage," **Prof. Yoram Meital** presented a sketch of the Egyptian Jewish leader Shehata Haroun, noting the resemblance to Simon Lévy. Prof. Meital addressed the principled position held by Jews who saw themselves as part of the Arab space and chose to stay in their Arab homeland. In this context, he argued that the self-reflection of people like Shehata enables us to deal with two significant issues: for one, the theme of "staying" – not for lack of choice, but out of principle. Shehata's staying was an expression of Jews' belonging to a place that they see as their homeland. Second, this position constitutes a critical piercing challenge to Zionism and Zionist as well as Arab historiography. Prof. Meital drew on Shehata's personal papers, such as letters he sent from prison to President Gamal Abd al-Nasser in 1967, sharply criticizing the leaders of Arab countries who sought to cause the Jews to leave Arab countries, which means that they were no less responsible for that tragedy than the Zionists. Whereas national historiography (both Zionist and Arab) usually describes the Jews in Arab countries as temporary guests, Shehata presented these Jews as integral part of

the local society. He frequently criticized Zionist historiography for inventing the term "Diaspora" in order to construct the Zionist narrative. Prof. Meital suggested to see Jews in Egypt in the way the pharaonic heritage in Egypt is perceived. Although there are no Pharaohs in the country for centuries, the Egyptians diligently preserve the pharaonic historical monuments. Prof. Meital noted that there has been a renewed debate on Egyptian identity politics in the recent decade, especially with regard to the place

of minority groups that used to live in Egypt in the past, such as Greeks, Italians, and Jews. After several decades during which many Egyptians perceived these groups, and especially the Jews, as a fifth column pursuing interests hostile to Egyptian society, there has been a wave of works of art, literature and movies in recent years, depicting the Jewish community in a manner quite similar to Shehata's narrative.

Youness Abeddour, a Moroccan citizen and Ph.D. student at the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU, dealt with Simon Lévy's identity and defined him as a communist, a patriot, and a Jew. After World War II, Simon Lévy asked himself many questions regarding his identity, but one answer was clear for him, namely that he was first of all a Moroccan.

A documentary made by the Moroccan filmmaker Younes Laghrari in memory of Simon Lévy was also shown at the symposium. In the documentary Lévy argues that he is a Jew and a Moroccan, and his forefathers had a Moroccan identity, quite similar to the identity of Muslims in Israel/Palestine. In one of the scenes Lévy was asked if Jewish culture in Morocco was endangered. He answered that this is indeed the case and emphasized that the museum has been established in order to familiarize the visitors, and especially Moroccans, with the Jewish culture that was part of Moroccan society and flourished there for many centuries.

Dr. Haya Bambaji-Sasportas from BGU gave a lecture on the Jewish Iraqi intellectual Elie Kedourie and his identity in light of his emigration to England in 1947. The lecture addressed the biographical, academic, intellectual and historiographical context of Kedourie's imperial consciousness and his ensuing perception of nationalism in general and especially in the Middle East, as well as the implications thereof for Jewish existence. Kedourie was a leading scholar of nationalism and one of the founders of the modernist current in the field. He presented a non-nationalist option, which may be ascribed to his Jewish identity. Dr. Bambaji-Sasportas showed how his biography gave meaning to his scholarly writing, and vice versa. Although he researched nationalism, Kedourie saw the imperial option as a good one for Jews in the Middle East. He grew up in Iraq after independence, at a time when nationalism turned into chauvinism, culminating in the Farhud, during which dozens of Jews were killed by an enraged local mob. The growing hostility in the attitude toward Jews caused most Iraqi Jews to emigrate to Israel in 1951. This experience had an impact on Kedourie' negative attitude toward nationalism. Judaism, Arabism, Islam and Imperialism had still been central elements of Kedourie's identity in Baghdad. Soon after arriving in London he understood that his self-view as imperial subject on equal footing with Britons was wrong since his Arab Jewishness was what shaped him. Moreover, he understood that the British Empire was much more nationalist than he had thought in his youth and that it was actually the Ottoman Empire that symbolized the imperial model that he had admired when he was young. ◈

Conference: Centennial of Jacqueline Kahanoff's Birthday

One of the fascinating conferences we held this year was dedicated to the literary work of Jacqueline Kahanoff (1917-79), writer, essayist and literary critic. Like her writings, the life of this Jewish woman born in Egypt moved between East and West in search of a collective identity which she later defined as Levantine. The conference was organized in cooperation with the Heksherim Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture, the Department of Hebrew Literature, the Gender Studies Program, and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism. Scholars from various disciplines participated in the conference, and family members, scholars, writers, literary critics, students and faculty members were in the audience. In a festive atmosphere, the conference was opened by **Prof. Yigal Schwartz**, head of the Heksherim Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture. Jaqueline Kahanoff's friend **Eva Weintraub** and one of her relatives, **Laura d'Amade**, gave greeting addresses expressing their gratitude and appreciation. They spoke about the importance of Kahanoff's writings and the interest she still attracts, thirty years after her death, which

shows that her ideas are today more relevant than ever.

The first panel dealt with Jacquline Kahanoff's world. **Prof. Yoram Meital**, head of the Chaim Herzog Institute and one of the founders of the Middle East Studies Department at BGU, gave the opening lecture. He presented Kahanoff's writings within the context of the developments in Egypt and especially the intellectual discourse of the 1930s and '40s, that she experienced and related to in her writings. Then he critically analyzed the Levantine model she proposed. Prof. Meital emphasized that Kahanoff came to Israel in 1954 as a highly educated woman. Part of the educated elite in Israel ignored her, which reflects intellectual opacity; but others embraced her and found a fresh breeze in her writings: valid criticism of the negative views and prejudices regarding Jews who came from Arab and Islamic countries. Her writing was defined as "thinking outside the box of the Jewish National Fund."

In the first half of the twentieth century Egypt underwent a transition from an Egyptian-Ottoman cultural tradition to a much more Egyptian and Arab one. The transition was accompanied by fierce battles, in particular the struggle against British colonialism. In 1922 Egypt attained limited independence, in the wake of which the preoccupation with identity politics accelerated. While the Wafd party championed the slogan "Religion is for God, and the homeland is for all," other parties and movements espoused national or religious identities. During the following decades, print culture expanded considerably, architectural planning flourished, and even the first feminist groups emerged. The Jewish community was also thriving, and the Jewish bourgeoisie in the major cities entered a very comfortable orbit, which however was intimately linked to the colonial situation. During their struggle for liberation, the national movements discovered that the Jewish communities were in a sort of vertigo: they were neither natives nor colonizers.

Prominent intellectuals set the tune in the discourse. One of them, Taha Husain extensively dealt with the relevancy and the advantages of Levantine identity, while ensuring that Arabism and Islam constitute important aspects of the local society's identity. Kahanoff was only in part familiar with that discourse, maybe because she did not read Arabic or because she saw herself as belonging to a European culture. For Kahanoff, Levantine identity was hybrid. Prof. Meital argued that her writings consciously reflected her detachment. Her ideas indeed presented an alternative to the prevalent crusader discourse, which is still prevailing in Israel, but like many Israelis she rejected the possibility of integrating Arabism and Islam in the cultural identity which she strove to establish. In Prof. Meital's view, Mediterranean and Levantine identity is not a Western copy of culture. Whoever tries to see these models as an option for a culturally Western Middle East, turns his/her back on the Arab and Islamic traditions.

Dr. Liat Magid Alon, who wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on the Jewish bourgeoisie in Egypt between the two World Wars, from the perspective of gender and family, gave the second lecture in the panel. She noted that the 1930s and '40s are often presented as a period of radicalization, affecting

the Jewish community and its organizational structure. In 1924 the community underwent a structural reform and committees were established, which was a reflection of the developments in Egyptian society. The changes in Egyptian society gave rise to expectations within the Jewish community. Over time, increasing financial means fostered the emergence of a Jewish bourgeoisie.

Jews have been living in Egypt ever since the sixth century CE. Developments in the nineteenth century facilitated Jewish immigration to Egypt. Jews functioned as mediators between the local communities and the Europeans. That gave rise to a new Jewish community, which was modern, urban and bourgeois. These Jews did not see themselves as a minority, but rather as those at the forefront of modernization. Westernization was actually a matter of a group of bourgeois leaders. They were independent professionals and adopted French as their common language. Religiosity was perceived as a sign of failure and backwardness. Kahanoff's writings allow us to discern the bourgeois nature of the Jewish community in Egypt.

Addressing Kahanoff's concept of Levantine identity, **Prof. David Tal**, the Kahanoff Chair in Israel Studies at Calgary University, Canada, set out to challenge the view that she represents a bridge between East and West, where cultures and languages coexist in harmony. He argued that Kahanoff did not move with ease from one place to another, and that she was more than anything else Western, Zionist, and Israeli. She was committed to the Zionist enlightenment project and sought to integrate Levantine identity in that project. Without stating it explicitly, she rejected the Levant as a desirable place. Egyptian nationalism and the rise of Islam undermined the existence of Jews in Egypt and the Levantine region. Zionism, as well, endangered the Jewish community's existence in Egypt. Kahanoff blamed the Egyptians for merely imitating rather than adopting Western culture and for taking only its material goods. Kahanoff considered a person to be Levantine if he/she came from the East and managed to adopt Western culture. The term "Levantine" does not refer to a person who succeeds in combining East and West, but rather one who moves from East to West. Not everything Eastern was reprehensible, to her mind, but everything related to the public sphere, everything central and essential had to be Western. In light of Kahanoff's ideas, we should reconsider the place of Levantine identity.

The second panel was devoted to Kahanoff's character and her development as a multi-faceted artist. In his lecture, Ilan Bar-David, director of the Hebrew Literature Archives at the Heksherim Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture, focused on Kahanoff herself rather than her writings. He described her as a sensitive person, interested in the developments in Egypt, the steps taken by President Anwar al-Sadat, as well as in the concept of death in modern times and in patients' rights. But in his assessment, she wanted above all to be a writer.

Prof. Henriette Dahan-Kalev from BGU spoke about Kahanoff's place in the Israeli cultural scene in the 1960s and '70s, regarding education, language, the concept of the Levant, Semitic peoples, integrity, and feminism. Israel was the last stop on Kahanoff's journey. She arrived at the age of 39. Her writings reveal her as critical toward the culture of immigrant integration in Israel. Due to her talent and skills in public relations Kahanoff managed to establish herself as a writer, mainly abroad. She was a practical woman also familiar with the dirty work required for proper journalistic and literary writing. Kahanoff joined the euphoria after the Six-Day War. She chose to write about pleasant topics and refrained from engaging in more complicated matters. Moreover, she addressed an Ashkenazi audience even when she wrote about positive things.

The writer and poet, **Prof. emeritus Haim Be'er** from BGU presented an enlightening perspective. He argued convincingly that the true Jacqueline Kahanoff is revealed in her essays which are a mixture of essay and literature. She managed to take her biography and turn it into an exemplary life. At the same time, she tried to derive intellectual insights from her story.

The third panel revolved around the roots and the influence of Kahanoff's literary work. **Prof. Ilana Rosen** from BGU placed Kahanoff's work into the context of other contemporary writings. She discussed the exclusion of women writers, who came from Egypt and other Arab countries, and who wrote a lot but were not recognized despite their considerable work. Among them were Jacqueline Kahanoff, Ada Aharoni, Levana Zamir and the poet Anda Harel-Dagan. The next speaker was the scholar of literature and theatre, **Dr. Dalia Cohen-Knohl**, who wrote the book *Mandelbaum Gate* (in Hebrew), where she presents a revised picture of Kahanoff. The book has recently been translated to Arabic by the Egyptian translator **Amr Zakarya**. Zakarya sent a video for the conference in which he relates that Jewish women writers like Kahanoff were studied at Cairo University. The book revealed to him novel aspects of life in Egypt in the 1930s and '40s as well as the problems faced by Jews from Arab countries who emigrated to Israel. The book enabled Zakarya to understand Kahanoff's character. He regrets that Jews, who loved Egypt, had to emigrate. Dr. Cohen-Knohl noted that Kahanoff wrote about her feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis European culture. In her assessment, the Jews from Arab countries saw themselves as too inferior to dare to express themselves and did not have the courage to tell their story in their own words.

The concluding panel of the conference, titled "Between Levantine and Mediterranean Identity," was opened by the lecture of **Prof. Nissim Calderon** from BGU. He sought to show that Kahanoff's essays have stood the test of time and are still relevant today. The Biton Committee emphasized Kahanoff although she opposed definite identities and identity politics since she saw human beings as changing and acquiring

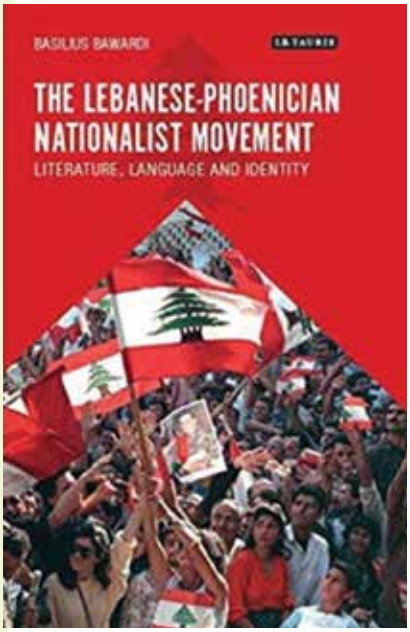
corresponding identities. Prof. Calderon described Kahanoff as someone trying to combine East and West in her attempt to adopt the tradition of solidarity from the East and the tradition of socialization from the West. **Prof. David Ohana** from BGU focused on Kahanoff's poetic world presenting her as essayist, literary critic, writer, poet and theoretician of culture. **Dr. Assaf Shelleg** from the Musicology Department, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, spoke about the Levant as a tapestry of close and similar types of music. A culture cannot determine whether the music or poetry of another culture is high or low quality, and therefore he decided to speak about the horizons of cultures. Mediterranean music represents another culture, which leads to a kind of Levantinization in the West, a sort of degrading, as if entering "Mediterranean" motifs into a symphony would "soil" Western music. In this context identity adopts an element and moves with it back and forth; any kind of "freeze" in that process is artificial. Kahanoff did not say that she is important because she adopted something, but her importance stems from the fact that she wanted to present something new; in other words, there is nothing of pure origin. ◈

Book Event: National Language and Literature among Minorities, The Case of Lebanon

Within its guest lecture series, the Chaim Herzog Center invited **Dr. Basilius Bawardi** from Bar Ilan University to give a lecture for research students about his book *The Lebanese-Phoenician Nationalist Movement: Literature, Language and Identity* (2016).

Dr. Bawardi opened his lecture with a review of the sharp criticism with which his book was received in Lebanon, for his alleged attempt to create divisions in Lebanese society and his presumed hostility toward Arab nationalism as core of Lebanese identity. In addition, his critics have pointed out that he is Christian and a "Israeli-Zionist" scholar.

In his lecture, Dr. Bawardi dealt with a group of Christian-Maronite Lebanese who see Lebanon as their homeland, but do not consider themselves as belonging to the Arab nation. The identity question is a source of tension in the political, religious and cultural thinking in Lebanon and in the internal relations within the mosaic of minorities that constitute its society. The tension leads to crises, including the civil war that broke out in 1975.



Dr. Bawardi's book focuses on the development of the Lebanese-Phoenician movement founded by Maronite Christians, that fought against the hegemony of Arabic language and culture. In their view, the Islamic conquest was of the worst kind for Lebanon, causing decline in all aspects of life, whereas the Phoenician conquest had led to Lebanon's development in cultural and civilizational terms.

Dr. Bawardi reviewed the literary work of four Syrian-Lebanese intellectuals — Sharl Qurm, Sa'id 'Aql, Mayy Mur, and Muris 'Awwad — who advocated the establishment of an independent Lebanese state and the severance of the ties linking it to Arab states and Arabism. They emphasized their Lebanese Phoenician heritage, negating any connection to the Islamic Arab one.

In their literary works, these four intellectuals shaped a sort of mythology which they saw as basis for the formation of a Lebanese-Phoenician nation. Sharl Qurm wrote about Lebanon's ancient heritage and thus highlighted the historical dimension; Sa'id 'Aql emphasized their separateness by the language used in writing, gradually replacing literary Arabic by the spoken language and adopting a different font from the Arabic one; Mayy Mur, who was a dominant figure among the Lebanese Phoenicians, focused on the geographic dimension in order to show that Lebanon has no connection to the Arab side; and Muris 'Awwad was a troubled person who wrote poetry in popular Lebanese

dialect, dealing with his troubles, often attacking the religious and Lebanese establishment and criticizing Arabism and Islam. These intellectuals saw themselves as a literary and linguistic minority and created their own alternative history and language, in an effort to disengage from the dominant Arab and Islamic dimension in their homeland. ◈

Robert St. John Prize Ceremony

Lecture by the 2017 recipient Jonathan Ferziger, Bloomberg News
"Truth Under Siege: Reporting in the Age of Alternative Facts"

Jonathan Ferziger, from Bloomberg News was invited by the Chaim Herzog Center to deliver a lecture under the auspices of the Robert St. John Chair in Objective Middle East Reporting. The ceremony was part of the 47th board of governors events of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. **Prof. Steve Rosen**, the Vice-President for External Affairs and **Prof. Yoram Meital**, the Chair of the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev opened the prize ceremony by giving opening remarks. The ceremony was moderate by **Prof. Lynn Schler**, from the Department of Politics and Government at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

In his lecture, "Truth Under Siege: Reporting in the Age of Alternative Facts", Jonathan Ferziger claimed that the key elements to reporting on Israel and its neighbours are getting to know all sides of the conflict and striving for fairness.

Ferziger described his arrival to Israel after a term of reporting from Saudi Arabia, where he was working for the UPI wire service. It was 1990 and the Middle East had turned upside down when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The military build-up before the Iraq war brought a tide of young journalists and he was one of them. For three months he lived in the Saudi kingdom, a closed society of unbelievable wealth that he had never really imagined visiting.

Being in the Gulf gave him the opportunity to see how the other side lives. And that's taught him that the best journalism is about Being There and seeing both sides of the equation. Telling people in an honest and fair way about stuff they ought to know, "reporting objectively".

According to Ferziger, many see objective reporting as a pretense and believe it produces boring, bloodless journalism. And we can debate whether any journalism truly achieves the elusive ideal of objectivity. But the goal of objectivity must be a guide. The Middle East conflict has long posed one of the great challenges in getting different sides of the story. This isn't a disagreement, it's an epic divide between opposing worldviews, each with its own set of facts, which it organizes according to its own beliefs, cultural norms and historical experiences.

Ferziger claimed that no U.S. president since Richard Nixon has been so openly hostile to the press as Donald Trump. For reporters, it's been a constant battle with a man who loves to accuse the media of delivering ``fake news." When reporters find that statements made by the president are untrue, his spokeswoman Kellyanne Conway asserts the right to provide "alternative facts." On the background of these, Ferziger said that the poisonous dynamics in Washington have a parallel right in Israel, in the combative relationship that Prime Minister Netanyahu has with the Israeli press.

Jonathan Ferziger ended his lecture by saying that freedom of the press cannot be taken for granted. The reporters can push back by fulfilling their role, by not retreating, by recommitting themselves to their historic job of reporting objectively and being a check on the abuse of government power. As unpopular as it may be, journalists must distinguish between facts and falsehoods, between reality and propaganda, and work hard to tell people the truth.

Following the lecture, the floor was opened to q&a that went well into the evening. ◈

The Future of Iraq as a State and as a Nation after ISIS

One of the most significant challenges of our time is the changes in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring and the rise of ISIS. The instability in Iraq after its fall was one of the factors facilitating the rise of that militant organization. Its take-over of large areas in Iraq was accompanied by genocide perpetrated against the Yazidi minority, by mass murder and the abduction of thousands of women and children. Against this background we decided to address the issue of the Yazidis and Iraqi identity. With the assistance of **Idan Barir**, Ph.D. student at Tel Aviv University, who investigates the Yazidis and their identity in his dissertation project, we invited the physician, **Dr. Mirza Dinnayi**, from Erbil in Iraq, who heads a project which rescues Yazidis and brings them to safe places. The conference topic met with great interest and a large diverse audience filled the hall, also including faculty members of the Faculty of Medicine who were interested in our guest and even invited him to a meeting and lecture on international medical relations.

Prof. Yoram Meital opened the event, introducing **Dr. Dinnayi** and describing his extraordinary activities as human rights activist who was forced to leave Iraq and continue his important work from Germany. After the US invasion of Iraq, he returned to his Iraqi homeland and served in various public functions. In 2005 he served as advisor to the Iraqi president Jalal Talabani, and later as special advisor to the Kurdistan government. In

2007, Dr. Dinnayi established a humanitarian aid organization in Germany, called Air Bridge Iraq, providing medical care for Iraqi children and when necessary bringing them for medical treatment to Germany. Since 2014 Dr. Dinnayi has rescued some 1,100 Yazidi women and children who had been abducted by ISIS, and assisted in their departure to Germany and their integration there.

In his lecture, Dr. Mirza Dinnayi addressed the future of Iraq as a state reviewing the identity question over the years and the power struggles in light of the numerous collective identities in the country. He opened his lecture by asking whether there exists an Iraqi national identity. To his mind, the population of Iraq lacks harmony, given that it is composed of various groups and characterized by fierce power struggles between Sunnis and Shi'ites. Iraq after 1921 comprised several nations and collective identities. The Jewish emigration in 1951 had a negative impact on Iraqi identity. And after the rise of the Ba'ath regime in 1963 the Iraqi identity was dissolved and replaced by a pan-Arab one. The Ba'ath party adhered to the idea of pan-Arabism and spoke about one Arab nation with an eternal mission, whereas Iraq was only one small part of that nation spread over a territory reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf. The Ba'ath encouraged war in the name of the Arab nation, leading to generations of aggression and belligerence. The Ba'ath actually introduced two ideas: Pan-Arabism and the formation of an Islamic establishment. After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Ba'ath's ideas vanished, but no new Iraqi national identity was created. There are local collective identities, there are constitutional and legal institutions; there is the implementation of local collective identity, and there is the Iraqi parliament.

The new Iraqi constitution of 2005 speaks about Islam as the official religion and as source for legislation. The constitution guarantees the majority's Muslim identity as well as the minorities' freedom of religion. Dr. Dinnayi pointed out, however, that the constitution has actually harmed minorities. According to the

constitution, the state safeguards the political, administrative, cultural and educational rights of minorities, but the Yazidi religion is not recognized by Islam. Iraq was defined as a state comprising various nations, religions and sectors, but on the other hand, cultivated a pan-Arab identity. The state sought to foster the Iraqi tribes and defend their particularistic interests (in order to gain their support for politicians). In Dr. Dinnayi's view, this was a mistake because a collective identity based on citizenship is undermined if tribes become more powerful. In other words, this led to a situation encouraging local tribal identities to the detriment of a united civil collective identity. According to him, this resulted in the emergence of many parties with programs based on religious principles and interests, instead of fostering independent thinking and democratic values.

Between 2010 and 2014, radical groups flourished among Shi'ites as well as Sunnis, in the wake of Nuri al-Maliki's efforts to establish a dictatorial regime. It was in that atmosphere that ISIS flourished, an organization that proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic State with a Sunni identity in 2014, in which other social groups will be humiliated subordinates.

Dr. Dinnayi rejected the common claim that the US was one of the factors causing the fall of the Iraqi state in 2003 and hence the rise of ISIS. He mentioned that Saddam Hussein oppressed all movements and sectors in Iraq. In his view, the dictatorial Arab leaders are to blame for the ensuing horrible situation, and not any US American administration.

Dr. Dinnayi concluded his lecture on a pessimistic note regarding the future of Iraq. In his view, Iraq as a nation does not exist anymore, and now even its borders are gone. In order to rebuilt Iraq, the only viable solution would be the establishment of a confederation. Yet, he does not see anybody on the international scene who would be ready to take responsibility and assist in the establishment of an Iraqi confederation, since peace would be much more expensive and require more effort than the continuation of the war. ◈

The Battle over Syria: Past, Present, and Future

In cooperation with the Department of Middle East Studies and the Department of Politics and Government at BGU, the Chaim Herzog Center organized a conference dealing with the civil war in Syria, one of the most violent conflicts of our times. Numerous organizations and groups in Syria fight each other and against the regime. The number of casualties is unclear, but international estimates place it above 300,000. In addition, millions of Syrians have become internally displaced (IDPs) or refugees, and the destruction of the infrastructures has reached catastrophic dimensions. Experts from various fields were invited to participate in the conference in order to shed light on the developments in Syria from different perspectives.

In his lecture **Prof. Eyal Zisser** from Tel Aviv University emphasized the historical context of the current civil war. He noted that most of the war's casualties and refugees stem from actions taken by the regime, Bashar al-Assad's annihilation war against the opposition. Prof. Zisser enumerated several factors behind the situation in Syria: the worldwide protest of those left behind (Syrian peasants in Dara'a like small American farmers in Pennsylvania, who voted for Trump); the impact of globalization; drought and bad weather conditions in the Middle East; population growth in Syria; radical Islam and ethnic tensions finding expression in a struggle for control, power, resources, and over the political and social order. In Prof. Zisser's assessment, the war is no longer a Syrian one. Without the money from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the material support from Turkey, and the assistance from Russia, the war would have ended a long time ago. Those who are actually fighting today in Syria are not Syrians, but foreign forces. The foreign intervention, resembling such incidents in the past, indicates the weakness of Syrian society.

Prof. Kais Firro from the University of Haifa noted that there have been contradictory trends since Bashar al-Assad's rise to power: economic growth, an increase in exports and a considerable reduction in national debts, on the one hand; and on the other, a continuous deterioration in the agricultural sector. The agricultural yields

decreased and water restrictions were introduced. The rate of the population growth continued to rise since the 1980s, which led to the creation of slums around the cities. These slums were and still are the strongholds of opposition to the regime. During the early 2000s, there were Syrian voices calling for social and economic reforms. At the same time, one can observe an increase in the activities of new Islamic currents. For its part, the regime ensured its presence at all religious events in the country. According to Prof. Firro, this explains why most demonstrations, at least during the initial stages, started at mosques and employed a religious rhetoric. Fear of a religious revolution pushed the Iranians to support Bashar al-Assad. Prof. Firro concluded by saying that the powerful media disseminate a narrative of resistance, whereas the Iranian and Syrian media emphasize the regime's narrative. The controversy in the media reflects the much bigger struggle unfolding on the ground in Syria: the struggle between the USA and the Gulf states on the one hand, and Syria and Iran on the other.

Dealing with present-day Syria, Elizabeth Tsurkov, from the Forum of Regional Thinking, noted that there is a consensus among experts that the Assad regime is responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Currently, the balance of power is clearly tilting in its favor. The Russian intervention in September 2015 changed the balance of power, which at the time was slightly in favor of the rebels. Tsurkov discerned four main blocks in Syria: (1) ISIS – controlling mostly desert and uninhabited areas, and some towns along the Euphrates; (2) the Kurds – benefitting from American air support and the presence of American special forces on the ground. Both groups are militias with a quite orderly organized chain of command. (3) The Assad regime – relying on ethnic militias, given that apart from the air force, the Syrian army is hardly functioning; and (4) the rebel-held areas – representing not a united force but a wide range of groups (according to some estimates, about 1,000) pursuing different agendas.

Syria – Citizens Turned into Refugees in their Homeland

Syria Destruction

Prof. Dror Zeevi from the Department of Middle East Studies at BGU concluded the conference showing that contrary to Prof. Firro's assessment, the story is much more complicated than a peasant rebellion. Prof. Zeevi, a scholar focusing on Ottoman history, argued that the Syrian arrangement, which promised a well-working economy and a comfortable life, though without freedom, collapsed. The way in which the narrative of the regime's supporters was formed is no less important than the truth. One of the surprising things is the power of the Syrian national sentiment. Syria is seen as an ideal. In his assessment, there will still be some kind of Syria in the end. ◈

Academia and Media under Siege

We concluded the academic year with a particularly impressive conference which we organized in cooperation with the Department of Communication Studies at BGU. The conference, titled "Academia and Media under Siege," dealt with a most topical issue against the background of the publication of **Prof. Asa Kasher's** draft of an academic ethics code for Israel and the ensuing widespread controversy. Among the audience filling the hall were faculty members, students, media representatives and members of the public who attended following the announcement of the conference in the press.

Prof. Yoram Meital, the head of the Chaim Herzog Center, and **Prof. Amit Schejter**, the head of the Department of Communication Studies at BGU, opened the conference. In his opening address, Prof. Meital pointed out that the academia and the media are two central civil society institutions facing a campaign today that mainly aims at preventing them from criticizing the political establishment and a wide range of its policies and of the status quo in Israel. Not all institutions of higher education and not all media in Israel are under attack, but only those that criticize the government and its policies. The attack is led by government officials and by civil society organizations with a similar agenda, such as Im Tirtzu. It is legitimate for the political establishment to criticize institutions of higher education and there is certainly room for criticism of the Israeli academia, but the attack is apparently directed against critical organizations and media only, which is obviously highly problematic. In his address Prof. Schejter dealt with the attack by the authorities on truth-seeking institutions: the judicial system, the arts, the media, and the academia. There is now a campaign to delegitimize and to silence jurists, media people and academics, and they are expected to accept the dictates of the government. As for the ethics code, there are attempts within the academia to silence and prevent controversial events. In that context, the conference "Academia and Media under Siege" was conceived with the intention to preserve the independence of the media and academic institutions in Israel.

Prof. Michael X. Delli Carpini from the Annenberg School for Communication, the University of Pennsylvania, gave the first keynote address presenting important insights into the challenges and threats to the freedom of expression in academia and the media. An important debate has developed on the issue of facts, truth and truth seeking. According to Prof. Carpini, technological changes affecting the American media environment have implications for the political arena. He sharply criticized the Trump administration and expressed his concern over the government's attitude toward the media, stressing the importance of a free political debate. After pointing to a change in the atmosphere in various democracies and especially in the US, Prof. Carpini reviewed statements and declarations made by Donald Trump and his team during the election campaign and the beginning of his term of office, some of which turned out to be detached from reality or distorting it. According to Prof. Carpini, this phenomenon is not a passing delusion, but reflects a deep change in the attitude of American society toward the media and the political sphere. Already in the 1980s, President Ronald Regan used satellite communication packages, and news broadcasts were clearly influenced by statements received from the candidates. The unprecedented use of the internet to mobilize young voters began in the 2000s.

The 2016 election campaign was totally different from its predecessors. The exploitation of the information environment not only peaked, but also the distinction between news and entertainment was blurred. Trump received wide media coverage mainly because of his entertainment value and his reputation as an unusual businessman. He also used Twitter to influence the traditional "gatekeepers." Trump's message to the social networks completely changed the political discourse and the information discourse.

Breaking the Silence

But the blurring of the distinction between *facts* and *opinions* became the greatest problem because such a senior public figure allowed himself to present lies in the media. Independent critical media and academia play a vital role when it comes to facts, truth, and truth seeking; but that role is now under threat.

The second panel, chaired by **Dr. Sarit Helman**, sociologist at BGU, focused on the media's role in shaping public opinion. In his lecture, **Dr. Abed L. Azab**, chemist, social activist, and writer in the daily *Ha'aretz*, criticized the Arabic media, especially in Israel. He argued that they are in a transitional stage influenced by tradition and a tribal and clan background which are still clearly visible. Dr. Azab placed the phenomenon within the framework of media coverage globally and in Israel. The Arabic media in Israel refrain from dealing with topics of the Israeli discourse, such as the story of Miri Regev, Minister of Culture and Sport, threatening to leave a ceremony if the singer Mira Awad performs of a poem by Mahmoud Darwish; or the fact that the Arab Members of Knesset did not attend the funeral of Shimon Peres. Moreover, the Arabic media in Israel avoids such topics as the rights of the LGBT community or murder on the grounds of "family honor," and does not sufficiently criticize the leaders within Arab society, as for example the chairman of the Palestinian Authority, when he proposed to reduce the electricity supply to the Gaza Strip. The Arabic media hardly deals with such issues since it is bound to lead to controversies within Arab society. This is a very serious expression of a mentality focused on avoiding that one's own "dirty laundry" is washed in public.

The next speaker, **Aluf Ben**, editor-in-chief of the daily *Ha'aretz*, noted that the main points raised by Dr. Azab are also applicable to the Hebrew media. The electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip has not been mentioned in most Hebrew media. Especially in the last two and a half years *Ha'aretz* broadened the range of things it is willing to publish, due to two changes: The main mass media decided that their audiences are not interested in the occupation and the struggle of the ultra-Orthodox, and do not cover the Arab society. Most media accept the basic features of the narrative formulated by the Netanyahu–Bennett government: a narrative of Holocaust and religion, which includes the argument that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved. At the same time, criticism of the government has become illegitimate, and we have now reached a situation where politicians campaign to censor the contents of newspapers or alternatively to close them down.

Ilil Shahar, journalist at the Israeli Army Radio, dealt with government attempts to silence the media in recent years. She raised the question whether the increase in the number of television and radio stations is an expression of the power of pluralism or actually, of the media's weakness. As investigations show, the public is already less interested in news and thus the media's power has been reduced. In the process, we are losing democracy's watchdog. In financial terms, there are more channels, each with less funds, and as a result, there are less expensive programs such as satirical or investigative ones, and instead more programs hosting politicians, which are cheaper. In the press market, the public also acts against its own interests, consuming media that do not serve its interest, thus increasing their power. These are extremely

difficult times for Israeli media; there is a sense of a tightening siege in light of the attempts to silence the media, an important tool of democracy.

Dr. Sarab Abu Rabia-Queder from BGU chaired the next panel, which focused on right-wing currents in Israel and the US aiming at limiting the freedom of expression in academia. In his lecture, titled "Not an Age of Post-truth, but one of Post-shame," **Dr. Daniel Dor**, head of the Department of Communication, Tel Aviv University, addressed recent changes constituting a threat to the freedom of the press and the arts in Israel. Similar developments have occurred in the US since the rise of Trump. There is a sense that something has changed and the question is what it is. Actually, there was always pressure und influence exerted within academia by various factors. That was a ritual in which everyone participated. According to Dr. Dor, the difference lies in the fact that in the current "post-truth" age, powerful people involved in politics feel secure and strong enough to say anything. Trump demonstrated in his campaign that he is not cooperating with the established rituals, and since he is very powerful, he is able to say that he does not know and that he does not care. The way Ministers Miri Regev and Naftali Bennett and/or Prof. Asa Kasher (who drafted the academic ethics code) behave shows that what has been lost is not truth or values, but shame.

In his lecture, **Riad al-Khouri**, former dean of the Business School at the Lebanese French University in Erbil, Iraq, spoke about public and political pressures exerted on universities in the Middle East. He presented an overview of the situation in Jordan and other Arab countries in the Middle East, showing that it looks quite differently than the situation in Israel or the US. In the West there is more freedom, liberalism, etc., whereas that is not the case in Jordan and other Arab countries, and change for the better is extremely slow. If someone in an Arab country sets out to resist, he/she is immediately arrested. The Jordanians are trying to present themselves as having a Western orientation and as moving toward democracy, but that is only partly true, since Jordanian society is, in fact, still very close to an Arab tribal society. In Jordan, one would never say that the academia is under siege. The universities in Jordan are supposedly autonomous, but actually, they are under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Dr. Mary Totri, senior lecturer at Haifa University and at Oranim Academic College of Education, presented insights from her research on the coverage of the Palestinians society in the Hebrew media. She pointed out that the Hebrew media plays a decisive role in shaping Jewish public opinion toward Arab society, since most Jews and Arabs in Israel live in separate towns and villages and are also separated in the education system. Dr. Totri reviewed studies showing that Arabs were excluded from the Israeli media, a state of affairs that is apparently getting worse over the years. Arab Israeli citizens are hardly present in the Israeli media, and when they do appear, it is in a negative context. Since the October 2000 events there has been a leap from passive delegitimization to incitement. Studies show that the Israeli media function as representatives of the Jewish majority and do not fulfill their role as restraining force vis-à-vis the regime. Lately we are witnessing post-truth politics, where even before all the facts have been clarified, politicians and media people rush to determine "facts" biased against Arabs, that become a *fait accompli* gripping public opinion. The coverage of the events in Umm al-Hiran is a clear example of that negative trend. The media failed in its role regarding Arabs since they do not think independently and critically whenever the army and the Shin Bet are their source of information. Moreover, many journalists covering Arab affairs are Orientalists or Islamophobes, and it is they who interpret reality.

Prof. Todd Gitlin, head of the Ph.D. program at Columbia University, gave the second keynote address. He spoke about liberal democracy and its enemies and dealt with the role of intellectuals in the country and their degree of involvement in politics. Totalitarianism has deep roots in Western history. Citing Vaclav Havel, "in an era when metaphysical and existential certainties are in a state of crisis, when people are being uprooted and alienated and are losing their sense of what this world means, this ideology inevitably has a certain hypnotic charm." For it seems that things are clear and that there are no unanswered questions. But that comes at a price: relinquishing one's own

Prof. Todd Gitlin

Ronit Herzog Honoring the Annual Scholarship Award

reason and responsibility. All varieties of absolutism are based on fear full of rage, fear of the Jews, fear of the bourgeoisie, etc. All these fears bind together a public that is both cynical and gullible, which leads to the surrender to state violence. In all such surrenders, the intellectuals are at risk, since they are those who will always be targeted, those who are under siege. Intellectual life is always a challenge to cant, and that always puts liberal democracy at risk, which by its very nature embraces an open, debatable future.

In a liberal democracy, news and education are not restricted and it is the task of the media to promote the ability to democratic self-rule, to conduct an unending dialogue on the good and the bad, a dialogue that in all its variations enables human cooperation. There will always be a need to assemble, not only in order to exercise the freedom of speech and to raise demands, but also as a framework in which people communicate with each other to form opinions, to believe that they are able to change one thing or other through a free play of argument and evidence. This process of communication is the core of liberal democracy, which is based on hope rather than fear. In theory, the free pursuit of truth fosters strong citizens able to rise above the forces of unreason. Such strength is an integral part of democracy. Prof. Gitlin cited the journalist Fareed Zakaria who addressed in 1997 the problem of "illiberal democracy," arguing that liberal democracy means not only free elections, but also the rule of law, the separation of powers, freedom of expression and freedom of religion. Accordingly, a democracy that is not liberal, lacks equality and is actually not a democracy.

Like the media and democracy, academia can be imperiled in many ways. To his mind, thoughtfulness is currently embattled in the US and therefore Prof. Gitlin is alarmed about the notion that speech can be violence and therefore must be curbed, that faculty members can "hurt" "delicate" students and therefore tolerance must be rejected. "No Free Speech" read a sign that Prof. Gitlin saw at his own university. At universities and colleges, teachers and students should defend the right to express any opinion, even unpopular ones. One should remember that education is not the search for a *safe* space but a brave one, a space where people are not afraid of hard questions, do not fear exploring different forms of argument, and are always looking for logic and evidence. Freedom needs to be practiced 360 degrees around.

Addressing the issue of the ethics code in Israel, Prof. Gitlin pointed out that the threat is gravest if it comes as state censorship, prohibiting faculty members to promote their political opinions in their lectures and to support an academic boycott of Israel. That means it is forbidden to hold an opinion; that is actually an infantilization, where faculty members are servants of state power, and the university is meant to "supervise" that position. Criticizing Prof. Asa Kasher's guidelines, Prof. Gitlin argued that he sees this as a kind of "conquest" of the university, a demagogic attempt to fight against academic freedom. Citing the American Association of University Professors, "No educator – at any academic level, anywhere in the world – should be told what to say or what to think. Such a proposal is the antithesis of critical thinking and democratic principles." Israeli universities have to be a safe haven for intellectual curiosity and serious study, and should not try to control faculty members' political opinions or their ability to instruct students in their respective fields of expertise.

Prof. Gitlin concluded his lecture on a personal note, saying that he is one of the initiators of an open letter signed by some 70 American academics who reject a boycott of Israel proper, but support a boycott of the settlements and everything Israeli that is beyond the Green Line. He noted that for this letter he could have been turned back at Ben-Gurion Airport, but according to Prof. Asa Kasher's guidelines, his lecture at this conference would be forbidden. ◈

Jama'a Vol. 23

The Interdisciplinary Journal for Middle East Studies Jama'a is marking its 20th year – a considerable achievement for a Hebrew-based, peer-reviewed, academic journal. Since its first issue came out in 1998, Jama'a has offered a unique platform for publication to graduate students and young scholars, alongside with continual publication of articles by established researchers. In its twenty years in publication (and counting), Jama'a – which is sponsored by The Chaim Herzog Center – has positioned itself as a leading Hebrew journal in the field of Middle East Studies, enabling Hebrew readers (students and the general public alike) to access cutting-edge studies in the History, Sociology, Anthropology, Language, and Literature of the Middle East. For faculty members, the journal serves as a valuable indicator of what the younger generation of scholars is engaged in, and contributes to the creation of a vivid academic community studying the Middle East. The forthcoming volume of Jama'a, no. 23 (Autumn 2017) will be the first to be published exclusively as an e-journal, allowing free and unlimited access to the current volume (as well as previous volumes) via the Jama'a website.

Volume 23 will contain three original articles. Ehud Mano'rs article, "'The Refugee Problem Will Occupy a Central Place': Zionist-Labourite Politics, 1917-1942" offers a new discussion about two largely forgotten episodes of Zionist-Socialist diplomacy which took place during the World Wars. Through his comprehensive discussion of these affairs, Manor aims to show that, contrary to certain critiques, the founding principles of Zionism were not opposed but consistent with universal, progressive, and humanist principles that sprung from the Enlightenment. The second article, by Maksim Yosefi, is titled "The Religious Establishment's Attitude towards Poets and Poetry in the First Centuries of Islam: A Textual Discussion". In this article, Yosefi engages in an intricate analysis of the factors that shaped the social image of poets in Arab society, both before the emergence of Islam and during the first centuries of its rapid expansion. Through his discussion of the social and religious challenges that poets supposedly posed to the emerging new religion of Islam, Yosefi explores the significance of poetry not only as a textual or speech style, but as an ideological apparatus embedded in Islamic thought. The third article is by Roy Marom, titled "Research Approaches in the Research of Early Islam: The Hijrah in Western Historiography". Marom's article, which formerly won the journal's annual contest for young scholars, deals with the various and competing ways in which Western scholars view the Hijrah and the challenges that research of this field has undergone. By looking into changing paradigms and

contested narratives, Marom offers a fresh analysis of Western historiography of the Hijrah in the last decades.

Volume 23 will also feature a Hebrew translation of Ann Laura Stoler's seminal article 'Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance' (2002). An introduction to this translated article will be provided by Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli, locating Stoler's research in Postcolonial studies and offering an intriguing discussion which deals with both the significance and complexities of Stoler's works.

This volume will contain an expanded review section, featuring six reviews of recent English and Hebrew publications. The reviews, as all other content publish in Jama'a volumes, will be available for free reading and downloading in our renewed website, at: http://in.bgu.ac.il/humsos/jamaa/Pages/default.aspx. Please visit us also on our Academia.edu profile: http://bgu.academia.edu/Jama'aJournal

The Chaim Herzog Center Annual Scholarships Award

2016

MA Thesis

- **Nahed Ashkar Sharary**, The Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
  Islamic feminism challenges among Arab Activists Muslims women in Israel

- **Amit Sadan**, The Department of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
  A Tale of Two Cities: The Bam Earthquake (2003) and State-Press Relations in Iran

PH.D Dissertations

- **Maya de Vries**, The Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
  Social Media within Disadvantaged Communities in Intractable Conflict Zones: The Case Study of Palestinians in East Jerusalem

- **Tajread Keadan**, The Department of Middle East Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
  The Organization of Democratic Women in Israel: Feminism, Liberalism, and Communism Under One Roof

2017

MA Thesis

- **Shaked Afek**, The Department of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
  Reza Shah's 1934 Visit to Kemalist Turkey and the Iranian Urban Middle Class

PH.D Dissertations

- **Khadir Sawaed**, School of Political Sciences, University of Haifa.
  The Effect of Stateness on Democratic Consolidation: A Comparative Study of Tunisia and Egypt after 'The Arab Spring'

Sigal Goorji, Tajread Keadan, Yoram Meital, Nahed Ashkar Sharary

Yoram Meital, Sarab Abu-Rabia, Nahed Ashkar Sharary, Alean al-Krenawi

A Concert by The Arab Jewish Orchestra

NEWSLETTER 2016

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- **Atar David**, Assistant

Conferences (Selected)

November 15, 2016
Albuquerque and the Neck of Venice: On the "Oceanic Turn" in Middle East Studies, Lecture by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite

December 21, 2016
Conference: Urbanism, Planning and Muslim Societies

December 21, 2016
The Chaim Herzog Center Annual Scholarships Award

January 8-9, 2017
International Workshop: The Middle East Reconfigured: World History and the Middle East

January 25, 2017
Symposium: Umm al-Hiran: On Rights and Principles

January 25, 2017
Nationalism, Anti-Nationalism and Rebellion: Options of Modern Jewish Identities in Arab-Muslim Societies, Homage to Simon Lévy

March 22, 2017
Conference: Centennial of Jacqueline Kahanoff's Birthday

March 29, 2017
A Concert by The Arab Jewish Orchestra

April 25, 2017
Book Event: Nina B. Lichtenstein, Sephardic Women's Voices Out of North Africa

May 9, 2017
Book Event: Nation, Language and Literature among Minorities, The Case of Lebanon

May 14, 2017
Robert St. John Prize Ceremony
Lecture by the 2017 Recipient Jonathan Ferziger, Bloomberg News
"Truth Under Siege: Reporting in the Age of Alternative Facts"

May 14, 2017
Symposium: The Future of Iraq as a State and as a Nation after ISIS

June 21, 2017
Conference: The Battle over Syria, Past, Present, and Future

June 27, 2017
International Conference: Academia and Media under Siege