ABSTRACTS

Moshe Dayan and the Palestinian Issue:
The Local Elections in the West Bank, 1972

Ronen Traube

This article examines the 1972 West Bank local elections as the most significant political gesture made by Dayan towards the Palestinians during his tenure as defense minister. The article has two goals: first, to describe for the first time the decision-making process on the Israeli side that led to the decision to hold the elections, while focusing on the motives and considerations behind it; and second, to use Dayan's political logic as revealed in this episode to provide insight into his overall political conception of the Palestinian issue.

The main argument of the essay is that Dayan did not envision that the mayors would play a role in conducting negotiations to achieve a peace settlement, which he viewed as not being very likely in the foreseeable future. Rather, he assigned the mayors a major role in creating a reality of quiet and normalcy in the West Bank that would enable Israel to gradually shape – both politically and practically – a reality that would suit its purposes. He was aware that the mayors could not be recruited to a process that would not give the Palestinians self-determination, but nonetheless believed that their personal interests could turn them, whether consciously or unconsciously, into players with a role in promoting Israel's goals as he perceived them.

Keywords: Mayors, Moshe Dayan, Municipal Elections, Palestinians, West Bank

The Religious Women Party in the First Knesset Elections: Failure or Achievement?

Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman

In January 1949, the first elections were held in the State of Israel. Two women's parties participated: WIZO and the Zionist-religious women (the PD list) which received thousands of votes but did not pass the threshold to enter the Knesset.

The participation and failure of the PD list provoked a stir in the religious sector. This essay traces the fascinating story of the PD list – the women's motives and goals, the causes of their electoral failure, and society's attitude towards the party. These elements are bound up with the identity of the religious woman and her status at that time, as well as the complex gender perception in the religious sector. Furthermore, the PD list serves as a starting point for a discussion of the idea of a 'women's party', which is a source of debate among researchers and the public in general.

The PD list shared characteristics with women's parties everywhere (women organizers, a lack of resources, society's reservations, the conflict between national or party interests and gender interests, etc.). However, it also had unique characteristics. Thus, it was founded by religious women who had been excluded from the religious party list. It had a new feminine identity, but nonetheless placed the religious-Zionist idea above feminine interests, which contributed significantly to its failure. And it suffered from the inherent paradox in a religious woman's identity, which tried to include the new but also to preserve the old. Finally, the experience of the PD list demonstrates that the presence or absence of a feminist consciousness among women plays a crucial role in the success of a women's party.

Keywords: Elections, Feminine Identity, Gender, Intersectionality, Religious Zionism, the State of Israel, Women, Women's Party

Ben-Gurion and Britain, 1930-1939

Meir Chazan

Ben-Gurion's stance on Britain and its Palestine policy fluctuated during the 1930s. In the beginning and end of the decade – in view of the Passfield and MacDonald White Papers – Ben-Gurion claimed that the Zionist "State in the Making" had no chance of attaining its coveted goal with the Mandate Government's assistance. But during the decade, Ben-Gurion became Britain's greatest devotee and key enthusiast in the *Yishuv's* political arena. No other politician, especially in the Mapai leadership, expressed his support of Britain more emphatically and explicitly than Ben-Gurion. Throughout the three-year long security threat of the Arab Revolt, he chose to predicate the advancement of the Zionist project on alliance with Britain. The article examines the dilemmas that Ben-Gurion faced in this decade, in particular vis-à-vis Arthur Wauchope, the British High Commissioner, and his reasons for believing that Jewish interests lay in strengthening British control over Palestine.

Keywords: Aliyah, Arab Revolt, British Mandate, David Ben-Gurion, Mapai, Zionism

'Talmud Industry': *Daf Yomi* and Modern Consumer Culture

Yair Berlin

The *Daf Yomi* (literally 'page of the day') program – in which people around the world study the same page of the *Babylonian Talmud* every day – was founded nearly a century ago as one of the flagship initiatives of the Orthodox *Agudath Yisrael* movement and has been in continuous use since then. Despite its wide popularity and its long history, *Daf Yomi* has received almost no research attention. This essay seeks to analyze *Daf Yomi's* cultural messages, which facilitated its widespread acceptance in ultra-Orthodox Judaism. The main thesis presented is that *Daf Yomi* has created a unique practice of regularly reading the Talmud, which designates the Talmudic page as an object suitable for popular consumption. As part of this process – alongside the preservation and adaptation of the 'classic' characteristics of Torah study – the study of the *Daf Yomi* also invokes values and connotations that characterize modern culture, and consumer culture in particular,

such as globalization and the positive value implicit in the linear progression of time. As an extension of the modern view of time seen in the *Daf Yomi*, the essay proposes a link between the ethos of Torah study as reflected in the *Daf Yomi* and Weber's 'spirit of capitalism'.

Keywords: Capitalism, Consumer culture, Globalization, the History of reading, Modernity, Talmud, Time, Torah study, Ultra-Orthodox

Palestine, My Love: Place and Home in the Literary Works of Sayed Kashua

Adia Mendelson Maoz

Kashua's spatial biography moves in ever-expanding circles, which slowly grow apart, as he lets the reader travel with him between his home in Tira – his birth place and where his family lives to this day – and other locations in Israel and elsewhere. In his books, newspaper columns, and television series, this movement is interlinked with the attempt to understand the nature of home, in both the private and public domains.

This article explores the concepts of place and home in the literary works of Sayed Kashua. In his first book, *Dancing Arabs* (2002), Kashua already constructs the concept of home from two interwoven circles: the private-concrete and the national-ideal. While the first is related to the personal and intimate, the latter is linked to the state of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. These two orbits are distinctly and critically expressed in each of Kashua's works and provide a spatial perception of the texts. *In Let it be Morning* (2004), space is manifested in the form of dystopia. *Second Person Singular* (2010) explores the possibility and complexity of leaving home behind, and *Track Changes* (2017) describes the choice of exile. The vicissitudes of the concept of home on the personal and national levels underscore an important trajectory in his writings about Israeli-Palestinian identity and place Kashua at a key poetic and political intersection.

Keywords: Sayed Kashua, Space, Place, Home, Diaspora, Palestine

Ethnography of Ethiopian *Sigd* in an Israeli Reform Congregation

Elazar Ben Lulu

Sigd is a holiday of the Ethiopian Jewish community, known as Beta Israel. The name of the holiday is derived from the Hebrew word for prostration (*sgida*). During *Sigd*, which is celebrated on the 29th of the Hebrew month of Heshvan – 50 days after Yom Kippur – the community marks the renewal of the covenant between the Jewish people, God and His Torah. On *Sigd*, Ethiopian Jews pray to God and plead for Him to return them to Zion.

Today, after most members of the Ethiopian Jewish community have made aliyah to the State of Israel, the holiday serves as an annual gathering of the entire Ethiopian community, and its members view it as an opportunity to strengthen the connection with their roots and culture. Indeed, non-Ethiopian communities, organizations and community centers celebrate *Sigd* in order to respect and support Ethiopian tradition.

In this article, I describe an innovative project of collaboration between the Israeli Reform movement and the Ethiopian community, while focusing on a shared celebration of *Sigd* in the Yuval congregation, an Israeli Reform congregation located in Gedera. The congregants' responses to the *Sigd*, especially those of the women who organized it, demonstrates that not only does this collaboration emerge from a liberal landscape of cultural inclusion and gender recognition, it also embodies a criticism of attitudes that reject and resist non-Western values.

Keywords: Ethiopian, Feminism, Jews, Israeli Reform congregation, Ritual, *Sigd*

The Americanization of Muscular Judaism

Udi Carmi

The term 'muscular Judaism', coined by Max Nordau in the late 19th century, has been interpreted in different ways. For Nordau, the image of a Jew standing strong and tall was a response to the anti-Semites and the Jews' unmet aspirations for a national home. Muscular Judaism in practical terms translated into excellence in sports. As athletes, the Jews could make their mark and move from the fringes of society into the mainstream. This concept evolved over the years, reflecting changing times, shifts in global thinking, political developments and new national

ambitions. After the establishment of the State, Israeli society underwent a process of Americanization that brought with it a new perception of muscular Judaism and body image. This article discusses three physical fitness trends that redefined the concept of muscular Judaism: gym training, bodybuilding and catch wrestling. These were rooted in the American aesthetic ideal, a far cry from the socialist ideology and collective worldview prevalent in Israel. Our principal argument is that muscular Judaism, as an aesthetic phenomenon shaped in gyms and scripted catch wrestling, heralded the onset of Americanization in Israeli society earlier than is generally accepted in Israeli historiography.

Keywords: Body image, Body building, Freestyle wrestling (catch), Gyms, 'Muscular Judaism'

Jews from Islamic Countries – Images and Perceptions in the *Yishuv* Society: The Case of Hannah Helena Thon

Itamar Radai

Hannah Helena Thon was born in Germany and immigrated to Palestine in the early 1920s. A pioneer in social work, she was also an activist and leader in women's organizations, a journalist and an essayist who published widely on various issues in *Yishuv* life. She came into close contact with Jews from the Islamic countries who at that time constituted 20%-25% of the *Yishuv*. She became preoccupied with their economic, social, and cultural situation and was considered to be an expert on this sector. Thon left behind a personal archive which alongside her essays as a publicist makes it possible to examine the perceptions and images of Jews from Islamic countries in her writings, as a case study of the views of the *Yishuv* mainstream. While Thon's activity in social work is worthy of praise, her writing reflects perceptions (prevalent in her time) of European supremacy over the 'Orient', as well as generalizations and superficial stereotypes. These culminated in a discriminatory dichotomy between poor people of European origin and poor people from Islamic countries. This rift, which already existed under the Mandate, cast its shadow over Thon's writing and other activities. Nonetheless, her attitude not only reflected the *Zeitgeist*, but also played a role in its emergence.

Keywords: Culture, Education, Hannah Helena Thon, Jews of Islamic countries, Palestine, Social Work, Women, the *Yishuv*

Haifa and Beirut in a Comparative Perspective: Jewish Entrepreneurship between the British and the French Mandates

Orly C. Meron

This study compares and contrasts the Jewish entrepreneurs working under colonial rule in Beirut and Haifa towards the end of the first decade of the neighboring French and British mandates. The patterns of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurial activity were influenced by local mandatory economic policies that created different opportunities.

The French economy leaned toward opportunities in regional trade and services, while the British supported an industrial and military environment. Entrepreneurial activity was also based on the ethnic composition of the two native populations, and the different skills, whether commercial or industrial, that Jewish immigrants brought with them.

Beirut's Jewish entrepreneurs during the first decade of the French mandate operated within a multicultural environment led by the dominant ethnic Christian community, who had developed an urban commercial tradition. Jewish entrepreneurs operated in a relatively limited range of sectors, mainly concentrated in the banking and commercial trading services. Unlike Muslim dominated colonial states, where Jews served as intermediaries between the majority local population and the Western colonial regime in the early mandatory period, the French government in Beirut did not need French-speaking Jewish go-betweens. The sectorial structure of Jewish businesses in Beirut was also influenced by the size of the Jewish population and its relative proportion in the local ethnic mix. The dominant Christian majority in Beirut's cosmopolitan population made the Jews' traditional functions as middlemen superfluous.

Under the British mandate in Eretz Israel, where the entrepreneurial environment was relatively open, Jewish immigrants behaved like a 'national majority' even before the Jewish community became a majority among the population. Unlike in Beirut, the Jewish entrepreneurs who settled in Haifa came from Eastern Europe, mainly Poland, where they had experienced industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were well equipped to introduce new manufacturing opportunities in and around Haifa Bay. The combination of their professional skills and the pro-industrial policy of the British mandatory authorities led to the urban expansion of Haifa, particularly in the area of heavy industry. These Jewish

entrepreneurs laid down Haifa's industrial foundations during the period before the determination of rigid borders between the new nation-states.

Establishing the Israel State Archives, 1948-1950

Kobi Cohen-Hattab

The creation of a national archive or the reorganization of existing ones is commonly viewed as a significant step toward the creation of a nation-state. Archival documents can be highly significant in shaping the attitude of the emergent national culture toward its past. Indeed, the place of the archive in modern national movements and nation-states and its contribution to the shaping of a new collective identity are attracting increasing interest in the research community. Particularly interesting in the context of the State of Israel is the fact that some months after the establishment of the State in 1948, a decision was made to establish the State Archives, although the Central Zionist Archives had already existed for many years and enjoyed a dominant position in the preservation of national documents.

The aim of this essay is to analyze the discourse surrounding the establishment of the State Archives, as reflected in a process referred to as "Transition from the Zionist Community (*Yishuv*) to a State". The scholarly discourse on this issue touches on some of the basic aspects of the emergent Israeli society, which in its early years confronted questions of statehood, the attitude towards its Jewish and Zionist roots, the shaping of Israeli identity, and the construction of a collective-national consciousness. In order to bring these questions into focus vis-à-vis the *yishuv*-to-state transition, the essay will discuss the decision to establish the State Archives and will explore two of its main outcomes: the fact that it ignored the centrality and importance of the Central Zionist Archives by creating a State-operated archive; and its impact on the Central Zionist Archives and what insights that can provide regarding the transition from *yishuv* to state.