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### The Rise and Fall of the National Poet

Avner Holtzman

This article addresses two principal questions: why was Haim Nahman Bialik unanimously recognized as the Hebrew national poet in so short a time after the publication of his first poems and why did Hebrew culture refuse to bestow the title on other candidates in the following generations?

The article identifies seven stages of Bialik's national canonization and discusses the complex interplay of several factors: the audience's needs in the dramatic era of prestate nation-building; Bialik's unique talent that appeared in the right place at the right time; developments in his writing that catapulted him to prophetic stature; his involvement in public affairs that expanded his spiritual authority far beyond the literary domain; an enhanced mythologizing process enhanced after his death; and so forth.

The magnitude of the Bialik myth was such that it left no room for competition. The developing national community apparently did not need and could not tolerate more than one national poet to serve as the symbolic focus of its self-image, beliefs, desires and links to the past. However, the last part of the article suggests an alternative candidate for the title of "Hebrew national poet".

In the Light of Darkness:  
The Satiric Mode in Nathan Alterman's Journalistic Poetry

Gidi Nevo

Natan Alterman, Poet Laureate of the Yishuv (the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine) and early decades of Israel, is not generally acknowledged as a satiric writer. The two contexts in which the term "satire" or adjective "satirical" are applied to his work relate to his last book, the novel *Hamasecha Ha'achronah* (*The Last Masque*) – a marginal, almost eccentric oeuvre – and the lighthearted ditties he penned for "Hakumkum" ("The Kettle") and "Li La Lo" theatres.

While the term "satire" is not entirely absent from the criticism of his journalistic poetry – "Rega'im" ("Moments") and "Hatur Hashvi'i" ("The Seventh Column") – it is generally not emphasized and the works' satirical content and import generally remain unacknowledged and unanalyzed.

The article contends that the satirical mode is a central feature in Alterman's journalistic poetry, one in which he displays prodigious dexterity, exemplifying his rich, versatile, and often virtuosic capabilities. It discusses the major rhetorical, prosodic, thematic, and historical components of this mode, which, together with Alterman's prophetic and discursive modes, form the largest, most popular, and most influential body of topical verse in Modern Hebrew literature.

In Search of the Local Feminine Self:  
Reading Shulamith Hareven

Yaffah Berlovitz

In 2002 Shulamith Hareven published her perplexing book *Many Days, An Autobiography*. Throughout her literary career she refused to expose her private life despite the requests of critics and scholars. Therefore it was not surprising that this autobiography, which chronologically outlines her life story through fragments of previously published poems, novels, short stories and essays, undermined the conventional genre.

The article takes a multidisciplinary approach in analyzing Hareven's unique autobiography within the field of life-story research. It also investigates Hareven's

local feminine poetics, as well as the alternate identities that run through her works (such as “Canaanite”, “Jewish-Sephardic”, and “Levantine”) in which she sought a local feminine identity for herself.

## The Holocaust of Greek Jews in the Cultural and Literary Discourse

Batya Shimony

The article discusses in historic-poetic terms the Holocaust of Greek Jews in the collective memory of Israeli society. Historical and political explanations are given for the exclusion of Greek Jews from the Holocaust narrative despite many attempts by Greek survivors to organize and bring their story to the general public. The article offers a new perspective that examines the internal development and relative strength of the first and second generation survivors.

In the 1980s, two cultural milestones occurred: Samuel Raphael established the “Division of the Next Generation” and founded the periodical, *We Shall Not Forget*, that pays tribute to the Greek survivors; and, following the production of Yehuda Poliker’s father’s story in Auschwitz, “Ashes and Dust”, Orna Ben-Dor directed the film, “Because of That War”.

The article looks at the influence of and price paid by the “next generation” for having raised public awareness of the Holocaust of Greece’s Jews in the Israeli cultural and literary discourse.

## Narratives of a Conflict

Mordechai Bar-On

In the past two decades, a number of Palestinian and Israeli historians and activists have tried to bridge, or at least narrow, the gap between the each side’s depiction of the history of the conflict and description of the other’s role in perpetuating enmity and mutual hatred. These attempts have been made in the belief that the reconciliation of antagonistic narratives is a precondition for appeasement.

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The first part clarifies terms, classifies narrative types, and discusses the complex interrelationship between collective and popular narrative and academic historiography.

The main body of the article focuses on the attempts to bridge over the conflicting narratives. The value of these experiments is explored. Also discussed are experiments at peace education to promote universal humanistic values and the efforts by authors, neither Israeli nor Palestinian, to write a “neutral narrative”. The main conclusion is that bridging over the conflicting narratives fails as a precondition for peace-making, though it may eventually be an outcome of conciliation. Nevertheless, such a dialogue seems to be valuable in awakening each party to the other’s point of view. Finally, certain aspects of the enemy’s narrative are presented that should be challenged in the ongoing attempt to explore the conflicting positions.

### Shas and Rabbai Ovadia Yossef’s Political Leverage

Nissim Leon

Israeli sociologists often view Shas as a party that exploits the seemingly pragmatic position of its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yossef, on political issues in order to maneuver between the right-wing and left-wing in Israeli politics. According to these scholars, Shas’s presence in the government is vital to the party’s retention of power status. Be this as it may, I claim that Shas should be seen as sitting on the cusp of a fundamental dilemma, over which the party’s spiritual leadership vacillates: should it assume responsibility for leading the entire population or limit itself to its own sector and the religious-political agenda that it champions?

The key to this question can be found in Rabbi Yossef’s position on major political issues. This paper examines three of his basic positions that have political significance: his view of halakha (Jewish religious law) as a restraining factor on revolutionary change; his opposition to radical messianism; and his development of an ethnic, nationalistic stance. All three put Shas in an independent position that makes it an alternative to the haredi (ultra-orthodox) and religious-Zionist agendas.

## The Struggle of the Arab Countries against the Israeli-German Reparations Agreement, 1952-1953

Jacob Tovy

In the spring of 1951, Israel and West Germany began secret talks on Israel's claim for reparations for the Holocaust. These contacts were first publicized in March 1952. In September the two sides signed a reparations agreement – in which Bonn undertook to pay approximately \$822 million to Jerusalem, in the form of various commodities, over the course of twelve years.

The Arab countries were outraged: the contribution to Israel's economy and, thus, its physical strength and survival was anathema to them. Their campaign to torpedo the agreement peaked in the winter of 1952-1953, just as the Bundestag was nearing its approval. The Arabs' primary argument related to the Palestinian refugee problem: since Israel had not compensated the Palestinian refugees, it should not receive reparations for the Holocaust. The link between these two events minimized the significance of the Holocaust, demonstrated the Arabs' flagrant contempt toward Jewish suffering, and even implied that its historical veracity was specious.

The Bonn leadership, and especially Chancellor Adenauer, was unwilling, on the basis of Arab political machinations, to renege on Germany's moral account that it owed the Jewish people.

## 1948 in Jerusalem: Diaries, Letters, and History

Anita Shapira

The history of Israel's 1948 War of Independence is a topic dealt with by professional historians, the media, and veterans of the period. The memory of the battles is mediated by various memory agents whose perceptions of the war have been defined and mitigated through the prism of time, the novels they read, films they see, and stories they hear.

The article describes the war from a contemporary view: how the men and women who actually experienced the trauma perceived what was happening at the time, and how they interpreted the events that they witnessed and their own reactions to the harsh reality. It is based on the letters and journals of fourteen people: men,

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women, youth, adults, native-born, new immigrants, and Holocaust survivors. The location and time: Jerusalem, from December 1947 to July 1948 (for most of this period the Jewish part of the city was besieged and isolated).

The letters and diaries convey claustrophobia, anxiety, fear, existential tension, and the breakdown of solidarity; on the other hand, they also reveal determination, resilience, heroism, and simple humanity toward the weak, the victims, and even the enemy.

### “Analysis-, Spy-, and Instrument-Based Early Warnings”: the Changing Concept of Early Warning in the 1950s

Shay Hershkovitz & David Siman-Tov

Israel’s national security doctrine considers early warning a strategic asset that provides the military with the option of operating preemptively with a small conscript army and relatively large reserve layout. The article discusses the role of early warning in Israel’s first decades, based on recently declassified documentation. After establishing a theoretical framework of three early warning environments (strategic, operative, and tactical), we contend that until the 1956 Sinai Campaign, strategic warning was the primary concept in IDF strategic and operative planning. The intelligence assessment that another Arabic attack (in the wake of the Arabs’ 1948 invasion), was not expected, and the recognition of the limitations of operative early warning, led Israel to base its military response on strategic and tactical early warning.

Only after the Sinai Campaign, and the geopolitical changes in its aftermath and developments in IDF intelligence collecting, did operative early warning gain supremacy. However, while the operative early warning concept became an established element in strategic and operational planning, it was progressively relegated to intelligence gathering only.

## The Perception of Female Sexuality in Israel's Rabbinical Courts

Yakir Englander

The article examines the rulings of Israel's Rabbinic Court on women who claim their right to receive a *get* (divorce agreement) on the grounds of "loss of interest in the sexual encounter" with their husband. I argue that the current rulings are influenced by the rabbis' concept of female sexuality.

The first part briefly reviews the salient *halachic* milestones in the "loss of sexual interest", based on the rabbis' concept of a "reasonable wife".

The main part of the article focuses on the changes in Israel's rabbinic courts regarding the rulings on the "loss of interest". Various legal opinions are analyzed. A close reading of rabbinic jurisprudence shows that while the "loss of interest" claim was introduced in the Talmudic period to protect the woman, today's rabbinic judges approach the issue with total disregard for the sexual needs of the woman and her marital role. Instead, they have created a new category of "loss of interest", which is defined solely by the husband's behavior, without any reference to the woman or her needs.

## The Absorption of Immigrants from Muslim Countries in the Kibbutz, 1948-1954

Rachel Cohen-Friedheim

During 1948-1954, most of the new immigrants from Moslem countries came with their families. Very few wanted to live in a kibbutz (collective agrarian settlement), where members worked on the Sabbath, the food was not kosher, the children slept in special children's houses away from the parents, and labor was without salary. But the kibbutzim did absorb a larger number of Jewish youth from Moslem countries, financing the outlay on their own because Aliyat Hanoar (the department in the Jewish Agency that brought Jewish youth to Israel) refused to pay for the education of youngsters who were not orphans.

After 1951 most of the new immigrants arriving in Israel were youngsters without families. Many of them were absorbed in the kibbutzim. Most did not stay long, leaving after a few months. The study also shows that the religious kibbutzim were most reluctant to accept immigrant youth from Moslem countries.

## The Common Grave and the History of the Jewish Cemetery in Beersheba

Elan Galper

The article deals with the history of the “common grave” of nine people. Most of the interred were Jewish workers and tradesmen who were conscripted into service for the Turkish army and lost their lives in a British air attack on the Beer Sheva railway station in World War I. The gravesite may be regarded as a memorial to the tragedy in which sixteen Jewish workers were killed and also as a symbol of the devotion of their families to their memory through the upkeep of the burial grounds. In a larger sense, the common grave may also be seen as a symbol of Jewish determination to maintain a presence in the Negev. The attempt to purchase the site and protect it from vandalism continued up until the War of Independence. The location of the grave and the ongoing efforts of the families and Jewish institutions on its behalf were major factors in determining the location of Beer Sheva’s Jewish cemetery after 1948.

The site is now maintained by the Beer Sheva municipality and remains a focus of pilgrimage for the offspring of the deceased.

## School Administration and Gender in Eretz-Israel in the Late Ottoman Period, 1889-1914

Zipora Shehory-Rubin

The feminization of school administration has generated keen interest in education management research since the 1970s. The study of women in administrative positions, which started in the USA and continued to Western Europe, has produced an extensive literature that focuses on women in management in general and schools in particular.

Sadly, other than two of my papers on the subject in the Yishuv (the Jewish community in prestate Israel) not a single historical study has been forthcoming on the management style of women principals in the period when Hebrew education was being established in Eretz Israel.

The article focuses on four pioneering female heads of girls’ schools in the urban sector during the waning years of Ottoman rule – 1889-1914: their backgrounds



and personalities; their criteria in being chosen to run schools; their ability to secure their status as educational leaders in a world still largely dominated by males; their defining attitude as principals of girls' schools; and their success in turning their schools into influential educational institutions that paved the way for girls' education in the burgeoning Jewish society in prestate Israel.

### Ethnic Politics and National Struggle: The American Political Arena and the Eretz-Israel Question in the 1940s

Zohar Segev

Using American Zionist documents to show how the Jewish vote was brought to bear on the 1944 presidential elections and mid-term elections in 1946, the article broadens the background in earlier research. It also reveals the basic difficulties that American Zionist leaders faced in mobilizing the Jewish vote, and how they coped with the complex challenges of American ethnic politics in the 1940s.

Documents of American Zionist leaders from this period show that the political use of the Jewish vote, which was so simple and natural to the WZO and Zionist establishment in Palestine, put the Americans in predicament. It began with the need to conceal its political agenda and went on to put the political and social identity of some of the American Zionist leaders on a collision course with the ethnic vote in the United States political arena. Despite these reservations, the American Zionist leadership had to unite the Jewish vote, which played a major role in influencing government activity on Palestine.

### The Concept of 'Responsibility' and the Need for a Renewed Reading of Hannah Arendt's Perception of Anti-Semitism

Shalom Ratzabi

The article's two main aims are to reread Hannah Arendt's thinking on Antisemitism and suggest a new link between her writing on the Jewish people, Jewishness, Judaism, Jewish history, Antisemitism, and her activity in various Zionist

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frameworks such as “Ihud”. It opens with an examination of Arendt’s thinking on Antisemitism in Jewish and Zionist historiography, and then confronts it with her writings on the subject. For example, Arendt claims that a difference exists between nineteenth-century Antisemitism and Nazi Antisemitism.

The second part of the article discusses the importance of phenomenology in the reconstruction of subversive currents in history and “responsibility” in Arendt’s thinking, and especially their connection to her research in Jewish history and Antisemitism.

## The New Antisemitism

Ilan Gur-Zeev

The new Antisemitism expresses an innovation in human existence under the rubric of post-metaphysics. It would be a tragic omission to view it as a watershed in the history of Israel alone. In the West it is part of the meta-narrative of the “new” (post-humanistic) progressivism. Criticism of Israel and opposition to its existence has a special status in the general criticism of Western civilization.

On the one the hand, the new Antisemitism is a progressive alternative to the postmodern joy machine; on the other, it is enlistment into the ranks of World Jihad. It can be seen as a kind of religious force with existential, philosophical and political implications for capitalist globalization and postmodern prosperity. Its powerful spirituality despises Jewish spirit and the essence of Judeo-Christian civilization. It provides an instinctual matrix and serves as an ecstatic altar to a world that thrives on all-conquering relativism, fragmentation, commercialism, and cynicism. Far from being a misguided radical domain, a passing fad or perversion, the new Antisemitism is a challenge that must be confronted. Dealing with it presents the Jewish people with an updated version of its universal task in human revival, one that is both noble and nigh to impossible to realize.

## Who's Afraid of 'A Jewish People'?

Ya'acov Shavit

Shlomo Sand's *The Invention of the Jewish People* has generated both political use and abuse. The question is: does it offer new revelations of unexplored primary material or is its goal to deny the Jewish people the right to a sovereign state? The book's unprecedented popularity may be due to a ready-made audience that believes that the commonly accepted narrative of Jewish history is indeed an invented construct. Therefore, there is room to delve into the author's qualifications and historical methods.

The three basic assumptions of Sand's "theory of origins" are scrutinized: 1) the Jews are not a "people", 2) they lack ethnic continuity in their unfolding history; 3) as such they hardly qualify as a "nation". His thesis is thus reduced to the claim that post-Second Temple Jews were nothing but a mixed multitude of "Judaizers" with no common ethnic denominator, possessing no cultural continuity with First Temple Jewry.

At its core *The Invention of the Jewish People* can be said to offer a radical counter-myth to the origins of the Jewish people, based on a selective reading of select chapters in Jewish history and relying solely on secondary material. In this light, it should hardly be considered the last word in either political or scholarly matters.