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The Problem of Jewish Identity as a Historical Process

Eliezer Schweid

This paper studies the development of the problem of Jewish unity and of Jewish collective self-identification since the middle of the 18th Century to our own days. We start with the effects of Emancipation: A conflict between diverse variations of cultural-national definitions of Judaism versus religious definitions. We then point to the following three periods of radical crises in which the developing major changes in economical, social, political and cultural conditions brought about not only more variations of conflicting ideological movements and parties, but also new ways of understanding the scope, the meaning, the intensity and the obligative power of collective Jewish self identity as such.

1. Started in the last decades of the 19th Century and culminated in World War I. Reacting against the disappointment from the cultural success of Emancipation, because of anti-Semitism and the collapse of Liberalism and Humanism, it brought about two antagonistic revolutionary moves towards socialism, either as a way of mass assimilation, or towards Zionism as a way to re-shape a new global secular Jewish self-identity.
2. Started in the late Twenties and culminated in the Holocaust, followed by the establishment of the State of Israel. Out of the traumatic, 'unprecedented' historical events emerged a new type of Jewish Unity, yet only to cause the establishment of two new conflicting 'families' of clashing Jewish self identities, one in Israel and one in the Diaspora. This process culminated in the emergence of both the religio-political and the psychological-existential problem of 'Who is a Jew?' on the personal individual level.
3. Started with the emancipation of Russian Jewry through to the collapse of the Communist regime. It revealed a new type of 'elastic' personal and communal Jewish self-identity, and started to change the balance of influences between Israel and the Diaspora as well as between religious and secular Jewish communities in Israel, which means the challenge of a new

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'cross-roads' between the possibility of a pluralistic unity of a people, on the basis of a broad cultural frame of inter-relationships, or a definite break-down of any basic form of Jewish unity in the fast approaching future.

Zionist Responses to the Partition Plan (1937) – and the *Haganah*

Elhannan Orren

The Peel Plan for partition presented a twofold challenge to the Zionist movement: How to respond politically to the plan and what practical steps to take, especially in the extension of settlement and in the adoption of more active tactics of defence.

In anticipation of some Jewish–Arab partition, early in 1937 a senior *Haganah* planner drew up an outline for the defence of the Jewish regions and an eventual expansion to the Jordan, with the buildup of an army. This premature 'Avner Plan' was overtaken by the publication, in July 1937, of the Peel Plan, which provided for a continued British presence in the country.

With the Peel Plan in view, the main problems of defence were the establishment of a military system and its financing. A joint committee of the Jewish Agency and the *Haganah* formulated a plan and a budget for a brigade and a frontier-guard, to be backed up by the local *Haganah* militia (Capt. Wingate submitted a similar plan of his own to Weizmann.)

As a problem on the regional level, on Mt. Carmel, the *Haganah* had to prove its ability to maintain the isolated and exposed Ya'arot-Hacarmel, in support of its claim to have Haifa and its environs included in the Jewish state.

The Woodhead Partition Commission was sent out in March 1938. The Jewish Agency submitted its proposals for an improved plan, only to find the very idea of partition rejected by October 1938.

In the spring of 1939, with war looming in Europe, it was hoped that Britain would avail itself of the war-potential of the *Yishuv*, and would not obstruct a scheme, drawn up by E. Liebenstein (Livneh) and E. Galilie, for raising and equipping a force of about 30,000.

One can see that from early on the focus of planning shifted from map-drawing to the calculation of manpower and economics involved in building up

an army. The early tentative plans of the Thirties were to be translated into harsh military realities less than ten years later, with the emergence of the state and the conversion of the *Haganah* into the IDF during the rugged course of the War of Independence.

**Jordanian, Egyptian and Palestinian 'Orientations' in
the Policies of the Jews of Palestine, the Zionist
Movement and Nascent Israel?**

Yaacov Shimoni

In this paper the author examines whether such basic-ideological 'orientations', i.e. a preference for a settlement or an alliance with one Arab country or another, guided Zionist-Israeli policies in the crucial years 1946–1948. Based on his recollections and personal involvement, as well as on pertinent documents of the time, he briefly discusses the few cases where some understanding or agreement were reached with significant Arab leaders: The Feisal-Weizmann Agreement of 1919 (which raised no question of 'orientation' since there were as yet no separate Arab states, but the Arabs planned one united or federal state for the 'Fertile Crescent'); the 1946 agreements with Egyptian Premier Isma'il Sidqi; the Christian-Maronite leadership of Lebanon and mainly King 'Abdullah of Jordan. The author concludes that the Zionist and Israeli leadership searched for Arab statesmen who would be prepared to accept the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state, and were eager to reach an agreement with any Arab leader so prepared, without raising any basic 'orientation'. Since King 'Abdullah was in 1946–48 the only Arab statesman in power prepared to accept Jewish independence in part of Palestine, an agreement with him was the only peace option available – in terms of practical policies, not of ideological 'orientations'. An accord with him involved the Jews' approval, or even encouragement, of his take-over of the Arab half of Palestine – though this remained informal in the understanding of 1946, and Israel never officially endorsed the annexation. Nascent Israel's informal approval of 'Abdullah's take-over indeed reflected a true, and legitimate, interest that the Arab part of Palestine be ruled by a power prepared for peaceful coexistence and able to impose control. But Israel did not, basically or in principle, oppose a Palestinian Arab state in the Arab half of Palestine. On the contrary, Israel was

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eagerly searching for a Palestinian-Arab partner to peaceful coexistence. But in 1948 no such Palestinian option existed, except for the Communists (They were not a serious partner as they had hardly any standing and influence in the Arab community, and some of their leaders anyhow refused to heed Soviet advice to accept Jewish independence in part of Palestine). No Palestinian-Arab leader was prepared to accept independent statehood in part of Palestine and peaceful coexistence with nascent Israel – nor was any Arab state, except Jordan (and Palestinian-Arab opposition leaders, who might have been more moderate, were too weak to assert themselves). It was therefore not the Jews' understanding with 'Abdullah and their approval of his take-over – based on pragmatic policies and the availability of options, and not on an ideological 'orientation' – that prevented the emergence of a Palestinian-Arab state in 1948, but the Palestinian Arabs' adamant refusal to accept such a state in part of Palestine (The constellation changed in 1951, with the assassination of King 'Abdullah, in 1967, and with the emergence of a Palestinian option in 1989–93 – issues beyond the scope of this paper).

The *Kadesh* Operation and the Suez Campaign: The Middle Eastern Political Background 1949–1956

Moshe Shemesh

The *Kadesh* Operation and the Suez Campaign (29.10.1956) were the result of political and military processes which developed in the Middle East during the years 1949–1956, pertaining to the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Western Powers attempts to preserve their interests in the region. Thus, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956, served only as the 'immediate' cause for the Suez Campaign. Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia (September 1955) was also an 'immediate' cause, or a catalyst to Ben-Gurion's and Dayan's resolution to initiate the war in order to prevent a situation in which Egypt would achieve a military superiority and would enable her to wage war against Israel. The impact of these processes created common interests among Israel, France and Britain and made the armed confrontation between them and Egypt inevitable.

During 1954–1956 Nasser's regime became the center of an Arab anti-Western axis. Nasser regarded the establishment of a Western regional defence

system as a threat to his Arab nationalist aspirations. Strong enmity against Nasser developed both in Britain and in France on the one hand, and in Egypt against the West, on the other hand. This enmity made any political conciliation between them impossible. Britain and France concluded that it was imperative to topple Nasser's regime. This process was paralleled by the deteriorating relations between the Arab states, and Egypt in particular, and Israel in the wake of the Arab military defeat in the War of 1948. All the Western mediating endeavours to bring about a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel were doomed to failure, owing to the huge gap between the attitudes of both sides.

This article surveys three spheres of the Arab states' struggle against Israel during the period 1949–1956: a) The Arab declared attitude which emphasized the pan-Arab national aim to destroy Israel. b) The Arab economic boycott against Israel, and in particular the closing of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran to Israeli navigation. c) The deterioration of the situation along the borders of Israel with Egypt and Jordan caused by the economic and violent infiltrations from Jordan and the Gaza Strip. These actions culminated in the *Fidaiyyun* actions during 1955–1956, directed by the Egyptian regime. Israel reacted militarily. The *Fidaiyyun* actions and the strengthening of the boycott against Israel, by Egypt during 1956, were viewed by Ben-Gurion and Dayan as a new stage in Egypt's struggle against the very existence of Israel.

This paper is supplemented by a Hebrew version of Nasser's article: 'The Secrets Behind the Sinai Attack', which was the first Egyptian official publication on the subject. In it, the Egyptian leader recounted his version of the situation concerning the campaign and its consequences.

Dayan Leads to War: The Role of the Chief of Staff in the Israeli Government Decision to Go to War in October 1956

Motti Golani

The idea that Israel must be the first to strike out without actually responding to an Arab attack was first raised only in plans of the Defence Forces. Ben-Gurion's return to the Ministry of Defence, in February 1955, made it easier for those who advocated a pre-emptive attack to promote their policies.

Moshe Dayan, the IDF Chief-of-Staff from December 1953, played a central

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role in this process. He endeavoured to persuade the government, and in particular Ben-Gurion, that Israel must be the first to strike.

Though no concrete threat to the State's existence prevailed at the time to substantiate this approach, neither was there a wish just to make battle for battle's sake. But both Ben-Gurion and Dayan believed a 'second round' of war with the Arabs was inevitable. Therefore, they concluded, that it would be far more beneficiary for Israel to initiate it. Furthermore, they reasoned, that even if war did not break out, or even if Israel did reach a settlement with the Arabs, this would not lead to much. For it would still leave Israel with borders which were difficult to defend, limited control of water sources, no free access to the Red Sea Straits and no deterrent power. Though favouring the approach in principle, Ben-Gurion was hesitant as to its practical results and therefore needed Dayan to lead him to war.

Ben-Gurion was asked to attack in the Suez Zone in order to furnish a good excuse, mainly for the British, to intervene in events there. Having signed a binding treaty with France, Israel could not refuse. Dayan encouraged Ben-Gurion, in both words and deeds, to accept the proposal. His activity made it easier for Ben-Gurion to respond favourably to the French.

In the concluding talks at the Sèvres conference (October 1956) Dayan presented a compromise formula which enabled Ben-Gurion to agree with the French 'Pretext Plan' and enabled the British to accept Israel's reservations. It was therefore agreed that Israel would make the required provocation in the Canal Zone, while the British and French military intervention would come thirty-six hours later, and not seventy-two hours as they had at first required.

US and Britain's Reactions Following the Exposure of the Israeli Nuclear Reactor in Dimona

Zaki Shalom

In mid-December 1960 leading Western newspapers published the sensational news that Israel had for some years been engaged, assisted by the French, in an extremely secret project to acquire military nuclear capability. Since authoritative sources in the West confirmed these suspicions, it seemed that following this exposure, Israel was heading towards a most severe conflict with the United States and Great Britain. This activity on Israel's part contradicted

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the super-powers' solid political course – to prevent, at almost all costs, the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, after the storm subsided, the US and Britain appeared to have agreed on a coordinated low-profile policy towards Israel, preferring to conduct an intimate and clandestine dialogue with her, rather than an open all-out conflict: A US decision to undertake a far-reaching course regarding Israel's nuclear activity, the author contends, was hardly possible at that time due to the fact that the exposure occurred shortly after the presidential elections and the Kennedy administration was taking its first steps in office. Also, it can be reasonably assumed that the new administration doubted whether it could come out as a 'winner' in the aftermath of such a conflict – at least as long as Ben-Gurion was in power in Israel.

In this paper, based on previously unpublished material, the author analyzes the factors which led the two super-powers to adopt this policy regarding Israel's nuclear build-up. He also suggests that it might have been adopted as a result of Western estimation that the Israeli nuclear project might even entail certain benefits to their own interests. The author also examines the main characteristics of that policy and considers its implications particularly regarding relations with the Arabs.

Herzl and the Uganda Controversy

Isaiah Friedman

In the spring of 1903 Chamberlain offered the Guas Ngishu plateau near Nairobi in East Africa for a Jewish settlement under the British flag. Herzl, pressed by the need to provide a refuge, even temporary, for the persecuted Russian and Romanian Jews, thought it politically imprudent to reject the offer. Moreover, the very fact that a Great Power was negotiating with him amounted to *de facto* recognition of his Movement; rather than impede, it might bring the realization of his ultimate goal nearer. As his close assistant, Leopold Greenberg wrote in a letter in June, 1903: 'It matters not if East Africa is afterwards refused by us – we shall have obtained from the British Government a recognition that it cannot ever go back of [sic] and which no other British Government will ever be able to upset. Everything after that will have to start from that point – the point of recognition of us as a Nation. It also follows

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naturally that ... if it is found that East Africa is no good they will have to make a further suggestion and this it is possible will gradually lead us to Palestine'.

This was fully in line with Herzl's thinking. As he wrote to Nordau: 'This British East African beginning is politically a Rishon le Zion'. If the Zionists gratefully acknowledged Chamberlain's offer, it would enhance his sympathy and commit him to do something for them, should a Zionist fact-finding mission disqualify East Africa as a suitable place for settlement. At no time did Herzl lose sight of Palestine. At the Sixth Zionist Congress he assured the delegates who had suspected him that he would in no way deviate from the Basle Programme. He ended his closing speech to the Congress with the ancient oath: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither.'

Eventually, the Zionist Executive, at its April 1904 meeting (shortly before Herzl's death), expressed its full confidence in Herzl. Menachem Ussishkin, Yechiel Tschlenow, Victor Jacobson and other leaders, staunchest critics of Herzl on this issue, admitted that they were mistaken.

The End of the 'Final Solution'?: Nazi Plans to Ransom Jews in 1944

Richard Breitman and Shlomo Aronson

In this paper the authors have tried to settle the question, once and for all, whether it was at all possible to rescue Hungarian Jewry by means of deals such as Joel Brand's mission. Also in question is the widespread claim that Reich Marshal Heinrich Himmler was ready to make such deals, as already in 1942 he had recognized Germany's impending defeat in World War II. For this reason, there are those who attribute to Himmler his readiness to circumvent his master, Adolph Hitler, and to seek his own way, which would have brought about the rescue of Jews on a wide scale.

The conclusion of this paper is that there is no basis for both claims. There was no real basis for the 'Jewish blood in exchange for goods' deal which was originated by Jewish rescue workers and not by the German side. Himmler did not betray Hitler and faithfully executed the 'Final Solution' almost to the end. He was prepared for minor deals and peace feelers – if necessary, by negotiating with Jews; but as for their rescue – he recoiled when they did not meet with the Fuhrer's approval. This research also refutes the claim, as a result of

investigating Hitler's involvement with details of the extermination to its end, that the initiative and execution of the 'Final Solution' originated amongst his subordinates. Hitler initiated, pushed through and executed the 'Final Solution' even when Himmler did break away from him over this matter and other issues, as the War drew to an end.

Istanbul, June 1944: The Intriguing Proposal to Menachem Baader

Tuvia Friling

This paper surveys one of the offshoots of the 'Joel Brand Affair' – the proposal put forth to Menachem Baader, one of the top emissaries of the *Yishuv's* Rescue Mission in Istanbul, to negotiate directly with the Nazis. The proposal was presented to him on 10 June 1944, at the height of the political negotiations concerning the 'Joel Brand Affair'. This paper sheds new light on several issues:

- a) On the question whether Ben-Gurion objected to Baader's mission or not?
- b) On the crystallization of a second 'interim agreement', an independent move by the envoys in Istanbul, to start direct negotiations with the Nazis, in order to gain time.
- c) On the fact that further clandestine rescue attempts existed – parallel to the Brand and Baader move. These attempts were meant to bring about a breakthrough in the contacts with the Nazis. They surfaced at the peak of the waiting period for the Powers' reply to the proposal brought by Brand.
- d) On the preparations of the *Yishuv* and the JDC (the Joint Distribution Committee) – despite all the ideological differences and operational disagreements between them – for an independent far-reaching move to rescue Hungarian Jewry.

This research also includes an evaluation that the main reason for the dismissal of the possibility of the Baader mission, either to Budapest or to Berlin, was connected to the extensive significance that was attributed to the Hungarian ruler Admiral Horthy's declaration.

The paper concludes with a methodological epilogue which deals with the historiographical and methodological significances of this affair, i.e. a 'Test Case' in understanding the decision-making processes and establishing the

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central determining factors of the *Yishuv*. Also, to evaluate the documentation of the prominent leaders and organizations of the *Yishuv*, as well as to study the chances and pitfalls of researching covert operations in the chronicles of the *Yishuv*. The new findings concerning these affairs are from the *Yishuv* Intelligence documentation as well as from US Intelligence papers from the National Archives in Washington – material which is in the initial stages of being researched.

Opportunity, Desire and the Break into Palestine

Amir Ben Porat

The 'main stream' school of the history of Israel considers the beginning of modern Israel to be the first wave of immigration to Palestine in 1882. This school treats the historiography of that time as if the Zionist project which was accomplished (in part) by the establishment of the State of Israel, was determined by the Zionist ideology. The present paper suggests an alternative interpretation. It is claimed here that objective socio-historical conditions which were predominant in the middle of the 19th century constituted the 'realm of opportunities' for the Jewish immigrants who, because of being Zionists, opted for Palestine as the country of immigration. Ideology is recommended here as a 'selector'. Its influence on the *post factum* success of the Zionists' break into Palestine is considered limited, though not negligible.

The theoretical framework of this study leans on two concepts: One is the 'realm of opportunities'. This concept specifies the parameters and the options which are available at a certain point in history. The other is the comparative concept of colonization. This concept specifies the particular form of settlement which was opted by the Zionist immigrants. Following the thrust of the first concept, it is suggested here that the main reason for the success of the first Zionist immigrants was the deteriorating position of feudalism in Palestine. In other words, the breakdown of feudalism made it possible for immigrants-Zionists to enter Palestine and to establish a 'net' of settlements. The concept of colonization assists us in understanding the particular type of colonial settlement which was established by these immigrants, within a comparative context. The conclusion of this paper is that although the Zionist immigrants made history in Palestine, they 'did not make it as they pleased'. They were utilizing an adequate

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instrument of colonial settlement, at a definite historical 'realm of opportunity'. Rather than viewing the establishment of colonial-Zionist settlements in Palestine as an ideological project, one should start with the objective, historical and socio-economical parameters. This is the correct basis for the historiography of Zionism in Palestine.

Utopia in the Negev: The Cooperative Town of Ramon

Yitzhak Greenberg

From the earliest days of Jewish worker settlement in the Land of Israel ideas were bandied about, plans were drawn up and experiments carried out in the area of urban cooperative settlement. Among the plans which reached the implementation stage was a design for the urban cooperative town of Ramon in the Negev. Throughout the year 1961 the outlines of a plan for this cooperative community were drawn up and organizational activity was undertaken in preparation for their settlement. At the close of 1961 and during 1962 a settlement group took up residence in the small Negev village of Mitzpeh Ramon. Mitzpeh Ramon was a non-cooperative setting. However, the group regarded their stay in the village as a transition period in which they could make preparations for transfer to the permanent site. During this period they established a communal style of life. In the last third of 1962 a process of group disintegration set in; members began to leave and by the beginning of 1963 the experiment came to an end.

This singular attempt to establish a cooperative town raises a series of questions. In the first place, what were the motivations of the settlement group? Did the project derive its outlook from a Socialist or a cooperative ideology? Or could it best be described as a pioneering exercise or perhaps the experimentation of youth originating from passing desires and the urge for adventure and novelty? Secondly, what was the attitude of the establishment with regard to the idea? And was there a readiness on their part to bring it to fruition?

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The 'Labour Trend' and the Absorption of Mass Immigration, 1948–1953

Yuval Dror

This article presents a comprehensive educational-social systems approach to the issue of the educational absorption of immigrants in Israel, by citing a 'case study': The 'Labour Trend' and its coping with the mass immigration in the years 1948–1953. This approach to analyse and understand the processes, in addition to existent research, is based upon three concentric circles: The inner curricular circle, the external social circle, and in between the two – the educational system circle. Being 'open systems', these three circles had to be balanced and integrated towards the common goal of absorption. The basic thesis of this article is that in spite of the great efforts that were made by the 'Labour Trend', it failed in achieving the aims it set itself because there was no balance amongst the three circles of curriculum, education and society.

The curricular circle was too socialistic and not Jewish enough. The curricula lost their uniqueness and were very formalistic. The educational system circle included hundreds of non-suitable teachers. In addition, there were the negative results of the policy of trying to abolish the original heritage of the Diaspora, as well as failure of the religious educational sub-system in the absorption of the religious workers' children. In the social circle we can note the parents who were without any Socialist-Zionist background, Ben-Gurion's policy of Statehood, the many divisions which occurred in the Labour movements, seminars, youth and Kibbutz movements. The lack of balance and integration brought about the failure of the 'Labour Trend' in the absorption of the mass immigration in the early years of Israel's existence – a lesson that ought to be learned regarding immigration (mainly in Israel), in general.

Occupational Structure, Occupational Mobility and Status Symbols in the New *Yishuv*, 1918–1948

Moshe Lissak

The building of the Jewish national home in the *Yishuv* was accompanied by intellectual, cultural and political efforts to create a system of social stratification

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different from those that characterized Jewish communities in their lands of origin, especially in Eastern Europe. The Labour movement took the leading role in this process. The supreme goal of the movement was to shape and consolidate a class of Jewish workers that would form the movement's power base and provide the means to realize its social vision – a socialist society in Palestine.

The efforts to consolidate a new social structure were channelled into two main avenues. First, a controlled and selective stream of manpower from the Diaspora with appropriate skills and ideological identification. Second, the promotion of status symbols to ensure the cultural and social uniqueness of the new class of workers and its social distance from the 'old' classes.

The paper deals mainly with the gap that emerged between the actual occupational structure and patterns of mobility on the one hand and social vision on the other hand. As a result of unstable political and economic conditions and the unpredictable waves of immigration, the occupational structure and especially the patterns of mobility prevented the Labour movement to implement its ideology. The socialist status symbols had to co-exist with competing symbols, either those of the traditional Jewish communities, or the modern petit bourgeois sector.

Mapai, Mapam and the Formation of the First Government in Israel, 1949

Ze'ev Zahor

In January 1949, even before the War of Independence drew to an end, elections to the First Knesset were held in Israel. Though *Mapai* won the elections it did not gain an overwhelming majority and had to form a coalition government. One possibility was to form a coalition with *Mapam*, which would have meant forming a government with a definite Socialist bent which would stress the values of the Workers' movement: efforts to reach equality, a centralized economy, and settlement. Another possibility was to form a coalition with the United Religious Front and the moderate Right. This meant relinquishing the centrality of the Pioneering-Socialist ethos.

Following intensive negotiations the government was formed with *Mapai* and the Religious block as its core. *Mapam* became a contending opposition and went

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through the dynamics of drawing to the Left. In this process it suffered several splits which turned it from the second largest party to a small party.

It was clear from the very beginning the importance and bearing that the first government would have on the formation years of the young State. Historiography explains the decision to prefer the United Religious Front over *Mapam* for two major reasons: *Mapam's* clear pro-Soviet leanings, while *Mapai*, headed by Ben-Gurion, wished to draw closer to the West. And secondly, *Mapai's* early evaluation that the United Religious Front would be a more lenient partner.

This article, based on the minutes of the negotiations for the coalition, shows that these reasons were stressed after the fact by the historiography of the parties. During the actual negotiations, both *Mapai* and *Mapam* were eager to form the coalition between them. It was not ideological reasons that brought about the failure of the negotiations, but struggles for power and prestige, as well as lack of experience in conducting coalition negotiations.

Moshe Smilansky – *Benei Arav*: The Patronizing Stories

Yaffa Berlovitz

This article deals with the early literary writings of Moshe Smilansky who came to Eretz-Israel with the *First Aliya*. After establishing his farmstead in Rehovot he also engaged himself in public affairs. An inseparable part of his public activities was journalism through which he informed the Jewish diaspora of the revival of Jewish life in Eretz-Israel. In addition, Smilansky began to write short stories. Surprisingly, his early writings were about native Arabs and not about the Zionist enterprise. The article presented here is part of a wider research which centers on a collection of these stories called *Benei Arav*. The research attempts to answer the question: why did Smilansky begin his literary career with materials which were foreign to him?

Smilansky kept adding stories to *Benei Arav* – up to the mid thirties. These stories can be divided into three groups: (1) The patronizing stories (1902–1909); (2) Arabic folk stories (1910–1921); (3) Stories of Arab social life (1922–1934).

Between 1908–1914 Smilansky underwent a thorough change in his political outlook concerning the Jewish–Arab conflict – from being a separatist to a moderate liberal. Each group of stories mentioned above reflects a stage in this

change. Smilansky's separatist views dictated the poetic spirit of the stories of the first group (the Patronizing Stories) which are the subject of this article.

The Rise and Fall of Hebrew Literary Centers, 1918–1933

Zohar Shavit

In this article the author examines the circumstances under which Hebrew literary centers in Europe and the United States developed. She discusses the reasons for the decline of these centers and describes the circumstances under which an attempt was simultaneously made to establish a cultural center in Eretz-Israel.

The term 'Literary Center' refers here exclusively to a certain territory in which an institutionalized group of writers, who shared a feeling of national identity, settled for a certain period of time and produced, regularly and continuously, belletristic texts. They did this with the help of literary institutions such as publishing houses and literary journals, which addressed these texts to a specific group of readers who could support these literary activities, either materially or ideologically.

The article contends that the demise of Hebrew literary centers occurred already at the beginning of the 20th Century, and that in the short period of time, when Hebrew literary centers did exist in Europe, the circumstances of their existence never allowed for a 'standard' course of development, mainly because Hebrew cultural life in Europe did not have any chance of becoming a full cultural system.

In Eretz-Israel the potential of building an encompassing cultural system did exist. When this potential began to take shape, it was almost immediately recognized as a distinguishing mark between Hebrew culture in Europe and the United-States, and that in Eretz-Israel. The understanding that only in Eretz-Israel Hebrew literature could develop and prosper, whereas it could not stand a chance in Europe and the United-States, was gradually comprehended by Hebrew European men of letters. Thirty years of desperate efforts to reconstruct the dying centers in Europe had passed before this understanding became patently clear. But one can almost ascertain that it was quite acceptable after Bialik finally immigrated to Eretz-Israel in 1924.

In Eretz-Israel, under different conditions, there began to emerge a reading public for whom the Hebrew language became the daily spoken and written

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language. In Eretz-Israel the option of culture in diglosia did not exist from the very outset, forcing Hebrew literature to develop as a full and stratified system, a process which involved many cultural battles.

It was this option to build a cultural center in Eretz-Israel in which Hebrew literature would keep officially (and fanatically) its monopoly, which served as the prime cause for the decision to establish in Eretz-Israel a center of Hebrew culture, and the main reason for its success to become in less than fifteen years the sovereign center of Hebrew literature in the world.

Min Hayessod – The Story of a Political Movement

Amir Bar-Or

The eruption of the Lavon Affair in the early 1960s brought to light the malfunctioning of Israel's political system. The affair, with all its concomitant political developments, served as both a vehicle for change and adaptation of the informal political system and its transition into a normative and enlightened system as well as a means of deepening public debate in Israel.

One of the more important developments which resulted from the affair was the awakening of Israel's independent public opinion. At the center of this discussion lay an examination of the underlying causes and nature of expressions of criticism voiced by the intellectual circles whose coming to life served as the background for the establishment of the *Min Hayessod* movement.

The main innovation of *Min Hayessod* was its activism. It stimulated the clarification of unanswered questions and created a forum for the expression of ideas which would never have been included on the pre-Six-Days War Israeli public agenda.

The disappearance of *Min Hayessod* from the public eye demonstrated that the Labour Party, the dominant political entity in Israel's political system, found it difficult to include an ideological-critical organization which attempted to combine ideology with political activism within Israeli society. A society which was typified, from the establishment of its political organizations in the 1920s, by high levels of politicization, as well as a continuous process of social change which involved the adaptation of political instruments to a changing socio-political reality.

David Ben-Gurion's Concept of Citizenship

Nathan Yanai

In the pre-State Jewish community and in the early years of the State the term and concept of the Citizen was identified with the Political Right. The Labour Movement, which read into this term the rejection of social vision and the selfish assertion of individual economic interests, cultivated instead the collectivist concept of The Movement and that of The Pioneer, who voluntarily carries out its social and national missions. Any interpretation of Ben-Gurion's concept of citizenship must therefore explore the link between his concept of statehood and Labour's collectivist ideology; both of which gave preference to The Nation and The Movement over the individual.

Ben-Gurion's ideology of statehood is based on his interpretation of Jewish history. In order to once again achieve and maintain an independent state, he argued, the Jewish people must transform themselves – must cease being a 'nation of individuals' and acquire a strong 'collective will'; must put an end to excessive political fragmentation and learn how to unite in the face of adversity. The purpose of this political revolution, in his view, was to prevent the repetition of the threatening cycle of dependence, disunity, destruction and exile. For Ben-Gurion, the concept of statehood not only implied the formation of a State; it also contained a strategy for nation-building and change.

The author claims that it is possible to discern in Ben-Gurion's writings a three-level normative approach to the content of citizenship:

I) The formal level of universal legal citizenship. II) May be defined as 'Good Citizenship' or in Ben-Gurion's phrase 'Citizen in the highest sense of the word'. This applies to those who take root in their own homeland; share the knowledge of the history of the nation, its language, culture and vision; and participate in its material and spiritual production. These qualities spelled out Ben-Gurion's integrative approach to the absorption of new immigrants in Israel. III) The *Halutz*, The Pioneer, who is more than just a good citizen, he (she) is an exemplary one, for he puts himself voluntarily at the service of The Movement and The Nation.

The author also discusses the significance of the concept of the *Halutz* in Ben-Gurion's ideology. Conceptually, Ben-Gurion strove to reconcile the voluntary essence of pioneering with the opportunities offered by the State. In reality, he engendered a bitter debate with the *Kibbutz* movement which wanted to keep its exclusive hold on the *Halutz* concept.

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Zion and Jerusalem: The Jewish State According to Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook

Yehuda Gellman

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935) has been the major ideologue of present-day messianic, religious nationalism. This messianism has been largely 'instrumentalist' in relation to the State, treating the State in the main as an instrument for achieving religious ends. There is a basis for such messianism in the writings of Rabbi Kook. But a closer look at his works reveals a type of messianism in which the holiness of the State is immanent within the very State itself, and not a means to achieving religious ends. This is revealed by an examination of the character of the organization called 'Jerusalem', founded by Rabbi Kook, to be a religious analogue to the Zionist movement which would deal with the secular side of Jewish life. Although in some of his writings it appears that 'Jerusalem' is higher in holiness than 'Zion', a closer look at Rabbi Kook's writings shows that this is only a superficial understanding. In fact, he considered 'Zion' to come from a higher spiritual source than 'Jerusalem'. And he considered the holiness immanent within the structure and institutions of the Jewish State to be of a higher order of holiness than the manifestation of religious holiness. This reversal of valuations leads to the conclusion that the messianism of Rabbi Kook was not instrumentalist, and that his messianic hope was for a State of pure moral and political values, in which no means-to-end compromises would be allowed.

American Jewry – The Lure of Freedom and Prosperity: A Review Essay

Allon Gal

Considerable strength and vitality of American Jewry has been recently demonstrated through the publication by American Jewish scholars of important and comprehensive historical books, some of which are reviewed in this essay. All authors discern the course American Jewry carved for itself between assimilation and separatism; that is, a course of acculturation, of considerable integration into society at large, while cultivating Americanized Judaism and

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while holding onto Jewish identity. This historic course, however, has been lately shaken by dramatic indications of assimilation. The background for this change, as agreed upon by virtually all authors, is mainly the increasing liberalization and openness of society at large, a great decline in anti-Semitism, and the many-faceted growing success of Jews as individuals. Some of the scholars claim that the pluralism ingrained in American society still encourages the community's creativity, sustains its Jewishness and attachment to Judaism and Israel, and eventually ensures its survival. Other scholars, relying on most recent demographic findings, incline to stress indications of disintegration and assimilation of the Jewish community; among them, a sharp decline in affiliation of Jews with Jewish organizations, a dilution of religious life and other expressions of Judaism, and a high rate (over fifty per cent) of intermarriage. This more realistic school suggests that though 'cultural pluralism' has become, during the last decades, a recognized ideology, the dominant factor active in American society, now more than ever, is individualism, which most powerfully works to dissolve American society to individuals for whom ethnicity is either meaningless or just a symbol.

Virtually all the authors cited in this review essay tend to see the main threat to American Jewish continuity as derived from 'acceptance factors' rather than from 'rejective forces'. This background, they suggest, has worked to make American Zionism and philo-Israelism genuinely liberal and attached to western-universalistic values. Some of the scholars suggest, in this connection, that the State of Israel – once fully democratic, pluralistic and enlightened – can most meaningfully contribute to the anti-assimilative efforts in the United States.