

The Andrea and Charles Bronfman
Center for the Media of the Jewish
People, Tel Aviv University

No. 31, May 2002

CONTENTS

Head of the Center:

Prof. Michael Keren

Founder of the Institute for the Study of Jewish Press and Communications:

Shalom Rosenfeld

Editor, Keshet:

Dr. Mordecai Naor

Assistant Editor:

Carmen Oszi

English Section:

Judy Krausz

Hebrew Copy Editor:

Moshe Orr

Typesetting and Production:

S. Kedem Ltd.

Hebrew Cover:

Portrait of Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsberg), a little known picture by Leopold Pilikovsky, 1919. Ahad Ha'am is a focus of the article about the Yiddish newspaper *Der Jude*, pp. 63e-71e. Photo by Avraham Hai, courtesy Ahad Ha'am Library, Beit Ariela, Tel Aviv.

Editorial and

Administrative Offices:

The Andrea and Charles Bronfman
Center for the Media of the Jewish
People, Tel Aviv University
Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv 69978
Tel: (03)641 3404, (03)640 8665
Fax: (03)642 2318

Introduction / Michael Keren – 2e

Israel and Zionism as Reflected in the Media in Israel and Abroad: Symposium / Eli Eyal, Yair Sheleg, Gary Rosenblatt, Dorit Gollander, Sarah Frenkel and Mordecai Naor, moderated by Efraim Lapid – 4e

Israel Grapples with Its History (and Future): The Domestication of the Post-Zionist Critique / Joel S. Migdal – 18e

Intellectuals and Tradition: The Case of Journalists and National Tradition in Israel / Yaacov Yadgar – 27e

Between Zionism and Post-Zionism in Israeli Theater: "Deconstruction" (1999) / Dan Urian – 37e

National and Personal Cinema / Uri Klein – 47e

Zionist Discourse in the Jewish Press in Post-Soviet Russia / Yuval Shahal – 56e

"Der Jude" (1899-1902): Profile of a Zionist Periodical Published in Yiddish / David Pur – 63e

Tribulations of a World Zionist Newspaper: The Rise and Fall of the "Jüdische Welt-Rundschan" / Thomas von der Osten-Sacken – 72e

English Abstracts of Hebrew Reviews:
New Books in Hebrew About the Press and the Media

Niv Ahituv, *A World Without Secrets: On the Open Information Society* / Michael Keren – 82e


Daniel Dor, *The Press Under the Influence* / Anat Biletzki – 82e


Yuval Elitsur, *From Shaharit to "Ma'ariv"* / Mordecai Naor – 83e


Eli Avraham, *Objects of Discrimination by the Israeli Media* / Vicky Shiran – 84e

Contributors to This Issue – 85e

The publication of this issue of Keshet was made possible by the support of:


World Zionist Organization
The 34th Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, June 2000


Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael
The Israel Prize Laureate for 2002


The Jewish Agency for Israel

Jewish Colonial Trust Ltd.

The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for Media of the Jewish People Information Center

The Information Center contains a computerized research library with an on-line database of some 110,000 articles and newspaper clippings published in the Jewish and Israeli media from 1989 onward, updated daily. Topics include the functioning of the print and electronic media; relations with governmental, public, legal and economic networks; the mutuality between media and society; and information on media figures. A special section contains a wide range of bibliographic materials on the history of Jewish media in Israel and throughout the world. The Center also houses several collections of current and historical exemplars of the Israeli and Jewish press, including special issues, books, videocassettes and photographs. Hours: Sun.-Thurs. 10.00 am-4.00 pm. Tel: 972-3-6408102. Fax: 972-3-6422318. Email: ocarmen@post.tau.ac.il <http://www.tau.ac.il/institutes/bronfman>

Introduction

Michael Keren

This issue of *Kesher* is dedicated to the discourse about Zionism carried on in the past and the present through various media: academic books, newspapers, periodicals, theater and film. It is part of a series of special issues of *Kesher* that seek, inter alia, to widen the scope of the study of the media, which we define as the totality of formats and contents by which people communicate with each other, and which include more than what is generally regarded as means of mass communication. Special issues that we have published in this context have been devoted to such topics as high and low culture, the representation and the role of women in the media, media and economics, and others. Conceivably, they have contributed to broadening the grasp of media by students in universities and colleges who are often exposed to a narrow and outdated perception of them. At the same time, *Kesher* encourages articles written from a historic perspective, on the premise that the important issues worthy of research and study in the areas of Jewish media and their relationship to culture, society, economics and politics did not originate with the establishment of departments of communications in universities in the last few decades – which tend to focus on contemporary topics – but were present much before.

The present issue of *Kesher* appears in a new format: while the articles in previous issues were published in Hebrew with English abstracts, this issue presents each article in complete bilingual (Hebrew/English) renditions. The articles were originally submitted in Hebrew, English or German, and were translated accordingly.

The issue opens with a symposium on Israel and Zionism as reflected in the Israeli and world media, held in April 2002 at Tel Aviv University under the joint sponsorship of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People, and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

We then present a survey prepared by the noted American researcher Joel S. Migdal about the media response to the book he co-authored with Baruch Kimmerling, *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*. The survey compares the reviews of the book when it was published in the U.S. in

1993 with those in Israel when it was published in Hebrew five years later, as a way of tracing the historiographic response to the so-called “new” sociologists and historians. Migdal identifies a moderation of the response during those five years and perceives it as reflecting an Israeli society that is coping with its past as a way of reinforcing its foundations in the future.

Yaacov Yadgar analyzes the attitude toward the national legacy by mainstream journalists writing for the Israeli newspapers *Ha'aretz*, *Yedi'ot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv*. Using theories about the role of intellectuals in constructing and preserving as well as destroying and altering traditions in society, and applying these theories to journalists who, by providing commentary on reality are perceived here as filling an intellectual role, Yadgar describes the journalists' treatment of the national narrative. He discerns a transition from a commonly shared narrative to a dissected national narrative, which he links primarily to the fracture created by the Yom Kippur War, although he argues that the Zionist statist paradigm, which lost its primacy, was not replaced by any other paradigm. Rather, it was dismantled into its various components.

Dan Urian's article on “Zionist theater” focuses on the play *Deconstruction*, produced by the Haifa Municipal Theater in 1999, which is a harsh critique of the Zionist narrative. Urian, surveying the Zionist narrative in Israeli theater and its erosion during the 1980s, emphasizes the distinctiveness of *Deconstruction*, which is neither a Zionist nor a post-Zionist play but a play that, in his words, provides a platform for “the Hebrew yuppies of the 1990s.”

In a similar vein, Uri Klein, in his article “National vs. Personal Cinema,” dismisses the premise of the existence of a post-Zionist cinema, arguing that Israeli cinema never posited an opposing narrative to the Zionist narrative. If the Israeli cinema has a narrative at all, he writes, it is a narrative that leads from a cinema that was obedient to the dominant ideology regarding reality, to a cinema that disconnected from this ideology, although it itself then experienced a crisis.

Yuval Shahal surveys the status of the Jewish press in Russia and the Zionist discourse in it during the period following the fall of Communism. The survey reveals that the major portion of the content of this press is devoted to the Jewish community in Russia rather than to immigration to Israel, and a major emphasis is laid on matters pertaining to the present and future of the Jews of Russia rather than Jewish history. The author views this as a reflection of the weakening of the Zionist element in Jewish society in Russia today.

David Pur profiles the Yiddish Zionist newspaper *Der Jude*, launched in Cracow in 1899 in light of the perception that the Hebrew periodicals *Hamelitz* and *Hatsefirah* did not fill the needs of the Yiddish-speaking masses. Pur describes Ahad Ha'am's interesting attitude to the paper. A believer in the revival of the Hebrew language as a basis of Jewish national revival, Ahad Ha'am was dissatisfied with the publication, yet

he also realized that the Zionist idea could be propagated only through the language of the masses. The author demonstrates how the periodical published in the language of the Jewish masses actually performed the function of articulating general Jewish topics and did not necessarily function as a voice of Zionism.

Lastly, Thomas von der Osten-Sacken writes about the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*, a newspaper published in 1939 as a continuation of the well-known *Jüdische Rundschau* by Zionists from Germany who immigrated to Eretz Yisrael. The effort constituted a unique response to the closure of the Jewish press in Germany, but the paper was subjected to sharp attack by various elements in Eretz Yisrael, which the author attributes to the opposition of the *yishuv* to German Zionism due to its political moderation.

Israel and Zionism as Reflected in the Media in Israel and Abroad: Symposium

The symposium took place on April 28, 2002, at Tel Aviv University under the sponsorship of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Opening Remarks: Michael Keren, Head, Bronfman
Center for the Media of the Jewish People

Moderator: Efraim Lapid, Spokesman, Jewish Agency

Participants: Eli Eyal, Member of the Executive, World
Zionist Organization

Dorit Gollander, Director, Radio Reka, Kol
Israel

Mordecai Naor, Editor, *Kesher*, Bronfman
Center for the Media of the Jewish People

Sarah Frenkel, Kol Israel

Gary Rosenblatt, Editor, *Jewish Week*, New
York

Yair Sheleg, *Ha'aretz*

Efraim Lapid: A group of 212 new immigrants from Argentina arrived in Israel on Independence Day; 200,000 Jews held a solidarity rally on behalf of Israel in France in April; 16,000 postcards were sent to Israel Defense Forces soldiers by Jewish youth from all parts of the world in the context of a solidarity campaign with Israel; tens of thousands of students visited Israel for ten days this year for the first time as part of the Birthright program, "Taglit," a joint project sponsored by Jewish philanthropists, the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency; and anti-Semitic activity in Europe in recent months, the most serious since World War II, was the main subject on the agenda of the World Jewish Congress held in Brussels in April. These are five examples in recent weeks of subjects given media coverage in Israel and abroad – some more, some less – which exemplify the scope of our symposium, "Israel and Zionism as Reflected in the Media in Israel and Abroad."

The Thirty-fourth Zionist Congress which will convene in

Jerusalem in June will focus on the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora at this difficult time. The information war, which is part and parcel of the war of terror between the Palestinians and ourselves, is being waged not only in the Israeli governmental arena. Every world Jewish body, and especially the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, is being recruited to participate with all its force in the struggle for public opinion. The feeling among Jews throughout the world and in Israel is that Jewish identity is strengthened at times of crisis and that more needs to be done in this respect. *Kesher*, the journal devoted to research of the Jewish media, is clearly a fitting venue for a symposium on media coverage of Israel and Zionism.

The first speaker is Prof. Michael Keren, head of the Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People.

Opening Remarks Michael Keren

About a year ago, when we planned this special edition of *Kesher* on the Zionist debate in the media, we assumed that the subject was such that it would be dealt with dispassionately. It never occurred to us that it could become, as the publication date approached, a burning issue. The recent entry by the Israel Defense Forces into Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank raised important questions about the portrayal of Zionism and the State of Israel in the world media. On the one hand, the harsh criticism of Israeli policy did not remain within the customary boundaries and at times acquired an anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist tone. On the other hand, some supporters of Israel tended to see anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist overtones in

any criticism of Israel. This matter requires attention, as it reflects a more profound confusion than that we have ever faced since the establishment of the State of Israel.

The sovereign State of Israel arose as a result of the struggle of the Jewish national movement – Zionism – for a national home. Since its founding, however, Israel realized, as does every national movement which achieves statehood, that there is no perfect nation-state, for there is more than one nation living within the borders of this sovereign state. Moreover, a substantial portion of the members of this nation lives outside the country's borders, in the Diaspora. This realization poses a dilemma to every modern nation-state: will it conduct itself as a sovereign state or as a national movement? Let me explain the difference. A sovereign state wishes to be integrated into the family of nations, while a national movement feels continuously threatened by it; a sovereign state recognizes the power of living within secure and recognized borders, while a national movement has difficulty recognizing this; a sovereign state accepts political compromises, while a national movement sees them as infringing on the rights of future generations; a sovereign state is strict about citizens' rights, while a national movement is prepared to expropriate civil rights under certain circumstances.

The differences in practice, of course, are not as significant. Few understood the importance of sovereignty as well as David Ben-Gurion, who agreed to the partition resolution of 1947 despite the fact that Israel's borders were not in accord with the historical yearning of the Zionist movement. Yet, Ben-Gurion was not satisfied with the sovereign state in the sense that he attempted to impose its sovereignty on the entire Jewish people. This was expressed in numerous arguments that he had with Jewish, Zionist and non-Zionist bodies, such as the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee. Following Adolph Eichmann's capture, for example, these bodies objected to the sovereign State of Israel's right to act as the champion of all Jewish people, including those murdered before the State of Israel even came into being. Ben-Gurion, in contrast, held firmly that thanks to the means available to a sovereign state, such as criminal law, the Jewish people could, for the first time in their history, put Jew-haters where they deserve to be put: in the courtroom. In the words of the poet Natan Alterman, who expressed Ben-Gurion's views on this issue at the time:

The crime of murdering a solitary Jew was...hitherto a mat-

ter that could have been encompassed in the realm of criminal law. But the murder of many Jews was, for many hundreds of years, ever since the Jewish people went into exile, a matter that belonged to the realm of social historical processes and was a topic for research into the causes and sources of hatred of the Jews. The Jerusalem trial, for the first time in Jewish history, raised and shifted the murder of Jews, and the decrees and laws involved in it, from the realm of history and research to the realm of criminal law.

In addition, Alterman argued, a practical purpose was served by the trial. Following the verdict, the murder of Jews might evoke in the hearts of those who yearned for it not only a feeling of revelry in these vile deeds, but also a sense of the bitter taste involved in being seized from a country of refuge to await the gallows (*Davar*, June 7, 1962).

As someone who grew up in the early days of the state and believes in the power of political sovereignty, I must admit that these statements still move me when I read them before you, but they also evoke great sadness at the fact that the State of Israel is perceived today by many as a burden rather than an asset as regards the personal safety of the world's Jews. Moreover, the State of Israel did not achieve peace with its enemies in all its 54 years, and despite its military strength, the personal safety of its citizens is today at its lowest point.

I would like to raise the thought that this condition is caused to a great extent by the self-image of many Israelis as incumbents of a national movement rather than as citizens of a sovereign state. If I may be permitted to pose a challenge to the participants of this symposium, it might be worthwhile to examine the role played by the media in encouraging this self-image. The difficulty in defining ourselves as a strong and stable sovereign state, and as a member of the family of nations willing to accept the limitations that this entails, is caused to a large degree by impassioned media reports on the conflict in our region which use terms like "slaughter," "blood libel," "annihilation," "war of survival," "the destruction of terror" and other terms taken, in Alterman's words, from the field of "historical social processes" and not from the realm in which sovereign states handle international disputes, difficult and complicated as they may be, and stabilize their borders. Therefore, one of the interesting outcomes of the symposium that we might hope for is a renewed definition of the role of the media in the present conflict, as opposed to the impassioned media reports that we are presently witnessing in Israel and abroad.

Efraim Lapid: Eli Eyal, a member of the Zionist Executive, is a former journalist and a writer with a broad perspective on the Zionist discourse and the media. We look forward to hearing his observations on the subject under discussion.

Criticism Slides into Anti-Semitism

Eli Eyal

After the Six-Day War, there was a growing perception that with the deepened sense of unity of fate felt by the Diaspora toward the Jews of Israel, the concept of self in the history of the exile had died out. Intellectuals tended to emphasize this perception as engendered by the disappearance of the argument of dual loyalty, which, they argued, had been nothing more than the product of emotional self-entanglement from the start.

This was the first time that the State of Israel was perceived by the world as possessing power, a phenomenon that strengthened the feeling of Jewish pride among the Jews of the Diaspora. In the United States, some liberal intellectuals crossed lines and shifted to the moderate, conservative camp. An especially notable example was Norman Podhoretz, then editor of the prestigious journal *Commentary*. A number of years later, however, it became clear that this shift did not involve all or even most Diaspora Jews, nor even most Jews who were involved in Jewish life.

Israel's image had begun to tarnish, the result of a wave of hostile propaganda emanating from several directions: the Arab and Islamic countries; the Soviet bloc, which adopted a totally pro-Arab, anti-Israel stand; some of the Protestant churches; and part of the new Left. Nevertheless, the main aim of this propaganda was not achieved, i.e., attributing the blame for not making progress toward peace exclusively to Israel.

Apparently, the deterioration of Israel's image in the West stemmed from an objection to the notion of Israel as a "conquering power"; dissatisfaction with Israeli "intransigence," or what was perceived as such; and criticism of punitive measures taken in the administered territories. The criticism of Israel in the West, however, was also prompted by concern over the renewal of war in the region, which would likely cause international complications, and the fear of losing influential Western bases of influence in the Middle East. Even in the 1970s the West wondered with concern: How will it end? Where is it leading?

Then as now these concerns were expressed by public opinion molders in the leading newspapers and in TV and radio. Moreover, objections to the Jewish right to this country began to surface in academic circles, and especially among the new Left, which was generally preoccupied with the Palestinian question.

Public opinion and the media are always influenced by political and ideological crises in the world, and they tend to curb or slow down the reaction of international powers. This was the case after the Six-Day War and is still the case today. Then, the prevailing crises were the American trauma of Vietnam; tension between the U.S.S.R. and China and unrest in Eastern Europe; ideological ferment in the Catholic Church; the first attempts to Christianize the Holocaust; and other signs of intellectual turmoil in Western society.

These ideological crises eased the search by Jews for self-identity, but in universities and other circles the revolt against the consensus provided an opening for Arab propaganda with regard to the issue of basic justice in the Israeli-Arab conflict. Even today, in our information efforts, we must bear in mind that the logic of the existence of a strong Israel is not always self-evident in the thinking of certain circles in the Western world, especially in Europe.

At the time, the late historian Prof. Jacob Talmon disparaged the deep conviction in various Jewish circles that "the glory of Israel will not fail," and the sense of reverence and exaltation regarding the secret of history and the Jewish mission. I moderated a symposium at that time on the image of Israel in the Diaspora and throughout the world, and Jacob Talmon, who was one of the participants, introduced a nuance into the discussion that is viewed by some as apocalyptic, by others as rational, and by still others as both. As a historian of the modern period, he said, the most compelling experience for him is the shock and fear engendered by the insanities and the horrors of the 20th century, of which the Jewish people were the main victims; and the gnawing consciousness that humanity has been poised at the edge of an abyss ever since the fashioning of the atomic and hydrogen bombs.

The Jews are at the very heart of the Christian Mystery. They are the chosen people who produced Jesus and the disciples. The words "Israel," "Zion" and "Jerusalem" resound in every Christian prayer. But the Jew is also the murderer of Christ, and he evokes the images of Judas Iscariot and Shylock. After the walls of the ghetto were breached and the Jews

emerged to join society at large, these former pariahs were found to be phenomenally successful and industrious. This caused the gentile displeasure. While wisdom and liberalism taught the modern non-Jew to treat the Jew as an equal, he instinctively rebels and refuses, and prejudice gets in the way. Feelings of hostility toward the Jews, therefore, mingle with feelings of guilt and shame. Nevertheless, it is incorrect to say that all gentiles everywhere were wolves plotting to savage the Jewish sheep.

A strong Israel is still new and unreal to the world, something the world has not yet gotten used to. The gentiles love to pity the Jews but not to fear them. During the 1982 Lebanon War demonstrators in Paris carried placards with slogans such as "Israel – Murderers" and "Death to the Jews." For a number of days, French TV repeatedly showed footage of an Arab man carrying a child in his arms whose head was lolling sideways and who appeared to be dead. As it turned out, the footage had been filmed in 1967 in Damur (Lebanon), a fact that was not noted at the bottom of the frame, as is customary. As the original footage progressed, the child is seen sitting upright, hale and hearty, but that segment was cut from the film screened on TV. The earlier segment was screened repeatedly as background to the current reportage during the Lebanon War.

At the height of the most recent campaign, Operation Defensive Shield, Kol Israel broadcast that a Silesian priest by the name of Giacomo was killed in Bethlehem while saying Mass. According to the description, he was murdered by a gunshot to the nape of his neck. The report was issued by Reuters, which took the item from the Catholic News Agency. A few hours later, the Vatican's ambassador to Israel, refuted the item and reported the priest as being in good health and going about his business in Bethlehem. The correction, however, was broadcast minimally.

By way of clarification, however, I want to add that not all who criticize Israel's policy and actions are anti-Semitic, not all who argue with us are the enemy, and we ourselves are not always right. But, as in the war in Lebanon, the criticism of Operation Defensive Shield slips into anti-Semitism. Our critics have found the Jewish sensitive spot – the moral aspect, and this, I admit, is far more profound. The State of Israel can cope with political isolation, but whether it can cope with isolation from a world that categorically rejects its moral validity is doubtful. The terrible pictures of the suffering of

Palestinian refugees shown by the television networks cannot but affect public opinion, even of those who are prepared to show understanding for Israel's political and security motives. The fear is that the unrestrained anti-Semitic assault might create a mentality among ourselves of a nation under siege whom the whole world opposes, a mentality that is fertile ground for the philosophy of historic religious and racist determinism.

Yitzhak Rabin once said, in the early 1970s, that peace would not survive so long as the Arabs do not recognize the light that is in Zionism. It seems to me that that such a statement was exaggeratedly sharp. If they don't recognize it, they should at least understand it, even if they don't agree with it. The Palestinians are not expected to send a delegation to the forthcoming Zionist Congress that opens on June 17th in Jerusalem. A certain understanding will be achieved if a political settlement is attained that is a compromise – a painful compromise for both sides.

A number of weeks ago the former head of the CIA said that talk of justice in regard to our conflict here must stop. No real political arrangement can be a totally just arrangement. Just people are the heroes of Greek tragedies: they kill one another, everyone dies, and justice hovers over the stage. A political arrangement does not obligate each side to fall on the necks of the other with love. Consequently, rational fear is usually required – a combination of fear and logic, appreciation and respect in the face of reality. Perhaps when there are peace agreements – which currently appear a long way off – anchored in the soil of reality, we can begin to investigate the question of Jewish justice as opposed to Palestinian justice. Then we shall have to persuade the Arabs that Zionism never sought to be, and never will be, the antithesis to national Arab and Palestinian existence.

Even if we protest that the world is judging us by different, stricter standards than it judges Cambodia, Ireland, Yugoslavia and other nations, we know in our heart of hearts that Zionism has succeeded in its struggles with the Arabs by virtue of its moral claim. The humanist approach to political problems was natural for a small country that for years sought to posit an enterprise of construction and rehabilitation vis-a-vis the enormous dimensions of the surrounding enemy. The idea of the return to Zion was perceived not only as a refuge for the persecuted but as the embodiment of moral, social and humane values intrinsic in the building of the country.

With us today is a journalist from the United States, Gary Rosenblatt, editor of the *Jewish Week* in New York. Perhaps he can respond to the claim that we hear from the Diaspora from time to time that we Israelis do not take into account the sensitivity of Diaspora Jewry to the criticism of gentiles with regard to our actions in the territories, to every hint that Israel is a repressive country and society where a racist atmosphere and racist laws prevail.

The fear, however, is not always of what the gentiles might say. We ourselves must deal with deep, primal yearnings. In the past, the magnetic force of the vision of the return to Zion was, for Jews, besides a refuge for the persecuted, the embodiment of the moral, social and humane values intrinsic in the building of the country. To the extent that Jews related to the political aspect, they clung to the belief that the Zionist doctrine attempted to nurture – that the Jewish state would bring about a basic change in the relationship between Jews and gentiles. The gentiles would learn to relate to the Jewish state in the same way that they relate to any normal state, thereby invalidating the saying “all Jews are responsible for one another.” Yet today they find themselves back in the traditional situation even more pronouncedly, this time specifically because of the Jewish state and not because of some violent outburst in one of the dark diasporas.

Efraim Lapid: The coverage of Jewish topics in the Israeli media is quite marginal. A survey undertaken by the Jewish Agency spokesman’s office in anticipation of this symposium and of the forthcoming Zionist Congress found some 40-50 items a day, not a large number considering that this included both the print and the electronic media. A decisive majority of these items, 86%, appeared in the written press, and only 14% in the electronic media.

Two Jewish organizations, the Joint and B’nai B’rith, deemed it important to encourage media coverage of this subject through prizes. The prize-winners in recent years – Eliahu Salpeter, Yair Sheleg, Sarah Frenkel, Gidon Remez, Eliahu Ben-On, and various programs aired on Galei Zahal (I.D.F. Radio) – can confirm the small number of journalists specializing in this field. One of the most prominent is Yair Sheleg of *Ha’aretz*, the newspaper with the best record in covering Jewish subjects – 19% of total coverage. By comparison, the figure for *Ma’ariv* is 8%, *Yedi’ot Aharonot* 7%, and *Globes* 7%. The English-language *Jerusalem Post* must

also be singled out – 15%.

Yair Sheleg will share his observations with us on the subject under discussion.

A Return to the Collective Ethos

Yair Sheleg

I will focus on two central processes with regard to the Zionist debate in the media, which may be likened to a pendulum swinging back and forth in recent decades.

It is difficult to disagree about the existence in Israeli society and in the Israeli media of the phenomenon of post-Zionism in recent years. In using the term post-Zionism, I do not necessarily mean the recognizable presence of a post-Zionist ideology. I suggest differentiating between post-Zionist ideology and the post-Zionist phenomenon. Post-Zionist ideology is still the province of a minority in the Jewish population of Israel. If a survey were to be carried out – and I urge the Jewish Agency to undertake such a survey – regarding the extent that the Jewish population in Israel identifies with Zionist principles, i.e., with the principle of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, I believe that a decisive majority would reply positively.

What then do I mean by the definition post-Zionist social phenomenon? I am referring to a situation in which the active directives of the Zionist idea – acting for the sake of society, a willingness to sacrifice for the nation as a whole – are declining, and the media is contributing to the molding of this reality.

Ever since the Yom Kippur War, a gradual ongoing process has been in progress in which the media, not alone but as a major representative of key trends in the secular elites in Israel, have leaned toward an emphasis on the individual element in society at the expense of the collective element. I am intentionally using the word collective rather than national because I believe that this relates not only to an abandonment of the Zionist ethos but to an abandonment of the ethos of social obligation, which is also a part of the collective ethos. This is important because Leftists tend to be indifferent to the subject of national responsibility, and have often failed to discern the connection between the two intrinsic meanings, i.e., an abandonment of the collective ethos in both the national and social sense.

In place of the collective ethos, of collective responsibility

for nation and society, we have adopted the individual ethos, which the media have made their focal point. Our cultural heroes are no longer those who live up to the imperatives of the collective ethos, but those who symbolize the successful individual ethos, whether they are models, athletes, stockbrokers or hi-tech people. These are the figures that the media, and especially the magazines, newspaper supplements and the electronic media, identify as the heroes of our new culture, and this, naturally, has created an ethos for society as a whole. As a consequence, even when significant social issues are covered in the media, the context is generally the personal misery of one individual or another, what he/she has or doesn't have in his/her refrigerator, etc., instead of the vital questions of the extent of national and social responsibility and the aspiration for broader social justice. It seems to me that the media increasingly adopt far more individual positions with regard to the essential issues, in the style of capitalist privatization. Anyone who hoped that the national Zionist ethos would be replaced by a humanist universal ethos was proven wrong; instead we got a capitalist bourgeois ethos, a form of bread and circuses, sometimes of the most inferior kind.

Why is this process occurring? First, because societies may naturally find it difficult to retain the collective ethos over time. There is a process of natural wear and tear of the collective ethos or collective vision. This natural decline, however, has been expedited by certain other developments. A point of departure is the Yom Kippur War, whose significance in Israeli society, I believe, has not been properly interpreted. The accepted interpretation is that of a failure of the national-collective ethos rather than a failure to apply it. The result was that the pendulum swung almost 180 degrees away from the collective ethos toward the individual ethos, whereas demanding the consistent, broad and comprehensive application of the collective ethos would have been the correct course. Another reason is that the individualistic ethos is integral to the nature of contemporary Western society, and Israel, as part of this society, is influenced in this aspect as well.

However, I believe that we are witnessing the beginning of a change. The pendulum is beginning to swing back toward the direction of the collective ethos. If historic fluctuations usually occur in the wake of dramatic crises, such as the Yom Kippur War, the beginning of the present change stems from a significant crisis as well – the shattering of the Oslo process.

The breakdown of the Oslo process is not only a matter of an agreement that was not actualized. The crisis goes much deeper and relates to the question of whether the State of Israel can realistically aspire or hope to reach a peace agreement with its neighbors, and especially with the Palestinians. Because the crisis is grave – in certain aspects graver in degree, even if not in the extent of fatalities, than that of the Yom Kippur War – it is bringing about a shift of direction in the historic pendulum.

This process is reflected in the media. The most prominent example is the process that *Ma'ariv*, a major newspaper in Israel, is undergoing. First of all, the paper has restored the practice of an unsigned editorial that represents the collective spirit of the editorial staff. An examination of the contents of these editorials, as well as of many of the articles that have appeared in recent months in *Ma'ariv*, reveals a return to an ethos that emphasizes security, collective responsibility and a divestment of the hedonism that has characterized the Israeli media in recent decades.

The very argument between Irit Linor and *Ha'aretz* publisher Amos Schocken concerning the nature of *Ha'aretz*, which appeared in today's *Ma'ariv*, also typifies this process. Linor, a known figure in the dovish camp, although not the most prominent figure in Israel's radical Left, argues that the Zionist ethos is not reflected in *Ha'aretz*. This signals an interesting direction. Amos Schocken's reply is no less interesting – he feels the need to articulate explicitly that *Ha'aretz* is a Zionist paper of the highest order.

The process, however, is broader. As social processes generally, it is accompanied by an interesting intellectual change. I want to mention two young Israeli intellectuals who, significantly, are media people and did not spring from academia. One is Gadi Taub, the other Assaf Inbari. Those who have followed Gadi Taub's writing in recent years as a bold exposition of dovish positions will discover that alongside these positions he repeatedly lays emphasis on national collective responsibility and, in his case, social responsibility as well. Similarly, whoever read Assaf Inbari's excellent essay in the Independence Day edition of *Ha'aretz* about the changes that have occurred in the new Hebrew literature, namely, the shift from collective responsibility to the quest for bourgeois personal happiness, in contrast to the Hebrew Jewish canon, will see clearly that Inbari supports a return to collective responsibility. These two voices imply a direction that I believe

will develop and deepen.

Moreover, a growing Zionist sector exists within the Israeli media that originated, ironically, when the main voice was, and to some extent still is, more post-Zionist – religious Zionist media people. The habitat of this sector may be more identified with the political Right, yet religious Zionists have become an integral part of the general Israeli media. They express Zionist values and are also prominent media professionals. Thus, in contradiction perhaps to the basic assumption by the media in recent decades that the Zionist ethos is of necessity anachronistic and unable to speak in the first person singular, it turns out that the Zionist voice can also speak with humor, candor and even in the first person singular.

We are thus witnessing a change of direction in the pendulum of media discourse, namely, a return to a more national collective ethos, albeit not in the style to which we were accustomed in the 1950s and '60s. I do not mean a 180-degree change, but something in the Hegelian spirit of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, i.e., the adoption of a middle position that will incorporate the best of all worlds, will one day itself become a thesis of the next generation, and against which someone will eventually rebel.

Efraim Lapid: We are privileged to host an important Jewish journalist, Gary Rosenblatt. He has been editor and publisher of the *Jewish Week* of New York since the summer of 1993. With five regional editions and a circulation of over 90,000, the *Jewish Week* is the largest Jewish newspaper in the United States and has attracted growing recognition from the general press. Prior to coming to New York, Rosenblatt had been editor of the *Baltimore Jewish Times* for 19 years, while serving during that time as editor of the *Jewish News of Detroit* for nine years and the *Atlanta Jewish Times* for four years. He has won numerous writing awards from both secular and Jewish organizations. His weekly column in the *Jewish Week*, "Between the Lines," won first-place awards from the New York State Press Association, is syndicated each week by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and appears in Jewish newspapers throughout the country.

I am delighted to invite Gary Rosenblatt to share his views with us on the role of the Jewish press outside Israel.

The Watchdogs of the Jewish Community

Gary Rosenblatt

It is an honor and a pleasure to be in Israel at this time and to be part of this symposium.

Last Thursday I spoke at a Hadassah conference in Long Island and asked the women how many in the audience thought that the American press was biased in its coverage of the media. Just about all of the 150 women in the room raised their hand. I told them that Robert Scheer of the *Los Angeles Times*, a columnist who is Jewish, would agree that there is bias in the American media. Then I read to them the beginning of a column that he wrote on April 23rd:

Is there media bias against Israel? The claim hotly expressed in thousands of angry e-mails and subscription cancellations that the US media are anti-Israel is so absurd as to suggest hysteria. Are American Jews in such deep denial about the brutality of Israel's recent actions that they would damn those who report the truth?

I assumed that the women who raised their hands, saying there is bias in the media, were not on the same wavelength as Robert Scheer. Neither are most American Jews, that's for sure.

I want to get back to the current conflict at the end of my remarks, but I was asked this evening to focus primarily on the role of the Jewish newspaper in America. In truth, there is nothing comparable in Israel. In Israel you have daily newspapers and you have religious newspapers, but you don't have Jewish newspapers because it is redundant, it is a meaningless phrase.

So let me begin with brief background about how the American Jewish press works. There are over 100 Jewish newspapers in America, and just about every community with more than 5,000 Jews has some kind of Jewish newspaper. The size, scope and quality of these newspapers vary greatly. The fact that few are known outside of their own local communities shows some of the difficulties involved in publishing a serious and profitable Jewish newspaper in America. We are known as "The People of the Book," but we are not known as "The People of the Newspaper." And while there are many prominent Jews who are journalists in America, including William Safire, A.M. Rosenfeld and Tom Friedman, there are few prominent journalists who write exclusively for Jewish newspapers.

The potential impact for Jewish newspapers in America is great. In a community that is increasingly divided by religious differences, it is the one central clearing house for news and opinions. People ask me to describe my job as editor and publisher of the *Jewish Week*, and I tell them it is a little bit like hosting a large family dinner. I don't know about your family, but in my family it doesn't mean they all get along, so you have to worry about where they sit. And your job as the host is really to keep the conversation going in a productive way, and at the very minimum make sure they don't throw food at each other. And, unfortunately, this is sometimes the case when dealing with the very passionate, large and contentious Jewish community in New York. The primary goal is to be inclusive and to have the people, through the pages of the newspaper, discuss issues.

Unlike the Israeli press, Jewish newspapers in America are not affiliated with political parties. Most would say they are centrists, wanting to reach Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and secular Jews, and everyone else. The one notable exception in terms of large Jewish newspapers is the *Jewish Press of Brooklyn*, which has a large circulation and is an aggressively Orthodox newspaper, once edited by Rabbi Meir Kahana.

Why aren't there a number of top quality Jewish newspapers in America? Part of the problem is economic, part a mix of sociology, politics and professionalism. The majority of these newspapers are either owned or heavily subsidized by their local Jewish Federation. A few are privately owned, very few are profitable. Most make their income from advertising, primarily from Jewish organizations, and a few of the more successful newspapers are able to attract general commercial advertising geared to the upscale Jewish market in their community.

Like newspapers everywhere, the Jewish newspapers worry about attracting younger readers. In general, older Jews are more involved and interested in Jewish life, and especially Israel. Younger Jews under the age of 45, who don't feel Israel in their *kishkes* the way their parents do, tend to be less interested, and that is reflected in the demographics of Jewish newspapers. I used to tell people, half kidding, when they asked, that the average age of our readers was deceased. Luckily, that was an exaggeration, but it was easily 60 and over. We have made a concentrated effort to reach younger readers in a number of ways, including starting a supplement

(called "Fresh Ink") that is written for and by high school students, and heavily investing in our website, which, by the way, is www.thejewishweek.com

Of the hundred or so Jewish newspapers in the U.S., I would have to say that less than a dozen are what we would call serious enterprises with a reach beyond covering the basics. The basics are the social announcements, from births and bat mitzvahs to bar mitzvahs, engagements and weddings; notices of Hadassah and ZOA meetings; Federation news; and synagogue news. This kind of information is not readily available in the general press, and it is the backbone of the Jewish newspapers. Then you have news of Israel and the Jewish world, usually provided through the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA). Only a few of the newspapers provide serious coverage of their own communities, because it is expensive, delicate and controversial, and you can fill the pages more easily with press releases and JTA news.

Now we reach a key point: how much do people want to read about controversy in their own communities? It is easier and more popular to write positive things about the Jewish community than critical ones. So in effect you have the First Commandment of the journalist – to probe and uncover and explore and shed light, while the First Commandment of the organized Jewish community in America is pretty much the opposite: to cover up any conflict, to present a united front, *shemsach* for the *goyim*. This tension between the journalist and the supporter of the Jewish community is always present for the editor of a Jewish paper. It is a tension between credibility and communal support, between being a journalist first and being supportive, supposedly, of organized Jewish life.

Few Jewish newspapers in America have the manpower, the financial independence or the guts to take on the establishment with any kind of investigative reporting of the local community. Various kinds of pressure are brought to bear, and this can mean pressure to publish page-one articles about the Federation campaign, even if it is not the most exciting story, or, as I heard from a colleague recently, pressure not to publish an opinion column by a leader of Peace Now because, she was told, it would be harmful to community support for Israel. Thus, Jewish newspapers risk the danger of becoming cheerleaders for Israel and the organized Jewish community, and once you lose credibility you have lost

everything.

In general, the American Jewish press is much less critical of Israeli policies in its opinion and editorial pages than Israeli newspapers. There is a feeling of a need to support whichever government is in power, and that sense has intensified in recent months. The Middle East violence of the last year and a half has created much more interest in Israel news on the part of American Jews. Before then, only two years ago, polls showed that readers wanted local news and were less interested in Israel, particularly among younger leaders. Now, there is a great deal of interest in Israel, and even in Europe and South America, because of the increase in anti-Semitism.

Part of the interest in Israel stems from a desire to read more details than what people see on TV or read in their daily papers, and part is because people are increasingly frustrated with and angry at the coverage of Israel that they are getting elsewhere. They feel the general press is biased against Israel. Some in Los Angeles are boycotting the *LA Times*, and there is a new move in New York to boycott the *New York Times*. While I personally think boycotts are self-defeating and unwise, they reflect the strong feelings that many American Jews have about media coverage now.

Our newspaper is one of the only American Jewish newspapers to have its own correspondent in Israel. Most rely on JTA, but all of the papers are carrying much more coverage of Israel now. What is always a luxury, though, is to carry stories that are not just about the crisis of the week, but reports on Israeli society, social issues, the kinds of stories that Israelis talk about with each other but that don't make the foreign press.

Over the years, the general press in America has mainly covered Jewish life in America as exotica, as writing about curiosities like *Hasidim* and *agunot*, rather than mainstream Jewish issues like Jewish identity, education or concerns about assimilation and intermarriage. I should point out that this is also true about the Israeli press, which does not tend to cover American Jewish life beyond Washington and support for Israel. It is also true of the Israeli government, for the most part. When the prime minister comes to America, he very rarely meets with the American Jewish press because the American Jewish community is, mistakenly I think, taken for granted.

It is also true that the American press treats all religions, not just Judaism, superficially, but that is another story. And

certainly in recent months, although religion has never been a serious beat of newspapers in America, I think the case could be made that religion is the number one story in recent times, from Islamic fundamentalism to the Catholic Church controversy that is raging now.

For all of our readers, the primary Jewish newspaper in New York is still the *New York Times*. It has long been the bible for many American Jews, and its coverage of Jewish issues, from the Middle East to politics in Brooklyn, is impressive and extensive and very frustrating for a Jewish journalist who operates around the corner from the *Times*. But I think the fact that it covers the Jewish community as thoroughly as it does reflects the importance of Jewish life to New York and the fact that so many Jews read the *Times*.

On a practical level, one important aspect of the Jewish newspaper is that it is read by the media, who look to it to gauge the mood of the Jewish communities and to find stories, which they often follow up themselves.

On a positive note, in terms of the role and importance of the Jewish newspaper in America, in my thirty years in the profession I have never felt the need for solid, thorough Jewish newspaper coverage as I do now. The American Jewish community has been deeply shaken by the war in Israel and the growing anti-Semitism around the world. We saw it in the tremendous outpouring of people who came to the national rally in Washington three weeks ago, we see it in the large and spontaneous efforts on the grass roots and now on the organized level to raise funds for Israel, and we see it in the heightened interest in Israel news. American Jews are worrying for the first time about Israel's future, about whether anti-Semitism might become a serious threat in the United States, about why Jews are becoming increasingly isolated, about why the world seems so biased against Israel and Jews. And they are looking to their newspaper to give them the facts and discuss the issues in analytical articles and to write with an understanding of and empathy for Israel that they can't find elsewhere.

These are tragic and trying days for all the Jewish people, but if there is a silver lining – and we all know how pessimistic Jews are; you know the Jewish telegram: "Start worrying, details to follow" – it is that more Jews are thinking about and identifying with Israel, and it is the job of the Jewish newspaper to educate them. The level of ignorance about the Middle East, especially among younger Jews, is frightening. But we

in the newspaper profession, in a sense, have found our voice. We were able to help rally the community to Israel's cause, to spread the word about activities, to tell Israel's story as it should be told. And we need to continue to improve and expand our abilities and to help reconnect American Jews to Zionism, the Zionism that they have paid little attention to in recent decades, helping them understand that our fate is linked to Israel's fate for good or for bad, forever. In that way, and in being a watchdog of the Jewish community, and in telling the current chapter of the longest running story in history, we can take Jewish journalism to a higher level, making it not only a job, but on a good day a calling.

Efraim Lapid: The next speaker this evening is Dorit Gollander, who is familiar with the Russian media in Israel, both written and electronic. It will be interesting to hear what is similar and what is different in this special media in comparison to other medias in Israel.

The Russian-Language Media – An Unusual Phenomenon Dorit Gollander

One million people arrived in Israel during the latest immigration from the C.I.S. (the former Soviet Union). This resulted in the founding of an entire media industry in the Russian language: 16 newspapers, four of them dailies; a large number of weeklies; dozens of local and private newspapers; magazines; several Israeli television programs running simultaneously on three main television channels broadcasting from Russia; the state radio station – Reka (an acronym for *Reshet Klitat Aliyah*, or Immigrant Absorption Network), which broadcasts 11 1/2 hours daily. What are the main reasons for this phenomenon, how long will it go on, and how will it affect the political and ideological processes involved in the absorption of a million new citizens into the Israeli reality? The following factors can help answer these questions:

1. A growing number of information consumers in the Russian language.
2. The slow integration of the Russian-speaking population in Israeli society and in the Hebrew-speaking population. Immigrants aged 45 and over number approximately 300,000. For them, the Russian-language media will

remain a key link to the Israeli reality.

3. The uniqueness of this immigration itself, which aspires to preserve the Russian language, spirit and culture. This population relies extensively on "our people," on a press and editorial commentary that is close to it and that appears in its language, Russian.
4. A general mistrust of the Hebrew media, which are perceived by the immigrants as being not particularly enthusiastic about immigration, and which have a completely different ideological, emotional and cultural base from that of the newcomers from the C.I.S.
5. A need for balanced information both about life in Israel and abroad, especially in the immigrants' homeland, Russia. Their interest in Russia is not particularly nostalgic in nature but rather reflects the emotional needs of hundreds of thousands of newcomers, including a not insignificant number with deep Russian roots.
6. The presence of a large number of high-level journalists who can utilize their skills only through the Russian-language media. Notably, despite intense competition, the Russian press is lucrative and supports a large number of newspapers of every kind. Surveys undertaken in recent years show that immigrants from the C.I.S. are particularly avid readers, listeners and viewers. Each immigrant family purchases at least one daily paper, one weekly periodical, and one weekend paper. One in every four Russian immigrants is familiar with the Israeli Russian-language TV programs, and one in every two listens to Radio Reka broadcasts – both daily news broadcasts and talk shows. Asked what attracts them most in the Israeli Russian-language media, the immigrants indicated, first and foremost, the wide variety offered, and secondly, objectivity. Language took third place only.

An additional point worthy of note is the high awareness by veteran immigrants from the Soviet Union during the 1960s and '70s of the Russian-language media. They, too, continue to be Russian-language media consumers. This phenomenon contradicts the predictions of the decline of the "Russian renaissance" in information and editorial commentary in Israel, a point reinforced by forecasts of continued immigration from the C.I.S. at a rate of tens of thousands annually. Moreover, there is a close connection between immigration from Russia and the existence of diversified Russian cultural life in Israel.

This is reflected in the opening of several hundred Russian bookstores and publishing houses, and a flourishing cassette and disc industry.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the demand for newspapers in the Russian language will continue for a period of at least 15-20 years.

Still, certain negative aspects of this intensive need for Russian culture and a Russian-language press cannot be ignored. First and foremost is an absence of contact and coordination between the Hebrew and the Russian press. While this situation does not cause any kind of media war, it does not support the integration of the Russian-speaking community in Israeli society. The Russian press relies on the Hebrew press, but the Hebrew press is insufficiently aware of the media world that exists alongside it, and of a whole army of journalists earning a living under much more difficult conditions than their Israeli colleagues in the Hebrew press.

Additionally, most of the Russian press does not have as its goal the integration of its readers in Israeli society. Rather, it simply responds to the needs of its consumers, with the result that a large portion of the information in the Russian-language Israeli press consists of materials copied from newspapers and magazines from Russia, which are not always on a worthy standard. Sensationalist headlines, erotica, and subject-matter remote from the Israeli reality dominate.

Another negative factor is that the Russian-language journalists work under difficult economic conditions.

Nonetheless, a positive factor that cannot be minimized is that the Russian-language media do enable a large proportion of the new immigrants to familiarize themselves with the Israeli reality and even take an active role in it. This contribution is significant and justifies concerted efforts to support these media.

This is the place to say a few words about the immigrant-absorption radio network of Kol Israel, Reka, launched in May 1991 and broadcasting regularly ever since. Any radio network in the world would be proud to have such a loyal audience of listeners and a rating of 73%. Another positive aspect is that young listeners who already know Hebrew continue to tune in regularly. Following are several statistics taken from a recent survey on the listening habits of immigrants from the C.I.S. who tune in to Radio Reka:

Up to age 24 – 31.7% tune in to Radio Reka
Ages 25-34 – 37.8%

Ages 35-54 – 68.3%

Ages 55-64 – 90.9%

Ages 65+ – 94.2%

Moreover, close to a million letters have been received by the Radio Reka network during its 11-year existence, a heartwarming mutual connection.

Efraim Lapid: From Russian radio we turn to the highly regarded Hebrew-language Kol Israel. According to the survey carried out by the Jewish Agency spokesman's office, referred to above, Kol Israel was responsible for nearly 50% of the coverage of Jewish and Zionist subjects in Israel's electronic media, while Galei Zahal (I.D.F. Radio) covered 19%, Channel One 10%, and Channel Two 3%.

Sarah Frenkel of Kol Israel is the leader in coverage of this area. She has demonstrated over the years that a career in journalism can be combined with activism on behalf of immigration and the Jewish people. For a number of years, she played an active role in the struggle for Jews to leave the Soviet Union and immigrate to Israel, a role that reflected her unique personal shift from the media to the establishment and back.

Immigration and Absorption Do Not Get Good Ratings Sarah Frenkel

Media coverage in Israel in nearly every area is markedly influenced by the political situation and the bitter rivalry between Right and Left and between secular, religious and haredi. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionist parties and the youth movements played a central role in society. Although political rivalry then, too, was destructive, there was a consensus regarding the supreme importance of such national tasks as immigration and absorption for the advancement, development and reinforcement of the state. This mindset was reflected in the media – both print and broadcast – as well.

When Zionism was not a derogatory word but signified esprit de corps, immigration, too, was recognized as an inseparable element of the Zionist enterprise. The political press (*Davar*, *Lamerhav*, *Herut*, *Haboker*, *Al Hamishmar* and others) gave pride of place to Zionist topics and highlighted immigration, absorption and the problems inherent in them. The

national bodies – the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund – were institutions that gave direct support to carrying out these national tasks and were also perceived thus by government, the public and the media.

During the past thirty years, the party-sponsored newspapers – which gave extensive coverage to such topics as the Diaspora, world Jewish movements, the Zionist Congress, the struggle for the right of Soviet Jewry to immigrate to Israel and other such issues – closed down. What followed was the “private” press.

What became of the national flag that used to fly over every public building, government office and school in Israel? Where have they disappeared? In deciding to banish the flags from our domain, was there no realization that this act contributes to the denigration of one of the immutable national symbols of any people or state, an act similar to the denigration of the national concept “Zionism”?

Observe how in the mighty U.S.A. the American flag flies over every public building. Here, however, our progressive-minded stratum dismissed the raising of the flag as nationalism. Thus, a generation has grown up without an awareness of the importance of the most basic national values. This, too, is one of the negative influences of class-conscious politics on society’s and the media’s attitude to national symbols.

Ultimately, our national home is still a work in progress and has not yet achieved a state of repose. We are still struggling for recognition for our existence in our land. Zionism is not yet bankrupt, and many tasks are yet to be accomplished by our national bodies, i.e., by Zionism.

During the past two decades, and especially in the last decade, political rivalry has influenced every area of our lives to an unprecedented degree. Nearly everything is dependent on politics. One example, which cries out for attention, will suffice: during the past decade, some 900,000 immigrants have arrived in Israel, of whom some 200,000 are not Jewish, the product of mixed marriages. They arrived under the aegis of the Law of Return (I am not referring here to illegal immigration). While not all are interested in conversion, those who would like to be identified with the Jewish people encounter rigid Orthodox obstacles put up in the spirit of the House of Shamai, instead of guidance along this route in the spirit of the House of Hillel, and without harming *Halacha*.

The *haredim*, on the one hand, and the secular who have turned their secularism into a religion, on the other, face off

against each other as if in a boxing arena. The main thing is winning, and in the meantime, the patient may expire. Where are the great rabbis, as exemplified by the late Chief Rabbi Goren, who was able to find original solutions to ease the situation and solve complex problems so as to take in the stranger in our midst?

To be honest, the media today are also to blame for the absence of appropriate coverage of the topics we are discussing. Basically, the media today are more competitive than ever. They promote topics that earn good ratings and bring in profits, tested at the end of the month in the balance sheets. If this is one of the goals, then the public must have what it wants and likes, or, more accurately, what the media – the journalists, editors or owners – think the public likes. The electronic media, too, are infected by the competitive rating system.

Topics considered too “Zionistic” must be “marketed” by the reporter to the editorial management. Editors today are mostly young, and not only have not experienced Zionist history personally, but they have absorbed the derogatory attitude toward anything that smacks of Zionism in their education. These topics, therefore, do not speak to them.

The sense of mutuality between the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry, visits by delegations of Jewish leaders, monetary contributions, fund-raising and so forth have been pushed aside. By contrast, scandals, especially political but also rape, crime and car theft grab headlines. These produce high ratings.

Immigration, absorption and the Diaspora – who cares? More’s the pity.

Efraim Lapid: To conclude, I would like to invite Dr. Mordecai Naor of the Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People, who is a journalist, editor and author of many books and articles on subjects relating to the press and Eretz Israel.

Renewed Interest of the World Media in Israel During the Last Two Years Mordecai Naor

These days it is easy to be a journalist. This morning I searched the Internet for information on the *Jewish Week*, Gary Rosenblatt’s paper. I came across a description of the paper and the wide variety of subjects it covers: The Jewish world from Midtown to the Mideast. Midtown, for those who don’t

know, is in New York; and the Mideast is known to all of us. At the click of a button, the computer provides us with comprehensive data on almost every Jewish paper that appears in the world today.

I will try to speak briefly about the world Jewish press today and its coverage of Israel. Notably, the subject of Zionism did not occupy the Jewish world very much in the early part of the twentieth century. By way of illustration, I located data about the Jewish world in 1930. The Jewish population centers at that time were to be found mainly in three countries: the United States, Poland and the U.S.S.R. Each had several million Jewish inhabitants. Other sizable Jewish communities were in Rumania, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, England, France and Argentina.

Why am I citing this list? Because every large community (except the U.S.S.R., of course) was free then to publish many newspapers in all the Jewish languages, yet the majority of them did not deal with Zionism or Eretz Israel. If we examine the situation today, the number of Jews has decreased since the Holocaust, and Jewish populations in the millions live in two places only today – the U.S. and Israel. These two populations are nearly equal in size: 5.7 million in the U.S. and 5.4 million in Israel, bringing the total to over 11 million Jews. Another two million are spread over many small communities and several larger ones: France, Canada, Russia, England, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Ukraine, South Africa and Germany (notably, some 90,000-100,000 Jews live in Germany today).

A small or even average-size community has difficulty publishing a newspaper. That is why nowadays a large number of newspapers in the U.S., and not only there, are local papers – community and Federation papers which are dependent on their patrons. The complexity of this situation may be illustrated by a joke cited by an American Jewish journalist in one of the latest editions of *Kesher*: “There is a riddle: ‘If a tree falls in a forest and nobody hears it, did it really fall?’ In the world of journalism the riddle is formulated differently: ‘If a tree falls in a forest and the media didn’t report it, did it really fall?’ But in Jewish papers in North America, the riddle should go like this: ‘If a tree falls in a forest and the Jewish papers didn’t report it for fear that it fell in a forest belonging to a renowned philanthropist who might be angry if the local Jewish paper were to report it, did it really fall?’”

The link between Jewish newspapers throughout the world

and Zionism and the State of Israel has been discussed here extensively. If I had spoken on the subject two years ago, I would have told you that the situation is in decline and that there is written evidence to this effect. In 1994, a conference of Jewish editors was convened at Brandeis University with participants from the U.S., Australia and elsewhere. The conference reported that in the decade prior to 1994, American Jewish interest in Israeli matters had declined, especially among younger people, and, as you know, newspapers are always interested in attracting young readers, as they are the future of the paper. One of the participants in that discussion, the editor of the *Cleveland Jewish News*, said at that time that the news from Israel is usually of less interest to American Jewish readers, except for unusual events such as the granting of the Nobel Peace Prize for the Oslo Accords, the signing of a peace treaty with Jordan or, by contrast, a bus exploding in Tel Aviv. She added that since the existential threat to Israel has passed, her paper had begun to lay greater emphasis on local Jewish news. In her opinion, in order for her paper and the rest of the Jewish papers to survive, they had to focus on describing life in the Jewish communities in the U.S. and not in Israel.

Of course, everything has changed completely in the last few months. I recently conducted a small experiment. I took one Jewish paper, the *Jewish Chronicle* of London, and examined the first 16 pages of its April 5, 2002, issue. I found that five pages of the issue were devoted mainly to events in Israel. A total of nine items were devoted to Israel and the Middle East. Ten items were devoted to England, but these included Israel-related matters as well (demonstrations and protests for and against Israel). Europe had three items; the Jewish world outside Europe – zero; and the U.S. – one item. I also checked the two editorials: both dealt with Israeli matters. Out of 15 letters to the editor, seven were on a single subject: a Peace Now petition circulating in England and a debate conducted in the paper over whether English Jewry should get involved in an internal Israeli dispute. The other eight letters were on other topics. Two other opinion articles were also about topics unrelated to Israel. By comparison, any issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* two or three years ago would have revealed very different proportions, i.e., only an occasional item on Israel. Furthermore, anyone familiar with this paper knows just how difficult it was to place an item on Israel then.

Is this good? Is it bad? I don’t know. I sometimes think it

would be better to return to the previous state – let them write less about us, because that would mean there is less to write about. Perhaps we have matured and do not need to get upset about everything written about us in the world press generally and in the Jewish press in particular. The other side of the coin, of course, is: do papers in Israel tend to write about the Jewish world? As someone who has explored this area, I can assure you that they write very little. Several years ago I required a source of ongoing journalistic coverage of the Jewish world. I found it in one paper only, the *haredi* paper *Hamodia*. The other papers carried a sprinkling of news items and articles, some more, some less, but nothing regular. *Hamodia*, however,

ran a large weekly column covering a full page with information on developments in the Jewish world.

This is the situation, and we ought to be aware of this side of the coin as well.

Efraim Lapid: We have heard, in this symposium, about Israel, Zionism, the Jewish world and the media that link them to a greater or lesser extent. The issue remains on the agenda. We have contributed our modest part. Undoubtedly there will be more to come.

Translated from Hebrew by June Spitzer

Israel Grapples with its History (and Future): The Domestication of the Post-Zionist Critique

Joel S. Migdal

In 1988, while he was in Seattle on a sabbatical, my dear friend Baruch Kimmerling [professor of sociology at Hebrew University] suggested to me that we collaborate on a project on the Palestinians. The book that resulted from our five years of work together, *Palestinians: The Making of a People*, was, I think, the first full social-political account of Palestinian history to appear in English (published in 1993 by the Free Press, a year later in paperback by Harvard University Press, and thereafter in Italian, Hebrew and Arabic). Shortly after the publication of the original version, the book was greeted with impassioned, sometimes vicious, reviews. It also became one catalyst, among several others, for a vituperative debate in the Israeli popular press, centering on historiography and the so-called New or Critical Sociology. Oddly, when the Hebrew edition of the book was published in Israel in 1998, it was treated much differently, with respectful, colorless reviews that gave no hint of the furor that the book had aroused less than five years earlier. In this essay, I would like to explore these very different sorts of reception for the book as a way to understand the domestication in Israel of the historiographic critique associated with what were variously labeled the New Sociologists, the New Historians and the Post-Zionists.

Kimmerling and I had known each other for ten years before his fateful proposal to me, from the time of a previous sabbatical of his in the United States. We felt close enough in our approaches and temperaments to subject ourselves to all the inevitable stresses and strains inherent in a collaborative undertaking of this scope. And, indeed, our friendship did survive such differences as in the pace of our writing (he, at breakneck speeds and I, at a much more measured meter) and our political views (especially toward the end of the project when Kimmerling expressed determined skepticism concerning Oslo as opposed to my ebullient support). Neither of us saw this project as one whose most important contribution would be breaking ground in introducing new material on Palestinian society. We relied largely on already published material in order to write an integrative, synthetic account of the

conditions that spawned a distinct Palestinian society and that helped shape it into what it is today. Only in a few instances did we fill in gaps by collecting primary data. The innovation, we hoped, would be in the book's scope, its success in bringing together scattered pieces of knowledge in already published works, and, not least of all, our particular perspective and interpretation.

Several factors motivated me to take on this daunting project, beyond the simple anticipation of writing with one of Israel's leading academic figures. For one, when Kimmerling came to me, I had just published a book that had consumed me for much of the previous decade, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, and I was casting about for my next undertaking. Beyond that, the idea of tackling the rapidly expanding body of data and research on Palestinian society and history and molding that into our own original interpretation proved very tempting. Both of us had strong theoretical ideas and felt that we could use those to bring a new coherence to the existing, fragmented material.

But, in the end, I think what swayed me to join Kimmerling in writing such a book was deep personal frustration about how the Palestinians were thought of in much of Jewish Israeli and Jewish American society. The demonization, dismissal and distortion of the Palestinians through seven decades of almost uninterrupted conflict, it seemed to me, were contributing factors to the inability of Israel and Israelis to move toward some sort of reasonable diplomatic solution (paralleled on the other side by an equally warped view of Israel and Jews by Palestinians). Standard understandings of the Palestinians—when they were even thought of as Palestinians—put serious blinders on Israelis and their backers, principally the American Jews, and thwarted them from taking new roads that might lead to settling the conflict. While I cannot speak for Kimmerling, to my mind, the principal audience for this book on Palestinians was to be these Jews in the two countries. What was going to be most radical, I thought, was the perspective we would bring to Jewish Americans and

Jewish Israelis on the Palestinian question. This was to be my first book aimed at a broad audience beyond the academic community, and I was hopeful that it would contribute to a wide segment of Jews envisioning Palestinians differently and, by implication, rethinking how to deal with them. In an audacious sort of way, the book was asking Jews, both in Israel and the United States, to re-imagine the Jewish future.

The perspective that Kimmerling and I brought to the subject included four elements. First, it focused on change at the grass-roots—the movement and distribution of people, their changing life circumstances, their differing and changing occupational structure, and the like—diminishing the weight of Palestinian central leadership while elevating the primacy of social processes at the level of everyday life. Second, the book examined the dynamic interplay between various segments of the society—town and country, hill and plain, secular and religious, Christian and Muslim, diaspora and Palestine-based, and others—rather than finding some unified, essential Palestinian character. Third, while not discounting the powerful effect of Zionism in shaping Palestinian society, the narrative placed Zionism as only one among several key world historical forces, including world capitalism's insidious penetration of the Ottoman Empire, which began long before the appearance of Zionism. Finally, and probably what was most unsettling and disorienting to Jewish readers, we recast the history of Palestine and Israel so that Jews, who had occupied center stage in most previous accounts, now were relegated to the wings, displaced by Palestinians. All of a sudden, the former bit players and character actors became the leading men and leading ladies.

The book itself could not have appeared at a better time. It was in the midst of the most tumultuous diplomatic period that Israel had ever experienced, the period leading up to the indelible moment on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993. No matter what one thought of the Oslo agreement, it certainly demanded from Jews and Palestinians alike new ways of thinking about old issues and stubborn problems. And that is often an unbearably painful process. A book suggesting different modes for thinking about the Palestinians was much more likely to make people sit up and take notice at that point than it would have had even in, say, 1988, when we started the research and writing.

I recall a couple of incidents that had suggested to me how set Israeli opinion on the Palestinians had been in the pre-

Oslo era. One was a closed seminar at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs in the late 1970s presented by Shimon Peres, then one of the leaders of the Israeli opposition. When Peres asked for questions from people around the table, Walid Khalidi, perhaps the leading Palestinian thinker, peppered him with a series of "what ifs": what if the PLO were to accept Israel's right to exist? what if the PLO were to accept a two-state solution? what if the PLO were to renounce violence? At first, Peres answered facetiously that if the PLO did such things, it no longer would be the PLO—a standard Israeli response of the time that characterized the PLO's *raison d'être* as terror. But, even after he apprehended the seriousness of the questions, Peres seemed startled and unable to pursue Khalidi's line of thinking very far. At that time, such radical ideas simply could not jar Peres out of his standard line of reasoning, even to engage in hypotheticals.

A second incident was a conversation I had with Arye (Lova) Eliav, the former secretary of the Labor Party, also back in the late 1970s. Eliav, someone who had certainly transcended the standard Israeli discourse on the Palestinians, was at the time about to receive the Bruno Kreisky Peace Prize in Austria for his unsanctioned peace talks with PLO official Issam Sartawi. When I asked what sort of response he expected once he returned to Israel, Eliav shrugged. "In restaurants, people will call over to me and say, 'Lova, Lova, what are you doing talking to that terrorist, Arafat?' It is Sartawi that I am worried about," he went on. "Palestinians will kill him." (Indeed, Sartawi was assassinated by other Palestinians in 1983, several years after receiving his share of the peace prize.) The relatively mild response that Eliav anticipated in Israel for his consorting with the enemy, I think, stemmed from the fact that popular thinking about the Palestinians was so entrenched at that time that his actions did little to threaten existing conceptions.

The Oslo process and preceding events, including changes in PLO policy in the late 1980s and the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, jolted the common understanding of the Palestinians in Israel. Books such as ours could now be taken much more seriously and, at the same time, could hit some very raw nerves. I was not surprised, then, that the book received considerable attention in the Israeli press and in Jewish American magazines. What did catch me unawares was the deep and hateful passion in many of the articles and reviews that commented on the book. The pieces that attacked the book were

clearly reacting to far more than what we had written. They were reeling from a new critical history and social science that were reexamining Israel's own history, and from an uneasy feeling that this reexamination could now matter in ways that it had not previously. Even the headlines and titles reflected the intensity of feeling in these negative articles on our book: "Scholarship as Fraud," "On the Sin that We Sinned in Creating a State" (echoing the penitential prayers on Yom Kippur), or "The Israeli Suicide Drive."

One of the harbingers of what was to come in Israel was an article in a small American Zionist magazine, *Midstream*. Joel Carmichael, the editor, fired the first volley in May 1993 by reviving the old shibboleth that the concept of Palestinians as a unique nation is a "very peculiar idea, itself a complete invention...." How can there be a Palestinian nation, Carmichael asked, when, "in Arabic, the language spoken in that area since the expansion of Islam in the 7th century, the sound 'p' itself cannot even be pronounced?" Carmichael surmised that it had been just a matter of time until Jewish scholars wrote about this "preposterous invention:"

It has finally happened. Two professors, Israeli, Baruch Kimmerling, and an American, Joel S. Migdal, have produced a serious-looking book put out by a major publisher in which this entirely artificial and indeed fraudulent claim is embodied in the very title.... Thus, by means of a transparent gimmick of matchless dishonesty Kimmerling and Migdal have constructed a mock-history of the eastern Mediterranean, via the area of Palestine itself.¹

I was not unaccustomed to negative reviews of my previous books—they were known hazards of my profession—but I was unprepared for these sorts of charges, that we had written an "utterly bogus book." Something was clearly afoot.

It did not take long for the Israeli press to chime in on the merits, or demerits, of the book, not so much in actual reviews as in articles that used the book as a launching pad for looking more broadly at the new historiography involving the Palestinians and Israel itself. In Israel, by the early 1990s, Carmichael's claim that the idea of Palestinians as a people or nation was a "preposterous invention" was no longer taken seriously by any major segment of Israeli thinkers and writers. What was at issue was when the Palestinian nation came into being, and this seemingly recondite question, the critics felt, had enormous implications. For a number of our book's Israeli critics, it was the contact of the country's Arab residents with Zionism that was the determining factor in con-

structing a unified people. There was no Palestinian nation, the thinking went, before Zionism; it was a product of the local Arab residents' encounter with immigrant Jews and their dynamic political movement.

The firestorm began in the weekly magazine of the now defunct Labor newspaper *Davar*. Written by Yisrael Landers, the article appeared in the March 18, 1994, issue. Its basis was a conversation with the esteemed Israeli sociologist, Moshe Lissak of the Hebrew University, in which the central claim was that a new generation of mostly Israeli social scientists was undermining the Zionist story while supporting the construction of an alternative, Palestinian story. Indeed, the article claimed, these social scientists were, wittingly or unwittingly, challenging the validity of the historic settling of Jews in the country and the very justification for the establishment of the State of Israel. This was the most serious sort of indictment. Israel's legitimacy was brought into doubt, Landers charged, through the introduction of the idea that Zionism had mercilessly uprooted an already cohesive people, the country's Arab residents. If the Palestinians as a people were simply a product of their contacts with Zionism, as Lissak and Landers assumed, then Zionism could not be charged with obliterating another nation, since no such nation existed when Zionists began settling the land. The basic premise of Zionism and the creation of Zionism, then, could not be said to have been born in sin.

Focusing on the publication of *Palestinians: The Making of a People*, Landers pointed to our purported argument that the Palestinian people as a social entity was created as far back as 1834, thus validating Palestinians' claims that the emergence of the Palestinian nation was in no way a recent event and certainly involved far more than a simple reaction to Zionism. Indeed, this thinking went, if the Palestinians were already a nation, then Zionism's success in securing the Jews' national rights was tainted by coming only at the expense of dismantling another existing nation's national rights. Landers' (or, more likely, Lissak's) charge against us stemmed from a serious misreading of what we had written; the book never made any such argument about the Arabs of Palestine emerging as a nation in 1834. Interestingly, a much more sympathetic reviewer, Ilan Papp, who is one of the so-called New Historians, similarly misread our intent in an earlier review of the book in the newspaper *Ha'aretz*.²

Our actual point in the book was that the events of 1834—

a territory-wide revolt against the recent Egyptian occupation—had created a structural pillar for drawing together the population of a territory, Palestine, in which the residents would much later develop into a self-identified people. Our argument involved a multi-vectored and long-term formation of a Palestinian nation. The method that we employed understood the construction of a people or nation as an ongoing process, without defining, “founding” moments in history. This method runs counter to established social science methodology, represented by Lissak and most others, which tends to deal with concepts, such as nation, as hard variables that have a defining moment of incarnation. Their misunderstanding of our method and intent led Landers to a vicious statement in which he noted that writers like us “find no defect in a subjective approach that suits the research to the ideological needs of the Palestinians.”³

Leave aside the misreading of our presentation of the revolt of 1834 by Landers and Lissak; their belief that we had posited the existence of a Palestinian nation in the early nineteenth century led them to dire conclusions:

The Palestinians lend importance to moving back the birth of their people to an earlier date because, if their distinctive nationhood was created before the Zionist settlement, the significance of that would be that Zionism sinned, not only in overtaking the boundaries of residents who did not have a distinctive national identity, but in the erasure of an existing Palestinian people from its land. Kimmerling and Migdal’s book aids the writing of the new history of the Palestinians, which asserts that their people existed even before the first Zionist settler set foot in the land of Israel.⁴

The effect of our analysis, for Landers, was “the de-legitimization of the Jewish state from within and from without.” The lionization of the subjective approach by the New Sociologists, as opposed to a serious attempt at objectivity, to Lissak’s mind, not only threatened Israel’s legitimacy, but chipped away at the foundations of social science generally. Lissak followed up these quite serious charges with more detailed attacks on the Critical Sociologists, most notably in a symposium on Zionism in the very first issue of the journal *Israel Studies*, in 1996.⁵

That symposium spilled over into subsequent issues of the journal and other sites. Lissak’s critique had the feel of the generational conflict represented in the *Akedah*, or binding of Isaac; much of his attack was directed at those who had been trained in his own Sociology Department at the Hebrew Uni-

versity, most notably, my co-author, Kimmerling, whom he had mentored and whose Ph.D. dissertation he had supervised.

With the publication of Landers’ critique, the gates were now open for a full-blown public airing of the deep divisions in Israeli social science that went way beyond our particular book. To be sure, there were purely academic arenas, too, in which these sorts of arguments were flying back and forth, such as the annual convention of the Israel Sociological Association, but using popular newspapers as the arena to air social scientists’ dirty laundry had an important broader effect. It made a wide segment of the Israeli public aware of these arcane debates, some of them playing off nearly impenetrable scholarly disputes about post-modernism in Europe and the United States, and it forced those writing in the newspapers to refashion their arguments in more broadly accessible terms. The newspaper readers became sideline observers of some of the Israeli universities’ less savory qualities, including unbounded personal attacks, but they also became the participating audience to be wooed in those debates. In currying the public’s favor, writers from both sides of the divide had to reframe their arguments in more socially relevant, and easily ascertained, terms. They had to make clear how their own narrow concerns reached fundamental problems and issues of Israeli society that were of interest to the newspapers’ readers.

In a retort in *Davar* magazine two weeks after Landers’ article appeared, Kimmerling did just that.⁶ His tack was to shift the central topic away from the Palestinians—a still rather obscure topic for most Israelis—to Israeli society itself. He countered Landers and Lissak by defining the essence of the debate as a key difference in understanding the construction of Israeli, not Palestinian, society. In other words, one needed to properly characterize Israel’s society and then explain how it developed its particular character. While the Old Sociologists presented Israeli society as born whole out of the organized pre-state *yishuv* (again, the emphasis on hard variables and defining moments), Kimmerling claimed, the New Sociologists understood it to be a society-in-the-making, shaped in good part by the British mandatory regime and, particularly, by the varied interactions it had with the Arab community in the country. Kimmerling was implicitly raising the issue of the validity of our process-oriented approach.

Kimmerling touched a critical chord in the public by arguing that the old view did not simply misstate the origins of Israeli society but left little room for understanding, in the

present day, the deep impact of Mizrahi immigrants and their Israeli-born children, Arab citizens of Israel, and the ultra-Orthodox on the continuing development of Israeli society. In that sense, the Old Sociologists, he charged, gave credence to the continued dominance and privileges of the old settler elite. (Years later, Kimmerling demonstrated how the decisive event in reshaping Israeli society at the beginning of the twenty-first century has been precisely the disappearance of this old settler elite, coining the term *ahusalim* – an acronym for Ashkenazi secular old-timer socialist nationalists – to describe the old guard's members. This analysis appears in his wonderful new book, *Ketz Shilton Ha'ahusalim* [The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony; Keter, 2001]). In *Davar*, back in 1994, Kimmerling was sounding a populist theme that could have much wider resonance than academic differences about the precise dating of the birth of the Palestinian people.

Kimmerling's response to Landers and Lissak only fanned the flames. An article appeared a month later in the local weekly newspaper *Kol Ha'ir*.⁷ It claimed that what had been a purely academic debate on the margins of the social sciences had turned into a deep generational conflict and, above all, an assault on the establishment sociology of the Hebrew University by young academics at Israel's newer universities. Much of the attack against the establishment was against S.N. Eisenstadt, my own teacher and a figure of world renown, who was accused of giving short shrift to the impact of Arabs in the shaping of Israeli society and of seeing Israeli society as relatively impervious to change, especially by underrepresented groups. Once again, the *Kol Ha'ir* article was laboring to take a rather abstract internal debate and strip away its many veils for the broader public.

The *Kol Ha'ir* piece had only limited success in that regard. Its focus on such elements as battles for control of academic departments and on key old establishment figures impeding the careers of younger critical colleagues would not seem to have broad resonance in the public. Much more successful in raising a public furor was the well-known essayist, short story writer and novelist in Israel, Aharon Meged. He took up the populist theme, addressed earlier by Kimmerling, in an article that appeared in *Ha'arets* on June 10, 1994, and again, in a somewhat truncated format, in the *Jerusalem Post* on July 2, 1994, entitled "The Israeli Suicide Drive."

His premises were that the critical social scientists and historians triggered a "latent biological urge [by Zionism] to

self-destruct," as evidenced in the territorial concessions to the Palestinians in the Oslo process—concessions, he claimed, that presaged the destruction of Israel. Meged picked up by-now familiar themes—the drive by critical academics to delegitimize the state, their understanding of Zionism as conceived in sin, and the like. "Their conclusion is almost uniform: that in practice, Zionism amounts to an evil, colonialist conspiracy to exploit the people dwelling in Palestine, enslave them and steal their land." To Meged's mind, the critical social scientists and historians were engaged in nothing less than "vulgar anti-Zionist 'propaganda' in the old Kremlin style." Their "pathology" has led to a phenomenon without "parallel in history: an emotional and moral identification by the majority of Israel's intelligentsia with people openly committed to our annihilation."

Meged's tendentious essay provoked a storm of responses. Days later, the anthropologist Danny Rabinowitz fired back in an article in *Ha'arets*⁸ that Meged fell into the classic trap of the old school, demanding that research pass some sort of hidden test to make sure that it does not undermine the reigning concept of the nation and its myths. In the weekly magazine of *Ha'arets*⁹ one issue after Meged's article appeared, a historian responded with an article entitled "The Stalinist." A week after that, *Ha'arets* informed its readers that Meged had elicited tens of letters and response articles, some of which the newspaper printed, along with an answer to them by Meged.¹⁰ Two weeks later, it published yet another collection of letters, this time including one by me. This was a no-holds-barred debate. Kimmerling, for example, started his response by writing that Meged's article "could serve beginners in every school of journalism as a lesson in demagoguery." I found the fracas bewildering.

Indeed, its substance included some very bizarre elements. Kimmerling and I were accused by Meged, for example, of denigrating the pioneering efforts of the kibbutz's founding generation, reducing it to seeking nothing more than economic repression of Arabs (in fact, we had not written anything of the kind, nor did I, or do I, accept such an idea). Additionally, I was accused by the well-known historian of the Palestinians, Yehoshua Porath, of claiming (in a conference that I never, in fact, attended) that the weakness of the Palestinian movement lay in the fact that it was led by peasants (an absurdity in its own right and directly contrary to a point I made in another book, *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution*).

But, for all the personal attacks and the playing fast-and-loose with the facts, the debate did indicate two important features about Israel. First, the old unquestioned assumptions about Israeli society—how it came into being, how it was shaped, and how it was now organized—were currently on the table for scrutiny and debate. Not least among these assumptions were those that had to do with who the Palestinians were, how they had been affected by Israel, and how they, in turn, influenced Israeli society. In short, if any consensus had existed on how to understand Israel's short history (and, by extension, its future), it had evaporated by the mid-1990s. Second, the debate that had simmered in the ivory tower of academia had now been reframed by the popular press and spread to a much broader section of Israeli society. I found this latter phenomenon fascinating. In the United States I had witnessed the growth of a revisionist history and social science, too, dealing there with the origins and the playing out of the Cold War, a cultural icon that had been as important to Americans as was the conflict with the Palestinians to the Israelis. But, in that case, the press had never succeeded much in making the larger public a part of the debate.

From the beginning, it had been Kimmerling's and my intention to publish the book in Hebrew, too. We negotiated with the Free Press, our publisher, for us to hold onto the foreign language rights ourselves, in large part because we thought that Kimmerling was far better positioned than the Free Press to strike a deal with a Hebrew publisher. I grew quite frustrated with him when one e-mail after another in 1994 and 1995 spoke of his failures in eliciting even a modicum of interest by any Israeli publisher. In fact, I was so sure that the problem was in Kimmerling's approach to these publishers that, in a visit to Israel in 1995, I took it upon myself to contact publishers to try and negotiate a deal myself. But I had no luck either. While no editor would say so explicitly, our strong impression was that even two years after Oslo, no publisher would touch with a ten-foot pole a book moving the Palestinians to center stage. Our ideas seemed too far beyond the pale.

By 1996-97, however, the ground had shifted. Not any old publisher, but Keter, one of the most established publishing houses in Israel, began negotiating with Kimmerling about the translation and printing of a Hebrew edition of *Palestinians*. And, when it finally appeared in 1998, Keter backed its publication by making it a major cultural event. Its marketing

department secured prized window space in book shops. The book's design was anything but nondescript, its cover boldly reproducing the colors and motif of the Palestinian flag, itself still a dubious icon in Israeli society. It took out full-page ads in major newspapers, aiming sales at a broad audience, certainly not just academics and students. Banner headlines in the ad read, "*Ha'sipur shelo supar me'olam*" (The Story that Was Never Told) and potential buyers were informed in red ink, no less, that the book was "a must read."

Keter clearly did something right. The book on the Palestinians(!) hit Israel's best-seller list, certainly a first for anything that I had written. Friendly reviews appeared. What was striking to me most of all was the tone of those reviews. I had braced myself for yet another onslaught, for a new edition of the bloody culture wars that we had been drawn into in 1994. But no such maelstrom occurred. Even the headlines of the reviews were bland this time around, "They Existed Before the Conflict, Too," and "The Conflict: The Enemy as a Human Being." How different from the shark-like headlines four years earlier! And the content of the reviews reflected the same milk-and-water tone. In *Yediot Aharonot*, Israel's top-circulation newspaper, Yaron London wrote on January 22, 1999, that "the outstanding achievement of the authors is, in fact, the critical coverage of the earlier period in the formation of the neighboring nation." *A neighboring nation!*

I found myself somewhat deflated. It was not that London disliked the book. On the contrary, the review was very favorable. What took the wind out of my sails was the implication that the importance of the book lay solely in our handling of the historical material, on what Israelis could learn from our account about their neighbors; its significance in shifting Jewish discourse on Israel's own history no longer seemed to be an issue. London went on to write in the same vein, "The perspective with which Kimmerling and Migdal present us makes it easier to understand the present-day sociology of the Palestinians." The new reviews portrayed the book not as a shot across the bows in the war over Israel's legitimacy, but as a nondescript teaching tool for Israelis in a new, still unfamiliar landscape.

A review in *Ha'aretz* on March 10, 1999, by Danny Rabinowitz had none of the sharp polemical tone that he had used five years earlier in responding to Meged. He no longer needed to adopt a defensive tone, reflecting a beleaguered band of academics put upon by a powerful cultural figure such as

Meged. Nor did Rabinowitz feel called upon to draw sharp lines between a new generation of critical academics willing to deviate from government myths, and the old establishment laboring to buttress the standard line. Instead, he could dedicate his review to the subject of the book itself and not to some outside academic struggle—praising the book’s approach to the subject, its view from the bottom of society, and its integration of history and social science, while critiquing some of its theoretical shortcomings, its inattention to citations (the Hebrew edition, much to our dismay, did not include the citations and simply referred the reader to the English edition), and its insufficient use of anthropological literature. As in the case of the review by London, Rabinowitz ended up addressing his readers didactically, rather than incorporating them into a debate on their own history, as the reviews four and five years earlier had. He instructed his readers that a key contribution of the book was in presenting Palestinian history as important in its own right, not only as reflected through the conflict: “The book covers a people with a history, which must be understood in and of itself. This course, which was of deep importance for the relatively neutral readers of the English and Italian editions of the book, is many more times vital for Israeli readers.”

The change in tone and content of the reviews of *Palestinians: The Making of a People* from 1994 to 1999 frankly startled me. Certainly, the divisive politics of how to deal with the Palestinians had not ended in Israel—the new reviews, in fact, came in the midst of Binyamin Netanyahu’s hardline administration, when feelings about the Palestinians ran high among the Israeli Jewish public, both on the part of those on the left and the right. Nor had debates involving Post-Zionists, New Historians, and New Sociologists ended within the Israeli academy (as the current issue of this journal indicates).

It is not surprising that such deep rifts did not simply disappear by 1999. Even in the United States, echoes of the revisionist history of the Cold War can still be heard at times. In Israel, where the issues that fired the debate are not just relics in history books but live, relevant topics, especially in the wake of the failure of the Oslo process and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, it is not at all surprising that deep divisions have continued to mark discussions of Israel’s history. Crude personal attacks and character assassination still rear their ugly heads. Despite assurances to the contrary, a recent article written under the pseudonym Solomon Socrates, for

example, resounded with overtones of McCarthyism. The piece produced a list of “radical” professors—including even Shlomo Avineri, Israel’s most esteemed political scientist and a highly sympathetic writer of Zionist history and ideas—who “actively legitimated the agenda of the country’s enemies, thereby doing much to demoralize their fellow nationals.”¹¹

The name of the article’s author, “Solomon Socrates,” represents, the article claims, “a watchdog team of researchers keeping an eye on Israel’s universities.” This is spine-chilling rhetoric. The broadside against “radical” professors and the monitoring of their activities seem to suggest that the gap between Post-Zionists and establishment scholars about how to understand Israel remains as wide now as it was in the early 1990s. If the differences have not been breached, how do we explain the contrasting sorts of reviews *Palestinians: The Making of a People* received in 1994 and 1999?

My thinking is that despite continuing deeply riven political divisions in academia today, it is remarkable how many claims made by the New Sociologists and New Historians came to be incorporated into standard Israeli academic—and popular—assumptions about Israel’s history and about the Palestinians. Challenges to the notion that the Palestinians constitute a nation are rarely heard these days. Even the issue of whether such a nation was in formation before the Zionist project engenders little interest. And, with the acceptance of nationhood comes, too, the corollary of self-determination and eventual statehood. Legitimate political questions continue to produce loud arguments on both sides, especially in the midst of the carnage of 2002: will the Palestinians be satisfied with only a portion of Palestine? Can Israel live in peace with a Palestinian state? Can the Palestinians be a viable partner in peace? Can negotiations settle the issue, or will it be resolved only through a drawn-out war? But political divisions over these questions, while sparking deep passions and reckless rhetoric in Israel, have increasingly taken place within a shared framework accepting the peoplehood of the Palestinians.

If one looks at the critiques of those opposing the Critical Sociologists and New Historians today, one is at pains to find the sort of criticism made by Lissak earlier, which questioned our basic assumption about the construction of the Palestinian nation. Nor does one find the same sort of debate over whether the pioneering core in the *yishuv* established Israel’s character, or that character is still evolving. What one finds instead in contemporary critiques is a lashing out against the tone and

quality of the critical sociology and history, while saying little about basic assertions and assumptions. Efraim Karsh, for example, assails the critics for their "Israel bashing."¹² Karsh goes on to say, "My quarrel with the 'new historians' was not about the interpretation of this or that document but rather about professional integrity, without which there could be no scholarly discourse..., [e.g.,] numerous examples of systematic falsification of evidence aimed at portraying a distorted picture of the birth of Israel."¹³

What seems to be missing in Karsh's book is any serious counter-argument, any substantive disagreement with the essential premises of the New Historians—e.g., Benny Morris's account of the creation of the Palestinian refugees in 1948, or Avi Shlaim's emphasis on Israeli-Jordanian understandings dating back to the 1940s. Instead of assailing the critics' premises, as Meged, Lissak and others had done in the early 1990s, Karsh attacks their claim of originality for these disclosures and the way they "moralize" their findings: "More than anything else the 'new historiography' is a state of mind or, rather, a fashion." In calling their findings old hat, Karsh demonstrates the degree to which even he accepts the new package of assumptions, all the while assailing the New Historians' purported dishonesty, exaggerations and political use of those assumptions. The same sort of argument—focusing on the motives of the New Historians, while accepting, grudgingly, some of their key premises and findings about Israeli history—can be found in Yoram Hazony's *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul*. He charges that "a systematic struggle is being conducted by Israeli scholars against the idea of the Jewish state, its historic narrative, institutions, and symbols. Of course, there are elements of truth in some of the claims being advanced by Israeli academics against what was once the Labor Zionist consensus on these subjects."¹⁴

One has the strong feeling in reading the tendentious, even irresponsible, attacks of Solomon Socrates, Karsh and Hazony that they have accepted key elements put forth by the New Sociologists and New Historians, such as the long-term construction of a Palestinian nation, shaped by more than just its opposition to Zionism; the flight of Arabs in 1948 for reasons that, in part, implicated Jewish fighting forces and not because of putative Arab broadcasts; and the continuing construction of Israel's culture and society through post-state waves of immigration and ongoing tensions. The acceptance in 1999 of my book with Kimmerling reflected a huge change in the land-

scape of popular and academic understanding of Israel's history from that of only five years before. The claim that the Arabs of Palestine were a nation-in-process, whose origins pre-dated Zionism, was hardly controversial in 1999.

Between the 1994 attacks on *Palestinians: The Making of a People* and the 1999 smiling reviews came the first sustained political engagement of Israel with the *Palestinians*. For all its faults, the Oslo process induced Israelis to reconsider their shared history with the Palestinians. That was a painful and difficult process. It meant coming to terms for the first time with elements of Israel's past that lacked the heroic glitter presented in school textbooks. Part of imagining a new future, it seems to me, is the ability to deal maturely and honestly with the past. Reconsidering Israel's historical relations with the Palestinians does not delegitimize Israel or its founding. It does demand considering, though, how the triumphs and tragedies of the past can be shaped into a better future. For all its failures and disappointments, Oslo began the process of shaping the future by leading Israelis to a much greater consensus about their own history than is commonly appreciated. Acceptance of many of the premises of the New Sociologists and New Historians—and of findings of some establishment scholars who, as Hazony notes, came to many of the same conclusions—opens the door, but does not guarantee forging a common view of the future.

Several factors still stand in the way of Israelis moving toward some commonality in their picture of the future. Not least of these is the failure of their counterparts, the Palestinians, to undertake a similar broad societal reconsideration of assumptions about the Jews, Zionism and Israel. Also, the tone of discourse among scholars and intellectuals in Israel remains a serious barrier. Many New Sociologists and New Historians have adopted a hypercritical tone, sounding as if they have discovered the first society on earth with skeletons in its closet; their moralizing does little to advance popular thinking. And, on the other side, their critics continue the despicable practice of accusing them of "bringing comfort and aid to the enemy."¹⁵

Finally, the closing off of opportunities for a negotiated settlement through the Palestinian resumption of violence in September 2000, the Israeli harsh response, and the new political alignments that have emerged in the shadow of the ongoing violence, all forestalled efforts to move from a reconsidered past to a reconsidered future.

Still, the differences between the early and later reviews of our book point to an Israeli society that has begun grappling with its past in the hopes of forging a foundation for the future. For all of Hazony's nostalgia for the old Zionism, that ideology can no longer serve as Israeli society's core values, at least not so long as Zionism is centered on the ingathering of the exiles, on a pioneering ethic, on a refuge for Jews in distress, and on the creation of a state for the Jews. Indeed, the rise in salience of religious conceptions of state and society reflects the growing irrelevance of the old core values of Zionism. The construction of a renewed secular ideology demands the assimilation of Israel's difficult relations with the Palestinians, including instances of mistreatment, into the thinking of Jewish Israelis. Coming to terms with this past is an important step in re-imagining the future, of creating a set of renewed values. If our book was one catalyst for shifting the close examination of Israel's past from under the academic microscope to the open court of public scrutiny, then it fulfilled my goal of helping Jews re-imagine their future.

Notes

1. Joel Carmichael, "Scholarship as Fraud," *Midstream* (May 1993), p. 32.
2. Ilan Pappé, "The Palestinian People Were Born in May 1834," *Ha'aretz*, July 16, 1993.
3. All the translations are mine.
4. Yisrael Landers, "On the Sin that We Sinned in Creating a State," *Davar Weekly Magazine*, March 18, 1994, p. 8.
5. Moshe Lissak, "'Critical' Sociology and 'Establishment' Sociology in the Israeli Academic Community: Ideological Struggles or Academic Discourse?" *Israel Studies*, 1 (Spring 1966), 247-94.
6. Baruch Kimmerling, "On the Awful Sins of the Critical Sociologists," *Davar Weekly Magazine*, April 1, 1994, pp. 16-17.
7. Yotam Benziman, "Sociology Lesson," *Kol Ha'ir*, April 29, 1994, pp. 63-65, 82.
8. Danny Rabinowitz, "Embroiderer of Grey Tones," *Ha'aretz*, June 15, 1994.
9. Gabi Peterberg, "The Stalinist," *Ha'aretz*, June 17, 1994, p. 44.
10. *Ha'aretz*, June 24, 1994.
11. Solomon Socrates, "Israel's Academic Extremists," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2001).
12. Efraim Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History: The 'New Historians'* (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2000, 2nd rev. ed.), p. xxviii.
13. *Ibid.*, p. xxix.
14. Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), p. 14.
15. This phrase was raised most recently by a group of Israeli Conservative rabbis against their colleagues in an organization called Rabbis for Human Rights. See Ami Eden, "Conservative Rabbis Demand Colleagues Quit Rights Group," *Forward*, September 7, 2001, <http://www.forward.com/issues/2001/01.09.07/news4.html>

Intellectuals and Tradition: The Case of Journalists and National Tradition in Israel

Yaacov Yadgar

Introduction

A focal point in the study of the mass media is the role the media fills in the construction of reality, that is, the "framing" of images and the formation of particles of reality into narrative-interpretive patterns that have an internal guiding logic and a coherent structure.

Journalists play a crucial role in this construction of reality by providing the public with interpretations of reality through the symbolic means offered by the mass media. Journalists introduce order and logic into otherwise seemingly illogical and incoherent events. They present the public with a limited set of optional interpretations of reality and, by doing so, guide the public debate of these issues. Journalists are, by definition, agents who utilize symbols and myths as tools for interpreting reality. As such, they are part of a larger group often referred to as the "intellectual strata."

Symbols and myths embody a narrative of events, a presentation based on a specific set of values. They awaken associations of a value-based interpretation, reaffirm this view, and yet rewrite it. Thus, the function of interpreting reality can be described as the molding of occurrences into interpretive narrative frames. These frames are based on symbolic presentations of reality, and reaffirm the validity of these symbols by their very use.

This interpretive function lies at the core of the definition "intellectual"; it thus highlights the relevance of the study of intellectuals to the understanding of the mass media. Media producers in general, and news media professionals in particular, function as prime producers and disseminators of symbols and myths. They, too, present reality cast into interpretive frames, based on sets of symbols and values.

One of the focal points in the study of intellectuals is the question of their attitudes toward tradition. Tradition must be understood as a view of the events, values and behavior pat-

terns taken from the past that serve, inter alia, to interpret and construct our understanding of the present. The dynamic quality of this function means that tradition is constantly being updated, although it may wear the garb of immortality. The scholarly debate over tradition in the context of intellectuals oscillates between two poles: one pole claims that there is an essential antagonism between intellectuals and tradition, while the other pole perceives intellectuals as loyal servants of tradition.

This article will explore the issue of intellectuals and tradition through a case study of Israeli journalists and their relationship to the Israeli national narrative (the latter being a significant textual expression of national tradition). After presenting the relevant definitions, I outline the answers commonly offered to the question of intellectuals and tradition. The second part of the article will briefly present findings from a study of journalists' attitudes toward national tradition in Israel during the years 1967-97, followed by a discussion of the theoretical implications of these findings for the issue as a whole.

Theoretical background: Intellectuals, tradition, and journalists

Defining intellectuals

The very formulation of an agreed-upon definition of intellectuals has challenged scholars for more than a century and a half.¹ The various definitions suggested can be divided into three main groups: normative, Marxist and functional.² Ignoring the first group of definitions,³ which is not empirical, and disregarding the pronounced normative-doctrinal aspects of the second, Marxist definition,⁴ one is left with the third group of definitions, which focus on intellectual-cultural, social and political functions as the best operative criteria available for use in an analytic study. According to the functional defini-

tion, intellectuals are social agents whose main tasks are the production, operation, manipulation, rewriting, interpretation and dissemination of symbols within society.

Acknowledgment of the symbol-oriented function of intellectuals does indeed appear to be the common denominator of the vast majority of definitions suggested in the literature.⁵ Moreover, this acknowledgment is also found at the core of the Marxist (or post-Marxist) formulations, which view production in the symbolic field as the key source of the intellectual strata's power.⁶

The above definition of the intellectual, however, is rather inclusive. Accordingly, a refinement of what we mean by "intellectuals" is needed, i.e., "primary intellectuals," who focus on the production and manipulation of symbols (with the dissemination of symbols a secondary task), and "secondary intellectuals," who focus on the dissemination and rewriting of symbols (and who usually avoid the production of symbols per se).⁷

Tradition and national tradition

As in the case of our definition of intellectuals, the functions listed in the predicate provide a fruitful basis for formulating an operational definition of tradition. Thus, tradition is the factor that preserves the standing of the most central social and cultural units in society as eternal elements in the collective construction of reality; it guides the questions to be asked regarding reality, and offers alternate answers to those questions through cultural and symbolic tools. Tradition constructs social and cultural reality and invests it with meaning.⁸

Although tradition refers to the past, it is always contemporary; it presents the past through the eyes of the present. Tradition expresses what is considered to be the past from the current vantage point in time and place of a distinct collective. Accordingly, each analytic and reflective discussion of tradition must specify its relevant temporal and spatial dimensions.

The subject of this paper calls for a narrowing down of "tradition" to focus on the term "national tradition." Based on the above definition, national tradition is conceived here as the overall set of customs, beliefs, values and, most importantly, symbols of a given society in a distinct national framework. The source of national tradition lies in the past (real or invented), and has implications for the future, within the collective consciousness of the group (i.e. "the nation") that relates to and attempts to uphold this tradition.

The question of intellectuals and tradition

The relationship of intellectuals to tradition has been the focus of numerous discussions, each carried on in its own terminology. The responses to the question concerning this issue reflect major differences of opinion ranging along an axis which at one pole claims that intellectuals are essentially alienated from tradition and wish to subvert it; and at the other pole claims that intellectuals fundamentally conform with tradition and the attendant status quo.

Intellectuals against tradition

The intellectual's assumed alienation from tradition has been generally viewed as a given.⁹ This view, which bears a distinct empirical stamp, seems to owe much to the normative definition of the intellectual. At the heart of this approach is an uncompromising demand that the intellectual transcend the constraints of narrow interests (whether personal or collective) in favor of guiding humanity as a whole toward a better future grounded in scientific truth. Accordingly, the intellectual's surrender to tradition (which, by definition, always belongs to a specific collective) is perceived as treasonous.¹⁰

A similar stance has been adopted by Marxist (or post-Marxist) thinkers, who offer a value-based claim, stating that intellectuals should function as a moral elite, the "vanguard" that acts according to a higher morality.¹¹ This position, however, is mobilized to serve the Marxist political agenda. Hence, one might describe the Marxist perspective as dualistic. First, it criticizes the intellectuals' mobilization in favor of the prevailing political framework; secondly, it insists upon the intellectual's mobilization in favor of its own political framework.¹²

The normative approach has come to be an integral part of the assumed self-definition of the intellectuals themselves. The empirical implications are evident: many members of the intellectual strata have functioned, at least partially, according to normative dictates demanding detachment from the political system and a refutation of its respective traditions. With respect to this issue, declarations from the Right are characterized by claims that intellectuals intentionally undermine the ties that bind society together and subvert its values and traditions.¹³

Various explanations for this critical and nonconformist stance have been suggested. Some see this position as derived from the social tradition of intellectuals, whose status evolved in response to the contest between the secular educated strata

on the one hand, and the church and the state on the other.¹⁴ There are also structural explanations which highlight the intellectuals' unique cultural leadership role in a system that controls the allocation of their material resources.¹⁵ Others point to the inability of intellectuals to differentiate between abstract ideals and the substance of complex reality as the cause of their constant frustration with that reality.¹⁶ Lastly, sociopsychological explanations suggest that intellectuals suffer from enduring feelings of discrimination because members of their stratum are denied recognition as "philosopher-kings."¹⁷

Intellectuals for tradition

Contrary to the self-evident claim regarding the alienation of intellectuals from tradition, the literature also posits a conceptual/ideological mirror image in which the attitudes of the intellectuals toward tradition are basically positive and supportive of tradition and its derivative, the prevailing sociopolitical regime. Such arguments are based on an analysis of the interests of the intellectual stratum, its power resources, and its unique position in society.

One of the normative arguments condemning the intellectual "surrender" to tradition rests on the Marxist critique of what is perceived as defective intellectual functioning. The Marxist argument focuses mainly on the relevant interests involved. As a "dominated group in the dominant class,"¹⁸ intellectuals are understood to be constantly struggling for the preservation and expansion of their power within the existing system. This struggle is conducted under the guidance of the "super-interest" of the dominant class, that is, the preservation and enforcement of the overall distribution of power in society.¹⁹

The demand for a reevaluation of the intellectuals' relationship to tradition, however, is not exclusively Marxist. It can also be found in the writings of functionalist scholars, such as S. N. Eisenstadt,²⁰ who criticizes the preoccupation with the subversive, revolutionary characteristics and potential of the intellectual stratum. This preoccupation, claims Eisenstadt, has diverted scholarly attention from the intellectuals' role as creators and bearers of tradition, their active participation in the symbolic as well as institutional systems of these traditions, and their function as society's secular conscience within the framework of existing traditions.

Seeking to present a revised, more reflective point of de-

parture for the discourse on intellectuals and tradition, Eisenstadt²¹ argues for added emphasis on what he sees as tradition's main function: the formulation of a limited set of questions regarding human existence, together with the formulation of a limited set of acceptable answers to these questions. The making of tradition, as any other act of social construction of reality, calls for the elimination of contesting interpretations of the same reality. Such an understanding of tradition exposes the core of the tension between intellectuals, who generate the symbols used in the creation of tradition, and the political establishment, which controls the institutional mechanisms that sustain this creation. This tension results in a variety of reactions among intellectuals, oscillating between escapism and detachment from reality and seclusion in the world of ideas, at one extreme, and complete surrender to political-institutional power in the other. Between those two poles is a wide range of intermediate responses.²²

Intellectuals' attitudes toward tradition are thus perceived as ambivalent, influenced by political power struggles and dependent on the relations existing between the intellectual strata and the political establishment. The ramifications of this network are many. In cases of strong political authority, the intellectuals' dependence on political institutions increases. Their intellectual production then tends to meet the demands made by political authorities; they support consensus and attempt to strengthen tradition. On the other hand, when political power is weak, subversive, revolutionary and anti-traditional intellectual activity flowers.²³

Accordingly, the major criticism of the normative-idealist view of oppositional intellectual practice is its a-temporality – its avoidance of the historical, social, political and cultural contexts. Included among these contexts are the narratives guiding the collective behavior of intellectuals as well as attitudes and world views held by individuals who occupy this stratum.²⁴

Thus, the profile of the intellectual's attitude toward tradition is not as conclusive and one-dimensional as sometimes claimed by thinkers of both the Right and the Left. Within the broad literature on the issue, the notion emerges that the key to understanding intellectual practice lies in identifying the complex sociopolitical and cultural constellation in which normative strictures clash against interests, aspirations for power combine with limited resources, and the possible contends with the desirable. Indeed, as components of sociopo-

litical systems, intellectuals tend to be the social actors most likely to develop critical attitudes toward the values that underlie that system and to pose the most difficult and embarrassing questions. Hence, intellectuals are most likely to become insurgents. Yet, due to their function as the creators of precepts, concepts, language and symbols, intellectuals also tend to play supportive roles in this very system.

Journalists as a distinct intellectual group

To review, this paper focuses on journalists as a distinct group within the intellectual stratum. They are defined as intellectuals because they play a major part in the production and dissemination of collective symbols. Like other groups of media personnel, journalists present otherwise fragmented occurrences as events constructed within specific interpretive-symbolic frameworks. News media messages – the output of journalistic production – are thus to be understood as constructs, interpretations of reality stated in symbolic and narrative terms.²⁵

According to this approach, the journalistic discourse should be read as a system of interpretive “packages” that invest an issue with meaning. Each “package” has its own internal structure based upon a guiding idea, or frame. This interpretive frame introduces a certain logic into the events and guides the reader/viewer/listener toward the event’s “meaning.” News frames usually offer several possible meanings, which thereby enables a degree of argumentation, a dialogue or discourse among those who share an interpretive frame. Such frames use a variety of symbolic tools in order to present the news package as a meaningful whole. These symbols are usually correlated with prevailing cultural objects. Therefore, changes in the interpretive frames are attuned to cultural and evaluative changes. This process identifies the news as the locus of “culture wars,” with each group seeking to impose (through its function as a source of information) its own frame as the appropriate device for organizing the news. These frames then interact with those held by journalists and their audience.²⁶

Accordingly, the power and influence of the media can be understood as derived from the fact that “reality” – i.e., the organization of occurrences into meaningful narratives (or “events”) – is a scarce commodity. Similarly, the interpretive function leads to the association of news with myth (a narrative that directs its audience toward a specific interpretation of reality), and calls for the reading of the news as a mythic nar-

rative.²⁷

In sum, the identification of journalists as intellectuals is based upon two basic concepts: first, the definition of intellectuals by the interpretive-symbolic function they perform, and second, the view of news as a cultural product that invests reality with (symbolic) meaning. Moreover, a distinction between primary and secondary intellectuals is also valid in the case of journalists. Those who head the pyramid of journalistic production – editors and senior writers/correspondents – are perceived as members of the primary group, which focuses on producing frames/symbols. The remaining journalists, those who focus on the dissemination of those symbols (by the use of existing symbolic narrative frames to convey the news to their audience), are members of the secondary group.

The Israeli case²⁸

The case employed here to examine the question of the attitude of intellectuals to tradition is the transformation of Israel’s national narrative by Israeli journalists. The national narrative is the literary expression of sets of symbols and values that relate to the national collective as a distinct unit.²⁹ In its simplest sense, the national narrative is the story that a (national) collective tells about itself. It tells the individuals constituting the nation (or whoever comprises its audience) who they are, the substance of their common national past, their characteristics as a collective, and where they are heading, that is, how they should act in the political realm.

The discussion that follows is based on a study of the national narrative in the Israeli mainstream press against the background of five critical events³⁰ in Israel’s contemporary history.³¹ A brief summary of my findings regarding the developments of the narrative³² is followed by a study of the implications of this case for the broader question of intellectuals and tradition.

Basic findings: from a national to a post-national narrative

The appearance of the national narrative in Israel’s mainstream press has been characterized by a steady shift from a particularistic to a universalistic pole of national-collective identity. In terms of values, this shift has been rather dramatic.

The older, particularistic version of the narrative celebrated the isolationist values of Jewish national uniqueness and worth.

It depicted a picture of Jewish collective isolation in a hostile world as a model of, and for, political action. This version of the narrative drew an extreme picture of the contrasts between the national "us" and the external "them." It solemnized statist values of national solitude, unity and security as major instruments for coping with what was perceived as a reality of international-gentile hostility toward the Jewish people in general and the State of Israel in particular.

This isolationist narrative gradually lost its hold, and in its place a new version of the narrative emerged based on a different set of core values. The new narrative is essentially universalistic, celebrating humanist, supranational values. It presents the national borderlines of belonging and otherness as anachronistic and dangerous, since they tie the individual to primordial, tribal and narrow-minded conceptions of reality. Instead, the universalistic narrative extols the adoption of a supranational perspective that focuses on the individual instead of the collective, and on the global rather than the local. In many respects, this narrative propagates anti-mythic thinking in its denunciation of the thought patterns that are imposed on the individual by collective symbols, images and myths, the building blocks of the "we" consciousness.

This narrative shift evolved against the background of the growing autonomy of the Israeli news media in their relationship with the government. Originally, these relations had been rooted in the authoritarian model of a "recruited" or mobilized press, in which the news media establishment subjects itself to the censorship and political guidance of the government. The Yom Kippur War marked the rupture of this pattern of compliance. Henceforth, patterns of government-media relations would be reformulated in accordance with liberal-democratic ideals of a free, adversarial and autonomous press.³³

The lessons of the Israeli case: The necessity of context

At first glance, the narrative shift from the particularistic toward the universalistic pole of national identity supports the argument that intellectuals are basically alienated from tradition. Accordingly, this narrative shift can be presented as evidence of the growing liberation of the Israeli press and proof that the Israeli intellectual strata (as represented by journalists) have remained loyal to the behaviors associated with the normative definition of the intellectual. More specifically, once the news media managed to free themselves from government strictures, journalists were able to offer a new inter-

pretation of reality that transcended the narrow world view dictated by national tradition.³⁴

Revealing as it may be, such an evolutionary argument ignores the contemporary character of tradition. The latter, it should be stressed again, is always the past as viewed through the eyes of the present; tradition, therefore, is continuously changing. Hence, there is no single (national) tradition; rather, there is tradition as it is perceived at a given moment by a distinct group.

The addition of this contextual dimension to the discussion revises the accepted conclusion arising from the normative analysis of the Israeli case. The context-based view of the development of Israel's national narrative acknowledges the dynamism inherent in national traditions. Journalists were able to stay loyal to universalistic, humanistic values while they were mobilized by tradition to rewrite it. Thus, tradition changed, not the journalistic commitment to the national tradition.

The journalists' rewriting of the national narrative against the background of the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993) and Prime Minister Rabin's assassination (1995) illustrates their mobilization in favor of a humanist, universalist version of the national tradition. It was not, as sometimes claimed, anti-traditional. The political elite and establishment of the period (the Labor government, 1992-96) vividly expressed the emergence of a "new national tradition" or, in our context, an updated, current version of Israel's national tradition. The political leadership at the time promulgated a new world view according to which Israel was no longer an isolated nation in a hostile world, and adjusted their policies accordingly. Shimon Peres's innovative symbolic notion of a supranational "new Middle East" was devised and disseminated by the ruling political elite, followed by the press. This notion acknowledged that former views of Jewish isolation and gentile hostility toward Israel were no longer applicable and, indeed, offered an alternative set of globalist views. The most conclusive evidence of the transformation of the national tradition is Israel's signing of the Oslo Accords with the PLO, a step that few in the general public anticipated.

The appearance of a universalistic version of the national narrative in the Israeli press, then, reflected the journalistic acceptance of an updated version of tradition. That is, the apparatus manned by journalist-intellectuals was quickly enlisted to support what became the prevailing version of national tra-

dition. They then proceeded to disseminate an interpretation of reality that corresponded to this revised tradition. Furthermore, competing versions of the national narrative and tradition were widely ignored or delegitimized.

The power relations prevailing between the Israeli press and government further reinforces this picture: mobilization under the universalistic narrative took place in a context of growing journalistic freedom from government dictates.

The results of the 1996 general elections in Israel shed further light on the changes this narrative would undergo. The election results, mainly the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu (who headed the conservative Likud Party) over Shimon Peres (who headed the dovish Labor Party) for the office of prime minister, were to a large extent the victory of a representative of the old, particularistic narrative over the unequivocal representative of the new universalistic one. This victory took place at the height of the journalistic propagation of the universalistic narrative. Thus, Netanyahu's victory could be perceived, *inter alia*, as an expression of a popular revolt against the updated national tradition in favor of the particularistic tradition.

The 1996 election campaign and its results highlighted the complexity of the relevant context. During the period discussed, the universalistic narrative had gained only partial support among the general population, although it was embraced by the political elite as well as large portions of the intellectual strata. The campaign, and Netanyahu's victory, demonstrated the existence of still another version of tradition popular among large sectors in Israeli society. This version was a sectoral vision of national identity, primarily ethnic and religious in character. Nevertheless, support for this version found little suitable articulation in Israel's mainstream press.

The evidence of the coexistence of competing narratives or versions of the national tradition in Israel's political arena suggests that the Zionist statist paradigm, which had lost its grip after the Yom Kippur War, was not replaced by another hegemonic paradigm. Instead, it appears that the former paradigm had been dismantled into its components – sub-traditions might be a suitable term – with two main contesting versions then reconstructed from the fragments: a national sub-tradition built upon the particularistic values of the Zionist paradigm, and a national sub-tradition centered on universalistic and humanistic values. Both versions, then, had originated in the very same Zionist paradigm.

Other sub-traditions, more conservative and particularistic

in character, also existed in the periphery of Israel's public sphere. These sub-traditions found expression mainly in the sectarian media (such as the religious-Orthodox sector newspapers and "pirate" radio stations), which constituted an alternative, more constricted, peripheral public sphere. The present article passes over these sub-traditions, which deserve a close look in another study. Here, the focus is on the three mainstream newspapers that, together with Israel's public radio and television, comprise the center of the Israeli public sphere.

This does not mean that outspoken anti-traditional interpretations of the sociopolitical reality never challenged the meta-narrative. Such formulations of the narrative were expressed mostly within the academic-intellectual milieu, under the headings of "post-Zionism" and the "new historians."³⁵ One of the most lucid expositions of this anti-traditional stance is the historiographic presentation of Zionism as merely a colonial enterprise. It is probable that other, albeit dissimilar anti-traditional narratives were found in the media catering to the Jewish ultra-Orthodox and the Arab sectors. In light of these interpretive options, the general conformity of the journalistic-intellectual milieu to a specific version of the national tradition is conspicuous. The interpretation of Israel's mainstream journalists during the period in question, therefore, may be understood as mobilization in favor of a single, dominant sub-tradition, the tradition perceived as appropriate by the elite. At the same time, this version competed with other sub-traditions.

The disintegration of the Zionist meta-narrative and its consequences

The handling of contesting national narratives by the Israeli press can be used to shed light on the disintegration of the Zionist statist paradigm. The Yom Kippur War (1973) marks the turning point in the process. To recapitulate, until the war, the journalistic interpretation of reality was characterized by obedience to the particularistic version of the national narrative: the press was "mobilized," and the tradition it served was clear. The trauma of the Yom Kippur War refuted fundamental notions of the ruling paradigm, causing what I call a "narrative perplexity" that became more poignant almost a decade later, following Israel's invasion of Lebanon (1982). In the wake of the Lebanon War, the press interpretation of reality appeared to lack a guiding narrative framework. There was no longer a single tradition that journalist-intellectuals could appropriate as a tool for understanding or explaining events. Not

until the Oslo Accords (1993) did one sub-tradition, the humanist-universalistic, appear to triumph over the particularistic sub-tradition. The only expression of the latter that remained current was a distorted version, presented as a kind of "counter-narrative." Nevertheless, as shown above, by 1996 (and again in 1999 and 2001), the voting patterns of Israeli Jews proved that both sub-traditions were alive and still attracting considerable public support.

The conclusion to be derived is that in each of the periods studied, the journalistic interpretation was characterized by general conformity to a single national tradition (or sub-tradition) as it was perceived at that time, while journalists rewrote and reformulated it in the process of using it as a guiding framework for their interpretations of reality. The narrative perplexity that was expressed in the wake of the Lebanon War emphasized the interpreters' paradigmatic need for tradition. However, in the absence of a dominant national tradition or sub-tradition, journalists used one available narrative lens through which to perceive reality; in the process, they rewrote it and disseminated it.

One of the questions that arises from such a context-sensitive descriptive analysis is the causal dilemma regarding the journalistic dissemination of national tradition. Do journalists act as mere agents of national (sub-) tradition, or are they the creators and molders of that tradition? As suggested by the theoretical discussion, the answer must be ambivalent. The journalistic interpretation of reality – that is, the rewriting of reality based upon a specific set of symbols, values and beliefs – functions as an agent of this symbolic construct through its very use. Yet, journalists are hardly the sole agents who deal with the rewriting and dissemination of tradition. They comprise a distinct group within the wider intellectual field which by definition deals with the interpretation of reality and its symbolic presentation. This field, in turn, interacts with the political field, which also participates in the formulation and dissemination of tradition.

Another question to be addressed is whether the critical events upon which my analysis is based did not shape my findings. A possible counterargument to my analysis could be that the special characteristics of the critical events studied here dictated either the interpretive uniformity or confusion among journalist-intellectuals. Thus, one might claim, the lack of interpretive clarity in the wake of the Lebanon War should not be understood as evidence of the disintegration of the para-

digmatic tradition but as testimony of the political dispute surrounding the military campaign. Unlike the situation in a "no choice" military crisis (i.e., the Six Day and the Yom Kippur Wars) when, so the argument might go, journalist-intellectuals were "recruited" under conditions of consensus and could present a uniform interpretation, the Lebanon War had non-violent alternatives and lacked a national consensus. Hence, there was no agreed-upon justification for intellectual mobilization, and for the first time in Israel's history the intellectual freedom of the journalists could be given vivid expression.³⁶

The rebuttal to this counterargument is to be found in the appearance of the narrative following the signing of the Oslo Accords. The controversy surrounding this event was no less vehement than the one surrounding the Lebanon War. Moreover, the overall cultural and political conditions were characterized by the ongoing delegitimation of those unifying elements that had functioned as barriers against disruptive internal controversies in the past. The intellectual freedom exercised could have and should have produced a wide range of contesting interpretive lenses. Nevertheless, the journalistic-intellectual interpretation of the Oslo Accords, even following Rabin's assassination, remained uniform and distinctly one-sided. It thereby proved the reemergence of a paradigmatic narrative capable of guiding the journalistic-intellectual stratum. Hence, considering the context of the freedom of the press practiced in Israel during the 1990s, coupled with deep social, political and cultural cleavages, the interpretive uniformity observed is truly surprising and deserves explanation.

My argument can be summed up by the claim that Israeli journalist-intellectuals throughout the entire period studied here conformed to a national tradition, but not to *the* national tradition. The latter had simply ceased to exist. If this argument is correct, the Israeli case negates the relevance of the question: Are intellectuals for or against tradition? Any attempt to discuss tradition as an absolute, eternal entity, constant in character throughout time, suffers from a miscomprehension of the phenomenon. Indeed, although it is perceived by its adherents as an eternal truth, tradition, like other symbols, myths and narratives, is continuously changing and being reshaped. Viewed in the context of this notion of tradition, my analysis shows that Israeli journalist-intellectuals estranged themselves from some traditions and sub-traditions, but did so out of mobilization in favor of other, contesting versions of that tradition.

The attitudes of journalist-intellectuals toward the violent – some would say militaristic³⁷ – Israeli past further illustrates this point. The vast majority of journalists have neither estranged themselves from this past, nor have they renounced it, even while rewriting and disseminating the universalistic narrative. The treatment of the Rabin assassination demonstrated these interpreters' need for a national heroic past and their strong reliance on it and on its symbols. However, the contemporary universalistic version of tradition did not faithfully repeat the old, particularistic view of the past; instead, an updated interpretation of it was adopted. The marginalization of a more radical version, one that renounced the national past in principle, again highlights the tendency of journalists to remain loyal to one version of the basically national tradition, writ large.

Explaining why: Interests, formative patterns and commercialization

Why, then, have mainstream Israeli journalist-intellectuals mobilized themselves in favor of one particular national (sub-tradition)? A conclusive answer is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, a focus on the media's interests and potential gains from mobilization is likely to produce some illuminating insights. The journalistic interpretive discourse, it should be stressed, was not characterized by anti-national or revolutionary-subversive elements during any of the events studied here. It always remained within the boundaries of a loyal national discourse. The basic outline of a national paradigm remained dominant throughout the period studied. The overall corpus of commentary can be described as seeking to suggest answers to one leading question: How should we progress, as a (Jewish) national collective, toward a better future? Notably, the high status granted to senior journalists and editors in Israel is a function of the social and political culture that characterizes the country as a democratic Jewish nation-state. In a different cultural-political environment, that status would be less certain.

A review of the power relations prevailing between journalists and the political establishment during the formative years of Israel's Hebrew press can also be illuminating. These relations were shaped during the British Mandate, known as the period of the *yishuv*, and all future developments took place against this background. Dina Goren³⁸ described the close relationship between Israel's journalistic elite and the Zionist

political establishment during those formative years, a relationship based on a wide network of informal privileges and personal contacts. Journalists and commentators were perceived by both sides as integral components of the national establishment. It is reasonable to assume that this image influenced the media's traditional conformity to the paradigmatic tradition in the years that followed.

Any explanation must also address the unique condition of journalists within the broader stratum of intellectuals, a condition that enhances the likelihood of journalistic conformity to some sub-tradition. The economic constraints that operate on journalists do not exist for other intellectuals, such as academics. Journalists sell their product on a daily basis, in competitive market settings. Their merchandise is constantly examined and their capacity to freely respond is limited by the structure of the market. Adaptation to these constraints usually involves some degree of conformity to whatever is perceived as popular, in this case, the prevailing tradition that guides the audience's view of reality. The modification of these guiding frameworks is done incrementally, with only rare breaks with the past. The "real" conceptual revolutions, the most anti-traditional positions, are the prerogative of other intellectual circles, more autonomous and less dependent on the commercial power of their audiences.³⁹

In addition to economic constraints, the methods of recruitment to the profession, the intraorganizational dynamics,⁴⁰ and what Herbert Gans⁴¹ called the "enduring" values guiding journalistic performance are also relevant for understanding the relationship of journalists to tradition. These features all operate as antidotes to any inclination toward radical criticism, much less any attempt to subvert tradition.

Conclusion

In addressing the question of intellectuals and tradition, we cannot ignore the context in which different groups of intellectuals function in different societies. The intervening factors are numerous and vary in nature. They tie any analysis of the intellectual strata to specific social, political, cultural, economic and even personal or psychological conditions. All these factors are liable to function as impediments to "pure" normative intellectual practice, i.e., loyalty to a universalistic world view based on the critical discourse of humanism.⁴² This is not to deny the utility of analyzing intellectual production in such terms. On the contrary, the articulation of clear and strict

research criteria – even if these criteria originate in normative sources – is a barrier against the paralyzing relativism that abolishes any critical stance and blindly reaffirms the status quo. Nevertheless, the need for conceptualization necessarily voids much of the substance of the question of intellectuals and tradition: the answer must always start with “It depends...” Such a conclusion should direct attention to two main channels. The first, and narrower one focuses on an analysis of distinct intellectual groups in known contexts; the second, wider channel provides an overall philosophical-sociological view of the characteristics of the intellectual field and its interaction with other fields.⁴³

One aspect of the long list of relevant contexts deals with the different groups comprising the intellectual stratum. The inclusive definition of intellectuals given here, despite its refinements of primary and secondary intellectual, does not identify any particular social, professional or cultural circle within the wider strata of producers and manipulators of symbols. This article has focused on only one group of many – Israeli journalists – and its attitude toward one genre of tradition, namely, the national one. The validity of extending any implications from this narrow case to wider strata or to a more inclusive definition of tradition is therefore limited. The main conclusion to be drawn with respect to Israeli journalist-intellectuals is that in transforming the national tradition, they are conforming to its broader outlines.

The author would like to thank Prof. Charles S. Liebman for his invaluable help and support, and Bar-Ilan University's Yehuda Avner Chair in Religion and Politics for its financial support.

Notes

1. R. Eyerman, *Between Culture and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); L. S. Feuer, “What is an Intellectual?” in A. Gella (ed.), *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals* (London: Sage, 1976), pp. 47-58; N. Garnham, “The Media and Narratives of the Intellectuals,” *Media, Culture and Society*, 17 (1995), 359-84.
2. Garnham.
3. The normative definition views intellectuals as representatives of a critical, liberating culture which transcends particular interests and celebrates universal values. Garnham, p. 360.
4. The Marxist definition views intellectuals as a social class whose power emanates from a monopolistic control over the production of knowledge and cultural legitimization through its culturally acknowledged ownership of the power to define what is considered to be true, right or beautiful. Garnham, p. 360.
5. See, e.g., S. N. Eisenstadt, “Intellectuals and Tradition,” *Daedalus*, 101 (2)(1972), 1-20; E. Etzioni-Halevy, *The Knowledge Elite and the Failure of Prophecy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985); J. Kirkpatrick, “Politics and the New Class,” in B. Bruce-Briggs (ed.), *The New Class?* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 33-47; M. S. Lipset and R. B. Dobson, “The Intellectual as Critic and Rebel: With Special Reference to the United States and the Soviet Union,” *Daedalus*, 101 (3)(1972), 137-98; E. Shils, “Intellectuals, Tradition, and the Traditions of Intellectuals: Some Preliminary Considerations,” *Daedalus*, 101 (2)(1972a), 21-34.
6. See P. Bourdieu, “The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods,” in R. Collins, J. Curran, N. Garnham, P. Scannel, P. Schlesinger, and C. Sparks (eds.), *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader* (London: Sage, 1986), pp. 131-65; A. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1979); B. Martin and I. Szelenyi, “Beyond Cultural Capital: Toward a Theory of Symbolic Domination,” in R. Eyerman, L. G. Svensson and T. Soderqvist (eds.), *Intellectuals, Universities and the State in Western Modern Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 16-49.
7. The terms “primary” and “secondary” are Eisenstadt’s (p. 18). For similar distinctions, see Kirkpatrick; M. S. Lipset and A. Basu, “The Roles of the Intellectuals and Political Roles,” in A. Gella (ed.), *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals* (London: Sage, 1976), pp. 111-52; Shils, 1972a, p. 4; A. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
8. Eisenstadt, p. 18.
9. S. R. Graubard, “Preface to the Issue Intellectuals and Tradition,” *Daedalus*, 101(2)(1972), v-xv.
10. See M. Walzer, “The Politics of the Intellectuals: Julien Benda’s La Trahison des Clercs Reconsidered,” in W. W. Powell and R. Robins (eds.), *Conflict and Consensus* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), pp. 365-77.
11. Gouldner, pp. 40-42.
12. See P. Bourdieu, (1989), “The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World,” *Telos* 81 (1989), 99-110.
13. See D. Bell, “The New Class: A Muddled Concept,” *Society*, 16 (2), 15-23; B. Bruce-Briggs “An Introduction to the Idea of the New Class,” in B. Bruce-Briggs (ed.), *The New Class?* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 1-18; N. Podhoretz, “The Adversary Culture and the New Class,” in B. Bruce-Briggs (ed.), *The New Class?* pp. 19-32.
14. See Lipset & Basu.
15. See Lipset & Dobson; M. S. Lipset, “The New Class and the Professorate,” *Society*, 16, 2(118)(1979), 31-38.
16. See Kirkpatrick.

17. Gouldner, pp. 57-73; Garnham.
18. P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
19. P. Schlesinger, "In Search of the Intellectuals: Some Comments on Recent Theory," in R. Collins, J. Curran, N. Garnham, P. Scannel, P. Schlesinger and C. Sparks (eds.), *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader* (London: Sage, 1986), pp. 84-104.
20. Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. See *ibid.*; M. Keren, *Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals: Power, Knowledge and Charisma* (Dekalb: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983); M. Keren, *The Pen and the Sword: Israeli Intellectuals and the Making of the Nation State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); E. Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972b).
24. Garnham; see also Shils, 1972a.
25. See, e.g., S. E. Bird and R. W. Dardenne, "Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News," in J. W. Carney (ed.), *Media, Myth and Narratives* (London: Sage, 1988), pp. 67-86; J. W. Carey, *Communication as Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992); D. Chaney, "A Symbolic Mirror of Ourselves: Civic Ritual in Mass Society," *Media, Culture and Society*, 5 (1983), 119-35; D. Dayan and E. Katz, *Media Events. The Live Broadcasting of History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992); W. A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); G. T. Goethals, *The TV Ritual* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981); G. Knight and T. Dean, "Myth and the Structure of News," *Journal of Communication*, 32 (1982), 144-61; R. Silverstone, "Television, Myth and Culture," in J. W. Carney (ed.), *Media, Myth and Narratives* (London: Sage, 1988), pp. 20-47.
26. Bird & Dardenne; R. M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, 43(4)(1993), 51-58; D. Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory of Media Effects," *Journal of Communication*, 49(1)(1999), 103-22; G. Tuchman, "Qualitative Methods in Study of News," in K. B. Jensen and N. W. Janowski (eds.), *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 79-92.
27. Bird & Dardenne.
28. Notably, the span of time discussed in this paper preceded the outbreak of violence between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in September 2000. In my opinion, this outbreak of violence and its political and diplomatic consequences constitute an interesting test of my thesis.
29. See D. E. Pease, "National Narratives, Post-National Narration," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 43(1)(1997), 1-23.
30. Critical events are occurrences that have a significant influence on a given society for a considerable period of time. S. Staggenborg, "Critical Events and the Mobilization of the Pro-Choice Movement," *Political Sociology*, 6 (1993), 319-45.
31. The events studied are: the Six Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Lebanon War (1982), the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO (1993), and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1995). The texts surveyed were published in Israel's three nonpartisan mainstream Hebrew dailies, *Ha'aretz*, *Yedi'ot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv*. The specific articles reviewed were published during the month following the outbreak/occurrence of each of the events and the first anniversary of each event.
32. A detailed presentation and discussion of these findings is to be found in Y. Yadgar, "Intellectuals and Tradition: The Attitudes of Leading Israeli Journalists Toward the National Narrative in Israel, 1967-1997" (Ph.D. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1999).
33. See D. Caspi and Y. Limor, *The Mediators: The Mass Media in Israel 1948-1990* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1992, in Hebrew).
34. Such an argument might find support in Michael Keren's (1989) pioneering study on the attitudes of Israeli intellectuals toward the Zionist national enterprise. Keren presents a sociohistoric analysis pointing to a gradual "liberation" of the intellectual discourse ("critical humanism," based on a view of reality through universalistic criteria) from the grip of the Zionist national enterprise and the Israeli nation-state (see also Keren, 1983).
35. For critical (and controversial) reviews of post-Zionism and the "new historians" in Israel, see E. Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History: The "New Historians"* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Y. Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
36. See, e.g., Keren's (1989) claim that perceptions of crisis and pressure encourage intellectual conformity to the national notion, while in conditions of non-crisis and reduced pressure, intellectuals tend to act in an "authentic" fashion, reverting to critical humanism as their guiding discourse and abandoning national notions as paramount.
37. See U. Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).
38. D. Goren, *Freedom of the Press and National Security* (Jerusalem, Hebrew University: Magnes Press, 1975, in Hebrew).
39. See B. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly* (5th ed.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1997); P. Bourdieu, *On Television* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), pp. 68-78.
40. See R. Darnton, "Writing News and Telling Stories," *Daedalus*, 104 (2)(1975), 175-94; G. Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978).
41. H. J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).
42. See Gouldner; Keren (1989).
43. See Bourdieu, 1986, 1989.

Between Zionism and Post-Zionism in the Israeli Theater: Deconstruction (1999)

Dan Urian

In 1999, the Haifa Municipal Theater staged a play written and directed by Roni Pinkovitch, entitled *Deconstruction*. In the play, representatives of two generations – one born in the 1930s and the other in the 1960s – find themselves in confrontation. Three young people, army buddies, share a secret. They have taken revenge on a young Arab boy who had killed their friend, and have beaten the boy to death. One of the threesome, Nadav (Nado), is the driving force behind the plot. He wants to overcome a disease he has contracted by an act of catharsis – exposing the “shameful deed” he has committed. In counterpart to the young trio stand three old-timers who represent the Jewish workers’ society and its traditional settlement values. They are shabbily dressed and speak a language that has atrophied and lost touch with modern-day reality. One of these veterans says to his son at the end of the play: “My life is not a life. It never was. We are a generation of wars. We should never have lived so long.”

In one of the most violent moments in the play, when a fistfight breaks out between one of the younger and one of the older generation, Yitzhak, an old-timer from a moshav, turns to Shmuel (Shmulik), a moshav son who has left and lives in the city and who is now an advertising professional involved in an election campaign for the One Israel Party. Yitzhak charges:

You, the children of '67, were born with a silver spoon in your mouth. After that glorious war. Without any fear. Without any danger. All our hopes were focused on you. From the day you were born – every day was a celebration. Day and night. Here! The real children of the State have been born. The generation of the Promised Land. The days of King Solomon [are here]. The realization of the dream. History played into your hands. The silver platter. And now, look – just a little blood, and right away you panic. You whimper. This country was conquered in blood. Our blood was shed here, too. So don't cry to me about the blood of Arabs.... Don't sermonize to us about morals. The madman is the one who panics at what he does. The one who doesn't know who

he is. Not us. We know exactly who we are.

The playwright, a contemporary of his character Shmulik, appended the following poem to the theater program:

The home, the “I”
The camaraderie the memories, the songs
The sense of truth
The sense of infinity, the stability
Ideas for the future. The future
The family, the secrets, the little things
The ideals, the aspirations, the hopes, the beliefs
The faith, acknowledgment of self-worth
Proportion and all criteria.
Systems, structures, groupings, combinations. Codes.
The primordial order of things, daily schedules
Yearnings
Tensions within the body
The body
Basic needs. Words.
Everything deconstructs.

Deconstruction is not the first play that takes the Zionist narrative to task, but specifically because it restricts itself to the level of a personal story it is more instructive than other plays about the growing changes that have taken place in the Zionist ideological perception from the 1990s onward. In order to understand the uniqueness of *Deconstruction* and the liminal reality it represents, I will begin with a description of several formative works of Hebrew Zionist drama and Israeli theater from the beginning of the twentieth century to its close. I will then turn to the yuppies, the social reference group of the play, and from there to the play itself as a Zionist text.

Zionism in the Hebrew Theater

The Zionism that the Hebrew theater represents is instructive in terms of the world view of both its writers and its spectators. Theater has served to promote the Zionist outlook and particularly to disseminate changes in Zionist perceptions among the creators of Hebrew theater and its audiences. He-

brew plays written and staged from the beginning of the twentieth century onward primarily demonstrate the affinity of a hegemonic secular social group to Zionist ideology. The playwright, however, is not only a public "emissary" and Zionist agent, but can also reveal, through his/her critical approach, the motivations and interests of the societal consensus, and the attitude of this group toward its own identity and that of the Other.

Zionism nurtured a revitalized culture, particularly during the period of the *yishuv* and for several decades following the establishment of the State. For almost a century, secular Zionist dialogue dominated "high" Israeli culture – its literature, theater, dance, cinema, plastic arts and music – while ignoring, to some degree, social heterogeneity, economic polarization, cultural fissures and the estrangement from the Other: the Palestinian, women, the religious, the Mizrahi Jew and the foreign worker community. The ideological component plays a central role in the repertoire of Hebrew theater. It imbues the writing of most plays, and impacts on the translation of works from other languages and the manner in which texts are adapted to serve objectives believed to advance the needs of the emerging Israeli society.

It is an ideology that "writes" itself through playwrights who at times appear to be unaware that they are propelled by the Zionist dialogue. Such is the case of *Deconstruction*. At the same time, more than in the past, recent Israeli playwrights have "liberated" themselves from the founding dialogue, bringing to the stage the difficulties of a fragmented reality and the need for a critical review of the ideology that created the State of Israel. The characteristics attributed by Nurit Gertz to writers and film-makers are particularly relevant to dramatists, who have "obliged Israeli society to examine its Zionist narrative and confront the contradictions between themselves, between themselves and reality, and between themselves and Zionism's utopian pretenses as a national doctrine established on universal humanitarian, moral foundations."¹

The sharpest contradiction between the universal humanitarian components in Zionist ideology and reality is created by the "Arab question." Hebrew drama and theater have, *inter alia*, served as an ideological agent for Zionist ideology in addressing the Jewish immigrant society in Eretz Yisrael. At the outset, during the period of the *yishuv* (1880-1948), this ideology seemed naive and unquestioned, primarily ritualistic. Declarative drama glorified the pioneer (*halutz*), portray-

ing him as confronting obstacles presented by nature, material greed and – occasionally – the Arab as an enemy. Yet, as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, the theatrical repertoire revealed troublesome undertones – plays, or references within a drama that criticized the contradiction between the magnitude of the Zionist vision and the difficulties, and at times misery, of its materialization. Several of the plays raised questions about the "Arab question" and the possibility of its solution. After the establishment of the State of Israel, this critical undertone intensified to the point of deriding Zionism as a synthetic, bombastic discourse no longer suited to the realities of the young state. Changes in the repertoire of the Hebrew theater reflected ideological change that was taking place within the hegemonic stratum of Israeli society – the creators as well as the consumers of theater.

Oz Almog, describing the Zionism of the *yishuv* period as revolutionary, defined the times as

a charismatic period [that] endows the revolutionary generation with a sense of being in a process "larger than life"; it awakens a sense of splendor, sanctity and magic. Sweeping into its vortex collectivist instincts and creating a great promise for the future. The single individual senses [himself as] an active participant in a historic process and in the shaping of reality.²

This was a Zionism comprised of commandments of do and do not, a revitalized tongue whose vocabulary was rich in love of the homeland, myths and heroes,³ holidays and rituals, sanctified symbols and Zionist shrines (e.g., the kibbutz and the moshav), as well as a semiotic treasure of customs, props, dress fashions and songs. Stereotypes of the Other played a role in the forging of the Zionist ethos, too. Prominent among these were references, images and traces of the Arabs, those inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael who, while nurturing the nascent Hebrew identity by their culture, also aroused antipathy and fear due to cultural disparity and their violent opposition to Jewish settlement.

In order to underscore the love of the land and nation, playwrights, creators of the festival theater (*massekhet*) genre, and directors employed a wide variety of dramatic semiotic systems: sets, costumes, props, songs and melodies.⁴ Drama in the period of the *Yishuv* was not, however, totally mobilized in the service of Zionism and there were many unresolved issues in the texts. These were reflected in the sense of despair over the exploitation, dispossession and violence that marked relations between Jews and Arabs. The play *Allah Karim* by

L.A. Arieli (1912) attests to violence by Arabs toward Jews but also to exploitation of and arrogance toward Arabs shown by Jews. It portrays violent conflicts between Jewish landowners and Arab shepherds, including Jewish watchmen habitually punishing Arab shepherds who trespassed in their fields by stripping them naked, beating them and even shooting at them. *Deconstruction* is a distant echo of *Allah Karim* and other Zionist dramas of the *yishuv* period.⁵

Changes “within the family circle”

Using a retrospective approach, *Deconstruction*, which appeared after the first Intifada, focused on the “Arab question” but did not follow the conventional narrative of self-defense. Instead, it portrays the Zionist endeavor as power-oriented and dispossessing. As one of the old-timers says:

Yitzhak: What do you think? That people in this country are so naive? That they think that in the Intifada our soldiers gave the Arabs a massage? Everybody knows what went on there. Nobody gets excited about it. They heard this story in the moshav. Everyone’s seen this movie. This moshav, too, was once an Arab village. You think we were nicer? We did exactly the same thing. *It’s part of life here* [emphasis mine].

Zionism was forged in a process that involved the adoption and invention of symbols, narratives and model heroes, which coalesced into an “exalted myth”⁶ and ethos for the founding generation. By contrast, for the next generation – the sons of the founders – “Eretz Yisrael was very tangible, identified with the landscape, with the experience of their youth... It was their land [and they] related to Eretz Yisrael as their legacy.”⁷ The works of the first *sabra* (native-born) generation of playwrights (Yigal Mossinson, Moshe Shamir, Natan Shacham, Aharon Meged and others) portray the stalwart tie of *sabra* youth to the home group (*hevre*) and the Land of Israel as characteristic of an indigenous culture.⁸

The pathos of the pioneer (*halutz*) generation was viewed by such native sons as ludicrous; in its place they posited a Zionism of action and self-sacrifice. Still, the collectivist-Zionist ideal was shared by both generations.⁹ From the standpoint of native-born playwrights, the Arab question hardly existed and could be defined as below the surface. The only play that had an Arab figure – *They’ll Arrive Tomorrow*, by Natan Shacham (1950), in which an Arab character is murdered onstage – was “rectified” in later versions and the presence of the Arab was deleted.¹⁰

The latter 1950s and the 1960s heralded the beginning of an unspoken change in addressing Zionist themes. The Hebrew theater moderated its interest in the subject and changed its approach to the pioneering ethos. In the wake of the War of Attrition, and particularly after the Yom Kippur War, the critical trend toward Zionism intensified. At first, this was manifested onstage “within the family” of veteran Ashkenazi protagonists through generational differences of opinion and conflicting views revealed between the old-time Zionist perceptions of the labor movement and those of the younger generation. The world view and conceptual language of the latter was more individualistic, whether in terms of personal self-realization or the pursuit of material gain.

The play *Silvester ‘72* by Yehoshua Sobol, written prior to the Yom Kippur War and staged after it (1974), dramatizes the clash between three members of a family. The father, Gershon Shapira, is the spokesman for the Zionist discourse. He is old and ill, and his family wants to sell his house. His son Yoash is a “detached” Israeli who has lived in Europe for over a decade and who comes home on New Year’s Eve to sign the contract of sale. For Sobol, Gershon represents the Second Aliyah:

He is a composite of all the elderly whom I met...people from the 1920s. Those were the turbulent post-adolescent years of young people living together who created a sort of group dynamic there [in Bitania]. Explain - a fictional place? They had a very stormy youth, followed by a long period in the mainstream and an old age in which they entrenched what they had acquired in their youth, [a period] associated with ossification.¹¹

In the playwright’s depiction, Gershon, the founder, is a tragic figure who tries to “incorporate contradictions that are far too deep. Action with dreams.” He embodies the distress that accompanied the Zionist endeavor from its inception due to the “existential contradictions of the work of creation that rises up against its creator. The act of creation carries with it estrangement. As if your dreams have been reflected in a crooked mirror.”¹² Gershon is still sustained by the old ideological vocabulary, but he is aware of the gap between the signals he sends and his points of reference, on the one hand, and the distortion in the meanings of his values:

For me, the storm broke the masthead. The engine room was flooded with water. The dials were covered with seaweed. I was left in mid-ocean...bending to [Zionist] movement decisions, values... The words come easily from my mouth. And inside – death. All my life I never dared call a spade a spade.

I was afraid everything would fall apart. How can a person hold all these contradictions together, eh? It's a great enigma.

The founding father is confronted by two young people driven by the Arab question: Yoash, who has fled from his father's "surplus of ideological obligations," is unable to fulfill the Zionist mission, and, moreover, is unable to accommodate its contradictions. He had left the country after taking part in a struggle on behalf of the Arabs to prevent the establishment of the town of Carmiel (which had dispossessed them of their land) - a protest that was suppressed by his father and his friends. The other young protagonist, Boaz, is Gershon's son-in-law. Gershon had been at the forefront of the struggle for "Hebrew labor" and against "Arab labor," while Boaz is a contractor who employs Arabs in carving tombstones for fallen soldiers. He has "a lucrative business. A car. Twenty 'slaves'."

Weakening of the Zionist narrative

The "absent presence" of the Arab as an indication of the delegitimation of the Zionist endeavor retained its hold over the Israeli theater repertory. More than a decade after *Silvester '72*, Hanan Peled's play *Hevre* (1989) depicts a group of friends in their thirties who are invited for a visit by an arms salesman who has run into trouble and eludes his enemies in a *mitzpeh* (a small Jewish settlement) in the Galilee, where he is building his home. He suggests that they come to live there with him as part of the realization of a new kind of Zionism: "They say Zionism is dead. Look at us...one would think we were a group of *Biluim* [Zionist pioneers vintage 1880] fresh from the 'School for Building a New World in Eretz Yisrael'."

Hevre, too, conveys a sense of deconstruction. "You think it's the same state? Everything's coming apart!... This country has lost direction.... The ship's sinking."

The play presents Arabs as an ominous threat, even within the Green Line ("It's terrible. Here, too, it's starting to be dangerous"), venting the fears that Israeli Jews harbor regarding Arabs ("There were Bedouin here. They were evicted. They're not exactly thrilled"). The Arabs remain offstage. First, an Arab wounds one of the group. Then, the leader of the group kills an Arab who has "invaded" his house. The group decides to cover up the deed and hide the body. "In another twenty years you'll recall how we stood on the hills of the Galilee, shovels in our hands and songs on our lips...and buried a corpse in the Land of our Forefathers."

The tension between the Zionist jargon and the act of mur-

der heightens the sense of contradiction and the morbid distortion. "This doesn't seem a bit crazy to you?... Sorry, but I'm nauseous," says a visitor, who is not part of the *hevre*, in the closing dialogue of the play.¹³

The weakening of the Zionist narrative was heightened by the Palestinian insurrection (Intifada) that broke out in the late 1980s. The Intifada changed attitudes and images, generating both hopes and fears. The failure of the "clubbing" policy adopted by then-Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to suppress the uprising, its damage to Israel as a state ruled by law, and fears regarding the detrimental effect on the education of young Israelis strengthened the position of those who favored reconciliation. The Intifada undermined Israeli society's self-confidence and the durability of the Zionist ethos. "Fears that had been repressed for years were aroused anew."¹⁴ Some of the theatrical texts, particularly of plays presented since the outbreak of the insurrection, illustrate this sense of crisis.

Three dramas staged at the close of the 1980s addressed the danger of the deteriorating moral image of Israeli youth as soldiers in the territories: Benny Barabash's *One of Our Own* (1988), Yitzhak Laor's *Efraim Returns from the Army* (1989), and, especially, Yitzhak Ben-Ner's *Deception* (1990).¹⁵ In retrospect, these plays read like drafts preparing audiences for Roni Pinkovitch's *Deconstruction* at the end of the 1990s. Of the three plays, only the dramatization of Ben-Ner's novel is, strictly speaking, an "Intifada text." Barabash's and Laor's works are "occupation plays" written prior to the Intifada, although staged after it erupted. *One of Our Own* is the story of an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of an Arab prisoner suspected of murdering an Israel Defense Forces paratroop officer. The investigator, an officer who in the past had served in the unit that is under investigation, is "one of our own." His friends expect him to exonerate them, although they had, in fact, beaten the prisoner in order to extract a confession, and then killed him. Barabash, like Pinkovitch, sequestered the Palestinian from the play; the victim is invisible, heard only on a tape documenting his last moments. He serves purely as a catalyst in presenting the dilemma for Israelis regarding the cogency and the boundaries of the bond between comrades-in-arms, which is also a key theme in *Deconstruction*.

Deception is the first play in the Israeli theater to depict an Israeli soldier coping with the Intifada. Like *Deconstruction*, the play revolves around a metaphor of malady. Holly (played

by Ram that em he, too, talks at academ project Zionist movem device many o the pro is not h of the : Sud stin stin guy son son act drill and "TI the hu any

The Decor standi cupati Taub, lows: Th cr: an fit or cl. Pa th ha do be b) ir b

by Rami Hoyberger) is a soldier hospitalized due to a stench that emanates from his body. Like Nado in *Deconstruction*, he, too, has been ill since the outbreak of the Intifada. Holly talks about himself while standing on a podium, as if in an academic institution, turning the pages of a "photo album" projected overhead which illuminates the typical course of a Zionist "pupil": home, kindergarten, Hanukah, Purim, youth movement, army. Opening the play by means of this "album" device helps create an identification between the audience – many of whom have similar photos in their own albums – and the protagonist. Holly suffers from an "odor syndrome" that is not his malady alone but the result of the acts and omissions of the audience as well.

Suddenly the guys began sniffing and saying that something stinks nearby.... They began to hadger me.... They'd say: "You stink like a corpse".... Sometimes we're called to help the guys from the General Security Service arrest someone...and some of the time, again, my stomach cramps up...also when someone among them [the Palestinians] cries, my stomach acts up. Their weeping, sometimes it's like a sort of electric drill. Penetrating. Sawing away. Aggravating. Full of pain and a kind of resentment. And then I repeat to myself... "The main thing is to stay normal in all this mess".... as if they were saying, these nerve-rattlers, "Beat us up, beat us, humiliate us, shove us around. Anything, whatever you want, anything for the hallowed cause."

The voice of the yuppies

Deconstruction is a late "Intifada play" that reveals an understanding and an awareness of the damage exacted by the occupation. The playwright has been influenced by writer Gadi Taub, whose article is quoted in the theater program as follows:

The secular humanist value system embodied in every democratic regime cannot tolerate a regime of occupation over another people for long. This is a problem that is not confined solely to the literature of philosophical discussion. Not only do the democratic idea and the regime of occupation clash here. A reserve soldier breaking into the houses of Palestinians at night, seeing fathers humiliated in front of their sons, finds himself doing [precisely] what he fears will happen to him and his family. He needs a justification for doing these things in order to maintain the very separations between his family and the family whose domain he has breached, and he finds this justification, if he is not religious, in the political realm.... The need for political justification becomes a psychic necessity, more than the product of a ra-

tional analysis, and a heavy weight is thereby placed on the political [sphere].... With the passage of time, the political [sphere] absorbs too much of this poison, and it itself becomes polluted with the oppression and the violence.¹⁶

Roni Pinkovitch explains *Deconstruction* in similar terms:

This play is one of the least "private" that I have written. It is very personal, although my protagonist in the play, Shmulik, is very remote from me. Several traumas are bound up together in the play.... Society absorbs things slowly, and not in depth. Yet, on the other hand, [society] incessantly deals with this reality, which demands answers. The Intifada and the war in Lebanon are an ongoing trauma.... The Intifada was "as if" at home. A combat soldier is a combat soldier. He goes across the border and he fights. In the Intifada, moral borders were breached. [The soldier] had to reexamine all the codes he was raised on. He goes into a family's home, and in the family there is a guy his own age and a little boy his brother's age. Violence begins at home...as happens in the play. The erosion that takes place in these people [soldiers] as they mature, only begins to show its effect after many years. The Intifada has caused sad and grave damage, individual and collective.... You face something legitimate: a people's war of independence. Poor, wretched, miserable people fighting for their dignity.¹⁷

Theatrical texts such as *Deconstruction* express the "structure of feeling" of both the producers and their audience. "Structure of feeling," a concept introduced by Raymond Williams, relates to the values shared by a particular group, class or society. It is a combination of the cultural collective subconscious and ideology expressed in various forms such as song, fiction, theater, architecture and fashion.¹⁸ Williams endows the playwright with the sensitivity and the ability to articulate a consciousness common to himself and his target audience. The "structure of feeling" is defined as "the continuity of experience from a particular work, through its particular form, to its recognition as a general form and then the relation of this general form to a period."¹⁹

Deconstruction is both similar to and different from the other "Intifada plays" mentioned here (as well as those not mentioned), speaking as it does for the "structure of feeling" of a new group that emerged primarily in the 1990s, although traces of its presence were identifiable in the 1980s. It is a play that provides a platform for Hebrew Yuppies of the 1990s – young people distanced by a decade from the characters in *Hevre* and two decades from Yoash and Boaz in *Silvester '72*. Oz Almog has noted the identifying traits of this group:

Most of the Yuppies are young people at the beginning or middle of their life cycle, at the height of their professional career.... Most of them belong to the creative stratum... and have higher education.... Most of the Yuppies are born in Israel to parents of European - American origins, and some are immigrants from English-speaking and South American countries. The Yuppie lifestyle is characterized by great intensity.... Personal career stands at the experiential core and demands most of the hours of the day... [creating] a sense of running on short time and [a need for] high achievement. All these generate tremendous mental attrition and create inner tension and extreme mood swings (euphoria or depression).... The Yuppies are generally enthusiastic supporters of the Left.... The prevailing feeling among this group is that the State of Israel is caught in a downward spiral from a moral standpoint and has become a brutal society devoid of conscience.... The Yuppie group is the most distanced of all groups in Israeli society from the Zionist world view and lifestyle.... Many [of them]... relate to the Zionist movement and its history from a critical and even cynical position.... Most believe that "we are not as fair-haired and pure" as we have tended to view ourselves. Our sins [particularly those of the Ashkenazi elite and the Labor establishment] toward Holocaust survivors, immigrants from Islamic countries, women and Palestinians have yet to be atoned for or rectified.²⁰

Deconstruction is not the first play to present the yuppie viewpoint. Other plays, labeled "Tel Aviv dramas" by critic Michael Handelsaltz, preceded it. These "bourgeois" plays (in Handelsaltz's definition) – including Hillel Mittelpunkt's *Temporary Separation* (1986) and Sinai Peter's *Midnight Critique* (1987) – are similar to *Deconstruction* in seemingly showing that "Israel at the end of the 1980s, so permeated by politics, can deal with smaller, but no less important, existential problems."²¹

Ironically, however, political reality invades these plays, too, particularly the conflict with the Palestinians. In *Midnight Critique*, one of the spouses is a Security Services investigator "who marvels at the tortures he applies to Arab suspects,"²² while *Temporary Separation* appears to show that creating bourgeois domestic reality on an Israeli stage is an almost impossible mission. A theater lecturer in a hotel room, seeking to clarify her relationship with her husband – perhaps in order to evade a heart-to-heart talk – plays a tape of the testimony of a Palestinian about his interrogation and the tortures he was subjected to at the hands of the Israeli Security Services. The voice of the Palestinian, and the "invasion" of the realities of the occupation into the "North Tel Aviv play," serve

to argue that detaching the "Palestinian question" is impossible even under the near "insulated" conditions created by the protagonists in the play and, implicitly, by most of the audience.

Three of the key characters in *Deconstruction* belong to the yuppie stratum and represent its "structure of feeling," while Nadav (Nado), the pivotal character, whose disease impels him to want to confess to the killing of the Palestinian, belongs to the lower middle class (a stratum that Oz Almog has caustically labeled "the Mitsubishis"). Although it is Nadav who propels the plot forward, the play focuses on Shmulik, Liora and Hani. In telling the personal stories of this trio of characters, the play tells the story of a generation – a story that exposes an "abscess." The play opens and closes with a monologue by Nadav, hospitalized for his illness, which is terminal. He seeks to purify himself by confessing the murderous deed to which he has been a party with his two army buddies while serving in the territories during the Intifada. Nado leaves the hospital and sets out on a journey. He meets up with Shmulik and Momo and takes them back to the past, to the murder. All three are plagued by feelings of guilt. Momo has become mentally unstable. He had been hospitalized and then released to live with his parents in their home in a moshav. Shmulik, although a family man with a successful advertising career, continues to feel remorse. *Deconstruction*, like the stories by Orly Kastel-Blum and a whole generation of other writers, is a play that can no longer bear the internal contradictions of the Zionist ethos. In Kastel-Blum's words:

I came from a Zionist venue, from a place of actualization that is supposed to be full of content, a place devoid of emptiness, a place filled with myth, purpose, mission. But there is something totally paradoxical here. Fifty years have gone by, and this country still doesn't have borders. We haven't demarcated them. Yes, a person doesn't know just how far he can go, where it's dangerous, and afterwards we are surprised that people go in weird directions.²³

Momo, Shmulik and Nado, too, don't know just "how far" they are permitted to go. What should the law be for an act of murder they committed in revenge for the killing of their friend?

Shmulik: We killed a human being back there! We beat him all night. We buried him. That spells courthouse the next morning. That means a giant compensation suit. That means jail.

Yitzhak: Let 'em send everyone who killed Arabs in war to prison. Half the country will sit in jail. All our leaders. "Break

their arms and legs" – who told you that? Rabin. The great leader. The Oslo Accords. What jail are you talking about, Shmulik?

Shmulik: I think you're crazy. Totally psycho. We killed a human being back there.... There's no statute of limitations on these kinds of things. Don't let them fuck up your mind. It's not part of life here. It was insane. Totally insane.... And we'll pay for it. It's beginning to dawn on me. We're already paying for it.

The impact of Hamlet

Roni Pinkovitch's play, like the stories by Orly Kastel-Blum, is the product of an anger that embodies a large degree of violence. Gadi Taub, writing about Orly Kastel-Blum, pointed out:

She's angry that they told her that here, in the lovely Land-of-our-Forefathers, all our hopes will come true, and she got Yom Kippur, Wadi Salib (a violent protest by the Mizrahim against the Ashkenazi establishment in 1959),...the debts of the kibbutzim, Lebanon, the development towns and the Intifada.... The Rabin she writes against is a symbol: he's the chief-of-staff of the Six Day War...in short, he's Zionism as a whole, and the post-'67 euphoria.²⁴

In a similar fashion, Pinkovitch calls the previous generation to account: "As the '67 generation, they are not responsible for what transpired here, but it has left its blemish on them. Or, their 'cultural baggage' has remained tied to 1967. *The sense of 'deconstruction' is also the product of what the Zionist dream succeeded in creating.*"²⁵

The story of the murder is not the only story the play tells. Political violence permeates events in the "private" sphere. "As a generalization," notes Pinkovitch, "one could say that the violence in the backdrop of the play is the violence in the backdrop of the Zionist endeavor. The father says: 'So what, you killed an Arab.' In essence, he is saying: 'Zionism is also violence.'"²⁶ Liora and Shmulik are in the midst of a marital crisis. Hani, Shmulik's former lover and a mutual friend of the pair, reveals to Shmulik that his wife hits their son. Shmulik, in a violent scene, hits his wife, and she decides to leave him. In another violent scene, set in the moshav, Shmulik knocks Yitzbak, the old-timer, to the floor and takes Momo home with him. There, Momo encounters Nado and, suspecting that he is going to reveal their secret to a journalist, strangles him.

Pinkovitch, in directing his play, was influenced by Steven Berkoff's staging of *Hamlet* (1999). More broadly, he was in-

fluenced by the Shakespearean play in the writing of *Deconstruction*, particularly in terms of the central motif – disease, the fatal abscess that contaminates an entire kingdom. As noted by Caroline Spurgeon²⁷ and subsequently by Wolfgang Clemen,²⁸ the linguistic imagery of *Hamlet* is dominated by the notion of an ulcer that contaminates the body, eating away from within until the entire body collapses. This imagery stems from the description in the first act of the murder of Hamlet's father by means of slow poisoning, an incident that becomes a central motif both linguistically and in the unfolding of the plot. The poisoning of Hamlet's father is widened out to symbolize the central problem depicted by the play: the corruption of the Danish state and of the nation, which is shown to be a process that is both unperceived and inevitable – the result of poisoning. At the close of the play, in a duel, most of those present are poisoned: Hamlet, the queen and the king.

"The motif of poisoning accompanies me all the time," Pinkovitch says. "The sickness of the kingdom is reflected in the existence [condition?] of the individual."²⁹ Nado, in the play, observes: "This cancer is like an enigma." He departs on a journey of purification that from the standpoint of the playwright (and his peer group) is demanded by the historical circumstances created by Zionism. The playwright himself testifies to a personal dream of purification:

Sometimes my anxieties are linked to an imagined situation in which a missile will be launched by Iran and we will become the refugees. We will become the carriers of the struggle. I know what I will lose...all the bourgeois comforts. What will I gain? Within the poverty and the humiliation and the crisis and the anger, there will be a very explicit expression of my own anger. Just as disease is the most terrible thing, and also a best friend as well,...that's the way I sometimes feel when I'm the most frightened and yearn most to be a fighting refugee... [I] yearn for reversal. To come full circle once again.³⁰

The tension between a world based on a well-ordered Zionism and chaos emanating from the dismantling of the ideological outlook permeates every element of the play and the performance. Claude Levi-Strauss's mythical-narrative approach may enhance our understanding of this tension. Levi-Strauss explains myth as a device that reduces anxiety and eases confrontation with the insoluble contradictions embedded in culture and in human experience by "dressing" them in concrete form. While the "logic of the concrete" does not

annul the contradiction, it mitigates the threat of living with it. Myths, in this view, provide tools for coping with contradictions and reconciling their presence in society. The solutions to contradictions, in myths, are transcendental, or evolve through a stratagem of incorporating improvisation, such as *bricolage*.³¹ Such *bricolage* shapes the narrative of *Deconstruction*. It is a consecutive narrative - a story that has a beginning: Nado in the hospital announcing his intention to embark on a journey of purification that will cure his disease; and an end: Nado returning to the hospital after he "completes" his mission. Most of the action is inter-linked by means of a clear plot. As Pinkovitch notes, "The performance is constructed a bit like a suspense story."³² Between the scenes, however, transitions in the form of a darkened stage and a musical motif break the flow of the play and the sense of realism, a technique the playwright terms "disrupted tension,"³³ which allows the spectator not only to follow the action but also to interpret it.

Sorrow and distress over the (Zionist) dream that has dissipated, impact on the design of the play, particularly on the music and the sets, conveying an emotional image. Pinkovitch observes:

The play had a color, a hue, a tone: a kind of indigo, a sad blue, and I didn't know how to present this. In the end we used the music of Sivan Shavit and Amir Tzoref, whom I approached for permission to use their song "This Grayish-Blue" with its sad electric guitar, which gave the right atmosphere. The core experience is one of grayish-blue melancholy.

I asked Dror (Herenon), the set designer, to paint a picture of the play as he saw it. He created a set that was a three-dimensional version of a picture he had drawn on a computer. The background is bluish-gray, on which he made two scratches. "This is the play," he said. Afterward, we made a print on a rug because we felt texture was needed. Composition and staging coalesced into a single image.

On the moshav we projected soil. Nado's friends are bound to the soil. The father, Yitzhak, says: "This moshav was an Arab village." We killed, he says, and he doesn't have any problem with this. He uses the Arabic term *tzumud* (perseverance, or hanging on). Not surprisingly, this mindset can drive the son, Momo, insane. He is a "delegate" of the soil. He carried a chunk of soil from the Sharon [Valley] into the Intifada. He protects the moshav from the territories,... expressed in his beating up and murdering [the Arab]. He should not necessarily have conflicting emotions, or guilt feelings,

or any ambivalence over what he does. But Momo was raised in a humanistic educational system. This generation was thus ordered to undergo a spiritual, personal, psychological "split" that was beyond their ability.³⁴

Will this generation bring about compromise?

A focus of Israeli public discourse in the closing decades of the twentieth century was the conflict between the Zionist and post-Zionist narratives. The Zionist narrative holds that a people had returned to its homeland after generations of persecution. The new *yishuv* was established and the land was redeemed from desolation. This redemption conferred on the returnees national rights over the land and over its Arab inhabitants, who, nevertheless, could live within it as individuals with equal rights. According to this narrative, the Arabs' wars against the Zionist endeavor were the outgrowth of malice and lack of wisdom that have since brought them only disaster. In contrast, the post-Zionist narrative perceives Zionism as "an aggressive national movement with expansionist aspirations that has inflicted tragedy on the Palestinian people by dispossessing it from its land...leading the Palestinian people into backwardness and disintegration."³⁵

Deconstruction does not deal at all with the Arab Other. As in many other Israeli plays, the Arab is absent from the cast of characters. The play focuses on young Jewish Israelis who continue to be engaged by the remnants of the Zionist narrative. The tension between this narrative and the frustrating reality in which they live is reflected in a tight, linear structure and realistic dialogue, with the scenes interrupted by "fade" transitions which fragmentize the narrative. This tension, and the contradictions in which the characters live, are reinforced by the contrast between the realistic acting style, costumes and dialogue, on the one hand, and the abstract set - scenery resembling scratches on a blue backdrop - on the other, transforming the play into a dramatic icon of conflict.

Deconstruction is not a post-Zionist play. Like other critical phenomena in the contemporary Israeli arts and in the realm of public discourse, it can easily be included in the category of nullifying the country's founding ideology. The play, however, is essentially a perplexed and grieving discussion of Zionism, which it cannot reconcile with the Arab question, and particularly with the reality of the Intifada experienced by the generation portrayed. As Roni Pinkovitch notes:

We are not sure, in the context of the Intifada, who "we" are

No
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10

when we're there.... The Intifada is right next to us, and it is so close to our Zionist myth, that it's very confusing.... For the young Israeli, there is something that is almost nostalgic in the Palestinian struggle. Something that was here, which he was not privileged [to experience]. This generation, which fought in the Intifada, was not tied to the womb of the Zionist struggle when it began. This generation is the "progeny" of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, and it fought the fighters of the Gaza ghetto. A number of these young people, during the Intifada, sometimes identified more with the very people they were fighting against than with the thing they were fighting for.... What is new in *Deconstruction* is the profile of the *sabra* that appears here, a profile that brings with it a type of sensitivity that cannot contain this dissonance. Perhaps this is the generation that will bring about compromise, because emotionally it cannot cope with the prevailing situation.³⁶

Translated from Hebrew by Daniella Ashkenazy

Notes

- Nurit Gertz, *Shvuya be-Halomot: Mitosim ba-Tarbut ha-Yisraelit* (Myths in Israeli Culture), (Tel Aviv: 1995), pp. 11-12. Also see Dan Urian, "Zionism on the Hebrew Stage," *Israel Affairs* (2002), pp. 43-55.
- Oz Almog, "Andartot le-Halelei Milhama he-Yisrael" (Memorials to War Casualties in Israel), *Megamot*, 34 (2), (1991), p. 181.
- Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- Naomi Yoeli, *Ha-Massekhet ke-Teatron-hag Zioni* (Massekhet: Zionist Ceremonies as Theatre), Ph.D. thesis, Tel Aviv University, Faculty of the Arts, 2001.
- These include Tzila Kumerker's *The Fourth Covenant* (1915); Moshe Fugel's *The Case of an Attorney* (1929); Sh. Shalom's *Gunfire on the Kibbutz (Dan the Watchman)* (1936); Shulamit Bat-Dori's *The Trial* ((1937); and Itamar Ben-Hur's *The Desecrated Vow* (1942). Dan Urian, *Dmut ha-Aravi be-Tetatron ha-Yisraeli* (The Image of the Arab in Israeli Theatre) (Tel Aviv: 1996), pp. 19-31.
- Anita Shapira, *Herev ha-Yonah* (The Dove's Sword) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1992), p. 486.
- Ibid.
- Oz Almog, *Ha-Tzabar – Diokan* (The Sabra: A Profile) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1997), pp. 97-123.
- Ibid., pp. 237-41.
- In later versions of the play – see Bimat Hakibbutz (1966) and Carneri Theater (1973) – the playwright chose to refrain from putting the Arab onstage. In a published version of the play still later, Shacham expunged the Arab figure altogether. Natan Shacham, *Hem Yagi'u Mahar* (They Will Come Tomorrow) (Tel Aviv: Or Am, 1989).
- Shraga Har-Gil, "Me-'Hamishpat Ha'aharon' le-'Silvester '72" (From "The Last Trial" to "Silvester '72"), *Ma'ariv*, March 17, 1974.
- Yehudit Livneh, "Ma Me'ik al Yoash Shapira" (Sicha im Yehoshua Sobol, Mehaber ha-Mahazeh 'Silvester '72" (What Bothers Yehoash Shapira [A Talk with Yehoshua Sobol, Author of the Play 'Silvester '72']), *Davar*, March 14, 1974.
- "At the very close of the play," writes Shimon Levy, "the *hevre* assist their leader in digging a huge hole and burying the Arab they had killed in self-defense (?). With him are buried all the dreams and camaraderie itself." Shimon Levy, "Hevre, meha-Tanach ad ha-Palmach" (*Hevre*, from the Bible to the Palmach), *Kol Ha'ir*, September 22, 1989.
- Ze'ev Shiff and Ehud Yaari, *Intifada* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1990), p. 325.
- Dan Urian, "Te'atron be-Zman Intifada" (Theater During an Intifada), *Bamah*, 135 (1994), pp. 19-36.
- Gadi Taub, "Retzah Rabin ve-Tarbut Apolitit" (Rabin's Murder and Apolitical Culture), *Ha-Mered ha-Shafuf: Al Tarbut Tzi'era be-Yisrael* (A Dispirited Rebellion: Essays on Contemporary Israeli Culture) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1997), p. 14.
- Author's interview with Roni Pinkovitch, January 27, 2001.
- Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), pp. 64-65.
- Idem, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 9.
- Oz Almog, "Milhemet ha-Tarbut be-Israel – Ha'arakhat Matzav ve-Tahazit Zehirah" (The Cultural War in Israel: Evaluation of the Situation and a Cautious Forecast) (at press).
- Michael Handelsaltz, "Drama Tel-Avivit" (Tel Aviv Drama), *Ha'arets*, October 26, 1987.
- Sarit Fuks, "Himnon ha-Necrofilia, Festival ha-Mavet" (Hymn to Necrophilia, Festival of Death), *Ma'ariv*, October 14, 1987.
- Quoted by Gadi Taub, "Mihapsim Safa Aheret: Ha-Pan ha-Tarbuti shel ha-Meha'ab" (Seeking Another Language: The Cultural Face of Protest), "Ha-Yisraeli shel Mahar" (Tomorrow's Israeli), *Ha'ir*, December 11, 1998.
- Ibid.
- Interview with Roni Pinkovitch, see note 17.
- Ibid.
- Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 133-34, 316-18.
- Wolfgang H. Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 106-8.
- Pinkovitch, see note 17.
- Ibid.
- Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, translated by C.

Jacobson and B.G. Schoepf (London: Allen Lane, 1967), pp. 213-19, 229-30; Eleazar M. Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth*, translated by Guy Lanoue and Alexandra Sadetsky (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 53-67.

32. Interview with Roni Pinkovitch, December 7, 2001.
33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Sammy Smocha, "Yahasei Yehudim-Aravim" (Jewish-Arab Relations) in Efram Yaar and Zeev Shavit (eds.), *Megamot be-Heker ha-Hevrah ha-Yisraelit* (Trends in the Research of Israeli Society), Vol. A (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2001), pp. 262-65.

36. Ibid.

Nat
Uri

Wher
tive a
get ir
gener
boure
the sc
vals l
reply
popu
I
erally
whos
he w
Z
relea
have
movi
audi
are s
cann
com
"Pee
tive
V
erall
cies
and
year
sele
love
of I
mur
disc
has
tack
sire
frot

National vs. Personal Cinema

Uri Klein

When colleagues from abroad question me about the distinctive attributes of Israeli cinema, and I can't or don't want to get into an in-depth discussion on the issue (the question is generally asked around a table laden with cut vegetables and bourekas of various types during one of the parties following the screening of a new Israeli film at one of the two film festivals held in Israel annually, in Haifa and Jerusalem), I tend to reply that Israeli cinema is the only one which can claim a popular film director who left the field and became a rabbi.

I am of course referring, in this weak witticism, which generally evokes a quizzical look by my colleagues, to Uri Zohar, whose last film, "Save the Lifeguard" (1977), was made while he was in the process of returning to religion.

Zohar's best-known film, "Peeping Toms" (1972), was re-released on March 21, 2002. In a reality in which Israeli films have difficulty finding a distributor, and in which even when a movie theater is willing to screen a film it can barely attract an audience, this is of course an exceptional event. Israeli films are screened in cinematheques and are shown on TV, but I cannot recall another case of an Israeli film being re-released commercially, an event that reflects the distinctive status of "Peeping Toms" in the history of Israeli film – or the distinctive status that is being attributed to it by force.

Who is trying to do this? Phenomena such as this are generally the product of a convergence of cultural trends, tendencies and longings that are not always discernible at the time and whose parameters are difficult to define. During the thirty years since its first release in Israel, "Peeping Toms" has been selected several times in various types of surveys as the best-loved Israeli film and sometimes as the best film in the history of Israeli cinema, and has been anointed with the somewhat murky and dubious title, "cult film." Without going into a discussion of the history and significance of this title,¹ which has become a kind of status symbol, and which is often attached to a film indiscriminately, I will say only that the desire to anoint "Peeping Toms" as a cult film stemmed both from facts on the ground and from the longing for a "normal"

cinema here, a longing that has accompanied the Israeli cinema throughout its history.

Undoubtedly, this film by Uri Zohar has gained many admirers over time who have watched it over and over (it has been screened for years in the cinematheques as well as in midnight screenings in movie houses, which is the venue that generally produces the cult film phenomenon, or those films that seek this title); remember every scene in it; can quote its lines; and relate to its characters as close friends (anyone who is involved in this phenomenon knows that in local mythology and folklore, "young Altman" does not refer to director Robert Altman in his youth, but to the character of the adolescent in Zohar's film who boasts about his impressive sexual organ). The phenomenon is not confined to Zohar's film only. It typifies a significant portion of popular comedies produced in the 1970s as well, which were labeled "bourekas films." I am surprised and impressed each time anew at the expertise of with-it young people regarding the dialogues and comic nuances in such films as Boaz Davidson's "Charlie and a Half" (1974) and "Snooker" (1975); Assi Dayan's "Halfon Hill Doesn't Answer" (1976) and "Winner" (1979); or Ze'ev Revach's "Stealing From a Thief" (1977) and "Wrong Number" (1979). A series of bourekas films broadcast on prime time by Channel Two some two years ago turned out to be one of the rating successes of that period.

The difference is, however, that while the current embrace of films by Davidson, Dayan, Revach and other directors constitutes a kind of reaction to the belittlement, disregard and sometimes even censure of those films when they were first released (a complex phenomenon that merits a separate discussion), the attitude toward "Peeping Toms" reveals the ambivalent cultural status of Zohar's film in the history of Israeli cinema in particular and of Israeli popular culture generally. Although the film did not elicit unanimously positive reviews at the time, and was not a box office hit when it was first released (this too is a phenomenon typical of cult films), it was never treated as a bourekas film. It was a priori treated with

greater respect – even by critics who dismissed it – than other comedies produced then. There were many reasons for this, but essentially it was due to Zohar's oeuvre itself, which, before "Peeping Toms," consisted of a mix of popular comedies ("Our Neighborhood," 1968; "Moishe the Fan Man," 1969) and films that ostensibly were on a higher artistic level. Even more significantly, in the cultural landscape then, it was due to his attitude toward several dominant and prestigious film phenomena of the time.

Stylistic eclecticism

Zohar's first long dramatic film, "Hole in the Moon" (1965), was influenced, by his own admission, by Adolfo Meksas's "Hallelujah the Hills" (1962), one of the key films in the development of the American underground cinema that emerged in New York in the late 1950s as an alternative to Hollywood. Zohar's "Three Days and a Child" (1968) was one of the first Israeli films to be based on a serious literary source (a story by A. B. Yehoshua) and revealed the influences of the two dominant cinema styles of the time: the French New Wave, and the Italian cinema style represented especially by the films of Michaelangelo Antonioni. The film's distinguished aura, and its affiliation, at least indirectly, with the European "art cinema" tradition, were underscored by its entry in the Cannes Festival, the only Israeli film until then that earned its leading actor (Oded Kotler) the festival's acting award. In "Uplift" (1970), ostensibly a situation comedy of the most basic kind featuring the Hagashash Hahiver acting trio, Zohar adopted yet another style that was fashionable in the 1960s, that of the British cinema which depicted what was called "swinging London" through an array of devices in a series of popular films (such as Richard Lester's "A Hard Day's Night," 1964, and "The Knack," 1965; John Schlesinger's "Darling," 1965; and Karl Reisz's "Morgan," 1966), which Zohar sought to apply to the local urban reality.

This stylistic eclecticism is more indicative of well-aimed imitativeness than creative authenticity. During the same period, other Israeli directors also made films influenced by contemporary non-Israeli cinema (Yitzhak Tzapel Yeshurun's "Woman in the Next Room," 1967; Jacques Mory Katmor's "About a Woman," 1969; Judd Ne'eman's "The Dress," 1969; and Dan Wolman's "The Eccentric," 1970, are the most prominent examples). Zohar's films, however, translated what was happening in the non-Israeli cinema to the Israeli reality more

successfully than these other films. Moreover, he himself, to a greater degree than his colleagues, resembled a film consumer in the cinema supermarket of the times, selecting the most suitable style for himself each time. Tellingly, in 1968 he made "Three Days and a Child" in a European French-Italian style, and that same year he made "Every Bastard is a King," whose plot takes place against the background of the Six Day War, in the most Hollywood-esque style of all his films (its cast even included Hollywood stars – who had known better days – namely, William Berger and Pier Angeli). The Hollywood style helped Zohar highlight the heroic aspect of the war, which had taken place a year beforehand, and project a romantic image of the Israeli male whose national loyalty and personal immutability are tested in war.

This variety of films, styles and influences engendered a different attitude toward the popular comedies that Zohar directed at the time from the usual attitude toward the bourekas films then, and not only when these films were first released. In his book *The Israeli Cinema* (1994), which included a chronological survey of all films produced in Israel until 1993, Meir Schnitzer describes "Uplift" thus:

The time is the sixties, the end of the sixties, when the world cinematic language becomes liberated from the shackles of the linear story, and a number of films favor a free, improvised story. Uri Zohar makes an effort to close gaps here and to present a local response to this creative challenge. Using stylized photography, and with the help of a cabaret m.c. (Uri Zohar himself) who steers the "plot" by means of connecting dialogue segments, the Hagashash Hahiver acting trio attempt to deviate from the popular-entertainment image that has stuck to them.²

Although Schnitzer later states that "the totality doesn't work as it should," and that the film "is more like a documentary about the spirit of a fascinating period in Tel Aviv, and less a film that is not actually a film," his tone is different from that in which he relates to "Halfon Hill Doesn't Answer," Hagashash Hahiver's next sally into cinema in Assi Dayan's film of 1976, although his overall attitude toward Dayan's film is more supportive than the one he displayed toward "Uplift." Schnitzer writes: "As a military burlesque with vulgar credentials, 'Halfon Hill Doesn't Answer' is certainly a success." In contrast to his comments about "Uplift," which avoided any mention of the highly vulgar credentials of the film, but did identify the effort by Hagashash Hahiver to break away from the popular entertainment image that had stuck to them (why,

actually?), Schnitzer writes that the plot of "Halfon Hill," which he defines as absurd, "gives Hagashash Hahiver an opportunity to air their stage talents before a film camera."³

Interestingly, Schnitzer's comments about "Halfon Hill" are totally devoid of any mention of the attempt by the film to constitute a comic antithesis (whether successful or not is another question) to the heroic Israeli military film, and this by a director (Assi Dayan) who as an actor immortalized the definitive image on screen of the fighting *sabra* in Joseph Milo's "He Walked in the Fields" (1967). The film's intention to constitute an antithesis was, of course, reflected in its very title, a throwback to Thorold Dickinson's 1955 film "Hill 24 Doesn't Answer," the ultimate cinematic perpetuation of the mythology of the War of Independence. By contrast, in all of his commentary about Zohar's films, Schnitzer identifies or implies the presence of critical and even ostensibly subversive undertones. He says about "The Rooster" (1971):

The well-entrenched machoism in the Israeli cinema milieu, especially in the films about the image of the fighter, or in family melodramas, is revealed here in the open and in the full reach of its punch. No longer manly values that hold the plots together by camouflages and repressions of varied kinds, but a determined frontal attack.⁴

Schnitzer later admits that the film-maker's intention was apparently to create a social satire, and "the result on the screen is remote from this intention." He defines "The Rooster" as "a dissonance of bad taste." Yet, in raising the issue of the film's representation of Israeli masculinity in Israeli cinema, he elevates "The Rooster" to a higher critical level than, for example, "Halfon Hill."

Schnitzer defines "Peeping Toms" as "the best of Uri Zohar as a film director and actor."⁵ I single out his book in this article not only because it is a highly useful work for the Israeli film critic – it includes vital details about all the films produced in Israel, from Haim Halahmi and Natan Axelrod's "Oded the Wanderer" (1932) to Hagai Levi's "Snow in August" (1993), and should therefore be updated at least once every decade – but because the book is written by someone whose primary occupation is film criticism and who thereby reflects the tendencies and trends that have typified local film criticism as it relates to the Israeli cinema. Additionally, more than any book or article about the Israeli cinema published to date, the author adopts the traditional narrative of Israeli cinema and presents it in a most direct, transparent and accessible way.

"In this burning light"

The parameters of this article do not permit an in-depth discussion of the question of how a national cinema is created, how its identity coalesces, or how the narrative that represents it is molded, which are among the most central and complex issues dealt with in contemporary cinematic theory. I can only relate to Israeli cinema, and note that in the process of its creation, primarily from the 1960s onward, a representative narrative was molded which functions along a single track and relies on a central dichotomy. The track leads from a cinema that dealt with national topics and aimed to create and confirm Zionist values, to a cinema that, while not striving to negate or even undermine those values, nevertheless questions them. The dichotomy on which this track rests is that of a national vs. a personal cinema; a cinema that deals with the community vs. a cinema that focuses on the role of the individual within the community; a cinema of "we" vs. a cinema of "I." Within this narrative, discussion has centered on changes in the Israeli cinematic representation of a wide range of topics (bravery and manliness, army and war, immigration and ingathering, our right to the land and our attitude to the other who lives here, etc.) alongside the unavoidable recognition of the essence of the dialectic and the ambivalent significance of Israeli cinema, its history, and the evolving narrative within this history.

This recognition illuminates the fact that cinema never relates to history unequivocally, as exemplified by American cinema, which has never treated American history in one particular way only. In one respect, the American cinematic narrative is closest to that of the Israeli, in terms of the issues it raises and its method of dealing with them.⁶ Israeli cinema was never either national or personal, public or private, politically partisan or heedless of political issues, a loyal advocate of the Zionist vision or distant from it and casting doubt on its ideological and historic viability. Cinema is too complex a vehicle to be capable of obeying such a series of dichotomies. The reality depicted in it, whether a documented reality for a documentary film or an invented reality for a feature film, inevitably incorporates its contradictions. It documents as well as invents. The national component in it is always personal as well, the public component is always private, and the evasion of political issues is in itself a political statement. Just as the Israeli cinema has no single narrative, it has never adopted a single national, historic or private narrative, whether in such

early films as Amram Amar's "Truce" (1950), Joseph Leytes's "The Faithful City" (1952), Nuri Haviv's "In the Absence of a Homeland" (1956), or Larry Frisch's "Pillar of Fire" (1959) – all of which dealt with the central events that defined the historic consciousness of the 1950s; or in films by Yeshurun, Ne'eman, Zohar, Katmor, Wolman and Avraham Heffner (whose "Whatever Became of Daniel Wachs?" was released the same year as "Peeping Toms") – all of whom were described as founders of Israeli cinema that is defined as personal.

The same holds true for the attempt made to divide Israeli cinema from the 1980s onward into political films that treated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict directly, such as Danny Wachsmann's "Hamsin" (1982), Yehuda Judd Ne'eman's "Silver Platter" (1983), Uri Barbash's "Behind Bars" (1984), Shimon Dotan's "Smile of the Kid" (1986), Yitzhak Tzapel Yeshurun's "Green Fields" (1989), Eran Riklis's "Cup Final" (1991), and Haim Bouzaglo's "Cherry Season" (1991) – vis-a-vis all the other films that did not deal with the conflict directly and were therefore viewed as ignoring it in favor of creating a local entertainment cinema that was apolitical. This, of course, is a totally artificial and mistaken division. By way of example, some of the most interesting Israeli films produced in the 1980s dealt with the Israeli reality by blending the private with the communal, the personal with the public and the national, in a distinctive way. Yitzhak Tzapel Yeshurun's "No'a at 17" (1982) reconstructed the 1951 split in the kibbutz movement, with the filming and screening taking place during the evacuation of Yamit and the entire Sinai Peninsula. Amos Guttman, in "Afflicted" (1983), placed the story of a young Israeli homosexual in an overlapping private, ethnic and national context. Eitan Green, in "Til the End of the Night" (1985), set his hero's story in ever-widening circles of social, cultural, religious and national alienation. Haim Bouzaglo, who in "Marriage of Convenience" did deal with the Israel-Palestinian conflict directly, managed nevertheless to handle it in a comic context of mistaken and shifting private, personal, national and authentic identities.

The difficulty in defining the Israeli cinematic narrative, which leads directly from the national and the public to the private and the personal; reshuffles historic narratives; and shifts from disciplined obedience to Zionist values to a certain rebelliousness against the vision that molded these values, is reflected in the introduction to Schnitzer's book,⁷ titled, poeti-

cally, "In This Burning Light," with subheads titled The Zionist Track, The Eastern [Sephardi] Alternative, In the Private Domain, The Sabra Goes to War, The Secularization of the Myth, The Coming of the Palestinian, and others. Schnitzer begins by calling Israeli cinema:

a social cinema, of course, but not a political cinema. In contrast, for instance, to Italian or French films, and American films, too, film-makers in Israel systematically avoided dealing with topics that harbor party disputation or that have remained unresolved in terms of the national consensus. There are no films about the affairs that rocked the country. None about Arlosoroff's murder or Jacob De Haan's execution. None about "the Season" [the vengeful animosity between the Haganah and the Etzel and Lehi undergrounds during the British Mandate period], and none even about the Ha'apalah [the clandestine immigration operation during the Mandate], or the assassination of UN Mediator Folke Bernadotte, or the liquidation of Lord Moyne [British minister of state in the Middle East]. And what about the sinking of the "Altalena," and the Lavon Affair – the dark cloud that hung over the historic Mapai Administration – none of these events made it onto the screen. Not even the stirring military affairs – the defense of Kibbutz Negba, the white flag raised at Nitzanim, the fall of the Gush Etzion settlements, and the Syrian tank at the gates of Degania.

Notably, the situation described by Schnitzer has not changed in the nine years since his book was published. No film has been produced relating to the events he cites, although TV has begun dealing with historic events sporadically, in a series format, e.g., one about the Kastner trial, directed by Uri Barbash, and another, directed by Elie Cohen, about the sinking of the "Egoz," which was carrying immigrants from Morocco. Later on, Schnitzer describes Israeli film-makers as "speaking loudly but acting with constraint. Striking a rebellious pose, but in practice docile and considerate." He defines Israeli cinema as "sullen and irate, but straight as a ramrod, falling into line, standing at attention. Breaking down barriers, but not avant-gardists. Seeking innovation, but putting it off for the next film – the one that will be produced, although maybe not."⁸

Without victorious soldiers

Schnitzer's observations reflect a degree of hypocrisy, in as much as Israeli film criticism has never been open to innovation or to what Schnitzer describes as avant-gardism. This is recognizable in Schnitzer's book itself, which treats some of

the more nonconformist films that were produced in Israel in the late 1980s and early '90s with askance and dismissal. He defines the device of breaking down the cinematic illusion, which Yitzhak Tzepel Yeshurun used at the end of his film "Green Fields" (the first full-length feature film set against the background of the first intifada) – in which one of the actors addresses the viewers in his own persona and not as the character he portrays in the film, and with Yeshurun's voice itself heard on the sound track – as "a surrender of the artistic act to political events."⁹ (Are we to understand from this that the device used by Yeshurun, which runs counter to the illusionist trend dominant in Israeli cinema, is not an artistic act?) He sums up Gidi Dar's "Eddie King" (1992), one of the few films produced in Israel that strove for a measure of experimentalism, as a "chatty mishmash that lays claim to post-modernism but is nothing but dilletantist pretension."¹⁰

Schnitzer's book is not the only one that ascribes a narrative to Israeli cinema which leads from a Zionist cinema to a cinema that casts doubt on Zionist values – or, more precisely, casts doubt on the effectiveness of Zionism in fulfilling its goals – and posits a confrontation between then and now in everything related to the presentation by Israeli cinema of some of the main components of Israeli history, society and culture, such as manliness and bravery, the army and war, immigration and integration, and, especially, the role of Israeli cinema itself.¹¹ One of the films analyzed by Nurit Gertz in her book *A Story From the Movies* is Akiva Tzevet's "Atalia" (1984), whose screenplay was written by Zvi Kertzner based on a story by Yitzhak Ben-Ner. "Atalia" also serves Schnitzer as evidence of the changes that took place in the Israeli cinema's treatment of key components of Israeli society, and of the grounding of Israeli cinema in the particular moment in history in which it is produced. Schnitzer writes:

When the kibbutz-bred heroine of "Atalia," who rejects collective thought, lambasts the kibbutz-bred hero of the film, who was dishonorably discharged from the army and thereby failed to realize his manhood: "Why should you want to fight? For the homeland? What they taught you here in Grade One, that it is good to die for our country, they lied to you, do you understand? It isn't good to die" – this is not only an artistic truth stemming from the character development in the film, but evidence of the social period in which "Atalia" was made – 1984.¹²

However, "Atalia," Schnitzer claims, does not represent only the moment in which it was created ("two years after the large

demonstration in the Tel Aviv square," in Schnitzer's identification), but the overall attitude of Israeli cinema to the kibbutz, which contradicts the way the kibbutz was portrayed in films produced before the founding of the state and in its early years. Schnitzer goes on to say:

"Atalia"'s plot takes place in a kibbutz, i.e., the entity which served as the ultimate example of the success of the vision of those who came here to build and to be rebuilt. The kibbutz, together with the Israel Defense Forces, is one of the most pronounced symbols of the state. Israeli films have a grudge against the kibbutz, against the collective thought and life style. Alongside "Atalia," in which ideological collectivization is depicted as a primal curse, a similar suffocation is palpable in "Intimate Story," "The Hero's Wife," "Belfer" and "Stalin's Children." Even the children's film "The Boy Takes the Girl" highlights the horror of the collective. Suddenly, the State of Israel is portrayed as a solitary land, a place possibly of internal exile.¹³

Schnitzer identifies the most significant cinematic change as its treatment of the Israeli male and hero. He asserts: "The current portrait of the Israeli fighter - wild-eyed, defeated, disabled and confused - is the central, and most fascinating, theme of the films made in the 1980s. Ever since the invasion of Lebanon, no victorious Israeli soldier has been portrayed on screen."¹⁴

The undermining of the image of the Israeli male and Israeli manliness did not begin then, Schnitzer points out. Signs of it were discernible in several films produced even before the Yom Kippur War, beginning with "Peeping Toms" and "Whatever Became of Daniel Wachs," both of which were released a year before that war (Schnitzer defines them as "the two best feature films produced in Israel"). He writes:

These two films hold up a mirror to the *sabra* whose hips have widened. The slight distortion and the profanity of this mirror ridicule the myth. "Peeping Toms" deals with males who channel their energies unconstructively - to voyeurism, masturbation and fleeting encounters with prostitutes.... The profanation of the myth is similarly pronounced in "Whatever Became of Daniel Wachs," which peels away the high-flown language from national concepts which had not been updated over the first 25 years of the State of Israel. The absence of such an updating of the national agenda led not only to the Yom Kippur trauma but also to the public schism, the acts of conscientious objection in the wake of the intifada.¹⁵

Nine years after the publication of Schnitzer's book, and 30 years after "Peeping Toms" was first released, Nahman Ingbar wrote, on the occasion of the re-release of Uri Zohar's

film:

Another Israeli myth has been shattered – the myth of the best Israeli film ever made, “Peeping Toms” by Rabbi Uri Zohar. A meaningless, superficial, poorly executed, repetitious, boring film, and if this is the best film ever made about us, we deserve it. Once again we see Uri Zohar’s sagging belly, his vile habit of kicking everyone and everything that moves (I understand that this is a kick at Zionist values, but come on, there’s a limit to gross symbolism)... Sitting through this film today is a nearly impossible mission.¹⁶

Comments about “Peeping Toms” written when the film was originally released; Schnitzer’s and other researchers’ and critics’ observations since, regarding the role of the film in the overall context of the history of Israeli cinema; and Ingbar’s comments today reveal the difficulty of defining a narrative in Israeli cinema and reading the text, i.e., each film separately, as part of the historic, social, cultural and political Israeli discourse.

I will conclude this discussion of Schnitzer’s book with a final quote from it. “The 407 films surveyed in this book,” he writes, “are chapters in the process of dealing with the self-definition of the Zionist entity which may have a distinctiveness all its own.”¹⁷

I agree in some respects with this formulation (although the ending of the sentence, “which may have a distinctiveness all its own,” is surprising – is it Schnitzer’s way of expressing his distancing from an absolute acceptance of the Zionist entity that is seeking to define itself?), but the issue is not only self-definition, and not only of the Zionist entity. The Israeli cinema has always dealt with questions of identity: local identity, historic identity, national identity, ethnic and communal identity and sexual identity, as well as social and cultural identity and, above all, cinematic identity. It has asked who we are and what is the nature of the place we are in, and whether we in this place want to make films, and what kind we can, are permitted or are obliged to make in this place. It has asked what Israeli cinema is, so as to try to understand what Israel is.

Confrontation between Israeliness and Jewishness

A key film in this discourse is Rafi Buka’i’s “Avanti Popolo” (1986), which was well received both critically and by the public at the time. This favorable response stemmed not only from Bouka’i’s expert directing, and the fine acting of both of

the film’s stars, Salim Dau and Haddad Suheil, but primarily from the fact that the film, set on the last day of the Six Day War an hour before the cease-fire between the Israeli and the Egyptian armies was to take effect, centered on two Egyptian reserve soldiers who had killed their commanding officer (for refusing to comply with the Egyptian surrender) and who are trying to make their way home across the Suez Canal. The local reviews accepted the fact that the reality of the film is portrayed through the eyes of the other – the Egyptian soldier – as a sign of liberal openness; viewed it as a progressive work of art that forces the Israeli audience to acknowledge and accept the existence of the other; and identified a humanistic, anti-war message in it (which stemmed as well from the directing style in the film, which highlighted the irrational, absurd side of war, in the same vein as a significant number of theatrical and cinematic works that preceded it, such as Arrabal’s “Picnic in the Battlefield” or Philippe de Broca’s “King for a Day”).

A deeper study of the film reveals that the issue is not as simple as it appears, and that the identification with the other, which the film ostensibly encourages, also means the expropriation of the identity of the other. In essence, “Avanti Popolo” describes the confrontation between Israelis and Jews: the Israelis in the film are represented by the Israeli soldiers whom the two heroes encounter along the way, and the Jews are represented by the two Egyptian soldiers. At the climax of the film, one of the Egyptian soldiers, who is a theater actor by profession, recites Shylock’s well-known monologue from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, which had been quoted on screen most prominently prior to “Avanti Popolo” in Ernst Lubitch’s “To Be or Not to Be” (1942), by a Jewish actor in occupied Poland in front of Nazi officers. The extant confrontation in Israel between Israeliness and Jewishness is relevant to the present discussion of questions of identity. Films that preceded “Avanti Popolo” touched on the issue primarily in the context of immigration to Israel and integration in it. Films produced after “Avanti Popolo” also dealt with the issue, most notably Amos Gitai’s “Berlin Jerusalem” (1989), whose plot posited an encounter between Elsa Lasker-Schueler and Manya Shochat. Buka’i, in “Avanti Popolo,” deals with the issue by expropriating the identity of the other and destroying it for the sake of the discussion. His film is a kind of conquest that obliterates the other in order to turn him into part of the I.

The question of the treatment of the other in Israeli cin-

ema, and the role of the other in the definition of Israeli identity, is central to the history of Israeli cinema. The inability of Israeli cinema to respond satisfactorily to the question of who we are, what this place is, what our shared history is, and what kind of consciousness molds our collective memory, increasingly prevents this cinema from consolidating a narrative of its own and confidently following the course that the narrative is supposed to posit. This phenomenon has been especially pronounced from the late 1980s onward. The genre concept that ostensibly dominated Israeli cinema broke down almost completely at that time, and the dichotomy that ostensibly typified local film-making – differentiating, *inter alia*, between popular comedies and films dealing with social and political issues in a more “serious” context – was finally blurred. The early 1990s, therefore, constituted perhaps one of the most interesting periods in Israeli cinema history, marking a process of growing variation and divergence that predicted the dizzyingly varied and divergent condition of Israeli society and the Israeli reality today. (Notably, I am not trying to ascribe to the Israeli cinema, or to any cinema, the ability to predict historic, social and political developments and changes. Similarly, I do not address the question of whether cinema molds developments or merely represents them. These are important issues that merit a separate discussion. I will only note, most naively, that anyone who followed cinema produced in Israel during the 1990s was not surprised by the results of the last elections, which testified to the existence of an increasingly splintered, divided and conflicted Israel.)

Reality becomes an illusion

Several films produced in the early 1990s may be said to summarize the preceding cinematic period and hint at the future direction of Israeli film. The year 1991 witnessed the release of the two latest films (to date) to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Eran Riklis’s “Cup Final” and Haim Bouzaglo’s “Cherry Season.” Both stories were set in Lebanon, with Bouzaglo’s film, in blending realistic scenes with fantasy, heralding the growing distancing by Israeli cinema from dealing with the extant reality in favor of a decomposing and irrational reality. Shabi Gabison’s “Shuru,” released in late 1990, dealt with disconnection and alienation typical of the Tel Aviv milieu through the character of a charlatan who draws a community of believers and admirers around him. The film was screened in Israel during the Gulf War, which above all else

undermined the typical Tel Avivian confidence in its immunity and autonomous identity rather than its Israeliness.

The most notable film produced in Israel during the early 1990s was Assi Dayan’s “Life According to Agfa,” released in 1992. In it Dayan gathered all the Israeli cultural and cinematic elements – soldiers, Arabs, workers, Sephardis, Ashkenazis, women, men, residents of the big city and representatives of the periphery – into a Tel Aviv puh called Barby (the name is associated with a well-known institution for the mentally ill), and brought about their collapse in a bloodbath in which nearly all the characters were massacred. The film, shot in black and white, ends with a single color shot in which the camera shows a Tel Aviv landscape viewed from the window of one of the characters in the story. This single color shot, contrasting in its calm and meditative mood to the shots of the massacre that preceded it, represents an appeal by Dayan to Israeli culture generally and Israeli cinema in particular to step back, return to its beginnings, and reposition the camera toward the Tel Aviv landscape – toward reality.

This shot is bound to remind the viewer of two Israeli film beginnings that preceded it. The first is the shot of Tel Aviv’s Ben-Yehuda Street that opened Avraham Heffner’s film “Aunt Clara” (1977), which was a direct statement by him about the cinema he wanted to make, the local reality he wanted to document, and the alternative he wanted to posit *vis-a-vis* the Israeli cinema being produced then. The other cinematic window, which also opened onto a Tel Aviv landscape, was the window in the home of David Perlov, through which he began photographing his “Diary” in 1973, perhaps the most significant creative work in the history of Israeli cinema. Perlov, in narration that accompanies the start of the first segment of “Diary,” announces his intention of photographing through his window as if through a tank slit. “Diary,” more than any other work in the history of Israeli cinema, raises the question of the role of the individual in the Israeli collective; the link in the Israeli reality between the personal, the public and the national; the issue of Israeli identity generally and its connection to its individual, private, historic and biographic sources; and the blurring by Israeli cinema, as by the Israeli reality, of the boundaries between the I and the other.

More than anything else, the 1990s revealed the inability of Israeli cinema to define the Israeli reality and the Israeli place. As a result, it depicted an increasingly elusive reality leaning toward delusion and evasion, in which the boundaries

between the country's center and its periphery are increasingly blurred. Three examples stand out: Shabi Gabison's "Lovesick on Nana Street" (1995), set in the periphery and focusing on the longing of the hero, who lives in the periphery, for a woman who arrives there from the center – Tel Aviv; Joseph Pitchhadze's "Under Western Eyes" (1996), which portrays the search for his father by a young man who arrives in Israel from Germany; and Julie Shles's "Afula Express" (1997), about the odyssey of a couple from the periphery to the center and back again.

Gabison, at the end of his film, channels all the components in the reality which the film portrays (and, some say, the reality of the bourekas films as well, to which "Lovesick" relates) to a local hospital for the mentally ill, shifting away from the realistic style of most of the film by introducing pronounced illusionary effects. "Lovesick on Nana Street," thus, is the second Israeli film produced in the 1990s to break down Israeli reality into components which are then gathered into an institution that symbolizes emotional and mental breakdown.

The symbolic search by the son for his father in Pitchhadze's film takes place in a reality that becomes increasingly disconnected, its detachment and illusionary atmosphere highlighted by black-and-white photography that gives the Negev landscape an unreal quality. Some scenes project the lunar setting of a sci-fi odyssey. Shles's "Afula Express" is the story of a magician and the woman who is with him and who supports his dream of becoming a success in Tel Aviv. The story of their journey from the periphery to the center and back again is embellished by fantastical effects designed to highlight the fact that the more elusive the heroes' confidence in their location and destiny becomes, the more blurred reality itself appears, turning, as in many other films of the period, into an illusion.

Amos Gitai's trilogy of films are particularly significant in this Israeli cinematic context. Each is set in one of the three major cities in Israel: Tel Aviv ("Things," 1996), Haifa ("Day After Day," 1998) and Jerusalem ("Sacred," 1999). The trilogy represents the only cinematic attempt of the time to explore the link between place and ideology in order to examine how place represents reality and determines its social, cultural and political significance.

If Israeli cinema has a narrative, it is a narrative that leads from a cinema that was obedient to the dominant ideology

regarding the essence and identity of Israeli reality, and the essence and identity of the place in which this reality existed (and which sought to convey this ideology to its audience), to a cinema that disconnected from this ideology (which itself was increasingly caught up in a crisis of identity and significance) and was no longer certain about its reality or about the place in which it existed. The beginnings of this narrative, as its continuation and its situation today, were never explicit in terms of ideology and issues of identity, reality and place. Yet, if an Israeli cinematic narrative is identifiable at all, it is a narrative that was followed only to a degree, always to a degree only, in terms of the Israeli reality and place.

Throughout this article I have avoided using the term "post-Zionist," for Israeli cinema is not post-Zionist. It never posited an oppositionist, different or alternative narration to the Zionist narrative, and when it disconnected from it, with all that is implied regarding the cinematic representation of the Israeli reality, locale and population, it became panic-stricken. This is reflected in the attempt by Israeli cinema over the past decade to seek refuge in the alternative reality of illusion and in a place that is neither the center nor the periphery but which exists in a territory beyond sanity.

Translated by Judy Krausz

Notes

1. For the history of the term cult film and its cultural attributes, see J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Midnight Movies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).
2. Meir Schnitzer, *The Israeli Cinema: All the Facts, All the Plots, All the Directors, and the Reviews as Well* (Tel Aviv: 1994, Hebrew), p.109.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
6. Many books, of course, have dealt with the history of American cinema and its link to history, politics, society and mythology. Since the present article deals primarily with the role of popular perceptions in determining the Israeli cinematic narrative, I recommend exploring critical anthologies about American films produced during the period parallel to the emergence of Israeli cinema (by Pauline Kael, John Simon, Stanley Kaufman, Dwight McDonald and others), and two books especially: Andrew Sarris, *Politics and Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); and Robin Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

7. Schnitzer, pp. 15-27.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 346.
11. Nurit Gertz, *A Story From the Movies, Israeli Fiction and its Adaptations on Screen* (Tel Aviv: 1993, Hebrew).
12. Schnitzer, p. 22.
13. "Intimate Story," Nadav Levitan, 1981; "The Hero's Wife," Peter Frye, 1963; "Belfer," Yigal Bursztyn, 1978; "Stalin's Children," Nadav Levitan, 1987; "The Boy Takes the Girl," Michal Bat-Adam, 1982.
14. Schnitzer, p. 21.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Nahman Ingbar, "New Films," *Akhar Ha'ir*, March 21, 2002, p. 4.
17. Schnitzer, p. 15.

Zionist Discourse in the Jewish Press in Post-Soviet Russia

Yuval Shahal

The Jewish-Russian press was a focus of contention for decades. Its very name is telling: is it Jewish or Russian (with an element of Israeli-ness, whether concealed or apparent), almost as if the Jewish press were being asked: are you with us or against us?

All this has changed greatly since Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness), and since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, the Jewish press is neither controlled by the regime nor is it opposed to the regime. It is not homogenous, either in structure or in content. It deals openly with everything Jewish in Russia and with all that relates to Judaism, including Zionism.

Yet, how much Zionism has there been in Russia in recent years? How much could there be? And what is the nature of the Zionism of the recent Jewish-Russian model when even the current Israeli model has changed? The answer, from a quantitative point of view, is surprising in its minimalism. Research on the Jewish press which I conducted at the end of the 1990s reveals that only 5%-6% of the contents of these publications were related to Zionism, i.e., support of the notion of the State of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people. By contrast, 16%-17% of the contents of this press dealt with building up Jewish communities in Russia – nearly the opposite of Zionism. Based on the premise that the media exert influence over their consumers, present-day Russian Zionism is not likely to be enhanced in this manner.

The newspaper as a component of building up a community

Several facts, premises and factors affecting the subject under discussion may serve as an introduction:

1. Despite the wave of emigration/immigration that brought some one million Jews, or persons eligible for immigrant status, to the State of Israel over the last decade and more; and despite the emigration of hundreds of thousands of other Jews to the West, hundreds of thousands of Jews

remained in Russia and in other areas of the former Soviet Union, especially in the European parts (Tolts, 1999). Some stayed where they were, while others migrated elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, from the Muslim countries of Central Asia to the European region, and from towns and peripheral cities to bigger cities.

2. A large portion of those remaining in Russia did so of their own free will, although they had other options. Essentially, these options remain available to them even now.
3. Many of the Jews who stayed "came out of the closet" and began identifying as Jews. There are many reasons for this: revealing one's Jewishness was no longer dangerous (everyone knew in any case); and there were potential advantages to participating in local activities arranged by Israeli and/or Jewish organizations such as the Joint and the Communications Division of the Jewish Agency. The Jews constitute a large community, distinguishable from the local population by ethnic differences, a higher than average educational level (Brym & Rivkina, 1994; Krupnik, 1995), a complex collective historical consciousness, the existence of hostility toward Jews as reflected in public opinion and the general press (Rivkina, 1996; Friedgut, 1994), and a sense of otherness.
4. A gradual and cautious process of building up Jewish communities has been going on in Russia for a number of years (Chlenov, 1997; Gittelman, 1997). It is still too early to refer to the Jews as a "community" in the Western European or North American sense, but the gap between a "Jewish-Russian community," a "Jewish-American community," or a French or British one is closing. This process includes a definition, or sometimes a redefinition, of identities; social reorganization; and the formation of different patterns of representation, taxation, responsibilities, etc. According to Avineri (1997), the continued development of the Jewish communities in Russia is closely linked to the continuation of the democratization process in Russian society generally. If

Gorbachev's well-known statement in this regard is to be accepted – "*protseess pashol*" – i.e., the process has begun, is one-way and is unstoppable, then the building up and institutionalization of the Jewish communities in Russia are ongoing as well and are likely to continue.

5. The unique media of a society/minority/community constitute a technical and a content-related organizational tool for defining boundaries and identities as well as for establishing an agenda, at least partially. In essence, the existence of recognized media testifies to a high level of institutionalization of a society or community (Riggins, 1992). Empowerment, too, is involved, both individually and communally, i.e., the attainment of the capability and expertise by which to take part in the shaping of identity (Nossek, 2001). Communal media – newspapers, in this case – serve as a convenient platform and a tool that can be useful in this kind of process.
6. The Jewish press in the Russian language, therefore, may be viewed as an important means for the development or renewal of Jewish identity, and for helping determine the Jewish agenda locally, regionally or nationally (Lokshin, 1992; Karasik, 1994, 1995). Notably, the vast geographic expanse under discussion, even after the collapse of the Soviet empire, must be born in mind in this discussion.

What is a Jewish newspaper?

Pincus (1999) divides the Jewish press during the Gorbachev era, especially during the second half of the period (1988-91), into three categories: the official press, the "Samizdat" (underground) press, and the legal or quasi-legal press. While the official press maintained the long anti-Israel and anti-Zionist tradition, its relevance vanished at a certain point in the face of open borders regarding both information and people. Moreover, the fact that Israel was no longer perceived as a political enemy, and Zionism no longer as a cancerous disease in the body of Soviet society, contributed to the de facto disappearance of this press. Even the Samizdat – the underground publishing venture that endangered yet enriched generations of Jews in the Soviet Union – became redundant when restraints on the press were loosened and prohibitions revoked. As a result, from the early 1990s, and certainly by the mid-'90s, the third type of press – the legal (no longer quasi-legal) press, became dominant. Dozens of Jewish newspapers, publications, newsletters and periodicals flooded

every locality where Jews lived, from cities with a dense and educated population, as Moscow and St. Petersburg (Russia), Kiev (Ukraine) and Minsk (Belorus), to small areas (by post-Soviet Russian or Jewish-Russian standards) – e.g., Perm, Herson, Nikolayev or Derbent. Many of these publications (not all of them can be considered newspapers, in light of limitations of frequency, accessibility, and technological and graphic proficiency) were published by Zionist or pro-Zionist bodies. Conceivably, this is the milieu of the Zionist discourse. However, this discourse is not likely to be homogenous. Even before the breakup of the Soviet Union, Altschuler (1980, 1987) observed great differences between Jewish societies, groupings and populations in Russia. Presumably, the unraveling of the Soviet system and the redefinition of entire ethnic communities speeded up this trend. A new media creation emerged: the alternative, but legal, press. While the Western perception finds nothing invalid in this development (Atton, 2002), from a Soviet viewpoint it is an oxymoron, i.e., despite roots that run deep in the history of the Jews of Russia and of the Russian press, the phenomenon of a relatively free Jewish press in Russia is quite new. Its oldest components – independent Jewish papers not under the patronage of the Communist Party, which appeared just prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union – have existed for only a decade or less.

The questions raised in this context concern the identity of this press and of its intended audience. What are its contents? Is it a fighting, almost separatist press that defines the boundaries of the Jewish community as cut off from the broader society? A beckoning press intended quite naturally for Jewish or partially Jewish readers, but also for those not included in this category at all? Moreover, does it have a defined backbone, a banner or two that are clearly distinguishable? If so, are they Judaism and Zionism? Israeli-ness and Russian-ness? A first and a second homeland?

A numerical evaluation of Jewish newspapers in post-Soviet Russia points to the existence of 40-45 (Frenkel et al., 2001). If newsletters, organs, publicity publications and youth and student supplements are counted, the figure is 59 in 1996-97, and 87 in 1998-99 (*ibid.*, p. 93). Not all of them meet the basic criteria of a newspaper as defined by Otto Groth in 1928: regular and frequent appearance, mechanical duplication, free access by consumers, diversified content, and continuity over time (Bittner, 1983).

Of particular interest is the question of how many

newspapers (I have adopted this term despite the reservations stated above) are published in each city/community, and whether this reveals the level of institutionalization or density of the local community. Presumably, larger communities or population centers will have more newspapers, and vice-versa. In practice, however, the situation varies. Moscow, which has over 200,000 Jews, has three significant Jewish papers. One is identified with the Russian Jewish Congress, the second with the Jewish Agency, and the third – the youngest, which began appearing in 2002, is published by Habad. St. Petersburg, with nearly 100,000 Jews, has one Jewish newspaper. In much smaller cities, such as Samara (Kuibyshev), there are two Jewish papers, as in Rostov-on-Don. The ultimate case is Yekaterinburg, a city with some 10,000 Jews, where four Jewish papers appear regularly (one of them published by the Jewish Agency).

A headline inspired by Lenin

The present study is based on the examination of approximately ten Jewish newspapers of differing sizes, circulations, formats, geographical areas and potential readerships. All appeared in the large cities of post-Soviet Russia. Not surprisingly, these are also the venues of the four or five largest Jewish communities in the country. The newspapers were studied for a three-year period (1996-98), with articles and other texts that touched on Zionism analyzed by content, i.e., topic and format (report, request, analysis, apology, invitation, etc.).

Fairness requires noting a point that might distort the picture: some of the Jewish newspapers in Russia are in essence part of the Israeli press, i.e., they are published and financed by the Jewish Agency, and the editor, or the individual with the authority to decide on texts to be published, contents and parameters, is usually the local Israeli *shaliach* (emissary). Not surprisingly, these papers show a relative preference for Zionist content. This, too, is part of the discourse relating to the Jewish press in Russia, although some of this discourse is imported.

What is the starting point? Each of the newspapers examined draws a different line. *Yevreiskaya Gazetta* (Jewish Gazette), the most important Jewish paper in Russia, devoted its September 1997 issue to the centennial of Zionism, and a bold headline to this effect appears on its main pages. The paper makes a somewhat zoological observation: "For 2,000 years, the Jewish people existed in a state of hibernation – just

like reptiles and insects in winter." It continues: "It was Zionism that decided to raise up the nation and turn it into flesh and blood." In the same issue, the Israeli ambassador in Moscow at the time, Prof. Aliza Shenhar, is interviewed and is quoted as saying: "Zionism is what brings the Jews back to a normal existence as a nation." The interviewer was Matthew Geiser, a senior member of the editorial staff and one of the most prominent Jewish journalists in Russia, revealing the importance attributed by a non-Zionist Jewish newspaper to the topic, or at least to the centennial. Yet, the paper does not miss the opportunity that presented itself, or that it created, to observe: "Zionism is not everything...the Jewish revival in today's Russia also brings joy." Additionally: "Today there is no longer government-sponsored anti-Semitism in Russia." Dealing with Zionism gave the paper leverage in the opposite direction, regarding the Jews who chose, choose and, one must assume, will continue to choose to stay in Russia. In the event, the paper did not address the topic of Zionism again throughout the entire period under review, i.e., until the end of 1998. Thus, only a major event, or, more accurately, the commemoration of a great event – the First Zionist Congress – prompted the newspaper management, which is identified with the leadership of Russian Jewry, to deal with this topic.

The Moscovian alternative, *Vestnik* (Herald), published by the Jewish Agency, is a paper with many Israeli components both absolutely and in relation to the *Gazetta*, and deals, expectedly, with more Zionist-related texts. Eschewing ceremonious or political polemics, the editors of the paper, some of whom are Israeli, carefully avoid any direct attack on their readers in Russia, who remain there on a temporary or a permanent basis. The paper's general line is "Why Israel?" and not "Why not Russia?" This, however, does not constitute the backbone of the newspaper. The paper prints many short human interest anecdotes, e.g., a driver in Israel who took a reporter from Jerusalem to Ashdod is described thus: "I am not a Zionist," he said, although no-one asked," but the text conveys to its readers that Zionism is really OK. "The essence of Zionism is the establishment of a small state so that every Jew who finds himself persecuted can pack his suitcase and come here.... There are problems here...bureaucracy, absorption, etc., but this is the country – small, and yours" (*Vestnik*, July-August 1998). The paper also publishes reports on seminars for Jewish scientists in Russia and the establishment of contact between them and firms in Israel with

the goal of future immigration and easing the difficult stage of finding a job in Israel. Here the emissaries from Israel are given faces and names (*Vestnik*, April 1998). Another issue (February 1998) contains an interview article featuring people who come from "here" – Russia or the Russian Diaspora, succeeded "there" – in Israel, and felt impelled to return to Russia to promote the Zionist idea. Lena Feldman is such a person. She immigrated to Israel in 1992 with the Jewish Agency "Na'aleh" program, served in the Israeli army as an officer, and now works for the Jewish Agency in Minsk, Belarus. There is a hidden, or perhaps not so hidden message in this: If she can, why can't you?

Although *Vestnik* tries to confine itself to pragmatic Zionism (following the historic "another dunam, another goat" approach, or, in the more current context, "another jobs fair, another immigrant"), it too waxed effusive when it came to the Zionist centennial. The chairman of the Jewish Agency at the time, Avraham Bnrg, declared in an article: "Today, one hundred years after the First Zionist Congress, we celebrate impressive achievements by the movement...the ingathering of most of the Jewish people in a strong and independent country.... Hebrew is not only the spoken language, but also a cultural bridge between past and future Judaism.... Modern Zionism must combine the dream with the ability to act" (*Vestnik*, July 1997). However, this declarative, even promotional style was atypical.

Vestnik is skillful in drawing from a diverse associative pool. The headline used by its editors for a report on a debate about assimilation vs. the attractiveness of immigration to Israel (January 1998) was: "The Disaster We Face and How to Fight It." This headline, whether suited or not to the debate that followed, was not composed by *Vestnik* but was taken from a famous article by Lenin which dealt with completely different issues. Similarly, the November 1997 issue reached far back in dealing with a current event: "The Zionist is Prepared to Storm the Winter Palace." This did not appear in a Petersburg paper of 1905 or 1917, but was a device to report about a Jewish Agency youth camp.

Israel as an option

Stern (Star), published in Yekaterinburg, also went back in time, reporting, in its November 1997 issue: "Over 1,500 guests from all over the world participated in the jubilee event marking the hundredth anniversary of the First Zionist Congress that

was held in Basle." Another Yekaterinburg paper, *Menora*, traced the link between the study of Hebrew in an "ulpan" in that city (February 1996), and living in Israel, which comes later. A factual report on the ulpan was followed by a report on life in Israel. The material was taken from an article published in an unidentified Russian newspaper in Israel.

Yahad (Together), a paper published by the Jewish Agency in Rostov on the Don, was the most Zionistic or Israeli in content of the entire sample. Quantitatively, approximately a third of its contents fall into this category (as opposed to 5%-6% in the Jewish press generally), while qualitatively, the variety of subjects dealt with fill the definition of Zionist. The April 1997 edition of *Yahad* reported on a series of milestones in the history of Zionism: "The First Zionist Congress Has Ended," "The Inauguration of the Hebrew Gymnasia," "Tel Aviv – The First Hebrew City," "The Inauguration of the Bezalel School of Art," "A Local Branch of the World Zionist Organization was Established in Eretz Yisrael," "International Recognition for the Right of the Jewish People to Establish a State in Eretz Yisrael," "American Jewry to Aid the Jews of Eretz Yisrael," "Theodor Herzl Dies," "The Holocaust of the Jewish People: 6 Million Victims," as well as a list of the main periods of immigration to Eretz Yisrael since 1882.

Perhaps the Jewish newspaper that is the most interesting and significant with regard to the Zionist discourse is *Ami* (My People), published in St. Petersburg, where over 100,000 Jews and persons eligible for immigration to Israel reside. *Ami* is the only Jewish paper in the entire northwestern Russia, giving it a monopoly in its field. It is not a Jewish Agency publication, although it is partially financed by the Jewish Agency; its Zionist obligation is not extensive. In as much as emigration to Israel or elsewhere is known to weaken the local community, *Ami*, a community paper, is not tasked to promote such a step. Nevertheless, Zionist texts, or texts dealing with Zionism, appear in it. While this material is not extensive – some 4% – it is still double the amount in the Moskovian *Yevreiskaya Gazetta*.

Ami, in February 1998, advertised a volunteer program on behalf of Israel called "Israel." The headline chosen was: "Israel – How Manifold Are Your Sounds," a paraphrase, or distortion, of a segment from Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Some might consider this to be in poor taste. Others might view it as a typically Soviet move. In the same vein, poetry supplements of the regime's newspapers (i.e., all the papers of the time)

published a poem in the 1940s by the budding Russian poet N. Nizlovina, titled "His Holy Blood." The poem, which is about a duel in which the admired poet loses his life, implies that he is a loyal Communist who died in the line of duty while protecting the proletariat, although the truth is known and is completely different. Similarly, even if Onegin or his creator, Pushkin, are not among the fathers of Zionism, they are likened to conscripts in it.

The paper is consistent in its policy of presenting Israel as an option. It offers a great deal of varied information which is not about Israel directly but about Zionist activity in St. Petersburg, e.g.: "Israel Fair Today – Work and Education" will open in the town's music hall" (May 1998); a conversation with a Jewish Agency youth and student emissary in the city, Dima Zitzer, himself a native of St. Petersburg, who immigrated to Israel: "I do not hide my Zionist inclinations.... It is interesting where I live...come!" (October 1997); remarks by education emissary Tzipi Figor: "I [only] advise people considering immigrating to Israel...I don't persuade or dissuade them. I only explain." By contrast, the paper is much more determined and much less neutral regarding other topics related to Judaism and Jews. Zionism is not its primary editorial line.

The contents of the Jewish press in Russia were found to fall into two broad categories: the first ranged from matters relating to those of Jews in Russia, to those of Jews from Russia who have immigrated to Israel; the second ranged from Jewish history to the Jewish present and future. The first category indicated a massive preponderance of local content. The second indicated a slightly smaller preponderance of material dealing with the present and the future rather than the past. In terms of local content, every area of Jewish society was covered: current events (slipping into the "wars of the Jews," whether surreptitiously or openly), commentary, culture, information (partly commercial) on local Jewish matters and businesses, and information related to the Jewish calendar (including educating the public that was distanced from this area; dealing with anti-Semitism; and commemoration). The Israeli aspect is generally presented through personal stories by Jews from Russia who went to Israel (two of the large papers have correspondents in Israel). Occasionally, wider aspects of life in Israel are also reported: politics (mostly internal, with an emphasis on Natan Sharansky and the Yisrael be-Aliya Party, and more recently Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu Party), society and economics. However, there is no ongoing or

systematic coverage of life in Israel.

In dealing with the past, the survey reveals an ongoing effort to show that Jews in Russia are not a new phenomenon or a one-time event, and that their past is dignified and even heroic by every criterion – cultural, academic, scientific, military, etc. Important dates, prominent names and Jewish events – some of which were tragic – are also marked. These include the elimination of Jewish intellectuals by Stalin during the 1930s and '40s (Mandelstam, Babel, Michoels and others), and the Holocaust of Soviet Jewry during the Nazi invasion in "Operation Barbarosa" in the summer of 1941. In the context of the present, a variety of aspects of Jewish-Russian society are dealt with: conflicts of identity, anti-Semitism, the role of Jews in contemporary Russia, open debates (certainly when compared to the norm in the Soviet non-Jewish press for years) on various issues, including the attitude toward Israel and to immigration to it, and especially, a sense of the institutionalized creation of strong, organized Jewish centers with a palpable presence in the rapidly changing post-Soviet Russian milieu. Put another way, the texts convey a sense of partnership in the effort to build a community or communities. Inevitably, the Zionist element in Jewish-Russian society and in its press was minimized in any discussion of building up a Jewish community in Russia.

The Russian Media Law

Conceivably, the breakup of the Soviet Union has made the national Jewish liberation movement – Zionism – less relevant and immediate precisely when all the obstacles in its way, or at least most of them, have been removed. Every Russian-speaking citizen, whether his name is Rabinovitch or Ivanov, is free to leave his homeland (real, artificial or forced) and head for a place where a better future might await him. The key is no longer the consent of the country which Rabinovitch or Ivanov want to leave, but a willingness on the part of the country of destination to absorb them. This means that only those whose destination is Israel have some kind of interest in Zionism, whether out of desire or necessity, which makes the entire topic considerably less heroic or relevant.

Moreover, the Russian Media Law (1992) divested Russian Zionism of yet another of its characteristics or symbols. The law, passed after the breakup of the Soviet Union, allowed the appearance of almost every kind of content in the press. With its passage, a unique and impressive phenomenon disappeared

– the Samizdat underground press. To be historically accurate, the change actually occurred two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the Soviet Media Law was passed, doing away with censorship. The Russian law, however, went even further, stipulating that a newspaper may be shut down either by its owner or by a court of law, but not by the state or any agent acting on its behalf, such as a censor, a party (which was not relevant at that stage) or a comptroller/punitive body of any kind. The main significance of the 1992 law, though, was not merely in the addition or deletion of clauses, but in the rethinking of the old Soviet values and laws by the new Russia and the adoption of a law that limits the state in its treatment of the press.

Does this mean that the discussion of the Zionist discourse in the Jewish press in Russia is shifting from the purview of analysts of content and current events, possibly aided by political or cultural measurements, to the purview of the historians? Does Russian Zionism, as its discourse and debate, require – absurdly – a constrictive and punitive milieu in order to flourish or, sadly, to be relevant? Or, perhaps, an outside, quasi-intellectual stimulus, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn's anti-Semitic hook (at least in part, and according to some of the critics) "Two Hundred Years Together," which recently appeared in Moscow, can revive the challenge of the term "Russian Zionism" or the "Zionism of Russians." Or has this already been accomplished by Vladimir Putin (the new president with the old habits of behavior) in his abuse of "his" Jewish media tycoons?

A thriving ethnic press

Quantitatively, as has been pointed out, only five or six articles or texts out of every hundred published in the Jewish press in Russia deal specifically with Zionism, i.e., with the State of Israel as the only national home of the Jewish people. Broader areas such as discussions about present-day Israeli society, especially with an emphasis on immigration, emigration, and the personal, economic, social and political organization of immigrants, constitute 8%-9% of the texts in the Jewish press in Russia. If the 6%-7% of texts dealing with politics in Israel are added, the total Israel-oriented material takes up approximately a sixth of all that is offered to the reader of the Jewish press in Russia. Thus, Israel is not at the top of the agenda of this press, and the Zionist component in it is even smaller. A somewhat absurd question may thus be asked: Must

the vantage point of Zionism, or the prism through which this vantage point is observed, be connected specifically to the Israeli side of the equation? In many respects, Zionism is a Jewish liberation movement and Israel is the result, so that a logical or perceptual reverse may well be in place here, i.e., analyzing the Zionist discourse in the Jewish press of Russia not with the Israeli tools of the here and now, nor with the tools of the end result, but with the tools of the process, or in conjunction with the needs, abilities, modes of self-expression and methods of exposure, including the extant content in the world of the readers of this press.

The Jewish press is not the only one blossoming in post-Soviet Russia. Other ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and in Russia that followed it created their own media networks, particularly in the print medium. The process began at the end of the 1980s immediately after glasnost was declared, and gained momentum with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Viewed somewhat cynically, the first venue in which the question of national allegiance (which troubled the Soviet Union during its entire existence and which gives no rest to the Russian leaders who inherited it either, as exemplified by Daghestan, Chechnya, the Cossacks of the Don River and others) was solved, was the press. Today there are "media autonomies" and even media polyphony, all coexisting (more or less) in peace.

Permitted but redundant

To conclude, the picture that has been drawn here with the help of a few comments about the Jewish press in Russia and the Zionist discourse in it facilitates the evaluation that Jewish society in the unstable Soviet system is going through an accelerated process of stabilization. The Jewish press plays a role in this process.

It would appear that most of those who chose to immigrate to Israel or to other destinations that were perceived as no less attractive have already done so. At the same time, a population shift of Jews is in process from the majority of the republics of the former Soviet Union, and especially from those in Central Asia, to the major Jewish population centers. The Jewish populations in the peripheral areas in Russia itself are also constricting. A central destination for these migrants is Moscow, which is gradually acquiring the status of a city-state. The city's Jewish population is not small, and perhaps has even grown. Moreover, the level of institutionalization of its

Jewish community or communities, as in other Russian cities, is rising constantly.

Freedom of self-expression, which, arguably, is not an elevated value in post-Soviet Russian society, nevertheless exists in practice. Evidence of this can be found, inter alia, in the existence of the press surveyed here, its contents, and the fact that there is no attempt by the authorities or the government, federal or local, to disturb its orderly process. Such interference would not necessarily involve censorship: an administrative injunction would be sufficient to prevent the publishers of this press from purchasing paper, or an injunction could close the printing presses. None of these things are happening, which means that the government has learned to live in peace with this press or, sadly, turns a blind eye in order to allow it to exist and even flourish.

A reasonable scenario, therefore, is that despite the discourse and activities of veteran anti-Semites such as Vladimir Jirinovski, or (relatively) new anti-Semites such as Albert Makashov; the ongoing harassment by Putin's government of Jewish media moguls Boris Brijovski and Vladimir Gosinski; and the publication of books like Solzhenitsyn's "Two Hundred Years Together," published about a year ago, which elegantly slanders Russian Jews (Kol & Shahal, 2002), Jewish society in Russia will remain dominant and significant, and not only on its own behalf. Perhaps that is not good news for those interested in seeing every last Jew leave Russia, but it is certainly good news for the Jewish press in Russia. For the foreseeable future, at least, there will be writers, something to write about, and, most importantly, a large audience of readers. How much will be written and read there about Zionism? Only a little, one may assume, but that is a question whose answers are more likely to be found outside rather than within the Jewish press in Russia.

In conclusion, yet another absurdity has been home grown in Russia, the land of unlimited possibilities and impossible limitations. At last one can write about and read about Zionism openly, presumably a tried and tested recipe for disseminating ideas and gaining believers. In effect, however, this license banished the aura that had enfolded Zionism for decades while it was banned. If it is permitted, it is, apparently, redundant.

Translated from Hebrew by June Spitzer

Sources

1. M. Altschuler, *The Jewish Collective Entity in the Soviet Union Today* (Jerusalem: 1980, Hebrew).
2. M. Altschuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).
3. C. Atton, *Alternative Media* (London: Sage, 2002).
4. S. Avineri, "Jews of the Former Soviet Union Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *International Perspective*, 37 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1997), pp. 5-9.
5. D.W. Benn, *From Glasnost to Freedom of Speech* (London: Pinter, 1992).
6. J.R. Bittner, *Mass Communication: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983).
7. R.J. Brym and R. Rivkina, *The Jews of Moscow, Kiev and Minsk* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).
8. M. Chlenov, "Jewish Community and Identity in the Former Soviet Union," *International Perspective*, 37 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1997), pp. 11-16.
9. A. Frenkel, E. Valk and A. Zeltser, "Jewish Periodicals in the Former Soviet Union, 1998-1999," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, 1 (44) (2001), 92-146.
10. T. H. Friedgut, *Antisemitism and its Opponents: Reflections in the Russian Press From Perestroika Until the Present* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 1994).
11. Z. Gittelman, "Choosing Jewish Identities, Constructing Jewish Communities," *International Perspective*, 37 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1997), pp. 17-24.
12. A. Kol and Y. Shahal, "Once Again Russianism Encounters Judaism and the Encounter is Bad for Both," *Ha'aretz*, February 13, 2002, Books Supplement, cover page (Hebrew).
13. I. Krupnik, "Soviet Culture and Ethnic Policies Towards Jews: A Legacy Reassessed," Y. Ro'i (ed.), *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Ilford: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 67-86.
14. V. Karasik, *Jewish Periodicals in Russia 1960-1994* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1994).
15. V. Karasik, *Jewish Periodicals in the Former U.S.S.R. 1988-1994* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1995).
16. A. Lokshin, "Jewish Press in the USSR During the Perestroika 1987-1991," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, 1 (17)(1992), 5-26.
17. H. Nosseck, "The 'Voice of the People' – For All the People? Community TV in Israel," *Kesher*, 30 (2001), 10e-12e.
18. B. Pincus, *Storm of an Era: The Jews of the Soviet Union in the Gorbachev Period 1985-1991* (Beersheba: 1999, Hebrew).
19. S.H. Riggins (ed.), *Ethnic Minority Media* (London: Sage, 1992).
20. R. Rivkina, *Jews in Post-Soviet Russia: Who Are They?* (Moscow: Oors, 1996, Russian).
21. A. Solzhenitsyn, *200 Years Together* (Moscow: Russky Put., 2001, Russian).
22. M. Tolts, "Jews in the Russian Federation: A Decade of Demographic Decline," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, 3 (40) (1999), 5-36.

“Der Jude” (1899-1902): Profile of a Zionist Periodical Published in Yiddish

David Pur

Der Jude (“The Jew”),¹ a Zionist Yiddish biweekly (later a weekly), was launched in Cracow (then Galicia) on January 1, 1899, and was edited in Odessa by Yehoshua Hune Rawnitzki. From Odessa, it was sent to Warsaw, and from there to the press in Cracow, to be distributed in Russia. Such a convoluted journalistic process appears odd today but it was the rule then. In essence, it became the guideline for the future Yiddish press in Eastern Europe.

The launching of the journal resulted from a sense of urgent need for an organ that would sensitize the Jewish public to new ideals. The extant Hebrew newspapers – *Hamelitz* and *Hatsfirah* – did not meet the needs of the masses, who did not understand Hebrew. The Hebrew press was read essentially by the non-assimilated intelligentsia. A newspaper in Yiddish, the language of the Jewish masses, was needed to convey the spirit of the Zionist ideas to them.

However, the Czarist government adamantly refused to issue a permit for the publication of a Yiddish newspaper in Russia. With this, a socialist press was beginning to emerge alongside a periodical Zionist press.

Der Jude was a Zionist initiative. In 1898, the Zionist Organization in Russia approached the Hebrew publishing house Ahi’asaf with a proposal to publish a Zionist weekly in Yiddish. Ahi’asaf at that time published various Hebrew works and periodicals in a Zionist vein. The Zionist Organization realized, however, that in order to disseminate its ideas and its propaganda, Yiddish must be used. The start of the year 1899, therefore, marked a new period. Ultimately, the paper managed to attract even implacable opponents of Yiddish.

Ahi’asaf had been founded in Warsaw in 1892 as a non-profit publishing house by the Benei Moshe movement led by Eliezer Kaplan, with Ahad Ha’am serving as mentor. The publishing house functioned until 1923, bringing out Hebrew books, children’s literature, calendars, the Hebrew periodicals *Hashilo’ah* and *Hado’ar*, and other materials.

Eliezer Kaplan traveled to St. Petersburg in 1899 to try to

persuade the Russian censor to permit the publication of *Der Jude* in Russia, as the journal was intended mainly for the Jewish population there. However, he was refused decisively by the Russian minister of interior, who declared that Yiddish newspapers were absolutely forbidden, as the Jews were “*treife*” and their language even more “*treife*.”² A decision was made, therefore, to publish the paper in Galicia, then under Austrian rule, and from there distribute it in Russia.

The appearance of *Der Jude* made an impact on the Jewish masses, who until then were accustomed to reading only anecdotal stories, novels and news items in Yiddish. Here was a Yiddish periodical on the level of the Hebrew *Hamelitz* and *Hatsfirah*, which an ordinary person could read and understand. “It may be said that in comparison to the weeklies that appeared during the next twenty years, *Der Jude* was the most forthright, the purest and the most interesting,” wrote the researcher of the Yiddish press D. Druck.³

Der Jude gained popularity and esteem not only within the broad public but from the Jewish intelligentsia as well. Its relative material success enabled the publication of a cheaper edition for the masses, as well as a monthly issued by the same staff titled *Die Yudische Familieh* (“The Jewish Family”). It became the most important Yiddish periodical of its time in Europe, not only in literary and journalistic terms but also in its advocacy of Zionism and Hebrew. It demonstrated that the Jew on the threshold of the 20th century could be worldly and had a newspaper that reflected a world view. In this it initiated a new period in the history of Yiddish literature and journalism.⁴

Yiddishists, nevertheless, leveled criticism at the Hebrew writers who were published in *Der Jude*: “The effect of their descent from their heights to the people confuses them and makes them incoherent. [Reuben] Brainin wants all the Jews to know Hebrew...and [I. E.] Lubetzki sits in Vienna dreaming of Jerusalem, of alters, of the Temple and of sacrifices.”⁵ With this, they acknowledged that *Der Jude* was the only Zionist

periodical to address the Jews in Yiddish and could spread "light and life" to the people. They expressed the hope that *Der Jude* would faithfully serve all the true Jewish needs, while taking an interest in all that concerns humankind as well.

Notably, "Yiddish literature filled a significant portion of the paper, with such contributing authors as Y. L. Peretz, Shalom Aleichem, Abraham Reisen, [Hersh David] Nomborg and Sholem Asch."⁶

"Der Jude"'s Ideology and Aims

From the start, *Der Jude* had lofty ambitions. Printed in Cracow, it was, nevertheless, called by the literati "The Warsaw Weekly," while its target audience was in Czarist Russia and elsewhere. A list of countries in which subscriptions were available, which appeared on the front page to the right of the masthead, included Austria, Hungary, Germany, Eretz Yisrael, the United States and England. To the left, the notice "For Russia Only" appeared. The price of a single copy was 20 kopeks. These details illuminate the basic approach of the paper and the audience to which it was geared. Clearly, its *raison d'être* was not purely commercial.

The Zionist *Der Jude* expressed modern, unconventional notions. It sometimes went against the stream, and in varied directions. This tendency, apparently, was an important element in its success. Had it confined itself to the parameters of a specific movement or a party, it would have been a negligible and limited organ. It dared preach Zionism and articulate Zionist ideas in Yiddish to an audience that opposed them, aired problems of a world scope, and discussed topics taken from world literature, introducing them to a readership that was confined to the small, remote *shtetl*. It presented a broad human panorama and an opening to the world to Jews who were generally preoccupied with their own involuted concerns. Inevitably, it evoked opposition and reservations, but it also stimulated interest and curiosity. In the social realm the paper attacked the prevailing bourgeois, civic-Zionist environment. As early as the second issue, an editorial titled "The Jewish Treasures" accused the wealthy stratum of ignoring the troubles of their Jewish brethren, failing to address the problems of Jewish society and showing indifference to its misery. The treasures referred to in the title, the editorial pointed out, were a product of education: parents must educate their children so that they can attain these treasures.

M.L. Lilienblum, in an article titled "What Do Ordinary

Jews Read?" wrote:

Give the ordinary people good books, explain what and who the Jewish people are, show them their place among other nations, revive their national pride, and give them courage and strength to aspire to bear the eternal historic name "Israel" and to reach the place and the status which they held in better days, while at the same time not lag behind enlightened culture, the contribution of the best of humanity.

The ideology and aims of *Der Jude* were outlined in its very first issue in a detailed editorial⁷ in which the editor, Rawnitzki, pointed to the oddity that Jewish authors who spoke exaltedly of their love for Israel and the Eternal People failed to address them in their language, the only language that all of them knew and understood, and which, fortunately, no other nation or people claimed. The entire Jewish people is literate, he wrote. The Jews are the "People of the Book." Not only are they literate, they love to read. They therefore read books, but, Lord, what hooks! The true authors must draw closer to the people, and instead of fairy tales offer them works that are qualitative and constructive.

Jewish authors, Rawnitzki continued, must be given material that they can discuss, not about the people, but with them, in their own language. This was the goal of *Der Jude*. And not merely discuss but enlighten the readers so that they can see for themselves and understand who they are, what happened in the past, and what their hope is for the future. "The revival of the people, together with the revival of the ancient land and our ancient language – these are our treasured ideals and hopes!"

The editor presented the main sections of the paper thus:

1. Editorial articles: articles about issues in the Jewish world written by qualified authors.
2. Fiction: novels and short stories about Jewish life in the present and the past – fine literature of intrinsic value that could improve the taste of the ordinary reader.
3. Academic articles.
4. Monographs and historical research.
5. Criticism: literary criticism and brief bibliographic reviews.

Additional elements were articles, reports and important news items about Jewish life in various countries, and political surveys relevant to Jewish life.

"Zionist," But Not "a Slave to Zionists"

An interesting question that aroused wide curiosity then and

later was why so vociferous an opponent to Yiddish as Ahad Ha'am helped establish a serious Yiddish newspaper and made peace with it.

Apparently, Ahad Ha'am, too, realized that the only way to reach the masses was through a language they understood – Yiddish. He agreed, therefore, to the publishing of the second organ of the Zionist movement in Yiddish. Notably, the first organ, *Die Welt*, was published in German, the language viewed then as universal. Significantly, a booklet about Herzl published in Hebrew after the first Zionist Congress in 1897 sold 3,000 copies, while a Yiddish booklet on the same subject, written by Shalom Aleichem, sold 27,000 copies.⁸

Ahad Ha'am viewed Yiddish as a purely practical means to an end.⁹ He agreed to publish his ideas in Yiddish in *Der Jude* only on condition that the organ be published by the Zionist movement. As a member of the board of Ahi'asaf, he was consulted by its managing director, Eliezer Kaplan, regarding the prospect of publishing such a newspaper. Although doubtful about the need or the usefulness of such a venture, Ahad Ha'am agreed on condition that the editor appointed be a person of good literary taste and integrity. "He must be a person who understands my thinking and who has similar taste as mine in most of the important matters."¹⁰

In a letter to writer Eleazar Schulmann, he wrote: "The paper will be 'Zionist,' but not 'a slave to the Zionists.' It will be similar in character to *Hashilo'ah*."¹¹ Ultimately, he demanded that Rawnitzki, an associate of Hayim Nahman Bialik, be appointed editor.

Rawnitzki, dispatching the first issue of *Der Jude* to Ahad Ha'am, waited impatiently for his reaction, which arrived promptly and in detail. Ahad Ha'am wrote to Rawnitzki on February 16, 1899: "Congratulations to you! I received *Der Jude* and read it. What can I say? Evidently, I lack any sensitivity to the beauty of the jargon [Yiddish].... I fear for the fate of the *Jude*."¹²

The Debate with A-D-M (Ahad Ha'am)

Interestingly, despite his opposition to Yiddish, Ahad Ha'am became the "*mashgiach*" (supervisor) of the first Yiddish literary journal, although clearly he was dissatisfied with it. After six issues of *Der Jude* had been published, he wrote an open letter to the editor that began: "Dear Friend!" and went on to ask: "Who is *Der Jude* [the Jew]?"¹³ The piece, signed "A-D-M,"¹⁴ was the only article Ahad Ha'am ever published in Yid-

dish – notably, in excellent Yiddish.¹⁵ In it he wrote:

I do not wish to give advice, but I want to ask a question: Who is *Der Jude*? The Jew whom your writers call a "people" (*das folk*) – who is he? A Hebrew newspaper for a Jew is self-explanatory. It addresses every Jew identified as a Jew and demands that he read and understand, even if he understands seventy other languages. This is not the case for a newspaper written in a jargon.

Ahad Ha'am continues:

The language is the man...so it is not surprising that each person loves his mother tongue so deeply, and each people is prepared to make difficult sacrifices to acquire, enrich and develop the language it holds dear. Only we, the Jews of the jargon, perhaps the only people in the world so accursed, do not know the sweet taste of a beloved and precious mother tongue.... The most beautiful memories of our national life stem from the time when this [present] mishmash was not our everyday language. The highest esteem of our national literature, of which we are so proud, was earned by it in another language, a language other than this [Yiddish], and which has no connection with it....

I know, my dear friend, that even though you are the editor of a newspaper written in a jargon, you are not one of those naive supporters of the jargon who believe that this beloved jargon can and must become our national language.... I only wanted to point out that *Der Jude* of the newspaper written in jargon is not *Der Jude* of Jewish nationalism. Literature in the jargon can never be the national aspiration....

Who then is *Der Jude* of the jargon literature?

The simplest audience of all, which does not understand anything else but jargon, which has no other means to learn about the world and about Judaism?

Yes! That is what I really thought, that is *Der Jude* whom you defined for your newspaper: the simplest of the Jewish masses, who from their childhood never learned more than *davenen* (praying) and how to read the jargon.

But, as I have become aware from your first issues, I apparently erred. Your authors evidently do not intend to help the simple Jewish public, to explain what it does not understand or know. They are masters at preaching morality, at explaining why the public does not feel this way or that. Why it holds no high ideals, why it does not concern itself with the public weal, does not educate the next generation as they believe – in short, nothing more than preaching. And all this fine preaching is aimed at the simple Jew, uneducated, the Jew of the jargon. Do the writers believe that their modernistic preaching suits him better and will have a greater influence on him than the sermons of the preacher in the synagogue?

...Our simple masses, pathetic and persecuted – don't forget that we are speaking about the simplest and least educated Jew of the jargon! What does he know of the world, of life, of Judaism, when he lacks the elementary concepts of culture generally and Jewish culture in particular?

What must be done is to begin with the ABCs: to tell him in soothing language what man is and what a Jew is. To give him a true concept about life, about history, and especially about Jewish life and Jewish history.

If it is not he whom you are targeting, then tell me, dear, friend, who is the Jew whom you think this newspaper in jargon will benefit?

A Sharp and Bitter Polemic

Ahad Ha'am's article evoked many responses. Notably, only after the Czernowitz Yiddish Language Conference (1908), which declared Yiddish a national language, did he view such a decision as a betrayal and embarked on a bitter struggle against Yiddish.

The first reaction to his article was that of the editor, Rawnitzki, who argued that one way of responding to the question of who is a Jew is by asking another question: "Who is not a Jew?" Indisputably, he wrote, Hebrew newspapers, for the time being, were read only by the "elite," a small sector of the public, while Yiddish was understood by nearly every Jew. If good material were published in this language, Jews – even "enlightened" or "aristocratic" Jews who knew another seventy languages – would read it willingly and happily. In what way is Yiddish worse than other languages, Rawnitzki inquired, especially for the "Jews of the jargon" who were educated in it from childhood?

Continuing his response in a lengthy editorial in May 1899 (No. 9), titled "Who is a Jew?" and signed "R," he wrote that no individual or party had a monopoly over Judaism, and all Jews, whatever their opinions, were equal. Even so, he asked, who is a Jew? His answer was: every Jew has an equal share in the name Jew, and in this context there can be no differentiation on the basis of status or party.

The dispute continued in the issues that followed. Issue number 12 ran an article by one of the paper's editors, Mordecai Spector, titled "*Der Jude* is a Jew," which was a direct and blunt response to A-D-M's piece. Setting out *Der Jude's* ideology clearly and unequivocally, Spector wrote that the paper loves the mother tongue in which it speaks to its brothers. A-D-M demands that Jewish writers spit in the well from which

they drink, he charged. However, even if a Jew knows Hebrew and seventy other languages, if his first words were *mameh* and *tateh*, he will love and esteem that language, the language of his infancy. A-D-M demands that *Der Jude* begin with the ABCs. That is a great mistake. The "enlightened" stratum forgets that the Jewish people are not a backward people, and that the simple Jew, too, is capable of understanding lofty concepts. He dislikes the ABCs. Jews want to be addressed as grownups, not as children.

A-D-M is mistaken, too, in thinking that supporters of the jargon believe that it will remain the Jewish national language, Spector wrote. The Jewish jargon is as necessary to the people as food, as the eyes in one's head.... The Jews love both languages, Hebrew and Yiddish, because both are important to them as Jews. *Der Jude* loves them both.

Spector responded to each of Ahad Ha'am's criticisms in full, expressing confidence in and hope for the future of *Der Jude* and its ideological orientation.

The editorial board of the paper also requested a response from the editor of the German-language Zionist *Die Welt*, Dr. Siegmund Werner. He replied that a newspaper in the jargon was a great contribution to nurturing education and culture and could be highly beneficial.

Liquidation in Exchange for 2,000 Rubles

With issue number 21, *Der Jude* became a weekly under the editorship of Dr. Joseph Lurie. In his first editorial, Lurie noted that there was no longer any need to pose the question of whether *Der Jude* was necessary, and for whom. Its content and its orientation were clear. Readers viewed it as a newspaper that serves the public. It shed light on the condition of the people and the issues that vex them. It also illuminated their glorious past. *Der Jude*, he said, reinforces the people's hope for better days.

In the dark and shadowed times, a bright star in the distant sky shined on us and its light prevented us from despairing. The star illuminated our hope for a free and happy national life in our holy land.... This hope descended from heaven and ignited many hearts with a burning love of Zion. It awakened a strong Zionist movement and founded congresses, a bank, and thousands of organized associations all over the world wherever a Jewish heart beat."¹⁶

Lurie went on to explain the paper's Zionist task and orientation: to serve not a particular party but the Zionist idea. The paper, under his editorship, would be independent and free. It

would devote a great deal of space to editorials. The articles would be written in simple, clear language aimed at the masses who understood and read only Yiddish. Moreover, they would deal not only with the Jewish world but with events in the wider world as well.

A section on "Cities and Villages," to appear in every issue, would contain descriptions of Jewish life in the provincial cities. The fiction section, Lurie promised, would cultivate good taste and a love of beauty and goodness. Reviews would cover not only Yiddish literature but also important books written in other languages. "We hope that *Der Jude*, which speaks to the people in their own language, will be a living, authentic popular newspaper that will bring light and life," Lurie concluded the presentation of the paper under his editorship.

Indeed, he edited the paper along the lines he had laid out. It became an important platform for the dissemination of political Zionism, then at the height of its development. The language of the paper became livelier, less sentimental and more assertive. *Der Jude* understood how to adapt to the times. The turn of the 20th century was a fruitful period for the Zionist idea, which spread far and wide among the Jewish people. The period witnessed the largest Zionist Congresses ever, under the leadership of Theodor Herzl. Large numbers of Jews anticipated salvation and solace. Judaism reawakened to expectations of a new future.

Der Jude addressed all the questions and problems that arose at the time regarding the solutions proposed for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael. This was especially pronounced during the fourth Zionist Congress, which took place in London in July 1900, with *Der Jude* publishing extensive propaganda for the Zionist idea as related to Eretz Yisrael in numerous editorials. Another topic that was covered extensively was the issue of Jewish education.

Issue no. 26 of July 1902 carried a large announcement by the editorial board reflecting concern by the editors that they had not fulfilled their duty to the Jewish reader sufficiently and had not been concerned enough about the readership and to the level of the paper. The editors sought to justify the price of the paper, while announcing that a cheaper edition would be published. Five months later, in December 1902, Ahi'asaf announced that ownership of *Der Jude* and *Die Yiddishe Familieh* was to pass to the editor, Joseph Lurie. This move ushered in a period of difficulty for the paper, with Lurie hav-

ing trouble implementing his plans.

At the same time, the first Yiddish daily, *Der Fraynd* ("The Friend"), appeared in St. Petersburg. It soon bought out *Der Jude* for the sum of 2,000 rubles, acquiring the services of Lurie as well. This marked the end of the paper after some four years of publication.

In parting from his readership and his staff in the final issue (No. 52), Lurie revealed the nature of the relationship between the editorial board and the readership:

We wanted to continue working toward improving the paper, which had acquired good friends everywhere. We did not have the good fortune to realize this aspiration. Regrettably, this is the last issue.... Our newspaper was aimed at readers in Russia and could have existed so long as there was no newspaper in Russia in the jargon. Now, with the establishment of a daily in St. Petersburg, an impossible situation has been created for us. Therefore, we have passed on all our rights to *Der Jude* and *Die Yiddishe Familieh* to the board of the St. Petersburg *Der Fraynd*.

The Editors – Rawnitzki and Lurie

Der Jude had the good fortune to have been led by editors with a strong literary background, talent and discrimination. Yehoshua Hune Rawnitzki edited the first 21 issues, published biweekly, while the succeeding issues, published weekly, were edited by Dr. Joseph Lurie.

Rawnitzki (1859-1944), born in Odessa, began his career as a teacher and an editorial writer first in Hebrew and later in Yiddish. He was active in the Hibbat Zion movement. As Bialik's first sponsor, he published the poet's first poem, "To the Bird" (Hebrew), in *Pardess*, which he edited. The two maintained a close relationship in joint literary projects for decades. Immigrating to Eretz Yisrael in 1921, Rawnitzki, together with Bialik and Shmaryahu Levin, established the Dvir publishing house, with which he was involved for the rest of his life as editor and co-author of a series of books with Bialik.

As editor of *Der Jude*, Rawnitzki published Bialik's first two Yiddish poems. The correspondence between the two regarding the publishing of the poems is revealing. Bialik wrote, inter alia: "A decent writer who can write in Hebrew but writes in the jargon robs us and himself as well. In the end, the jargon will disappear from under God's heavens..."¹⁷ Still, both Bialik and Rawnitzki, who were committed Zionists and great advocates of Hebrew, joined the Yiddish *Der Jude* and made their contribution to it.

The correspondence between Rawnitzki and author Reuben Brainin is also instructive, revealing Brainin's intensely negative attitude toward Yiddish, on the one hand, and his willingness to be associated with *Der Jude* as a Hebrew writer on the other. This ambivalence was reflected throughout the correspondence, e.g., in remarks by Brainin in a letter: "I hate the jargon with a deadly hate, but we are forced to use it as a means to reach the people and are obligated to educate the masses and not let our opponents influence them."¹⁸

The reason for the change in editors was typical of the times. The publisher insisted that Rawnitzki relocate to Warsaw in order to be closer to Cracow so as to spare the need for two editorial staffs – one in Odessa, where Rawnitzki lived, and the other in Warsaw, where the paper was published. Rawnitzki would not agree to leave Odessa, and the publisher was compelled to replace him.

Dr. Joseph Lurie (1871-1937), born in Pumpenai, Lithuania, joined the Hibbat Zion movement in his youth. As a student at the University of Berlin, he was a founder of the student Zionist association there and a member of the Benei Moshe and the Hovevei Zion branches there. He completed his studies in 1896 with a doctorate in philosophy.

His career centered on the field of education. Editing *Der Jude* from November 15, 1899, until its closure, he enhanced the level of the paper, attracting the finest Hebrew and Yiddish writers to it. From 1903 he was literary editor of *Der Fraynd*, and in 1905 he edited *Dos Yidishe Folk* in Vilna. Immigrating to Eretz Yisrael in 1907, he taught at the Gymnasia Herzliya in Tel Aviv and later held senior posts in the education system of the *yishuv*, including director of the Education Department of the National Council (Va'ad Leumi).

Lurie was enamored with Hebrew, yet his attitude to Yiddish was positive. In an article titled "Yiddish and Its National Value,"¹⁹ he wrote:

The attitude of some of the socialists and of the Zionists that the jargon serves as a temporary means or as a specific purpose must end. [Yiddish] must not be a transitional language to another language for the Jews of Russia, for that other language cannot be Hebrew but rather the state language, which harbors assimilation.... The jargon and its literature, therefore, must not serve only to educate the ignorant masses but also [to contribute] to the national life of the people, with all its problems and issues.

Lurie invited Sholem Aleichem, Spector, Reisen, Nomborg, Anokhi and Asch to contribute to his weekly, and their work

attained wide popularity on his far-reaching platform. He also published pieces by Lilienblum, Elhanan Leib Lewinsky and Shmaryahu Levin, who dealt with the entrenchment of Zionist education.

The editor and contributors were assisted by an unofficial editorial board consisting of Y. L. Peretz, who managed the feuilleton section; Mordecai Spector, who edited the "Jewish Cities and Villages" section; and "A Thinker" (Y. A. Eliashiv), editor of the book review section.

The Sections

Belles Lettres

Literary work was given a significant amount of space in *Der Jude*. Authors sympathetic to Zionism were published as well as those who were not Zionists. The paper published not only the classicists, two of whom – Mendele Mocher Seforim and Y. L. Peretz – were formerly Hebrew authors, and Shalom Aleichem, who was a delegate to the Zionist Congress, but also Abraham Reisen, S. An-ski and even David Pinski and Abraham Walt (Liessin), who were registered Bundists then. Abraham Reisen's poem "A Winter Song" was to be adopted as the anthem of the Bund,²⁰ the large Jewish anti-Zionist party. Authors and poets overseas also appeared in *Der Jude*, such as Yehoash, Morris Rosenfeld and Y. Y. Schwartz in the U.S.

Der Jude initiated a new era in the history of Yiddish literature and the press. The works first published in it constituted the foundations of modern Yiddish literature. The literary development of writers such as Reisen, Nomborg, "A Thinker" and Sholem Asch began on the pages of *Der Jude*. Other writers and poets whose work appeared in the paper included Shimon Frug, Menahem Mendel Horowitz, Shimon Bronfeld and Jacob Dineson. The paper published not only recognized writers and poets but also unknowns.

Of the Hebrew writers published in Yiddish by *Der Jude*, Bialik was the most outstanding figure. Five of his poems appeared in it over the years.

Der Jude published the prose of a total of 54 writers and the poems of 38 poets during its four-year existence.

Jewish Cities and Villages

This section was distinctive to *Der Jude*. Introducing it in the first issue that he edited, Lurie wrote: "This section, which will appear in every issue from now on, will provide descriptions of Jewish life in the provincial towns." The editor of the

section, Mordecai Spector, was a well known and experienced writer.

The section constituted a survey of Jewish life in Russia. It reflected the living, sometimes wretched reality of Jewish life in the many villages throughout the Czarist state, viewed through the prism of social Zionist criticism. It was based on letters to the editor or anecdotes generally written in a feuilleton style by Mordecai Spector under the pseudonym "Truth." Several examples are:

Here in Vilna there are "book peddlers" who sell books in the jargon. The peddler goes from house to house with a bundle of several dozen books. For a large book he gets 2 kopeks, for a small book 1 kopek. When you finish reading them, he returns and collects them and gives you new books. He usually comes around on Sabbath eve or before holidays. He distributes his entire library on these days.²¹

From Litchikov we read: In one of your articles you wrote that light should be brought to the dark villages. Indeed, a decision was made [here] to finance this. Two sides immediately formed up: one side argued that the streets should be lit up, and the other side that minds should be illuminated – that a school should be built or the Talmud Torah should be enlarged. The first side won out. Sidewalks were built and 36 street lamps were installed, and now our streets are lit up, but the minds and hearts are as dark as before.

A Jewish woman in Zhitomir borrowed 50 kopeks from her neighbor. When the neighbor demanded repayment of the debt from the woman's husband, he replied: I give you my wife as repayment. The neighbor agreed, and both of them laughingly shook hands in the presence of two witnesses. The joke, however, developed into a serious matter. The neighbor claimed that by law the borrower was now his wife, and he demanded a sum of money in exchange for forfeiting the purchase. The woman meanwhile moved into her parents' home... The woman is the daughter of a rabbinical family.

In Odessa there is terrible poverty in the Jewish lower class. This is especially evident in the side streets. The well-off Jews who live on the fine streets are oblivious to the tribulations of the unfortunate families with their hungry, half-naked children. They see nothing and do not want to know anything. Thousands of unfortunate Jews are to be found in the side streets of Odessa and many die of hunger and cold, and all this happens in a city in which wealthy Jews, wealthy merchants, live.²³

Korchev, a small village near Otvosk, makes its living from the deceased whom vacationers leave behind in the summer. In Otvosk it costs at least 500 rubles to bury a dead person because the vacationers are millionaires...but this summer there was a poor livelihood to be made....²⁴

And so on and so forth. A gallery of images, a sea of events, anecdotes and occurrences that made up Jewish life then.

Literary Criticism ("Critique")

Newly published books were reviewed by "A Thinker" (Y. A. Eliashiv) in this section. Critical articles on various literary topics also appeared. A survey of the books reviewed reveals the breadth of erudition of the reviewer and his desire to interest the readership in the range of books published in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian as well as in a variety of topics relating to literature and culture. Examples from various issues of *Der Jude* are:

- A review of a monograph by S. Nissenbaum titled "The History of the Jewish Community of Lublin."
- A critical analysis by "A Thinker" of Jacob Dineson's story "Yossele."
- A brief review upon the appearance of the third notebook in Volume 2 of "The Talmud in Russian Translation" by N. Ferperkovitch.
- A critique of the literary album by academician M. L. Maimon.
- A list of easily comprehensible booklets in the jargon about various academic topics. Four dealt with the natural sciences and two with issues of religion and morality.
- A survey of the "Agricultural Settlers and Gardeners Library" in simple, easily understood Yiddish providing explanations about agriculture.
- A critical article about academic research on the jargon (Yiddish) by Fabins Schach and about Jacob Gerstein's book "The Yiddish-Germanic Language" in four parts.

Two articles of many that appeared in this section were "Something About Literature" by Reuben Brainin, in which he analyzed the genre of the literary sketch, and an article by "A Thinker" (Eliashiv) on the poet Morris Rosenfeld.

Feuilleton Section

Although called the Feuilleton (i.e., a sketch in a light style) Section, this department, headed by the renowned author Y. L. Peretz, was a literary section in every respect. An examina-

tion of the feuilletons published in *Der Jude* reveals that most were distinctly literary pieces written with humor and irony. Examples are a series by Jacob Dineson titled "The Birth Pangs of the Messiah" (1900, Nos. 42, 43, 44), and an ironic piece by Mordecai Spector (1900, No. 27), "A War on Behalf the Jews," in the form of a kind of fantasy about the harsh persecution of Jews in Rumania which prompts the consuls of the enlightened countries of Europe to threaten Rumania that if the persecution is not halted, Europe will declare war against it.

Art

Der Jude regularly printed reproductions of works of art by Jewish artists in Russia. The pictures generally portrayed expulsions, persecution and destruction by fire, often showing Jews in nightclothes fleeing with Torah scrolls and babies in their arms, although other themes also appeared. The very fact that the paper incorporated art into its content was exceptional for Jewish newspapers of the day.

Der Jude also published articles on science, biographies, historical and political surveys and a column titled "Roaming the Wide World."

Light and Warmth to the Lonely

In summary, *Der Jude* was the first and only Yiddish Zionist periodical of its time. It attracted a long list of authors, Zionist and non-Zionist, encouraged fine literature written in Yiddish, and published the best of this output – a policy quite unanticipated for a Zionist organ. It was open to the entire Jewish world and to the wider world outside, bringing its readers knowledge from all parts of the globe. This, too, was a highly innovative approach. At the time, there was no extant source for ongoing and regular information about Jewish life in remote places.

Der Jude, whose essential aim was to disseminate the Zionist idea, became a supra-party organ devoted to all topics that concerned the Jewish people. An editorial titled "What Must Zionists Do?" observed that "the tragedy is that a Zionist is forbidden to deal with anything that smacks of the *galut* [exile; the Diaspora].... The *heders* [religious schools] are ghetto-like, the jargon is the language of the exile.... But, good Lord, this approach is narrow and short-sighted.... We should bring light and warmth to the narrow, suffocating dark corners and to the lonely hearts."

In a similar vein, the paper did not function as a Zionist organ in conveying information about Eretz Yisrael. It reported about the difficult situation there with accuracy, as an anti-Zionist publication surely would have done. A pseudonymous "Zionist Old-timer"²⁵ reported in "A Letter from Eretz Yisrael" that the situation was terrible. People everywhere believed that "all was lost!" Ruin in the workers' realm and ruin in the villages. People were in such despair that they had stopped protesting or submitting requests and plans. The paper did not beautify the harsh reality. Even though it was Zionist, it remained faithful to the truth. It made an important contribution in various areas of Jewish creativity and culture. It brought news to its readership of about Yiddish theater, marking its importance and status in Jewish national life, and reviewed books, other literary works and cultural events. The newspaper, and Joseph Lurie, its second editor, earned high esteem by non-Zionists because of the friendly attitude to Yiddish and Yiddish writers.²⁶

Der Jude was a qualitative periodical that set a high standard in its field. It was also distinctive in the ideological and political landscape of the turn of the 20th century in Eastern Europe. It aspired to educate the Jewish masses in Russia toward Zionism, Jewish cultural values, openness and discerning taste.

It would be no mistake to conclude that these lofty aspirations, as has been shown, were well and truly realized.

Translated from Hebrew by Judy Krausz

Notes

1. Other periodicals also used the name *Der Yud*, e.g., a daily ultra-Orthodox organ published in Warsaw before World War I.
2. D. Druck, *Tsu der geshichte fun der Yudisher presse (in Rusland un Poilen)* (Warsaw, 1929), p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. Samuel Rozansky, *Der Jude, pinkas far der forschung fun der Yiddisher literatur un presse*, Vol. 3 (New York, 1975), p. 320.
5. *Dos tsvantsigste yahrhundert, a zamelbuch fun literatur, weisenschaft un critic, redagirt dorch Avraham Reisen*, Vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1929), p. 122.
6. *Algemeineh Entsiklapedieh*, 3 (New York, 1942), pp. 226-27.
7. *Der Jude*, 1, January 1899.
8. Letter from Ahad Ha'am to E. Schulmann in Kiev, 27 July 1898. *Igrot Ahad Ha'am*.
9. Zalman Zilberzweig, *Ahad Ha'am on zein batziung tzu Yiddish* (Los Angeles, 1956), pp. 7-8.

10. Letter to E. Kaplan, Odessa, 24 July 1898.
11. Letter to E. Schulmann, Odessa, 29 January 1898.
12. Zilberzweig, see Note 9 above, p. 13.
13. No. 7, April 1899.
14. Ahad Ha'am revealed that he was A-D-M in one of his letters.
15. Ahad Ha'am spoke Yiddish in his youth but, like all the *maskilim* then, he wrote in Hebrew or in Russian.
16. Free translation from the Yiddish by the author.
17. Sosnowiec, 2 Elul 5659. Rawnitzki Archive, National Library, Jerusalem.
18. Reuben Brainin to Y. H. Rawnitzki, Berlin, 11 June 1899, Rawnitzki Archive.
19. First published in *Der Fraynd* and reprinted in *Yuvileieh Oisgabeh*, 1913, No. 49, p.6.
20. *Der Jude*, 3 January 1901, No. 1. The poem appeared in materials published illegally by the Bund.
21. *Der Jude*, 1900, No. 1, 1900.
22. *Ibid.*, No. 2.
23. *Ibid.*, No. 3.
24. *Ibid.*, No. 39.
25. *Der Jude*, October 1901, No. 42.
26. Shmuel Rozansky, op. cit., p. 333.

Tribulations of a World Zionist Newspaper: The Rise and Fall of the “Jüdische Welt-Rundschau”

Thomas von der Osten-Sacken

Zionist newspapers played a variety of roles in Germany after the National Socialists came to power in 1933.¹ Unlike the press of assimilated Jews, they focused increasingly on Eretz Yisrael as the most important immigration destination and as a psychologically stabilizing center for a new national Jewry. Depictions of “the new Jewish man and woman” in Eretz Yisrael, embodied in the ideal image of the *halutz*, the Zionist pioneer; and descriptions of Jewish life in Eretz Israel were consistently, though not explicitly, a form of resistance against the anti-Semitic image of the parasitic Jew disseminated by the Nazis.

The less the Zionist press was allowed to report from Germany, due to increasingly harsh restrictions imposed by the German government during the 1930s, the more it concentrated on Eretz Yisrael and, later, on other countries as immigration destinations. While press reports in Europe displayed increasingly nationalist tendencies, the Jewish nationalist, i.e., Zionist, press became increasingly cosmopolitan.² Immigration to Eretz Yisrael, and to other countries, spawned a new readership whose contact with the old homeland, Germany, and the new one, Eretz Yisrael, was often sustained only through the Jewish newspapers it received.

New Zionist publications in both the Diaspora and Eretz Yisrael developed a close bond with the Diaspora. One of the most interesting of these newspapers, which carried on the tradition of the best-known German Zionist paper, *Jüdische Rundschau*, was the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*, whose formation and role are the subject of this article.

The first issue of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* (*JWR*), a Zionist weekly produced in Jerusalem and printed in Paris, whence it was distributed in over 60 countries, was published on March 7, 1939. The idea for, and the marketing of the *JWR* constituted a direct response by German Zionist immigrants in Eretz Yisrael to the ban imposed in 1938 on the Jewish press in the German Reich. The *JWR* was linked both in terms of its

staff and contents to its precursor, the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau*, which had been published in Berlin. The new paper was published by former workers of the Association of German Zionists and former editors of the *Jüdische Rundschau*.

The *JWR*, which became the mouthpiece of German Zionism for almost a year when Zionists were denied freedom of expression in Germany, is one of the most interesting German Jewish publications of the 1930s. It was a continuation of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, but published in Eretz Yisrael. In essence, it was a German Zionist publication produced by exiles. Yet, as it was conceived in Eretz Yisrael and written for readers there, it was also a local Eretz Yisrael newspaper. Thus it was a makeshift solution with an “in-between” base, no longer in Germany, not yet in Eretz Yisrael, intended for an exiled readership.³ This position, developed by the *JWR* under pressing circumstances, was a response to the particular situation of Jews from Germany and the regions annexed by the Nazis. One of the first issues aptly described the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* as “a unique enterprise, unprecedented in modern history.”⁴

A publication in the spirit of “Wear the yellow patch proudly”

After the Kristallnacht pogrom in 1938, the Jews of Germany, including the Zionists, lost Germany for good as a base for their activities. The publication of the *JWR* was a one-time attempt to turn a newspaper into a new center for German Jewish-Zionist life, with a purely ideological rather than geographical link:

The *JWR* seeks to resume the illustrious tradition shaped by German Jewish newspapers such as the *Welt* and the *Jüdische Rundschau*.... Since the Jewish center in Germany had disappeared, and no Jewish newspaper can be sent from there to serve as a link between German-speaking Jews, this task is being assumed by the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*. What place

in the world can serve as the base for such a task? We do not wish to represent a Jewry consisting of "emigrants," but of Jews who know where their center lies. The *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* is published in Eretz Yisrael. This in itself constitutes a symbol.... Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora are two facts of contemporary Jewish life. The *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* will cover both Eretz Yisrael and the countries of the Diaspora.... It wants to offer Jews a sense of unity and help them cope with their concerns.... The *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* speaks foremost to Jews, but addresses the non-Jewish world as well.

It seeks to forge a worldwide image of the new, contemporary Jew, tortured and persecuted yet steeled by work and struggle and conscious of his or her human dignity even at the height of a fateful storm. It supports Eretz Yisrael, it requests the assistance of civilized nations in integrating the Jews of the world and in healing the wounds inflicted by the violence of recent years.⁵

The field of action of Zionist politics in the fall of 1938 seemed to have shrunk more than ever. By allowing the Evian refugee conference to fail, the Western countries had bluntly demonstrated their refusal to assist Jews from the German Reich.⁶ Moreover, during the same year, almost all potential countries of immigration closed their borders to Jewish refugees. In the spring of 1939 Great Britain de facto stopped Jewish immigration to Palestine, announcing that it did not wish to see "a motley swarm of Jews he granted entry to any other part of the Empire."⁷

Until the fall of 1938, many Jews still hoped that they would be allowed to lead a ghetto life under National-Socialist rule or would at least be granted an extension of up to ten years within which they could emigrate from the Reich. Kristallnacht, the state-organized pogrom on November 9, 1938, had brutally confirmed the beginning of a new chapter in Nazi policy toward Jews, which would lead to deportation and annihilation.

Powerless and desperate, the German Zionists who had managed to reach Eretz Yisrael followed the developments in Germany, unable to halt or even affect them. Confrontation with the Nazi government seemed pointless, and the possibility of negotiation to assist those Jews who had remained in Germany was nonexistent. For over six years these emigrants had been forced to watch, more or less helplessly, the Nazi march from one victory to the next.

A newspaper such as the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*, published in Eretz Yisrael, was meant to cover much more than

the catastrophe of German Jews. In keeping with the tradition of the Zionist press, the paper intended to function in the spirit of a series of articles by Robert Weltsch titled "Wear the yellow patch proudly"⁸ and write about a new Jewish consciousness in a period when Jews were being reduced, to an unprecedented extent, "to a worthless political object."⁹

It was this role, and not merely its name, that linked the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* to the *Jüdische Rundschau* and the tradition of Zionist journalism. Until the ban imposed on it in 1938, this Zionist newspaper, the largest and most important in Germany, was much more than a typical newspaper: it represented Zionism to the outside world; it conducted major debates on the role and mission of Zionist politics on its pages; and it helped organize the emigration from Germany. Its regular appearance and its bold lead articles steadied and strengthened the Jewish readership amid hardship and humiliation, proving that Zionists "still had the ability to deliberate and act even when their political impotence had become obvious to all, including themselves."¹⁰

The ban imposed by the Nazis on the German Jewish press, which, along with other repressive measures, ushered in the end of Jewish life in Germany, deliberately aimed at depriving Jews of their last venues of self-expression and at reducing them totally to no more than "tolerated objects."¹¹ Even earlier, the feeling was that "when speaking of the life of Jews in Germany...one should not forget that this term [Jewish life] has a special ring. It cannot really be called life, but at best the existence of a group of people non-tolerated and deprived of every possible right, whose daily life is becoming harder every minute."¹² After the Austrian Anschluss in 1938, the very sight of Austrian Jews forced to clean the street pavement with tooth brushes had completely shattered all hope for a Zionist solution to the "Jewish Question," first and foremost the organized emigration to Palestine. Following the pogrom of November 1938, the few Zionist activists left in Germany could do little more than make every effort, under enormous pressure, to assist as many Jews as possible in their flight from greater Germany – the so-called "*Fluchtauswanderung*." It had become clear that Jewish life and politics would be possible only outside the German Reich, that "a Jewish era had come to an end through terrible suffering, in the blazing light of sacred assets set on fire."¹³

The first editorial of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* read: In these hours our first thoughts go to our brothers in Ger-

many. All of us who emigrated from Germany (including Austria and the Sudetenland) have experienced part of the Jewish tragedy.... Quite some time has gone by since the Jews' civil and legal rights were first violated, causing consternation and deep emotional shock among hundreds of thousands for whom this blow came as a total surprise.... According to a recent statement by a spokesman for the ruling party, the current policy intends to turn Jews into a heap of dispossessed, totally disenfranchised, hence desperate and antisocial human beings, and the state that has itself forcibly reduced them to this level will thus feel entitled to take violent measures against them. As far as this depends on German Jews, they will not be reduced to this level.¹⁴

Early history of the JWR

As stressed in the first issue, the publishers of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* adopted the various aims previously pursued by the *Jüdische Rundschau* and other Zionist newspapers published in Germany. Making up for the loss of these papers, and at the same time reinforcing the role of Zionism and Eretz Yisrael among all German Jews were viewed as a necessity. Moreover, besides the support it lent Jews in Germany, the Zionist press after 1933 increasingly provided the "new Diaspora" of German Jewish emigrees with information, analysis and propaganda that would tie them ideologically to the building of Eretz Yisrael. The ban on Jewish newspapers thus affected not only Jewish readers who had remained in Germany but also Jewish emigrants and refugees abroad.

In Eretz Yisrael, where over 60,000 German-speaking Jews had immigrated during the 1930s, the Jewish press from Germany, and especially the *Jüdische Rundschau*, played a crucial role, as all attempts to publish a local Zionist daily or weekly in German had been thwarted by the opposition of the Jewish community – the *yishuv* – which often resorted to stringent means to keep Hebrew the sole language of written communication.

Several Zionists from Germany, among them Erich Gottgetreu,¹⁵ had attempted in 1935 to found a German Zionist magazine, titled *Orient Express*, as a supplement to the newspaper *L'Orient* published in Beirut. However, it was forced to close after a few months due to vehement opposition by all the Zionist bodies and by the Hebrew press in Eretz Yisrael. Even the German Jewish organizations in Eretz Yisrael distanced themselves officially from the project.¹⁶ Non-Hebrew-speaking German Jews, probably the majority of new

German immigrants at that time, had to rely, therefore, on foreign publications or, at best, on duplicated newspapers such as *Blumenthals Neueste Nachrichten* (Blumenthal's Latest News) or *Presse Echo* (Press Echo), which since 1937 offered mostly news translated from the Hebrew or English press. The only exception was the *Mitteilungsblatt der Hitachduth Olej Germania* (Information Bulletin of the Association of German Immigrants; *MB*).

The Association of German Immigrants (HOG), founded in 1932 by Zionists who had been active in the Association of German Zionists (*Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*) to represent the interests of German Jews in Eretz Yisrael, evolved into an important institution in the *yishuv*. The HOG, renamed, following Austria's Anschluss, *Hitachdut Olej Germania ve-Austria* (the Association of German and Austrian Immigrants – HOGO), published a biweekly, *Mitteilungsblatt* (Information Bulletin), for subscribers, which featured, besides advice on integration and daily life in Eretz Yisrael, background articles and analyses on the situation there and in the Diaspora. However, despite its increasingly professional level, the *Mitteilungsblatt* could not replace a daily or weekly newspaper, though with a circulation of 3,500¹⁷ it offered new German immigrants an important link to political life in Palestine.

Early planning

Despite the setbacks, the German Zionists in Eretz Yisrael never abandoned the idea of publishing their own newspaper. With an eye to the lucrative local advertising market,¹⁸ the editorial staff of the *Jüdische Rundschau* in 1937 planned to print its own Palestine supplement in Jerusalem, independently of the German edition. Apparently, the German government itself had indicated in mid-1938 that it would agree to such a project.¹⁹ In a memorandum to Robert Weltsch, the long-time editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, one of the Zionist activists, Bruno Kirschner,²⁰ proposed another idea in August 1938, namely, to develop a German daily in Eretz Yisrael to be published as a supplement to *Ha'arets*.²¹ Since Weltsch, who had been a symbol of Zionist journalism in the 1930s, had immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in September 1938, such a project seemed feasible on a personal level as well.

Moreover, following the ban on the German Jewish press, no German Zionist newspapers remained in Europe, except in Switzerland. An important link was thus severed between vari-

ous German Jewish populations who had increasingly joined forces around the idea of building a national homeland in Eretz Yisrael. The psychological significance of Eretz Yisrael, noted in 1939 by the former manager of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, Erich Liepmann, was true not only for those Jews who had remained in Germany but for the majority of all the emigrants, whether Zionist or non-Zionist:

It is the thought of building Eretz Israel that brings some light and hope into the Jews' bleak life in Germany. Since there is almost no Jewish family in Germany today without children or relatives in Palestine, since the developments in Germany have vindicated the Zionist idea, the thought of building Eretz Israel has become in the last seven years the common property of German Jews, and is now the silent hope and great faith of German Jewry.²²

As attested by countless letters from readers from abroad to the editors of the *JR*, the Zionist press thereby forged cross-border links between German Jews. Understandably, after the ban on the *Jüdische Rundschau*, German-speaking Jews both in Eretz Yisrael and other countries increasingly called for a Zionist newspaper in German.²³

With the ban on the *Jüdische Rundschau*, the German Zionists in Eretz Yisrael lost, inter alia, an important political organ that had supported their activities in the country. Immigrants from Germany had been trying to gain political clout in the *yishuv* since the mid-1930s. In 1938, the Achdut Ha'am (People's Unity) Party was formed in Eretz Yisrael under the leadership of Gustav Krojanker, a noted Zionist, with the goal of representing liberal-leaning immigrants from Central Europe. The party's goal was to establish a third, moderate, liberal force between the East European socialist majority and the revisionist minority in the *yishuv*. Achdut Ha'am's platform dovetailed more or less with that fostered thus far by German Zionism: reconciliation with the Arabs and the British; no radicalization of the *yishuv*; and advocacy of "a third way" opposed to both a socialist economy and the revisionists under Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who were labeled fascists by the German Jewish liberals and who had been the main opponents of "German Zionism" back in Germany.

Furthermore, as the majority of politically active immigrants from Germany, but unlike the establishment *yishuv*, Achdut Ha'am considered "the critical situation of German Jewry the foremost challenge for Zionism in particular and world Jewry in general."²⁴ Its announced goal, which was adopted by the *JWR*, was to assist the Jewish Diaspora from

its base in Eretz Yisrael. Controversies over internal Eretz Yisrael issues, therefore, receded into the background, in contrast to the platforms of other local parties. Georg Landauer, a long-time activist in the Association of German Zionists, noted that the *yishuv*, although shocked by the events in Germany, "concentrates heavily on local problems, on the political fate of Palestine, Jewish immigration, security issues. The press reacts harshly, yet no substantial public stir has been noted."²⁵

The goals set for the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* were designed, inter alia, to break the fixation of Eretz Yisrael politics on internal issues and thrust the fate of the Jews persecuted by the Nazis onto the Zionist agenda. Nearly all former members of the Association of German Zionists who had immigrated to Palestine participated in the planning and founding of the *Freundeskreis der Jüdischen Welt-Rundschau* (Friends of *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*), which kept close contact with various Zionist bodies. These establishment bodies agreed to the project, provided that the new paper would target only the overseas public and would not develop into a German newspaper in Eretz Yisrael.²⁶ Nevertheless, HOGOA sought to combine the new paper with the extant information bulletins in order to reach the German-speaking public in Eretz Yisrael as well, to impart "knowledge about Jewish life and Zionist thought to the tens of thousands driven unprepared to the country by the current tragic circumstances and thus help them strike firm roots there."²⁷

A decision was made, therefore, to change the format of the information bulletins, and to publish the new paper "in two editions with different titles – a local edition entitled *Mitteilungsblatt der HOG* (Information Bulletin of the HOG)...and a foreign edition as *JWR*."²⁸

In the event, close personal ties existed between HOGOA, Achdut Ha'am and the *Freundeskreis*, as their members were former activists of the Association of German Zionists who had been seeking for years to link their activity in Germany with Eretz Yisrael. They anticipated that a newspaper of their own would further reinforce their position and allow them to carry on their activities from Eretz Yisrael: "With *Jüdische Rundschau* subscribers in 64 countries outside Germany, the newspaper should attempt to become the central organ of German-speaking Jewry throughout the world.... It is of utmost importance to establish a fait accompli in order to keep the worldwide German Jewish newspaper...in Zionist hands."²⁹

Aware that time was running short, since Hitler's politics

would soon plunge Europe, and with it European Jews, into a catastrophe, the *Freundeskreis* set to work at full speed in order to cope with the vast array of financial and organizational problems raised by the project. At the same time, the staff feared that a rival Zionist body might forestall publication of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* with a newspaper of its own tailored to German Jews in the new Diaspora. A paper with revisionist leanings, *Medina Ivrit*, published in Prague, had already announced that it would be “the sole Jewish German language paper in the world” from then on.³⁰

International Zionist newspaper or emigrant bulletin?

The original plan to retain the name *Jüdische Rundschau* for the newspaper to be published in Eretz Yisrael was discarded in the winter of 1938, “as it could jeopardize the lives of colleagues who were still in Germany.”³¹ Since the *Jüdische Rundschau* was officially banned, a breach of the ban, it was feared, would prompt the Nazis to use harsh collective punishment against Jews still living in Germany.³² Moreover, the staff decided to make the independent status of the *JWR* clear to the German authorities.

The *JWR*'s somewhat reserved position toward the German authorities and the National-Socialist state with its anti-Semitic ideology was the subject of extended controversy. While the editors saw it as their duty to sharply criticize the war-mongering Nazi regime and Germany's policy toward Jews, they had to bear in mind that severe restrictions notwithstanding, Zionist organizations were still active in the Reich and had to cooperate with the National-Socialist authorities, for example in emigration matters.³³ Since the Nazis had proved in the past that they did not distinguish between Zionists abroad and those in Germany, but held them accountable for each other, caution was needed. In terms of content, the *JWR* did not want to acquire the reputation of yet another “emigrant newspaper,” since from 1933 onward the Zionists had expressed strong reservations about various exile publications, which they decried as a “red assimilationist press.”³⁴ This exile or emigrant press was both feared and criticized as the stronghold of assimilated Jewry which rejected the Zionist solution to the Jewish question, i.e., the creation of a national homeland in Palestine, and advocated instead the integration of Jews in the Diaspora.

A related issue was also treated tactfully:

One of the main tasks of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* will be the debate with hostile, anti-Jewish powers in the world. Unlike the *Jüdische Rundschau* in Berlin, the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* will be able to speak openly and clearly and will sharply underscore the Jewish position on the anti-Semitic slander propagated throughout the world. It will fight against National-Socialism with both dignity and determination, while trying to win the attention of non-Jewish bodies as well.³⁵

Even if they did not entirely abandon their original Zionist analysis of anti-Semitism as “the gentiles’ normal, almost rational reaction to the abnormal, perverse state of the Jewish people in the Diaspora,”³⁶ the publishers of the *JWR* revised their political position when they joined – albeit with some reservation – the anti-Nazi movement that was gathering momentum worldwide.

Still, criticism of the Nazis was strikingly restrained in the first issues of the *JWR*. In a letter to *Ha'aretz* publisher Salman Schocken, Yeshayahu Klinow was openly critical, noting: “The first issue didn't feature a single word against Nazi Germany.”³⁷ *JWR* Editor-in-Chief Robert Weltsch, too, stated later:

I believe the issue [of the newspaper] is quite harmless; I assume you can notify Berlin that if anything should be held against us, one may say that ours is a Zionist paper rather than an ‘emigrant bulletin,’ which will not attack Germany, although it obviously cannot agree with Nazi anti-Semitism, a position that was not expected of the *JR* in Berlin either.³⁸

Final plans

The publishing plans for the *JWR* were completed in February 1939. A publishing committee was set up to represent the German-speaking Zionists in Eretz Yisrael, in consultation with representatives of the former Association of German Zionists, the German section of the Jewish Agency, the Zionist Executive, and the executive committee of the Association of German Immigrants (HOG). Siegmund Katznelson, previously publisher of the *Jüdische Verlag* in Germany, assumed the management of the *JWR*. He, together with Gustav Krojanker, guaranteed the project's financial success with personal investments, and almost all the known German Zionists in Eretz Yisrael supported the new paper. A former worker at the *JR*, Betty Frankenheimer, had managed to escape Germany and brought the paper's foreign subscription list to Eretz Yisrael. The *JWR* could therefore be sent out to some 11,000 addresses. The HOG had already sent three issues of the *Mitteilungsblatt (MB)* – the Information Bulletin – to these subscribers and

received a positive response.³⁹

The *JWR* could also rely on the correspondent network of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, which spanned the world from Shanghai to all the European capitals and Latin America. The open nature of the *JWR* inspired people to join the project, with manuscripts arriving at the editorial office from all parts of the world. The *JWR* could thus develop the cosmopolitan tenor of its precursor, the *JR*, even further, and inform readers about the situation of Jews as far afield as Swaziland.

A former *JR* correspondent, Erwin Kaskeline, found a print shop in Paris willing to print the galleys overnight. They were flown in Wednesday night from Jerusalem, and the *JWR* could be distributed next morning all over the world. Additionally, Paris was chosen as the printing venue in order to turn the *JWR* into a paper officially produced abroad rather than in Palestine. Although the *Mitteilungsblatt* of the HOGOA was to be printed in Tel Aviv with a front page identical to that of the *JWR*, the publishers of the *Mitteilungsblatt* reached an agreement with the Zionist Executive whereby they would send the bulletin to subscribers only and would not sell it on the stands.⁴⁰

The dispute over the “Jüdische Welt-Rundschau”

The first issue of *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* had barely appeared, in March 1939, when a fierce quarrel broke out in Eretz Yisrael over the paper, which soon turned into a dispute about the role of German immigrants in Eretz Yisrael and highlighted the far-reaching differences between Central European Jews and the *yishuv* with its Eastern European sensibility.

It is not clear whether the *Mitteilungsblatt*, to be distributed in Eretz Yisrael as the *JWR*, appeared on the newsstands due to an oversight, as the publishers later explained, or whether, as claimed by the Hebrew press, this move was planned ahead of time despite the agreement with the Zionist Executive. The leading Hebrew newspapers, *Ha'aretz*, *Haboker* and *Hamashkif*, severely condemned the publication of the *JWR*; trade unions and various Zionist organizations publicly protested against the paper's publication; and a “Committee for the Struggle against the German Press” was set up in Jerusalem. Matters went so far that the *JWR* was allegedly burned in public.⁴¹ Appeals to boycott the paper followed: “Stands selling the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* or the *Mitteilungsblatt* of the HOG will no longer be supplied with Hebrew dailies.”⁴² On March 26 a central protest meeting took

place in Jerusalem, where the HOG was presented with an ultimatum: halt the publication of the paper within 48 hours, or face stricter measures against it.⁴³

The indignation had been unleashed because of the merge of the *Mitteilungsblatt* with the *JWR*, which ostensibly resulted in the publication of a German newspaper in Eretz Yisrael. A letter to Weltsch read: “Stop publishing a newspaper in German because Hebrew is the language of the country.”⁴⁴ Under mounting pressure exerted on the *JWR* and HOG, including by some German Jews, the publishers finally yielded. In two separate statements published in subsequent issues of the *JWR* and *MB*, both papers, together with the HOG, justified the original concept of their project but agreed to the Hebraists' demands: from now on the *JWR* and the *MB* would be two separate publications. The *JWR* would be distributed from Paris as an overseas newspaper, while the *MB* would once again be distributed in Palestine as a local biweekly of the HOG.

Responding to the charges against them, the HOG, and Robert Weltsch, defended the *JWR* and criticized the way the conflict was handled. After all, they pointed out, countless Yiddish and English publications had been printed in Eretz Yisrael for years without any public objection. Only the use of German regularly evoked a storm, although it was precisely the German immigrant community that had been making vigorous efforts at integration. Opposition to the *JWR* had a counterproductive effect on overall Zionist politics and further isolated those affected, they argued. “Today,” stated HOGOA, “thousands of Jews live alongside the *yishuv* without any connection to the life of the country. Previously, this population, too, was able to read the Zionist press of Central Europe.”⁴⁵ Moreover, HOGOA pointed out that absence of German Zionist papers, which would play an important educational role, reinforced, instead, the danger of a “new assimilation,” as those immigrants in Eretz Yisrael still unfamiliar with Hebrew would withdraw to German-speaking islands, while refugees in other countries would lose contact with Zionism. Those Jews who professed apolitical or non-Zionist attitudes before the Nazis came to power would be most affected. HOGOA feared these Jews could be

completely lost for Zionism, as no organization was able to care for them on an ongoing basis. A newspaper is the only means to maintain contact with these people and to struggle against geography and total fragmentation – a struggle informed by the idea that all Jews belong to one people. Moreover, immigrants from Central European countries today are

exposed everywhere to strong anti-Zionist and anti-Palestinian influences. The efforts to assimilate, with no prospects left in Germany after 1933, are visibly stronger today. While we are silent, other Jewish groups are gaining more influence over Jewish emigrants.

We firmly believe that following the collapse of German-speaking Jewish centers and the forced dismantling of Zionist organizations in Germany-Austria, the center for such a Zionist organ can exist only in Eretz Yisrael.... This is why we have made every effort to promote the publication of a new paper to replace our destroyed Zionist press, and are glad the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* has become a reality.⁴⁶

Causes of the hostility toward the new newspaper

Considering the claims raised by the HOG, and the predicament of German Jewry, one wonders why large sectors of the *yishuv* reacted so aggressively to the publication of the *JWR*. Even then, there was speculation that the Hebrew newspapers were defending their monopoly in the advertising market and feared the considerable competition that might result from a professionally produced German newspaper.⁴⁷ Another factor, noted by Israeli historian Yoav Gelber, was that the majority population of the *yishuv*, with its Eastern European sensibility, had long since been angered by the German immigrants' "loyalty to the German language and culture.... They injure national pride and interfere with the attempt to revive the Hebrew language."⁴⁸ Even more importantly, the campaign was an attempt to weaken the impact of German Zionism, with which both the *JWR* and Achdut Ha'am were associated. German Zionism was deemed a liberal current seeking a settlement with the Arabs, embodied mainly in the Brith Shalom organization which advocated a binational state⁴⁹ as well as a policy of close cooperation with the British. Tom Segev succinctly conveys the difference between the German Jews – called "Yekkes" in Eretz Yisrael – and the majority population in the *yishuv*:

In the conflict between socialist collectivism and liberal individualism, the *Yekkes* were to be found among the liberals. In the conflict between the demands of the country and individual rights, most *Yekkes* took the side of the individual.... In the conflict between violence, militarism, extremism as well as hostility toward the Arabs, on the one hand, and a readiness for peace, on the other, the *Yekkes* advocated tolerance and compromise.⁵⁰

In Eretz Yisrael, staff members and contributors to the *JWR*

such as Martin Buber, Robert Weltsch, Elias Auerbach and Kurt Blumenfeld were perceived as representatives of this moderate position, which met with growing criticism in the late 1930s. Palestinian Arabs had been mounting an open revolt against the British Mandate government and against Zionist immigration since 1936, which claimed a daily toll of fatalities and wounded and slowly led to the militarization of the *yishuv*. *Haboker* wrote that while all German Jews were warmly welcome, transplanting "Meineckenstrasse [the location of the headquarters of the Association of German Zionists] with its character and atmosphere to Palestine" was undesirable.⁵¹ Ha'aretz editor Yeshayahu Klinow wrote mockingly: "The ideological rift between the *JWR*'s line of thought and that of the *yishuv* is infinite."⁵²

Moreover, the Zionist parties feared that, should the German Zionists manage to set up a party of their own, it would be a formidable competitor for influence and constituents. Later on, the establishment of the Aliya Hadasha Party by immigrants from Germany in the early 1940s, which perpetuated the platform of Achdut Ha'am and became the second strongest party in Eretz Yisrael for a time, was to vindicate these fears. The dispute over the *JWR* was also, therefore, a conflict between political forces, namely between the Eastern European proletarian orientation of the earlier immigrations and the middle-class liberal mindset of the immigrants from Germany and Central Europe. Hans Georg Burger reached the conclusion that "the *Welt-Rundschau*, the *MB* and the HOG...were perceived as a serious new opposition," and that the disputes over the *JWR* "stemmed from conflicting political positions and the attempt to prevent the formation of a new organ of political opposition in the *yishuv*." The issue of a German newspaper in Eretz Yisrael, therefore, was not the reason but the pretext for the dispute.⁵³

Robert Weltsch, a distinguished representative of the left-liberal tradition of German Zionism, was also aware that something more essential was at stake than the publication of a German-language newspaper. Presumably, this was the reason that he tried publicly to minimize the attacks on the *JWR* as misunderstandings. In a long letter, published in the Hebrew press as well, he laid out a defense of the idea of the *JWR* before its detractors. He, too, stressed that the *JWR* was not an Eretz Yisrael paper but was intended for German Jews scattered throughout the world, whose unique fate required special action:

If you are interested in facts, I am willing to show you hundreds of letters from all the countries, from German and non-German Jews, who no longer have a newspaper, since the Jewish press in Germany has been discontinued.... This situation cannot be compared with that of any other Jewish group in the world. A large, widely distributed Yiddish press exists, for example, in Poland, America and other countries, and thousands of copies of these newspapers are allegedly sold in Palestine as well. But German-speaking Jews no longer have either a center or a newspaper; they have no contact with Jewish centers. The people who publish the *JWR* are no less attached to Hebrew culture and Jewish rebirth than anyone else. But tens of thousands of people who do not understand Hebrew stand behind us. This is our reality. I am convinced there is no more important task in this situation than to mediate between these people and Hebrew Eretz Yisrael.⁵⁴

Following these statements, and the formal separation between the *JWR* and HOGOA, criticism of the *JWR* abated, although it did not entirely cease until the outbreak of World War II. The distribution of the paper from Paris without the *MB* as a local paper printed in Eretz Yisrael was a setback for the *Welt-Rundschau* project, as described somewhat understatedly by Felix Schneebalg: "To a large extent, the paper's content is no longer topical, and the advertising prospects have greatly declined."⁵⁵

In April 1939 the *Freundeskreis* of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* founded the Jewish Newspaper Ltd., with Gustav Krojanker and Siegmund Katznelson putting up a personal investment of £1,500 as collateral for 40% of the capital.⁵⁶ Cooperation with the HOGOA was officially terminated and the *JWR* was no longer automatically sent to subscribers of the *MB*, although some unofficial cooperation did subsist. Despite financial losses caused by the reorganization, the publishers were able to bring out the *JWR* in the same format until the outbreak of World War II. As hoped, it evolved in those few months into a Zionist medium not only read worldwide but well received by Zionists and anti-Zionists alike. Undoubtedly, it was the most important organ of German Zionism until its final closure in the spring of 1940.

An attempt "to survive and find one's way through the storm"⁵⁷

The scope of this article does not allow me to discuss the various articles, essays and commentaries on the politics of cul-

ture in Eretz Yisrael published in the *JWR*, although they more than merit exposure. Whether Martin Buber's "The End of the German-Jewish Symbiosis," the coverage of the 21st Zionist Congress in Geneva, the debate over the role and the dangers of the new Jewish nationalism in Eretz Yisrael,⁵⁸ the appeal for an understanding with the Arabs, or the analyses of anti-Semitic racism — all these ought to be presented in detail. Similarly, a report on the different articles written in the paper about the changes in the German Zionist analysis of anti-Semitism and Zionist strategy toward the British and the Arabs is sorely missing.

Supported by noted Zionists and non-Zionists, the *JWR* endeavored to be a forum for these arguments and, at the same time, analyze and comment on the rapid developments in international politics and take a stand wherever possible. During the paper's short life span, when it was distributed from Paris, the Germans marched into Prague, the Hitler-Stalin Pact was signed, the 21st Zionist Congress was held and the British Mandate government de facto banned Jewish immigration to Palestine, while boats with so-called illegal immigrants frequently landed on the Palestinian coast or were intercepted by the British navy.

With the outbreak of World War II, the publication of the *JWR* in its extant format had to be discontinued. Resumed in December 1939, it was produced and printed in Palestine, whence it was sent to several countries. The Nazi invasion of France, Belgium and Holland put an end to its publication finally in May 1940.

With the outbreak of the war, the *MB* and *JWR* were again merged de facto, though no disputes with the *yishuv* recurred. On November 13, 1939, the *Freundeskreis* members decided that HOGOA would officially publish the *JWR*.⁵⁹ With the closure of the *JWR* in 1940, all rights to the paper's name were transferred to Eretz Yisrael HOGOA, which stated: "Should it be possible to republish the *JWR* in Palestine, the HOGOA would do its utmost to prevent publication of an organ in Germany or any other country which claimed to carry on the old tradition by taking advantage of the name *JR* or *JWR*."⁶⁰

The *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* was never published again. Still, beginning in the summer of 1940, the *Mitteilungsblatt*, with the active help of Robert Weltsch and other *JWR* staffers, evolved into a German Zionist weekly published in Eretz Yisrael, which assumed, at least for German Jews in Eretz Yisrael, the role originally intended for the *JWR*. The *MB* was

sent to subscribers abroad as long as this was possible, and soon served the Aiyah Hadasha Party as an organ, carrying on the traditions of German Zionism in Eretz Yisrael in the 1940s. At the same time, the *Aufbau* in the U.S. grew from a small emigrant paper into the most important organ of the German Jewish Diaspora and perpetuated, in its own way, the pro-Zionist and anti-fascist political tenor of the *JWR*.

Translated from German by Beatrice Smedley

Notes

1. With this, their significance changed. The *Jüdische Rundschau* grew from a newsletter put out by the Association of German Zionists with a circulation of less than 10,000 into a publication with a circulation of up to 37,000.
2. Cf. esp. Herbert Freedon, *Die jüdische Presse im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt/M:1987).
3. As Joachim Schlor aptly noted, "the studies on the fate of German Jews who had been able to save themselves by emigrating to Palestine focus, on the one hand, on the fate of Jews in Germany or other European countries up to their emigration and, on the other hand, on their life following their arrival in Palestine.... What is missing is the in-between." This may also be the reason that hardly any studies have been conducted thus far about the *JWR*. Joachim Schlor, "Triest in Palästina in Triest," afterword, in Giorgio Voghera, *Meine Heimat ist die ganze Welt, Überleben im Kibbuz 1938 - 1948* (Gerlingen: 1997, p. 234).
4. *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau, Revue du Monde Juif*. Jerusalem und Paris, Jg. 1 Nr. 7, April 21, 1939, p. 1.
5. *JWR* Nr. 1, I Jg, March 7, 1939, p. 1.
6. Moreover, "the expected failure of the Evian Conference" signaled "to the German government that the wholesale expulsion of Jews from Germany would not trigger vehement reactions." Moshe Zimmermann, *Die deutschen Juden 1914-1945* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte Bd. 43) (München: 1997), p. 59.
7. Statement by the Foreign Office, quoted by Saul Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden, Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933-1939* (München: 1998), p. 322.
8. Robert Weltsch, "Tragt ihn mit Stolz den gelben Fleck; Zur Lage der Juden in Deutschland 1933" (Berlin: 1933).
9. *JWR*, Nr. 22, 1. Jg. August 11, 1939, p. 2.
10. Hans Albert Walter, *Deutsche Exilliteratur 1933- 45, Deutsche Exilpresse Band 2* (Darmstadt/Neuwied: 1972-74), p. 577 f.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Petition by Rabbi Dr. Max Nussbaum, on behalf of Mr. Morgenthau or Stephen Wise, upon his immigration to the U.S. (August 1940), Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, 01/232, p. 15.
13. *Mitteilungsblatt der Hitachduth Olej Germania (MB)*, November (I) 1938, p. 1.
14. *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*, Nr. 1, I Jg. March 7, 1939, p. 1.
15. Erich Gottgetreu (1903-1981) was a member of the Reichstag (SPD) during the Weimar Republic. A Zionist, he emigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1934 and wrote extensively for various Zionist newspapers and the Diaspora press. His published work included *Das Land der Sohne: Palästina nahe gerückt* (Vienna: 1934).
16. "A German daily, 'Orient Express,' has been published for the past few weeks.... The Executive of the Hitachduth Olej Germania is officially opposed to this undertaking and calls on all German immigrants to refrain from lending any support whatsoever to the publication or distribution of such a newspaper." *MB*, July (I) 1935, p. 6.
17. *MB*, May (II) 1935, p. 3.
18. The duplicated news bulletins competed well with the advertising section of the *Jüdische Rundschau*. The scope of their ads from Eretz Yisrael expanded steadily and provided an important source of income.
19. On July 27, 1938, the editors of the *Jüdische Rundschau* sent the following statement to the Reich's Ministry of Propaganda and People's Education: "The intention is to set up a legal entity (Ltd.) in Palestine that would assume the printing and distribution in Palestine on a trust basis. This body would consist of German Zionists close to us, who are now in Palestine.... As matters now stand, it is impossible to get local Palestinian ads for the main edition of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, which is only partly distributed in Palestine, as prices in gold Marks are far too high. Still, the advertising prospects for such a special supplement are certainly favorable, as confirmed by the many Palestinian ads in the countless duplicated German information bulletins, which seriously compete with the *Jüdische Rundschau*.... The intention is, furthermore, to include various [types of] news, such as that of the Hitachduth Olej, Germania, in this special supplement." Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem (CZA) A 376-65.
20. Bruno Kirschner (1884-1964) had published the Zionist newspaper *Der jüdische Student* in the 1920s and was a co-founder of the Leo Baeck Institute. He emigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1937.
21. Letter from Bruno Kirschner to Robert Weltsch, August 11, 1938. CZA A 167-49.
22. Erich Liepmann, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Versuch einer Analyse nach sieben Jahren* (Jerusalem: 1939), p. 32. Yad Vashem Archives 01/135.
23. Robert Weltsch to Martin Rosenbluth, December 20, 1938. CZA A 376-65 (File Siegfried Moses).
24. Joav Gelber, "Deutsche Juden im politischen Leben des jüdischen Palästina 1933-1948," *Bulletin of the Leo Baeck Institute*, 76/1987, p. 59.
25. Georg Landauer, quoted by Tom Segev, *Die siebte Million: Der*

- Holocaust und Israels Politik der Erinnerung* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: 1995), p. 91.
26. Letter from Robert Weltsch to Siegfried Moses, December 11, 1938. CZA, A 376-65.
 27. Statement by the *Freundeskreis* of the *JWR*, n.d. [1939], CZA, A 376-65.
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. Memorandum of February 1939, CZA 167-44, p. 2.
 30. *Ibid.* The only Zionist newspaper in German intended for this new Diaspora, the *Jüdische Revue*, published by Manfred George in Czechoslovakia, was forced to close after the Nazis marched into the Sudetenland. George later became the publisher of the *Aufbau*.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. Shortly after the Kristallnacht pogrom, A. Rau warned in a letter to Weltsch of "the special dangers for our work in Germany due to the possible publication of the *JR* in Jerusalem.... The danger would be smaller if the new paper had another name.... For the sake of our work in Germany it would obviously also be better if the newspaper wouldn't see its main task in the 'fight' against the German regime." Letter from A. Rau to Robert Weltsch, December 15, 1938, CZA A 376-65. In this context, although the possibility of distributing the paper in Germany was briefly considered, the idea was abandoned at once.
 33. Carsten Teichert, *Chasak!: Zionismus im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1933-1938* (Köln: 2000), p. 476.
 34. Kurt Blumenfeld in a letter to Siegfried Moses (date missing), CZA A 367-65. Cf. an essay by Jan Kroker, subsequently a contributor to the *JWR*, in which he vehemently criticizes the exile and its press from a Zionist point of view. Jan Kroker, "Emigranten Literatur in Selbstwehr," *Jüdisches Volksblatt*, Prague, 27. Jg., Nr. 47, November 17, 1933, p. 1 f.
 35. Memorandum, see Note 29.
 36. Yigal Elam, quoted by Mario Offenburg, *Überlegungen zur Politik und Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Berlin [W]: 1979), p. 3. Cf. Robert Weltsch in a 1932 essay, "Judenfrage und Zionismus": "Zionism sees the reason for the Jewish Question in the abnormal state of the Jewish people. All other phenomena, including anti-Semitism, are merely symptoms of the Jewish Question and not its essence." Robert Weltsch, *An der Wende des modernen Judentums* (Tübingen: 1972), p. 13.
 37. Letter from J. Klinow to Salman Schocken, March 12, 1939, CZA, A 376-65.
 38. Letter from Robert Weltsch to Gustav Landauer, March 3, 1939, CZA A 376-65.
 39. Hans Georg Burger, "Die Auseinandersetzung um die *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*," dedicated to Robert Weltsch on his 80th birthday. *Emuna-Horizonte*, VI Jg., Nr. 5, October 1971, p. 321.
 40. See *Blumenthals Neueste Nachrichten*, Vol. 3, No. 617, March 17, 1939, p. 22.
 41. Hans Georg Burger, see Note 39, p. 325.
 42. Dr. Felix Schneeberg to S. Schocken, March 12, 1939, CZA, A 376-65.
 43. *Ibid.*
 44. CZA, J 1/ 3992.
 45. Statement of the Hitachdut Olej Germania ve-Olei Austria regarding the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* and the *Mitteilungsblatt*. *Mitteilungsblatt (MB)* of the HOGOA, No. 13, March 24, 1939.
 46. *Ibid.*
 47. Notably, this is why the duplicated German information bulletins, such as *Presse Echo*, objected to the *JWR*. Cf. *Presse Echo*, 3 Jg., Nr. 14, April 7, 1939.
 48. Joav Gelber, see Note 24, p. 61.
 49. In one of its early manifestos, Achdut Ha'am laid out the thesis that an understanding between Jews and Arabs could prevent the division of Palestine. *Achdut Ha'am*, July 1938, p. 6. In the same issue the revisionists were severely censured, pp. 26-30. Yoav Gelber, too, observed that Achdut Ha'am moved increasingly closer to Brith Shalom and to Judah L. Magnes. Joav Gelber, "Deutsche Juden im politischen Leben des jüdischen Palästina 1933-1948," in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 76/ 1987, p. 57.
 50. Tom Segev, see Note 25, p. 90.
 51. Letter from Felix Schneeberg to Salmann Schocken, March 12, 1939, CZA A 376-65.
 52. Letter from J. Klinow to S. Schocken, March 12, 1939, CZA A 376-65.
 53. Hans Georg Burger, see Note 39, p. 330.
 54. Printed in *MB*, Nr. 13 1939, see Note 45, p. 1 f.
 55. Letter from Felix Schneeberg to Salman Schocken. See Note 51.
 56. Decision taken at the meeting on April 19, 1939, see Protokoll, CZA A 376-65.
 57. *JWR* Nr. 2, 1 Jg. March 17, 1939, p. 3.
 58. This debate, evoked by Tristan Leander in his *Confessions of an Ex-Assimilationist*, culminated in his protest against "the intention to offer us, the refugees who have at last escaped the rustle of Nordic runes in German oak forests, an analogous rustle in our future Keren Kayemet [Jewish National Fund] forests; to exclude us for decades, under the slogan of a misunderstood Kulturkampf, from the nation's cultural and spiritual life, after we fled, trusting and in good faith, from the brown hell to the highly praised national homeland; to serve up to us a purely Eastern European Jewish culture, superficially translated into Hebrew but seasoned with a billboard nationalism inspired by the worst of German models." *JWR* Nr. 20, 1 Jg. July 28, 1939, p. 6 f.
 59. On the publication of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau* by the Hitachdut Olej Germania, see CZA A 376-65, p. 1.
 60. Protokoll, Summer 1941, CZA 376-65, p. 3.

New Books in Hebrew About the Press and the Media

An Open World: Positive and Negative / Michael Keren

Niv Ahituv, *A World Without Secrets: On the Open Information Society* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, Atidot Series, 2001)

Niv Ahituv's book deals with the phenomenon of a world without secrets. Listing the agencies that have information about us, he cites a series of bodies ranging from the Income Tax Authority to credit card companies, Internet servers and the Ministry of Education.

Rather than rebel against the development of the open information society, which he feels is useless, Ahituv suggests joining it and preparing for the revolution that is unfolding before us. This revolution is characterized by the mass distribution of inter-organizational systems for conveying information, for carrying on electronic commerce, for spying by satellite and so forth.

The book posits two forecasts – one optimistic, the other pessimistic – regarding the nature of this new society. The optimistic one is based on the possibility of business creativity stemming from competition based no longer on information itself but on the creative use of it. In a similar vein, a halt in the arms race may be anticipated in light of the impossibility of keeping research and development secret. The pessimistic forecast is based on harm to the freedoms of the citizen due to governmental and corporate control of information which turns the individual's fortress/home into a venue for police interrogation.

A challenging question raised by the author is whether the safeguarding of privacy should continue to be viewed as a sacred cow. Ultimately, he claims, the public will have to consider the benefits of putting limitations on the right to privacy. In Ahituv's view, by preparing for the open information society and by molding it along moral lines, the approaching era can be one of the best ever for humankind.

Two problems loom, however. One is the possibility that the public itself will decide about its future, whether based on cost-benefit considerations or on moral principles – a prospect that conflicts with the technological determinism at the heart

of the discourse about this revolution. The other is that, as Herbert Marcuse has pointed out, the development of moral principles is not independent of material and technological forces. The demand for freedom, for example, developed as part of the conditions engendered by the earlier industrial revolution. The problem, therefore, is not how to protect the freedom-loving individual from the scientific revolution, but how to safeguard the conditions that engendered the demand for freedom historically. The fear is not of harming the freedom of people who are concerned for it, but of the emergence of a generation whose existence in the shadow of enslavement to scientific technology will become natural to them.

In contrast to the optimistic spirit of the book, I tend to view the future in terms of the prospect it raises of the "open information society that has gone off the rails. It does not improve the lives of all, but rather distorts them, is controlled by only a few, and turns the world into a hell on earth" (p. 7).

The Israeli Press at the Start of the Al-Aksa Intifada / Anat Biletzki

Daniel Dor, *The Press Under the Influence* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2001)

Daniel Dor takes on a double task: that of a philosophic/semantic/political analysis of the journalistic output that flooded the press during the first three weeks of the al-Aksa intifada from a linguistic and media point of view; and the enhancement, thereby, of our understanding of these events. While an understanding of the events was and remains deeply problematic over the past year and a half, the first part of the task – a detailed exposure of the journalistic response during the first days of panic – is well handled through the provision of fascinating, even astonishing, analyses, insights and explanations.

Essentially, the outbreak of the intifada elicited a reaction of fear, anger, hate and ignorance on the part of the Israeli press. In practice, the press reflected the establishment

propaganda line of the government, the Israel Defense Forces and the Security Service. In effect, the readers were subjected to the influence of these elements through the editorial policy and treatment of layout, headlines, etc. All of this is illuminated throughout the book by countless examples of every journalistic sin: propagandistic slanting of news reports, the unilateral blaming of Arafat as instigator of the intifada, fomenting an atmosphere of apocalyptic panic, entrenching the lie of Israeli restraint, incitement against the Arabs of Israel, the total delegitimation of Arafat and the Palestinians as partners in peace, and the deep conviction of Israel's pure intentions.

Notably, Dor points out repeatedly that a close examination of the articles shows a more complex picture of reality than the simplistic consensual "We want peace, but we have no partner on the other side at this time" that was reflected in the headlines and that took root in the Israeli Jewish public. The fact that the complexity of the issue is discernible in the news reports and the commentary, and yet a simplistic consensus was created nevertheless, underscores the merit of exposing and studying the journalistic/editorial factor which led to such a significant deviation from reality.

Dor's explanation may be summarized in four points: the reliance by the newspapers on establishment information; the recruitment of the newspapers for the mission of national unity; a disregard of the ongoing occupation; and a conviction in the supreme efforts for peace made by Barak.

The reaction to the book by the press was predictable: *Ha'aretz* devoted a not inconsiderable amount of space to it, while *Yedi'ot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv* ignored it entirely. The book, however, made an impact in other venues where the painful issues raised in it are discussed in study days, conferences and lectures. Readers whose interest in the media is not only professional but also relates to political and moral aspects will find great interest in it.

"Ma'ariv" – A View From Within / Mordecai Naor

Yuval Elitsur, *From Shoharim to "Ma'ariv": Chapters in the Press* (Tel Aviv: Te'uda, 2002, 261 pp.)

Elitsur, a media person from his earliest youth, began his career in the British Mandate's Voice of Jerusalem Hebrew broadcasts,

in which he read parts and wrote skits while not yet 15 years old. He then edited a newsletter for the Scouts movement, wrote for the newspaper *Ashmoret*, and became one of the first writers for the Israel Defense Forces *Bamahaneh* and for the Air Force organ. He also worked for *Kol Israel*.

Following a period of study in journalism in the U.S., Elitsur returned to Israel and joined *Ha'aretz* as a night editor and economic writer. He soon shifted to *Ma'ariv*, where he was appointed editor of the economics section and eventually became assistant editor of the paper during a 35-year career. His story is also the story of *Ma'ariv*, from its glory days of the 1950s, when the banner "The most widely distributed newspaper in the state" appeared beneath the logo, until the early 1990s, a period of crisis and changes of ownership, with the paper trying unsuccessfully to close the gap with *Yedi'ot Aharonot*.

It is a highly personal story, and unflattering to *Ma'ariv*, revealing the paper's weaknesses even when it was viewed as the most popular and influential paper in the country. Elitsur criticizes the senior editors and the management, following the death of founder Dr. Ezriel Carlebach, as fearful of change, which eventually led to the decline of the paper and the re-ascendance of its rival, *Yedi'ot Aharonot*.

The book contains a great deal of behind-the-scenes information about newspaper work, as well as about the ties of *Ma'ariv's* senior editorial staff with the country's leaders and policy makers. To his credit, Elitsur writes with a commendable degree of candor. One example is his treatment of the controversial "putsch" carried out by the senior staff of *Yedi'ot Aharonot* in February 1948 in quitting that paper without notice and clandestinely launching *Ma'ariv*. Another example is his analysis of the meteoric rise and fall of *Ma'ariv*, which, he claims, was saved by a large capital injection by Robert Maxwell, and after his death by the acquisition of the paper by the Nimrodi family. Elitsur ascribes a major portion of the blame for the decline of the paper to the failed management of Ido Dissenchik as editor in chief.

Notably, Elitsur emphasizes the large measure of freedom given to him as a writer and analyst over the years, especially in light of the fact that the targets of his criticism were often well-known establishment figures. Other areas covered in the book are his work as a foreign correspondent, his role in the struggle against the Arab Boycott, political and economic

assignments on behalf of the Foreign Office, and books that he has written – most notably *The Establishment* (1973) together with Eliahu Salpeter.

Objects of Discrimination by the Israeli Media / Vicky Shiran

Eli Avraham, *The Israel Hidden From the Media: The Kibbutzim, Settlements, Development Towns and Arab Communities as Reflected in the Press* (Jerusalem: Akademon, 2001)

This book is required reading for anyone interested in the media and its role in molding the Israeli milieu. It analyzes the patterns of representation of the periphery in the press from the early 1960s to the mid-'90s. Conceivably, the findings are applicable as well to the electronic media, which have adopted many of the practices of the press. The importance of the book lies in the mirror it holds up to the dominant media center, showing how these media mold the image of entire populations as socially marginal in the mainstream consciousness, thereby perpetuating negative stereotypes. The book, however, is even more comprehensive and complex in that it exposes the focal point of media power and its role in social and political processes.

The book is based on qualitative and quantitative research of patterns of press coverage using a sample of 800 issues of *Ha'aretz* and *Yedi'ot Aharonot* spanning four decades. The study is also supported by dozens of interviews of editors, reporters, spokespersons and public figures.

Four main groups constitute the "periphery" in Avraham's

book: development towns (population 1,100,000), the Arab communities within the Green Line (800,000), the kibbutzim (124,000) and the settlements across the Green Line (116,000), based on data from the Central Office of Statistics from 1996. The research found that the kibbutzim, which constituted a small fraction of the total population studied, were treated positively over the time span under review, although this trend began to change during the 1990s. By contrast, the coverage of the development towns and the Arab communities, which together comprised some 2 million residents, was conspicuously and continually negative. The Arab communities, moreover, received relatively less coverage proportional to their population, while the coverage of the settlements was proportionally much greater, albeit not positive in tone.

Avraham reveals that the key factor regarding the patterns of coverage is the sociopolitical affinity of the population studied with the foci of power in society and in the press, as exemplified by the sustained positive coverage of the kibbutzim despite the systematic decline of their mythologic status from the late 1970s onward. This is attributable, the author argues, to the shared sociopolitical background (Ashkenazi, secular, liberal-Left) of the editors and reporters and the kibbutz population. Additionally, the agenda of the press, despite protestations of neutrality, differs from that of the development towns or the settlements. Ultimately, neither geographic distance nor size of the population studied influenced patterns of coverage.

While the book would have benefited by tighter editing in presenting the research, the analytic element is pointed, illuminating and insightful, making the book essential in the study of the Israeli media, political science and social sciences.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Prof. Michael Keren: Head of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv University.

Prof. Joel S. Migdal: International Studies, Robert F. Philip Chair, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington.

Dr. Yaacov Yadgar: Department of Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan.

Prof. Dan Urian: Department of Theater Arts, Tel Aviv University.

Uri Klein: Lecturer, Department of Film and Television, Tel Aviv University; film critic, *Ha'aretz*.

Yuval Shahal: School of Communication, College of

Management – Academic Studies, Tel Aviv.

Dr. David Pur: Researcher of Yiddish literature; former chair, Pedagogical Secretariat, Ministry of Education.

Thomas van der Osten-Sacken: Ph.D. candidate, Department of German Language and Literature, University of Frankfurt/Main; writer on Israel and Middle East issues.

Dr. Mordecai Naor: Editor, *Kesher*, Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv University; author and researcher of the history of Eretz Yisrael.

Prof. Anat Biletzki: Department of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University; head of the School of Cultural Studies, Tel Aviv University.

Dr. Vicky Shiran: Lecturer in criminology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Beit Berl Academic College.