

Journal of Media and Communications History in Israel and the Jewish World
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INSIDE KESHER 44

CHILDREN, MEET THE PRESS!

Gideon Kouts

Some 150 years after the Hebrew press came into being in Palestine (a topic that will receive expanded attention in the upcoming summer issue), the wretched condition of the print media makes one wax nostalgic for the good old days that are probably gone for good—nostalgia for readerships that have vanished, that approached the print media with keen interest, confidence, and also a sense of duty. Children were one such leadership; every media player and institution strove to publish a “children’s newspaper” in tandem with the grown-up one. The real dream of the print media, it seems, was to prolong the shelf-life of this well-trained readership and induce it continue reading them “like children” who had grown up. From a children’s press to a childish one . . . Just the same, the children’s press apparently managed to educate a critical leadership as well.

The articles in the concluding segment of this edition, readied for the press by Rima Shikhmanter, are based on lectures given at the “Tribal Campfire” conference, held by the Masters program in research on child and adolescent culture at the School of Cultural Science, in conjunction with the Institute for the Study of Jewish Press and Communications at Tel Aviv University. The articles emphasize not only the strength of “adult” ideology and politics in these publications but also the spirit of debate and criticism. In the first article, Yael Darr challenges the conventional wisdom about the “struggle” between political material and *belles lettres* in the pre-Israel children’s press affiliated with the Zionist Labor Movement. Meir Chazan recounts the ideological roles that *Davar li-Yeladim* played in the first Arab uprising and how this publication endured them. In contrast to the Labor Movement newspapers, Rima Shikhmanter describes *Ha’aretz Shelanu* in the 1950s as a newspaper for the children of the bourgeois (who, in turn, read *Ha’aretz*). Orly Tsarfaty and Dalia Liran-Alper turn their attention to the religious sector, home to the broadest range of print media organs today, and discuss the representation of gender in the ultra-Orthodox newspaper *Yeladim*.

The articles at the front of this edition also move between sector and gender, starting with the religious sector. Yoel Cohen examines the effects of the information era on the ultra-Orthodox world and concludes that this population group continues

to manifest the basic indicators of the cultural ghetto, new era or not. Gilad Malach describes how three ultra-Orthodox newspapers covered the affair surrounding the exclusion of Sephardi girls from a school in Immanuel and analyzes the factors that influenced the media battlefield. As for gender, Ilan Tamir and Alina Bernstein draw an interesting analogy between women’s place in the sports media and their presence in combat units.

Our regular voyage into the history of the Jewish press begins this time with an article by Moshe Pelli about the Haskalah journal *Ha-Tsefira*, which appeared back in the 1820s—predating its eponymous and more famous successor by nearly forty years. Mergers of newspapers to assure their survival have become an accepted if not usually a painful *modus operandi*, as in the case of *Makor Rishon* and *Ma’ariv* (adding the economic affairs department of *Globes*). In our journal, however, Gideon Kouts recounts the first attempted merger in the Hebrew-language Haskalah press in Europe, back in the 1860s—which, even though it merely attempted to add an independent scientific department to an existing newspaper, ended in a resounding failure. The Hungarian researcher Hedwig Ujvári treats us to a novelty: a first-ever examination of the young Theodor Herzl’s journalistic activity in the Hungarian press before he joined the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna. Ruth Wisse retells the story of the left-leaning American Yiddish newspaper *Vokh*, which broke away from the Communist *Frayhayt* due to the latter’s stance against the Yishuv in Palestine during the Arab uprising.

Two articles concern themselves with the media profession of spokesperson, which seems more attractive to media students today than the press, which has largely lost its luster (at least on the balance sheet). Yehiel Limor and Baruch Leshem investigate the evolution of the definition and characteristics of this function in the Israeli public services and government ministries. The development of the public-relations industry, they say, annexed the spokesperson’s role and changed the job definition from “information and publications officer” to today’s “media adviser.” Eran Eldar explores the parallel but not identical progression of the spokesperson’s function at the municipal level, in Tel Aviv City Hall. The article immediately

preceding the regular departments probes the always-intriguing historical relationship between journalists and authors. Ido Bassok describes the relationship between the journalist Benzion Katz and the poet Shaul Tchernichovsky and the foundation that the ambitious journalist dug—not yet built upon—for the writing of a biography about this important bard.

In this edition, Motti Neiger bids farewell to our teacher and friend Raphael Nir, the preeminent researcher of the development of journalistic Hebrew, who passed away late last year.

We'll see you again in the summer edition; until then, pleasant and useful reading!

Kesher, a scholarly journal devoted to the history of the press and media in the Jewish world and in Israel, is published twice yearly by the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Institute for the Study of Jewish Press and Communications at Tel Aviv University. *Kesher* seeks to publish original research articles and academic reviews on all subjects relating to the history, endeavors, and influence of Jewish media and media people, from a multidisciplinary perspective. All articles are peer reviewed blindly by experts, members of the Journal's Advisory Board and, if necessary, externally. Articles should be submitted in Word to presstau@tauex.tau.ac.il. A reply will be given within three months. Articles should not usually exceed 8,000 words. The bibliography and notes should appear at the end of the article. Citations should follow the conventions of your discipline.

The editorial board invites reviews of new books in the journal's areas of interest and proposes such reviews itself. *Kesher* also publishes a list of recently approved doctoral dissertations and master's theses along with abstracts of no more than 250 words in length (for master's theses) and 500 words in length (for doctoral dissertations).

English Abstracts of Hebrew Articles

THE INFORMATION AGE AND HAREDI (ULTRA -ORTHODOX) RELIGIOUS IDENTITY / Yoel Cohen

Haredim (literally 'fearful ones') live within ultra orthodox cultural ghettos in order to ensure that the secular lifestyle does not influence their purist way of living. Israel's Haredim have faced the challenge of changing media patterns – press, radio, advertising, television and Internet. Over the years, Haredi rabbis issued religious decrees (*pesuk din*) against exposure to mass media regarded as a threat to *Torah* family values. This article will examine Haredi responses to media changes, such as the appearance of alternative Haredi media, the exposure of Haredi Jews both to the secular media and to such alternative haredi media, rabbis' responses and the overall impact of these developments upon Israeli Haredi society.

Since the mid-eighties, we have seen the establishment of several independent weekly Haredi commercial magazines, which are characterized by open news reporting untypical of the daily papers published by Haredi political parties. In addition, Haredi listening patterns changed further following the rise of Haredi radio stations and thus contributed to a further 'opening

up' of the Haredi cultural ghetto walls.

Yet the Internet was the major battlefield which the Haredi rabbis lost their anti-media campaign. In 2000, the Haredi rabbinical leadership imposed a prohibition on Internet "as a moral threat to the sanctity of Israel". But given the centrality of Internet in modern life, rabbis have allowed Internet use in businesses. Haredi cultural ghettos also declined when the advertising sector 'discovered' the commercial potential of the Haredi market and honed its advertising strategies and tactics accordingly.

This plethora of messages challenges religious hierarchical authority. The media are not formally under the control of the rabbis so the latter have lost the battle. But the basic feature of the cultural ghetto still exists. While it is true that the new Haredi independent commercial weekly press, radio and internet sites compete with the institutionalized Haredi daily press, the former respect no less their religious values.

THE IMMANUEL AFFAIR—THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX NEWSPAPERS VS. THE SUPREME COURT/ Gilad Malach

In summer 2010, Israel was fascinated by an affair involving segregation between Ashkenazi and Sephardi girls at an ultra-Orthodox elementary school in Immanuel. While both the general media and the Supreme Court severely criticized the Ashkenazi parents for insisting on separating their daughters from their Sephardi girlfriends, the ultra-Orthodox newspapers came out very militantly in support of the parents and against the Supreme Court's ruling in the matter.

This article, analyzing the three dominant ultra-Orthodox daily newspapers on the basis of the priming theory, shows how the Immanuel affair, initially a local issue, was transformed

into a battlefield on which the ultra-Orthodox community was expected to fight with all its might. The article also analyzes four main reasons for this escalation in the ultra-Orthodox media, one of which being the unusual involvement of the Supreme Court in the last stages of the affair. It finds that by treating the Immanuel affair as a war against the ultra-Orthodox at large, these newspapers were both leaders of public opinion and soldiers in a broader war over relations between the secular and the ultra-Orthodox in Israel and, specifically, the place of the Israel Supreme Court in the struggle.

BATTLEFIELD SPORT: FEMALE SPORTS JOURNALISTS IN ISRAEL / Ilan Tamir, Alina Bernstein

The emergence of a female presence in journalism marks is by far one of the most significant turns that the Israeli media have taken in recent years. Against the specific backdrop of

the feminization of the media, one cannot but take notice of the minuscule number *and* the rather belated advent of female journalists in the field of sports journalism.

This article showcases the point of view of a variety of female sports journalists on the unique experiences that characterize their line of work in order to identify the key elements that help to shape the practice of women in sports journalism. By understanding exactly how women experience being within and of this media as they cover sports events and by analyzing how they perceive their own roles—including how they relate to feminist enterprise in women's sports—a better understanding may be

attained of the way the sports media relate to women's sports and of the fundamental differences that prevail among these media in this context.

Seventeen Israeli female sports journalists were interviewed for this study. Ten of them worked or are still working in the print media; at the time this research was performed, they accounted for nearly the entire female presence in the sports departments of Israel's largest daily publications. The other participants included three journalists who worked for television sports channel and four employed by local online outlets. Male editors of various sports departments were interviewed as well.

***HA-TSEFIRA* (1823 /24) , EDITED BY MEIR HALEVI LETTERIS IS THE NEW *ME'ASEF* FOR THE ISRAELITES / Moshe Pelli**

Ha-Tsefira, edited and published by the young writer Meir Halevi Letteris, was envisioned by its editor as "the New *Me'asef*," namely, a revival of the *Ha-Me'asef* journal that had been discontinued twelve years earlier. It was launched as *Bikurei Ha-'Itim* was publishing its fourth volume (1823). Although Letteris published several of his poems in the latter journal, he made no reference to it in his own journal. Ostensibly, the new publication was intended to serve the readership in Galicia, Poland, and Russia.

In his editorial, Letteris explained the reason for the introduction of the new journal. First, he noted, the Enlightenment had augured a new era; cited the awareness of the new times of the Enlightenment, as the *Maskilim* were now able to come out in public and declare their loyalty to the *Haskalah*. Second, he stated his goal of promoting the revival of the Hebrew language and encouraging the young to enlist in this effort by engaging in the study of Hebrew.

This periodical owes its importance to several seminal contributions that exemplify the nature of the Galician *Haskalah*. Basing himself on Wieland's German translation, Letteris translated Lucian's satire on Alexander of Abonoteichus, the fraudulent prophet who deceived his people. In this classical

The analysis of the findings and, particularly, the breakdown of the female sports journalists' experiences reveal striking similarities between the place of women in sports media and the female presence in military combat units. The fact that gender segregation is practiced openly and officially in both the military and in sports has led inevitably to affinities and similar characteristics. In both instances, the *body* and physical activity appear to dictate the very essence of the experience, thus seemingly validating and justifying outright segregation between men and women and the marginalization of the latter in production and involvement. This said, the study also reveals emerging similarities between practices shaped by women in the sports media and those observed among female soldiers in combat roles. For instance, female sports journalists tend to rebuff traditional femininity in favor of emulating patterns of behavior more commonly seen among male journalists. One of the most conspicuous findings in this context is the trivialization by female sports journalists of the sexual harassment that they face at their news desks and in sporting events.

satire, Letteris alluded to parallel deceitful practices by the *Hasidim* and their rabbis, thereby participating in the continuous Maskilic struggle against this sect.

In one of the other important articles, Juda Leib Miseses examined the lack of general knowledge and limited access to non-Jewish disciplines among the Jews. As the other nations were making progress in the Age of Reason, he argued, the Jews were being kept in ignorance and superstition. He accused the host countries of limiting Jews' access to higher education and the rabbinic leadership of prohibiting their flock to read books that opposed their views.

In the third seminal article, another *Maskil*, Yaakov Shmuel Byk, who later turned toward Hasidism, also analyzed the spiritual, social, and economic illnesses of Jewish society and suggested that they be remedied by cultivating three major aspects of Judaism: *Torah*, *hokhma* (wisdom), and the practice of beneficial occupations. In particular, Jews should be encouraged to acquire practical occupations that would benefit society and, at the intellectual level, to study the great thinkers of Judaism: Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Wessely, and Mendelssohn, among others. The inclusion of the two Maskilic pundits shows the impact of early *Haskalah* on its development in later years.

A fourth item of importance is a letter by the renowned Hebrew philosopher Nahman Krochmal, who was persecuted by the *Hasidim* for communicating with Karaites. In the letter,

Krochmal explained the background of the event and tells his side of the story.

THE MERGER THAT FAILED: *HA-MELITS* AND *HA-TSEFIRA* NEST TOGETHER / Gideon Kouts

The merger of two newspapers that have separate “personalities,” traditions, and leaderships is commonplace when the print media tumble into crisis and publishers of financially solid papers acquire troubled vehicles. This phenomenon leads naturally to the restriction of freedom of information and multiplicity of views. The Hebrew press, however, has always been engulfed in crisis, including at its inception. This paper recounts an interesting attempt to impose such a merger on two pioneering organs of the Haskala movement in Imperial Russia, at the initiative of an ideologically sympathetic creditor and sponsor. The failure of this attempt gave the Hebrew press two central independent newspapers that, in their best years, attracted relatively large readerships and became landmarks in the history of this press precisely because of the difference between them.

Ha-Melits, a weekly that first appeared on October 11, 1860, in Odessa, is recorded in Jewish history as the principal organ of the Hebrew intelligentsia in Russia from the 1860s onward and an important and vibrant forum for disputation over issues of cardinal concern in the Jewish public sphere. The paper’s subtitle explains its intended role as mouthpiece and mediator: “The advocate [Heb.: *Ha-Melits*] between the People of Jeshurun [the Jewish people] and the government, between faith and Enlightenment.” Its founder, editor, and subsequently also a prodigious champion of Russian Jewry vis-à-vis the authorities and in the Jewish international arena was Aleksander Zederbaum (EReZ), born in Zamość, near Lublin, Poland.

Ha-Tsefira, the large rival Haskala weekly that debuted on January 23, 1862, in Warsaw, capital of Poland (then part of Imperial Russia), was the product of a totally different journalistic philosophy. Its founder, the autodidact scholar and scientist Chaim Zelig Słonimski (CHaZaS) of Białystok, a preeminent opponent of the Ultra-Orthodox, was termed by Nahum Sokolow “the scientific Maskil from the Talmud.” Słonimski aspired to reach out to the Jews of Poland by offering them the first local newspaper in Hebrew that would champion Enlightenment and modernization by attracting readers to natural science and technological innovations.

Słonimski had to close down his newspaper after twenty-five issues, on July 25, 1862, because he had been appointed to the post of censor in Zytomir. *Ha-Melits*, in contrast, continued to appear but was unable to increase its circulation. Even after three full years of activity, it had no more than 1,000 subscribers and generated no profits. Thus, Zederbaum turned to the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment and applied for support. His letter paved the way to the first attempted merger of newspapers in the Hebrew press. Just then, the Society’s committee was negotiating with Słonimski over the reinstatement of his newspaper, *Ha-Tsefira*, in Warsaw. A newspaper devoted largely to imparting popular science for the masses seemed very important to many of the committee members, who, still prejudiced against the new media in the Jewish world, disapproved of the aggressiveness and raucousness of *Ha-Melits*. However, *Ha-Melits* had attained a stature that ruled out any overt support for its rival. Thus, the committee proposed that Słonimski contribute a regular science column in *Ha-Melits*, which would, practically speaking, take up half the newspaper.

Dr. Aaron Isaac Goldenblum, Zederbaum’s deputy and son-in-law, described the merger period and what it implied for the committee’s work: “During this time [...] the committee meetings dealt almost exclusively with quarrels between the editors. CHaZaS would send the committee members letters full of complaints and allegations against Zederbaum, who in turn would demonstrate bombastically that he was right in all respects. Słonimski would submit a lengthy article about the latest comets for the supplement and Zederbaum would instead publish a lengthy article about the yeshivas in the towns of Lithuania. ‘Yeshivas meet the definition of nature, too,’ he would advise the committee.” Each editor had his own nature.

In addition to the personal rivalries, the differences in outlook were hard to bridge.

In Issue no. 6 of Year 5, after four months of tense “merger,” the column was discontinued.

It took *Ha-Tsefira* until July 8, 1874, to reappear. Initially in Berlin, it returned to Warsaw in 1875. *Ha-Melits* moved from Odessa to the imperial capital, St. Petersburg, in 1886.

IMPORTANT MILESTONES IN THEODOR HERZL'S JOURNALISTIC CAREER BEFORE *NEUE FREIE PRESSE* / Hedwig Ujvári

The year 1891 was an important milestone in the early career of Herzl, who would eventually earn quite a reputation as a playwright and correspondent for German newspapers. It was the embodiment of his journalistic ambition to be hired as the Paris correspondent of *Neue Freie Presse* was. The ramified professional literature on the persona of this man, almost too copious to estimate today, makes virtually marginal reference to the early stages of his journalistic career, from his departure from Budapest up to his stay in Paris. This article tries to fill the void by probing Herzl's correspondence and journal, which have been scientifically edited and published, and by describing the important newspapers and key personalities of the time.

Herzl conceived of German culture as a world in which intellectual goods trump material goods. It was an outlook with which he wished to identify. To his mind, the affiliation with German culture that he coveted would be fulfilled if he were to become a successful house playwright for the Vienna Burgtheater or a permanent correspondent for *Neue Freie Presse*. His letters from his pre-Paris years attest to an ardent inner need to prove himself and earn recognition: Herzl aspired not only to fast success but to lasting success as well. Although resounding success as a playwright eluded him, he became a particular favorite of the Viennese public as the Paris correspondent for *Neue Freie Presse*. This popularity, however, was preceded by

many futile attempts to land a post with many Viennese and German newspapers.

Why was *Neue Freie Presse* so important to him? By what virtue did this newspaper merit such a prestigious reputation? In Austria, there were several salient currents in public opinion, e.g., the Catholic-conservative, the Christian-socialist, the socialist, and the antisemitic. Many considered the press the most important medium for the shaping of public opinion, and among its organs *Neue Freie Presse* was the most influential. Its editor, Moriz Benedikt, was regarded as one of the most influential personalities in Austria and for good reason. His paper championed assimilation, exuded liberal openness, and safeguarded the German cultural hegemony without segueing into antisemitism. Anyone who managed to publish in this newspaper, or to be written about in it, was deemed to be "in" irrespective of his or her racial, religious, or ethnic affiliation.

In early October 1891, Herzl received an offer from the imperial capital: the post of Paris correspondent of *Neue Freie Presse*. He accepted it with no vacillations whatsoever. "This is the springboard by which I can advance," he wrote to his parents that month. He held the position until July 1895 and afterwards edited the columnists' department in Vienna. In this manner, he fulfilled his journalistic aspirations.

DROWNING IN THE RED SEA: THE YIDDISH COMMUNIST PRESS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLEGIANCE TO SOVIET IDEOLOGY IN THE 1930S / Ruth R. Wisse

In late August 1929, after months of disputation over Jewish access to the Western Wall, Arabs began to riot across Mandatory Palestine. The murder and maiming of over 400 Jews, most of them yeshiva students in Hebron and Safed, reminded Jewry both in Palestine and elsewhere of the Ukrainian pogroms a decade earlier. Jewish organizations throughout the world, including in America, began mobilizing on behalf of the Jews of Palestine, and the American Yiddish press did the same. On August 25, 1929, the Communist newspaper *Morgen Frayhayt* reported, "20 Dead, 150 Wounded in Battles between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem." The next day, *Frayhayt* accused the British of having sanctioned the Arab violence and having

failed to protect the Jewish victims.

On August 27, however, the tables turned: *Frayhayt* defined the murders as the opening of an "Arab Revolt against England." The Arab workers and peasants, the paper said, were demanding the distribution of land to the masses and were responding legitimately against the "Jewish fascism" that had provoked the riots. The Arab uprising, the paper explained, had broken out due to Zionist imperialism that had victimized the Arabs. The new line had been dictated to the editorial board by the Comintern, the Soviet Communist International.

Frayhayt's attack on the Jews in Palestine outraged readers and newsstand owners alike. The American Yiddish Writers'

Association also condemned *Frayhayt* and expelled its associates. In this turgid atmosphere, a breakaway group from *Frayhayt* came out with a weekly journal, *Vokh*, devoted to “culture, literature, education, art, theater, music, and the like.” It proposed to navigate between the positions of *Frayhayt* and those of its opponents and to strike a balance between Jewish consciousness and allegiance to the Communist camp. *Vokh*’s platform championed the advancement of Yiddish culture in the spirit of communism. Its writers expressed views on Zionism, Palestine affairs, the Birobidzhan scheme, Yiddish culture, Soviet communism, and life in America in journalistic pieces, prose, feuilletons, and poetry, a selection of which is presented and analyzed in the article.

The article reviews the edifying oeuvres and diverse attitudes of the writers and editors of *Vokh*, including many of the leading Yiddish writers of the time: Aron Leyeles, Leib Feinberg, Efraim

Auerbach, Isaac Raboy, Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, Avrom Reisen, Leivick Halpern (H. Leivick), Menachem Borisho, and Levi Joshua Shapiro (Lamed Shapiro). It sheds particular light on the variegated outpourings of H. Leivick, Lamed Shapiro, and Moyshe-Leyb Halpern.

Although short-lived, *Vokh* served as an important venue for American Yiddish creative art in its time. It may serve as a lens through which the communist Jewishness of that era may be viewed and as a historical mirror of the state of mind in the interwar Yiddish culture and its responses to the events of that fateful period in Jewish history. In addition to its literary value, *Vokh* is useful for those interested in tracking the change in Jewish communism’s attitudes toward Soviet policies due to World War II, the Holocaust, Stalin’s antisemitism, and the establishment of the State of Israel.

FROM “INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS OFFICER” TO “MEDIA ADVISER”: THE METAMORPHOSES AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE ROLE OF SPOKESPERSON IN THE CIVIL SERVICE / Yehiel Limor, Baruch Leshem

Ever since Israel was established, its government ministries have been sustaining a steadily growing population of spokespersons, PR people, and media advisers—demonstrating a permanent and lasting process of institutionalization of the spokesperson’s role in the government apparatus.

The role of spokesperson in government offices has been evolving in two parallel and contrasting ways. One is the reinforcement of spokespeople’s status, job definition, and numbers, along with recognition of their being members of the civil service—something that entails, among other things, hiring by competitive bidding based on professional qualifications and skills. The second process is the weakening of their status due to the creation of the function of media adviser, who enjoys proximity to the minister and a senior status in the eyes of the media and also, of course, the entire ministry staff.

One might hypothesize that the consistent growth in the number of spokespersons and media advisers at government ministries, as well as other public apparatuses, should instill democratic outlooks among ministers and senior officials. By this reasoning, such officials should be “transparent” and should regularly report their actions and feats to the public, mainly via the mass media. However, one may also regard the proliferation of spokespeople as the reflection of a media

reality that forces government offices and those at their helm to establish and activate mechanisms of response to inquiries from the mass media. Developments on the media scene, as well as technological innovations and changes in the regulation of electronic media, have led over the past two or three decades to the emergence of hundreds of new media outlets: print (chiefly local press), broadcast (new television networks including cable news, regional radio, and even educational radio), and online (web sites and social networks). These outlets gave birth to hundreds of information-thirsty “calves,” requiring the governmental “cow” to develop appropriate ways in which to deliver the surging demand for “milk,” i.e., information. The ministries of Education and Culture and of Justice are two salient cases in point. In 1952, the Ministry of Education had one spokesperson, who *ex officio* was also in charge of educational and cultural publications. By 1998, the spokesperson’s function was being handled by a three-member team, whereas in 2012 the Ministry had eight spokespeople (not including aides), including five at the Ministry’s district offices and one for the non-Jewish sector. The job slots for these six spokespersons had been created in response to the need to cope with the hundreds of local newspapers and the evolving and growing sectoral media in Arabic. At the Ministry of Justice, the spokesperson’s

function was handled by two people in 1998 and ten in 2012 due to the appointment of spokespeople at the district bureaus of the State Attorney's Office.

The proliferation of spokespersons in the government apparatus, however, may be explained differently: the

employment of a spokesperson (usually described as a "media adviser" or a "personal adviser") has gradually become a status symbol for ministers and senior officials, something like "I've got a (personal) adviser—*ergo* I exist."

THE CITY OF TEL AVIV SENDS YOU A MESSAGE: FROM PUBLIC RELATIONS SYSTEM TO SPEAKING SYSTEM / Eran Eldar

At the establishment of the state of Israel, the national government undertook the task of sending public messages, such as Independence Day postcards, posters, folders and letters, to its citizens. But this was different on a municipal level, in which communication with the public "cooked" rather slowly as opposed to the rapid progress at the national level. The necessity of a municipal spokesperson's office or another system to convey messages and engage in public relations was quite slowly recognized. But it eventually might have been recognized mainly due to administrative, political and non-ideological reasons.

This article examines the development of public relations and the later establishment of the spokesperson's office in the

Tel - Aviv municipality during the intense urban development phase of the 1950's and the 1960's. It must be stressed that establishing communication with the citizens of Tel Aviv was quite complex. The first prominent figure within the Tel-Aviv municipality who understood the importance of public relations, and attempted to develop this sort of communication was Matityahu Kalir. Kalir's activity in this field began in the early 50's as he progressed in the ranks of the city administration and became head of the public relations department. In subsequent years the public relations department was replaced by the city spokesperson's office. This article tells this story and analyzes the multifaceted development of public relations as part of the urban development processes in Tel Aviv.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER – INDEED? BEN-ZION KATZ: FRIEND AND FOUNDER OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF SHAUL TCHERNICHOVSKY / Ido Bassok

The friendship between the journalist and historian Ben-Zion Katz (1875-1958) and the prominent "Jewish Revival" poet, translator and physician Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875-1943) was far from an expected one, given the wide gaps between their backgrounds, education and worldviews: Katz was a "Litvak" scholar and Tchernichovsky came from simple, rural Ukrainian Jewry; Katz maintained a quasi-traditional worldview, while Tchernichovsky was thoroughly secular and he embodied the "New Jew" in his poetry and lifestyle. Nevertheless, from the moment Katz became involved in convincing Tchernichovsky to work for the Shtibel Publishing House as a translator of classic texts from ancient Greek and English, he (Katz) acted as a kind of doting father to the poet-physician, who was apparently quite naïve and not pragmatic. During the 1920s, when both lived in Berlin, Katz pressed Tchernichovsky to write a series

of chronicles about the Odessa of his youth for an American Yiddish journal, and also managed to make him a salaried editor of the prestigious journal "Ha-T'kufa." The pinnacle of his support was being the promoter of the expensive 10 volume Jubilee Edition of Tchernichovsky's writings, commencing on the latter's 50th birthday and finally completed seven years later.

When the two lived in Palestine in the 1930s, their relationship continued, the Katz' home being one of the few places visited by the poet. Similar political views led to their cooperation in the campaign to clear Revisionist Abraham Stavsky of the charge of murdering the Labor Zionist leader Arlozorov. During the last years of Tchernichovsky's life the two lived in adjacent buildings in Tel Aviv. Shortly after the poet's death, Katz published a series of memoirs about his friend which could form a basis for a biography of Tchernichovsky.

WHEN THE MOBILIZED WAS BEAUTIFUL AND THE BEAUTIFUL WAS MOBILIZED / Yael Darr

Thoughts about the ostensibly inherent conflict between “political” and the “beautiful in its own right” in canonic children’s literature in pre-statehood Israel

The article examines the Yishuv-era literary oeuvre in the Histadrut periodicals for children, the children’s supplement of *Davar* and *Davar li-Yeladim*, and refutes a prevalent assumption in the study of the Labor Movement’s hegemonic legacy for children of that period. Citing the multiplicity of literary voices that Labor aimed at young readers in the 1930s and 1940s, I argue that the movement maintained an intentional poetical duality between a blatantly “political” literature, tasked with paving a “correct” political way, and a literature that defined itself as decidedly anti-political—“beautiful in its own right.”

Therefore, rather than analyzing these poetical options on the basis of an oppositional paradigm, the article suggests that

both were read at the time as “political” for two main reasons: They were printed by the movement’s publishing houses and the vast majority of contributors identified publicly with the Labor Party.

The article argues that the antithesis model, which assumes an inherent dispute concerning “*belles-lettres*” for children—contrasting the political with the “beautiful in its own right”—reflects the external struggle of the Modernistic group, *Yahdav*, in the field of poetry for adults. Before statehood was declared, this struggle had not yet permeated the field of children’s literature. After the Modernists attained canonical status in the field of adult literature, their paradigm of “political” vs. “autonomous” literature became a poetical convention. Only later, however, in the 1950s and 1960s, did it penetrate children’s literature as well.

DAVAR FOR CHILDREN DURING THE ARAB REVOLT / Meir Chazan

Davar li-Yeladim (Davar for children), the children’s edition of *Davar*, was pivotal or elementary-school Jewish children in Palestine during the latter part of the 1930s—not only due to its quality but also for the prosaic reason that it had almost no competitors from its loyal readers’ point of view. *Davar li-Yeladim* was a newspaper of the Labor Movement, which had established its hegemony in Yishuv society during that decade. It was one of the finely honed tools that, directly and indirectly,

aided the Labor Movement to become the dominant factor in the lives of Jews in Palestine. This article outlines some of the central nodes in which *Davar li-Yeladim* described, praised, and sometimes even “sanctified” events during the 1936–1939 Arab revolt. In those years, *Davar li-Yeladim* was one of the most interesting mass media that represented, expressed, and refined the political-ideological path that the Labor Movement had paved to deal with the generation’s challenges.

PERIODICAL FOR BOURGEOIS CHILDREN: HA’ARETZ SHELANU IN THE EARLY 1950S / Rima Shikhmanter

This article describes the early 1950s editorial policy of the children’s periodical *Ha’aretz Shelanu* (Our *Ha’aretz*) (1951–1985). The children’s periodicals of the time—just like the grown-up press—represented sectoral or partisan political interests. The most important periodicals in this class were linked to socialist parties. *Davar li-Yeladim* (Davar for children) (1936–1985), although officially a paper of the Histadrut (the federation of trade unions), actually represented Mapai, the governing party during most of that time, *Mishmar li-Yeladim* (*Mishmar* for children) (1945–1985) was associated with the left-wing party Mapam. *Ha’aretz Shelanu*, like the adult newspaper *Ha’aretz* to which it was affiliated, was commercial, non-partisan,

and tailored to the needs of a readership that opposed, or did not identify with, socialist parties or the political Left. Thus, it represented the positions of the bourgeoisie and filled a niche that was empty at the time.

The article explains the success of the sectoral children’s press in the Yishuv and the early statehood years and places *Ha’aretz Shelanu* in its political-cultural context.

In the early 1950s, *Ha’aretz Shelanu*, unlike the two older periodicals, became a venue for writers whose political positions denied them a place in the socialist papers. It represented—hence legitimized—the everyday lives of middle-upper-class children, championed progressive liberal values, and emphasized

the fulfillment of democracy and civil rights for all inhabitants of the country. In the early 1950s, it even tried to free itself of the standard national agenda, toning down its reference

to Israeli festivals and observances and coming out against consensus positions.

BOY TAKES GIRL ... AND GIRL TAKES BOY / Dalia Liran-Alper, Orly Tsarfaty

The article uses thematic analysis to study the representation of gender in the ultra-Orthodox children's commercial periodical *Yeladim* (Children).

The blossoming of ultra-Orthodox children's periodical literature in Israel from the 1990s onward illuminates a striking phenomenon.

Study of the contents of the periodicals opens a window onto the world of children in ultra-Orthodox society. The children's periodicals of this society are ideological vehicles that allow one to decipher the role assigned to children by a society that is characterized by patriarchal notions and standards and maintenance of gender segregation.

The picture that emerges shows that within the range

of approaches toward the representation of gender—from conservatism to the embracing of equality—the discourse in the periodicals gravitates toward the traditional-conservative pole.

Modesty as a normative requirement applies to both boys and girls but “policing the body” is more severe and extreme for girls. The periodicals play an important role in the befriending process that establishes clear gender roles in ultra-Orthodox society; by doing this, they serve as a supervising agent of a community that aims to develop mechanisms of internalization and self-supervision among its young readers.

Despite the gender segregation, it is important to emphasize that the periodicals themselves are public spheres in which the genders encounter each other.

A TRUE ALLY OF HEBREW / Motti Neiger

In Memory of Professor Raphael (Rafi) Nir (1930–2012)

The philologist, media researcher, and educator, Professor Raphael Nir, died on August 22, 2012 at age 82.

Professor Nir—Rafi to the many who knew and loved him—was productive and active to his last day. Although I acquired my schooling at the Department of Communication of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I became acquainted with Rafi the person mainly during his term as chair of the curriculum committee at School of Communication at Netanya Academic College, when we took many enjoyable trips by taxi from Jerusalem to Netanya and back. On those trips, as each other's “captive audience,” we discussed current affairs from the perspective of Rafi's typical pluralistic worldview and, at slightly more intimate moments, we spoke about family, moments of happiness, and reminiscences. The warmth that he exuded when spoke about his family, his wife Miriam, and his children and grandchildren always gave the right perspective on what really counts in life. The trait that typified Rafi, although one might wrongly stereotype him as a square “Yekke,” was an incessant wish to innovate and modernize rigid, normative, puristic frameworks. As tenderhearted as he was as a person, he

was equally flexible as a researcher. This quality was mirrored in his approach to the Hebrew language that he loved so deeply. He wished to investigate it in its practical manifestations, in the way people use it in daily life, and, more specifically, in the mass media. His aim in this regard defied convention in the 1970s and 1980s; the fact that it is perceived today as altogether trivial also attests to Rafi's contribution as a groundbreaker.

It is hard to sum up in a few lines the lifework of a man who publish dozens of professional articles and left behind so many students, especially because the characteristic that sets his ramified oeuvre apart is that it while branched in different directions—Hebrew language, education, and media studies—it managed to integrate them and, thereby, to innovate. Nir was active as a faculty member at the School of Education and the Department of Communication at the Hebrew University and, after his retirement, co-founded the School of Communication in Netanya and chaired its teaching committee for a decade. He furthered the cause of Hebrew education and teaching at David Yellin College and chaired the Hebrew language curriculum committee at the Ministry of Education. A summary of the varied aspects of Nir's scholarly work may be found in the first part of a book that came out about a dozen years

ago: *The Rafael Nir Jubilee Book: Studies in Communication, Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hebrew), published shortly after he retired from teaching at the Hebrew University. (As for Nir's contribution to lexicology, see Berman, 2000; on his contribution to language education in Israel, see Rosner, 2000. His publications list was edited in the aforementioned book by Asif and Schwarzwald, 2000.)

One may attempt to identify Prof. Nir's singularity as a researcher by contemplating two of his last articles. His very last published article—he managed to take it to press shortly before his death—“On Silence as a Speech Act” (Nir, 2012a)—may be seen as an example of the way his articles integrated the disciplines of language, education, and communication. It begins with reflections on whether silence may be an act of speech, namely, a linguistic statement that has practical meaning. After all, he muses, silence is a none or a null act, whereas we customarily think of the linguistic act as valid by existence. Although the article begins with a question from applied linguistics, it turns immediately to examples from the mass media: how the silence of a politician in response to a radio interviewer's remark is perceived, or what we think about a person who is known as having “invoked the right to silence.” This transition from a linguistic question to its application, leading pragmatics, semantics, and rhetoric to an intersection in the context of mass media, is typical of Rafi Nir's entire contribution; it explains the broad circles of researchers, teachers, and students who found novelty and interest in his writings. As the article continues, Nir investigates silence in broader contents: silence as a polysemic statement (one that lends itself to multiple meaning), silence in its culture-bound aspects, the possibility or impossibility of silence in writing, silence as irony, and silence in the Jewish sources. All these give evidence of Rafi's breadth as a person and a researcher and exemplify the way he attracted students as though by glue by linking these diverse worlds.

In another article, this one posthumous, “The Aphorism as a Pedagogic Text” (Nir, 2012b), he investigated the aphorism as a “mini-text,” a brief autonomous textual unit, a small vessel that retains much content. His study of aphorisms joined company with his previous research on mini and brief texts such as election slogans, commercials, and newspaper headlines. In this article, as in other opuses, Nir exhibits literary sensitivity and does not

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forgo poetic analysis as a complement to painstaking linguistic analysis. However, despite his excitement about the aphorism and its pithiness, Nir warns against treating aphorisms as axioms and as representing almost unchallengeable truth. It is from this perspective, mentioning the practice of pasting aphorisms on school classroom walls as decorations, that he insists that “the contents of aphorisms be taught *critically*. The aphorism is indeed an important component of the sociocultural heritage but it does not follow that we must accept the content of every aphorism without challenge, as if suited to every situation” (p. 26, emphasis in the original). These remarks, quoted from the last few paragraphs of his last article, encapsulate a spiritual testament by Nir as an educator, a philologist, and a media researcher: language is a meaningful element in our lives and one that surrounds us from childhood to advanced age, but for this very reason we should learn to master its mysteries and develop of them a critical toolkit for use in both everyday life and the mass media. We need to learn how, practically, “Life and death rest in the hands of language” and, by extension, to understand “how to do things with words” (as in the telling remark by Austen, the trailblazer of modern pragmatics)—not only to know how to put language to personal use but to develop a critical attitude toward its public aspects and its potential for manipulative use.

Memorial remarks for an academician in a professional journal tend to sum up the deceased's oeuvre and contribution to research. My remarks, however, would not be complete if I failed to relate to Raphael Nir's human aspects, since anyone who knew Rafi realized immediately that s/he was standing before not only a great researcher but also a superb figure, the embodiment of the dictionary definition of a *mentch*. Rafi was as much a paragon in his personal life as in his academic career, and his marriage of fifty-nine years to Miriam is an inspiration for the coupling that all of us do. Rafi, a dear and high-minded man, was beloved and appreciated by so many; his academic endeavors will continue to illuminate the path to wisdom and knowledge that all of us may follow.

Professor Raphael Nir was an ally of the Hebrew word, but the silence to which he addressed himself in his last article is appropriate as a final speech act on this occasion:

Those Hebrew words offer a moment of silence in his memory, may it be blessed.

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