

Journal of Media and Communications History in Israel and the Jewish World
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WHAT'S IN *KESHER* 50?

COMMUNICATING DESPITE CRISIS

We're already up to fifty editions of this modest scientific journal on the history of Jewish, Hebrew, and Israeli media and communication. That is nothing to take for granted in a brutal publishing world that harbors no kind feelings for scientific publications in any field that is steadily contracting in number and scale, especially in hard copy. It does, however, indicate the incessant and growing interest among researchers and readers in their media and their history as elements that cannot be circumvented in understanding today's world.

At this significant moment for the editorial board, we can only thank Tel Aviv University, which continues indefatigably to support the existence of the Shalom Rosenfeld Institute for Research of Jewish Media and Communication and its flagship vehicle, *Kesher*; the domestic and foreign institutes of higher education that continue to give *Kesher* a place of honor on their lists of refereed journals; the community of media researchers in Israel, amalgamated largely under the Israel Communication Association, to which most of the journal's contributors and readers belong; the historians and researchers in the humanities, the social sciences, and other fields, in Israel and abroad, who honor *Kesher* by presenting it with the fruits—sometimes their first fruits—of their research; the editors, typesetters, proofreaders, and producers; and our loyal readers. We hope to continue providing all of you, with no compromise on quality, with material that's useful but also intellectually enjoyable. To

avoid making ourselves into a historical or archaeological relic, we've recently posted all back issues online while retaining the hardcopy edition in its full scale and circulation. We're up to fifty editions and still counting.

This expanded gala edition begins with an article by the founder and first editor of *Kesher*, Dr. Mordechai Naor, containing several stories and revelations about the first editions of our journal. The main topic that we posted at the "gate of *Kesher*" is "Media in Times of Crisis." Actually, the appearance and activity of the media are always associated with some kind of crisis—an external crisis in the surroundings of the media, a crisis between the media and their surroundings, and crises within the media world itself. In the pages that follow, we try to deal with them all.

In the article that inaugurates this part of the journal, Noam Lemelshtrich-Latar asks a simple question in an extreme way: what will become of the journalistic profession amid its digitization and "robotization." Is the day approaching when the war correspondent will be replaced by a robotic doppelgänger? Uzi Elyada discusses the responses of the Hebrew press in Mandate Palestine to the trauma of the 1929 violence. Chen-Tzion Nayot investigates representations of the operations of the Irgun militia through the prism of this organization's propaganda. Amos Blobstein-Nevo continues to study the struggle between the Hebrew press and other institutions and

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 Shalom Rosenfeld Institute for Research of Jewish Media and Communication 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).

the foreign-language press in Israel during the country's first decade. Menachem Keren-Kratz writes about the virtual ramparts that the Neturei Karta media erected in the early statehood era. Ofira Gruweis-Kovalsky explores relations between the far-Right magazine *Sulam le-Mahshevet Herut Yisrael* (Ladder to a Philosophy of Jewish Freedom) and the Herut movement. Eran Eldar reviews editorials in the Israeli press during the tense run-up to the Six-Day War. Haim Frenkel and Hillel Nossek write about the representation of the Egyptian enemy in the Israeli press between 1970, when the War of Attrition ended, and 1973, when the Yom Kippur War broke out. Irit Zeevi and Deborah Dubiner study outdoor advertising that appeared during Operation Protective Edge. Aref Abu Qwedir studies the attitudes of Bedouin Arab adolescents toward relations with Jewish peers on online social networks.

The rest of the articles deal with specific manifestations and new perceptions in the history of Hebrew and Israeli media and their related institutions. This section of *Kesher* begins with Moshe Pelli's investigation of *Hatikva* as the anthem of the Haskalah movement in the journal *Kochbe Jizchak*, which appeared from the 1840s to the 1870s. Gideon Kouts identifies and analyzes the first interview in the Hebrew press, published in the newspaper *Ha-melitz* in July 1865. Zef Segal and Menahem

Blondheim describe how the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century journal *Ha-me'asef* created an "international social network" of rabbis that corresponds, in some ways, to today's social networks. Rafi Mann reveals and analyzes a document about the debate within the Government of Israel over establishing Army Radio in 1950. Ephraim Lapid and Clila Magen give an overview of the history of the Government Press Office, and Tal Laor offers historical landmarks in the development of educational radio in Israel.

In the Documents section, Mordechai Naor presents yet another unknown document—a letter (from the estate of Shabtai Tevet) in which Shimon Peres remonstrates with the editors of *Ma'ariv* about what he considers warped coverage of the Lavon Affair in that newspaper, raising problems in press-government relations that continue to simmer today.

In the past few months, we parted with the unforgettable media researcher and news anchor Dr. Itzhak Roeh and with Yaakov Gross, the documenter of Israeli cinema. Dov Shinar and Heally Gross present their eulogies in this edition.

Finally, all the regular sections are at the reader's service as usual. We'll be seeing you again in Edition 51.

The Editor

REVISITING *KESHER'S* EARLY EDITIONS / *Mordechai Naor*

Now that *Kesher 50* is in the reader's hands, I as the first editor of this journal and the steward of its first thirty-three opuses (1987–2003) allow myself to describe how it all began.

The idea behind *Kesher* belongs to Shalom Rosenfeld, who in the mid-1980s launched what he hoped would become a great research center focusing on Jewish and Israeli media from the nineteenth century onward. *Kesher*, the institute's organ, debuted in May 1987 and continued twice annually. Fancy full-color photos or illustrations of media personalities graced almost every cover; English translations of the abstracts also date to that time.

Past and present mingled in *Kesher*: the collapse of the Soviet empire and the rebirth of Jewish media there (*Kesher 7*, May 1990), Yitzhak Rabin's electoral victory from diverse media perspectives (*Kesher 12*, November 1992), contraction of the domestic print media through the closure of well-known newspapers (*Kesher 15*, May 1994), and little-known Jewish media history, such as the eighty (!) vehicles published in the Jewish immigrants' detention camps in Cyprus in 1946–1949 (*Kesher 16*). *Kesher 23* marked Israel's jubilee by presenting editorials of fourteen newspapers— from Communist to Sternist—that appeared on May 14–16, 1948.

In 1998, Rosenfeld's successor, Michael Keren, strengthened *Kesher's* research orientation and introduced “theme pieces” such as *Kesher 29*, devoted to the economic aspect of newspaper publishing, and *Kesher 31*, on the Zionist discourse and post-

Zionism in the Israeli and foreign Jewish media.

Now I offer a few personal remarks. Two of my contributions to *Kesher* over the years made waves. Chaim Weizmann is famous for having said, “No state is given to a people on a silver platter,” but where and when did he say it? All sources seem to have been ransacked to no avail. By searching the newspapers of December 1947, I found the answer: it happened on December 13 at a UJA fundraising convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. I reported this in *Kesher 15* (May 1993), whence it cascaded. In *Kesher 29* (May 2001), I looked into a local media myth: that *Ha-boqer*, on the morning of August 6, 1945, carried a lengthy front-page piece about a speech by Tel Aviv Mayor Israel Rokach and marginalized coverage of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. This “news” spread everywhere, including *Kesher 25* (May 1998). But it wasn't true. Combing the issues of *Ha-boqer* that month, I found the Hiroshima item right there on Page 1, with nary a word about Rokach. The erstwhile editor of *Ha-boqer* wrote me a thank-you note for setting the record straight.

My last *Kesher* was No. 33 (May 2003). The journal then took a time-out and reappeared in 2006 under the Institute's new head, Yosef Gorny, with Gideon Kouts as the editor. Gorny has retired but Kouts remains on the job. Let's hope he's there for the long haul, because *Kesher 50* is but a stopover on a lengthy journey.

TO OBSCURE OR TO EMPHASIZE? THE HEBREW PRESS IN MANDATE PALESTINE CONFRONTS THE “EVENTS” OF 1929 / Uzi Elyada

A largely placid decade in Mandate Palestine came to a shattering halt in late August 1929 with the murder of 133 Jews and the wounding of hundreds more in brutal massacres around the country. The article asks how the Hebrew-language press dealt with the trauma that the violence left behind.

On August 23, 1929, the day the violence erupted, the Mandate authorities imposed a nine-day gag on the Hebrew and Arabic press. When the moratorium ended, the three

Hebrew daily newspapers framed their coverage in black, listed the casualties, posted graphic photos, and groped for a term that would characterize what had happened. Words such as riots, pogroms, slaughters, and massacres appeared. Later, a euphemistic coinage—“events”—became common. Reportage on the aftermath of the violence in subsequent months, including trials of perpetrators and the work of a British investigative committee, demonstrated the feeling in the organized Jewish

community that this spate, unlike a precursor in 1920, had left an open wound that entailed through reconsideration of ways, means, and goals vis-à-vis both the British and the Arab population and its leadership.

Ahead of the first anniversary of the massacres, the Mandate authorities again imposed a gag order. This time the Hebrew

newspapers responded in diverse ways, including outright defiance (*Davar*) and intensifying the sense of trauma (*Do'ar ha-Yom*). As time passed, they gathered around the need to eradicate the “shame of 1929” in various ways including more liberal resort to proactive defense, by violence if necessary—some of which became interecine.

IRGUN OPERATIONS AS REFLECTED IN IRGUN PROPAGANDA DURING “THE REVOLT” / Chen-Tzion Nayot

The goal of an underground organization is to win hearts and minds. Therefore, the success of such an entity is significantly influenced by the media’s response to its activity. It matters little whether the response is positive or negative; the very fact that the media give the organization a platform for its activity is what creates the psychological and cognitive effect that the entity needs. Nevertheless, underground organizations are not satisfied with coverage by recognized and legal media; instead, they seek to convey their messages directly. For this purpose, they establish independent media that are loyal to their cause.

The Irgun, too, created media channels of its own for two main purposes: to disseminate its ideological and practical stances and to debate external agencies that sought to defame it. The Irgun used three central media for propaganda purposes during the “Revolt”: notices and fliers pasted up and scattered throughout the city streets, radio broadcasts from the soi-disant “Voice of Fighting Zion,” and the newspaper *Herut*, which was distributed directly to households and plastered on building walls.

The details and outcomes of military operations figured importantly in the Irgun’s propaganda. In many instances, such operations were presented laconically, as if only to credit the Irgun with actions that the general media reported without attribution of outcome. In other cases, detailed descriptions of operation were given in order to highlight the daring of the Irgun’s fighters and the organization’s, military capabilities,

technical prowess, creative thinking, and devotion to mission. The details of the operations were not central in the propaganda, which was dedicated to the operational arena.

In this respect, the Irgun’s propaganda had two main purposes: defining the organization’s goals and objectives and emphasizing the attainment of these goals while emphasizing the ethics of combat. Concerning these two points, the Irgun even engaged in polemics with the Mandate Government, various Yishuv elements, and the British media.

The Irgun battled the charge that its operating methods defined it as a terrorist organization. To uphold its claim to being a legitimate liberation movement, it assigned centrality to its goals and objectives on its propaganda agenda in the operational arena. Not satisfied with merely defining the goals of “the Revolt,” the Irgun sought to prove time and again that it remained true to its path, that it planned its operations deliberately to avoid endangering life, and that its fighters fought clean even when personally endangered. This was especially conspicuous after the bombing of the King David Hotel, which damaged the Irgun’s image severely.

The Irgun used propaganda to build and fortify its legitimacy as a national liberation organization, to increase its ranks of fighters, and even to encourage financial support for its struggle. Throughout the Revolt period, it never forgot that its operations, albeit important, were but a means to a political end.

CHUTZPAT HA-LA'AZ—HOW THE HEBREW PRESS TRIED TO WIPE OUT FOREIGN-LANGUAGE JOURNALISM IN ISRAEL'S FIRST CENTURY / Amos Blobstein-Nevo

More than 100 newspapers in fourteen different languages flooded the Yishuv and Israel in their first century. These vehicles, published alongside Hebrew ones, were intended for the hundreds of thousands of people who reached the country in the course of mass immigration.

Most of the foreign-language newspapers were published for political reasons by parties that wished to recruit immigrants for their cause. Others, however, were put out for commercial reasons by businesses and journalists who sought to capitalize on the immigrants' poor Hebrew. A third type of foreign newspaper was the kind that the Israel Defense Forces published for the educational purpose of easing the immigrants' acclimation and induction process.

The country's Hebrew-speaking journalists took no joy in these foreign-language papers, accusing them of impairing their income, reducing circulation, and stealing journalistic content. This being so, Hebrew journalism planned to do away with the foreign papers in various ways that were at once undemocratic and in transgression of the tenets of the "free press." The tactics included barring writers in foreign languages from admission to the association of journalists and pressuring politicians to reduce newsprint quotas and withhold press accreditation.

The struggle failed, partly because it was hypocritically managed and partly due to the Hebrew journalists' failure to gain support from the state leadership and politicians, who preferred political interests over national-education ones. Although the foreign-language papers did hinder the immigrants' acquisition

of proficiency in Hebrew and, in turn, slowed their acclimation, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and his leadership turned a blind eye for the sake of their political survival, which the foreign-language newspapers bolstered.

The study reveals that the Ministry of the Interior, tasked with licensing the foreign-language newspapers, found itself helpless and devoid of all standards with which to deal with the subject. Accordingly, it issued licenses to almost all comers. Senior politicians subjected interior ministers to pressure. Political parties sent seemingly unconnected individuals to apply for licenses that were actually intended for party purposes. Politicians and independent journalists used various ruses to turn papers that were licensed to appear three times a week into dailies.

Concurrently, political newspapers attempted in various ways to control their foreign-language peers in order to reach as many immigrants as possible. Given the existence of rival party newspapers and an independent foreign press, parties tried to control private newspapers with intent to silence them and widen their own influence. This was done by subsidizing such papers and purchasing or "renting" rival papers come election time.

(This is the second part of an article dealing with the all-out war against foreign-language newspapers in Israel. The first part, dealing with the war of liquidation that took place in pre-independence Israel in the 1930s and 1940s, appeared in *Kesher* 49).

WALLS OF SEPARATION: NETUREI KARTA'S MAGAZINES 1944–1958 / Menachem Keren-Kratz

Neturei Karta (Aramaic: the town guards) is considered the most radical of all Orthodox groups. In recent decades, its spokesmen have appeared regularly in the media in their traditional black attire and their distinctive haredi ("ultra-Orthodox") mien, standing alongside sworn enemies of the State of Israel and sometimes even Holocaust deniers. They

categorically maintain that Zionists are not genuine Jews and that the founding and existence of State of Israel are fundamental breaches of *halakha* (rabbinical law). By perusing the pages of Neturei Karta's periodicals, all of which contain the word "wall" in their title, the article traces the story of the movement's "golden era," from its establishment in the late 1930s to its

decline in the late 1950s.

During most of the British Mandate period (1917–1948), all non-Zionist haredim were organized under the auspices of the international haredi movement Agudath Israel. The largest non-Zionist haredi community—that of Jerusalem—was led by Va'ad ha-'Ir ha-Ashkenazi (the Ashkenazi Town Council), which in the late 1930s was renamed Ha-'Eda ha-Haredit (the Haredi Community).

Agudath Israel's non-Zionist ideology notwithstanding, three major developments in the 1930s nudged it toward greater cooperation with Zionist organizations: (a) the desire to take a more active part in setting the land that the British had designated as the future site of “a national home for the Jewish people”; (b) growing antisemitism in Europe and the need to rescue as many of the movement's followers there as possible; and (c) a wave of murderous attacks on Jews throughout Mandate Palestine by Arab nationalists. As the gap between Agudath Israel and the Zionists narrowed, the most extreme members of the former became dissatisfied and seceded to establish Neturei Karta.

In the mid-1940s, Neturei Karta emerged as the largest faction in elections for the 'Eda ha-Haredit's governing body. This induced the more moderate members of the organization, namely members of Agudath Israel, to leave it. Since then, the 'Eda ha-Haredit has represented only the radical anti-Zionist haredi groups, the most active of which was Neturei Karta.

Even within this extremist framework, Neturei Karta sought to preserve its status as the most radical faction. It did so by two means: by initiating an ongoing series of riots, demonstrations, and slander campaigns against various Zionist and even haredi targets, and by publishing its weekly magazine. This mouthpiece reported on the organization's ongoing activities, carried articles by rabbis who supported its stances, and constantly reiterated the group's uncompromising principles.

Neturei Karta's first magazine was founded in 1944, preceding its “hostile takeover” of the 'Eda ha-Haredit. Following the group's triumph, the weekly continued to berate Agudath Israel for its lenient positions, assailed the Zionist institutions, and took an uncompromising stand against the foundation of a Jewish state. Even after Israel came into being, the periodical continued its two-pronged attacks—against the state and against the religious parties that cooperated with it.

The study concludes its coverage of the Neturei Karta magazine in 1958, when Israel celebrated its tenth anniversary. By then it was clear that, despite hundreds of demonstrations and public protests on various issues, Neturei Karta remained a small and insignificant group. Not only did it have no influence on government and municipal policies and actions, as the religious parties did, but over time it even lost its hold on the 'Eda ha-Haredit's leadership. Although Neturei Karta is still active, it remains a tiny group and has never regained the public attention it attracted in its early years.

REPROOF OF LOVE—THE ISRAELI FAR RIGHT JOURNAL *SULAM LE-MAHSHEVET HERUT YISRAEL* AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE HERUT MOVEMENT 1949–1955 / Ofira Gruweis-Kovalsky

Several key events in 1949–1955, starting with the transition from Yishuv to sovereign Israel, gave the Israeli political structure its contours and had a dramatic impact on the Revisionist wing of the Israeli body politic. It manifested as an organizational change, i.e., the establishment of two new parties—Herut and the Reshimat ha-Lohamim (Fighters' List)—alongside the senior Revisionist Party. The very establishment of these parties, Herut in particular, was not an inevitable development within the Revisionist camp. During the electoral campaign for the Constituent Assembly (January 25, 1949), later to become

the First Knesset, a bitter struggle took place among the three of them. By July 1951, Herut was the sole political body with Revisionist tendencies that survived in the polls. Nevertheless, the struggle continued over the years, in a new form but with the same people. Herut endured under Menachem Begin while the far Right congregated under Israel Eldad and the circle surrounding his journal, *Sulam le-Mahshevet Herut Yisrael* (Ladder to a Philosophy of Jewish Freedom). The collective memory has it that this struggle was waged against Menachem Begin's leadership, which the far Right construed as overly

moderate. Research on that era, however, has overlooked both the Israeli far Right and the topics associated with it.

Thus, the article presents Eldad's attitude toward Herut and its leader, Begin, and its influence on the legitimacy granted to Begin in Israel's first years, through the prism of Eldad's journal. The main argument is that, during the period reviewed, Eldad's circles attempted to influence Herut into becoming a radical-Right party. The gambit failed and had two outcomes.

First, from the mid-1950s onward, the far Right headed in a new direction that set it apart from Herut and, thereby, marginalized itself. Second, joining of Herut by elements of the radical Right in 1949–1955 reinforced the legitimacy of Begin's leadership. Thus, contrary to the radicals' aim, this demarche strengthened not only Begin as a leader but also the Herut Party's moderate views.

JOURNALISTIC FRAMING AND A BIG SURPRISE: THE EGYPTIAN ENEMY IN THE HEBREW PRESS, 1970–1973 / Haim Frenkel and Hillel Nosssek

The Yom Kippur War caused Israelis to reassess the strength of the Arabs in general and of Egypt, its army, and its leaders in particular. Many in the Israeli academic community and public have since criticized the arrogance that allegedly characterized the IDF, the political echelons, and the press in the years building up to the war. Nevertheless, no empirical and systematic analysis has yet attempted to describe and explain the role of the press in shaping Israeli public opinion on these issues during that period.

Presented in this article is a content analysis of journalistic coverage during the years immediately preceding the war (1970–1973) in Israel's three major newspapers at the time (*Ha'aretz*, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, and *Ma'ariv*). The analysis focuses on three topics: 1) Egyptian President Sadat's personality and his status in Egypt and in the army; 2) the attributes and abilities of Egyptian soldiers; and 3) the operational capabilities of the Egyptian army and its command. The Israeli press is found to have depicted Sadat as a weakling whose status was eroding in the eyes of the Egyptian public and army and whose time in office was coming to an end. Egyptian soldiers were described as incapable and illiterate peasants whose performance had not improved since the Six-Day War. The Egyptian army was

portrayed as frustrated, incited against the regime, and led by men who had fled the battlefield in 1967. The Israeli press labeled the very idea of an attempt by this army to cross the Suez Canal as delusional and suicidal.

This depiction of the Egyptian enemy in the Israeli press is totally congruent with the assessments of senior IDF officers and high political echelons during that period, as cited in the press and as analyzed in retrospect in the abundant literature written since the Yom Kippur War. The research indicates that with respect to these topics, the press acted contrary to the expectations of normative journalistic theory, which posits that the press should challenge and oppose the political establishment in the treatment of public issues. The findings illuminate the role of the press in belittling the Egyptian enemy and its military might, consequently contributing to the complacency and euphoria that marked Israeli civil society as well as the military and political echelons in the years leading up to the war. Thus the press intensified Israelis' surprise at the Egyptian decision to go to war and the Egyptian army's operational achievements in the war's first stages.

“TOGETHER, WE SAY THANK YOU TO THE SOLDIERS”: ADDRESSERS AND ADDRESSEES IN OUTDOOR SIGNAGE DURING OPERATION PROTECTIVE EDGE / Deborah Dubiner and Irit Zeevi

Linguistic landscape researchers discuss the presence of language in the public space and the significance of this presence when examining a society and its values. By exploring linguistic landscapes, one may learn much about the society and the social context in which language, often accompanied by additional visual elements, is displayed outdoors. Signs of all types, including commercial and governmental billboards, shop signs, street signs, traffic signs, and private announcements, are considered when analyzing a region's linguistic landscape.

In some cases, outdoor signs are a means of displaying emotions as a response to stimuli. Emotions, in turn, are often expressed more openly at times of crisis than otherwise. During such periods, there seems to be an awakening of patriotic feelings and a tendency to express emotions through symbolic artifacts. By analyzing outdoor signs in Israel's public space during Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014), the article discusses the special dialogue that took place between addressers and addressees of such signage. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Who were the addressers of outdoor signs in the Israeli public space during Operation Protective Edge and what were their motives?
2. Where were the outdoor signs displayed and for whom were they intended?
3. What can this particular linguistic landscape teach us about

the relationship among the addressers, the addressees, and the location of the signs during the military operation?

The data source for the study is comprised of 100 different outdoor signs selected from a convenience sample of 300 photographs taken in diverse locations in Israel, from north to south. They are categorized by the roles of addressers and addressees as indicated by the signs as well as the place where they are displayed. A content analysis illuminates common themes embedded in the signs' visual and linguistic elements.

The analysis yields three major findings. First, during Operation Protective Edge there were specific groups of addressers and of signs. The addressers were governmental bodies (41 percent of the sample) and non-governmental entities such as social organizations, individuals, commercial firms, and demonstrators (59 percent). Second, initiators of the signs made a conscious choice regarding the places where their signs should be displayed: high-visibility locations such as major national highways, public and private buildings, house façades and fences, and buses. Third, an interrelationship among the addressers, the addressees, and the locations of the signs is found. Amid the reality of Operation Protective Edge, we found intertwined elements that brought about, and emerged from, the outdoor signs examined. The findings are discussed in light of Bakhtin's dialogic theory of discourse.

“IT CHALLENGES ME TO TALK TO YOU JEWS” / Aref Abu Qwider

Bedouin youth live in a traditional society that does not allow them to encounter peers from other societies, such as the Jewish one. In recent years, however, thanks to technological development, the two societies have been able to meet in a virtual environment. The internet has made communication between youth easy and handy via email and online social networks. In this study, I use questionnaires to examine the interaction of Bedouin teenagers with peers in virtual space, including communication and correspondence between Arab and

Jewish teens in online social networks. The results indicate that virtual friendship is consistent with the outcomes of research among Bedouin youth on their online activities. I found that social networking helps them break free from the traditions of Bedouin society and offers them new experiences that they cannot find in daily life. As for the need for connection, this relationship does not correspond to the way Bedouin youth perceive their affiliation with their original society.

“SINGING HATIKVA” IN THE MID-NINETEENTH-CENTURY JOURNAL *KOCHBE JIZCHAK*. / Moshe Pelli

Among the hundreds of songs and poems that appeared in the thirty-seven volumes of *Kochbe Jizchak* (1845–1873), the Haskalah journal in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at least thirteen were titled *Hatikva* (The hope) and five others centered on that theme. What’s more, the word *tikva* (hope), with or without the definite article, recurred in numerous articles. Hope made its first appearance in the premier edition of the journal and bowed out in the last. It’s intriguing for two main reasons: the place of hope in the value system of the Maskilim who populated this journal and the metamorphosis of the word, and the concept behind it, into Naftali Herz Imber’s *Tikvatenu* (Our hope), the 1878 opus on which Israel’s national anthem is based. If so, hope appears to spring eternal in this journal, much like the term *haskala* (enlightenment) itself.

The hope expressed is largely personal, linked to the individual’s yearning for a spiritually bright future. In some poems it begins with pessimism: diurnal life is disappointing but up ahead is the afterlife, in which things will be better. Other contributors articulate an innocent form of hope with which they can cope with all the trials God can send their way. Alternatively, hope manifests as a form of prayer, affirming the poet’s trust in Divine Providence. Two contributors express

hope at the national level: in the context of the revival of the Hebrew language and in “Love of Zion,” in which a young respondent rues his presence on foreign soil, no matter how enjoyable life there appears to be. This is an anomaly among Maskilim, who generally adopt the nationhood of their countries of residence and strive for total fulfillment there—a real, literal hope in the here-and-now.

This is not to say that hope evolves during the journal’s lifetime. The reality of Jews’ lives overshadows the rosy perception of hope and induces skepticism, negativism, pessimism, and irony. Several references to hope are totally negative; one of them appears in the very first edition. Contributors report dashed hope, useless hope, and hope that arises only because their current circumstances are so bleak. Hope boasts of its utility; the individual wants no part of it. One poet uses Ecclesiastes’ most memorable word, *hevel* (vanity), to describe hope. Indeed, the contributors stress the Jewish credic contexts of their hopes, be they high or dour, by embellishing them with Biblical terms and verse fragments.

The balance of optimism and pessimism in *Kochbe Jizchak* tilts in the direction of human experience: hope proliferates, it seems, because hoping is mankind’s natural predisposition.

ABRAHAM MAPU AND THE HEBREW PRESS: HOW THE FIRST INTERVIEW WAS BORN / Gideon Kouts

Abraham Mapu (1808–1867), patriarch of the Hebrew novel, reviled and avoided the Hebrew press for what he considered its lowly, sensationalist ways. With typical iconoclasm, he advanced his ideas through his books and used the press, with its mercantile practices, for his own mercantile interest in promoting his writings. Thus, with the help of his soi-disant exclusive literary agent and his publishers, he invoked methods that included something akin to crowdsourcing and solicited readers’ payments up front. These tactics, however—not exclusive to Mapu among Hebrew authors and publishers—were sliding toward desuetude due to authors’ delinquency in producing the promised writings, a sin of which Mapu was also guilty.

Then a new tactic was born: the journalistic interview, a genre just created in America. (Hebrew didn’t have a word for *interview* until Eliezer Ben-Yehuda invented one, *re’ayon*, decades later.) On July 13, 1865, *Ha-melitz* published an article by the correspondent Mordechai Yitzhak Kurlandsky about Kurlandsky’s meeting with Mapu in Mapu’s home, with quotations from the author’s answers to his questions. Kurlandsky emphasized the novelty of the genre and of his role as the initiator of the piece. What followed was reportage by a sympathetic if not fawning Kurlandsky about his tête-à-tête with Abraham Mapu.

The first question: Why did the last part of Mapu’s roman

a cléf 'Ayit Tsavu'a (Painted bird) take so long to publish? Mapu's answer: financing issues among other things. The second: Why had Mapu gone so long without share his writings with the public? The answer: multiple woes including personal illness, namely, not Mapu's famed aversion to publishing through the press. Kurlandsky even extracted information from Mapu about his side pursuit: teaching Hebrew while encouraging proficiency in and use of European vernaculars. Mapu seemed to be flattered by the interviewer's attention,

sharing professional correspondence concerning the translation of his works (translation being another endeavor that Mapu scorned).

The interview reverberated through the world of Hebrew literature but did not improve Mapu's relationship with the newspaper editors, who continued to disdain him due to his hands-off approach to their vocation. Mapu, in turn, continued to observe them from afar and complain about being mistreated.

THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK: *HA-ME'ASEF*, 1896–1914 / Zef Segal and Menahem Blondheim

The article investigates the gradual expansion of the international network of rabbinical contributors to the Jerusalem journal *Ha-me'asef* between 1896 and 1904. *Ha-me'asef* began as a dream of a twenty-nine-year-old editor, Ben-Zion Cuenca, who aspired to create more than a local journal with an international readership. What he wanted was an international journal with an international authorship, a journalistic hub of international communication.

Despite Cuenca's intentions, the first contributors were his students, teachers, and kin, all of whom members of a Jerusalem social circle of Sephardic rabbis. Although gaining international recognition was difficult in the early going, by the ninth year, contributors to the journal came from across the globe, from Tashkent in the east to Portland in the west, connecting rabbis from the various streams of Orthodox ideology. *Ha-me'asef* succeeded as the hub of a social network because

of its ideological, theological, and thematic flexibility. Even as the network linked Jewish scholars from around the globe, however, it marginalized the Jerusalem Sephardic community whence it originated. The Sephardi voice that set the tone in the first few years was replaced by East European, British, and American voices that addressed different topics in different dialects.

We examine both the geography of expansion, using GIS mapping, and the writers' networking, using Social Network Analysis methodologies, to understand the historical processes that powered the development of this international network. The history of the social network is described as an outcome of the geography of its members, their social milieu, and the personal history of its main protagonists, most importantly that of the editor, Cuenca.

THE GOVERNMENT DEBATE PRECEDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IDF RADIO (1950) / Rafi Mann

On September 25, 1950, a day after IDF Radio launched its inaugural broadcast to the sound of a traditional trumpet blast, the newspaper *Davar* trumpeted its own take on the event: "Yesterday was a great day for the Israel Defense Forces." The present article investigates the process that made that day possible.

The government resolution that created IDF radio, adopted

on September 7, 1950, traces its history to the hundreds of military radio stations that operated in World War II (including Mandate Palestine) as well as those of the Yishuv-era militias. Military transmissions were civilianized once Israel declared independence, the Voice of Israel allotting several hours per day to the armed forces. The army took two initiatives to reinstate its own transmissions in the belief that needs such as mobilization

of reserves were not being met in civilian ways. Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion concurred but was not allowed to make the decision on his own.

The government session on the topic was attended by Ben-Gurion, ten ministers, and high military officials. The debate concerned procedure in making the decision and by whom, civilian versus military authority over the army's transmissions, and the possibility that army radio would draw listeners away from civilian radio, which itself was under strain. Children's programming was thought necessary, given youngsters' interest in the army. The contents originally envisioned had nothing to offer religious soldiers; Rabbi I.M. Levin stepped in to lobby for them. Use of radio to enhance the army's role as a melting pot and a symbol of statehood encountered concern about overusing the IDF for non-military tasks. Still, everyone agreed that immigrant absorption needs had to be taken into account. Here a colonel in attendance expressed the condescension that was common at the time: army radio must be pitched to a

lower level than the Voice of Israel because "It'll be adjusted to soldiers of Algerian and Moroccan background." And it was thought that the lawful armed forces should have their own a broadcasting vehicle just in case the political opposition (Right and Left) might launch a putsch.

The vote on IDF radio was a narrow one despite Ben-Gurion's support: 5:4 in favor for a one-year trial period. When the year was over, no review was launched. In a typically Israeli manner, the decision reflected the balance of forces at that given moment; the modalities of implementation were never monitored. Absent a comprehensive and consistent media policy, IDF radio went its own way. From the late 1960s onward, it grew in listenership and became central in the Israeli media scene and in society all told.

By examining the minutes of the government discussions that brought IDF radio into being, the article demonstrates the added value of Media History to research focusing solely on the political, military, and/or social aspects of historical issues.

BETWEEN STRATEGY AND TACTICS: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY GLANCE AT THE GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE / Ephraim Lapid and Clila Magen

Even before the State of Israel came into being, the pre-state Jewish leadership—the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency—appreciated the importance of having in place an information bureau for the Jewish cause worldwide, including the Arab world, and for the state-in-the making. The Agency maintained such an auspice until statehood, giving it different names and staffing it with experienced personnel, mainly for the Anglophone population in the United States and Europe. When Israel was established, the Government Press Office (GPO) was founded. It was a time when governmental information emanated from the Office of the Prime Minister; the government ministries' spokespeople operated within narrowly defined purviews. Thus, the GPO became the leading purveyor of government information and spokespersonship. Over the years, a broad pluralism evolved in the latter domain and technological progress has changed the way the administration works with Israeli and visiting foreign journalists.

In the past decade, with the establishment of the National

Information Headquarters at the Office of the Prime Minister, the GPO has cut back on its information duties and stepped up its technical services and assistance for correspondents, chiefly foreign ones, in order to keep them up-to-date on core issues in government activity. Concurrently, it developed cutting-edge capabilities and amassed an archive of national and historical value that lends the government's conduct a visual dimension. Amazingly, however, the GPO, although in existence for more than seventy years, has attracted scanty attention in research on Israel's public-diplomacy array; in fact, it has been marginalized. Our comprehensive study sheds light on the GPO's historical development, with extensive reference to dilemmas that occupied its directors, and sets forth its main milestones over the years. The research was based on in-depth interviews with GPO directors and foreign correspondents and on copious documentation gleaned from newspapers, archives (IDF, State, and even private archives), and the Internet. In its years of existence, the GPO has changed repeatedly in both

its organizational structure and its remit. Most of the time, it has been perceived largely as a source of technical services for correspondents. The article shows that even when the GPO did concern itself with extensive technical aspects, it often branched into strategy and policy commensurate with the personal attitudes of its changing directors.

The GPO was and remains a leading player, along with the Foreign Ministry and the IDF Spokesperson, in managing the

important relationship between the government and foreign correspondents in times of crisis and normalcy alike. Its influence on the contents of Israel's public diplomacy, however, has been limited. In this context, it is worth asking whether the focus on the strategic facet of public diplomacy in Israel has not crowded out another dimension, an incomparably relevant and important one—that of tactics, in which the policy researched in this article is reflected in practice.

“THE MAGICAL YEARS”—DATA POINTS IN THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RADIO IN ISRAEL / Tal Laor

Radio is one of the earliest communication media and the most powerful. Therefore, it has much potential in teaching values, influencing public opinion, and promoting agendas. In Israel, although educational radio has operated in Israeli academic institutions for more than twenty-five years, comprehensive research on it is sorely lacking. The main idea of the present study is to fill in the empty numbers in the literature and document data points in the historical development of educational radio in Israel's universities and academic colleges.

This educational project in Israeli academic institutions was the fruit of an encounter between two main social forces. One was Kol Yisrael (Voice of Israel), a centralized public communication authority that sponsors the projects and activities. The other—the executive arm of the endeavor—comprises academic institutions that are considered prestigious and in many ways were the next generation's infrastructure. To trace the evolution of the project, we analyzed documents from the Voice of Israel archives and interviewed some of VOI's senior personalities. The findings suggest that the project surmounted crucial and complex bureaucratic obstacles in working with three major government agencies: the Ministry of Education,

the Ministry of Communication, and the Broadcasting Authority. Notably, senior education ministers meddled with the contents of educational radio.

The process began in the early 1990s. Today, forty-seven educational radio stations operate in more than eighty education intentions: elementary and high schools, community centers, colleges, and universities countrywide. The vision of the founders of the project was to train media professionals who understand media structure and subscribe to other liberal and democratic values. It is also proposed that the educational-radio project sought to enhance understanding of the communication field. It being assumed that media affect all aspects of life in Israeli society, education in correct consumption and against uncontrolled communication is needed. The project also aims to train the communication industry workforce. Non-formal educational radio has two additional goals: to compete with, and to offer an alternative to, regional radio and the Voice of Israel's ongoing monopoly. Thus the path of the project circumvents Army Radio, it being assumed that the media industry obtains much of its workforce from graduates of military stations anyway.

SHIMON PERES V. *MA'ARIV* (1960) / Mordechai Naor

The Lavon Affair was probably the most tumultuous political and media episode in Israel's early history. It was an outgrowth of the “shameful business” (1954), which had brought on the resignation/termination of Minister of Defense Pinchas Lavon

and touched off polemics over who had given the order to activate a bumbling Israel-sponsored espionage unit in Egypt. In 1960, the affair erupted again when the discovery of new evidence prompted Lavon to depict himself as the victim of a conspiracy.

The affair crashed into the public domain on September 25, 1960, through the mediation of the newspapers *Ma'ariv* and *Davar*. *Ma'ariv* headlined its piece: “Ben-Gurion Orders Reinvestigation of Testimonies that Ousted Lavon in 1955,” adding “Investigative Committee under Justice Haim Kahan Established.” *Davar* ran a lengthy article about ominous remarks that Lavon was about to make. From then on, the snowball grew in mass and speed. Two camps formed: one under Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, favoring investigating the affair solely through the aforementioned committee, and the other, backed by Levi Eshkol, seeking a compromise for Lavon’s sake and to keep Mapai, then the ruling party, from splitting. As the internecine rivalry escalated, Mapai was riven anyway.

From then on, as every day’s newspapers carried sensational reports about the development of the standoff, the press itself fell into rivaling Ben-Gurion and Lavon camps (with one paper,

Davar, of divided sympathies). Most of the papers backed Lavon in his quest to clear his name in some manner. Among them was *Ma'ariv*, the country’s largest-circulation newspaper at the time. Although *Ma'ariv* was considered “right-wing” due to the Revisionist background of many of its stalwarts, it favored Lavon, secretary of the Histadrut labor federation, over the “statist” Ben-Gurion.

Shimon Peres, thirty-seven years old in 1960, was Deputy Defense Minister and a leading figure among the “young Turks” of Mapai. Due to his friendship with much of the *Ma'ariv* staff, he took the paper’s anti-Ben-Gurion coverage as a personal affront. Thus, he wrote a letter to Arye Dissentchik, editor of *Ma'ariv*, censuring the paper for distorting the truth and churning out what today we would call “fake news.” The missive evidently was never sent; instead, it was deposited with the late Shabtai Tevet in the Ben-Gurion Archives.

ITZHAK ROEH (1937–2017)

“KNOW THAT EACH AND EVERY SHEPHERD HAS HIS OWN SPECIAL SONG” (NAOMI SHEMER): A PERSONAL AND PUBLIC EULOGY TO ITZHAK ROEH / Dov Shinar

How would Itzhak Roeh have broadcast a report about his death in 2017? Those who had the privilege of experiencing his intellectual honesty, his biting irony, and his special song could guess that, after natural hesitation and a nonchalant wave of the hand, he would have expressed doubt about the newsworthiness of the event. After all, this was his second death, the physical one. His first death, about a decade ago, marked the demise of the spirit, terminating forever his connection with the world. It also stands to reason that, as a true professional who hated to impose an unnecessary burden on his interlocutors, listeners, viewers, and students, he would not have invested dramatic hyperbole in either of these events.

The son of laborers from the mythological Kiryat Haim, a member of the Hanoar Haoved youth movement and a loyal Nahalist, he set out on a quest for “fulfillment” and became a shepherd [Heb. *ro'eh*] at Kibbutz Alumot, near Lake Kinneret. Like many comrades and like Shlomik, the hero of the first Israeli telenovela, he reached the city pursued by feelings of having betrayed the ideals of personal and social redemption.

However, thanks to a charisma composed of modesty and an ego that always sang in a minor scale, the shepherd from Alumot attracted a flock of his own over the years. The “sheep” were captivated by his charm in a manner that would last a lifetime—fans, critics, those who loved him from way back and others who surfaced day after day on the radio, television, in academia, and in the street. No one, myself included, hesitated to step out of the closet and admit their weakness: We just loved him, and still do.

In this context, I will always retain pleasant memories, spiced with the nostalgia of old age, of how we swapped roles along the byways of the wide world. Wherever he was, Roeh felt as if he were in a pasture facing Lake Kinneret—including stubborn loyalty to sandals even on a rainy day of a New York summer and consistent refusal to wear a jacket at official events abroad. Thus, he served me as a guide in Paris (starting with the convention arrondissement, where the parents of his wife, Miriam, lived, and onward to Montmartre and Marais) and in New York (the Chelsmore building, where countless Israelis

lived over the years, and the Village institutions—Café Vivaldi, the Elephant and Castle restaurant, fringe theaters, and high-quality micro-cinemas). I did my best to reciprocate in Montreal, on the sidewalks of the Notre Dame de Grace the quarter and in the French-Quebécois area of the city.

As has been said and written abundantly, Roeh was a critical and innovative professional by nature, justly called a “media revolutionary.” It began with his warm and human style of presentation, which few emulated successfully and eventually became conventional, although without Roeh’s special grace. It continued with his presentation technique. Roeh appears to have been the first who dared to pronounce on the air the soft and guttural *resh* of the Hebrew vernacular. By so doing, he deviated from conventional media condescension and attracted radio listeners and television viewers alike. Even though this manner of pronunciation was a product of the Ashkenazi sabra hegemony, it managed to attenuate the Voice of Israel’s officiousness and original authoritarianism, which made the station a sort of “poor man’s BBC”.... Third, it traced to his participation in the group of young subversives that sprouted at the Voice of Israel under the patronage of Haggai Pinsker, who changed the nature of the radio news and later took control of its leadership. They were not perfect and sometimes broke the rules, but without them the radio would have been deprived of innovation. Like others in this group, Roeh was not exactly the media barons’ darling. A fascinating example was his public attitude toward the “Nakdi Report,” the first ethical code of broadcasting in Israel, composed by the Israel Broadcasting Authority doyen Nakdimon Rogel in 1972. The document was revised five times and never exerted dramatic influence. After a revision in 1996, Roeh wrote, on the basis of a study that he conducted, that it was anachronistic and irrelevant.¹

This is an appropriate backdrop for discussion of his academic activity, which also excelled in casting doubt on conventional wisdom in media research. Roeh was blessed with the trait of brilliant creativity. He neither wrote nor published a great deal in academia, prompting some to accuse him of indolence and to withhold the plaudits that he deserved as an intellectual, an applied cultural researcher whose novelties and insights blew fresh breezes into the sails of media work and media research. In contrast to the doubters’ claims, those who knew

him realized that this evidently stemmed from uncompromising self-judgment, true modesty, and criticism of establishmentarian rituals, including the rating of academic quality on the basis of number of publications (*in English*, as he made sure to stress as a sworn aficionado of Hebrew). The studies and writings that he did produce were always innovative and refreshing, thought-provoking and challenging of convention.

Pursuing a fundamentally skeptical approach rooted in his professional experience, Roeh was one of the first in Israel who believed, and preached, that everything in the media is “storytelling.” This attitude inspired a public and academic professional curiosity that did not wane over the years. Thus Roeh joined the critics of the accepted tradition of assuming the existence of an absolute truth that should manifest in the media in objective coverage. Instead of this, he cultivated the study, creation, and research of approaches that focus on relativism and are anchored in political and cultural criticism of structures and functioning.

This approach placed Roeh on equal footing with innovative critical circles and researchers worldwide.²

Roeh’s work also draws close to reformist attitudes in other fields. An example is his awareness of the importance of philosophical approaches and methodological quests in anthropology. In the former, Jean Baudrillard stands out for his polemic vis-à-vis from the Left against the functioning of media in the capitalist world. Baudrillard pointed to shortcomings in coverage of the Gulf War in the Western media by claiming allegorically that the war had not taken place at all except on the pages of newspapers and over the radio and television airwaves.³ Such claims resonate clearly in Roeh’s use of criticism

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakdi_Report

2 Such as Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the News: a Social History of American Newspapers*. New York, Basic Books; Herman, E.S. and N, Chomsky (1988). *Manufacturing Consent*, New York: Pantheon; Dayan, D. & E. Katz (1992). *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. In this sense, it is of interest to ask whether Roeh would have subscribed not only to historical attitudes but also to “futuristic” ones (to the days of Donald Trump, for example), as in the remarks of Schudson, who already saw at a time when objectivity was the norm in the media—at the end of World War I—the kind of thinking that would develop, he said, in a world where “even facts could not be trusted” (p. 122).

3 Baudrillard, J. (1981). “Requiem for the Media,” in idem, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Trans. Charles Levine, St. Louis, MO: Telos: 164–184; idem (2001). “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place,” in M. Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, Palo Alto: Stanford

of coverage of wars and hostilities.

His approach also ties into debates among anthropologists over how necessary it is to “be there” in anthropological research⁴ and Dayan’s and Katz’ discussion about the experience of media non-presence at the time and place of media events. In this context, one can only wonder how essential Roeh would have considered the “presence from afar” of today’s digital media and social networks.⁵

The importance of professional background as an academic and research resource is mirrored in Roeh’s work in at least two concrete cases. One is his participation as an advisor in establishing the Department of Communication at Sapir College. The idea that Roeh and his associates from the south proposed, an innovative one for its time, was to establish the focus, and announce publicly, that the Department would engage in teaching and developing of *creativity and production*—unlike other programs that attempted to resemble university departments, possibly in the hope of earning the affections of the Council for Higher Education.

Another salient innovation is Roeh’s integration of follow-up research and prestige production, as in “Almost Midnight,” the nightly news program of which he was the initiator, editor, and guiding force. The research for the program was conducted together with his colleagues Elihu Katz and Akiva Cohen and with Barbie Zelizer, then a student and today a well-known researcher.⁶ Back in his time as head of the Israel Television

foundation team, Katz (who at the time of the research headed the Department of Communication at the Hebrew University) aspired to introduce a research dimension into the IBA’s professional work. This aim dovetailed with Roeh’s goal of bringing a professional dimension into media studies. The research for “Almost Midnight” was an uncommon and innovative combination of television art and media research, in which Roeh’s success in bringing professional media to academia may have surpassed Katz’ success in bringing academia to the media.

Roeh was an epitomic qualitative researcher who collaborated with numerous media scholars such as the late Rafael Nir, Elihu Katz, and Menahem Blondheim, to name only a few. In a departure from the norm in academia, however, he also found common language with pronouncedly quantitative researchers such as Akiva Cohen. Furthermore, true to his past, he stayed in close touch with colleagues in the humanities and the behavioral studies, such as his mentor, the late Gershon Shaked, and his friends Dan Laor, Elazar Weinrib, David Hen, and David Bargal. He often co-opted students into his studies and publications, giving them inspiration for their own work. Some of them recorded respectable achievements of their own; a few remained loyal to him in perpetuity.

In sum, Itzhak Roeh offered several answers to basic problems and contributed much to thinking and research in the social sciences generally and media studies particularly. It would be no exaggeration to say that his main contribution lies in defining the identity and the directions of development of media as a (loosely defined) profession and, like many of its academic siblings, as a conceptual and analytic-research discipline or sub-discipline that is still searching for an identity and a *raison d’être*.

May his memory be a blessing.

University Press: 231–253.

4 For example, Roeh, I. & S. Ashley, 1986. “Criticizing Press Coverage in the Lebanon War: Toward a Paradigm of News as Storytelling,” *Communication Yearbook*. Newbury Park: Sage: 117–141.

5 For example, Postill, J. (2015). “Public Anthropology in Times of Media Hybridity and Global Upheaval,” in S. Abram and S. Pink (eds.) *Media, Anthropology and Public Engagement*, Oxford: Berghahn.

6 Katz, E., I. Roeh, A. Cohen, and B. Zelizer (1980), *Almost Midnight: Reforming the Late Night News*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

A SENTINAL IN THE FIELDS OF TIME / HEALLY GROSS

Yaakov Gross, a director of documentary films and a scholar of Hebrew cinema, devoted most of his life to identifying, restoring, and preserving films that were created in Mandate Palestine and fledgling Israel. In his unique oeuvre, he preserved enchanted scenes of the country as commemorated by the cameras of the pioneers of Israeli cinema—scenes that were almost lost in the fields of time.

Yaakov Gross was a Renaissance man: a director of documentary films, a historian of the Hebrew cinema, an author, a poet, and a painter. He made other interesting and diverse stops along the way, but I choose to focus mainly on his forward motion, powered by inner passion and an exceptional historical perception. What is the power of documentation and what is the value of a seemingly lost film? Who can estimate the worth of the films that commemorated the first steps of a people reborn in its homeland? Had he measured his endeavors by economic cost/benefit considerations, much of our cinematic legacy probably would have been forgotten and destroyed by the ravages of time.

Yaakov's first steps in the tracks of the Hebrew cinema began with modest research and filming work for Israel Television. In the early 1970s, the cinema personality Adam Greenberg (cousin of Nathan Gross, Yaakov's father) initiated a film about Yaakov Ben-Dov, a pioneer of the cinematic art in Eretz Israel. It was disappointing at first; the work was not produced due to budget problems. The goal, however, had been set and so it remained. More than forty years have lapsed since then; during that interim, Yaakov researched the distribution of Ben-Dov's films around the world, tracked down much of his lost oeuvre, and had the works preserved, restored, and made accessible to the masses in conjunction with public archives in Israel.

Thus, in 1989 Gross directed and edited the film *Ya'akov Ben-Dov—Patriarch of the Hebrew Film*, in conjunction with the Steven Spielberg Archive. In 1992, he produced several events to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first Hebrew film, in the course of which a series of stamps was issued to commemorate the event. The stamps feature portraits of cinema pioneers whom Gross had known personally: Ya'akov Ben-Dov, Baruch Agadati, and Nathan Axelrod. This gesture reflected an additional passion that Gross had cultivated since

boyhood—stamp collecting. He also initiated and curated five photo and film exhibitions of Ya'akov Ben-Dov's works, titled "Cards from Eretz Israel Speak."

Yaakov, the eldest offspring of the director Nathan Gross and Shulamit, a future professor of geology, was born in Łódź, Poland, in 1949. A breeze of Zionist action and pioneering blew through the family home, and the Grosses repatriated to Israel several months after Yaakov was born. His father's goal was clear: "When I came to the country in January 1950, I knew I was coming to unplowed soil. I came anyway, firmly determined to make films here." Despite numerous hardships, he made his dream come true and became the most sought-after director in Israel, at Geva Studios. Yaakov Gross' interest in films dates from his childhood, when he escorted his father to work and made the studios his home-away-from-home. When children in the neighborhood asked, "What does your father do?" he answered proudly, "He's a filmmaker."

Gross spent his childhood and adolescence in Givatayim, together with his sister, Aliza, who had moved to Israel. Already then, he gravitated to sundry cultural activities such as acting in drama groups, editing a school newspaper, and contributing to newspapers for children and youth and to *Ba-ma'ala*, organ of the Hanoar Haoved ve-ha-Lomed movement. At Municipal High School 9, he presented cinematic movies to his friends under the auspices of a "Good Films Club."

That period, a time of innocence and mischief, gave Yaakov the inspiration to write a book titled *Giv'at Batiah* (Watermelon hill) under the pen name Ram-Zor. He wrote the following on the back cover:

Sometimes it's worth pausing and glancing backward a little. What has happened won't come back and what will come is going to move on no matter what.

It's hard to dwell on details in real time because time passes as soon as it forms. In retrospect, however, you can freeze the picture and contemplate each and every detail and see lots and lots of moments that we had not had time to discern in that split-second when they came into being and moved on. A kind of journey into our own innerness, to time that has stopped, within the web of years of life.

When he enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces, Yaakov turned

to combat service in the Engineering Corps. There he became an officer and established an array of education activities for combat engineering training bases and an Engineering Corps performing troupe—the Palasim (“Sappers”)—that became a good-cheer crew, its alumni including the Pure Souls.

After leaving the service, Yaakov enrolled at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and studied art and theatre history for his bachelor’s degree and art history for his master’s. Amid his studies, he plunged into cultural activity and was elected chairman of the Students Union culture committee and editor of *Klipa*, the literary supplement of the students’ newspaper *Pi ha-Aton*. From his standpoint, the most meaningful thing he did at that time was management of a satirical cabaret at the Suramello Hall in Jerusalem. Several members of this institution (Kobi Niv, Efraim Sidon, B. Michael, Hanoach Marmari, Gideon Kouts, Iris Lavie, etc.) became the core cast of the TV show *Nikui Rosh*.

Concurrently, Yaakov developed his painting abilities by taking fourth-year studies at Bezalel for practical projects on canvas and in prints. Evidence of those days is found in the impressive works that decorate the walls of his home. In the middle of an especially boring theatre class, he suggested to his classmate Talia Sherlin that they play hooky and go to Mount Scopus to see an exhibition of his works.

In 1973, Yaakov was called into the reserves when the Yom Kippur War broke out and spent a lengthy stint in the southern sector. The difficult fighting, the friends who perished, and the sights of the Land of Goshen were engraved in his memory and influenced his art. They were inspiration for his paintings and poems at the time. After returning from the battlefield, he married Talia and they established their home in Jerusalem, where their daughters, Shelly and Hiali, were born.

From 1967 into the 1970s, Gross published articles about the Israeli cinema, mainly in *Hotam*, the supplement of *Al Hamishmar*. His personal acquaintance with the cinema professionals who worked at Geva Studios paved his way to key personalities and many private collections and archives.

In 1974, he was chosen to study, set up, and manage the first professional film archive in Israel. Until then, the country had many cinematic collections, some public and others private, but none was run on the basis of the rules of preservation, indexing, and information that govern such enterprises.

Yaakov managed the Abraham Rad Jewish Film Archive at

the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, known today as the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive. The overseer of the archive and one of its initiators was Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder of the Oral History Division of the Institute for Contemporary Jewry. The facilitators of the archive in its first years were Professors Moshe Davis, Yehuda Bauer, and Haim Avni.

A meaningful endeavor that promoted research and archive collection activity was the creation of two television series: *Pillar of Fire* (Israel TV) and *Palestine* (Thames TV). External production budgets allowed Yaakov and the archive to tackle preservation problems that they discovered as they treated the films. Most of the work at that time took place at film laboratories in London.

The proximity of the film archive to the Oral History Division led Yaakov Gross to develop the theme of “Oral History in Video” under the auspices of the Hebrew University Institute for Contemporary Jewry, in conjunction with Dr. Margalit Bejarano. Technological development in the 1980s placed inexpensive and handy video cameras in the service of research and made it possible to offer facilitation and training sessions in video documentation. In this activity, which continued for nearly a decade, training was given for this purpose and similar projects were promoted under public and private auspices.

As part of his work and activity at the university, Gross initiated and carried out the preservation and recording of many collections and archive films, including Baruch Agadati’s film archive and Nathan Axelrod’s archive of Carmel Film newsreels. Government entities participated in his activity; the most prominent of them were the Israel Broadcasting Authority, the State Archives, and the Israel Film Service.

In the course of his work, Gross understood the critical need to preserve historical films. Realizing that many works of this kind had been lost over the years due to nonobservance of rules of caution in handling and preservation, he began to track down and restore films that had vanished. His comprehensive and painstaking research work had numerous results. As films that were known to exist were being searched for, unknown ones also turned up, including an amateur opus called *The Camp Album*, filmed in 1948 with the Chief of the IDF General Staff, Yaakov Dori. It was an era almost unaddressed in documentary film.

Yaakov’s research work overstepped Israeli’s borders. Yaakov visited many archives in Europe, the United States, and Australia, where he found copies of lost films, legacy works about Eretz

Israel, and vehicles on Jewish themes produced abroad. His work never ended because his set of self-defined goals was always replenished by small gems on themes of Eretz Israel and the State of Israel's early years. Until his last days, he continued to locate reels of film worthy of preservation every year. Due to lack of funding, however, they remain stuck in various archives around the globe.

In the 1980s, Yaakov launched an independent research project on the history of Israeli silent films and cinema. Experience had taught him that it wasn't worth his while to be subject to the policies and budget crises of public entities. During these years, he cemented his place as a consultant and executor of dozens of projects on Zionist cinema themes in Mandate Palestine and Israel, locating and preserving films, making archive films accessible to museums, and producing television works that were broadcast in Israel and abroad. Were this not enough, he lectured at the Tel Aviv University Department of Cinema.

Yaakov's research work yielded significant and thrilling discoveries. At the beginning of his career, as director of the Rad (Spielberg) Jewish Film Archive, he tracked down and revealed the film *Unzere Kinder* (Our children), created by his father Nathan Gross about Holocaust survivors in Poland. It was at that time that he initiated the purchase of the Agadati collection by the Archive and the recording and preservation of Series 1 of the Carmel films (1934–1948), together with Nathan and Leah Axelrod and in conjunction with Dr. Moshe Mossek of the Israel State Archives.

The pinnacle of Yaakov's first twenty years of researching, locating, and preserving films (and their creators) was the publication of his book *The Hebrew Film: Chapters in the History of Silent and Talking Movies in Israel* (in Hebrew). The opus was co-authored and -edited by his father, Nathan Gross, and featured subjective writing by Gross *père* along with editing and supplements by Gross *filis*.

In the book, Yaakov Gross recounts some of his travels in pursuit of lost films:

The real treasures were actually in Israel. Buried in sacks of mail from the Mandate era, in cellars and attics of artists who had passed away and even under mattresses.... Yes, that's how I found Yossele Rosenblatt's film *My People's Dream*, in the bed of an elderly guy in Meah She'arim. This man thought that the film, given him for safekeeping by Daniel Auster (former Mayor of Jerusalem), had special powers. Only after I convinced him

that the film, made of nitrate, posed a real danger of catching fire, did he deign to part with it for a symbolic sum of money.

In 1997, Yaakov had the privilege of discovering and restoring the film *The Life of the Jews in Palestine (1913)* after a twenty-year hunt for the lost reels. Originally produced by Mizra'h Co. of Odessa, the buried treasure was uncovered in France in the form of 197 reels in negative, each around twenty meters long. The work was restored under the guidance of Yaakov Gross by CNC (Centre nationale de la cinématographie) in France, in conjunction with the Israel Film Archive-Jerusalem Cinematheque. The film shows life in the towns and villages of Ottoman Palestine, Old Yishuv people, and the pioneers of the First and Second Aliyot. Gross attached a sound track in the spirit of that era to the restored iteration and handed the role of narrator to Yehoram Gaon.

Tracing and restoring old movies became a way of life for Yaakov Gross. Over the years, he directed and produced some thirty documentary films. During his more than four decades of work, technology developed in giant strides, restoration and preservation qualities improved, and the costs increased commensurably. Even films that had already been converted underwent enhancement. Ya'akov Ben-Dov's film *Spring in Eretz Israel* (1928) is a salient case in point: Gross produced a reworked version of this film based on Ben-Dov's documents, accompanied by a periodic musical sound track, in 2007. Seven years later, he produced an improved digital reworking of the film, including narration.

When Yaakov's father, Nathan, passed away in 2005, his son invested time in collecting and centralizing his father's cinema legacy. The result was the release of ten DVDs containing around half of Nathan Gross' approximately 120 works. Some of them had been lost and were now found in Israel and Poland.

In 2007–2009, Yaakov created three films that mirrored his vast experience and knowledge. In 2007, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem* was produced for the ninetieth anniversary of General Allenby's conquest of Jerusalem; for this work, Yaakov Gross did research and filming together with the director Eli Cohen and the producer Zvi Shefi. The film retells the story of Jerusalem under British Mandate rule from British, Israeli, and Palestinian perspectives. In 2008, Gross had the privilege of directing a film in the town where he had spent his childhood, Givatayim. This work, *Borochoy—The Neighborhood across the Wadi*, tells the story of the first workers' quarter in Palestine in

the words of its veterans, members of the founders' generation. It, too, was produced by Zvi Shefi.

In 2009, the centenary year of the founding of Tel Aviv, Gross initiated the production of a special film titled *Legend in the Dunes*, about the first half-century of the first Hebrew city. That year, during which he worked on additional centennial-related projects, he was introduced to the composer Nachum (Nah'che) Heiman, an encounter that led to a deep friendship and artistic collaboration in which Yaakov wrote lyrics and Heiman set them to music. Their first joint endeavor was "Legend in the Dunes," the theme song of the eponymous movie, wholly based on Hebrew films and accompanied with Heiman's tunes. Subsequently Yaakov directed a film titled *Nah'che about Nah'che* for the talented composer's eightieth birthday.

In those years, he began to plan a film under the title *This Good Land*, about the inception of the Jezreel Valley settlements, on the basis of a film he had found abroad. Although it remained an unfulfilled dream, its title resonated in the artist's inner feelings.

From 2010 onward, Yaakov focused on preserving and digitizing films of historical value, including *The Land of Promise*, *This Is the Land*, *Sabra*, *Oded the Wanderer*, *Tale of a Taxi*, *Pillar of Fire*, *Land of Promise*, *Spring in Eretz Israel*, *The Fifth Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, *Shivat Zion*, *Labor*, and others.

Geva Studios, where Gross' love of cinema had been nurtured, was flattened by bulldozers in 2011. Saddened by the event, Gross paid last respects to the artists and the building by putting on *Farewell to Geva*, a colorful exhibition in the abandoned rooms. Many artists who had helped to lay the foundations of Israeli cinema responded to his initiative by committing their memories to writing and visiting the nostalgic exhibition, which Gross dedicated "to the memory of those days when the luminescence of the Israeli cinema emanated from Geva Studios, to the memory of the dreamers who powered the wheels of the films: Mordechai Navon, Yitzhak Agadati, and Nathan Gross." Articulating his anguish over the separation, he wrote:

... No, it's not over, Only the Geva building will vanish from the scene. Millions of meters of celluloid ran in the labs here: living films, witnesses to a cinematic enterprise that pulsed with life in Givatayim. Millions of viewers who saw the films and the newsreels will remember this place until they close their eyes. People

of the humanities understand that cultural life is not only buildings. And just the same, the heart aches and we wish to turn our gaze once more to the enterprise that symbolized the cinema, whose demise cannot be prevented.... . No, it's not over...."

(Yaakov Gross, *Farewell to Geva*—souvenir pamphlet)

In 2012, a series of Jewish National Fund cinema events—*Films from the Blue Box*—took place for the first time, with collaboration between the JNF film archive and Yaakov Gross on the occasion of the JNF's 110th anniversary and the Jewish arbor day. In view of its success, the series became a tradition with JNF films being shown at cinematheques around the country, after being preserved and digitally reworked under Gross' editorship and guidance.

At the very beginning of his career as an independent researcher, Yaakov chose to cooperate fully with the Spielberg Archive and the Israel Film Archive (as the case may be). His goal was to hand his discoveries and small treasures to them so they should be available to the public. His activity evolved into an enterprise of collection for the public, powered by belief in the contribution of artifacts from the country's past to education, enlightenment, and culture in its present.

Yaakov Gross went about his work with a sense of indebtedness to the creators of the films, who had not been appreciated while alive and whose works remained at risk. He was mindful of the disputes that existed over the quality of the original films, a question wrestled over by critics both in real time and in retrospect. From his standpoint, the question was altogether irrelevant. What really mattered was the creative work, his documentation of Israel's motion-picture history, and the country's people, buildings, and pace of life. Therefore, he felt it his duty and responsibility to act to preserve the films for posterity.

To make the films accessible to the public at large, Yaakov held special events in which he presented his discoveries and brought along the personalities associated with creating the films or telling the story. He produced the events on his own in conjunction with the cinematheques of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, with no assistance and no budgets, and made sure to advertise widely by direct mail and through the media. His work was usually unpaid, and entrance to the events was also free of charge (or for a symbolic charge in special cases). In

addition, he became a sought-after lecturer, presenting his films from daises all over the country.

The jewel in the crown of his endeavors found expression in the last year of his life, in a series of encounters titled “Ladies and Gentlemen, History Is Back,” on which he had labored for several years. Produced in conjunction with the Tel Aviv Cinematheque, it featured documentary and fictional films from Eretz Israel that he had tracked down, restored, and preserved that. He was the moderator, of course. Preparing for the series of encounters, he feared that he would have to cancel one session or another due to some medical problem. Just to be sure, he created a backup plant and asked me to lock in the dates that had been set and to stand in for him if necessary. Unfortunately, his request became a will in my eyes, and I have been moderating the remaining encounters.

In the past decade, it was my pleasing privilege take part in his documentary activity, research some films that he had edited, and consult with him about my work as a publisher of documentary books. I do not purport in one go to encompass his

vast enterprise, which covered every area in which he engaged; I may write a book about it one day. My father left behind an enormous legacy—fascinating and rare documentary material and a spiritual legacy of inestimable value. Also left behind is the family. In recent few years, he derived immense pride from his grandchildren, and in all family correspondence he called himself Sababa—a pun on *saba*, grandfather, using the Arabic *sababa*, “a great time.” His filled his life with action until his last day, and even more ramified and fascinating action awaits us.

Gazing from the walls of his orphaned home are his paintings, along with awards and medallions that he and his father had received as signs of appreciation. Piles of films and papers flush with plans are waiting for their owner to come back, to no avail. Suspended above them all is a picture of my pioneer grandfather, Nathan Gross, holding a camera as if continuing to film the reality of our lives. It is a story not yet told, as my father, Yaakov, used to say: “From where did I come and why am I walking backwards? A little patience, and the future will be the past as well...”