

ISRAEL

STUDIES IN ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL
HISTORY, SOCIETY, CULTURE

The Chaim Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel was set up in 1962 at Tel Aviv University through the initiative and with the assistance of the Executive of the World Zionist Organization, with the aim of furthering the research and the teaching of the history of the Zionist idea, the Zionist movement and the Land of Israel in modern times.

ISRAEL

STUDIES IN ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL
HISTORY, SOCIETY, CULTURE

No. 21, 2013



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES
THE CHAIM WEIZMANN INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF ZIONISM AND ISRAEL

Editor: Meir Chazan

Editorial Board: Avi Bareli, Nurith Gertz, Avner Horowitz,
Hannah Naveh, Shalom Ratzabi, David Tal

Style Editing: Herzlia Efrati
English Editing: Philippa Shimrat

Front cover: Naftali Bezem, *Ma'abara* (transit camp), 1952, oil on
plywood panel, 120x120, courtesy Gideon Gadot, Ramat Hasharon

Back cover: Naftali Bezem, *The Housemaid*, 1955, oil pastel and
gouache on paper, 87x63, collection Tel Aviv Museum of Art

© Naftali Bezem

© 2013

All Rights Reserved

Tel Aviv University

The Chaim Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel

Graphic Editing: Michal Semo and Yael Bieber, TAU Graphic Design Studio

Printed in Israel by Elinir

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

“An Evil Hypocrite” or “An Honest Friend of the Jewish People”? The Riddle of Commander Bodilly, the Examining Magistrate in the Arlosoroff Murder Trial	
Nathan Brun	1
Meir Har-Zion’s Reprisal Act: Reality and Memory	
Efrat Seckbach	37
The Attitude of the Jordan Valley’s <i>Halutzim</i> to the Jews of Tiberias in the First Two Decades of Labor Zionism	
Matan Boord	61
From Ukraine and Crimea to the Wilderness of Birobidzhan: The Yevseksiya’s Aspiration for a Jewish National Republic in the USSR	
Mattityahu Minc	87
Jewish Private Manufacturing in Mandatory Palestine and the Cost of Living Allowance, 1939–1943	
Omri Metzger	117
Into the Circle: Attempts by Agudat Israel to Join Forces with the Jewish Agency	
Yosef Fund	143
Haredi Educational Institutions in Palestine during the Second Half of the British Mandate Period	
Kimmy Caplan	179
Visions of Identity: Pictures of Rabbis in Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Private Homes in Israel	
Nissim Leon	203
Siah: The Case of a New Left Movement in Israel	
Adi Portugez	225

REVIEW ESSAY

- Patterns of Partnership: Kvutza, Nationwide Commune and Kibbutz, 1910–1926*, by Abigail Paz Yeshayahu
Udi Manor253

REVIEWS

- Pinchas Sapir: An Economic and Political Biography*,
by Yitzhak Greenberg
Ephraim Kleiman263

- Diamond and War: State, Capital and Labor in British-Ruled Palestine*,
by David De Vries
Michal Frenkel271

- Hebrew Woman to the Flag: Military Service of Yishuv Women in the
British Forces during the Second World War*, by Anat Granit-Hacohen
Tammy Razi277

- Seeking A Homeland: The Jewish Territorial Organization and its
Struggle with the Zionist Movement, 1905–1925*, by Gur Alroey
Guy Miron283

- A Red Star in the Israeli Flag: The Communist Movement in Eretz
Israel and its Attitude towards Zionism during the Yishuv and the
First Decades of Independence*, by Lea Miron
Eli Tzur289

- To the Core of Secularism: Philosophical Analyses of Secularism
within the Israeli Context*, by Gideon Katz
Yuval Jobani295

- List of Contributors301

- English Summaries VII

Summaries

Nathan Brun

“An Evil Hypocrite” or “An Honest Friend of the Jewish People”?
The Riddle of Commander Bodilly, the Examining Magistrate in the
Arlosoroff Murder Trial

The murder trial of Dr. Haim Arlosoroff, the young and very talented Labor Party (Mapai) leader, who was murdered on a Tel Aviv beach during the night of 16 June 1933, is considered even today to be the most important, interesting and controversial of all trials in the Yishuv and Israel over the last 100 years. The murder occurred at a time of bitter political rivalry between Mapai, under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, and the Revisionist Party (Beitar), under the leadership of Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Three young Revisionists were arrested as suspects and were brought to trial before the Examining Magistrate in Jaffa, whose sole role was to decide if the case should be transferred to a higher court. This judge was Commander Ralph Burland Bodilly, Chief Magistrate of Jaffa and a former senior officer in the British navy, who had arrived in Palestine a few weeks before the murder. His life, personal relations and the way he handled this very complicated and long process are the subject of this article.

Efrat Seckbach

Meir Har-Zion's Reprisal Act: Reality and Memory

On the night of 5 March 1955, Meir Har-Zion set out with three friends to avenge the murder of his sister and her boyfriend in the Judean Desert (in Jordanian territory), about two months earlier. They murdered five innocent Jordanian Bedouins and crossed back into Israel. Upon their return, they were placed under arrest and held until the end of March. The purpose of this article is to examine the changes in Israeli collective memory of Har-Zion's reprisal act over the course of thirty years, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s, in order to shed light on the ways in which public memory is fashioned in Israeli society as well as on different aspects of Israeli society's attitude toward the issue of revenge and retaliation. The changes that occurred in the public discourse about Meir Har-Zion and his private act of retaliation reflect the changes in the public's attitude toward it: from esteem and even admiration to condemnation of his behavior as an illegitimate act of vengeance.

Matan Boord

The Attitude of the Jordan Valley's *Halutzim* to the Jews of Tiberias in the First Two Decades of Labor Zionism

Based on a case study of the Jordan Valley and Tiberias, the article argues that the Jews of the “Old Yishuv” played an important role in the formative decades of labor Zionism. From the perspective of the *halutzim* (pioneers), those Jews had two roles. One was negative, as embodying the opposite of the pioneers’ own self-image, against which they could define themselves as radical, productive and modern. The second and more positive one was their role as the “Jewish masses” already in Palestine, whose acceptance of the *halutzim*’s leadership could vindicate the latter’s self-perception as leaders of the Jewish national revival. The crisis of World War I and the collapse of the Old Yishuv’s economy enabled the *halutzim* to fulfill their ambition of recruiting the Jews of the Old Yishuv to the *halutzim*’s values. In the early 1920s, with the gradual integration of the Old Yishuv’s Sephardi community into the Zionist Yishuv in Palestine, on the one hand, and the strengthening of Labor Zionist institutions as a result of increasing Jewish immigration from Eastern and Central Europe, on the other hand, the importance of the Old Yishuv for the *halutzim* declined, leading to growing alienation between the Sephardi Jews who were already integrated in the Zionist Yishuv and the *halutzim* and the institutions they headed.

Mattityahu Minc

From Ukraine and Crimea to the Wilderness of Birobidzhan: The Yevseksiya’s Aspiration for a Jewish National Republic in the USSR

In 1923–1928 there was a struggle in the USSR over the plan to create a territory in which around 100,000 Jewish families could work in agriculture. In order to fulfill this target the Committee for the Settlement of Working Jews on the Land (Komzet) was founded in 1924. The Jewish representatives in the Yevseksiya (Jewish Section of the Soviet Communist Party), with the support of high-ranking officials within the Soviet regime, wanted that area to be located close to the existing Jewish population in the agriculturally productive areas of southern Ukraine and northern Crimea, which they regarded as the best way of fulfilling the hopes of economically viable Jewish statehood within the Soviet Union. Stalin, however objected to the idea of establishing a Jewish republic in Crimea and decided to locate it in the Russian Far East near the Chinese border, in a barren swampland, which was unsuited to agriculture. This would be the Jewish Autonomous Region, popularly known as Birobidzhan.

Omri Metzger

Jewish Private Manufacturing in Mandatory Palestine and the Cost of Living Allowance, 1939–1943

The Cost of Living Allowance (CoLA) was first introduced in Palestine by a voluntary agreement between the Manufacturers Association (MA) and the Tel Aviv Workers Council in late 1939. In 1942, the government stepped in and institutionalized CoLA in response to the inflationary effects of the war. The article shows that while the MA succeeded in turning economic resources into political strength via the voluntary agreement of 1939, it failed to elevate this strength into sustainable power. This failure was made clear in 1942 with the institutionalization of the CoLA led by the state. This arrangement, although based on its 1939 predecessor, diminished the strength of the MA, leading to the formation of the separate organization of the “big three” (the Electricity Company, the Potash Company, and Nesher – the cement producing company) and thereby threatening the position of the MA.

Yosef Fund

Into the Circle: Attempts by Agudat Israel to Join Forces with the Jewish Agency

Agudat Israel was founded in 1912 with the intention of uniting Orthodox Jews in order to protect their rights and combat secularization. The Aguda objected to Zionism, which it saw as contriving to secularize the Jewish people. In 1922, when the mandate awarded to Britain stipulated that until the formation of an assembly of representatives for the establishment of a national home – a Jewish agency – the Zionist Organization would hold this position, Agudat Israel demanded that it be recognized as the representative of the Orthodox sector. When this request was denied, the Aguda asked the leaders of the Zionist Organization that it be included in the prospective agency, but when the Jewish Agency came into being in 1929, it included non-Zionist representatives but excluded Agudat Israel. The accession talks held between the heads of the Aguda and the Zionist Organization in 1925 and 1930 were fruitless. The Aguda made cultural-religious demands that were not welcomed by the Zionist Organization, while the Zionist Organization headed by Weizmann viewed the Aguda as a politically and economically insignificant movement that might hamper the Jewish Agency’s work. From the early 1930s, the parties gave up trying to incorporate Agudat Israel into the Jewish Agency, striving instead to create agreements for political cooperation between them. The cooperation that was thus achieved mitigated the rivalry between them and paved the way for Agudat Israel’s integration into the state institutions upon the establishment of the State of Israel.

Kimmy Caplan

Haredi Educational Institutions in Palestine during the Second Half of the British Mandate Period

Based upon archival and additional primary sources, this article examines various dimensions in the formation, development and expansion of Haredi educational institutions in Palestine during the second half of the British Mandate Period, especially between 1935 and 1945. This process, thus far overlooked in scholarly research, took place in many educational institutions in the Haredi central and peripheral settlements, and is overall characterized by a consistent rise in the number of students that enrolled in these institutions. While small in absolute numbers, this rise was significant percentage-wise. This process contributes to our understanding of the available institutional structures that subsequently served the rehabilitation and consolidation of Haredi society in the wake of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.

Nissim Leon

Visions of Identity: Pictures of Rabbis in Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Private Homes in Israel

This article discusses the use of portraits and photographs of rabbis in the private sphere – the home – amongst the Haredi scholar-society in Israel. It shows that the pictures of rabbis help to transform the home from a place that is essentially functional into a sphere that participates actively in the politics of Haredi identity. This politics plays an important and central role in contemporary Haredi society, both because of that society's internal diversification as a result of the relatively recent affiliation of new groups and because of the ongoing and charged interaction of parts of this society with its non-Haredi environment. The pictures of rabbis serve as visions of identity, in two senses: in their visibility, they are part of the cultural effort to signify social belonging and boundaries in a society that is boundary-challenged, both inwardly and outwardly; and in the sense of the vision that they reflect, the choice of portraits and the manner in which they are displayed connect their users to a religious, communal and political vision that is identified with a particular rabbinical figure or set of figures.

Adi Portugez

Siah: The Case of a New Left Movement in Israel

The Israeli New Left Movement, Siah, was established in the summer of 1969 by a group of activists who had left the Israeli socialist and communist parties in search of a new ideologically pure political home that could foster and carry out the aspirations of a new generation. This generation of Israeli baby-boomers of the 1960s was inspired by the student protests of 1968 in Europe and the USA and by the New Left movements that flowered that year. Although it was motivated by leftist ideology and was determined to bring a new agenda to Israel, Siah remained an esoteric movement with no significant impact on Israeli politics. However, this article argues that Siah reflected the major changes that were taking place in Israeli politics in that period, deriving both from the ramifications of the 1967 war and from the influence of global trends.