

Mattityahu Minc

The Liquidation of the Jewish National Project in the USSR

This article explores the liquidation of KOMZET (the Committee for the Agricultural Settlement of Working Jews), the Soviet Union's national project for its Jewish inhabitants, between 1936-1938, following the failure to establish a Jewish autonomy due to changing attitudes of the Soviet leadership. It is based on recently published documents.

these changes from a social-religious perspective, tracing the shift from the autonomy typical of the movement during Israel's early years to its subordination to rabbinic authority in the 1970s. Whereas in the early years, norms of sexuality and chastity were determined by Religious Zionist society from within, in the 1970s they were already set by rabbis, leading to sexual restraint and gender separation. The second section of the article seeks to trace the deeper cultural and fundamental causes of the change. It argues that the messianic takeover of the discourse and the leadership of Religious Zionism resulted in its displacement from a concrete body to an imagined and sanctified one. The perception of the Land of Israel as a metaphysical entity leads to a perception of the body as a divine realm. The discourse of chastity and sexual abstinence is a significant implication of this displacement.

Raanan Rein

The Jewish Self-Defense Organization in 1960s- and 1970s-Argentina: A Mirror of Anti-Semitic Violence?

In late 1963, the Argentine foreign ministry expressed its concern to Israeli diplomats about "military training" that Argentine Jewish youth were receiving under the supervision of Israeli instructors. This concern of Argentine authorities was prompted by the formation of Jewish self-defense groups in the country's capital, groups that were determined to confront the provocations of anti-Semitic, nationalist, right-wing bullies. Based on an oral history project of interviews with former members of Jewish self-defense groups, this article analyzes the establishment, structure, recruitment methods, training, and activities of these organizations. The main argument is that the concern of Argentine authorities was exaggerated, as were the fears of Jewish-Argentines of a possible pogrom following the kidnapping of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Argentina. The organization of Jewish self-defense had, first and foremost, a psychological and moral significance. It was part of an effort to change the traditional stereotype of the Jew as a passive victim and send a clear message to the thugs of the extreme right that they would not be able to injure Jews without having to pay a dear price for their acts. It was also an instrument to strengthen Zionist attitudes among Jewish youth, and to encourage immigration to Israel.

David Ohana

Restorative Memory: Nimrod, Herod, and Bar Kokhba

The innovation and the uniqueness brought by the concept of 'Restorative Memory' stems from the way a given society "restores" historical facts with an intention to adapt these to its contemporary political, social, and national purposes. In the following article, I demonstrate the usage of Restorative Memory through the case studies of the myths of Nimrod, Herod the Great, and Bar-Kokhba. The historical myths of the three historic figures preserved their vitality and relevance by exemplifying an "inner dialectic": the myths strengthened certain elements and repressed those elements that no longer fulfilled a necessary function. The "new discourse" on Herod, Nimrod and Bar-Kokhba in recent years in Israel serves national spirit and masculinity by creating a favorable view of these three men and by glorifying their architectural, artistic and heroic traits and achievements. This restorative approach facilitated the return of their stories to Israeli society as an important part of the state's mythology.

Udi Carmi

The Involvement of IDF Officers in Sports in Israel

The article discusses the influence of IDF officers on Israeli sports during the early years of the State of Israel. These years were characterized by political and social disputes, reflected in the struggle between the politically-affiliated sports clubs Hapoel and Maccabi. State leaders, headed by Ben-Gurion, sought to move the center of gravity of sports institutions from political parties to the institutions created by the new state. Sport, in this respect, was no different from other areas, where military officers were appointed to key positions in institutions. Their activity in civilian bodies blurred the line between the Israeli society's civilian and military sectors. This trend faded from the 1970s onward, as Israeli sports underwent professionalization and commercialization, and had no place for military officers in it.

Avi Sagi and Dov Schwartz

Changed Perceptions of the Body and of Sexuality in Religious Zionism, 1948-1982

The article deals with processes affecting attitudes toward the body and sexuality within Religious Zionism, from the establishment of Israel to the period of the massive expansion of settlements in the West Bank. The first section describes

Sebastian Klor

Between Welfare and Distress: The Case of Olim from Argentina in the 1950s

This article aims to uncover the various factors that led Jews to emigrate from Argentina to Israel and motivated the actions of the Zionist bureaucratic apparatus that assisted them during the 1950s. It focuses on the Aliyah policies and work patterns devised by the newly independent State of Israel. The article concludes with an analysis of the sociodemographic composition of the Olim from Argentina during that decade – by looking at the people behind the numbers – using a combination of macro and micro methods within the social, economic, and historical dimensions, while also viewing individuals as they experienced and perceived this complex process.

Haim Rechnitzer

The Return of King Saul as a Messiah: Political Theological Dissent in the Poetry of Amir Gilboa

A close reading of Gilboa's poems about King Saul exposes a theopolitical critique of traditional Jewish messianic theology, as well as secular Zionist ideology. Rooted in Hassidic mystical tradition of *bitul hayesh* (self-annihilation) Gilboa's Saul 'who falls on his sword and lives' presents an alternative call to action from the ethos of self-sacrifice that was the cornerstone of Zionist *ḥalutzim* and first-generation Sabra youth.

Omri Asscher

'Judaism in Translation':

Jewish-American Literature and Culture in Israeli Thought

This paper addresses the understudied topic of the conception of American Jewishness in Israeli thought. I analyze the Israeli public and intellectual discourse during the late 1950s to the late 1980s, about Jewish-American literature and culture, which was often perceived as representative of American Jewish life in general. Frequently drawing on an ideology of language that attributed inherent preeminence to Hebrew, Israeli thinkers and literary critics asserted a spiritual-cultural hierarchy in the Jewish world that placed cultural and literary life in Israel as more authentically Jewish and therefore superior to that of American Jews. This contentious stance actually attests to the continuous challenge that the major Jewish center in the United States, with its competing version of Jewish identity, posed to Israeli thought.

Abstracts

Havatzelet Yahel

Proposals for the Settlement of Negev Bedouin in Pre- and Early Days of the State of Israel

The process of Bedouins' transition to permanent settlement has preoccupied the Israeli authorities since the state's establishment. This study presents the first proposals that were made regarding the location and the pattern of the Bedouin settlement in the Negev, in the context of the discussions held by Israeli institutions, during and shortly after the War of Independence. The study reveals a series of alternatives for Bedouin settlement locations that were discussed, and shows that the establishment of permanent agricultural villages was under consideration. Though never implemented, a study of these plans for agricultural villages opens a window to the public figures that operated during the time of the plans' formation, as well as the considerations behind them. In this framework, political and security considerations, the state's economic situation, Jewish settlement plans, as well as the Bedouin society were examined. This study integrates and complements other studies that deal with the formulation of policy regarding the Bedouin population of the Negev, in the early years of the State of Israel, within the scope of settlement and land policy.

Amiram Ezov

The Occupation of Wadi Ara: April 1948 to April 1949

The day after the approval of the Palestine Partition Plan by the UN on 29 November 1947, Arab fighters blocked the movement of Jews on the narrow main road that twisted along Wadi Ara, thus creating an impassable divide extending from Barkai Junction to Lajun Junction (Megiddo Junction) that disconnected the Galilee from the center of the designated Jewish territory located on the Mediterranean coastal plane. Until March of 1949, the movement of Arabs on this axis was also blocked. At the end of that month, upon conclusion of difficult negotiations, King of Trans-Jordan Abdullah yielded to pressure and transferred the area of Wadi Ara to Israel without further warfare; then the Iraqi forces stationed in the area withdrew. These events raise questions: Why wasn't Wadi Ara conquered by Israel during the hostilities, despite the importance of this route and the absolute superiority of the IDF in the last stages of the War? What would have been necessary to conquer it and include this area within the boundaries of the State of Israel?