

ABSTRACTS

Israeli Policy toward the Druze on the Golan, June 1967-February 1969

Oded Cohen

This article examines Israel's policy toward the residents of the Druze villages on the Golan Heights between June 1967 and February 1969 – a period beginning with the conquest of the Golan in the Six Day War and ending with the death of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. The article argues that the policy toward the Druze population that remained on the Golan after the war was a reflection of the policy implemented toward the Druze in the Galilee and the Carmel, which was based on Israel's perception of the Druze as a preferred minority. Israel's approach toward the Druze residents of the Golan also reflected the policy toward residents of the other territories occupied in the war and toward the Arab minority within the Green Line. At the same time, Israel's position toward the Golan Druze was a direct outcome of the policy applied to the Golan itself.

Already at the beginning of Israel's occupation of the 'Syrian Heights,' steps were taken to establish control over the area while endeavoring to maintain normal life in the Druze villages. A few months later, against the background of Israel's gradually emerging determination to hold on to the Golan, the civilian and military authorities sought to integrate the Golan's Druze residents into the State of Israel, both economically and civically. However, their integration was only partially achieved since they were until only recently Syrian citizens, and also in view of their status in Israel as residents without citizenship. The Druze received only partial rights from the State of Israel and had few duties toward it. At the same time, Israeli authorities sought to strengthen ties between the Druze in the Golan and Druze within the Green Line, with the goal of encouraging their sectarian-religious consciousness and blurring their Syrian and Arab identity.

Keywords: Druze, Golan Heights, Israeli policy in the occupied territories, Israeli policy toward the Druze, military government, Six Day War

The Altalena Affair through the Eyes of Hillel Kook

Renen Kol-Hallel

The Altalena affair created two opposing foundational myths: the government's myth of statehood, according to which firing on the ship prevented a military coup; and the Begin myth, according to which Begin's refusal to respond prevented a civil war. In this article, I offer a novel view of the affair based on the testimony of Hillel Kook. Countering the statehood myth, I propose a new interpretation of Kook's prolonged detention during the affair: Mapai sought to silence the Irgun's most effective public advocate ahead of the elections to the Constitutional Assembly, while at the same time trying to create the myth of an attempted coup. Unlike the myth associated with Begin's image, Kook's diaries reveal criticism of his leadership, his failure in negotiations, his indecisiveness, and his insistence on ceremonies that exacerbated the crisis. Kook's testimony points to shared responsibility for the affair's outcome: Ben-Gurion by his decision to shell the ship and Begin as a result of his conduct which helped bring about that decision.

Keywords: Altalena, Hillel Kook, Menachem Begin

The Document Delivered to Lord Balfour on the Eve of the British Cabinet's Decision on the Declaration of Support for a National Homeland

Betsalel Rechav

On the eve of the final and decisive discussion of the British War Cabinet to issue a declaration of support for the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, Sir Mark Sykes, a British diplomat serving as Secretary of the Cabinet, delivered a memorandum to Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour describing the high agricultural potential of Palestine's various regions. In the summary of the memorandum, it was estimated that with a modest investment and prudent agricultural cultivation, it would be possible to double the country's population within seven years without displacing any of its existing inhabitants.

The summary was written and submitted to Balfour as a response to a detailed memorandum prepared a few days earlier by Lord George Curzon, one of the cabinet

members. Curzon expressed reservations about issuing the requested declaration of support, primarily arguing that the land was not very arable and incapable, in his view, of sustaining the Jewish people were they to immigrate there.

During the cabinet discussion, Balfour sought his colleagues' support for a pro-Zionist declaration. He addressed Curzon's reservations, relying in part on the document he had received from Sykes. After a brief discussion, the cabinet approved the decision to issue the declaration.

The article offers a close reading of the summary delivered by Sykes to Balfour, showing that it was very likely written by agronomist Aaron Aaronsohn - discoverer of wild wheat and founder of the NILI underground. Aaronsohn arrived in London in the autumn of 1917, and Sykes invited him to participate in the discussions between Zionist leaders Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow and senior officials in the British Foreign Office regarding the pro-Zionist declaration. The memorandum in question was another link in the cooperation between him and Sykes as part of forging the alliance between the Zionists and the British during World War I.

Keywords: Aaron Aaronsohn, Arthur Balfour, Balfour Declaration, Mark Sykes, Palestine

Urban and Rural Songs in Zionist Propaganda Films of the *Yishuv* Period

Efrat Barth

The article examines the use of the audiovisual medium by Zionist ideology to articulate a narrative that both glorified the agricultural pioneer and accommodated the emerging urban reality of the *Yishuv*. Focusing on rural and urban songs featured in Zionist propaganda films, the study analyzes how musical choices functioned as ideological tools that negotiated the tension between these two modes of settlement.

During the *Yishuv* period, national institutions operated on multiple fronts to raise funds for the Zionist project and attract new immigrants. Though still young, cinema was rapidly gaining influence and served as a primary tool in these efforts. Propaganda films, screened in Palestine and abroad, portrayed the building of a nation and achieved notable success. Their moving images were accompanied by specifically composed soundtracks; in many cases, the selected songs reinforced the film's intended message. Leading poets such as Nathan Alterman, Emanuel Harussi,

and Alexander Penn supplied the lyrics, while composers such as Mordechai Zeira, Daniel Sambursky, and Emanuel Amiran shaped the melodies.

I argue that although Zionist discourse tended to idealize agricultural settlement, the films and their songs offered a more nuanced representation – one that acknowledged the complementary roles of both rural and urban development in nation-building. Furthermore, the distinct textual and musical characteristics of each song type reflected broader ideological conceptions within the Zionist movement. Through the integration of image and music, these films became an especially effective medium for disseminating those messages both within the *Yishuv* and among international audiences.

Keywords: Hebrew song, Israeli cinema, national institutions, propaganda, rural settlement, Tel Aviv, urban culture, Zionism

The Vanished Pantheon: The Attempt to Establish a Burial Site for the Nation's Cultural Giants during the State's First Decade

Kobi Cohen-Hattab

This article discusses the attempt to establish a pantheon for the great cultural figures of the Jewish people on Jerusalem's Har HaMenuchot during Israel's early years. I examine the idea of creating a national burial site designated for the country's intellectuals – writers, poets, and thinkers – which would serve as a national memorial institution. It was intended to resemble pantheons for cultural giants in other countries, such as Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in London. The attempt was not successful.

The initiative was intended to commemorate the contributions of intellectuals – including Peretz Smolenskin, Avraham Shalom Yahuda, Naftali Herz Imber, Zvi Hermann Schapira, and Joseph Klausner – to shaping Zionist national identity. The first stage explored the idea of establishing a pantheon in the Nicanor Cave on Mount Scopus, but this idea was abandoned due to opposition from university authorities and the fluidity of borders during the War of Independence. After the establishment of the state, Mount Herzl served as the national burial site for politicians and fallen soldiers, and in addition, a special section on the summit of Har HaMenuchot was designated for cultural figures.

I identify four main reasons for the project's failure: legal and bureaucratic barriers; ideological disputes centering on the relationship between religion and state; competition from existing pantheons such as Mount Herzl, the Kinneret cemetery, and the old Tel Aviv cemetery on Trumpeldor Street; and the secondary status of intellectuals in the state's early years. Although the idea was abandoned, the section designated for it on Har HaMenuhot became the burial place of Jerusalem's distinguished citizens. This local solution achieved recognition from the city but did not achieve national recognition.

I show that institutional and social conflicts reflect the tension between collective and state memory and that the fate of the intellectuals mirrored their status in the national culture of the period.

Keywords: burial, burial societies, Har HaMenuhot, Jerusalem, nationalism, pantheon

Nationalism and Identity in the Tenth Anniversary Exhibition in 1958

Galia Limor-Sagiv

In this article, I discuss the Tenth Anniversary Exhibition held in Jerusalem in the summer of 1958, which was intended to showcase the achievements of the State of Israel in its first decade. The exhibition has not yet received a full and comprehensive scholarly account. Its presence in Israeli culture is minimal, and it appears not to have left a deep impression on its visitors in comparison to national and commercial exhibitions held in Israel and worldwide during those years which served as important tools for shaping national identity and collective memory. Here I reconstruct the exhibition, analyze its propaganda goals, and consider whether it met the ambitious objectives set by its organizers.

The exhibition was an initiative of the Israeli government, as part of the Tenth Anniversary celebrations held nationwide. There were debates among the mayors of Israel's major cities regarding its location, style, and content until the government decided to hold it in Jerusalem, the capital. The organizers sought to give it a festive character and imbue it with content that would inspire a sense of exaltation among its visitors. The contemporary press was enthusiastic about the exhibition, but soon after its opening – and especially following it – reports emerged describing

boredom, incomplete displays, complaints about the venue, low visitor turnout, organizational failures, and poor planning.

Using archival documents, the exhibition catalog, and contemporary media reports, I analyze the exhibition's content in light of the political, cultural, and social processes of the 1950s in Israel. I highlight the gap between the exhibition's goals and its actual impact, emphasizing the aims its planners envisioned for it as a tool to promote the Zionist ethos and national identity in the state's first decade.

Keywords: collective memory, first decade, Jerusalem, national exhibition, national identity

Religious Jewish and Muslim Women in Interfaith Dialogue in Israel: Intersectionality of Faith, Gender, and Conflict

Salwa Alinat Abed and Laila Abed Rabho

In this article, we examine the intersectionality of religion, gender, and peacebuilding in interfaith dialogue in Israel. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the influence of religion on conflict resolution; however, the distinct contribution of religious women to such initiatives remains under-recognized. We focus on religious Muslim and Jewish women involved in these initiatives by tracing their motivations, the dynamics of their encounters, and their perceptions of peace. We also examine the way in which religious identity shapes the dialogue by highlighting issues important to religious women, such as modesty and head covering, as part of an experience that empowers the women, and the way in which religious education influences the discourse between the women.

Drawing on qualitative field research and in-depth interviews conducted between 2018 and 2020, we examine the complex experiences of 14 religious Jewish interviewees and 11 religious Palestinian–Muslim women (Israeli citizens) who participated in interfaith dialogue. These women are driven by humanistic and political motivations and emphasize that their religious duty drives them toward peace, and that religion is not an obstacle to reconciliation but a tool for achieving it. We show that their efforts represent religious feminism and that they constitute a transformative force that challenges conservative religious interpretations of women's roles in resolving national conflicts. The findings indicate that although the participants' political positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not change,

they reported a significant shift in their attitudes toward the Other, which they expressed as the breaking down of barriers of fear and prejudice. The women draw on their religious common ground and personal experiences to create empathy. These encounters are a form of grassroots peacebuilding and demonstrate their importance despite the failures of official peace efforts. In this context, religious women constitute important agents for change.

However, we also uncover disagreements and complex gaps between the participants: mistrust rooted in gender, tension between individual and collective voices, and differences in emphasis on the religious experience relative to the political experience. Gaps in formal religious education and status also stood out between the groups.

Keywords: interfaith dialogue, intersectionality, Islam, Israel, Judaism, peacebuilding, religious education, religious feminism, women

Between Army, Society, and Law: Addressing the Personal Problems of Reservists in the Yom Kippur War

Anat Stern

October 6, 1973 – the day on which the Yom Kippur War broke out - is etched in Israeli national memory. The day on which the war ended and its outcomes are equally familiar. After three weeks of fierce and determined fighting, Israel thwarted the coordinated attack and launched counteroffensives that forced Egypt and Syria to agree to ceasefire agreements on October 24, 1973. Contrary to public perception, the ceasefire did not end the war completely. Maintaining the separation-of-forces agreements with Egypt and Syria required large numbers of troops, hastily mobilized in early October, to remain in service for many more months. Of the 260,000 soldiers mobilized at the height of the war, approximately 190,000 were still in the army in mid-November, creating a significant social and economic burden on Israel. Apart from being on active military duty and having to maintain a constant state of alert, reservists faced hardships in their civilian lives as a result of their unexpected and prolonged military service.

This article examines the central role of the reserve army in Israeli security doctrine. It analyzes how reservists' problems were addressed during the Yom Kippur War through the assistance mechanism for reserve soldiers established within the

Military Advocate General's department in January 1974. By examining the legal and practical response to reservists' difficulties, I shed light on a lesser-known aspect of civil-military relations in Israel and illustrate the importance of addressing the individual reservist as part of the effort to strengthen social resilience – one of the cornerstones of Israel's security doctrine.

Keywords: civil-military relations, Israeli security doctrine, Military Advocate General, reserve service, Yom Kippur War, Emergency Time Extensions Law

Man and Machine in the Image of God: Haim Zelig Slonimski as a Herald of Technological Innovation in the Jewish Enlightenment

Asaf Shamis

In this article, I examine the work and thought of Haim Zelig Slonimski, a key figure in the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) movement in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe. I focus on his engagement with technological innovation, a topic that has not been sufficiently analyzed in the scholarly literature. Unlike the common perception of Slonimski as a popularizer of science, I argue that he attributed great importance to technological innovation as a driver of society's transition into the Age of Enlightenment. A systematic analysis of his writings on the subject sheds light on his views regarding telephone and telegraph lines, electrical networks, railways, and steam engines, not merely as applications of science but as powerful mechanisms in their own right, paving the way for individuals and society toward the Enlightenment. Moreover, I make clear the synthesis Slonimski created between technological innovation and the Jewish religious worldview. In his conception, new technological inventions embodied a divine spark inherent in the human intellect, offering a dual pathway: both the advancement of knowledge and science and the strengthening of faith. Based on these findings, I propose a new interpretation of Slonimski's role in the Haskalah – not as a mediator of scientific knowledge, but rather as a popularizer of technological innovation. This term more accurately reflects his techno-Enlightenment worldview.

Keywords: Haim Zelig Slonimski, Haskalah movement, *Ha-Tzifira* newspaper, popularizers of science, technological innovation

Equality before Calamity Strikes? Zalman Aran and the Struggle for Educational Reform, 1963-1969

Amir Aizenman

In the 1960s, Zalman Aran was among the leading members of the labor movement. He identified the need to address social inequality as an urgent task that could no longer be postponed. His efforts, along with those of his compatriots, to expand the right to secondary education and to promote integration reflected a political agenda seeking to narrow social gaps. This aligned with the broader shift in Israel's welfare policy at the end of the decade. The article analyzes this shift in secondary education, shaped in those years by a series of policy decisions, ad hoc committees, and *Knesset* laws, which established the junior high school system in Israel as part of a broader structural reform. The article explains how the new structure reflected an expansion of the universal right to education, embodying the educational dimension of Israel's welfare state at its peak. It sheds light on the broad political consensus that facilitated the rise of state secondary education, in which generations of Israelis were educated. Its central argument is that the decision to create integrative junior high schools reflected a unique politics of equality, based on a 'leveling-down' approach aimed at reducing disparities and fostering cross-ethnic and cross-class encounters. This was to be accomplished not only by strengthening weaker students but also by limiting the advantages of stronger students within the public education system. The article delves into the protocols of the Rimalt Committee and for the first time sheds light on the debate surrounding the 'leveling-down' approach, which despite its importance has not received significant attention in previous research.

Keywords: educational integration, leveling-down, public education, Rimalt Committee, the welfare state, Zalman Aran