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THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES  
THE INSTITUTE FOR ZIONIST RESEARCH  
FOUNDED IN MEMORY OF CHAIM WEIZMANN



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# ZIONISM

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT  
AND OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN PALESTINE  
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## The War of Independence: Conflict of Literary Models within the Israeli Culture

by  
Nurith Gertz

During the War of Independence the state of Israel was totally isolated in the region, suffered heavy casualties and its very existence was threatened. Despite the bleak situation, the newspapers' reportages of the war revealed complete confidence that the human efforts vested in the war would bring victory.

This confidence was certainly dictated by propaganda needs – above all to encourage the fighters. But it took the form of literary models that were well-known and prevalent in the Hebrew culture. These models reflected the self-image of the Israeli society and its conceptions of its relations with the surrounding nations. At the same time they portrayed the image of Judaism as conceived by the Zionist *yishuv*: a culture that is meta-physical and ahistorical, based on miraculous and destruction/redemption conceptions, and isolated from the culture of other nations. The analysis of the reportages in the newspapers and its comparison with other literary texts written during the same period depicts the literary models and their cultural function.

## Judaism and Statism in Ben-Gurion's Thought and Politics

by  
Eliezer Don-Yehiya

Ben-Gurion's perception of Judaism reflects his tendency to interpret and re-define it, in order to adapt it to his idea of "statism". For Ben-Gurion, statism was embodied in the primacy of Jewish sovereignty and national unity. The new definition of Judaism, therefore, was based on a selective attitude toward Jewish history and tradition that emphasized values, symbols and myths which fit his idea of statism. Thus the bible was interpreted as the most authentic expression of Judaism, and its historical heroes, events and symbols were exalted. By contrast, traditional values and notions that were created and cultivated in the Diaspora were shunted.

The negation of the Diaspora tradition did not lead Ben-Gurion to animosity or confrontation with traditional Jewish religion. From this point of view, he was different from non-religious militant streams in the Zionist movement, especially within the labor movement. In Ben-Gurion's conception the Jewish religion was integral for preserving the national existence. Even more important in his view was to create national unity and avoid any conflict on the ques-

tion of religion. These considerations led Ben-Gurion to maintain the political collaboration with the religious parties in Israel and to yield to a significant number of their demands.

## The Debate over the Creation of the State of Israel within the American Jewish Intelligentsia

by  
Ben Halpern

The debate among American Jewish intellectuals about the creation of the State of Israel in the 1940s was conducted by relatively isolated groups. Those directly involved were rival communal organizations who competed for leadership and contended with one another over the issue of the organizational unification of American Jewry. The arguments voiced were long-standing differences of opinion between Zionists and their non-Zionist traditional opponents, with no significant ideological innovation, and between the post-Revisionist "Bergson group" on one side and the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism on the other.

An ideological, political discussion was centered on the proposals for international reconstruction and the solution of anticipated Jewish problems formulated by the rival postwar planning and research institutes of the American Jewish Committee and the American and World Jewish Congress.

A markedly ideological development took place among the Jewish intellectuals who were featured in *Commentary* after its inception in 1945. The authors grouped around this organ included many who moved from a Jewishly-estranged Trotskyism to a searching concern with Jewish issues, arriving at an affirmation of the *Golah* through a doctrine of self-conscious "alienation" – a kind of analogue of the Mission of the Chosen People in Dispersion.

## Invisible Souls

by  
Idith Zertal

The contribution of the illegal immigration from 1946-1948 is today widely accepted by historians as part of the combined process that brought about the retreat of Great Britain from Palestine, the 1947 UN partition decision, and the establishment of the Jewish State. Thus, the main arena of the

nationalist-Zionist struggle after World War II took place on the European continent and on the sea, rather than in Palestine; its heroes were tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors who made their way to Palestine ready to make any sacrifice to arrive at its shores. Nevertheless, these *ma'apilim*, who played such a central role in the Zionist struggle for independence, were not allocated the appropriate place in the epic of the Independence which was created during the first years thereafter. Along with them, the activists of the *Mossad for illegal immigration* were also shunned.

The first part of the article deals with the contribution of the illegal immigrants to the struggle for independence, and the way in which the drama of these survivors was exploited by the Zionist leadership. The second part shows how representatives of this recent past disappeared from the new national epic, since they did not fit into the myth of an old-new Hebrew nation and the image of the new man that this newborn nation meant to forge.

### The Soviet Union as an Ideological Factor in the Split of Hakibbutz Hameuchad

by  
Eyal Kafkafi

The Kibbutz Hameuchad movement, the largest among the kibbutz movements, split in 1951. Forty percent of the Kibbutz Hameuchad members belonged to Mapai, and most of them left the movement in 1951 to establish the Ichud Hakibbutzim Ve-Hakvutzot movement.

The article analyzes the ideological factors of the split: the establishment of the Mapam party in 1948 which turned the majority of the Kibbutz Hameuchad towards the more left-oriented position of Hashomer Hatzair, and especially affected the youth who tended to glorify the Soviet Union and Stalin. However, the success of this shift to the left was not due to the new, external influence. Rather, the glorification of the Soviet Union had been integral to the zealous kibbutz ideology within Hakibbutz Hameuchad, even before the establishment of Mapam.

### “Mass Immigration” and the Language of Literature

by  
Dan Laor

This article contains a reading of various literary texts focusing on the phenomenon of Jewish mass immigration to Israel during the late 1940s and early

1950s. All of these texts, including poetry and fiction, were produced by Israeli writers in the 1950s.

Three of the writers whose works are examined – Nathan Alterman, Hayim Hazaz and Hanoah Bartov – were by then well-known, belonging socially to the “old” Israeli society. The fourth writer, the satirist Ephraim Kishon, was a new immigrant who arrived in Israel from Hungary in 1949, having made his debut in the Israeli literary scene within a very short time.

The reading of these texts reveals the attitude of the writers while facing mass immigration: Alterman, Hazaz and Bartov, the old settlers, are filled with pathos, interpreting the new immigration in messianic terms. These writers are cognizant of the physical and emotional plight of the immigrants. Yet their suffering seems to be a marginal fact in relation to the unique historical significance of that which was referred to at the time as “the gathering of the exiles.”

By contrast, through the mode of satire, Kishon elucidates the ‘*Via Dolorosa*’ of the new immigrant, emphasizing his painful alienation vis-à-vis the well-established Israeli society, which becomes the major target of his mockery. Unlike the writers mentioned above, Kishon takes no consolation in either history or ideology, and Zionism is irrelevant to his uprooted protagonist who desperately searches for a mode of survival in his new homeland. Clearly Kishon’s irony in regard to mass immigration is a relatively rare phenomenon on the Israeli literary scene in the 1950s, which was dominated by the ‘native’ writers. This changes in the course of the 1960s and beyond, as the new immigrants themselves gradually integrate into the community of Israeli writers.

## Israel’s Supreme Court: the Formative Decade (1948–1955)

*by*

Pnina Lahav

The first part of the article discusses institutional aspects of the Supreme Court: the political history of selecting the original team of five justices and the struggle of the judiciary to be accepted as a co-equal branch of the government. It is suggested that the reluctance of the Cabinet and the Knesset to accept the judiciary as a co-equal branch encouraged a formalist and restrained jurisprudence on the part of the Supreme Court. The second part of the article analyzes the world view of the justices as it is reflected in the court’s opinions of the period: the conception of the “state”; the effect of the ideology of Zionism on the nascent Israeli jurisprudence; the conception of the rule of law, in its formal and substantive components; and the protection of rights. Generally, the Supreme Court’s opinions reflected a tension between collectivism and liberalism. With the passage of the judges’ law in 1953 which granted tenure to



the judges and secured the independence of the courts, a modest and qualified trend of protecting rights began to emerge.

Some Historical Perspectives on Mass Immigration  
in the 1950s  
*by*  
Moshe Lissak

The mass immigration of the early 1950s marks a turning point in the development of Israeli society because of its broad scope, its rapid pace and the diversity of the groups that arrived during that brief period. The problems of integration of the immigrants in the 1950s and especially those from Asia and North Africa, were not theirs alone. The establishment also faced some serious dilemmas, the most significant of which was the choice between pushing policies of rapid integration, or reconciling itself to the existence of cultural pluralism and accepting it as fact. The "ethnic gap" that surfaced during the period of mass immigration was an inevitable result of differences in personal resources such as education, occupational skill, and family size on the one hand, and the authorities' preference for a process of absorption that stressed speed and quantity rather than quality on the other.

Foreign and Defense Policy: Structural and Personal  
Aspects, 1949–1956  
*by*  
Yair Evron

This article analyzes the interrelation between foreign and defense policy in Israel in light of major international and regional processes, as well as internal debate during 1949–1956. It discusses the military doctrine on the basis of a mixed deterrence/coercion strategy and suggests that the internal discussion in Israel can be identified, to a large extent, with the differences between Ben-Gurion, Sharett and Dayan. It concludes that after 1956 Ben-Gurion adopted Sharett's conception of "conflict management" on a political level. However, on a military level he opted for a pure deterrence posture, in which a nuclear option would be eventually incorporated, and as well as to the extent possible, a defense agreement with the United States or NATO.

## German Reparations and Israel-Diaspora Relations

*by*  
Ronald W. Zweig

Reparations, restitution and indemnification payments from Germany have transferred close to \$35 billion to the Jewish world. Although the bulk of these funds were in the form of indemnification to individuals, there were also significant payments to Israel, to the Jewish Agency and to leading Diaspora organizations. The origins of these payments, and the ways in which they were used has had a significant impact on the nature of Israel-Diaspora relations.

The article examines these relations during four stages: deliberations during the war on returning looted Jewish assets and obtaining reparations for Jewish suffering; the appointment of the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee as recipients of restituted and heirless property; the parallel Israel-Diaspora negotiations in 1952 with Germany; and the mutual inter-dependence of Israel and the Diaspora organizations once the Germans began to pay.

There were many public issues in Jewish life in this period in which Zionist and non-Zionist, Palestinian and American Jewish organizations, Israel and the Diaspora actively collaborated on. But none were as long-lasting, or as rewarding, as the collaboration on the claims for reparations. This collaboration went far to transform the nature of postwar Jewish life.

## The Intelligentsia in Israel and the Political Establishment

*by*  
Michael Keren

This article deals with the ambivalence felt by Israel's political establishment in the 1950s toward the intelligentsia and its contribution to the state and the labor movement. This ambivalence is explained by reference to a conflict – on the level of principles – between the political establishment and a “new class”. The latter consisted of scientists, professionals and researchers who in the 1950s began to raise societal and ethical demands stemming from their perception of modern science.

## From *Yishuv* to Sovereign State: Changes in the Social Structure of the Jewish State in the 1940 s

by  
Yehuda Reinharz

In achieving independence, the new State of Israel achieved or incurred sharp changes in the conditions under which it would henceforth have to pursue its national purpose. In some respects the transition was smoother for Israel than for other new states of our era. Before becoming independent, the community had already created a social infrastructure quite capable of supporting a modern polity. There subsequently would be strains to overcome, but the fundamental political stability of Israel was beyond question.

In other respects, Israel's situation was unusually difficult. The land was small and poor. The Israeli policy of open doors for all displaced or unsettled Jews presented unprecedented problems of economic absorption and social adjustment. These difficulties had been foreseen and were more or less inherent in the social and ideological purpose of Zionism. Other difficulties had not been foreseen and were due to extraneous circumstances beyond the State's control. All of these changes abruptly and totally altered the conditions under which Israeli policy would henceforth have to be formulated.

## Poale-Zion in the Struggle for "Oppenheimer's Plan" for Settlement

by  
Shabtai Unger

At the beginning of the century, the German Jewish sociologist, Dr. Franz Oppenheimer, developed a program for Jewish settlement in Palestine. This program was endorsed by the Poale-Zion party in Austria as part of an ideological conception, namely a new road to socialism. However, the plan was finally endorsed by the Zionist Congress in 1909 due to the support of the Poale-Zion party in Palestine, not as a means to socialism, but as a practical method of settlement that met their needs of the time in Palestine.

The only settlement that was planned according to "Oppenheimer's plan," Merhavia, failed. However, the principle of cooperative settlements as serving both the national and social interests of the settlers, has since become a major conception in the Zionist movement.

# תמצית מאמרים באנגלית