

TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY
THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES
THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF ZIONISM
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 XIX

The Institute for Research in the History of Zionism founded in memory of Chaim Weizmann 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.

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Summaries

Daniel Gutwein

Utopia and Fulfillment: Antisemitism and Transformation of Self as “Driving Forces” in the Early Zionist Thought of Herzl

The article examines Herzl's position regarding the “driving force” that will transform Zionism from a Utopia to an achievable program. Herzl's writings from the formative period of his Zionist thought reveal that his position on the driving force underwent a radical change. In the first stage he saw this force as the self-transformation of Jewish society that would be expressed in economics, society and politics; in the second stage he proposed an explanation – which in a short time became the official Zionist line – that perceived antisemitism as the driving force. A review of his writings reveals that it was only an apparent change of view. In fact, even when Herzl expounded the “official” explanation that centered on antisemitism, a latent level in his thought processes still saw transformation as the driving force of Zionism. Moreover, the official, later level, the messages of which are clear and sharp, was not the product of an intrinsic change in Herzl's point of view, but a propaganda ruse, intended to convince those in doubt and combat opponents; on the contrary, the latent, earlier level reveals the complex, ambivalent considerations that underly the concepts that guided Herzl to the Zionist solution. Defining the ostensible change and the two levels, on the one hand, and studying the content of each and their mutual relation, on the other – subjects that despite their importance have not been studied in Herzl scholarship – contribute to a deeper understanding of Herzl's thought and teach something about the dynamics which he perceived to be the basis of Zionism and the mechanism by which it could be achieved.

Dalia Levi

“Or la-Yesharim” (Light to the Honest) – An Anti-Zionist Manifest and Several Responses to It

The Book *Or la-Yesharim* (Light to the Honest) expressed the Orthodox anti-Zionist position in the beginning of the twentieth century. Orthodox Zionist circles reacted to this book primarily in two ways:

- (1) Zionism is unrelated to religion, and consequently should not be negated from a religious point of view; one may participate in it because of its practical benefits. This was the attitude of Rabbi Reines and Rabbi S.Y. Rabinowitz.
- (2) Zionism is related to religion and it is an important expression of awakening before redemption.

The first chapter of this article presents the primary arguments of *Or la-Yesharim* against Zionism, a partial comparison to Shivat Zion (Return

to Zion) and a discussion of the letters of rabbis who contributed to *Or la-Yesharim*. The detailed discussion of the letter by the Lubavitcher Rebbe is deferred to Chapter Three, in the context of the criticism it aroused.

The second and third chapters present the critique of *Or la-Yesharim* by Rabbi A.I. Kook, which has been published lately from his literary legacy, compared to articles he published at the time, and the position of Rabbi Don Yihe, based on the tract that he published including the supplement by Wilner.

The conclusion points out the uniqueness of these two responses, both of which perceive an intrinsic connection between national awakening and religion, as opposed to the characteristic attitudes of the religious-Zionist camp.

Dalia Levi is engaged in Ph.D. studies and teaches in the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Tel Aviv University.

Yaakov Borot

The Affair of the Preacher Horowitz in Reklinghausen: A Chapter from the Zionist Life of the German Communities

The article describes an affair that took place in the Community of Reklinghausen, Germany in 1931-32, after a local Zionist group disseminated a leaflet containing harsh personal accusations against the local preacher (*Prediger*) Horowitz. Horowitz was an extreme liberal preacher, who came into numerous confrontations with Zionists and "Ostjuden" in the community. Among other things he was accused of putting pressure on Jews from Eastern Europe to vote for the liberal list in communal elections. In the wake of severe accusations against the preacher the communal administration filed a libel suit against the authors of the leaflet, who were led by the local teacher Siegfried Plaut. This initiated a complex affair that involved many factors within the community and outside it, among them regional and national Zionist leaders, and the regional and national leadership of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbuerger jüdischen Glaubens. The events that led to the dissemination of the leaflet and those that transpired after the libel suit was filed against its disseminators enable us to examine the conditions under which the Zionists operated in middle-sized and small German communities, a subject that has virtually been ignored in modern research.

Barukh Ben-Anat

“The Great Moment Found a Small Generation” – The Nordau Plan 1919-1920

In 1919 Max Nordau presented his plan to bring 600,000 Jews, refugees from the pogroms in the Ukraine, to Eretz Israel in the course of one year. His plan was not accepted by the Zionist leadership. This article discusses the plan from Nordau's point of view. Nordau framed his plan on the basis of his assumption that violent antisemitism, like that in the Petlura pogroms, was increasing, and regarded saving the Jews of Eastern Europe as the central problem. In his opinion, if a Jewish majority is not established in Eretz Israel, Britain will renege on its commitment to the Zionist Movement. Both for saving the Jews of Eastern Europe and attaining a majority he regarded time as the cardinal factor – and in that he was unique. He saw the key to achieving his plan in enlisting the Jewish People to save the Jews of Ukraine. The mass murder of the Jews of Ukraine, a halt to migration to the US, which had become the traditional refuge, and the opening of Eretz Israel to Jewish immigration, were a unique constellation of events, that could be the impetus for drafting the Jewish People into action.

Yigal Drori

Roots in the Diaspora and Ottoman Eretz Israel

The political activity of the “civilian groups” in the 1920s revolved primarily around six individuals. Three of these were eventually to become the leaders of the liberal wing of the General Zionists in Eretz Israel (Bograshov, Mossensohn and Glickson), and the three others the conservative wing of the same movement (Superski, Isimojik and Levontin). All six were born in Eastern Europe, received individualistic education, and ideas regarding building a new society based on new social principles were foreign to them. In this way one may explain their connection, later on, to the “General Zionist” camp, in the framework of the Zionist movement.

Beyond the similarities, there was a clear distinction between the leaders of the liberal wing of the General Zionists in Eretz Israel in their youth and that of the conservatives. The three leaders of the liberal wing acquired formal education in Switzerland and were influenced by the liberal concepts in vogue in Western Europe at the beginning of the century. The three knew each other and worked together in Europe on information and propaganda, as assistants to the Russian Zionist leader – Ussishkin. Conversely, the three future leaders of the conservative wing did not engage in higher studies, did not absorb Western enlightenment, did not meet abroad, and obviously did not work together abroad.

These distinctions between the two groups of leaders brought about differences in their future direction. Bograshov, Mossensohn and Glickson led, from the 1920s, a branch in which ideology was the first priority, even if economic profit was not achieved immediately, and this explains their proximity to the Labor movement in Eretz Israel. On the other hand, Superski, Isimojik and Levontin were to head, later on, the branch that preferred the economic direction and saw social needs through the prism of hard currency, and consequently supported free enterprise.

Dr. Yigal Drori teaches in the Open University and at Oron College.

Eyal Kafkafi

The "Gordonian" Version – An Ideal Grounded in Reality

This article seeks to interpret the unique position of Pinchas Lavon, in particular the positions of "Gordonia." Lavon, the leader of "Gordonia" and later on the General Secretary of the Histadrut and the Minister of Defense, had a high regard for social-ethical pathos, for the "idealistic" element in Marx's thought – which his followers presented as if it were socio-economic scientific objectivity – and for the concept of "historical necessity." On the other hand Lavon received "affirmation of reality" from Marxism. However Lavon protected himself from the negative influences of Marxism, including anti-Zionism and antisemitism, and fought against the radicalization of his movement, "Gordonia." From his own experience he knew how essential it was to protect youth from Communist messianism. On the other hand with the rise of Hitler and after the assassination of Arlozorov, faithful to his own views on realism in ideological contexts, Lavon rejected every attempt to move the Labor Movement to the right camp. The Hebrew Workers Movement, based on the freedom of the individual, opposed all forms of oppression and dictatorship. Therefore Lavon opposed the idea that the ends justify the means. This article aims to discover how he walked this fine line.

Hagit Lavsky

The Puzzle of Brit Shalom's Impact on the Zionist Polemic during Its Time and Afterwards

The article examines how Brit Shalom attained special status in Zionist history and historiography. Its place in history is derived from the fact that it developed among the Zionist leadership of the 1920s and 1930s, which included both "Weizmanists" and "Constructive Socialists." The approach of Brit Shalom expressed the deep desire of this establishment population to anchor its nationalism in the humanist Jewish tradition. Among other factors that contributed to Brit Shalom's prestige were its

popularity among German Zionists and the participation of famous intellectuals in it. The article examines the stages of development of Brit Shalom's status within the Zionist Movement from its first rise in 1920-21 through its consolidation in 1925 to its fall in the wake of the riots of 1929. Regarding historiography, it would seem that dealing with Brit Shalom serves the object of the historian who wishes to describe the limits of Zionist consensus. Moreover, the Zionist historian takes pride in the historical existence of Brit Shalom for apologetic reasons: the idea of Brit Shalom, ethically so attractive, could not have dictated the path of realistic Zionism.

Orzion Bartana

Natan Alterman and Yehiel Perlmutter – Canonical and Non-Canonical Hebrew Poetry from Eretz Israel in the 1940s in “Mahbarot le-Sifrut”

The central claim of this article is that in Alterman's poems and in his essay, published in “Mahbarot le-Sifrut”, one may find a growing split between the abstract, figurative symbolism of his poetry and the demands of the reader that Eretz Israel poetry reflect the landscape and life of the country. Alterman tried in these poems in the 1940s to adapt his poetics to the new demands of Hebrew poetry, but succeeded only partially. At the same time the article examines the poetics of Yehiel Perlmutter (Avot Yeshurun) which were Eretz Israel oriented from the beginning, and not burdened with European cultural baggage like Alterman's. In the course of the 1940s Perlmutter's poetry absorbed and gave expression to two monumental traumas: the Holocaust and the War of Independence, and it became the dis-jointed, problematic poetry that Israeli readers came to know in the 1980s.

The conclusion of the analysis is that the principle antithesis of Alterman's poetry is not the poetry of Natan Zach, but that of Avot Yeshurun on the one hand and the “Canaanite” poetry on the other.

Tzivia Belsan

The (Fifth) Conference of the World Alliance of Po'alei Zion –
the Rift

The article discusses the controversies and the various ideological approaches that arose in the fifth world conference (Vienna, 1920) of the Leftist Po'alei Zion parties, known as the “conference of the rift.” This conference gathered against a background of ideological confusion within the alliance. The immediate reason for this lack of certainty was the crisis of the Second International and the establishment of the Third International, which required Socialists to define their positions and join one camp or the other. However, even though the question of the

International was perplexing and unbalancing, the fifth conference gathered in order to resolve additional problems that were no less severe. And indeed as it was clear since the meeting of the Stockholm conference, the important and perhaps critical meeting in this conference concerned the building of Eretz Israel. In this discussion the report of "The Leftist Po'alei Zion Delegation" that was sent to Eretz Israel, and the discussions of which refined the controversies regarding Eretz Israel, played a central role.

Yaakov Roth

The Po'alei Zion Party in the USA between 1920 and 1947

The article includes four chapters of a study on the Leftist Po'alei Zion Party in the USA between 1920 and 1947.

"From Bloc to Party" describes the formation of the party in the United States. The chapter "In the American Arena" examines how a party with a socialist-revolutionary platform operated in the capitalistic reality of America, while examining its positions on such issues as the trade-union struggle, the relations with the American Communist Party, the Great Depression and the Second World War. "Zionists in Their Own Way" discusses the attitudes and activities of the party in the nationalist arena, as revealed by its approach towards the Zionist movement and its institutions, the place of Eretz Israel in its deliberations and the internal controversies that arose in the party regarding questions that led to its split and withdrawal from the Zionist movement. The final chapter, "On the Theshold of the Communist World," discusses the attitude of the party to the question of joining the Comintern, its position towards the Soviet Union and attempts to solve the Jewish problem by means of the state authorities.

Shemuel Cohen-Shani

The Political Department of the Jewish Agency and the "School for Diplomats" – Building the Institutions of the New State

"The School for Diplomats" was the name given to the institute for training personnel that operated in the framework of the political department of the Jewish Agency. It was founded by Walter Eitan, the director of the department, who intended to set up a college that would serve the needs of all the civil administration and not only the future foreign office. In fact the curriculum stressed contacts with foreign officials, but its purpose was to train the leading cadre of civil servants in the future state.

Candidates for the course underwent a strenuous admission process including aptitude tests with the object of creating a permanent civil service based on knowledge and professionalism and not on political

considerations.

The course operated from November 1946 to Spring 1948. The 25 students in the course took part in the work of the "situation committee", which planned the institutions that needed to be established to run the new state. In addition to a plan for the future Foreign Office, they engaged in comparative research and drew up plans for the structure of the information (propaganda) department in the Ministry of Interior and proposals for the Civil Service regulations of the Jewish State.

In this way the students of the course and its director expressed the multi-functional tradition of the political department, which combined diplomatic activity with defense and propaganda in the struggle against implementation of the partition plan between November 29, 1947 and May 14, 1948. Building the institutions of the new sovereign state was a part of this multi-faceted activity.

Dinah Porat

"Amalek's Partners" – Ultra-Orthodox Anti-Zionist Accusations in

Israel in the 1980s against Zionism during the Period of the Holocaust
This article discusses an accusation that was first heard in Israel in the 1950s and grew louder in the 1970s, according to which the Zionist Movement and its leadership, whether in Israel, the Free World or Occupied Europe, was responsible for the Holocaust. The responsibility is both practical and theological. The practical guilt was that Zionism was a willing and eager partner in the destruction of European Jewry, systematically carrying it out, primarily out of hatred for Orthodox Judaism; examples of the guilt are presented from the actions and words attributed to Zionist leaders. The theological guilt was its being a secular national movement that sought to establish a state like any other state, violating the central principles of Judaism: not to force the redemption, to wait for the Messiah, to be a chosen and different people. Because Zionism violated these principles it released the gentiles from their oath not to harm the Jewish people too much. This release made Hitler's actions possible.

This accusation, and particularly its vociferous reiteration in the last decade, should be understood against the background of the struggle of extreme ultra-orthodoxy against the Zionist state and its institutions, which it seeks to replace with a state ruled by Jewish law (*halakha*). The accusation has been voiced only by extreme groups within ultra-orthodox Judaism, but its echoes, and the questions raised today by the entire ultra-orthodox community (Was the Holocaust the express will of God? Where were the rabbis during the Holocaust? Did we go like sheep to the slaughter?) extend the controversy to all the questions that pertain to relations between the Zionists and the ultra-orthodox in Israel, relations that threaten to split us into two nations.