Dor Ledor

Studies in the History of Jewish
Education
In Israel and the Diaspora

LII

מוזיאון חצר הישוב הישן ע"ש יצחק קפלן
The Isaac Kaplan Old Yishuv Court Museum

אפרתה
המכללה האקדמית לחינוך
תשעים שנות הכשרת מורים

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Studies on the History of Hebrew Education in Eretz-Israel on the 90th anniversary of the Efrata College

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Students and teachers at the Mizrachi Teachers' Seminar for Women, 1930
Source: Efrata College Archives, picture album S-4
(See article by Michal Ben Ya'akov in this volume).
Back cover photo:
An activity of the Yavneh Religious Students Union with children in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, 1940
Source: The Isaac Kaplan Old Yishuv Court Museum
(see article by Ora Pikel Tzabari in this volume).

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When asked "Where did you go to school?"
I answer with pride:
"I studied at the Mizrachi Women's Seminar for Teachers".

Nehama Michaeli (neé Horowitz) z"l, 1949 graduate

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Part 3 – Childhood and Children's Education in Eretz-Israel in the Mid-Twentieth Century

"…The whole future of our work in the Land is dependent upon the success of girls' education …" – The Beginnings of Women's Teacher Training for National-Religious Education in Eretz-Israel

Michal Ben Ya'akov

The development of Zionist education in Eretz-Israel in general, and national-religious education under the aegis of the religious-Zionist Mizrahi movement in particular, resulted in a call for qualified teachers who could integrate their commitment to religious life, Zionist ideology and modern pedagogy. The call for qualified teachers for the newly formed schools extended to women as well as men, in line with principles of the European Enlightenment and the nationalist movement.

This article traces the development of Jewish education for religious girls in Palestine in the late Ottoman and Mandate periods, and focuses on the Mizrahi Teachers' Seminary for Women (*Beit HaMidrash LeMorot HaMizrahi,* today the academic Efrata College for Education) which opened in Jerusalem in May 1924, five years after its "older brother", the Mizrahi Teachers' Seminary for Men.

Although the curriculum was dictated by the Mizrahi movement, the Education Department of the Zionist National Committee and the British Mandate's Education Department, the teachers in the women's seminary molded it according to their own goals and education. Many of the female teachers had lasting influence on their pupils as role models in a new society.

The educational and social goals of Mizrahi education for girls are examined in light of the founders' traditional gendered expectations and reveal their unexpected results, expanding the status of religious Zionist women, without directly challenging social norms.

School Trips at the "'Mizrahi's Teachers Seminar for Women" (now Efrata College) during the British Mandate

Yossi Spanier

This article presents the philosophy of the Mizrahi Teachers' Seminar for Women regarding field trips that took place during the period of the British Mandate. Field trips during the 1920s were part of the national awakening and the development of Eretz-Israel, as expressed in Zionist ethos which crystalized during the early waves of immigration (Aliyot) in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The Seminar's diaries for the period record a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including field trips. These trips included participation in tree plantings and parades on Tu B'Shvat, the New Year for the Trees, in Jerusalem neighborhoods, walking tours to scenic and heritage sites in the vicinity of Jerusalem and trips to new settlements. Most were walking tours, whether for economic reasons or the ideology of gaining familiarity with the Land by foot. The teachers also participated these trips. The variety of activities linked with the field trips created varied experiences and high spirits. These activities were part of the institution's educational philosophy for training its students to become school teachers and preschool teachers in the Zionist enterprise in Eretz-Israel. Trips were also conducted to educational institutions in order to become familiar with schools in the country.

A small picture album from those times preserved in the college archives allows us a visual glimpse of the trips and those who participated in the tours.

'Batey Ze'irot Mizrahi': A Reflection of the Profile of Religious-Zionist Women during the Yishuv Period

Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman

This article focuses on the Beit Ze'irot Mizrahi girls' homes established in Jerusalem (1933) and Tel Aviv (1939). These institutions, founded by the Mizrachi Women's Organization in the United States and Eretz-Israel, were intended to absorb religious pioneer girls, both veteran residents and new immigrants, and help them by providing vocational training, an academic education and cultural enrichment in the spirit of religious Zionism. However the primary goal of these institutions was to train young women to join in building the Land, in order to influence the religious character of the emerging society in general, and be involved in the shaping of the religious society in particular. The Beit Ze'irot Mizrahi homes embodied the outlook of the religious Zionist women who saw education as a tool to advance the young religious woman within the national enterprise. A survey of these institutions reveals an additional layer in the history of Hebrew education created during the Mandatory period, while also reflecting the character of religious Zionist women of the times, including their gender-based and educational viewpoints. With the founding of the Beit Ze'irot Mizrahi homes they hoped to realize their goals, promising support to meet the needs of the resident girls and allowing them to participate in the national enterprise as religious women without challenging their gender-traditional philosophy. However, the varied activities in these institutions, characterized by women's initiative and management, as well as the girls' education and vocational training, formed the basis for change in the gendered outlook of religious-Zionist women.

Women's Winding Way to Professionalism: A Historical Perspective: 1854-1948

Margalit Shilo

The first school in Jerusalem for Jewish girls was established by the Rothschild family in 1854 in an attempt to modernize the Jewish Orthodox community by introducing education for girls. This trend, i.e. educating girls, became the order of the day when the first Hebrew schools were founded, beginning in 1885, in the newly-established Jewish colonies in Ottoman Palestine. The Hebrew teachers believed that girls would have much influence on Hebraizing the entire Jewish community in Eretz-Israel and their education would be an important means of changing society.

The goal of this paper is to sketch the different ways in which Hebrew girls who studied in institutions of higher education paved new professional roads in the Zionist enterprise in a wide variety of professions: agriculture, nursing, teaching, medicine, law, and politics. The newly acquired knowledge opened vistas for women in the public sphere. During the Mandatory period women became very prominent in the building of the new Jewish society in Eretz-Israel. Paradoxically, some of these professional women saw their new standing in society as a means of strengthening their position also in their families. In different ways, both education and nationalism had empowered women in their homes and in the public sphere.

Between the Comprehensive Nationalist Educational System and the Sectorial Model: David Yellin's Educational Pedagogy with a Longitudinal Focus on Jewish Education in Israel

Ofra Meitlis

David Yellin (1864-1941), one of the founders of the new Hebrew education in Eretz-Israel, believed in education that combined religion, nationalism, and academic knowledge, and strove to provide all Jewish children with the same education. This article first presents Yellin's educational philosophy, as well as his spheres of activity in different institutions and occasions, and describes how, despite this position, he supported the national religious Mizrahi movement's stance that divided education into two: national religious education under its patronage and general education – a division that has remained at the foundation of the educational system in the State of Israel until this day.

The second part of the article describes the development of a uniform and integrative program of education in the State of Israel and the place of Judaic studies in State secular schools. Despite the changes in recent generations, ever-increasing parts of Israeli society are now incorporating the vision of David Yellin and others, who rejected sectorial education and understood the importance teaching Judaic studies to all Jewish children.

Education for the Religious Kibbutz in the Bnei Akiva Youth Movement

Nachum Baruchi

The Bnei Akiva youth movement and the Religious Kibbutz movement are purported to be part of the same organization – Hapo'el Hamizrahi. While the youth movement was established by activists from the adult movement in Eretz-Israel to protect the youth from the secular influences that dominated the street and raise a generation that would continue in their path, the idea of the Religious Kibbutz movement sprouted as a rebellion against the lifestyle of the Diaspora communities and its religious pioneers, philosophers and advocates immigrated to the Land of Israel. The relationship between the two movements was solidified during the 1930s with a mutual ideological basis of *hagshamah* (realization or self-fulfillment, used in the context of Zionism as realizing the Jewish national spirit in Eretz-Israel), during a period when kibbutz life was the pinnacle of the Zionist ethos. Bnei Akiva graduates established three Kibbutzim and their members were counselors in the youth movement.

During the War of Independence half the religious kibbutzim were destroyed and the responsibility for the youth movement passed to the next generation of counselors who were less familiar with kibbutz life. Within a few years the kibbutzim ceased sending out counselors and continued in the youth movement only in an administrative role. Once the Religious Kibbutz movement failed to provide appropriate manpower as counselors for the youth movement, it lost its central place in impacting educational content. The kibbutz influence further waned as the number and status of Bnei Akiva yeshivas increased. Moreover, the kibbutz's fall from favor in Israeli society strengthened its critics who argued against the exclusivity of the kibbutz ideology in the youth movement. The separation was completed at the end of the 1980s when the last Bnei Akiva Secretary General who was a member of the Religious Kibbutz movement ended his term of office, and the two movements continued separately to strive to realize their goals.

Religious Socialization in the Religious Kibbutz Movement

Menucha Cohen Amir

Religious socialization that results in youth becoming religious adults is often taken for granted. However, the assumption of this study is that religiosity does not develop by itself. The question of 'becoming religious' is particularly interesting in the Religious Kibbutz Movement, since the movement integrates orthodoxy, modernity, and socialism. Agents for religious socialization include all that influence the individual. It is usually believed that the two most significant agents for religious socialization are the family and peer group.

This article examines the topic of religious socialization in the Religious Kibbutz Movement using two research methods – a systematic historical review of past studies on education and religious socialization in the Religious Kibbutz Movement and a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews, particularly suited to studying socialization processes.

The findings of the qualitative study indicate three agents have major significance for religious socialization: not only the family and peer groups, but also the 'kibbutz street', representing the public areas and communal elements of the religious kibbutz – values, norms, and the religious and social atmosphere. Interviews demonstrate that the 'kibbutz street' is of great significance in developing its members' religiosity.

The Religious Kibbutz Movement, as part of the broader religious Zionist community, is facing the dilemmas and tensions characteristic of modern Orthodox and religious Zionist worldviews which seek to integrate different worlds and values. This is an approach that is both difficult to convey but also impossible to exist without because its complexity and integration are the very essence of the Religious Kibbutz Movement.

'From Yavneh to Jerusalem' – The Yavneh Religious Students Union in the Jewish Quarter in the 1940s

Ora Pikel-Tzabari

The end of the British Mandatory period was a difficult one for those in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem. The Arab uprisings and the appalling hygiene conditions caused the more established Jews to depart, so that by the 1940s most of the remaining residents were from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. The harsh economic realities forced parents to take their children out of school in order to join the workforce.

The financial situation of the Hebrew University students also deteriorated during the 1930s and particularly after the outbreak of the Second World War. A significant increase in tuition fees, together with the cessation of funds which many students had received from their parents in Europe, resulted in many of them living from hand to mouth. In December 1939 Dr. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University, promised room and board to students who would live in the Old City and work for the community, reinforcing Jewish settlement in the Jewish Quarter. Members of the Yavneh Religious Students Union responded to the call, inspired with faith in their mission and providing a personal example. They worked on two levels: sending children from the Old City to religious kibbutzim and working to strengthen the poverty-stricken community in the Old City.

The students established a 'children's society', club houses for young people, summer day camps, evening lectures, day trips, a library, loan societies, and professional training courses to impart their philosophy to the children – love of the Jewish nation and Eretz-Israel, preparation for a life of cooperation and labor, and the enrichment and expansion their horizons. All this ended with the fall of the Jewish Quarter in 1948, however the Yavneh Religious Students Union's success and distinctiveness lay in their establishment of a new and unique model, renewed life within the community.

The 'Bet HaRashal – HaMetifta HaGedola' – Beit Midrash for Rabbis and Rabbinical Judges in Jerusalem

Shlomo E. Glicksberg

From the 1950s onwards, the Sephardi Community Council dreamed of establishing a central Torah institution to create a new generation of rabbis, with secular knowledge and involved in contemporary affairs, to lead the Sephardic communities in both Israel and the Diaspora. Although in practice this dream was not realized, the idea was based on previous aspirations of the Sephardic Tiferet Yerushalayim Yeshiva to shape spiritual leaders with broad secular knowledge. Thus, the Sephardi Community Council joined a chain of similar unsuccessful attempts made by the Sephardic Chief Rabbis Yaakov Meir, Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel and Yitzhak Nissim. However, the efforts to establish such a rabbinical seminary shed light on the many ways the Sephardic communities addressed modernity. The centuries old Sephardi Community Council did everything within its power to preserve a vanishing world of rabbinical leadership that combined an absolute commitment to ancient Jewish tradition along with the greatest possible openness to general education. Although the greater vision was not realized, through this unique effort we can learn about the worldview of the Sephardic Community Council leadership in Jerusalem and the way they chose to address the spiritual challenges of modernity, a path that was inherently different from the approach that recommended isolation and distance.

Cultural Agents and the Design of Childhood in the Hebrew Education System in Mandatory Period

Zehavit Shenkolvski

This article discusses the shaping of perceptions of childhood among the educational agents of change during the British Mandatory period, contrasting them to conceptual models presented in previous academic research which analyze the ideal Hebrew youth of the second generation of the Zionist revolution, *Dor Ba'arets* (the Native Generation) as manual laborers and builders of the nation, connected to nature and willing to fight and sacrifice their lives for their homeland, disconnected from Diaspora roots.

Many teachers during the British Mandatory period, irrespective of sector, prioritized the desire for order and discipline, according to European philosophies of discipline and hygiene. These characteristics are apparent in educational policies and the conduct of its agents of change, the teachers, doctors, and school nurses. Special emphasis is placed on the claim that order and discipline were part of the Zionist revolutionary vision and the desire of the Hebrew educational system to create uniform curricula, language, and behavior among the new Hebrew children, who came from a wide variety of homes, many of which having 'Diaspora culture'. Careful study of the justifications for order and discipline expose the deep anxiety felt by the revolutionary teachers: anxiety that the revolution would gradually disappear and the fear that the next generation would not bear the yoke of the Zionist revolution nor be willing to sacrifice itself. Therefore schools had to create an obedient adult and faithful soldier for the revolution.

We also argue that the inflexible order and discipline were a reaction to the increasing fear of 'the dangers of the street', the Levantine-Mizrahi environment and 'Diaspora' culture. The street hosted a different Yishuv society, far from the control and supervision of the agents of Hebrew cultural change. Fear of the power of this alternative street culture reinforced the need for unbending and stringent guarding of those children who were still part of the education system.

'To Be A Child' in Eretz-Israel of the 1940s

Haim Grossman

Children in Mandatory Palestine were surrounded by products that simplified the Zionist ideology and imparted it through daily material objects. These products created a colorful mosaic of the Zionist experience, presented to the children not only in the schools and preschools, but also in the toys and games they played during their leisure time.

In addition to 'regular' lotto games, chess, dominos, pick-up sticks, dolls and cars produced in Eretz-Israel, others emphasized a nationalist-Hebrew message that linked the children to the experience of building the Land, representing the essence of the adult world while building a generation of Hebrew Zionist children. The children cut out pictures and card games, collected postage stamps, and created beautiful nature notebooks that were full of lovingly picked and dried flowers of the homeland. Trips outdoors emphasized their Zionist mission and showed how the New Hebrew child was the exact opposite of his Diaspora counterpart. Map games took children on 'trips', using a die and colored playing pieces that moved around the board and helped realize the Zionist 'duty' of 'walking the Land' Children learned the stories of national heroes imprinted on candy packages and built Tel Aviv from paper cut-out models. Simultaneously these helped, albeit unintentionally, to distance the terrible world war that appeared in several of Binyamin Berloi's toys, but did not threaten the building of the homeland. The Jewish National Fund, joined by private manufacturers, produced a wide range of pictorial products which spread the nationalist message. Thus, through games and toys children internalized their religious duty of building the Land and fulfilled the 'commandment' of being the Hebrew children of the generation of redemption.

Friends Talk About the School called Jimmy – 'The Aaron Shemi School' in Beit Shemesh

Israel Rozenson and Yossi Spanier

It is common custom to name places and institutions after people as a means of commemoration and promoting collective memory. In many cases, the naming is for figures who are worthy of commemoration in light of their actions or contributions to society. However, the effectiveness of naming as a means of commemoration is not simple. The name given to a place or institution often becomes a technical means of identification, without any recognition of its significance. To prevent such a situation, various means may be employed, such as explanatory signs or ceremonies at the site expounding upon the story of the person being commemorated.

Schools, both in Israel and abroad, bear the names of various people, although this, too, may be ineffective as an instrument for promoting collective memory. However, commemoration may be effective if the school's curriculum integrates the story of the person in whose memory the school is named, his values and contribution to society.

The Aaron Shemi School in Beit Shemesh is an interesting example of such commemoration. Aaron Shemi, known as 'Jimmy', was a squadron commander in the Harel Brigade, the Fifth Battalion of the Palmah, as well as a man of letters and culture. After he fell in battle in the Beit Shemesh area, a memorial book, *Haverim Mesaprim Al Jimmy* [Friends Talk About Jimmy] was published in his memory. Later Yehuda Ornan, a friend of Jimmy's, came to teach in Beit Shemesh and in the early 1950s he decided to name the State school of which he was principal after Aaron Shemi. This was an individual initiative, not officially sanctioned by the authorities, but encouraged by the Harel Brigade members and the Shemi family. Through school programs the Palmah hero became loved by the Beit Shemesh pupils and his memorialization was prominent in official State memorial ceremonies. However, the connection with Shemi's figure faded over time and was finally severed during the 1980s when this area of Beit Shemesh became home to ultra-Orthodox residents.

"We'll study during summer vacation..." – School as Reflected in the *Hasamba* Children's Book Series

Israel Rozenson

Hasamba is the name of a fictional group of boys, whose adventures were described in a popular series of books for adolescents, first published during the 1950s, with additional books appearing over the next two decades. The adventures focus on the teenagers' aid to the State of Israel, particularly in connection with security, demonstrating their unusual loyalty to the State and Zionist values. Several studies have discussed *Hasamba* as an unapologetic work of Zionist children's literature. This article focuses on how school is reflected in the series and its educational and historical implications, as expressed in various books of the series.

In the early books the heroes came from different schools in the Tel Aviv area and were identified by them. The multiple schools may reflect the ideology that aid to the nascent state was not limited to one school or sector. The initial stories did not include many details concerning the time when the adventures took place, but it is understood that they occurred mainly during summer vacations. However, later in the series, the adventures became part of the boys' lifestyle, and thus raise the question concerning the relationship between these activities and school. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that throughout the series both general and Zionist education are an inseparable part of the *Hasamba* protagonists' lives and the values promoted in the series. Several explanations are offered to resolve the conflict between service to the nation and the demands of regular school attendance. The attitude towards school is not negative and adolescent rebellion as expressed in the series does not include a struggle against school or its teachers. The schools' central role in the nation, educating new generations of Zionists, does not permit slighting the teachers or the day-to-day educational process. Silence regarding school can therefore be understood as a central constraint of the plot, which entails intensive time-consuming activities which don't allow for regular studying, despite the strong position of the school in national awareness.