

ישראל

כתב עת לחקר הציונות ומדינת ישראל
היסטוריה, תרבות, חברה

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Ofri Krischer and Arie M. Dubnov
The Bentwich Saga

The Bentwicks, a middle-class Anglo-Jewish family, were British patriots, early adherents of Zionism, and enthusiasts for British imperialism. This article focuses on two generations of the family patriarchs, Herbert Bentwich (1856-1932), a leading member of the English Hovevei Zion, and his son, Norman de Matos Bentwich (1883-1971), Attorney General of the Mandate Government in Palestine. The article uses these case studies to examine the dynamics of transferring ideas and social practices between the imperial metropole and Palestine, as well as patterns of imperial careering. In doing so, the article attempts to narrow the artificial gap separating Anglo-Jewish history from the study of the British Empire in general and its mandatory rule in Palestine in particular. Additionally, the article scrutinizes the numerous memoirs and biographies produced by the Bentwich family members over the years, highlights some of the discrepancies between these narratives and other historical records, and examines the function of these texts.

Hagit Krik

Beyond Anemones: Britons in Mandate Palestine as a Colonial Community

Thousands of British citizens lived in mandate Palestine, contending with the various implications and ambiguities inherent in their position as representatives of colonial rule, Britain, and empire. Their consolidation into a community of colonial expatriates shared common patterns with colonial communities around the globe while being characterized by a distinctive evolution due to local circumstances. The article portrays, for the first time, Britons in Palestine as a particular case of a colonial community in the British Empire. Through a reconstruction of its composition and various aspects of everyday lives, it explores distinctions and hierarchies among its members based on class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. The historiography of the British presence in Palestine often concentrates on aspects of politics and governance, highlighting the role played by senior British officials. Moreover, it usually depicts Britons as a monolithic group of formal imperial agents, characteristically male. By recapturing the social and cultural history of the British colonial community, the article depicts the much more complex and dynamic fabric of British lives. Furthermore, it considers their interactions with the mechanism of imperial power and mandatory rule in Palestine.

Giora Goodman

Film Censorship in Mandatory Palestine, 1921-1948

The remarkable growth in cinema theatres and film audience numbers in Mandatory Palestine reflected general trends of economic development, urbanization, and mass immigration. This article highlights the British administration's efforts to control and censor the public screening in Palestine of thousands of feature films, documentaries, and newsreels, mostly imported but some locally produced. The subject – combining political, social, and cultural aspects – has not been previously discussed in the vast research literature concerning mandatory Palestine. The article traces the development of the legal infrastructure of film censorship and examines its application by the government-created board of censors. It reveals the categories for censoring films in full and in part and considers the banning of particular films and the public response to this censorship. The article argues that while censoring films out of moral concerns was an important part of film censorship, in Palestine as elsewhere, the British authorities' chief concern was the political impact of films on film audiences. As in other areas of British colonial rule, film censorship in Palestine played an important role in the administration's efforts to prevent religious and national discontent, inter-communal strife, and even to check any popular support for armed rebellion.

Eli Osheroff

Was There Arab Bi-nationalism? Towards a History of Binationalism
from ‘The Other Side’

The historiography of Jewish bi-nationalism is one of the richest subfields of Mandate Palestine history. This article suggests that the concept of bi-nationalism should be examined from the ‘other side’, in order to begin to ask to what extent bi-nationalism was accepted among Arab elites before 1948. The main argument of the article is that by placing the concept of bi-nationalism in its pan-Arab context and defining bi-nationalism as an aspiration to reach an agreement between the Jewish settler minority and the indigenous Arab majority, we find that support for binational principles among Arabs was wider and deeper than previously thought. As a case study, the article focuses on two circles of Arab intellectuals: The Liberal-Constitutional Party in Egypt and the editors and reporters of the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin*. By examining the dialogue between them between 1926 and 1931, the article points to the local and regional interests and conflicts that led the members of these groups to discuss bi-nationalism and adopt some of its components. The article concludes that using these methods to examine similar case studies might shed new light on Arab politics of the Mandate and the road to the 1948 war.

Nimrod Lin

What Do We Talk about When We Talk about a State?
The Global Context of Mandate Era Zionist Political Thought

The present article argues that, in terms of Zionist politics in Palestine, the British Mandate years can be divided into two distinct periods: between 1917 and 1937 many Zionist leaders were willing to accept Jewish self-rule within larger imperial or federative structures. This openness was influenced by Central European political thought and by the attempts of the League of Nations to restrict the sovereignty of empires and nation-states. With the growing persecution of European Jews and the collapse of the League of Nations’ authority, by 1937 the Zionist leadership had become convinced that only a Jewish nation-state would allow for mass Jewish immigration. The turn to the nation-state, which requires an ethnic majority, however, made population transfer part of the Zionist democratic repertoire, as way to ensure Jewish control of the state and grant the Arab minority rights.

Anat Kidron and Shuli Linder-Yarkony
The Historiography of Jewish Settlement in Arab Cities
During the Mandate Period: The Case of Acre

This article deals with the historiography of Jewish settlement in Arab and mixed cities in Mandatory Palestine. The paper's main argument is that while the dominance of the National-Zionist historiography that characterized the study of the National Home's development began to undergo deconstruction processes from the 1980s, the historiography of Jewish urban society in mixed cities remained primarily written out of national dichotomy, or made a distinction between the new, national emigrants and the old settlement that preceded Zionism. This dichotomy explains failures to hold on to Arab cities in communities that were not part of the 'national home' and thus failed to survive the growing national struggle. The example of Acre's Hebrew community shows the discrepancies between the publications that have been written about the city and emphasized the national dichotomy and other possible explanations for the decline and disintegration of the community.

Mustafa Kabha and Nahum Karlinsky
From Competition to Bi-Nationalism: The Palestinian-Arab and
Jewish-Zionist Citrus Industries during the British Mandate Period

This article presents the untold story of the largest and most successful bi-national organization formed during the British Mandate period, a joint Arab-Jewish body that managed Palestine's major export industry, the citrus industry. Formed in early 1941, this bi-national framework operated interminably until April 1948. The organization managed Palestine's citrus industry equally and cooperatively, representing tens of thousands of Arabs and Jews, whose livelihood depended on the industry.

Informed by a new methodologies and research perspectives, among them settler-colonial studies and reconciliation studies, this study delineates the history of the Arab and Jewish citrus industries from the mid-nineteenth century until 1948, analyzes the unique conditions that enabled the formation of that bi-national organization, and concludes as the Palestinian Nakba brought the spirit of bi-national cooperation and the Palestinian-Arab citrus industry as a whole, to an abrupt and tragic end.

Omer Einav

Defending the Goal: Football and Violence in Palestine, August 1929

The 1929 Palestine riots were a significant milestone in the timeline of Jewish-Arab relations in Mandate Palestine, and later the state of Israel, having a great impact on the national and religious conflict. This article seeks to examine these riots from the prism of the connection between football and violence. To this end several case studies in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Hebron are examined, illuminating contemporary historiography. The article utilizes football as a tool to examine the relations between Jews and Arabs, nationality and sports, and violence and nationality. While the 1929 disturbances did not occur because of football, the popular game provides an alternative prism to understanding dominating narratives engrained in collective memory. Despite the independent status of football in Mandate Palestine, the political and military realms cannot be separated from the sports realm – despite British attempts to do so. This is because sports, and particularly football, are the ultimate platform for demonstrating and expressing national sentiment.

Ofer Idels

‘Can We Call Gymnastics a Sport?’: The Inception of Competitive Sports in the *Yishuv* and the Limitations of Zionist Periodization

The historiography of Zionism marks two pivotal moments in the relationship between sports and Zionism: Max Nordau’s ‘Muscular Judaism’ speech at the second Zionist Congress, and the establishment of the first Maccabi club in Palestine in 1906. In contrast to this common research assumption, I argue that the cultural and social significance of sport in the *yishuv* began only after the First World War. Based on recent historical writing on sports, which emphasizes the rapid globalization of modern sports during the interwar period, I show that sports, with their primary focus on competition, were a dramatic deviation from the notions and ideas of physical culture (primarily gymnastics) that were common in pre-war Hebrew culture. Thus, through a discussion of the inception of modern sports in Palestine, the article joins a growing literature that seeks to analyze Zionism and Hebrew culture in a broader historical context than the isolated and limited ‘Jewish perspective’ of classical Zionist historiography.

Abstracts

Dotan Halevy

The Post-Ottoman Period: A New Framing for the History of Palestine
under British Rule

The expanding body of literature on the social and cultural history of Palestine under British rule allows historians to question the validity of treating the ‘mandate’ as a definitive historical period. Seen through the eyes of contemporaries, the Ottoman-ness of Palestine, as that of the larger Arab Middle East, did not necessarily vanish with arrival of the British in 1917, and the ‘mandatory’ rationale did not last as late as their departure in 1948. By critically examining these and other historiographical markers, the article suggests an alternative (or at least a complementary) periodization to the one commonly used in the research of the modern Middle East. Based on the ways historical agents conceived of their own temporalities, the article argues that during the interwar period Jews, Arabs, and Brits continued their quest for the political, cultural, and social horizons that originated in the late Ottoman period. The article surveys recent works advancing this claim to propose that the years of the British rule in Palestine up to the late 1930s may be reframed as a *Post-Ottoman* period. This framing puts in sharp relief the overwhelming effect of the longstanding Ottoman rule on the social and political realities in Palestine during the years we more often tend to associate with the ‘mandate’.

Elizabeth E. Imber

Thinking through Empire: Interwar Zionism, British Imperialism, and
the Future of the Jewish National Home

This article explores how three different interwar Zionist leaders from Palestine (Gershon Agronsky, Chaim Arlosoroff, and Moshe Shertok) saw the cultivating of relationships and the negotiation of political developments from across the British Empire – particularly India – to be critical in securing the Jewish national home in Palestine. In preparing for a range of possible British imperial fates (spanning from the persistence of imperial rule to the triumph of anti-colonial political movements), these Zionists understood the future of the Yishuv and Palestine, the question of British mandatory policy, and the matter of Jewish-Palestinian Arab relations to be part of a much broader British imperial dynamic. This article shows how these trans-imperial ventures and relationships shaped diverse Zionist visions of nationhood (including dominion status, federative and binational models, and the independent nation-state as an ideal) and, what is more, depended on an equally diverse coterie of Jewish political actors (among them Zionists and non-Zionists from Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, and Africa).

REVIEWS

<i>The Ruins of the Present</i> , by Gish Amit Shira Wilkof.....	313
<i>Hebrew Fascism in Palestine, 1922-1942</i> , by Dan Tamir Roman Vater.....	319
<i>This Is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine</i> , by Andrea L. Stanton Yair Wallach.....	325
<i>Jabotinsky's Children: Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionism</i> , by Daniel Kupfert Heller Amir Goldstein.....	331
<i>Sewing the Fabric of Statehood: Garment Unions, American Labor, and the Establishment of the State of Israel</i> , by Adam M. Howard Rachel Rojanski	337
<i>Beyond the Zionist Nation-State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion</i> , by Dmitry Shumsky Gil Rubin.....	343
<i>The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine</i> , by Salim Tamari Yoni Furas	349
List of Contributors.....	345
English Summaries	VII

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Arie M. Dubnov and Motti Golani	1
---------------------------------------	---

ARTICLES

The Post-Ottoman Period: A New Framing for the History of Palestine under British Rule

Dotan Halevy	13
--------------------	----

Thinking through Empire: Interwar Zionism, British Imperialism, and the Future of the Jewish National Home

Elizabeth E. Imber	51
--------------------------	----

Defending the Goal: Football and Violence in Palestine, August 1929

Omer Einav	71
------------------	----

‘Can We Call Gymnastics a Sport?’: The Inception of Competitive Sports in the *Yishuv* and the Limitations of Zionist Periodization

Ofel Idels	95
------------------	----

The Historiography of Jewish Settlement in Arab Cities During the Mandate Period: The Case of Acre

Anat Kidron and Shuli Linder-Yarkony	115
--	-----

From Competition to Bi-Nationalism: The Palestinian-Arab and Jewish-Zionist Citrus Industries during the British Mandate Period

Mustafa Kabha and Nahum Karlinsky	137
---	-----

Was There Arab Bi-nationalism? Towards a History of Binationalism from ‘The Other Side’

Eli Osheroff	165
--------------------	-----

What Do We Talk about When We Talk about a State? The Global Context of Mandate Era Zionist Political Thought

Nimrod Lin	187
------------------	-----

Beyond Anemones: Britons in Mandate Palestine as a Colonial Community

Hagit Krik	213
------------------	-----

Film Censorship in Mandatory Palestine, 1921-1948

Giora Goodman	241
---------------------	-----

The Bentwich Saga

Ofri Krischer and Arie M. Dubnov	271
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ISRAEL

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HISTORY, SOCIETY, CULTURE

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Motti Golani and Arie M. Dubnov



THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES
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The Chaim Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel 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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