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SELECTION ABSTRACTS

THE "SECOND GENERATION"
IN QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Naftali Lavie
Israeli Consul General, N.Y.C.

The "Second Generation" American-born children of Holocaust survivors, seem to have a clearer sense of Jewish identity than that of their counterparts, whose parents were born in America. Yet, caught in the dynamics of adolescent turmoil, a consuming and achievement-oriented society, they, too, find themselves on the assimilation trail. While their parents, scarred by their experience, continue to question the rationale behind life in the Diaspora, the children begin to question the validity of their Jewish identity. They have become uncertain about their place as Jews within the American society. A clear sense of identity which results from second-hand memory begins to cloud.

The spiritual leadership in America fails to meet the needs of young Jews beyond high-school age, who do not affiliate themselves with a religious organization. Only a small number of these young people view Jerusalem as their spiritual and national center. It is unfortunate that Israel, for the last 36 years the only vital source and focal point of Jewish creativity — cultural, religious, artistic, scientific, political, social, and by necessity, military, has not succeeded in becoming the singular unifying force for young American Jews.

SHLONSKY'S POETIC REBELLION AGAINST BIALIK

Avraham Hagorni-Green
Hebrew University, Jerusalem

The dramatic poem, Affliction, (Dvai) published in 1924, was Shlonsky's first book of poetry, and it marked the culmination of diverse literary activity he had been involved with during the previous two years. The periodical Hedim, edited by Yacov Rabinowitz and Asher Barash, served as the arena for his polemic and critical essays, as well as his poetic views, which spearheaded a turning point in the Hebrew literary establishment of the day.

During 1923, the year of Bialik's Jubilee, Shlonsky, who considered himself the celebrated poet's heir-apparent, made his break with the Bialikean tradition. In his cycle, "Affliction" he made satirical and parodic use of Bialik's poetic norms. While Bialik's poet/prophet strives for purity of body, soul and language, Shlonsky's poet/pariah is an afflicted individual who expresses his condition in appropriate language, whose uncleaned state is the ultimate road to salvation.

Bialik's Noah is Shlonsky's Job, blazing his own poetic trail. "I will not play pipes — that aren't mine,/nor blow a white shofar/I wish not!"

POLAND TODAY

Ephraim Shmueli

Poland has undergone considerable political, economic and social changes since the end of World War II. Its agricultural nature has given way to industry, the population, formerly interspersed with several minority groups is now homogeneously polish, and anti-Russian feelings run strong. The Poles are more educated now and covert interest in human rights is evident. An unchanged characteristic is Polish anti-Semitism.
Although no Jewish community exists in Poland, the inherent hatred for the Jew is evident in the official party line, which is expressed in anti-Israel, anti-Zionist policies. Israel and the Zionists are blamed for all political misfortunes or governmental mishandling of internal issues, — an all too familiar anti-Semitic practice.

The fact that a country without Jews is still embroiled in demonic anti-Semitic propaganda is both chilling and terrifying.

THE FORCES OF LIFE AND DEATH IN ZELDA’S POETRY

Sarah Halperin
Bar-Ilan University

Zelda (Mishkovsky), who had recently passed away, succeeded in fusing profound religious tradition with modern poetic sensibility. A descendant of the Schneurson Hasidic dynasty, her imagery is drawn from her spiritual and mystical roots. This is particularly evident in Zelda’s aesthetic treatment of the death-theme, central in her poetry.

Death is never final, it is rather, metamorphic. In death, disintegrating matter is followed by its integration into a new form. Death is a higher and more complete state of being, in which man transcends life, and gets closer to God — his utmost quest. Yet, in the dialectics between the forces of life and death, between the emotional and rational, Zelda often reaffirms life in a celebration of light, beauty and joy.

WHY THE GREAT JEWISH REVOLT OF 66-70 AD FAILED

Joseph Nevada
Prof.-Emeritus, Haifa University

During his stay in Jerusalem in 1883, General Charles George Gordon ("Chinese Gordon") propounded an original explanation to what he considered an easy victory of the Roman Emperors, Vespasian and Titus, over the Judaen forces in suppressing the revolt and destroying the Second Temple. He cited three determining factors: 1) Incompetency of Josephus Flavius, the chief commander of the Jewish forces in Galilee; 2) lack of a Jewish cavalry force; and 3) the almost non-existence of a Jewish navy at a crucial time when even a small navy, such as one 15,000 men strong, could have warded off any Roman landing along the entire Palestine coast.

In order to substantiate or refute Gordon’s contention, one has to evaluate Roman naval strength in the latter part of the first century. During the early Republic, Rome had maintained a large navy to serve it during the early Empire, when stress was laid mainly on land forces. The Eastern Roman squadron was mainly intended for safeguarding the Corn Route from Alexandria to Puteoli and Ostia. Both the Egyptian and Syrian naval squadrons were increased only much later, in the second century.

Its is symptomatic that in his Wars Against the Romans, Josephus does not mention at all the presence of Roman warships along the Palestine shores.

The extent of the Judaean naval power during the Revolt is debatable. While Prof. Klausner points out Hasmonean awareness of "naval politics", more particularly in the case of Herod, who had built the Caesarea harbor, and Alexander Yannaeus, whose coins bore the imprint of an anchor, other historians tend to minimize Jewish naval preparedness. However, it is worth noting that following the suppression of the Revolt, the Romans deemed it appropriate to mark their victory by issuing new coins, carrying the inscription: JUDAEA NAVALIS.
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