

Editors' Note

• • • *The Split That Did Not Happen*

As all who attended the Association for Israel Studies conference this past June at Kinneret College now know, the only thing that resulted in unbearable heat was the temperature outdoors, not tempers around the tables. The discussion of “Word Crimes,” the title of the summer issue of *Israel Studies*, our sister publication, did not cause an irreparable split—or any split at all—in the AIS. There was a spirited and quite lengthy airing of the whole issue at the meeting of the Board of Directors on the Sunday before the conference began, at which various differing opinions were presented. But it was clear that it no longer appeared to be a make-or-break time for either the AIS or IS.

Ilan Troen, the IS editor, and Donna Robinson Divine, the editor of the “Word Crimes” issue (and outgoing AIS president), spoke at the board meeting and allowed that mistakes had been made. They announced that new procedures have been put in place to provide transparency and prevent a lack of balance in future issues of IS. Critics of the issue sought a one-year suspension of IS’s affiliation with the Association, but accepted instead the formation of a committee that would examine what was meant by ‘affiliation’ and, more generally, what IS’s relationship with the AIS should be in the coming years. The nominations of the new president and vice-president, Yael Aronoff and Arie Saposnik respectively, were accepted, pending election by the General Assembly, and the meeting ended peacefully and congenially, if rather late.

The business of the conference proceeded peacefully, and the anticlimax was reached on Tuesday when the General Assembly, perhaps better attended than usual, satisfied itself with a brief discussion of “Word Crimes,” approved the formation of a committee to consider IS’s affiliation, and elected Yael and Arie, thus ratifying the generational change that had taken place. “Word Crimes” was now officially behind us. Unlike most political disputes in this age of partisanship, populism, and rancor, common sense and moderation were displayed, even if some rancor remained.



While in the foreground this non-confrontation was taking place, in the background the ISR was churning out articles, the fruits of which you have before you. We chose to begin this volume with a non-article—in fact, an interview, which is an unusual format for an academic journal, but one of particular importance because it is with Aharon Barak, the legendary and now retired president of Israel's Supreme Court, often either praised or damned for initiating a 'judicial revolution', and especially for introducing judicial review of Knesset legislation, a doctrine not known in Israel prior to Barak. However, the topic here is not particularly legal; rather, it is an interview by Raphael Cohen-Almagor on the subject of negotiations—specifically, the Israeli-Egyptian Camp David negotiations of 1978, which resulted in a peace that still endures. Justice Barak, then just finishing his tenure as Israel's attorney general, was a key figure in the negotiations, and his ruminations on how they proceeded to a successful outcome are fascinating, as both a human and a diplomatic drama.

It is followed by an article on the diplomacy surrounding an extremely current and divisive issue—the Israeli government's response to the ongoing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Ronnie Olesker analyzes the 'securitization of delegitimization'—that is, how the delegitimization perceived in the BDS campaign has essentially been declared an existential threat to Israel—and the consequences, positive and negative, of that policy.

Then Benyamin Neuberger presents a hard-hitting analysis of the democratic and, particularly, non-democratic elements of the political components of Israel's body politic, from Yishuv times up to the present. It is sobering to read of the significant non-democratic elements that have been—and to some degree still are—present in Israel's political parties and culture.

At this point it is perhaps a relief to come upon a thoroughly non-political article. Gil Baram and Isaac Ben-Israel describe and analyze Israel's Academic Reserve, those particularly talented IDF recruits who get to attend university before their mandatory military service in return for extra years in the military, often at the cutting edge of Israel's technological R&D. Its various components form a little-known but essential aspect of Israel's technological prowess.

We continue with a non-political analysis of a very political subject. Nir Atmor and Chen Friedberg tested the current hypothesis that women tend to favor left-wing parties by examining and comparing data from Israel's center and periphery. They came up with mixed—and fairly technical—results.

We return to political analysis with an article on the violent Wailing Wall riots of July 1929, a watershed in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. Ouzi Elyada closely examines the role of the Revisionist paper *Doar Ha-Yom* in instigating and inflaming the riots on the Jewish side.

Our review essay, by Avi Shilon, discusses four books on (two of which are by) Israeli prime ministers, including two who are still actively engaged in politics, at least as of this writing. Both the men and the books are a study in contrasts.

Our book reviews for this issue feature (not by design) security policy and religion, including books with very different takes on Religious Zionism. We also offer reviews of Revisionist Zionist history and of a new textbook, as well as Haim Saadoun writing on Orit Bashkin's new book on the Iraqi *aliyah* at the time of the 1948 War. Lastly, we present a review of the winner of the Shapiro Prize, an annual award recently instituted by the AIS. Diego Rotman's *The Stage as a Temporary Home: On Dzigal and Shumacher's Theater (1927–1980)* was chosen by committee members to receive the 2019 Shapiro Prize for Best Book.

We should also mention that we are happy to have the services of a new associate editor, helping us to cope with the increased workload of three issues per year. Matt Berkman, who received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and is now teaching at Oberlin College, comes to us with extensive editing experience and helped edit much of this issue.

We hope you enjoy the fruits of our and our authors' labors—and share our relief about what did not happen at Kinneret.

— Paul L. Scham and Yoram Peri