

## **THE GENESIS OF THE ZIONIST PARADIGM IN JEWISH HISTORY: EXPLORING BEN-ZION DINUR'S WORLDVIEW\***

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### **Abstract**

The 1920s and 30s marked a pivotal period for the genesis of the modern Jewish state and its historical narrative. It was during this era that the Zionist paradigm of Jewish history took shape, serving as the cornerstone of collective memory and the bedrock of national identity for successive generations of Israelis.

The initial cohort of Zionist historians astutely grasped the pivotal role of historical scholarship in shaping a national identity, particularly in advancing the Zionist ambition of rejuvenating the Jewish state and cultivating a novel Jewish identity - the Israeli identity. In pursuit of these aspirations, Zionist historians grappled with formidable challenges, chiefly centered around establishing a scholarly foundation validating the unity of the Jewish people and their enduring connection to the land of Israel, known as Eretz Israel.

This paper endeavors to delineate the defining traits of Zionist historians during this epoch, drawing upon the prominent figure exemplifying this ethos, Professor Ben-Zion Dinur who endeavored to harmonize ideological allegiance with scholarly veracity.

Furthermore, the paper delves into the fundamental elements comprising the Zionist narrative within Jewish history.

**Keywords:** Israel, Zionism, Israeli historiography, Ben-Zion Dinur, history, Eretz Israel, Mandatory Palestine.

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\* The article was submitted on December 4, 2023. The article was reviewed on December 10, 2023.

## **Preface**

Within the Hebrew scientific literature, a substantial body of research comprising monographs and articles delves into Zionist historiography. The dedicated focus of Israeli researchers on historiography is easily comprehensible, considering that history stood as a pivotal tool in the realization of Zionism's primary aspiration - the revitalization of Jewish statehood in Eretz Israel.

Subsequently, historical science in Israel emerged as a potent tool in the intense internal political strife that unfolded in the country post-1948 [5]. Throughout the clashes among historians - those aligned with the "new" and "old" schools - it appeared that all conceivable approaches and interpretations associated with the Zionist narrative in Jewish history had been thoroughly explored. Nonetheless, this paper endeavors to offer a fresh perspective on the evolution of Zionist historiography by analyzing the life experiences of Professor B.-Z. Dinur, the architect of the Zionist narrative in Jewish history [2].

The life trajectory of a researcher and their worldview undeniably play crucial roles in comprehending the ideas they espouse. In the case of B.-Z. Dinur, it is arguable that his life experiences not only influenced the shaping of Zionist narrative in Judaic studies but also became integral components of the narrative's formation. Moreover, Professor Dinur embodies a distinct type of historian, the Zionist historian, whose approach intertwines science with ideology and politics inextricably. He stands as the epitome of this paradigm, reflecting how deeply intertwined his scholarship was with his ideological convictions and political stance.

The primary aim of this proposed article is to delve into the life experiences of the creator behind the Zionist narrative in Jewish history and to encapsulate how these experiences shaped the paradigm he constructed. At the heart of this inquiry lies the investigation into the extent to which the Zionist

paradigm in Jewish history mirrors the life journey of its architect. Using B.-Z. Dinur as an example, this study examines how Zionist intellectual historians responded to contemporaneous events in which they were active participants.

It is crucial to highlight that historians' perspectives on past and present events hold particular significance in the study of Israeli historiography [9]. Unlike scholars in other fields of humanities, representatives of the Zionist narrative in Judaic studies sought to elucidate the present through past interpretations and, conversely, to evaluate historical events through the lens of their contemporary reality.

The figure of B.-Z. Dinur is particularly intriguing, not only because he formulated the concept of the Zionist narrative in Jewish history and charted the course for the future of Judaic studies in Israel for decades, but also due to his monumental influence on his contemporaries, being an exceptional organizer of the academia. His impact on Judaic studies is further accentuated by another vital aspect: before the 19<sup>th</sup>-century onset of the Zionist movement, Jewish life oscillated between two continuously conflicting trends.

This examination aims to elucidate how Dinur's life experiences and visionary narrative intertwined, shaping both the trajectory of Jewish historiography and the interpretation of historical events in Israel.

During periods of prosperity for Jewish communities dispersed worldwide, the connection between the Jewish people and Eretz Israel notably waned. Conversely, in the most tragic junctures of Jewish history, Eretz Israel became synonymous, especially among Jewish elites, with salvation, the sole haven where Jews could live securely.

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi's magnum opus, "Kuzari" [13], reflects this sentiment, as he dedicated 40 years of his life to this work, advocating for the return of Jews to Zion. Between 1100 and 1140, this period witnessed Jew-

ish communities in Europe and the Middle East facing imminent destruction following an era of prolonged prosperity.

The devastating aftermath of the Crusades compelled the author of “Kuzari” to a resolute realization: the prosperity and success of Jews in the Diaspora cannot supplant the imperative need for their own sovereign state. Subsequent to the Crusades and a succession of Jewish expulsions from European states, from Germany and France to Portugal and Hungary, European Jewish history embarked on a phase of peace and prosperity under the Polish crown. This respite concluded abruptly with the outbreak of the Bohdan Khmelnytsky uprising in Ukraine, marked by Jewish pogroms perpetrated by Khmelnytsky's Cossacks. These pogroms rekindled the earlier paradigm of Eretz Israel, as posited in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this paradigm found practical manifestation through the messianic return to the Promised Land under the guidance of Rabbi Yehuda Hasid in 1700. This movement signified a tangible effort to actualize the age-old aspiration for a return to the ancestral homeland.

The European Enlightenment and the French Revolution of 1789 reignited hope among Europe's Jews for successful assimilation into European society. This optimism culminated in the rise of the Haskalah movement, representing the Jewish adaptation of Enlightenment values. Parallel processes, each with distinct characteristics, unfolded in Russia, where the traditional drive for integration took the form of autonomism. Yet, the Dreyfus affair in France and the series of Jewish pogroms in Russia redirected the attention of Diaspora Jews back towards Eretz Israel [11].

A brief overview of Jewish history unveils two consecutive primary trends: the pursuit of integration into local environments and the longing to reestablish statehood in Eretz Israel. These trends evolved into historical paradigms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the progenitor of the former being S. M.

Dubnov, while the latter was championed by B.-Z. Dinur. While the creative legacy of S. M. Dubnov extends far beyond the scope of this article centered on the Zionist narrative in Jewish history, the primary focus here lies on the paradigm crafted by B.-Z. Dinur.

### **Birth of the Zionist Narrative of Jewish History**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of a constellation of remarkable Jewish historians, including luminaries like Eliezer Lipa Sukenik, Benjamin Mazar, and Shmuel Yavin, among others. Their invaluable contributions not only garnered high acclaim within Israel but also earned recognition abroad, particularly in the Western world.

However, even among these distinguished scholars, the figure of Professor B.-Z. Dinur stands prominently. His lifespan (1884-1973) intersected with the pivotal events of Jewish history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the birth of the Zionist movement, the establishment of the Jewish community in Palestine, the Holocaust, and ultimately, the founding of the modern state of Israel, where he played an active role. Furthermore, B.-Z. Dinur passed away just before the Yom Kippur War, his death in July 1973 symbolizing the end of one era of Israel and the dawn of another - the Israel we recognize today.

Born in Khorol, Poltava province, B.-Z. Dinburg spent his formative years immersed in the study of sacred scriptures and rabbinic literature within the midrashim and yeshivas of the Pale of Settlement [6]. At 18, he attained the title of rabbi, envisioning a promising future as a spiritual leader within the Pale of Settlement. However, young Ben-Zion chose to deviate from this spiritual path.

In his memoirs, he describes the transformation of his worldview in detail: from Orthodox Judaism in the form of Hasidism to Jewish nationalism

in the form of social Zionism<sup>\*</sup>. While considering memoir literature, one should acknowledge its inherent goal of portraying the author in a favorable light before readers. However, it is evident, even in these early years, that the architect of the Zionist narrative in Jewish history displayed not only ambition but also remarkable qualities such as extraordinary thinking and a keen, critical perception, extending beyond the present to encompass the depths of the past [6].

His critical acumen was primarily evident in his interpretation of rabbinic literature, a stance that, according to B-Z. Dinur himself, caused disfavor among the rabbis. He often examined the past through the lens of the present, adopting this approach as his method, a scientific approach to evaluating specific historical events. As a seeker, he swiftly found the religious framework, much like the confines of the Jewish *shtetl*, to be overly restrictive.

Yet, it is important to note that B.-Z. Dinur held a deep regard for his family's traditions, taking pride in their roots and ties to prominent Hasidic clans [8]. Despite his departure from religious practice at a young age, Hasidism's core tenets, such as nationality, collectivism, and mutual aid, undeniably shaped the worldview of the architect of the Zionist paradigm in Jewish history. It is highly probable that Hasidism significantly influenced B.-Z. Dinur's ideological and political inclinations, leading him to align with social Zionism during his formative years<sup>\*\*</sup>.

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\* The program slogans of this movement were: “Jewish labor on Jewish land” and “the land of Israel” is the property of the Jewish people.

\*\* This fact is noted by famous Israeli historian Sh. Etinger in the preface to the multi-volume edition of the works of B.-Z. Dinur “Ben-Zion Dinur, Generations and Records: Studies and Essays on Israeli Historiography” - vol. 4, Jerusalem, Mossad Bialik, 1978 p. 7 (in Hebrew), Etinger refers to the article by B.-Z. Dinur “The Origin of Hasidism and its Social and Messianic Foundations”, Jerusalem, 1956, Ami 207-227 (in Hebrew). This article is available here: Studies and essays on the beginning of the new times in the history of Israel (historical writings, Jerusalem, 2016 (in Hebrew)).

B.-Z. Dinur, naturally spirited, harbored aspirations not solely in studying history but in forging it. His proactive nature propelled him into leadership within social Zionism in Ukraine. He actively engaged in organizing Jewish self-defense and shaping the Jewish education system within his movement. During this period, he not only emerged as a political leader but also revealed his skills as an interpreter of history.

In the realm of historical science, B.-Z. Dinur functioned less as a theorist and more as a practitioner, synthesizing and adapting historical research to suit the ideological requisites of the political movement he fervently championed throughout his adult life.

The anti-Semitic policies of Tsarist Russia, evident in Jewish pogroms, significantly influenced his personal and academic development. His formative years coincided with the First Russian Revolution. Struggling financially during his *yeshiva* studies and failing to find common ground with the impoverished Russian and Ukrainian populace or the affluent Jews in the Pale of Settlement, he turned to the Jewish poor for support. This marked a pivotal moment that shaped his commitment to being a social Zionist, a stance he upheld steadfastly throughout his life, as detailed in his memoirs [6].

Amidst the reactionary period following the First Russian Revolution's defeat, B.-Z. Dinur fled persecution by the Tsarist authorities and emigrated to Europe. There, he pursued a contemporary European education, initially at the Berlin Higher Institute for Jewish Research and later at the University of Bern.

During this phase of B.-Z. Dinur's life, his scholarly development burgeoned. At the high school level, he was mentored by the eminent Russian antiquarian Mikhail Rostovtsev and the Jewish history specialist Eugen Taubler. Taubler, a fervent Zionist and architect of the Jewish archive

among German Jews, played a pivotal role in establishing the first Zionist archive in Eretz Israel.

Both of these scholars wielded immense influence over B.-Z. Dinur's academic journey. Notably, they imparted to him a holistic approach toward the study of Jewish history, an approach that Dinur staunchly advocated from the outset of his scholarly pursuits after immigrating to Mandatory Palestine. Drawing heavily from M. I. Rostovtsev's comprehensive methodology, Dinur later adapted and refined this approach, employing it effectively to interpret Jewish history.

It should be noted that M. I. Rostovtsev was the successor of the Russian tradition of the “anti-historical trinity” in scientific research, which means the synthesis and analysis of sources of archeology, philology and history. B.-Z. Dinur was a follower of this tradition. It was at his insistence, long before the declaration of independence of the State of Israel, that all scientific disciplines at the Hebrew University, in one way or another connected with Jewish studies, were united into a single block, “*Madey Yahadut*” (Jewish sciences), which included, in addition to Jewish history, the study of the Tanakh and rabbinic literature (*mikra*), the study of the geography of Eretz Israel, the Hebrew language, Jewish philosophy, archeology, etc.

M. I. Rostovtsev's influence is also found in such monumental works by B.-Z. Dinur as “*Israel Begola*” (Israel in exile) and “*Israel beartso*” (Israel on its own land). These two monographs not only formed the cornerstone of the Zionist narrative within Jewish studies but also served as the primary textbook for the study of Jewish history in Israel for several decades, a point we will address shortly.

Much like his mentor, B.-Z. Dinur focused significantly on chronology, grounding his periodization in historical, archaeological, and literary sources. This method, prominently employed by Professor Dinur in the



aforementioned monographs, underpinned his narrative, structured through clear periodization drawn from historical documentation.

Additionally, Professor Dinur adopted his teacher's methodology in source analysis, adhering to M. I. Rostovtsev's fundamental principle of synthesizing diverse historical evidence, from literary to numismatic sources. Moreover, Dinur followed Rostovtsev's approach in modernizing history, for instance, interpreting messianic sects within a Zionist framework. However, this interpretive stance was not unique to either Rostovtsev or Dinur but was a prevalent approach among many scholars during and after their time.

Similar to M. I. Rostovtsev, B.-Z. Dinur scrutinized historical events through the lens of their contemporary relevance. Yet, Professor Dinur diverged significantly regarding his connection to present-day life, rejecting the historian's detachment to a far greater extent than his teacher.

When assessing the relationship between a teacher and a student, researchers often aim to identify commonalities in methodologies and overall creativity, along with recognizing the student's contributions to their mentor's methods and concepts. In the case of B.-Z. Dinur, this distinguished scholar not only followed his mentors but also critically evaluated and refined their approaches.

In contrast to his mentor Eugen Teubler, who perceived Jewish history as an integral element of broader historical currents, B.-Z. Dinur underscored the distinctive nature of the Jewish people's historical odyssey. The worldview of B.-Z. Dinur, evident in the narrative of Jewish history he crafted, was shaped significantly not only by the poignant experiences tied to Russia but also, to a considerable extent, by the events unfolding in Europe during the First World War.

During this period, European historians aligned historical research with their nations' resurgence, viewing this revival through the lens of national

movements. It can be argued that B.-Z. Dinur's Zionist narrative mirrors European nationalism, which infuses a national framework into various facets of public life, including scientific research and university education [17]. A hallmark of this phase in European historiography is the quest for the distinctiveness of a particular people's historical trajectory. Notably, not only B.-Z. Dinur but also renowned Jewish historians like G. Graetz and S. M. Dubnov adhered to this European tradition. For instance, B.-Z. Dinur consistently argued that despite the disappearance of the Jewish state in antiquity, the essence of the Jewish people remained unchanged, experiencing alterations only in their living conditions and existence.

The burgeoning wave of nationalism in Europe during that era further fortified B.-Z. Dinur in his Zionist convictions. Initially, he placed his aspirations for the future in the Russian revolution and even endeavored to defend his dissertation in Petrograd, guided by M. I. Rostovtsev. However, as B.-Z. Dinur later recounted, the outbreak of the First World War and the October Revolution of 1917 thwarted his academic pursuits, hindering his attainment of an academic degree.

Eventually, in 1921, he relocated to Mandatory Palestine, where he immediately immersed himself in political, educational, and scholarly endeavors until his passing in 1973. B.-Z. Dinur's personal experiences undeniably shaped all aspects of his activities. In the latter half of the 1930s, he joined the Committee of Hebrew Writers, assumed a leadership role in the Association of Hebrew Teachers, and was elected chairman of the Literary Council at the Bialik publishing house in 1935.

Concurrently, B.-Z. Dinur's political trajectory soared. By 1933, he was elected as a delegate to the Zionist Congress in Prague, representing the Workers' Party of Israel (Mapai). Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, he assumed the position of Minister of Education in Ben-Gurion's government, holding this office for five years. During his tenure,

B.-Z. Dinur formulated a cohesive standard for the Israeli education system, a legacy that endures to this day.

### **Science Organizer**

Dinur's leadership qualities and skills honed during his tenure leading the social Zionist organization in Ukraine during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century proved invaluable after his immigration to Eretz Israel. He immediately set about organizing historical research within the Jewish enclave of Mandatory Palestine. Following his return in 1921, he dedicated himself entirely to uniting like-minded, ideologically driven Zionist historians [4].

*His organizational efforts culminated in the formation of the Eretsisraeli Association, a cohort that included renowned historians and archaeologists such as Yitzhak Baer, Shmuel Yavin, Eliezer Lipa Sukenik, and Benjamin Mazar. This association essentially laid the groundwork for ideologically motivated historians, which later formed the backbone of the Humanities Faculty at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.*

Bound by a shared idea, goal, and objectives, the historians of this association became known as the 'Jerusalem School.' Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, their scientific endeavors were dedicated to formulating a conceptual framework, methodologies, and principles through which all Jewish history could be interpreted from a Zionist ideological standpoint. In essence, the activities of the 'Jerusalem School' sought to align scientific research with the ideological and political objectives of Zionism, and, in specific terms, to search for a scientific substantiation of the main thesis of the Zionist narrative in Judaic studies, the essence of which is the thesis about the historical unity of the Jewish people and its inextricable, permanent connection with Eretz Israel. The genesis of the Jerusalem School initially emerged as an association rooted in Eretsisraeli ideals. Over time, this association found its nucleus in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, wielding influence over ac-

academic research and educational directives in Mandatory Palestine. After 1948, it continued to shape the academic landscape in the State of Israel for more than three decades, largely credited to the pivotal role of Professor B.-Z. Dinur.

A seminal editorial piece penned by B.-Z. Dinur and his closest associate, Yitzhak Baer, featured in the inaugural issue of the magazine 'Zion' in 1936, served as a manifesto for Zionist historians. The journal's own history warrants detailed exploration. Initially launched by B.-Z. Dinur and Yitzhak Baer in 1924 under the Eretsisraeli Association's patronage, 'Zion' functioned more as an irregular almanac, sporadically published, and served as a printed medium for a small group of enthusiasts rather than a scholarly publication. It was not until 1936, 12 years later, that the journal began regular publication. Dedicated entirely to Jewish history—termed the history of the people of Israel in its Hebrew version—spanning from ancient times (Mikra, according to Zionist historiography) [18] to the contemporary era, 'Zion' rapidly ascended as a leading publication in Jewish studies, gaining international acclaim.

Despite being published under the Eretsisraeli Association's umbrella, 'Zion' retained its identity as the voice of the 'Jerusalem askola' or, more simply, the Zionist narrative in Judaica. The essence of this narrative was articulated by B.-Z. Dinur and Y. Baer in their programmatic article titled 'Magamateinu' (Our Approach), featured in the 1935 edition of 'Zion'. Initially, the Jerusalem School was formed as an association of Eretsisraeli. Subsequently, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem became its center. The Jerusalem School determined the goals and objectives of academic research and controlled the educational process, first in Mandatory Palestine, and after 1948 in the State of Israel for more than 30 years. Of course, the main role in the formation of this trend in Jewish historiography belonged to Professor B.-Z. Dinur.

An editorial article by B.-Z. Dinur and his closest associate Y. Baer in the first issue of the magazine 'Zion' for 1935 became a kind of manifesto of Zionist historians. The history of this scientific journal deserves separate consideration. 'Zion' began to be published by B.-Z. Dinur and Y. Baer back in 1924 under the auspices of the Eretsisraeli Association. But then it was more of an almanac, which was published irregularly, at best once a quarter, and was a printed organ of a small group of enthusiasts, rather than a scientific publication. Regular publication of the magazine began only 12 years later, in 1936. Published in Hebrew and entirely devoted to Jewish history (in the Hebrew version - the history of the people of Israel) from ancient times (Mikra, according to Zionist historiography) to modern times, from the mid-30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this magazine became the flagship of research in the field of Jewish studies and very soon received international status. It is important to note, however, that still published by the Eretsisraeli Association, 'Zion' remained the mouthpiece of the "Jerusalem askola" or, more simply, the Zionist narrative in Judaica.

The essence of this narrative was presented by B.-Z. Dinur and Y. Baer in the programmatic article discussed above, entitled "Magamateinu" (Our approach), which opened the issue of the magazine 'Zion' for the year 1935 [1].

The central thesis of this, almost a manifesto of Zionist historiography, is succinctly put forth by Dinur and Baer: "Our fundamental stance on interpreting the past, which should guide the course of Jewish historiography and delineate the scope of historical inquiry, is encapsulated in this fundamental and essential assumption: Jewish history constitutes the history of the Israeli nation, an unbroken continuum whose significance has remained unyielding across epochs. Jewish history remains singular, unified by its consistent essence across time and space" [1].

The narrative created by these two undoubtedly outstanding historians was initially revolutionary and controversial for a number of reasons. Firstly, in an effort to unite the entire Jewish people over time and despite distances, Professor Dinur, in his works discussed above, divided the Jews into two antagonistic groups: the “Hebrew nation” or, in other words, Israel, and the “Galut” - exile. Moreover, each of these terms has an emotional connotation. The first is positive, and the second, respectively, negative.

Rejection by B.-Z. Dinur the Jewish shtetl in the Russian Pale of Settlement was projected by him onto the Jewish Diaspora as a whole. He sends to “galut” the entire diversity of Jewish culture, created over thousands of years by Jews in vast areas from Morocco to China. The uniqueness of the Jewish people, to which Professor Dinur devotes an entire chapter in the monograph “Israel in Exile,” naturally loses much with this approach, since every Jewish community in the world has a rich cultural and historical heritage. However, B.-Z. Dinur is not worried about this circumstance, but about the task of implanting Zionism into the historical fabric, or more precisely, into the collective memory of Jewry. To do this, he, firstly, declares the connection of the Jews with Eretz Israel historically, existing at all times. Secondly, it makes this connection the main criterion for belonging to Israel (“Hebrew nation”). Finally, thirdly, he identifies the historical connection of the Jewish people with Eretz Israel and Zionism, the beginning of which B.-Z. Dinur dates back to 1700, when Yehuda Hasid immigrated with his followers to the Promised Land. B.-Z. Dinur declares this event in Jewish history a “new national era.”

It is important to note that the thesis about the inextricable connection of the Jewish people with the Land of Israel became the foundation not only for the Zionist narrative of Jewish history, but also for the construction of a modern Jewish state in the historical Land of Israel. It is on this thesis that

the founding document of the State of Israel - the Declaration of Independence - is built.

Dinur projects his personal experience of breaking with the Jewish *shtetl* B.-Z. onto Jewish history, highlighting in it the messianic immigration to Eretz Israel, which he calls the “uprising in exile,” as the starting point for the “national era” [5].

Understanding B.-Z. Dinur's role in Israeli historiography necessitates considering his approach, akin to his colleagues at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he intertwined ideology, politics, and scholarly pursuits. As highlighted by the renowned Israeli sociologist Uri Ram [15], “For him (Dinur), history was not solely a profession but more of a mission [14:131]”. Clarifying whether historical science served as Dinur's mission or a means to address ideological matters remains complex. However, it is undeniable that “writing national history was an integral part of the broader national historical enterprise in which Dinur actively participated.” Dinur's perspective on the historian's role was unmistakably evident in his published works and public speeches.

In the preface to the initial edition of his monograph “Israel in Exile” in 1926, Dinur articulated: “The purpose of the historian is to foster a sense of solidarity with one's nation.” He envisioned this book as a catalyst for igniting a “historical consciousness” in readers, aligning personal identity with the collective identity of the nation (Uri Ram) [10]. He returns to this idea in his speech in the Knesset: the “I” of a nation exists insofar as it has memory, provided that the nation knows how to unite everything it has experienced into a single whole, and only on this condition does it exist as a nation, as a single whole [7:1352].

Dinur demanded from himself and his colleagues to awaken in readers a sense of national identity, a sense of common national destiny, national will, national unity and the desire for national action. It is important to note that

B.-Z. Dinur justified his involvement in historical engagement by asserting that the study of the past is inevitably perceived through the lens of the present, subject to constant change. He believed that historians could choose their perspective or have it imposed upon them, a decision he considered a personal choice.

His historical interpretations aligned with the principle ingrained in Israeli historiography, encapsulated in the adage "those days and this time." This approach dictated that historians analyze past events from the standpoint of the present, emphasizing the significance of certain historical occurrences while overlooking others. This principle guided Dinur in selecting and interpreting historical documents to construct his paradigm. G. Scholem underscored this aspect when criticizing Dinur's work, noting the tension between the objectivity of documents and the subjectivity inherent in their selection [12].

Critics, including the "new historians"\*, rebuked Dinur for his relativistic approach, even as they employed similar methods in their own monographs. Nevertheless, Professor B.-Z. Dinur adeptly wielded history as a tool to advance the ideological and political objectives of his movement, recognizing its pivotal role in shaping the present and manipulating collective memory.

However, a notable omission in Dinur's historical purview was the failure to accord significant attention to pivotal events such as the Holocaust. He and his colleagues in the Zionist historiography circle viewed the Holocaust through the prism of the exile Jewry dogma, neglecting its profound impact on Jewish history and the future of Israel and Jewry at large. Dinur primarily perceived the Holocaust as a European historical phenomenon.

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\* Israeli historians, for example, Benny Maurice, who revised the legacy of their predecessors and, first of all, B.-Z. Dinur.



During his tenure as Israel's Minister of Education from 1948 to 1953 and later as President of the Yad Vashem memorial for the subsequent six years, Dinur displayed limited interest in the Holocaust. Instead, he actively engaged in internal political strife in Israel, focusing on his role as the chief historian of the ruling Social Zionist party. His primary focus was on crafting the monumental "History of the Haganah" [10] glorifying the military organization's role in Israel's resurgence [16].

Moreover, adhering to the same dogmatic perspective, Professor Dinur, as the president of Yad Vashem, initiated the publication of monographs extolling the heroism of Jewish partisans and ghetto rebels, particularly highlighting those associated with the social Zionist movement [3]. It is safe to say that Professor Dinur did not understand either the scale of the Holocaust or the historical significance of this tragedy.

In essence, B.-Z. Dinur's approach to Holocaust research delineated the Jewish populace into distinct groups: the heroic Zionist combatants who resisted Nazism, and the Galut Jews who, resignedly, met their demise in Nazi concentration camps like cattle bound for slaughter. Initially, these monographs were authored by young individuals lacking historical or academic backgrounds, whose formative years were spent in ghettos, concentration camps, or Jewish partisan units.

In summation, it is pivotal to recognize that Professor B.-Z. Dinur epitomizes the archetype of a Zionist historian who steered the trajectory of historical scholarship, initially in the Jewish enclave of Mandatory Palestine and subsequently in the State of Israel for nearly 50 years.

Dinur and his associates were ardent Zionists who amalgamated historical inquiry with political ideology. For them, aligning science with ideology and politics was intrinsic, with political objectives and ideology often prevailing over scientific rigor. Notwithstanding, Dinur received his education

at Europe's preeminent universities of his time, engaging in scientific research professionally without neglecting empirical evidence.

Criticism of Dinur's legacy, including within this article, is contextualized within today's perspective. While Dinur's contributions are subject to critique, it is crucial to acknowledge that he formulated his narrative utilizing the then-prevalent methodologies and theories of national historical narratives. Furthermore, his endeavors were primarily driven by a profound commitment to the welfare of his people, albeit interpreted through his individual lens. Ultimately, he was earnest in both his convictions and misconceptions. Lastly, his upbringing in the Jewish town of the Pale of Settlement significantly shaped his worldview, a facet apparent in his scholarly works.

Undoubtedly, B.-Z. Dinur stands out as an exceptional individual and scholar. Within Israel's history and Judaic studies, he remains an emblematic figure of his era.

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**ՍԻՈՆԻՍՏԱԿԱՆ ՊԱՐԱԴԻԳՄԻ ՍԿԶԲՆԱՎՈՐՈՒՄԸ ՀՐԵԱԿԱՆ  
ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ. ԲԵՆ-ՍԻՈՆ ԴԻՆՈՒՐԻ ԱՇԽԱՐՀԱՅԱՑՔԻ  
ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ**

*Վլադիմիր Ռուժանսկի*

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Իսրայել, սիոնիզմ, իսրայելական պատմագրություն, Բեն-Սիոն Դինուր, պատմություն, Էրեց Իսրայել, ենթամանդատային Պաղեստին:

1920-30-ական թվականները նշանակալից են եղել ժամանակակից հրեական պետության ստեղծման համար: Հենց այս դարաշրջանում է ձևավորվել հրեական պատմության սիոնիստական պարադիգմը, որը ծառայել է որպես հավաքական հիշողության հիմնաքար և ազգային ինքնության հիմք իսրայելցիների հաջորդական սերունդների համար:

Սիոնիստ պատմաբանների սկզբնական խումբը ըմբռնեց պատմական գիտության առանցքային դերը ազգային ինքնության ձևավորման գործում հատկապես հրեական պետության երիտասարդացման սիոնիստական նկրտումներն առաջ մղելու և նոր հրեական ինքնություն՝ իսրայելական ինքնություն, մշակելու գործում: Այս ձգտումներին հետամուտ լինելով՝ սիոնիստ պատմաբանները բախվեցին ահռելի մարտահրավերների, որոնք հիմնականում կենտրոնացած էին հրեա ժողովրդի միասնության և Իսրայելի երկրի հետ նրանց հարատև կապի հաստատման վրա հիմնված գիտական հիմնադրամի վրա, որը հայտնի է որպես Էրեց Իսրայել:

Սույն հոդվածը փորձում է ուրվագծել այս դարաշրջանում սիոնիստ պատմաբանների որոշիչ գծերը՝ հենվելով հրեա նշանավոր գործչի՝ պրոֆեսոր Բեն-Սիոն Դինուրի վրա, ով ջանում էր

ներդաշնակեցնել գաղափարական հավատարմությունը գիտական ճշմարտության հետ:

Հոգվածում մանրամասն դիտարկվում են հրեական պատմության մեջ սիոնիստական պատմությունը պարունակող հիմնարար տարրերը: