

# SYMBOLIC GOODS IN ISRAELI POSTERS

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**ABSTRACT.** This article deals with symbolic goods in posters in Israel from the period before the establishment of the state to the present day. The poster and the symbolic goods that appear in it, serve as an agent of ideological companies. In this study, I will examine the nature of the relationship between the symbolic goods and the Zionist-Israeli ideology, by comparing the symbolic goods represented in them over time and space. The questions the research asks are: What are the contribution and importance of symbolic goods as an ideological tool in Israeli posters? Has the world of symbolic goods that served Zionist ideology origin or been borrowed from other ideologies? The methodology is Qualitative research by: study case, Visual – genealogical. The conclusions of the study indicate the importance of the symbolic goods in the foundation of the State of Israel by posters and other media. The symbolic goods that characterize the posters in Israel, consist in part of content related to Jewish tradition and religion (Bible stories and myths) and its other part is influenced by the symbolic goods appropriated from ideologies around the globe.

**Keywords:** *Symbolic Goods, Posters, Marketing, Ideology, Zionist Movement, Israel.*

## 1. Introduction

In November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations discussed the report of the committee set up for Palestine-Israel and recommended the area between the Mediterranean until Jordan River to established two states - Jewish and Arab. Boundaries of division

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were determined mainly by demographic concentrations. The decision stipulated that the states would be Democracies and that they will not infringe on the civil and political rights of the other national group to remain in their territory. The partition decision was well-founded on the recognition of the rights of self-determination of the Arab-Palestinian collective and of The Jewish collective, as well as the fact that at the same time the two collectives could not live in peace and agree among themselves on essential matters such as immigration, security or foreign policy.

The division is meant to ensure that each of the collectives will have Control over immigration, settlement, security and public culture in the territory of his nation-state. At the same time, states were required to advance their right to definition National self in recognition of the individual and group rights. In November 30, 1947, immediately after the partition plan was adopted at the UN General Assembly, the Arabs of Israel launched attacks against the Jewish community in Israel to prevent its implementation. After a long war, On May 14, 1948, the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel was announced.<sup>2</sup>

At the establishment of the State of Israel, there were about 716,000 Jews in the Land of Israel. According to the Israeli Center for Statistics, there are 6,806,000 Jews living in Israel in 2020. About 45% of the world's Jews live in Israel. The question is- how in such a short time the State of Israel doubled 9.5 times the number of its Jewish inhabitants. Some will answer that this is a direct result of the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. Some will say anti-Semitism in general, foreign fatigue and lack of belonging. But probably no one will say that Jews immigrated to Israel because of the swamps, poverty, wars, diseases, conflicts, different languages and unclear culture. USA that swept away hundreds of thousands of Jews was much more promising and attractive. Despite all the atrocities the Jewish people were experiencing, the Zionist movement realized that it had to market the Land of Israel.

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<sup>2</sup> Gabizon, R. (2007). *Things and fragments of things*. Editors: Ravitzky A. & Stern Y. The Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem Israel, p. 107.

In a time when there was no internet, cell phones and emails, Posters depicting virtual reality with nostalgic symbolic goods were distributed everywhere with the aim to "marketing" and "selling" Israel to the Jews in the Diaspora.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Art & Posters

One of the major visual ideology agencies in the world in the first half of the 20th century is posters. The symbolic goods in Posters is an agency for ideological companies, but still an artistic tool.<sup>3</sup> Symbolic goods are a rhetorical instrument and a tool of artistic expression mobilized. Even before the symbolic goods were mobilized for ideological purposes, art was mobilized. In her book "Art and Tyranny - Avant-Garde and Art Recruited in Totalitarian Regimes", Arieli-Horowitz (2008) deals with the subject of conscripted art. According to Arieli-Horowitz, the term "mobilized art" was not born in the dictatorships between the world wars, but existed even in the days of the political patrons of the art world. Arieli-Horowitz argues that the roles of art in totalitarian regimes were not defined by the artists themselves, but were dictated from above, according to the needs of the regime. It therefore suggests a distinction between the terms: "mobilized art" and "mobilizing art".<sup>4</sup> The first term describes art created under the coercion of the regime, i.e. "from above." The second term on the other hand describes art in which the artists themselves expressed commitment out of choice, "from below".

The visual style - according to Arieli-Horowitz, most identified with the art of mobilized art is 'Realism'. Returning to it characterizes crisis situations, which explains the blossoming of the style and its dominance in the politically and socially turbulent period between the

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<sup>3</sup> Donner (1998), p. 535.

<sup>4</sup> Arieli-Horowitz, D. (2008) *Art and Tyranny: Avant-Garde and Art Recruited in Totalitarian Regimes*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Publishing, pp. 30-31.

world wars. Another means adopted by dictatorships alongside the realist style, is 'Monumentalism' as a tool to deepen their legitimacy and abolish the individual. The latter contains two means of communication: words and visual images, which are often used in a poster in combination.

A successful poster will catch the viewer's attention immediately, keeping the same attention until the message is received. The main purpose of the posters is to convey a message or promote a product or event.<sup>5</sup> A poster is, in essence, a printed sheet of paper hanging in a central location where it is exposed to a specific target audience as large as possible.<sup>6</sup> Later in my research, I would like to examine the role posters play in the world of new media, mainly because media digitalization and the rise of the internet society means a paradigm shift in the acquisition of media literacy.<sup>7</sup>

Posters produced in large numbers of copies were usually printed in standard formats, based on different sizes of paper. Independently produced posters are not necessarily based on the standard ones. In terms of materials, the poster itself adds a rhetorical device that engages in the narrowing of ideas and is used to spread them.<sup>8</sup> The way to build a poster is to create a visual dictionary that converts stereotypes or symbols, which we are used to recognizing in other contexts.<sup>9</sup>

The establishment of the art field during the establishment period and in the early years of the state, deals, among other things, with the issue of the national role of plastic art. A central claim made by nationalist thinkers is that the field of culture in general, and the field of plastic arts in particular, are key factors in the process of

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<sup>5</sup> De Jong, Cees W., Purvis, Alston W., LeCoultre, Martijn F. (2010). *The Posters: 1,000 Posters from Toulouse-Lautrec to Sagmeister*. New York, Harry N. Abrams, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Timmer, M. (1998). *The Power of the Poster*. London: V&A Publications, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> P. Eric Louw (2001). "Sites for Making Meaning I: The Culture Industry," in *The Media and Cultural Production*. SAGE Publication Ltd. London.

<sup>8</sup> De Jung. & Purvis & Le Coultre (2010). *The Poster: 1,000 Posters from Toulouse-Lautrec to Sagmeister* by Purvis, Alston W., Le Coultre, Martijn F. New York: Abrams, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Tartakover, D. (2010). *Jean-David - multi-faceted*. Exhibition catalog, the Tefen and Omer Industrial Gardens and the Beit Reuven Museum, Tel Aviv, pp. 2-32.

redefining the uniqueness of the nation. This argument is also relevant to the field of 'Eretz Israel art'. Territory and social homogeneity are basic conditions for the existence of national art.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding Jewish-Zionist-Israeli art, according to Ofrat, the establishment of the latter has three stages: the revival of the new Jewish art, the recruitment of artists for the Zionist movement and the establishment of Bezalel.<sup>11</sup> Regarding the first stage, Ofrat, (2014) claims that in the middle of the 19th century, there was a revival in Jewish art in Europe, partly due to the "Enlightenment" movement and emancipation. According to him, Jewish painters and sculptors left the complexes of the closed Jewish culture and acquired artistic knowledge in academies, mostly in Central Europe.

Despite being "educated", artists such as Oppenheim, Maurice Gottlieb, and Isidore Kaufmann chose to give representation in their works to the religious Jewish life, in academic realistic language. As for the second stage, Ofrat argues that with the founding of the Zionist movement and the organization of the first Zionist congresses in the last decade of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the need arose for visual designs of various items, including certificates, postcards and posters. For this purpose, Jewish artists were recruited, some of them from the forefront of renewed Jewish art. The most notable example is Lilien, who is joined by names such as Ranzenhofer Hirszenberg Struck. These are members of a unique branch of form and content worthy of the name "Zionist art," Ofrat said. The third stage is, as mentioned, the

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<sup>10</sup> Trachtenberg, J. (2005). Between nationalism and art. *Establishment of the art field during the settlement period and in the early years of the state*. Jerusalem: YL Magnes Publishing House, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Eshkolot Library, Eshkol Institute, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, pp. 108-111.

<sup>11</sup> 1906-Professor Schatz establishes the Bezalel School of Arts & Crafts in Jerusalem. The school's goals are "to train the people of Jerusalem in crafts, develop original Jewish art and support Jewish artists, develop visual expressions towards national and spiritual independence. Seeking to create a synthesis between European artistic traditions and Jewish design traditions of the East and West and to integrate these with the local cultures of the Land of Israel." Retrieved from <http://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/about/landmarks/>

establishment of Bezalel in Jerusalem, a school that, according to Ofrat, is the first artistic institution in the Land of Israel that is essentially Zionist, and the basis for the history of Israeli art. According to him, these three stages in the establishment of Jewish-Zionist-Israeli art "are responsible for the gradual development of images used by the Jewish artisans, those who designed archeological relics and memorabilia in Israel and Europe at that crucial time in the formation of the new national identity."<sup>12</sup>

## 2.2 *Political poster*

The alternative semantic field poster serves as an interface between government and citizen and as an instrument designed from the outset to bring about a change of attitudes among the public, "assisted in converting it to a distinct and distinct platform for influencing consciousness and directing target audience behavior".<sup>13</sup>

Initial communication with the public met symbolic goods at every site and site. There was no need to read the fine print in the paper. She focused on the idea they were trying to express in illustration, photograph, in one word, or in several words.<sup>14</sup> Posters should be broad as possible, informative, recreative and convincing about any information or message. Since the space of the poster is limited, it must catch the viewer's attention as quickly as possible, it must be fluent and receptive. The shelf life of the poster is limited and its lifespan is short.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, Sheps adds that the natural display place of the poster is the street.

According to him, the distribution of the announcement is wide, but at the same time not for a long period. The message it conveys, he

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<sup>12</sup> Ofrat, G. (2014). Shao Ziona miracle and flag. In: Bahrozi Baruz, N. (Curator) Local Judaica. *Judaica Artifacts Created in Eretz Israel 1442-1964 Exhibition Catalog*, Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> (Ibid, pp. 17).

<sup>14</sup> Kister, J. (2014), p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Omar, M. (1999). Hebrew Graphics - Shamir Brothers Studio. *Exhibition Catalog*, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, p. 17.

emphasizes, will in most cases be limited, whether it is a particular product or a targeted event. Regarding the beginnings of the modern poster, Sheps argues that the latter began with the invention of lithography and the use of this technique to create posters by artists such as 'Daumie'.<sup>16</sup>

In his article "*Ideal Idea and Independence of Expression*", Danieli (1999) refers to the illustrated political poster. According to him, the role of the illustrated poster is to **market** a product that is essentially propaganda. It is designed to establish, with a minimum of means, ideological positions and to instruct maximum people how to relate to reality, who to choose and what to vote for. For this reason, poster illustrators, Danieli argues, used techniques known from the world of advertising and marketing: simple, pointed and direct messages that have elements of brainwashing.<sup>17</sup>

"Ideology" refers to control and power relations. "Ideologies are part of an attempt to legitimize a ruling group or social class. Governing power can make itself legitimate by encouraging the values and views that fit them, by presenting them as universal and natural values, so as to reflect them as necessary, by duplicating ideas, by eliminating and excusing his opponent's forms of thinking and blurring social reality according to his own needs."<sup>18</sup> Eagleton (2006) further argues that "ideology is the medium in which the social and political struggles exist at the level of meaning and representation."<sup>19</sup> Another theory supporting "imagined representation" is Anderson's theory articulated in *Imagined Communities*<sup>20</sup>: "Ideologies express

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<sup>16</sup> Sheps, M. (1981). In: Tartakover, D. (curator). Franz Krauss: *Exhibition Catalog Posters*, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Danieli, J. (1999). The ideological identity and independence of expression. In: Shaltiel, S. (editor). *Art in the service of an idea - Hashomer Hatzair posters 1934-1964* Givat Haviva, Sde Boker: Yad Yaari and the Ben-Gurion Heritage Center, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Eagleton, T. (2006). *Ideology, Introduction*. In Hebrew translation by Oren Hamoked. Tel Aviv: Resling, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Benedict Anderson (1999). *Imagined Communities: Thinking about National Origins and Its Expansion*, Tel Aviv, The Open University, Chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 38-31; Chapter 2, Cultural Roots, pp. 68-39.

desires, hopes, or nostalgia. They do not describe reality."<sup>21</sup> The reader derives textual meaning through an act of interpretation controlled by the way the image content is constructed. The context in which meaning is created and communicated through the media is also important.<sup>22</sup>

Using posters in the process of creating a new Israeli community served the ruling elites during the period in which the state was founded. The elites either "nationalized" the settler/colonial media or acquired the settler-owned media. These media, staffed by members of the new Western elite, were expected to implement self-censorship to assist the ruling elite in creating national unity and develop a national definition – i.e. state-licensed media.<sup>23</sup> In this theory, we can find a direct link to Foucault's supervisory mechanism.<sup>24</sup> The symbolic means culture will use to monitor and transmit its messages are packed with codes and symbols. These will ensure the regular presence of the dominant culture within the physical environment of the human beings who live the culture in all its facets.<sup>25</sup> In other words, what we call reality is solely based on the, which is the mass media dominated by capital and government interests.<sup>26</sup>

### *2.3 Visual images and symbols (symbolic goods of Zionism & Israel)*

What is an image? I will briefly define the concept with the help of Roland Barthes' article "The Rhetoric of the Image", in which the French semiotician examines the essence of the image and the meanings derived from it. In this article, in which Barth offers tools for

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<sup>21</sup> Eagleton (2006), p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Abrudan (2012), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Louw (2001). *The Media and Cultural Production*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 43-44.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, Michel (1978). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. by Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (1986). "The Forms of Capital," in: John C. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, pp. 241-258.

<sup>26</sup> Abrudan (2012), p. 11.



analyzing advertisements aimed at conveying a clear message in a short period of time, Barth argues that an image is a presentation-re, which actually means resuscitation".<sup>27</sup> The use of visual images of Zionism is not limited to the field of graphic design. They can be found on other visual mediums, such as painting. They also appear in theater and cinema. Beyond that, Zionist images also exist in areas that are not visual at all, but textual. Among them are literature, poetry and singing.

The Zionist movement also made extensive use of symbols, similar to images. Members of the Zionist movement, and especially Herzl,<sup>28</sup> understood the importance of national symbols. From its earliest days, the movement has been able to adopt a set of national symbols. Next to the central national visual symbol - the flag, which I will expand on later, the main non-visual national symbol should be noted, which is the anthem. The very fact that the Zionist movement has had the anthem since its earliest days, the "hope" of 'Naftali Hertz Imber', teaches about the importance of symbols, visual and non-visual, among the members of this movement. The Star of David and the flag of the Zionist movement, is the most significant visual symbol of Zionism. According to Berkowski and Azariahu, "a flag is a media object made of a colored sheet of cloth adorned with graphic symbols, sometimes also. According to the two, the object of the same identification is used to convey messages, signal or identify."<sup>29</sup>

The symbolic goods can appear in various forms, whether in the colors of the flag, in its shape or in the goods of the symbols that appear on it. "Beyond its visual form, the meaning of the flag is a function of the socio-political use made of it and of the interpretations given to it in well-defined historical, cultural and ideological circumstances".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Barthes, R. (2003), p. 259.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Zeev Herzl - State Contract.

<sup>29</sup> Berkowski, A. and Azariahu, M., (2014). Waving a flag! Hashomer Hatzair. *flags - first hundred years*. Givat Haviva: Yad Yaari Publishing Center, Hashomer Hatzair Documentation and Research Center, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Ibid.

As for the set of signs, two types of signs must be distinguished. Between: Icon and Symbol. "An icon is a sign in which a resemblance to a phenomenon it is supposed to represent, which in its form has a hint of the marked essence." An example of an icon is a clenched fist, which symbolizes rebellion, determination and power. A symbol, on the other hand, is "an arbitrary sign that is not iconic and therefore does not resemble the signified one."<sup>31</sup> For example, the Star of David - a geometric shape of a hexagonal star, which symbolizes the Jewish people. Regarding the flag of the Zionist movement, which will later be adopted by the State of Israel and serve as the official flag, it has been found that this flag has been used by the movement since the first Congress in Basel.<sup>32</sup> As for the inventor of the Zionist flag, the right to invent the Zionist Organization flag was granted, according to Zionist tradition, to David Wolfson, who saw before his eyes three details: the white field of the tallit, the stripes adorning it and the shape of the Star of David. Another speculation say that the origin of the Zionist flag is unknown, and that historians have not agreed on this issue. The Magen David has never been a unique symbol of Judaism alone. Magen David has appeared in different cultures and at different times. The common name for the geometric shape we call the Star of David is a six-pointed star. This is a very ancient symbol that has won many versions. Regarding the two azure stripes, Mishori claims that the origin of the azure stripes on the Zionist flag is in a tallit.<sup>33</sup> The national flag, alongside the military, embodies national pride, and both have been in this decade the two main national myths.

The seven-branched lamp, the temple lamp depicted in the Titus Gate relief in Rome, was a traditional Jewish symbol of the destruction and beginning of the Jewish exile. Over the generations,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> The First World Zionist Congress is the first major convention of the Zionist movement's delegates and is the first of the World Zionist Congresses. The congress was held in the Swiss city of Basel from August 29 to 31, 1897. The initiator and leader of the congress was Benjamin Zeev Herzl.

<sup>33</sup> Mishori, A. (2000). *Sheshuro looked and saw - Zionist icons and symbols in Israeli culture*. Tel Aviv: Afakim Library, published by Am Oved, p. 166.

legends have been attached to the 'menorah'<sup>34</sup>, an example of which states that with the coming of the Messiah, the menorah will return to illuminate the temple he will build in Jerusalem. The recurring motif in all the legends indicates that the lamp that was exiled to Rome is actually a replica of the original lamp from the Temple and that the original lamp disappeared. The Zionist movement adopted the lamp as a symbol of national significance. Later, during the period of the Jewish Yishuv and in the years of the establishment of the state, the story of the menorah formed the basis of popular symbolism which "gave its rediscovery in the days of Messiah a secular aspect by stating that its return" home "symbolizes Zionist" return to Zion in modern times .

#### *2.4 Symbolic goods in various media and their distribution*

The Zionist movement recruited graphic artists, photographers, literary figures and filmmakers. All of these were invited to design, compile and produce the information materials produced by the Zionist image in a wide variety of media, from posters, through ads and brochures, to films and exhibitions. At the same time, Tartakover emphasizes, the posters in those years was a unique tool for disseminating ideological ideas.

The poster was born as an instrument for precisely this purpose, and while the other means of propaganda appealed to specific target audiences, the poster influenced a wide range of audiences. Posters of the Zionist movement were distributed in two ways. One is to display them in the public space on population pages and bulletin boards around the country, and the other is to display them in institutions such as schools, organizations, youth movement centers and public institutions. "There were announcements for an educational element that mobilizes the iconic memory in the process of imprinting ideology in consciousness".<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> 'Menorah'- The nickname of seven-branched lamp in Hebrew.

<sup>35</sup> Tartakover, D. (2010), pp. 15-17.

### 3. Methodology

The research method is based on case study research, Visual - genealogical, which uses a semiotic analysis tool. (Rose, 2012), (Barthes, 2004) and (Panofsky, 2009) I will present an analysis of eight posters, some designed for bodies and official institutions of the Zionist movement, and some designed for commercial bodies. Common to all the posters, they combine the ideological aspect with the commercial one through symbolic goods.

### 4. Study case

#### 4.1 *Symbolic goods in the poster - romantic nostalgia*

Opinion is a combination of the cognitive mental logic, tradition, and belief system according to which a subject life and grows.<sup>36</sup> Based on this definition, it is understandable that spiritual products aimed at influencing opinions will depend on education, location, time, and the environment. Public opinion is built on the visual culture that surrounds it and dictates the agenda.<sup>37</sup> It is loaded with spiritual symbols aimed at commercial or spiritual gain. Symbolic goods have a dual reality as both merchandise and symbolic object.<sup>38</sup> Posters, as means of communication for distributing symbolic goods, often combine words and visual images. See Figure 1:

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<sup>36</sup> Dan Caspi (2001). Pictures in Public Opinion and Democracy, *Open University*, pp. 26-22.

<sup>37</sup> Elena Abrudan (2012). *Visual Culture*, Galaxia Gutenberg.

<sup>38</sup> P. Bourdieu (1984). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, New York, p. 1.



**Figure 1:** "Land of Bounty," New York, 1937.

The visual image in Zionist movement posters was full of contrasts and contradictions: old versus new, east versus west, and abundance versus scarcity. This is the inheritance of the ancestors, whose descendants are meant to restore the homeland's early days, even though the land is also virgin territory that can be shaped and built in the spirit of a new era. It is an Eastern country, with an appealing exotic charm, but is also seen as part of the primitive East that Zionism is supposed to bring to the forefront of Western culture. There it is, presented as a land of milk and honey, which can guarantee the well-being of an oppressed people, but in other cases, it is a ravaged land whose desolation and ruins the people must overcome and rebuild.

Above all, the Land of Israel appears to be the absolute opposite of the Diaspora. Compared to the Diaspora, depicted in gloomy colors as a place of harsh devastation, the Land of Israel is the land of light and freedom. These images, whether created in the Diaspora or created in the Land of Israel, say more about the dreams and wishes of their creators than the land's objective reality. The Zionists who immigrated to Israel first described it through the visionary lens that brought them there. These images strengthened and nourished the

imagination of the Zionists in the Diaspora and were assimilated into the images created there. In the end, the Land of Israel, the heart of the Zionist cause, was an issue that needed to be marketed, acquire fans and believers, encourage immigrants, and open the hearts and wallets of donors. Propaganda posters and greeting cards were not intended to present a realistic picture reflecting the difficulties or complexity of life in Israel, but it seems that every Zionist immigrant who immigrated to Israel followed one image that found its way into his heart and became his private dream of this place.

Because posters are constructed of image and text, we must understand that visual images appearing in them are important means of communication that work to replicate reality, build private and collective memory, deepen fundamental assumptions and religious beliefs, formulate political ideologies, and so on. The images and symbols of Israeli posters were borrowed from contexts serving disparate ideologies. One prominent example is the image of the "new person," which exists as a visual image in many non-Zionist versions and is repeatedly used. An example of a propaganda poster of the new Jewish man is "A Pioneer Rolls Up His Sleeves," designed by Uta Velish for the JNF in New York in 1939.



**Figure 2**<sup>39</sup>: "A Pioneer Rolls Up His Sleeves," Uta Velish, 1939

<sup>39</sup> Nahum Goldman (1996). *Blue and White in Color: Visual Images of Zionism, 1897-1949*, Tel Aviv: Diaspora Beit Hatfutsot Publishing House and Oved, p. 94.

One prominent visual feature is the use of a realistic figure. The pioneer's posture – his firm stance, the left hand rolling up the right sleeve while the right hand grips a hoe – indicates the pioneer's strength and resilience. The size of the figure on the poster and its central position in the composition indicate the importance of the pioneer and his centrality in Zionist movement imagery. The images and visuals incorporated into the design of posters were not unique to this medium. They can be found in other visual media such as plastic art, theater, cinema, literature, poetry, and song. The poster was just one of many agents "recruited" for the purpose of spreading Zionist ideology.<sup>40</sup>

After the establishment of the state, the posters in Israel focused on the elite's wish to preserve and shape the "new Israeli." In light of the many immigrant waves from around the world, there was a need to create a crucible to unite the multiple diasporic tribes. In practice, this meant re-education, and the brunt of that job fell to the nation's school system. Such a setup makes it possible not only to define the limited field of production as the arena of competition over the authority to grant cultural sanctification, but also to engage in the function of sanctification as a system specifically designed to do so.

This hierarchy expresses the structure of the objective relations of symbolic power among the makers of symbols produced for the public and are consequently sanctified by legitimate institutions and overall define legitimacy. After all, the state has the power to direct intellectual production through subsidies, commissions, promotions, positions of honor, and even decorations, all designed to speak or be silent, compromise or avoid.<sup>41</sup> An example of this can be seen in the mandatory "national corner" existing at the entrance to every Israeli school, classroom, and kindergarten, which consist of government posters that the Ministry of Education is obligated to post, just like the

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<sup>40</sup> Sabag, R.: Ben Baruch: B. Yaffe, N., and Vice, N. (eds.) (2010). *Art as a Visual Culture: The Middle School Curriculum*, Ministry of Education, Jerusalem, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Bourdieu (1984). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York, pp. 16-17.

mezuzah.<sup>42</sup> This institutionalized state cultural capital creates a record of cultural capacity that gives its possessor conventional, permanent, and legal value in relation to power. An example of this situation of cultural capital is formal education.<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 3<sup>44</sup>:** A national corner includes a map of Israel, the Declaration of Independence, a Star of David, the national anthem, photographs of the prime minister, president, and chief of staff, as well as Theodor Herzl (the visionary of the modern state of Israel), and Jewish / Israeli symbols.

While the “national corner” has existed since the establishment of the state, we are now sensitive to the postmodern phenomenon of pluralism and stratification in Israeli society. In an era of individualism and the ability to create entirely new identities, redefinition is needed. Thus, after the demise of the spiral of silence, which shut down discourse and secured hegemonic dominance, it was time for the postmodern era in which intentional interpretation of visual culture is more complex and leaves room for more truths. Visual culture has become part of

<sup>42</sup> Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mezuzah>.

<sup>43</sup> Bourdieu (1986), pp. 241-258.

<sup>44</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.liatpeled.co.il/nation.html>.



everyday human production and develops by multiplying the forms in which it is expressed, thus increasing the impact it has on social interaction. It is found in the confluence of visual art and mass culture, being aware of the postmodern condition.<sup>45</sup>

#### *4.2 Postmodern Posters*

Some postmodern posters embrace the old symbolic goods and adapt them, in a layered and pluralistic way, to individualistic self-identifications in contemporary Israeli society. In doing so, they partner in producing and distributing symbolic goods. The poster of the Pride Parade (2019) took the motif of the new Israeli, the "beautiful pioneer" and recruited it for the publication of the parade.



**Figure 4:** A poster for the Pride Parade in Tel Aviv. 2019.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Abrudan (2012), pp. 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> From: Ephraim Arada Collection at the Museum of Eretz Israel, Tel Aviv (2019).

The poster decorated the streets of Tel Aviv and was sold to many tourists from all over the world who came to celebrate the Pride Parade in Tel Aviv. The public significance of a work must be defined by the author, originating from the recycling and consumption process that is governed by the objective relationship between the institutions and agents involved in the process.<sup>47</sup>

The social relations that produce this public significance are determined by the relative position that agents occupy in the structure of limited production. These relationships are revealed as a composition of the "publication" of the work. It has become a public object. In each of these relationships, each of these agents deals not only with his own image of other relationships in the relationship, which depends on his relative position in the field, but also with the image of his own other party image, that is, the social definition of his objective position in the field.<sup>48</sup>

Another example of a pluralistic social definition of who is an Israeli is designed as a huge poster in the heart of Tel Aviv of the Ethiopian community's demonstration. The Ethiopian community is affected by the visual definition of "the new Israeli" as a white man from Europe. It wants recognition and its own place in Israeli society as an equal. The poster wants to enter the Israeli cultural field using symbolic motifs to market its belonging. At the general social level, symbolic power operates within a defined field called culture. Cultural logic is an act of creating and granting legitimacy to perpetuate class structure, which is the existing system of inequality.<sup>49</sup>

The poster consists of symbolic goods, like the Star of David, the *talit katan* (a four-cornered undergarment worn by traditional Jews), Ethiopian embroidery, and a dark-skinned woman lifting her dress in the shape of the Israeli flag against a black background. The text contains a headline asking the public to support the Ethiopian

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<sup>47</sup> Barthes, R. and Foucault, M. (1967), The Author's Death, What is the Author? In *Dror Mishani*. (2005) Tel Aviv: Resling Publishing.

<sup>48</sup> Bourdieu (1986), pp. 241-258.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

protest. The body of the poster says “You are accused of having a ticking bomb in the womb.” Of the poster, its creator has said that “The establishment is concerned about separating and controlling. The establishment sees the black woman as a ticking black bomb...”<sup>50</sup>



**Figure 5:** Poster Design: Benjamin Samin. (2019).

The poster uses symbols of the existing culture to convey messages loaded with codes and symbols from the physical environment of the people who live the culture in all its various facets<sup>51</sup>

#### *4.3 Posters as Reflective of Regional Realities*

As a case study of symbolic goods in Israel, the poster cannot reflect the coherent situation in the country only according to the linear timeline of the period of the modern state's establishment with its attendant the romantic ideas or of the period of the post-modern

<sup>50</sup> <https://timeout.co.il>.

<sup>51</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1986).

search for identity. It is my contention that, in Israel, we must also examine the lateral axis of the dominant locations defining the posters parallel to their timeline. To do so, I will compare the Tel Aviv posters to the Jerusalem posters of the 2000s. The assumption is that the beginnings of introverted cultural capital are a long and complex process spanning the course of an entire life. The internalization of cultural values occurs mainly in childhood during the socialization process and only in such a way that these values become an integral part of the subjects and their environment.<sup>52</sup> External cultural capital has a number of features associated with cultural capital in its internalized state. Cultural capital is made external through material objects, such as books, paintings, posters, and more. Because it is material, it can be moved; in fact, it can be transferred as easily as economic capital. Therefore, cultural goods can be purchased, both in the material dimension (economic capital) and in the symbolic dimension (cultural capital).<sup>53</sup>

Thus, if there is a gap between the traditions of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the capital product and cultural values may also differ between these two major cities.



**Figure 6:** Poster in the Mea She'arim neighborhood of Jerusalem, September 2014. (Photographer: Nati Shochat)<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Rafi Man, (2017, June 1). *The Renaissance of the Haredi Digital*, The Haredi Media 2016 - Between Conservatism and Modernization <https://www.the7eye.org.il/250637>.

The poster's headline, in white on a red field, reads, "Daddy, I'm scared." The visual image is of an innocent-looking baby with body language that seems to convey fear. Alongside the image, text warns that smartphones and the internet are endangering the family. Below the text is a photograph of a rabbinic letter expressing the idea that electronic devices constitute something defiling. The technology and information revolution occurring in the ultra-Orthodox sector has led to a significant change in ultra-Orthodox society and its characteristics. Those who fear the continuation of this process explain the extent of the resistance of conservative elements to the new media's penetration into and power over the ultra-Orthodox world. Another example of posters in Jerusalem is taken from a large and very popular shopping mall where the second floor is a kind of biblical museum full of posters depicting biblical stories featuring both images and text.



**Figure 7:** Bible City at Cinema City Mall, Jerusalem (2019)  
(Photographer: David Ser).

As Abrudan (2012) wrote, we live in a world of visual culture. Its most important aspect is that we do not have to go to a museum to see art. Even as we enter the shopping mall, we experience forms of

visual culture. Art is displayed in industrial and commercial places. The action highlights the common goal of art, industry, and participant, together with business and industrial activities, for the improvement of quality of life.<sup>55</sup>

In terms of the demonstration of cultural capital and symbolic goods, we see that Jerusalem, too, has embraced the postmodern trend to take art out to the streets, such as shopping malls, street art, the workplace, and so on, i.e. places that are not the traditional gatekeepers of art, such as museums and galleries. On the other hand, the contents of the symbolic goods retain their modern condition and purpose of preserving the what exists, traditions, and beliefs. Most of the posters that appear in Tel Aviv are not welcome in Jerusalem and will not be shown there, and the posters that appear in Jerusalem will most often not be shown in Tel Aviv. It seems that, when it comes to the concept of the contents of the symbolic goods, the two cities differ. Although only 67 kilometers separate Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the true distance between these two cities is not merely geographical.

#### *4.4 New Media (Post)ers*

Posters in the new media break boundaries and transcend dimensions of time and space, interactivity, networking, and frequent changes typical of today. The new media are aware of the power of symbolic goods and offer endless options for personalized poster editing. A new object is created in every copy of the object.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the author's intention loses its importance and is adapted to the needs of the symbolic goods replicator.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Elena, Abrudan (2012). Visual Culture, Galaxia Gutenberg, Postmodern Visual Culture, pp.1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Walter, Benjamin (1936). Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.

<sup>57</sup> Ronald Barthes (1968). "The Death of the Author".



**From:** Facebook profile, myself.

These selective patterns of symbolic goods and leisure activities suggest identification with symbolic meanings that define personal identity in new ways. According to Lace, Kline, & Jahli (1986), consumers choose products as a means of "communicating to others their relationships to complex sets of attributes and social values."<sup>58</sup> We live in a mostly symbolic visual medium, which makes it possible to understand the establishment of social reality in the picture, just as with linguistic terms. Identifying the strategies of viewers' interpretation in daily life allows us to understand the process of attaching significance and social meaning, at the same time.

In this case, the image is considered as a text and the audience is a community of visual significance. There is no reality that is "more real" than the one we perceive and interpret ourselves.<sup>59</sup> We become the creators of our reality and therefore we can also cancel the same reality with the click of a button. The liquidity of the virtual world is affected by the user's action. At the same time, the user is the witness of the message building and is an active participant.<sup>60</sup>

The process of exchange turns symbolic goods into signs of recognition and recognition of group membership. The process upholds and restores recognition and confirms its boundaries. Thus, bringing new members into the group poses questions about its identity, boundaries,

<sup>58</sup> D. Crane (1992). *Social Stratification and the Media: Audiences in Media-Saturated Societies*, SAGE Publication Ltd. California. p. 243.

<sup>59</sup> Abrudan, E. (2012). "Media audience as a community based of visual meanings," in *Visual Culture*. Galaxia Gutenberg, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> Lev Manovich, Lev (2001). *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press, pp. 20-44.

etc. The restoration of social capital is possible through the constant flow of conversion and exchange in which recognition is confirmed and restored. Each group produces a mechanism through which it concentrates the social capital that underlies its existence to a single activist or a limited activist group that grants to activists the authority to act on its behalf.<sup>61</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

I found that the most common symbolic goods are: the new Jew/ pioneer, the conquest of the desert, settlement, the flora and fruit of the land, the seven species, the land of the Bible and the holy places, a map of Israel, portraits of great nations and Zionist figures, illegal immigration. Alongside them, the common symbols are: the Star of David and the flag of the Zionist movement, the seven-branched lamp, twelve symbols of the tribes of Israel.

In this article, two types of posters can be identified. One includes national posters, designed for public bodies and official institutions of the Zionist movement before the establishment of the state, and the other type includes commercial posters, designed for commercial bodies for the dissemination of political and commercial ideas in the Land of Israel after the establishment of the state. The ideological statement is visually expressed on the products of various symbolic goods produced by the Zionist movement, with the main visual medium for this purpose being the poster. The study shows that all streams of Zionism & Israeli poster used the same repository of images and symbols. There is no image or symbol that claimed ownership of a particular stream of symbolic goods.

One of the main tasks of the Zionist movement was to turn the Land of Israel from a desire, which exists as a historical memory, to a real homeland that exists as a territory of Hebrew settlement. Zionist activity also includes the cultural design of Israel as a homeland. The Zionist movement produced graphic publications of symbols and

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



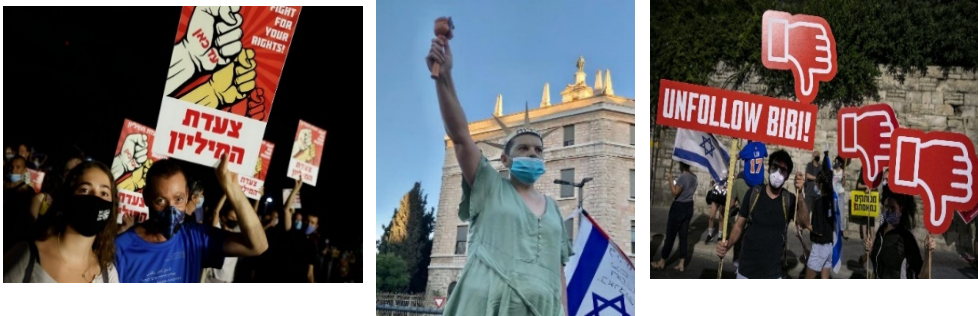
images from the process of nation building. The lives of those visual texts were sometimes very short, but their importance is in the symbols and images they created, which defined the national identity and the symbolic goods that represent it. The use of visual messages and their duplicate production in photography, painting and graphic design, as a tool for communication and ideal construction, has served the Zionist movement from its inception and serves the State of Israel to the present day. The same graphic materials colored the private space, and especially the public one, with visual messages that understood and strengthened Zionist consciousness, and encouraged activity and activity in the Land of Israel.

The relationship between a poster as a corporate agent and the Zionist ideology in all its forms, as expressed on national posters designed for public bodies and official institutions of the Zionist movement, compared to commercial ones designed for commercial bodies in Israel. Both kind of a posters with symbolic goods Made a major contribution to the dissemination of Zionist ideology in all its forms. It was a significant instrument for the visual narrowing of Zionist ideology. The ideological statement is visually expressed on various graphic products produced by the Zionist movement, when the main visual medium for this purpose was posters. At the same time, poster did not serve as the sole medium. Alongside it, various and varied graphic products were "recruited", from stamps, through "Happy New Year" cards to game boards. It seems that the members of the Zionist movement made use of almost every visual medium that existed in their time, within which they could spread the Zionist ideology. It can be stated that Zionist ideology was expressed less with the help of graphic languages, and more with the use of symbolic goods. After the establishment of the state, the posters received pluralistic symbolic goods as a central element that characterizes them.

The poster may have changed its form from a sheet of paper to a digital product, but its purpose remains the same, namely, to use symbolic goods to influence public opinion in marketing an idea, event, or product. It is clear to me that this is just the tip of the iceberg of options on poster research. Every poster contains sufficient research

opportunity for an entire thesis. The purpose of such a thesis would be to provide a broad overview of the development and status of posters in Israel in terms of both timeline and location. The study would address the close relationship between symbolic goods and posters in general and in Israel in particular. Repetition of symbolic goods in posters causes the symbolism to be echoed and preserved. The source of the symbolic goods that appear in posters in Israel, is borrowed both from the history of the Jewish people and the Bible and is owned by symbolic goods of different nations.

During the research, I discovered that the symbolic goods and their geographical place in posters in Israel matter. Also, in September 2020, posters are often used in posters in demonstrations against the government and the government in Israel. I would like to do further research on the subject of symbolic goods in posters at the Corona demonstrations in Israel. It is interesting to check to whom does the symbolic goods belong and whom does it serve in these demonstrations? The government or rather the people. Is it possible that the symbolic goods changed its role as an agent of the government to an agent of the people?



Demonstrators near the prime minister's residence.

Photo: Flash 90, 02/08/20

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