"PHOTOGRAPHY HAS TAUGHT ME TWO THINGS" (BENO ROTHENBERG, PHOTOGRAPHER)

>> RUTH OREN

INTRODUCTION

In this exhibition, the public is exposed to photographs collected over a period of six decades; had they not been preserved in state archives and in the collection of the Meitar family, they might have disappeared or been forgotten. From intensive research of Jewish photography in Israel, we are aware of how important, interesting and culturally relevant this material is, particularly now, sixty years after its creation. This exhibition and the catalogue accompanying it teach us about the years during which we were silent; it shows us the process of development needed before we were able to address the difficult questions of our existence here and also about the continuum of Israeli photography as it responded to local history.

The historiography of Israeli photography with its different research approaches from impressionistic models – some of them based on the biographies of photographers – through aesthetic, formalistic models, continuing on through various cultural and social models, can be placed sequentially from the first appearance of Jewish photography in Eretz-Israel at the beginning of the 20th century up to at least the 1960's.[1] In this historiography, Beno Rothenberg is well recognized as both a photographer and as the editor of photographic books.

Up until the 1970's, photography was looked at within theories of universal forms and artistic values.[2] In the 1980's, a new, more "realistic" view of the medium emerged. Theoretical articles on art, film, popular culture, literature, feminism and politics began to influence the study of photography and its interpretation. It was no longer possible to ignore the fact that the medium reflected social changes, political attitudes and social revisions. The theoretical literature that was written examined photography not only from the aspect of form and structure but also in relation to its social function. The new theoretical approaches uncovered the relativism and the multiplicity of meanings that it offered. Changes in the world of photography have thrown light on social changes; nevertheless, we can not ignore the contribution of outstanding individual artists or creativity in the frame of artistic genres.

This article was also written within an interdisciplinary approach that considers

Dr. Ruth Oren is a photographer, researcher and photohistorian. She taught photography in the secondary educational system. Today, she is a lecturer and researcher in the field of visual literacy and photography at the University of Haifa and the WIZO Academic College of Design in Haifa.

photography an associative medium anchored in the culture in which it is created together with its being a visual means of self expression.

Between 1945-1967, the years in which Beno Rothenberg's work stood out, the range of Israeli photography reflected the dominant political aims of the Zionist movement and the influence of its activities on the national landscape of Israel: building and development, urban and rural settlement in various areas of the country, demographic changes, expressions of relationships with "others" (British and Arabs) – this in addition to universally aesthetic observations of the human condition and the natural surroundings of the country. Among the photographs shown in public, the works that stood out emerged from both the central and marginal areas in a geographic, political and demographic sense. Certain places, actions and populations gained more attention than others that were less publicly exposed. Yet, a fresh glance at collections and archives reveals the existence of another viewpoint which directs attention to the peripheral and the "other."

Rothenberg, one of the outstanding and major photographers of the nascent state and during the first decade of its existence, helped to set a course in our visual collective memory. During this period, he made a sizable contribution to the creation of an Israeli iconography, working as an independent photographer, as well as authoring books of his own photography and editing photographic books on cardinal nationalistic subjects.[3] In addition to these, we should point out the distinctive Rothenberg collections in the state archives and the Meitar collection, which include significant photos from 1948 that have rarely been seen until today.

It is possible that Beno Rothenberg's photojournalistic work was significantly influenced by critical opinions and models that appeared in the international press. For example, we can learn from the letter sent in 1949 from New York by Nahum Tim Gidal[4] to Moshe Perlman, at the time head of the Israel government's Department of Information:[5] Gidal suggests coming to Israel for three weeks to hold a seminar of a very select group – three or four at the most – of young people to teach them photojournalism. He writes that the quality of the photographs coming out of Israel

to New York was not good enough to be used in the international press, other than those of Beno Rothenberg...*Life* magazine was looking for photo shots to accompany a story on the Negev, but from all of the material sent to New York, not a single story was printed because of the poor quality of the photographs.[6]

A DUAL VIEW

Beno Rothenberg arrived in Eretz Israel from Germany in 1933 at the age of 19; as a youth, he chose to pursue his education. When he was 22, he was drafted into the nomadic Jerusalem unit of the Hagana under the command of Itzhak Sade, and according to Rothenberg, they became friends. At the outbreak of World War II, he enlisted in the British army and served in the intelligence unit of the British air force. During the Independence War, he accompanied Itzhak Sade who commanded the armored brigade – the 8th regiment – and photographed moments of major significance in the war such as operation Yoav, operation Danny and others. Subsequently, he served as a photographer in the unit that provided maps and photographs.[7] In 1949, he began as a photojournalist and edited various photographic books. Later, his professional and academic development led him to a career as an archeologist and researcher. Until he turned exclusively to the occupation of archeology, his camera caught most of the proceedings that characterized the establishment of Israel's foundation in the first decade of statehood: the war of 1948 and its regional consequences, immigration, the hardships of absorption, building and development; in the background were ancient landscapes that were both prophetic and served to remind one of the magnitude of their historical silence.

As a young intellectual, Rothenberg belonged to a group of photographers that eventually created a large body of work. Most of them who worked in an independent or institutional framework in the first ten years of the state, began their professions in the previous period of the British Mandate and during the "state in-the-making," some of them as early as the 1930's. There was extensive photographic activity in Israel.[8] Rothenberg belonged to what we now call the "canon" of Israeli photographers.

Within a group numbering about eighty, some twenty-five photographers stood out who were working (and some still are) as a homogeneous group from a professional and cultural stand point, in spite of the difference of a decade or two in their ages.[9] Most of them were German born,[10] rooted in that country's technological and advertising culture that had developed between the two world wars; they were highly motivated towards professional and aesthetic excellence.

Their professional ambitions were limited by the meager economic existence in Israel; yet they strongly identified with Zionist and national policies and felt obligated, as part of an active intelligentsia, to work towards a "cultural affinity" with the land, a cognizance and internalization of its landscapes. Photographed reportage appeared in the illustrated press sponsored by the "establishment's" *Davar* and *Be'Machaneh* , and among them were those of Beno Rothenberg.[11] So called "reality reporting" which would today be examined with a critical eye, was representative of an attempt to create an image of a situation or place in a positive and constructive light, in order to improve morale; this approach was not characteristic of a press that presented itself as "critical" and exposed faults in the bureaucratic and governmental system beginning in the late 1940's, such as *Ha'olam Hazeh*.

Immediately upon its introduction, the medium of photography was embraced, occupying an intermediary position between fine art and popular art. Similarly, the press gained greater popularity when photography was added to the format – albeit with the limitations in print existing at the time – featuring images that were on the border between the "natural" and objective and "treated" iconic photos. Up until 1915, almost every large newspaper of widespread circulation had a weekly supplement of photographs. At the beginning, these were not news photos in the sense of conveying a story, due to censorship limitations during World War I, for instance, and because photographic technology did not enable taking pictures quickly; they were mainly photographs of staged scenes to illustrate news reports. Between the two world wars, a visual style of dynamic photojournalism developed, influenced by an atmosphere of cultural modernization into which many deft photographers were integrated.

Well-developed photographic reportage with a wide circulation in the Hebrew language began appearing regularly, particularly after World War II. The content of these weeklies was mostly influenced by the British magazine *Picture Post* edited by Stephan Lorant. The magazine was characterized by a social sensitivity, political awareness and an endeavor to reveal and reform social injustices and inequalities. Even prior to that, as editor of the German magazine *Munchner Illustrierte Presse* (1926), Lorant organized and designed that magazine as one of the world's first modern picture publications. Modernized photo journalism began its development primarily in Germany and central Europe and later moved overseas. There were strong similarities between the European illustrated press and that of America.

The press photographer, taking pictures with a rapid-shooting portable camera, told the story: well versed in human behavior, intuitive and able to anticipate events, hunting "the decisive moment," he turned it into a distinctive style of photojournalism. Alongside this genre of photography of "the decisive moment," a photographic approach developed that demanded social involvement – "the concerned photographer."[12] Of course, we must mention the powerful influence of the illustrated magazine *Life* that sent photographers all over the world in order to bring back the human story and to be there at "the decisive moment." Many photographers became "concerned photographers" and were often rewarded with significant financial prizes.[13] Society has always appreciated courageous photographers who manage to capture dramatic stories with a moral focus that are documentary and yet well designed.

The concept of "documentary" is an essential characteristic of a photograph; however, as more photographers found ways of self-expression, the term began to relate to photos that were taken from a particular humanistic point of view. In a broader sense, every photograph is documentary: it witnesses an event, proving that it actually occurred. Usually a photo is considered documentary when the event takes place in front of the camera and is minimally influenced by the photographer's presence. But the idea of "documentary intent" is always theoretical in the sense

that "intent" determines the chosen image. The picture contains "documentary intent" as opposed to "aesthetic intent," the latter of which is merely a treatment of visual content easily identified. A "documentary photo" in an historical, artistic sense evolved into a photographic genre that took a critical social stand. Photographs of human pursuits and situations that affected the human condition obtained significance in the first half of the 20th century, when they gained public exposure. American documentary photography developed under the influence of photographers such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, and through members of the American Farm Security Administration (FSA).

Documentary photography was aimed at the wider public in the 1930's through periodical magazines. The format of a pictorial story, adjacent to the text, developed into a sophisticated presentation. Many photographers, who were previously interested only in the formal values of the medium, began showing interest in social relationships and in photographing human problems; thus, they created humanistic, documentary photography. Their aspirations to exhibit their work in an artistic context caused museums and galleries to take notice.

Beno Rothenberg's work may be discussed within the framework of these two approaches: photographs with a documentary purpose and those with an artistic, social and critical dimension. This invokes a dual view of the documentary and the press photographer who has more than a single-minded regard for the subject of his images.

Beginning as a documentary photographer charged with recording the role of Zionism, Rothenberg also gave critical thought to its injustices; his work eventually led to outsiders – the Arab, the new immigrant, the marginal settlers. He was a documentary photographer who was "concerned."

"Rothenberg's broad range of interests, his many years of expression through words and pictures in various disciplines – all this leads to the revelation of his underlying viewpoint, all of which had seemed to be familiar ... To Rothenberg, more than to artists who appear to be, (according to our opinion or their assertions), 'naïve'

1 > On board the ship "Atzma'ut," February 1949

or 'pragmatic,' - we are entitled to raise the bar and propose a difficult question: as a sensible artist, a philosopher and metaphysicist whose state of mind and world-view are at the foundation of his art, what moral determination is expressed here? On the one hand, there is the Rothenberg whose photography is less than a noble practice, a "backyard" pursuit. On the other hand, there is the other Rothenberg whose images reflect the nation's greatness, one who left his mark on the publication of national albums during the first twenty years of the State of Israel – which of these aspects is the determining influence? Which should we believe? It seems that both models of expression, both basic formations of perception, have existed together for a long time..."[14] *(Fig. 1)*.

WARTIME PHOTOGRAPHY

The most significant variable characteristic of wartime photography is the timing; the story is created within the scope of a symbolic situation - the battlefield, the town, the village – at a certain critical moment from the vantage point of a certain spot. War stories take place in a combat area where one's destiny is determined; an area that fosters brotherhood; where political changes occur that are precisely and meaningfully timed.

Jewish photography from the early 1920's through 1948 centered exclusively around the Jewish outlook aimed at fostering a national identity and enlisting contributions from world Jewry for the Zionist movement in Eretz Israel.[15] The Arab landscape and the humanity populating it were removed from the variety of presentations and advertisements that appeared in 1948-1949; up until the signing of disarmament agreements with the Arab states, photographs relating to Jewish-Arab relations in the country were presented in the context of an armed struggle during the Independence War. Press photographers who moved around during the war, particularly in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (including Robert Capa who enjoyed an international reputation as a war photographer and brought pictures from Israel to the whole world),[16] and photographers who served in the unit responsible for

mapping and photographing and were in the combat area, developed a symbolic order for the photos taken of the area. This Jewish iconographical outlook grew out of a universal iconography; other than images of anonymous soldiers, it included sharp visual representations of interactions between men, places and time. A study of the photographic inventory in comparison with the military historiography of the war shows that there are photos from every combat area: from the north, the center, the south; from the large cities and from the Burma Road that became a symbol of Jewish resourcefulness during the war.

Military historiography claims that the armed struggle in 1948 was unavoidable.[17] The dialectical debate over the topic of Jewish-Arab relations in regard to shaping a territorial identity developed within Zionist and post-Zionist discourse. There are those who claim that if we examine the territorial influences and the ultimate spatial consequences of the conflict, we will see that the Zionist and post-Zionist debates compliment one another, and for the most part are not contradictory.[18] As a result of the war, the concept of settlement and the political-cultural landscape of the country were changed. The Jewish perspective dominated. Most of the Arabs within the boundaries of Israeli territory left their homes and became refugees. Zionist discourse that saw "nation building" and "land redemption" as constructive concepts from a Jewish historical point of view looked upon the Arab as the "other," the backward and aggressive enemy who objected to the legitimate renascent nationhood of the Jews in their homeland. Post-Zionist dialect sees the idea of "liberation" and "nation building" as a manipulative and aggressive system that destroys human values. This debate centers around an understanding of the Arab "other" and examines the roots of the national conflict from the opposing side of the issue, to the point of showing the Jew as the aggressor and the Arab as the victim.[19] According to Zionist historians, most of those who left the country during the war did so of their own free will, following an explicit call from the leaders of Arab countries or out of fear of the advancement of Jewish forces. However, post-Zionist historians question this,[20] as well as claims regarding IDF's battle morality; they contend that in many

instances the Jewish forces expelled the Arabs from their homes under threat.

Rothenberg's photographs facilitate a dialogue between these two positions. This tall and agile photographer, who easily blended into a military scene, found himself in various places in 1948, behind the lens of his camera, creating images from all forms of iconography that contemporary photography had originated: induction, Arab attacks, injury to civilians, fighting in trenches, exchange of prisoners, and finally victory. He photographed in bombarded Tel Aviv and besieged Jerusalem, in Sarafend and Jaffa, in Lod and Ramla, in Gush Etzion and Sha'ar Hagolan, in Tiberias and Tantura, in Nazareth and Beersheba, in Yad Mordechai, in Iraq-Suweidan, and on the shores of Tel Aviv during the attack on Altalena.

During an interview, Rothenberg talked about what he did in the 8th regiment: "I was attached to Itzhak Sade and the 8th regiment. I was in touch with him for many years. I was with him, we moved about, and when it was a bit quiet in the north, we took a jeep and I could photograph sites that no one else was able to reach. They didn't allow anyone to get near. The army didn't relate to the photographer until they established a photography department, and then everything changed...I photographed every place that I went, even when they expelled Arabs. I saw how they stole stores, grabbed fruit, everything they could find...I was free. I didn't belong to a group of journalists, to the people from the press office that were led from place to place. For example, during the occupation of Beersheba, everybody photographed a certain spot there, some yard where there was nothing. The battle was on the other side where I was with the regiment. There were official tours...for instance, the journalists went down to Eilat. On their way back, I met up with them. I had already been there and back and made a special supplement for Maariv on the conquest of Eilat. The old man (Itzhak Sade) and Yigal Alon would send a jeep to get me anytime something was happening. Everyone liked to be photographed. Everyone liked having a photographer who would photograph what was happening. I suspect they also wanted to be in the picture. The old man really liked photos, and that allowed me to take pictures that no one else got to or they arrived after everything was over."[21]

In cinematic-like mass scenes, often melancholic, emotionally satiating, but also surprisingly well-designed in their photographic format, within a personal frame of reference[22] close to the view of an ordinary man, from changing distances and angles, in keeping with the principle of seriality with which he worked, generally within dynamic conceptions, with a recurrent display of a space that possessed depth, aided by an airy perspective or a linear emphasis – in this way, Rothenberg photographed the interaction between man and space: the combatant, the prisoner with hands raised, the financial bargaining following battles, the excited or sullen crowds, men, women and children with their belongings behind fences and mud barriers, sabra cactuses in the background - in all of these, the photographer's intent, seen or unseen. This was done by relinquishing dominant aesthetic formations, such as the creative principle of light or critical graphic values that might steal the essence of the story. These formal elements would be seen in later works, in his landscape photographs. Occasionally, a seemingly oriental outlook reverberated in his photos, in a way that the West might observe the East, at a distance, from a posture of superiority. But we will not be able to view his documentary photographs of multitudes of Arabs gathered outside their dwellings, surrendering with arms raised, on the move, leery of or admiring the exotic "other," except as a silent testimony to the human condition – theirs and ours.

Although the war as it was presented was taking place "somewhere," and in spite of the fact that the scenes are similar to battle scenes in other places, identification of some details in the landscape and the descriptive captions next to the photographs confined the war scene to Israel and turned it into a central and traumatic part of the process to gain Israeli sovereignty. Rothenberg's images can also be called expressions of victory and a challenge of a conscience to the act of expulsion, if, in fact, it occurred.

The Arabs left behind a large number of villages. Most of the deserted villages were destroyed in order to prevent a return of the inhabitants; the act was also meant to allow for the construction of a modern foundation for the projected

2 > Evacuating inhabitants of the village of ‘Iraq el-Manshiyeh, 1948

Jewish settlement and to solve the problem of settling tens of thousands of new immigrants.[23] Abandoned Arab urban settlements in the center and periphery were populated with Jewish immigrants of the working class. Many places, including villages, were settled by immigrants, or the ruins were left in place. The relatively small number of photographs of Arab scenes that were published in albums and the illustrated press between 1949 – 1967, deal with the settlement of abandoned Arab villages by the Jewish population, and with the granting of technological – agricultural aid to the remaining Arabs in the country, as well as allowing them freedom of worship. Rothenberg added to this limited repertoire with his book *Land of Israel*, in the frame of a cultural co-existence, including landscape photos from ancient cities that were intermingled, where a potential for tourism existed: Arab women in Acre, mosques and courtyards in Jaffa and Arab images of stone pathways in Pekiyin *(Fig. 2)*.

PHOTOS CAPTURING ALIYAH

Sociological research dealing with the question of the dynamic demographic and social structures of the population and state between the years 1945 – 1965, and more recent publications addressing the demographic-social condition of Israeli society,[24] very often present a picture of a complex and pluralistic human existence, at times even traumatic, resulting from demographic growth and changes. The demographic growth was mostly the result of waves of immigration from the Diaspora; they required dramatic demographic changes that were at the base of the historical, social and cultural changes that the country experienced. With the declaration of statehood, the gates were opened to tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors and to every Jew whoever he may be. From May of 1948 until the end of 1954, the Jewish population of Israel doubled.[25]

The beginning of the demographic changes was presented in photographs of the masses arriving at the Haifa port. Rothenberg, as well as many other photographers, awaited their arrival in strategic positions, where the port could be seen as a site of a mass welcome and celebration. The decks of ships, laden with immigrants and

deportees from Cyprus, became "Israeli territory" in which icons were created of masses of people merging with the smokestacks and with the details inherent in a silhouette of a ship. The image of ship decks in a sense marked the beginning of a "new world," similar to the photos that can be found in the reservoir of images from the immigration to America at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century that symbolized the passage of millions of people from the "old world" to the "new world," with all of their expectations and fears. The voyage to Eretz Israel was part of a "rite of initiation" towards membership in a community that watchfully awaited them in the Haifa port.

At the beginning of mass immigration, the proportion of immigrants to every thousand members of the population was greater than that of those arriving at the peak of immigration in countries such as the United States, Canada and Argentina.[26] Whole communities were brought on aliyah in concerted operations, at first according to the immediacy of their distress: the deportees from camps in Cyprus, displaced persons from European camps, the Jews of Bulgaria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, and intermittingly – the Jews of Poland, Romania, Morocco and immigrants from developed countries. Immigrant absorption meant not only a concern for their housing, but a policy that included economic, social and cultural concerns and created encounters between new immigrants and veteran settlers. The aim was to create a melting pot, a homogenous society in relation to its social-cultural fabric; this would be accomplished by educating new immigrants, endowing them with the language and providing them with cultural and political information, in addition to imbuing them with the values of the veteran population. However, according to researchers, the meeting between the old-timers and the new immigrants created considerable antagonism. The immigrant population had, for many years, experienced hardships: inequalities of income, property, profession, education, cultural assets and political power. The antagonism and deprivation were based mostly on a geographical separation and a social-cultural isolation.

Among several formats of absorption – immigrant camps and deserted Arab villages,

transit camps *(ma'abarot)*, rural settlements, planned housing – the transit camps were a fascinating subject from a visual point of view, especially for photographers that were looking to photograph currents of human change in the framework of "documental" or "humanistic" photography. The camps represented both more intense suffering and greater possibilities of achieving a "photogenic," dramatic picture. The majority of these photographs was not shown in the press at the time, or in books, but mostly utilized by the Jewish Agency and the foundation fund ("Keren Hayessod") for their appeals for money; they needed the photos urgently and ordered them from the working photographers. The vista of immigrant absorption - of hundreds of thousands of people - was homogenous and unvarying for the most part, but it was in essence a scene of pronounced hardship, uncertainty and incongruence between space and the individual. This landscape easily provided ethnographic, symbolic and iconographic photographs. The public and private photographic archives of most of the photographers of the time contained a great many images of immigrant absorption settings, but their public exposure over the course of time was limited. Nevertheless, our collective memory is more often burdened by visions of the transit camps due to the iconic forcefulness of a few photographs, and also because they were more frequently shown in the 1960's and continue to be shown today, over and over again.[27]

Among the space photographs, a few demonstrate the formation of the camp, its merging with the scenery, its organizational rationale – row after row of tents, canvas or tin huts, and next to them the human suffering, physical and spiritual. Many photographs display the hardships through scenes of rain, mud and snow that created a bothersome climatic backdrop or through the images of barefoot children dressed in tattered clothes, cared for by their little brothers and sisters, and through the work of absorption, mostly in the areas of teaching and education.

The refugee experience crosses physical, political and ethnic boundaries – as a "mark" it is bound by the shifting images of those who bear the "mark"; this means that from a visual standpoint (as well as from many others) there was no way of

fundamentally differentiating between Jews and other refugees in photographs.[28] The types of belongings, the loaded vehicles, people on the move, temporary camps, infants carried in the arms of their parents, crying children, articles of torn clothing – all these, even without a known frame of reference, could represent the universality of the refugee problem. The refugee is a victim and anti-hero, but such depictions would not fit in with the Zionist ethos. The Jews making aliyah to Eretz Israel were heros, immigrants, representatives of the demographic-cultural changes that took place in the country. Beno Rothenberg's outlook tried to uplift them, while justifying and accusing the institutions of absorption at the same time. He came to the transit camps and caught the immigrants of different ethnic groups in the eye of his camera - out of curiosity, compassion, identification and respect. "Immigration began and I loved being a photographer at that time. I loved meeting with human destiny. I visited the transit camps; it was important. It wasn't easy for a thinking man..."[29] *(Fig. 3)*.

3 > In the immigrants' camp in Ras el-Ein (later to become Rosh Ha'ayin), winter 1950

A HOMELAND PHOTOGRAPHER

In addition to the illustrated press, photography books were the principle stage for the publication of period photographs. The books often functioned as implicit, unified and coherent creations that produced an image of a place beyond the single photograph. In this context of a photograph and self-editorship of a photography book, the term "auteur" comes to mind, author-creator on whom is bestowed lofty cultural attributes. Yeshayahu Nir in an article related to the photography book produced by Micha Bar-Am, expressed words that could have been written about any similar photography book by an "auteur": "A photography book is a medium found on the 'media map,' somewhere between a newspaper and a museum, between communication and literature and art. In a book, the photographer controls the editing and uses it to create a visual text, a work of art built almost entirely from photographs. The visual editing of a photography book is a creative endeavor in itself, of "innovative writing," of creating a story or an essay. The photographer rises to the position of auteur, even if he does not write a single word...the book

is a complete work of art, new, complex, possessing its own connotation."[30]

Laam (לעם) Publications first published the album *Israel Reborn* (1949) and later several ornate albums: *Herzl Seer of the State, The Children of Israel, A Tour through Israel, Haim Weizmann, Israel Holidays* and subsequent editions of *Israel Reborn* (1951).[31] The latter was edited by Beno Rothenberg and Yeshayahu Klinov. Press photographers of the period took part in the others. The albums, with imitation leather binding and metallic leaf inlay in the center, had accompanying texts in three languages (English, Hebrew, French) and sold thousands of copies. In addition to landscape photos, there were images of varied subjects: portraits, political events, gatherings. The main purpose of this series of albums was to present cultural-nationalistic information.

In 1953, Rothenberg published his book *Off the Beaten Track* through a small private publishing firm *Matzpen*; the book focused on his views that would become sharper and more entrenched over the coming years, leading up to the more significant publication of his book, *Land of Israel*, visually edited with associative contrasts, revealing an internalized, poetic view of a photographer's observations. Yossi Nahmias[32] studied the visual and textual aspects of the book and saw an opportunity to compare the ways in which its outlook and significance resembled those expressed in one of the first photography albums published in Israel that centered around the personal-poetic views of the photographer. With the exception of four or five photographs (among the seventy-four in the book), the photography is not meant to compliment, glorify, praise or commend, but also not to judge, negate or denounce the images. They depict desolation and neglect, conditions of despair, fatigue and weariness, alongside hope, dedication, hard work and everything between: respite, leisure, some humor – moments of relaxation: "...it was Robert Frank who years later would accompany the well-known book of photography *The Americans* (the English edition was published in 1958) with poetic texts by Jack Kerouac. In this modest book of Rothenberg (that would sell fewer copies), he suggests, in the words of the Israeli poet Amir Gilboa, looking at the names of

those who are seeking to fill 'the world' with meaning, to bestow it with a collective identity...In the pages immediately following, a short text by the photographer appears together with a photograph of 'the Judean desert at the source of a small stream.' It is an image that could be compared with the well-known painting of Friedrich Caspar David, except that the shades and morphology of the photographic view are softer. They are more 'a subdued elevated landscape' and less 'romantically sublime.' Yet, the similarity remains in its basic iconographic theme, the loneness of the image (depicted from the back), a singular hint of the presence of a man facing nature..."[33]

In the introduction to *Land of Israel*, Rothenberg formulates a poetic expression of the power of a landscape photograph and the sentimental force invoked while viewing activities such as hiking with confidence - to reinforce the intimate connection, but also out of a need for historical continuity - towards a place, a land. Through hiking, visualized in the motif of symbolic boots – nail-studded and dusty - which appear more than once in the photos, and by observing and immortalizing the images, Rothenberg, the author and editor, joins those working to foster a national identity. *Portrait of a Homeland* represents the best of Rothenberg's iconic-thematic work, if judged in light of the cultural industry to produce a national identity, as well as by the universal and modern outlook, which would ultimately make possible a critical outlook and dismissal of post-Zionism. The album was published by *Schocken*,[34] which correctly anticipated its commercial success, in two editions: in 1958 and 1962 (with additional photographs of "the genuine Solomon's mines"). The book is based on 144 of Rothenberg's photographs and edited by him. In this sense, it is a book of one creator, using landscape photographs to represent a country, with the intent of invoking an emotional bond with the land, emphasizing a connection beyond its historical and geographical context and, to a lesser extent, focusing on the achievements of individuals and the labors of the Zionist settlement.

The book's layout resembles a somewhat symbolic geographical course, advancing along a marked path, as it were – a road from south to north or in the opposite direction (the texts are in two languages, Hebrew and English).

As early as the 19th century, the desert and canyons, like primordial landscapes far from civilization, attracted many photographers. The strategic and ideological importance of the Negev to the Zionist movement made it a center of great interest, which can also be said of its visual potential. Rothenberg brought the desert at the height of its compelling force to photography, its varied sites traveled, familiar and photographed. In several colored images from *Off the Beaten Track*, we are struck by the desert's greenery in wintertime as seen from the traveler's viewpoint - the myriad shades of green - and the blue that is reflected in the springs when the weather is cool, by the hues of the craters' Nubian sandstone that seemingly marks the site and was chosen for representation in sculptures (for example, the Canaanite *Nimrod* by Danziger), and by the texture and hues of the stones and corals in the bay of Eilat. The finest photography of the Negev and the south is shown in graphic photos of black and white that are carefully studied as part of the history of photography: the Dead Sea and its silent purity, the lofty Masada with its historical-mythical connotations which have been crystalized into an educational symbol of self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation, the path going down to the Zeelim stream where travelers, not only soldiers, hike in single file, the Hever stream where people risk their lives as they descend to it. Over and above the visual significance of these sites is their cultural value, as alluded to in the explanatory texts accompanying the photographs. They link the present to the country's past and the grandeur of its early history, from the days of the Canaanites and the First and Second Temples. The placid view of the Kinneret in his book *Land of Israel* would eventually lead to a simplicity, an aesthetic of light in a decidedly graphic format, a view beyond the oddities of nature or singular phenomena in the landscape of the lowlands (the caves of Beit Guvrin) – all of this led to photographs which would be visually linked to international photography.

The topographic closeups that Rothenberg brought to photography, especially those shot in the Negev, dry and cracked in their pronounced symbolic texture and internal illumination, tell the story, so to speak, of the revelation of man. Photos

of the desert were one of the innovations of landscape photography following the establishment of the state, made possible by the occupation of the Negev, the removal of the restraints on movement enforced by the British Mandate on the region, the lessening of dangers for the traveler, the opening of roads and highways and the development of Eilat. The Sinai war exposed photographers to the real desert – immense and intriguing, inviting a spirit of adventure and overcoming difficulties. Going to the Sinai meant breaking through the restrictive borders of the state and the possibility of moving freely across them, while at the same time connecting with the nation's cultural and spiritual roots.

Desert photography of the Negev and the Sinai (1956-1957) was at first captured from the viewpoint of yielding an experience and only later, in hindsight, the ideological shade was cast, connecting them to the Bible and ancient territorial roots. The aesthetic experience that the desert invoked in photographs, the intellectual and emotional bond with its dramatic nature, its seclusion and timelessness, preceded the political-geographical rationale behind the distribution of the desert photographs to various publications.

When asked to explain his attraction to the desert, the photographer answered: "First of all, the silence. Silence that can be heard. The color, the hues that change from hour to hour, everything is naked; you see everything. The dramatic forms of erosion. But above all, I think that what especially draws many people to the desert, even those who established our religions...is the direct contact with nature...I had a good relationship with Ben-Gurion. He believed that the Negev was the future of Israel. There was land; we would develop it, a new landscape, a new country, new nation. For him it was an empty terrain, a massive expanse...he didn't actually take a backpack and hike for a week in the desert. He had a different conception of it. For me it was an experience ...I knew every plant there, every living thing, every fly. For many years, I hiked in the desert, from the beginning. From the western wilderness, when I was in the Second World War...I had this desert illness, I always found an excuse to escape to the desert. In the desert you see everything."[35] *(Fig. 4)*.

4 > waiting for image

A CONVERSATION WITH BENO ROTHENBERG: THE PHOTOGRAPHER, THE MAN, THE WORLD

While conversing with Beno Rothenberg, it is possible to draw additional insights as to his path in photography and the social-political-cultural point of view that forms the basis for his work.[36]

What was your perception in the books that you edited?

"In the book *Israel Today and Yesterday*, I wanted to explore a certain slice of life, also some of the problems, but from a Zionistic viewpoint. To try not to emphasize things that were not so comforting, that were there and will always be there. The question is how you view them. I saw how they treated immigrants. I hoped this would pass. They would learn and that's it. But I photographed their misery and published those photographs in the book *Off the Beaten Track*. You can't say that I edited them as some official publications. But I am sure that I acted under the influence of 'making an effort to build a state,' with all that was happening, to stress the beautiful things. In archeology, the situation changed. When I was leading a dig and I had a problem somewhere, I photographed the problem. I gave a description next to the photograph in a book. This, no one else did. Later on, I showed broad landscapes in my books. I thought that the reader had to enter the region with his head and his eyes, and I created a book where the photographs were spread across two pages. And if a picture was also beautiful - it wasn't there for a rational reason but because of my sense of aesthetics. I very often see things that I think no one else sees."

What was so special at the time about a photograph of the native landscape? Could you identify it as an Israeli photograph without the caption?

"I'm not quite so sure. A photographer sees things as he does, without an ideology. I see certain things that someone else doesn't see. On the contrary, it's very personal. A landscape is an experience. Everyone sees something different in the landscape. You see a formation. That's personal. It's not an ideology and you can't learn it."

There are those that claim that photographs have ideologies.

"That's true. If for instance, Zoltan Kluger[37] would go to the valley, he would photograph

the farmers at work. I would look for a view that emphasizes the special character of the place. I wouldn't be obligated to tell a story about the Zionistic outlook. It is very important to understand the intention of the photographer. For me, the camera was a notebook where I recorded things visually. I photographed images that were interesting from an aesthetic point of view."

What is the difference between an album designed for the local public and one directed towards a tourist, for instance?

"The difference is in the small details. If a flower or a bird is shown there, it doesn't interest a tourist. Tourists are interested in the broader picture. Your attitude towards the country is different than the one you offer to the tourist. Most of the albums that I browse through are actually intended to present the country to a stranger. The truth is, I wanted to include something of humanity, but Schocken, who was a very intelligent man, didn't agree. He thought that it was another subject - it wasn't a landscape of the country. I wanted to show the footprints of others, but images of people were not included. Each book reflects objective subjectivity. We observe with two eyes. How do I know what is really there? I've been engaged in this for a generation and more. If I say that this is green, what do you see? We recreate images for ourselves."

How do you explain the popularity and commercial success of albums, photographic annals and your books?

"I think that people in the country actually lived Zionism. To be an Israeli was to be a Zionist. It was an experience. To this day, people have a concept of how things should be."

What were your personal views?

"I'm a Zionist. I believe that the Israeli nation belongs here and enormous efforts should be made to bring Jews here, as many as possible. It's this nation's last chance. But not only that. I'm not in favor of blurring the evidence. True culture is created in tribes. The Jewish culture of today was created by ethnic groups, not acting as Jews but as people with common interests. It's a national tragedy that we are abolishing

ethnic groups...I became a Zionist from a very religious family. Eretz Israel was the starting point. Nobody thought it was a place to live a normal life. I became a Zionist by reading historical literature. I read a book by Dubnov,[38] who wasn't a Zionist, but from the facts in his book, I drew Zionist conclusions and joined a youth movement, an act that caused many problems at home. Later, everyone came to Eretz Israel. But that's another story. My first guide was Yeshayahu Leibowitz."

Did you remain somewhat religious?

"No. I suffered from being part of the religious world, and I didn't understand what they were talking about. I had nothing in common with them. From a rational viewpoint, I knew nothing of a God as an old man with a beard, surrounded by angels standing and singing songs in His praises. I had a perception based more on Spinoza, of an extraordinary force or something like that. But when I matured and began to study science, I tried to understand the religious; I wanted to comprehend what a religious experience was, so I read a lot of religious literature; I read the Mainorides. But I didn't have religious feelings. I felt close to the Renaissance concept of man as the center of the world."

What was important in the 1950's, not only in photography, but in a perception of the world?

"It makes a difference if you are asking about personal matters or in general. I was completely secluded from society, I was always at the university. I was living the problems that I was dealing with. I didn't learn situations from a book, I lived them and looked for solutions in books. Very often, my problems were abstract, without humanistic significance, such as 'a taste for life' for instance, but something else entirely. The way we perceive things, the relationship between our perception and the outside world, that is what I have earnestly dealt with for years. For that reason I didn't relate to my studies as learning a profession, in order to make a living, but I studied because that is what I wanted to do. I was a strange bird in the university; That is why they helped me with scholarships, without my asking. They didn't pressure me with exams. I was somewhat exceptional, because I didn't study for exams. I never

thought that a man had to work to make a living. It never occurred to me to look for a job. So I imagine that it is the reason I made changes and moved easily from one profession to another."

Can we say that a photographer observes through one eye?

"I had a very strange experience. I was on a dig in Iran as an expert in ancient metallurgy. One Sunday, the head of the dig and I went for a drive. On the way, in the direction of Afghanistan, there is a long, narrow canyon, and I say to him: 'I hope you have a record of all of the pictures in the rock walls of this wadi.' He said, 'What are you talking about? What walls? What pictures? ' I asked him to stop, got out, took some of the dust and put it in my hat (the pictures are carved in the rock and fill with dust). Suddenly, images emerged. I saw the site from far, far away. Another time, I saw a rock in a strange position, and it was an archeological site.

Is it possible to consider art as an expression with "intent." There is a difference between documentary intent and the intention of expressing oneself. But defining photography as an art is complicated. We don't have to view your desert photographs as art. We can call them archeology or Zionism. But if you simply went hiking and saw what you saw in the desert, perhaps that would be art?

"It is the nature of man to create. He is creating all of the time: with the aid of his tools – with his eyes, his feelings, he creates his own world, whether he wants to or not. I think that man is a creative creature. The question is, if within the impulse to create, do you do things for others, or are you satisfied to create for your own world? The difference is not so great, only if you externalize your creativity. Every action a man takes has an element of creativity. If you turn it into an intentional activity, you create images, you decide that you want to paint, it is only a matter of degree, not a substantial difference. It is similar in photography. I see images all of the time but I don't photograph them. But I see them. Some photographs are art, if we define art as an intentional expression of the creative person, in order to produce an object that provides him with self-expression. It is important, just as in writing, to define your terms, otherwise it is just palaver."

Perhaps, in order to be a photographer, you have to be an outsider. Maybe it suits someone who remains aloof? Or the exact opposite, it is a way for people to connect?

"You can't just be an outsider; you must stand aside. A photographer is not only one thing; there are many types who are photographers."

Perhaps the similarity between them is greater than the difference?

"The similarity is that they always stand opposite, in a visual sense. You stop at the visual space and don't enter into the subject. You're not part of the picture. You can't be a part of the picture. When you remain within the visual boundaries, you observe. You don't make judgments, good or bad. That is why I get angry at people who judge photographers. For instance, they were angry with the photographer who photographed a soldier hitting an Arab. It was all unintentional. The press photographer doesn't stand in judgment, he observes. What the editorial board does with the photograph afterwards is another story. Halting short of a visual observation is what characterizes a photographer."

"Photography has taught me two things: to see – I was born with two eyes. Nevertheless, before I took up photography, first as a hobby, later, professionally, I didn't see the little things which make up all that is important in life. It was only when I had to pay attention to the minor details... that I really began to see them... ; to tolerate – Photography has taught me that freedom means freedom to one's own way of life, tolerance, patience and a smile".[39]

Footnotes and bibliography >>

1 In an article attempting to construct the sequential history of Israeli photography, Yehoshua Glotman complained about the presence of "white spots" in the historiography. "The Art of Immigrants," *Ha'yir– Camera 6*, 1997, pp. 20-21 (Hebrew). Since then, scientific research has been published on the history of photography in Israel during the 20th century, and articles have appeared in museum catalogues (in chronological order): Oren, R., "Constructing Place: Propaganda and Utopian Space in the Landscape in Zionist Landscape Photography, 1898-1948, *Devarim Ahadim nr 2*, Van Leer Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1997, pp. 13-31 (Hebrew); Nahmias, Y., "Histories and White Spots – the Middle Ages of Israeli Photography," *Camera 5*, 1997, pp. 28-31; Silver-Brody, V., *Documentors of the Dream. Pioneer Jewish Photographers in the Land of Israel – 1890-1933,*. Jerusalem: Magnes, The Hebrew University 1998; Oren, R., *Blue-White Photography - Photographic Communication in the History of Zionism and the Israeli State 1898-1998*, Ministry of Education, Curriculum Dept., Maalot, 1999 (Hebrew); Sela, R., *Photography in Palestine in the 1930s - 1940s* (catalogue), Tel Aviv: Herzliya Museum of Art and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2000 (Hebrew); Sela, R., "Conquering the Mountain: Photographers and the Israel National Fund," *Keren Kayemet Umetzalemet, Pictures from the Blue Box* (catalogue of an exhibition held at the Reading A power station), Tel Aviv, 2003: pp. 4-40 (Hebrew); Kofler, H., "A Local Lense," *Tsalmania in Tel-Aviv, Rudi Weissenstein* (catalogue of an exhibition held at the Reading A power station), Tel Aviv, 2003 (Hebrew); Raz, G., *Photographers of Palestine Eretz Israel/ Israel 1855-2000*, Tel Aviv: Mappa and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2003; Raz, G., "Soskin's Theater," *Soskin: A Retrospective, 1905-1945*, Tel Aviv and Tel-Hai: Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Open Museum of Photography, 2003: pp. 13-28 (Hebrew); Nir, Y., "Homage to a Press Photographer", *Paul Goldman – Press Photographer, 1943-1961*, Tel-Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, 2004, pp. 10-23; Carmiel, B., *Korbman – An-Other Tel Aviv Photographer, 1919-1936*, Tel-Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv and Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 2004 (Hebrew); Silver-Brody, V., *Alfons Himmelreich: Photographer on the Roof*, Tel-Hai: The Open Museum of Photography, 2005: pp. 9-37; Oren, R., *"System and Themes: Aspects of Jewish Landscape Photography in Eretz Israel, 1945-1963*. Ph.D. diss., Geography and Environmental Studies Department, University of Haifa, 2005a (Hebrew); Oren, R., "Photogeography of the Center and Periphery: Israeli Places and Regions as Depicted in Photographs, 1945-1963," *Ofakim Begeografia*, 65-66, Haifa, 2005b, pp. 407-424 (Hebrew); Passsentin, E., *Images of Jewish Woman in the Public Establishment - Photographs in Eretz Israel During the Mandatory Period*, M.A. thesis, Eretz Israel Studies and Archeology, Bar Ilan University, 2005; Sabag, A., "The Image of a Woman in Boris Carmi's Photographs," *Boris Carmi – Photographs of Women, 1940–1980*, Tel-Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, 2006, pp. 8-17; Haikin, N., "Spatial Dualism Seen Through the Camera," *Spatial Borders and Local Borders . A Photographic Discourse on Israeli Landscapes*, The Open Museum of Photography, Tel-Hai Industrial Park, 2006, pp. 188-200; Oren, R.," Space, Place, Photography: National Identity and Local Landscape Photography, 1945-1963," *Spatial Borders and Local Borders – A Photographic Discourse on Israeli Landscapes*, Tel-Hai: The Open Museum of Photography, 2006, pp. 162-188.

2 Writers such as Walter Benjamin, Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard and others began gaining recognition. Marxism, structuralism and semantics started to influence research on photography. See books and compilations of articles dealing with the central issues on the subject within a social-cultural perspective, up until the past few years (in chronological order): Rosenblum, B., *Photographers at Work – A Sociology pf Photographic Styles*, New York: Holmes & Meyer, 1978; Burgin,

V. Y. (ed.), *Thinking Photography*, London: MacMillan, 1982; Tagg, (ed.), *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographies and Histories*, London: MacMillan, 1985; Lemagny, J. C. and Rouille, A. (eds.), *A History of Photography – Social and Cultural Perspectives*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University, 1987; Holland, P. Spence, J. & Watney, S. (eds.), *Photography/Politics: Two*, London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1986; Bolton, R. (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989; Szarkowski, J., *Photography Until Now*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989; Squiers, C. (ed.), *The Critical Image*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990; Goldberg, V., *How Photographs Changed our Lives*, New York: Abbeville, 1991; Brennen, B. and Hardt, H. (eds.), *Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999; Sturken, M. and Cartwright, L., *Practices of Looking –. An Introduction of Visual Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; Schwartz, J. M., and Ryan, J. R. (eds.), *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*,. London & New York: Tauris, 2003; Hight, E., and Sampson, G. D. (eds.), *Colonialist Photography – Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, New York: Routledge, 2005; Rampley, M. (ed.), *Exploring Visual Culture*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

3 Oren, 2005a, note 1 above.

4 Nahum Tim Gidal (Münich 1909-1996). His contribution to Eretz Israeli photography was inconsistent as he was often abroad pursuing the career of an internationally recognized press photographer and author of books through which he revealed scenes of Eretz Israel and photographs of conflict, along with portraits of children. From 1936-1947, he photographed for all of Israel's major institutions: Keren Hayesod, the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Agency, Youth Aliyah and the Hebrew University. His photography was in addition to theoretical work, writing about photography and historical research, integrating photography with other disciplines in his books. Gidal, T.N., *Modern Photojournalism – Origin and Evolution*, 1910–1933, New York, Macmillan, 1976.

5 The Information Bureau was a group that functioned within the framework of the Prime Minister's office beginning in 1949 (שנתון המדינה, 1950). The bureau was comprised of the press office (interior and foreign) and radio services; its role was essentially the dissemination of state information. The group also dealt with dispersing visual information through posters, exhibitions, boards with serial photographs in display windows, publicity slide shows, the bi-weekly movie newsreel and short documentary films.

6 Israel State Archives, 1/4/3933.

7 This unit worked through IDF and included a "squadron of photographers" who were under the sole jurisdiction of the mapping service. The squadron was authorized to do all of the photographic and film work requisitioned by IDF: instruction films, photographing and filming combat operations used for drawing strategic conclusions, documentation of specific incidents that reflected army life and its activities; it also provided photography services to units of career soldiers for their internal use, photographic and film projects for cultural and information purposes and material for the press office (from a memorandum issued by the commander of the 5th brigade, October 1948, Archives of the IDF, 50/2169, 10). The roots of the mapping and photography service dated back to the Haganah and even to the British army during World War II (see *Devar Hashavua*, 3.3.1949). The army photographers included H. Bahir, A. Wilheim, P. Cohen, B. Carmi, S. Meir, Y. Merlin, H. Kaufmann, S. Rokenstein, all of whom were active in civilian life in the years following the war. Some of the photographs included scenes from the war in the

Negev, photos of the cavalry, the artillery division, the army hospital, pictures taken during a cease-fire. The mapping and photography service managed to put together an exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum in July 1949 under the title "The Camera In Pursuit of Soldiers." The exhibition attained popularity, press coverage (*Dvar Hashavua*, 15.7.1949) and appraisal from abroad, which included orders for certain photos from the exhibition that later became icons of Israeli heroism during the war. In the end, the service was dismantled in 1949 and its military functions were divided between the aerial photography unit of the Air Force and the photography and film unit of the Intelligence Corps; it also became part of the framework of the press communications unit.

8 A letter signed by Mr. Meurtier, Kodak's representative in Haifa (a branch of the Cairo office), to Yosef Gal-Ezer, the director of the photographic department at The Foundation Fund ("Keren Hayessod"), June 1943, in which he stated that in Eretz Israel there were at least 300 customers requesting photographic materials, other than the government and military (Central Zionist Archives, KH4b 5396). In an article on a photographic competition that took place in 1951 for the first time in Israel, and organized by the government press office, it was written that over 200 photographers, amongst them some amateurs no doubt, sent in 1, 800 photographs – *Dvar Hashavuah*, 17.1.1952.

9 For more regarding the photographers, see in detail: Oren, 2005A, 2006, note 1 above.

10 On the attitudes of German Jews towards Zionism and their contribution to developing the country, its culture and Israeli photography, see: Oren, 2005A, 2005B, 2006 (note 1 above), and also (in chronological order):
Dorman, M., "Martin Buber's Speech 'Liberty' and its Influence on the Jewish Youth Movement in Germany," in I. Bloch, H. Gordon and M. Dorman (eds.), *Martin Buber, the 100th Anniversary of his Birth*, Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1981, pp. 213-225 (Hebrew); Gelber, Y., *A New Homeland: the Immigration and Absorption of Central European Jews*, Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi and the Van Leer Institute, 1990 (Hebrew); Lavski, H., *Before the Catastrophe: the Unique Way of German Zionists*, 1918-1932, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990 (Hebrew); Miron, G., "The Israeli National Story as Seen by German Immigrants," in A. Shapira (ed.), *A State-in-the-Making*, Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for the History of Israel, 2001, pp. 161-189 (Hebrew); Girsch, P., "Projectleitung Israel" in K. Honnef, and F. Weyers, *Und Sie haben Deutchland verlassen mussen. Fotografen und ihre Bilder 1928-1997*, Bonn: Rheinisches Landesmuseum austellung und Katalog, 1997.

11 See Nahmias, Y., "Refugees in Photography – A Universal View Versus a Local View," *Studio*, 124, 2001, pp. 24-34 (Hebrew). In the period between the end of World War II, up to the end of the 1960's and the establishment of state television in Israel, the press played a central role in the distribution of visual images to the local public. The combination of wide circulation at a low cost to the customer and its ready availability contributed to the image of those newspapers that provided a platform for photography based on visual traditions which originated in central Europe.

12 "The Decisive Moment" was a name given to define a quick photographic approach that produced exact and concise images, as described by the French press photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. Due to its impact on the profession, the epithet became a concept distinguishing a particular photographic style. "The Concerned Photographer" is the name of an international foundation managed by the International Center of Photography in New York (ICP). The fund supports photography that exhibits

social awareness, that is meant to expose afflictions, and, as a result, to better humanity. The foundation has produced various traveling exhibitions since 1967.

13 See, for example, the Israel Prize awarded to three press photographers – David Rubinger, Micha Bar-Am and Alex Levac; the Pulitzer Prize for press photography to the Israeli photographer Oded Balilty; the prize endowed by the Dan David Foundation (worth $1,000,000), awarded through the Tel Aviv University to the photojournalist James Nechtwey, and many other awards.

14 See Nahmias, Y., "A Meeting with a Missing Spring – Photographer Beno Rothenberg's Project," *Studio*, 93, 1998, pp 16-25 (Hebrew). In this commentarial-philosophical article based on the work of Beno Rothenberg and resulting from conversations held with him in 1997, Nahmias presents the power of Rothenberg as a critical observer, possessing a strong awareness of the act of photography and the culture within which he creates. I am grateful to Yossi Nahmias for his wise comments. He contends that Rothenberg creates images from contemplative observations and from a critical, historical view at the same time.

15 See Oren, 1997, note 1 above.

16 Capa, R., Photos from Israel, 1948–1950 (Exhibition Catalogue) Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 1988. Robert Capa (1913-1954), internationally-known as a "war photographer," left his impressions on press photographers of his era. A large body of literature has been written about him. He was born as Andrei Friedmann in Budapest, Hungary. In 1931, he left Hungary for Berlin and began his way as an apprentice in the darkroom of a photo lab. In 1933, he moved to Paris. He photographed the Spanish Civil War and created the unforgettable and controversial image of "The Death of a Loyalist Soldier" that was published in *LIFE* magazine. He photographed China's invasion of Japan, was on assignment for the magazine in the European Theater during World War II and founded the first international cooperative agency for free lance photographers, Magnum Photos 1988).
He arrived in Israel for the first time in 1948, under assignment for the magazine *LOOK*, close to the declaration of statehood and in time to photograph the war that was soon to break out. He remained in the country for several months, moved about on all fronts and shot thousands of images. Following a tour in Russia with the American author, John Steinbeck, he returned to Israel in 1950 as a sympathetic Jew, in order to photograph the state-in-making, the experience of building and settlement. The fruit of his two visits was published in the books:-
Stone, I.F, This is Israel, N.Y : Boni and Gaer, 1948; Shaw, I., Report on Israel. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1950.
Capa won the friendship and appreciation of many of the local photographers, especially that of Paul Goldman, a long-time friend from Budapest. Capa was killed at the age of 41 in the Indochina War. In commemoration, a reportage-obituary was published in *Dvar Hashavua*, June 1954: "Robert Capa – A Victim of His Camera," praising his energy, courage, endurance charisma and magnetism, noting the internal unrest that constantly motivated him and, of course, his sympathy towards Israel, even though he didn't consider himself a Zionist.

17 Lorach, N., *History of the War of Independence*, Tel Aviv: Massada, 1989 (Hebrew).

18 Golan, A., *Wartime Spatial Changes*, The Ben-Gurion Research Center, *Sede Boqer* Campus, Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, 2001.

19 The differences between the historiographic approaches is

explained, in part, by the distance between my generation from events; it takes into consideration the renewed assessment found in archival sources that only became available in the 1970's and 80's. The quantitative deciphering of works that were debated at first from a qualitative-ideological position were now viewed with a change of perspective expressed in the presentation of the country's conflicts in contrast to modern civil wars or the development of a post-modern, cultural historiography; this approach deals with ethical questions and is based not only on investigating the elite and the origins that lead to an understanding of their influence, but on different popular sources, such as state ceremonies, names of streets, images of sites, graphic expositions, museum showings of the heroic past, as well as research that deals with photographs of the landscape as part of building a national identity.

20 See Hebrew note 20 and also: Morris, B., *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge: Un. Press, 1989; Pappe, I., *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-51*, London: Tauris, 1994; Kimmerling, B, and Joel Migdal, J., *The Palestinian People: A History*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003; Morris, B., *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Un. Press, UK, 2004.

21 From my interview with Beno Rothenberg, Museum Eretz Israel, Tel Aviv, August 1998.

22 The frame of reference: objective, a set of different lenses and optical equipment for a camera (Even- Shushan Dictionary, 1982 [Hebrew]).

23 See Golan, 2001, note 18 above.

24 For the cultural sociology of immigration, see Hebrew note 24.

25 Information from the *Israel Monthly on Statistics*, Volume 1, 1948.

26 See Lissak, 1996, note 24 above (Hebrew)

27 See Nahmias, Y., "Refugees in Photography – A Universal View Versus a Local View," *Studio*, 124, 2001, pp. 24-34.

28 Ibid.

29 See Lissak, 1996, note 24 above (Hebrew).

30 Nir, Y., "Three Comments on Photography", in M. Bar-Am, (ed.), *The Last War*, Photographs, Tel Aviv: Keter, 1995, p. 249 (Hebrew).

31 The Press Administration for information, broadcasting and films of the Ministry of Interior backed this publication, together with the publisher. A document issued by the administrative director Yeshayahu Klinov, (National Archives, J/64/713) confirms that Beno Rothenberg was publishing an album of photographs dedicated to the first year of the State of Israel. The Administration was interested in the success of the project, and therefore all of the institutions were requested to cooperate with Rothenberg in reference to any photographs or documents.

32 See Nahmias, 1998, note 14 above.

33 Ibid.

34 Schocken Publications in New York published the album *A Palestine Picture Book* previously in 1947; it was based on photographs by Yaakov Rosner. The publishing house was owned

and managed by Zalman Schocken, one of the most prominent Jewish publishers. Schocken, born in Prussia (1877-1959), a business man and man of letters, immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1934 after having transferred his numerous assets there, and established the Schocken Publications in Tel Aviv. In 1940, he left the country for America and in 1945 founded his publishing firm in New York; the firm published books of Judaica and Hebrew culture. Rothenberg's book came out in Israel and as far as is known was the only one of his books published by Schocken. For the activities of Zalman Schocken see: Lavski, H., "Businessmen, Zionism and Building the Country – the Case of Zalman Schocken," in: Gross, N. (ed.), *Jews and Economics*, Jerusalem: Publication of the Zalman Shazar Center, 1984, pp. 357-371; David, A., *The Patron* (Trans. by A. Hashavia), Israel: Schocken, 2006 (Hebrew).

35 See note 18 above.

36 Ibid.

37 The photographer Zoltan Kluger was for many years connected to local institutions, and his work was the model for "Zionist photography." The period of Kluger's work, from the beginning of his professional life in Eretz Israel in 1933, belonged in many ways to the "classical period" of Zionist photography. Through his intensive work during 15 years of photographing the state-in-making, Kluger was the one who created the iconography that left its mark on the national identity, and he continued to distribute his photographs after the establishment of the state as well.

38 The Jewish historian, Shimon Dubnov (1860-1942), who wrote *Chronicles of the Jewish People* (11 volumes).

39 Rothenberg, B., *Off the Beaten Track*, Tel Aviv: Matzpen Publishing House, 1953 (Hebrew).