

Research report # ????

Subject: Israeli Journalists as an Interpretive Community: A Case Study of 1950s Mainstream Journalistic Attitudes towards *Haolam Hazeh*

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A Case Study of 1950s Mainstream Journalistic Attitudes towards *Haolam Hazeh*¹

In May 1954, Amos Elon, a prominent *Ha'aretz* journalist published a review of the major weeklies that appeared in Israel at the time. When dealing with *Haolam Hazeh* Elon wrote:

Haolam Hazeh has a unique writing style that is enforced upon all of its sections, in an almost totalitarian manner... this style appears to be [written] in one octave above normal prose, a trick that keeps the reader in a state of constant tension, and induces him to share the editors' hysteria... This style brings us every week articles that increase [the weekly's] circulation through well-known methods such as fanning ethnic, party and cultural differences, combined with large doses of pornography and coffee shop gossip.... Letters written by minors are published alongside propaganda campaigns that serve only to undermine morale in high schools, and increase the tension between teachers and pupils.²

Most leading Israeli journalists of the 1950s and 1960s who publicly discussed *Haolam Hazeh* on the pages of mainstream newspapers were appalled, to say the least by the weekly. *Haolam Hazeh* was established in 1937 by the journalist Ouri Kessary and was first called *Tesha Baerev*

(Nine O'Clock in the Evening). It changed its name to *Haolam Haze*h (This World) in 1946 and four years later it was bought by Uri Avnery, Shalom Cohen and two other investors.³ Avnery became the editor of the weekly, and Cohen became the chief of the editorial staff. Following the buy-out, Avnery and Cohen recreated *Haolam Haze*h as a newsweekly, different from most other Israeli newspapers of that time in terms of content, style and journalistic objectives. The new *Haolam Haze*h developed a journalistic formula that was non-traditional yet attentive to the existing realities of the Israeli journalistic scene of the 1950s. This formula had several aspects, the most salient of them being the combination between *Haolam Haze*h's "harder" and "softer" contents. The ultimate expression of this unique mixture could be found in the 1959 initiation of the two covers system, by which *Haolam Haze*h's front cover referred to hard news topics, mainly of a political nature, while the back covers dealt with sensationalist issues, usually of a sexual nature.⁴

The public journalistic disdain for *Haolam Haze*h was so prevalent that on several occasions journalists who wrote about the weekly in mainstream newspapers argued that the only effective way to combat *Haolam Haze*h weekly would be to ignore it altogether.⁵ Ironically, in some cases writers addressed this proposed "policy" of ignoring the magazine as if it had already been voluntarily adopted by major newspapers.⁶ Then, they went on explaining why this policy was misguided and elaborated, at length, on the great damage that *Haolam Haze*h had caused Israeli journalism and Israeli society. The mere discussion of *Haolam Haze*h and its contents seemed to require an apologetic justification. Hence, for example *Davar*'s columnist Shlomo Grodzensky, explained that he dedicated a whole article to an analysis of *Haolam Haze*h - a publication he did not regularly read - and its perils just because he happened to glance through an issue of the weekly while he was waiting his turn at the barbershop.⁷

But the sensationalist and radical *Haolam Haze*h was not ignored by Israeli journalists of the 1950s and 1960s. Mostly, it was fiercely attacked and in some cases it was defended due to a

belief that freedom of the press should protect even a publication such as *Haolam Haze*^h. In other cases, the overall rejection of the weekly's style was accompanied by the notion that *Haolam Haze*^h was attacking the right political targets, even if it was doing so by using unacceptable journalistic methods. But, whatever the journalistic reaction was, the weekly was not ignored both in the public arena of journalistic writing and in the informal settings of the Israeli journalistic community. All of this brings us to the question that stands at the core of this paper - why was *Haolam Haze*^h impossible to ignore in the eyes of the Israeli journalistic mainstream of the 1950s and 1960s?

My argument is that the unique nature of *Haolam Haze*^h's constructed journalistic outsidership could best be explained through the analysis of the Israeli journalistic community of that era as an interpretive community. The strategic positioning of *Haolam Haze*^h as the designated "other" of Israeli journalism during the formative era⁸ (1950-1965) was articulated in order to define the boundaries of the journalistic community, enforce normative standards, and establish what was considered good and bad journalism. At the same time, however, that *Haolam Haze*^h was used as a means of defining everything that legitimate Israeli journalism opposed, it was also utilized as a source of professional inspiration (or even straight-forward replication), a de-facto journalism school, and as an unofficial exposure channel for exploring topics and approaches that were unacceptable to the mainstream Israeli media. Moreover, *Haolam Haze*^h's existence as such a paradoxical phenomenon points to the major inner-contradictions that characterized the Israeli journalistic community during the formative era, and the ways by which such contradictions were appeased. *Haolam Haze*^h's criticism of the mainstream journalistic community that was accompanied by the mainstream's fierce public denunciation of *Haolam Haze*^h appeared to reflect a struggle between two clear alternatives. In parallel, the more complex picture illustrated in this paper, pointing at ways in which those two arch-

rivals utilized one another, and even carried on a dialogue in overt and covert ways suggests that under some circumstances journalistic communities need to construct their own in/outside. Moreover, and as seen in other sections of this project, once those circumstance changed (through the influence of *Haolam Hazeh* itself, among many other factors), the need for such a contrasting, yet mediating entity declined.

Establishing a theoretical framework: journalists as an interpretive community

The academic study of journalism aims to explore journalistic practices, norms, routines and values while situating them within larger social frameworks. That is, scholars of journalism do not only investigate the way in which journalists conduct their work, but they also offer insights regarding the complex relations between how journalists think about their work and how they actually execute it. Moreover, most journalism studies aspire to frame journalistic work as derivative of the norms, values and institutions of the society in which journalists work.

Journalism studies can be categorized according to their choice of four possible contexts through which they explore journalistic work: individual, organizational, institutional and cultural. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary: each level of analysis offers a point of view that situates journalism differently, and thus leads to different research foci. The earliest approach to journalism research addresses news as the product of the individual journalist. And so, various Gatekeeper studies have focused on the way individual editors manage to regulate the stream of information they receive.⁹ The second approach to journalism research investigates journalism through a focus on the social organization of news work.¹⁰ Three trajectories characterize workplace research: first, there is an emphasis on the similarities between news production and other types of production. Thus organizational research analyzes journalistic work as the outcome of the need to allocate scarce resources and routinize the unexpected.¹¹ Second, organizational research focuses on how news organizations define

their policies and disseminate them through the organization.¹² A third trajectory of workplace research focuses on the way in which journalistic values of professionalism are translated into the concrete language of routines, norms and conventions. Such research does not only aim to trace those routines, norms and conventions, but also to understand their functionality for journalists and the ways in which journalistic practices help fortify the professional and social status of journalists.¹³

The third approach in journalism research aims to explain journalistic work through the interrelations between the journalistic institution and other social institutions. Studies of this sort situate journalists, mainly in Western-democratic societies, as mediators between the political system and the public.¹⁴ According to this perception, journalists are responsible for disseminating information and symbols through different sections (or sub-systems) of society, while monitoring the activities of the establishment.¹⁵ A radically different view of the interrelations between journalism and other social institutions is offered by advocates of the critical school. They contend that the main goal of the news media in capitalistic societies is to maintain the existing social status quo. Moreover, news-producing organizations take part in the large-scale hegemonic project by creating the impression that the current social condition is the best possible one.¹⁶ The claim that the hegemonic effect of news media is such that they tell the public what not to think about¹⁷ contradicts how journalists perceive themselves, and the way in which they are depicted by many journalism researchers. Thus, researchers who present a hegemonic analysis of news work have to resolve a number of fundamental tensions such as: what is the role of journalistic values, such as objectivity and fairness, if journalists cater to the needs of the ruling elites? How do journalists learn to serve those elites when research shows that they mainly consult one another? How do journalists manage to fortify the status quo while aspiring to expose scandals and criticize the establishment?

The fourth approach to journalism research stands at the core of his study. The cultural approach addresses news as the product of broader cultural conventions and journalists as cultural interpreters. The conventional understanding of communication as a form of transportation is replaced here by a perception of communication as a social ritual.¹⁸ Instead of thinking of communication as a process in which information is transmitted from point A to point B, we are asked to think about communication as a process, in which communities share and negotiate information, values and beliefs. Such a perception tends to replace the prevalent perception of communication as a uni-directional linear process with a more circular one. It is not only the journalists who communicate to their audiences, but rather the culture of the audiences and the reporters that shapes a common understanding of events and their meaning.¹⁹ This perception emphasizes that journalists do not work in a cultural vacuum. They are a part of a culture that has common biases, preferences, memories and narratives. And so whenever a community is dealing with a news event through its members who are reporters, those reporters are bound, at least to some extent, to communicate this new event through existing cultural frames. It is important to note that this point of view does not suggest that journalists have no power or authority. Instead, the cultural perception aims to place journalists within a broader context: the image of the journalist as a quasi-scientist who explores events from the outside is replaced by one of a journalist who is an interpreter and representative of the society in which she lives.²⁰

Following this line of thought, the cultural-interpretive perception of communication can be implemented “inwards,” towards the journalistic community itself. According to Barbie Zelizer, journalists are not only members of a professional group but also members of an interpretive community, “united through its shared discourse and collective interpretations of key public events.”²¹ Zelizer’s approach implements the interpretive community concept, first used in anthropological and literary studies, to establish the notion that journalistic work is embedded

in both a broad cultural context as well as in the narrower context of social interaction among journalists. Despite the fact that journalists tend to reject the institutionalization of their occupation and underplay the communal aspects of their work, they share a common discourse and varied common experiences. While journalists tend to portray their work as objective, individualistic, immediate and informative, the interpretive community frame depicts that work as value-laden, communal, continuous and narrativistic. Such a concept focuses on the existence of an inner-journalistic discourse that is created while and after journalists conduct their work. Through this inner-discourse journalists learn how to do their work, and interpret the meaning of the events they encounter as a collective. This collective shares a common heritage of memories and lessons that are cultivated in ways that constitute journalistic authority and fortify the status of the journalistic community. The interpretive community approach also stresses the existence and centrality of a collective journalistic memory. Although journalists tend to highlight the timeliness of their work, journalistic reporting is also nourished by a body of knowledge that has been accumulated by journalists through the years. Hence, the existence of a journalistic interpretive community is especially evident when journalists are involved in narrating the past. Their struggle over time to constitute their authority as narrators of past events points at the collective and longitudinal traits of their work.

Although the interpretive community frame seems to contrast the dominant frame of understanding journalists as professionals, it also builds upon previous ethnographic studies of news work and the analysis of journalistic values.²² Thus, for instance, earlier works concluded that journalists do not work directly for the public.²³ That is, they usually do not have a clear image of their “clients” - their needs, interests and preferences. Furthermore, this tendency is reinforced by the journalists' professional values that encourage them to renounce the commercial aspects of the trade. Journalists, according to this system of values, are in the business of presenting facts, exposing truths and giving the public what it needs and not

necessarily what it wants. In contrast journalists are highly influenced by their peers and superiors.²⁴ They decide what events to cover and how to cover them through ongoing interaction among themselves, and the day after a story is published they are not concerned with the reactions of some abstract “public” but rather with those of their colleagues and usual sources. The interpretive community frame does not only acknowledge the fact that journalists learn how to report through and with their colleagues but also argues that this ongoing socialization process creates a community whose members share values and perceptions. All of this becomes evident from the fact that journalists seldom cover stories exclusively. Mostly they work on stories in parallel with their peers from competing organizations. Later the story is discussed in the organization, edited and debated and so on. But even though most journalists would admit to this collective aspect of their work it is hardly imaginable that they would embrace this perception in its entirety, since this analysis undermines the ethos of the independent reporter. Moreover, it challenges journalists with the notion that what they share with their peers is not a set of common professional guidelines but rather a system of value judgments.

In sum, this study of the ways in which *Haolam Haze* provided a setting against which the mainstream Israeli journalistic community could articulate and negotiate its professional ethos utilizes the cultural approach towards the study of journalism. The study focuses on two areas that heretofore have been relatively neglected, especially when it comes to the investigation of Israeli journalism. First, the notion that Israeli journalists are the storytellers of Israeli society and that their tales are shaped via large-scale cultural frameworks is used in this project as a springboard for discussing the tales Israeli journalists tell about their own work. Along these same lines, this project also probes the ways in which the narratives that are told and interpreted by Israeli journalists are used to fortify their own status and authority. Second, my research complements the existing body of Israeli journalism scholarship through its focus on the

longitudinal development of the Israeli journalistic community as a memory community. While previous research has offered a cultural analysis of journalistic themes at specific points of time, my research focuses on the retrospective view of Israeli journalism, looking at how *Haolam Haze* was conceptualized at different stages, for different purposes. By doing so, my study stresses both the communal aspects of the work of Israeli journalists and the effect of accumulated journalistic heritage on the current work of practitioners.

Mainstream Journalistic Perception of *Haolam Haze*

In order to explore the complex relations between 1950s and 1960s mainstream Israeli journalistic community and *Haolam Haze* it is first essential to define the tenets of the criticism against *Haolam Haze*. Basically, there were three interconnected arguments:

The political argument: the political complaints regarding *Haolam Haze* had two main components that ought to be viewed through the prism of the political characteristics of mainstream Israeli journalism during the formative era. The first fundamental complaint was that *Haolam Haze*'s politics and journalistic practices were damaging the Zionist endeavor. Thus, for instance, *Davar* dedicated a first page news item to a report that "the latest issue of *Haolam Haze* provided most of the material for the 'know your enemy' program that was aired on Damascus Radio, yesterday."²⁵ Time and again, it was argued that *Haolam Haze* holds no respect to the great efforts that were invested in establishing the state, absorbing the mass migration waves and defending the country's borders.²⁶ Following that line, whenever Avnery was involved in political activities, even before the 1965 establishment of the *Haolam Haze* – *Koach Hadash* party, the weekly's journalistic opponents would stress the assumed anti-Israeli nature of those activities, such as Avnery's meetings with a "pro-Arab" Jewish-American Rabbi.²⁷ A complementary aspect of the anti-Zionist accusation were the claims that *Haolam Haze*'s political criticism was not constructive, anti-democratic, or even Fascist in its totality:

instead of offering productive solutions, *Haolam Hazeḥ* promoted the notion that the whole political system was corrupted and beyond repair.²⁸

The second political complaint involved *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s claim of being unaffiliated with any political party or movement. Israeli journalists of the 1950s did not accept *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s hegemonic analysis of the relations between the Israeli press and the Israeli political system (an analysis discussed in detail elsewhere in this dissertation). Instead, Israeli journalists - especially those who wrote for party-affiliated newspapers - aspired to reveal the "true" nature of *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s political leanings, that is, the party that was behind the weekly. The suspects came, of course, from the opposition side, and the most salient among them were the Communist party²⁹ and the General Zionist party.³⁰ Other private newspapers such as *Ma'ariv* and *Ha'aretz* were also often accused of serving political goals, but in *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s case this criticism seemed to be more consistent: while the more established private *Ma'ariv* and *Ha'aretz* played an agreed upon, or even scripted role (in the eyes of the party-affiliated newspapers) within the journalistic scene of the 1950s, *Haolam Hazeḥ* aimed to redefine the scene and thus earned harsher rivals. The weekly's fundamental charge that there was basically little difference between private and party-affiliated newspapers - since they all served the political-economic establishment - was answered by an attempt to position *Haolam Hazeḥ* within the context of 1950s Israeli journalism. That is, the effort to reveal *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s true political loyalty aimed to deprive the weekly of its outsider status and point-of-view.

The professional argument: according to a majority of the journalistic references regarding *Haolam Hazeḥ* that appeared in Israeli newspapers during the formative era the weekly was practicing bad journalism. Mainstream Israeli newspapers were quick to spot mistakes and inaccuracies that appeared in *Haolam Hazeḥ*, and on several cases they argued that *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s journalists reported on events that did not happen³¹ or claimed to have witnessed events in which they did not participate.³² Following that line, the mainstream newspapers argued that

Haolam Hazeh's editorial policies were opportunistic and self-serving. Hence, for example, *Ha'aretz*'s reporter compared the Hebrew and the (short lived) Arabic editions of *Haolam Hazeh*³³ and concluded that the two publications reflected different, if not contrasting, images that catered to the preferences of each of the two ethnic audiences.³⁴

Additional professional criticism was aimed at *Haolam Hazeh*'s extensive focus on gossip stories, its sensationalist tone³⁵ and its ongoing tendency to invade the privacy of the people it reported upon: conducting interviews with children;³⁶ publishing photographs of people who did not wish to be photographed, such as a prostitute who was attacked by ultra-Orthodox protestors³⁷ and more. The overall attack against *Haolam Hazeh*'s selection of topics and its reporting style should be understood within the context of the self-imposed restrictions followed by mainstream Israeli newspapers during that era. For instance, in 1960 the Editors' Committee instructed newspapers to substitute the term "committed suicide" with "died in tragic circumstances" and to use the term "attacked" instead of "raped."³⁸ The Editors' Committee even sent a written request to *Haolam Hazeh* asking it to adopt this terminology.³⁹ The weekly refused to do so, explaining that it would not submit to the decisions of a body that "judges Israeli journalism without even bothering to include *Haolam Hazeh* in its discussions."⁴⁰

Perhaps the most common tactic of discrediting *Haolam Hazeh*'s journalistic professionalism was to address its extensive dealing with sexual themes, even before the weekly actually started to feature photographs of naked women.⁴¹ When the *Mapai*-affiliated *Hador* wanted to define *Haolam Hazeh*'s essence it did so by linking *Haolam Hazeh*'s politics, journalistic practices and interest in sexual topics: "[*Haolam Hazeh* represents] hypocritical, reckless, cynical and rude journalism that is covering over the stinking nest of This Underground World which combines political gangsterism and odious pornography."⁴² *Davar*'s Shlomo Grodzensky advanced this argument by demeaning *Haolam Hazeh*'s assumed readership:

There is one significant sector of *Haolam Haze* readers, for whom the reading [of the weekly] is an essential need, and no sacrifice [i.e. price] would deter them from satisfying their wish. Maybe out of respect to the feelings of the more fastidious group among *Davar's* readers I should have refrained myself from naming that need. I am sorry. But I am sure that MK Avnery, for whom honesty is such an important principle would not be cross at me. There are those who say that chronic masturbators need constant textual and visual stimulations. I assume that such readers are among *Haolam Haze*'s hard core clients.⁴³

The moral argument: the cumulative effect of the previous two arguments led to a rejection of *Haolam Haze* that was not based on a specific detail or compliant. Rather, it was argued by some mainstream journalists that *Haolam Haze* is an inherently bad and immoral entity. This immorality was an outcome of the nature and aspirations of the weekly's staffers and especially its editors. The process by which *Haolam Haze* became tagged as inherently immoral and untrustworthy was especially apparent through the ongoing coverage of the attacks against *Haolam Haze*. In 1953, Avnery and Cohen were beaten by members of the army's 101 commando unit, following *Haolam Haze*'s criticism of the Kibya raid. The event did not gain much coverage, with the exception of *Haolam Haze* itself. It was also condemned by two of the opposition parties' newspapers - *Herut*⁴⁴ (*Herut* party) and *Kol Ha'am*⁴⁵ (the Communist party). Two years later, after *Haolam Haze* published the first articles dealing with Aba Hushi, Haifa's mayor, two bombs were put near *Haolam Haze*'s offices and the building in which the weekly was printed. The first bomb did not explode, while the second did. In this case, the journalistic coverage of the attacks was far more extensive. Several newspapers condemned the attacks⁴⁶ as did the Federation of Israeli Journalists, which declared that although it "will not venture into assessing the nature of the newspaper and its editors, who do not belong to the association,

it [the association] believes that it is its duty to condemn such unacceptable phenomenon, and denounce all use of violence."⁴⁷

But there were other more strident voices that went beyond the Journalists' Association's half-hearted denunciation. What characterized these harsher reactions was the total disbelief in *Haolam Haze*'s credibility and morality. As expected, the fiercest attacks against *Haolam Haze* came from the *Mapai*-affiliated dailies. This time, those newspapers skipped even the formulaic condemnation of the violent attacks: first, there were justifications - even if only implied - of the attacks. *Hador* titled the Haifa investigative reports "spiritual gangsterism,"⁴⁸ and the more respected *Davar* attacked the decision to provide *Haolam Haze* with police protection after the explosion of the second bomb. Protecting *Haolam Haze*, explained the writer will only further legitimize "pornography that is sheltered by the police, moral gangrene that is sheltered by the state."⁴⁹ Second, the *Mapai*-affiliated newspapers raised doubts regarding the true identity of the people who planted the bombs. *Davar* questioned the credibility of the accounts provided by *Haolam Haze*'s staffers and suggested that it might have actually been someone related to *Haolam Haze* who planted the bombs in order to attract public support of its journalistic crusades and draw support from *Mapai*, eight weeks before the general elections.⁵⁰ *Hador* echoed the same sentiment.⁵¹

But the most significant high-status doubts were raised by Ezriel Carlebach, *Ma'ariv*'s first editor and arguably the most influential Israeli journalist during the 1950s. In his column, entitled "Strange Bombs" Carlebach wondered:

If indeed there is a mysterious organization that believes that out of everything that is published in Israel only the contents of *Haolam Haze* are the most dangerous... than what drives the logic of this strange terrorist organization? It makes sure that *Haolam Haze*, its editors and its struggles over the freedom of the press will gain

the greatest publicity possible... Is there a better way to attract public attention than by an explosion?⁵²

A Functional Transgressor

The previous section of this paper portrayed the mainstream journalistic view of the challenge posed by *Haolam Haze* during the formative era. As shown, in most mainstream newspapers - both private and party-affiliated - most of the time the public response rejected *Haolam Haze*'s journalistic vision and journalistic practices. This dismissal of *Haolam Haze*'s journalistic alternative was formulated through a discourse that incorporated the major themes that defined the Israeli journalistic mainstream of the formative era: the appropriate relations between journalists and the political establishment; the expectation that journalists would take an active part in the advancement of the Zionist endeavor and provide constructive criticism, if at all; the kind of stories that were considered newsworthy; the manner in which information about such stories was supposed to be gathered and reported upon; the ethical and aesthetical constraints that were supposed to guide the work of Israeli journalists, and more. In other words, **the criticism of the Israeli journalistic mainstream against *Haolam Haze* during the formative era was comprehensive to the extent that it defined - by default - the mainstream's own journalistic vision. *Haolam Haze* was positioned publicly as an ultimate contrast against which the community could define its positive and constructive professional ethos.**

In order to understand why mainstream Israeli media of that time were so heavily invested in the public exclusion of *Haolam Haze* it might be useful to consider the larger phenomenon of social construction of deviance, in which people or forms of behavior are condemned as immoral in order to protect the collective. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda explain, the definition of an act or a person as deviants should always be understood within the social context

in which they occur. There is always some larger cultural background (fears of the effects of rapid modernization, latent resentment of a certain social sub-group etc.) that ignites this vilification, and it always answers some social need. Or as Goode and Ben-Yehuda put it: “the important point is, to the sociologist, the characteristic of deviance as defined not by the quality of the act but by the nature of the reaction that the act engenders or is likely to engender.”⁵³

Therefore, **the presentation of *Haolam Haze* as the ultimate “other” of Israeli journalism during the formative era was a construction sustained both by the weekly itself and by members of the Israeli journalistic mainstream, each for its own needs and motivations.** This section of the chapter tracks down the motivations for bestowing that transgressor status upon *Haolam Haze* by the mainstream journalistic community. During the 1950s and 1960s the Israeli journalistic scene offered several journalistic outsiders of various sorts - newspapers that served the Arab and the Jewish ultra-Orthodox communities, newspapers in foreign languages, and the Communist Party's daily. Still, only *Haolam Haze* was positioned so clearly as the "designated other" of the journalistic mainstream. There were several factors that made *Haolam Haze* impossible to ignore and required its framing as the publicly defined transgressor.

Political initiatives: first, it is important to remember that journalistic communities do not exist in a vacuum. Journalistic communities are influenced and shaped by surrounding entities, and in the specific case discussed here it is impossible to address the mainstream journalistic community of the formative era without linking it to the political establishment. As mentioned, Israeli politicians of the formative era, and particularly *Mapai*'s elite were among *Haolam Haze*'s fiercest opponents. **Political leaders and organizations constantly tried to restrain or even shut down the weekly through initiatives that had a significant influence on the process by which *Haolam Haze* was marked as the designated transgressor of Israeli journalism. The political attempts to combat *Haolam Haze* elicited the supporting**

or condemning responses of the professional community and thus provided an opportunity for the journalistic community to define its attitudes towards *Haolam Haze*. Furthermore, in some salient instances the politically-initiated debates over *Haolam Haze* enabled the journalistic community to define its own boundaries, standards of affiliation, and relations with the political establishment.

Such an opportunity to define the boundaries of the professional community occurred on January 1958, when *Habimah*, Israel's national theater, premiered *Zrok oto la-klavim* (Throw him to the dogs). The play, written by Yigal Mossinsohn and directed by Peter Frye told the story of an honest building contractor who wins a large government contract. Following that, he is pressured to cooperate with a corrupt supplier of building materials who in turn would pay him kickbacks. The contractor rejects the bribe and thus is confronted with the writer and editor of a sensationalist weekly who threaten him that they will publish a libelous story about his past. In one of the key moments in the play the contractor tries to calm his worried family members by telling them that should the weekly actually publish the article, he would sue. His son, an IDF paratrooper responds:

You make me laugh, daddy. What do you mean by saying that?... Some smart folks tried to sue, and what happened? More dirt and more mud.... You haven't been reading the newspapers lately. This country has been turned into one big stinking public trial. According to the newspapers, no one is plowing or sowing or doing anything anymore – instead, everything has turned into lies and deception... I will break all of his [the journalist] bones. We didn't die in Sinai [the 1956 war] so anyone who has a mouth and a pen could badmouth us."⁵⁴

This paragraph and several others that appeared in the screenplay made it apparent to which "sensationalist weekly" it was referring. It is not clear if Ben-Gurion or any other politician personally ordered the writing of the play, but it is important to note that Mossinsohn, the

playwright was the former press officer of the Israeli police, one of *Haolam Haze*'s major objectives of criticism. Moreover, *Habimah* received financial support from the state's budget, and the contractor was played by Aharon Meskin, one of Israel's leading actors and a former Knesset candidate of *Mapai*.⁵⁵ Ben-Gurion, who rarely attended the theater was guest of honor at the premiere, and alongside him sat several cabinet members, high ranking officials and the commander of the police. After the play ended, Ben-Gurion praised its quality and important message.⁵⁶

Israeli newspapers of the time, including *Haolam Haze* itself dedicated considerable attention to the play and its political context. Most theater critics were in agreement that "Throw him to the dogs" was a weak and superficial play, and that even its cast of high-caliber *Habimah* actors could not salvage it.⁵⁷ But when it came to a discussion of the play's message and its impact on the image of Israeli journalism the views were less uniform. Fundamentally, there were two views that resurfaced whenever the political establishment targeted *Haolam Haze*, directly or indirectly. Although the upholders of both denounced *Haolam Haze* and its journalistic practices they were spilt in their analysis of the ramifications that such attacks might have on the entire journalistic community. In many ways, the two views on this specific matter illuminated larger debates within the Israeli journalistic community of the 1950s:

First, there were those who viewed the play as an assault on Israeli journalism in its entirety. They stressed the fact that the play or at least one of its main characters supported violent attacks against journalists.⁵⁸ Moreover, it was argued that the play strategically contributed to a larger political plan to legislate a new "journalism law" that would handicap the work of all Israeli journalists.⁵⁹ Letting the political establishment hurt *Haolam Haze*, it was argued would eventually limit the freedom of all other Israeli journalists and newspapers. Or, as *Haboker's* columnist put it:

The playwright presents an impossible upside-down picture: with his moonstruck imagination he created the prototype of a journalist who does not exist, but is in charge of all the scandals. At the same time, he tries to convince the audience that all the reports [they hear] about misdeeds were born in the minds of greedy journalists. Moreover, the most positive characters [in the play] demand the enactment of laws that will restrain the freedom of the press, before they are forced to take the law into their own hands and break the journalists' bones, just because they dare to interfere with the "building of the country." Such kind of spiritual enslavement goes even beyond the standards of Soviet theater during Stalin's reign.⁶⁰

The second approach viewed such attacks on *Haolam Haze*h as a necessary means of cleansing Israeli journalism. Several writers argued that once the mainstream journalists chose to defend the weekly the political establishment and the public would view all Israeli newspapers as if they were no different from *Haolam Haze*h. Thus, limiting and isolating *Haolam Haze*h would actually improve the image of legitimate Israeli journalism and curb any further attempts to regulate its work. The main problem with "Throw him to the dogs," according to this perception was not its encouragement of violence against journalists or its depiction of Israeli journalists as opportunistic liars, but rather its failure to distinguish between types of Israeli journalists. Or, as Dr. Hayim Gamzu, *Ha'aretz*'s influential theater critic explained the play's main problem: "it does not stress the difference between journalists who tell the truth and journalists who lie."⁶¹ David Lazar of *Ma'ariv* complained about the absence of a "good journalist" in the play and asked:

Doesn't Mossinsohn know any journalists of that [honest] kind? Does he really need to stain the whole profession in order to prove that one newspaper is corrupt? This kind of generalization is as dangerous as the libels that Gahelot [the weekly's editor

character in the play] uses in order to "strike the government"... [The play] attacks yellow journalism but it does not mention the existence of another kind of journalism.⁶²

And *Al Hamishmar*'s columnist summed up the point:

In his latest play, Yigal Mossinsohn combats unruly journalism, but while doing so he contradicts his own goal: he threw **all of the newspapers to the dogs**, [including those] that are actually the best weapon against such substandard journalism.⁶³

Eventually, the accumulation of mainstream journalistic criticism against the play's focus on "one kind of journalism" achieved its goal: the director and the playwright decided to cut out of the play one scene and add a character of a "good journalist" that would confront the bad ones. "I was aiming at a certain type of journalism" Mossinsohn explained "but people got the impression I was talking about all [Israeli] journalism."⁶⁴ Following the additions to the play, it was explained that journalists would be invited to comment and approve the revised portrayal of Israeli journalism.⁶⁵

Finally, evidence of the influence of the political establishment on the way in which mainstream Israeli journalism defined itself in contrast to *Haolam Haze* could be found in the frequent journalistic use of the terms "certain weekly" and "certain journalism" during the debate over "Throw him to the dogs." One of Ben-Gurion's well-known means of demeaning his political opponents was to address them only by an indirect nickname. Thus, Menachem Begin became "The MK sitting to the right of MK Bader" and *Haolam Haze* was termed "that certain weekly."⁶⁶ In their coverage of the debate journalists from *Ma'ariv*, *Haboker*, *Ha'aretz*, *Davar*, *Hatzofeh*, *Herut*, *Al Hamishmar* and *Lamerchav* - both private and party affiliated newspapers, from all parts of the political spectrum - recited these derogatory terms, which enabled them to refrain from actually mentioning *Haolam Haze*'s name.

Fear of the transgressor's attractiveness: a second explanation for why it was necessary for mainstream Israeli journalists to construct *Haolam Haze*'s image as an ultimate professional "other" - or rather, why the mainstream was unable to ignore *Haolam Haze* - was the attractiveness of the alternative offered by *Haolam Haze* for journalists as well as audiences. During the formative era Israeli journalists negotiated their professional identity within their community and through their relations with outside institutions. *Haolam Haze* offered an extreme alternative that corresponded directly with the major dilemmas that troubled the journalistic community: it provided a hegemonic analysis of the relations between the Israeli press and the Israeli political system. Beyond that, *Haolam Haze* formulated a practical alternative to the common routines of Israeli journalism. Its focus on investigative reporting (instead of opinion pieces) and its innovative style addressed and violated the conventions of Israeli journalism of that era. **My claim is that because *Haolam Haze*'s alternative lured Israeli journalists of the formative era - or to be more precise, some of the journalists were lured by some parts of the weekly's proposed vision - there was a functional need to construct *Haolam Haze* as deviant in order to dismiss its alternative vision and clearly place it beyond the borders of the legitimate professional community.**

This argument cannot, of course be sustained only through a review of the formative era's public mainstream journalistic discourse regarding *Haolam Haze*. As presented earlier, the public journalistic discourse dealing with *Haolam Haze* was the main sphere in which the weekly's exclusion from the professional community was manifested and argued. Thus, evidence of *Haolam Haze*'s assumed attractiveness could mostly be found through complementary methods as well, such as an assessment of *Haolam Haze*'s readership, a review of the professional advancement of journalists who started their careers in *Haolam Haze*, interviews with veteran Israeli journalists, a tracking of the adoption of *Haolam Haze*'s practices and

language by mainstream journalists, an archival search for materials that might reveal a more complex picture of the relations between *Haolam Hazeḥ* and the journalistic mainstream.

Haolam Hazeḥ's readership: mainstream Israeli journalists viewed *Haolam Hazeḥ* as a viable threat due to the scope and nature of its readership. Sources that estimated *Haolam Hazeḥ's* readership came up with numbers during the formative era that varied from 13,000 issues per week in 1954⁶⁷ to 15,000-16,000 issues per week in 1957-1958⁶⁸ to 20,000 issues in 1965⁶⁹ and 25,000 in 1966.⁷⁰ These numbers positioned *Haolam Hazeḥ* as the second most popular weekly in Israel, following *Davar Hashavua*. But since many *Histadrut*-affiliated businesses and organizations subscribed all of their employees to *Davar Hashavua*, *Haolam Hazeḥ* actually might have been the most widely read (if not circulated) weekly in Israel of the formative era. *Haolam Hazeḥ's* circulation was also significant in comparison to the circulation of Israeli dailies: during the 1950s, Israeli newspapers did not readily reveal their circulation numbers, but a 1951 internal *Ma'ariv* memo written by Ezriel Carlebach reported the following daily average circulation numbers: *Ma'ariv*, 44,500; *Davar*, 29,100; *Ha'aretz*, 27,200; *Yedioth Aharonoth*, 25,300; *The Jerusalem Post*, 14,400.⁷¹ Even if these numbers increased considerably through the 1950s and 1960s with the rapid growth of the Hebrew reading population it still seems as though *Haolam Hazeḥ* could not be dismissed as a publication read only by the few.

Beyond *Haolam Hazeḥ's* circulation numbers extended the assumed traits of its readers. *Haolam Hazeḥ* published readership statistics showing that its readers were relatively younger and more educated than the average Israeli citizen.⁷² The readers usually lived in the well-to-do neighborhoods or suburbs of the big cities, and in general *Haolam Hazeḥ* was far less successful among *Mizrachi* and lower-class Israeli newspaper readers.⁷³ Critics of the weekly were aware of the growing popularity of *Haolam Hazeḥ* among young readers⁷⁴ and they were especially concerned by its popularity among young kibbutz members.⁷⁵ But *Haolam Hazeḥ*

was not only read by younger audiences. It was read or at least noticed by prominent members of Israel's elites: even if they despised the weekly, politicians and high ranking officials feared that they might become a target of its attacks. Furthermore, some of *Haolam Haze*'s stories were initiated by political insiders or high ranking officials who took advantage of *Haolam Haze*'s reputation in order to attack their political rivals.⁷⁶

The hiring of *Haolam Haze*'s staffers: *Haolam Haze*'s relatively small editorial staff produced a steady stream of young journalists who were hired by mainstream newspapers. A survey of the list of Israeli journalists that appeared in the 1958 yearbook of the Association of Tel Aviv Journalists shows that in the same year that *Haolam Haze* was harshly attacked by mainstream newspapers within the context of the debates over Eli Tavor's kidnapping and "Throw him to the dogs" 10 former staffers of the weekly were already working in Israel's main newspapers – *Ha'aretz*, *Ma'ariv*, *Yedioth Aharonoth* and even *Davar*. "Many great Israeli journalists got their professional schooling in *Haolam Haze* and then moved on to 'legitimate' newspapers" explained the late Hanah Zemer, *Davar*'s former editor (1970-1990). "There was a social and political echelon that thought that *Haolam Haze* was not legitimate. But everyone agreed that people who entered *Haolam Haze* with no experience left it as great professional journalists. Such people had no problem getting jobs in bigger newspapers."⁷⁷ This tendency grew stronger during the 1960s to the extent that in later years a considerable number of mainstream Israeli journalists were graduates of *Haolam Haze*.

At the same time, there is some evidence to suggest that the mainstream criticism against *Haolam Haze* was sometimes translated into a rejection of journalists who were associated with the weekly. For instance Shelomo Nakdimon, a prominent veteran journalist, recalls that in the late 1950s when he was working as a political reporter for the right-wing *Herut* he was offered a position in the larger daily, *Ma'ariv*.⁷⁸ Nakdimon prepared a trial article according to which he would be evaluated, and was informed that *Ma'ariv*'s editor was impressed by it. Soon after, he

was told by Shalom Rosenfeld of *Ma'ariv* that the daily's senior editorial staff had decided to retreat from the original job offer since Nakdimon's work was too often quoted in *Haolam Haze*, even though Nakdimon himself was not an employee of the weekly.⁷⁹ "I certainly did cooperate with *Haolam Haze*" admits Nakdimon. "I did so since I published great political stories in *Herut* that got no attention. So, whenever journalists from *Haolam Haze* contacted me I elaborated on those stories. I knew that *Haolam Haze* operated like an amplifier. The people in *Ma'ariv* and *Yedioth Aharonoth* hated it but read every word."⁸⁰

Adoption of *Haolam Haze*'s journalistic formats: another effect that *Haolam Haze* had on the professional community was the diffusion of components of the weekly's journalistic formula into mainstream Israeli journalism. Its influence was evident on several levels. First, there was the adoption of *Haolam Haze*'s language. *Haolam Haze* strived to create a journalistic style that was influenced by American (and to some extent, German) magazine journalism, but still anchored within Israeli reality.⁸¹ One way of creating such style was the invention and translation of words that did not yet exist in the Israeli journalistic vocabulary. And so, words such as *iltur* (improvisation), *yomon* (daily newspaper), *Hack* (abbreviation for *Knesset* member), *halalit* (spaceship), or *macazemer* (musical) that were invented by the weekly were gradually adopted by mainstream Israeli newspapers, and even by *Kol Israel*, Israel's state-owned radio station, known for its allegiance to formal, highbrow Hebrew.⁸² Similarly, regular *Haolam Haze*'s sections such as its brief predictions regarding events that were going to take place in the next week, its "people" column and more were duplicated in other newspapers.⁸³

Haolam Haze did not only influence mainstream journalism through the adoption of its format, but also through an adoption of its journalistic work practices. In some cases it seems as though mainstream journalists did not eagerly embrace the weekly's aggressive and questionable professional methods, but rather did so in order to keep up with the pace set by the weekly. Hence, in his memoir *Ma'ariv*'s veteran political correspondent Moshe Meizels recalls that he

was the staffer in charge on the daily connections with Moshe Dayan, which meant that Meizels used to call Dayan every morning and "sometimes even woke him up."⁸⁴ One week *Haolam Haze* published a story about Dayan's extramarital affair with a certain lady, claiming that through the course of the relationship Dayan revealed military secrets to his mistress. Shalom Rosenfeld, *Ma'ariv*'s editor at the time, asked Meizels to contact Dayan and get his reaction to *Haolam Haze*'s scandalous story. "I asked him [Rosenfeld] to relieve me from this assignment," writes Meizels, "since I feared it would damage the good relations I established with Dayan. Usually, Rosenfeld treated me with courtesy... but this time he insisted that I call Dayan. I did so with dire concerns but was surprised to find out that Dayan had no problem answering my questions. He did not deny *Haolam Haze*'s story, but argued that it included several inaccuracies that made it not sensational at all."

Finally, the most comprehensive attempts to adopt *Haolam Haze*'s formats and style occurred when new Israeli publications, mostly weeklies, imitated *Haolam Haze*'s most well-known traits and hire *Haolam Haze*'s staffers.⁸⁵ Perhaps the two most interesting publications of that sort were *Panim-el-panim* and *Rimon*. The weekly *Panim-el-panim* (Face to face), edited by Rabbi Shmuel Avidor Hakohen, appeared between 1954-1959 and featured an attempt to adopt some of *Haolam Haze*'s formats into a moderate religious context. For instance, typical *Panim-el-panim* issues included extensive photographic coverage of the wedding between the son and daughter of two prominent ultra-Orthodox Rabbis⁸⁶ and a dramatic description of the heated scientific-religious debate over the right of physicians to perform autopsies.⁸⁷

The second weekly was part of the political attempts to combat *Haolam Haze* with its own tools: *Rimon*, which first appeared in 1957 and was closed less than two years later was secretly financed by Israel's General Security Service.⁸⁸ What made *Rimon* so peculiar was the way in which it combined two contradicting components: on the one hand, it imitated *Haolam Haze*'s style and tone in a precise manner -- bombastic headlines, dramatic photographs

accompanied by elaborate and tendentious captions, long editorial articles justifying its stands and overreaching accusations against political and journalistic rivals. Moreover, even *Rimon*'s decisive textual tone reflected a policy of stylistic uniformity (including, of course the elimination of the writers' credits) *Haolam Haze*'s distinctive style. At the same time, *Rimon* dedicated considerable editorial space to head-on attacks against *Haolam Haze*, termed by *Rimon* "The venom weekly." Such articles dealt with *Haolam Haze*'s alleged affiliation with the Communist party,⁸⁹ Avnery's attempts to stop the production of "Throw him to the dogs,"⁹⁰ *Haolam Haze*'s questionable practices of gathering information⁹¹ and more.

Social proximity: finally, the functional and constructed nature of *Haolam Haze*'s positioning also supported its status as the ultimate transgressor of Israeli journalism during the formative era. My point here is that *Haolam Haze*'s otherness in terms of its journalistic and political agendas was balanced or rather complemented through the interpersonal relations that existed between its staffers and members of the journalistic, political and military establishments. The social proximity between *Haolam Haze*'s staffers and members of the journalistic mainstream was a determining factor in the dual positioning of the weekly inside and outside of the professional community. Despite or beyond the harsh rivalry, there existed strong biographical similarities. Although *Haolam Haze* staffers were considerably younger than many of the prominent Israeli journalists of the 1950s they shared many traits of the younger generation of journalists: most of them were born in pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine or immigrated at a young age from Europe lived in Tel Aviv. In most cases they became journalists immediately after they were discharged from the IDF or while they were studying in the university. This social profile was shared by the young urban staffers of *Haolam Haze* as well as the young staffers of mainstream newspapers, but of course did not fit the biographies of journalists who worked in other outsider newspapers such as the foreign language newspapers or the publications oriented towards the Jewish-religious and the Arab sections of Israeli society.⁹²

Beyond biographical similarities there was also a sense of shared professional experience: in parallel to *Haolam Haze*'s often tense relations with senior journalists and journalism's official institutions, there were also professional friendships forged between lower-ranking journalists of *Haolam Haze* and mainstream newspapers through shared routine coverage work.⁹³ "There was a small group of Jerusalem journalists, and it was only natural that I became a part of it. Our whole social lives revolved around other journalists and photographers," recalls the photographer David Rubinger who worked for *Haolam Haze* between 1951-1953. "Respected journalists from *Lamerchav* or *Davar* despised *Haolam Haze*'s, but I, personally never felt like an outcast [among other journalists]."⁹⁴

Haolam Haze's status as a functional in/outsider within Israeli journalism became evident whenever mainstream journalists utilized the weekly in order to transgress from the ideological and professional boundaries set by the community and by the political establishment without labeling themselves, publicly as transgressors. One salient example for such behavior occurred within the context of *Haolam Haze*'s relations with the military censor and the Editors' Committee. *Haolam Haze* was never a member of the Editors' Committee. Technically, its exclusion was due to the fact that *Haolam Haze* was a weekly rather than a daily like all other members of the committee. But beyond that, it is clear that other newspapers and the officials did not perceive *Haolam Haze* as a legitimate member of the journalistic establishment. Correspondingly, *Haolam Haze* insisted that it opposed the mere existence of such a self-censoring institution.

But this is only part of the story. In his autobiography, Avner Bar-On, who was Israel's military censor between the years 1952-1977,⁹⁵ explained that during Israel's first decades *Haolam Haze* posed the most significant challenge to the Editors' Committee agreement: the newspapers that were members of the committee were, of course, bounded by its decisions. Non-Hebrew Israeli newspapers that were not affiliated with the committee did not usually have

access to secret information, and *Kol Ha'am*, the Communist party's Hebrew-language daily, was never highly invested in newsgathering. In contrast, *Haolam Haze* had access to some government sources, and it was well-connected with mainstream Israeli journalists through close personal relations of Avnery and other staffers.

Bar-On wrote that in many cases after the Prime Minister, or other high ranking officials met with the editors it took less than 24 hours until *Haolam Haze* would submit to the censor leaked reports from the meeting. Since this information was not banned for publication by the censor, but rather by a voluntary agreement between the editors and the officials, the censor had to try to convince *Haolam Haze* to join this agreement de facto and not publish the information. In some cases *Haolam Haze* agreed to conceal the information, but in other cases its insistence on publishing such stories forced the censor to inform the other newspapers that they could go on and print it - despite the initial concealment agreement - since *Haolam Haze* was going to do so. Shalom Rosenfeld, the former editor of *Ma'ariv* adds: "there were instances in which the established or respectable newspapers decided among themselves that a specific topic is taboo, and 24 or 48 hours later it appeared in *Haolam Haze*. And so, we learned our lesson that it is impossible to conceal news unless it is information that is truly sensitive due to security reasons."⁹⁶

All of this is to say that **in the Editors Committee case *Haolam Haze* played a typical dual role that characterized its overall operation: the weekly forced other newspapers to reconsider their policies and undermined the tight relationship between mainstream newspapers and the political and military elites. At the same time, the simultaneous positioning of *Haolam Haze* within and outside the journalistic community enabled mainstream journalists to reconcile opposing tendencies: *Haolam Haze*'s behavior allowed them to maintain the impression that they were adhering to strict ideological directives (i.e. cooperating with security officials) while at the same time they followed their journalistic**

calling and published their stories either through *Haolam Haze* or because the weekly was going to publish them.

Beyond that, the fact that even though *Haolam Haze* was not obligated to conceal the information (like the members of the Editors' Committee) it was still willing to negotiate its concealment with the censor stresses, again the fact that *Haolam Haze* was very much part of the journalistic community, rather than an absolute outsider. Furthermore, there are researchers who argue that *Haolam Haze*'s constant challenging of the Editors' Committee actually evolved from its own covert wish to become part of it.⁹⁷ Within this context it is also important to note that the personal relations between Avnery and the censor were influenced by their shared military backgrounds: both were combat veterans of Israel's 1948 war of Independence, which meant that beyond all their disagreements they maintained an "informal and chummy" relationship.⁹⁸ "We were always in a state of negotiation, it was never a war," Avnery describes the relations between *Haolam Haze* and the military censorship. "We had good personal relations, and all and all, there were game rules that I followed. I never, openly broke the law. I found creative ways of getting around it."⁹⁹

The functionality of *Haolam Haze* as a channel through which other journalists could act upon their professional instincts while remaining loyal to the binding guidelines of the journalistic mainstream was also evident when mainstream journalist leaked to *Haolam Haze* stories that they could not publish, from various reasons in their newspapers. "It was a peculiar situation," explained Eli Tavor, the former chief of *Haolam Haze*'s editorial staff. "Many professional reporters were actually [de facto] staffers of *Haolam Haze* that worked without pay, just because of their journalistic obligation. They had a good story, they wanted it to get published but they could not publish it in their newspapers. So they gave it to *Haolam Haze*."¹⁰⁰ Hence for instance, *Yedioth Aharonoth* reporters forwarded to *Haolam Haze* negative information about Yosef Almogi, one of *Mapai*'s leaders at a time when Almogi was considered

untouchable in *Yedioth Aharonoth*.¹⁰¹ This kind of information leakage from mainstream newspapers to *Haolam Hazeḥ* became even more consistent once former *Haolam Hazeḥ* reporters moved on to bigger newspapers, such as in the case of *Ma'ariv*'s Uri Dan, a former *Haolam Hazeḥ* staffer: "there were some cases in which I was angered when stories I wrote were censored by *Ma'ariv*. So I gave them to my buddy, Eli Tavor."¹⁰² There were also instances in which other members of the journalistic community leaked information to *Haolam Hazeḥ* in order to combat mutual rivals. For example, *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s 1955 attack article attacking Ezriel Carlebach, *Ma'ariv*'s founder and first editor, was based, among other sources on information that was supplied by members of the Moses family, the publishers of *Yedioth Aharonoth*.¹⁰³

An additional aspect of the multifaceted positioning of *Haolam Hazeḥ* within and outside Israeli journalism during the formative era could be found in the relations between the weekly and the official institutions of the journalistic establishment. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Federation of Israeli Journalists was not eager to defend *Haolam Hazeḥ* once it was threatened and attacked. Correspondingly, *Haolam Hazeḥ* kept on stressing its contempt to the organization, or as Avnery puts it: "in the beginning of the 1950s the Journalists' Association was a despicable body... it was totally obedient to the establishment and to its parties, in the spirit of the pre-state 'recruited journalism' era... our staffers were not members of the association and it boycotted us. That was our policy till the end."¹⁰⁴ But there is some evidence that portrays a more complex picture: on February 5, 1952 Avnery wrote a letter to Moshe Ron, the chairperson of the Federation of Israeli Journalists asking the Tel Aviv branch of the federation to admit all the full-time staffers of *Haolam Hazeḥ*, including Shalom Cohen and Avnery himself as members.¹⁰⁵ Ron replied that all *Haolam Hazeḥ*'s journalists were welcomed to apply. The only exceptions were Avnery and Cohen who could not apply since they were not only the editors of the weekly, but also its owners. And due to its being a union-like association it did not admit any Israeli media owners. And indeed, the association membership records indicate that during the

1950s and 1960s a number of *Haolam Haze* staffers were members of the association.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, on several occasions *Haolam Haze* sought the assistance and backing of the association: on December 1953 Avnery demanded that the association condemn the nightly attacks against Cohen and himself, and it indeed published a brief denunciation.¹⁰⁷ Later, Avnery asked Ron, the chairman of the association to join a panel of referees who will elect the weekly's 1954 "Sabra of the year."¹⁰⁸

Finally, *Haolam Haze*'s personal relations with members of Israel's elites were not restricted to the journalistic sphere. Some political and military officials were on good terms or at least working terms with the weekly's journalists for various reasons. Some were avid readers, others were personal friends, and there were of course those who used *Haolam Haze* in order to promote their own agendas and smear their rivals. Thus, for example, one of Ben-Gurion's top aides leaked to Shalom Cohen the information about wealthy Israeli citizens and companies that avoided contributing to the national Defense Fund (*Keren Hamagen*), or donated minimal amounts of money.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, MK Shimshon Yunitzman of *Herut* transmitted weekly inside parliamentary information, Rabbi Shmuel Avidor Hakohen provided information about the politics of the religious parties and the rabbinical world, and Yisrael Ber, a high ranking IDF officer and a prominent military historian leaked information that was intended to damage Ben-Gurion's young protégés Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres.¹¹⁰ *Davar*'s Meir Barely stressed this point while trying to refute *Haolam Haze*'s self-presentation as an anti-establishment and oppressed newspaper: "In most cases, these parties of the 'old regime,' [and] all parts of the Israeli establishment do not persecute *Haolam Haze* - but rather, on the contrary feed it with information. The items that are leaked to Avnery's and Cohen's weekly are not intended to glorify their submitters, but rather to slur their rivals, who are also, of course members of the 'old regime.'"¹¹¹

Haolam Haze also maintained good relations with some high ranking IDF officers such as General Recavam Zeevy. Thus, when Uri Dan, a *Haolam Haze* staffer decided to leave the academic deferment program and join another army unit he was recommended by Avnery to General Tzvi Tzur, the IDF's head of personnel directorate as a writer for *Bamachaneh*, the IDF weekly. Tzur who was Avnery's regiment commander during the 1948 war adopted the recommendation. Moreover, when Dan held his first interview with Ariel Sharon, the commander of the IDF's paratroopers regiment, he was surprised to find that Sharon was acquainted with Dan's work in *Haolam Haze*.¹¹² All of this took place in a time when *Haolam Haze* was officially banned by the IDF.

Correspondingly, while *Haolam Haze* that was highly critical of Ben-Gurion's security policies it was far less critical when it came to the IDF itself, and especially to its combat units. This approach was reflected through many complimentary portrayals of IDF soldiers and commanders, a heightened interest in various aspects of military life, and ongoing attempt to gain legitimacy from the IDF. For instance, on November 1951 Avnery wrote a letter of complaint to the spokesman of the Ministry of Defense criticizing the unwillingness of IDF Chief of Staff Yigal Yadin's, to internalize any form of journalistic criticism.¹¹³ Later that month, Avnery requested a personal appointment with Yadin so he could present to the Chief of Staff his vision of what the IDF's future should be.¹¹⁴ Similarly, in 1955 *Haolam Haze* requested another Chief of staff, Lieutenant General Moshe Dayan to contribute to the weekly's special issue dedicated to the fifth anniversary of the new editorial staff.¹¹⁵ Dayan refused, politely.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was explore the reaction of the mainstream Israeli journalistic community of the 1950s and 1960s to the journalistic and political alternative posed by *Haolam Haze*. This investigation revealed a seemingly-contrasting pattern of relations. *Haolam Haze* was

constructed by others and by itself as a transgressor for whom the conventional rules and values did not apply. At the same time, *Haolam Haze* operated within the context of the professional and ideological limitations that bounded mainstream Israeli journalism of that era. This is to say, that *Haolam Haze*'s own professional vision was designated - or, rather was channeled - to address most of the blind spots that remained unexplored by mainstream Israeli journalism. The close social similarities between *Haolam Haze*'s staffers and some of the members of the mainstream journalistic community nourished this internal division of labor: *Haolam Haze* enabled the professional community to appease some of its internal tensions by providing it an agreed upon "other" on which the community could define its own professional ethos and project its own uncertainties. Simultaneously, that same "other" was socially close and informed enough to be utilized by members of the mainstream community as a means for ventilating their discomforts with the limitations of the prevailing Israeli journalistic model.

This is not, however, where the role of *Haolam Haze* within (and outside of) Israeli journalism ended. As discussed in other sections of this project, through the years the interpretive community of Israeli journalists continued to use *Haolam Haze* in various ways as a means of fortifying its professional authority. This trend became especially evident throughout the 1980s and even more pronounced after the weekly closed in 1993. Through the shift from the immediate "local mode" to the retrospective "durational mode," ¹¹⁶ *Haolam Haze* became a constituting memory of the current Israeli journalistic community.

¹ This paper is an abbreviated version of a chapter from my dissertation "Israeli Journalists as an Interpretive Community: The Case Study of *Haolam Hazeh*" written at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. Any use of this paper requires the permission of the author. The study was supported by a research grant awarded by the Hubert Burda Center for Innovative Communications at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

² Elon, A. 1954. The Weekly Meaty Portion (in Hebrew). 28 May, 5.

³ The two investors withdrew their investments in less than one year, and Avnery and Cohen remained the sole publishers of *Haolam Hazeh*.

⁴ The first two-covers issue appeared on December 30, 1959. The front cover dealt with the growing inner-struggles within *Mapai*, regarding the consequences of the Lavon affair (*Esek Habish*). The back cover dealt with a murder within the family. The large headline "A horrific murder in Haifa" was accompanied by large photographs of the dead couple (their three children were killed as well) and their burnt apartment.

⁵ Carlebach, E. 1955. Freedom of the Press (in Hebrew). *Ma'ariv*, 7 June, 4; Shamir, M. 1957. "One has to Know How to Cheat" (in Hebrew). *Al Hamishmar*, 4 June, 4.

⁶ Teveth, S. 1956. Lynch of Reputation with Coarse Sand (in Hebrew). *Ha'aretz*, 24 February, 2.

⁷ Grodzensky, S. 1967. A Carrion in the Market (in Hebrew). *Davar*, 1 February, 3-4.

⁸ "The formative era" (1950-1965) refers to the period between the establishment of the Avnery-Cohen led new *Haolam Hazeh* and the 1965 elections in which the *Haolam Hazeh* – *Koach Hadash* won its first *Knesset* seat. This dissertation defines the 1950-1965 era as the period in which the contrasting, yet dialogic relations between *Haolam Hazeh* and the Israeli journalistic mainstream were shaped.

⁹ White, D. M. 1950, v.27. The "Gate Keeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News. *Journalism Quarterly*, 383-396; Berkowitz, D. 1990, v.34. Refining the Gatekeeping Metaphor for Local Television News. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55-68; Bleske, G. L. 1991, v.12. Ms. Gates Takes Over: An Updated Version of a 1949 Case Study. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 88-97.

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¹¹ Tuchman, G. 1972, January. Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual. *American Journal of Sociology*, 660-679; Epstein, E. 1973. *News From Nowhere: Television and the News*. New York: Random House; Fishman, M. 1980. *Manufacturing the News*. Austin: University of Texas Press. Tuchman, G. 1973, v.79. Making News by Doing the Work: Routinizing the Unexpected. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110-131.

¹² Breed, W. 1955, v.33. Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis. *Social Forces*, 326-355.

¹³ Schudson, M. 1994, v.45, n.6. Inventing the Interview. *American Heritage*, 46-49; Schudson, M. 2001, v.2, n.2. The Objectivity norm in American Journalism. *Journalism*, 149-170.

¹⁴ Wolton, D. 1990, v.5, n.1. Political communication: The construction of a model. *European Journal of Communication*, 9-28.

¹⁵ Deutsch, K. W. 1966. Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T Press.

¹⁶ Hall S. 1978. Culture, the Media and the "Ideological Effect." In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch & J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Mass Communication and Society*. Beverly Hills, CA: sage.

¹⁷ Katz, E. 1987, v.51. Communication Research Since Lazarsfeld. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, S25-S45.

¹⁸ Carey, J. W. (1988). *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. London: Unwin Hyman.

¹⁹ Schudson, M. 1989, v.18. How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols. *Theory and society*, 153-180.

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