

**חדשות האגודה – ינואר 2020 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2020**

החודש יתקיימו מפגשי מועדון הקריאה כמפורט להלן. לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים/ות וקבלת הודעות על שינויים, יש להירשם מראש דרך הדוא"ל של המנחה, המופיע בקישור הרלוונטי לכל מפגש. רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום או בחברות באגודה, וכן אינה מותנית בהגעה למפגשים נוספים.

• **המועדון בגליל מערבי (כרמיאל-משנב)** יתקיים בחודש ינואר ביום שני, 27.1.20, בשעה 20:30, ויעסוק בטרילוגיית "חומרי האפלים" (המצפן הזהוב, הסכין המעודן, משקפת הענבר) מאת פיליפ פולמן. המועדון יתקיים בבית פרטי במשגב. כתובת תמסר לנרשמים ולנרשמים במייל של המנחה, **ד"ר קרן פייט**.

• **המועדון בירושלים** יתקיים ביום חמישי, 30.01 ויעסוק בספר "כנס העתידים" מאת סטניסלב לם. התכנסות ומינגלינג ב-20:00, שעת התחלת המועדון 20:30. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמים ולנרשמים למועדון, אצל גלי אחיטוב. מספר המקומות במועדון מוגבל לעשרים.

• **המועדון בתל אביב** יתקיים ב-23.01 ויעסוק בזוכה פרס גפן "ארטמיס" מאת אנדי וייר (הכורסא הוצאה לאור 2018). בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי בתל אביב. מנחה: איתי צור. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמים ולנרשמים למועדון, במייל של מרכזת המועדון, **דפנה קירש**.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד) לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או בדף האגודה בפייסבוק.

Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

This month's roundup:

- Part IX of the Zion's Fiction review: Short story #13
- We welcome a new reader: Yehezkel Laing – and the interesting story he contributed
- This month's installment of "Time-Space" has been put off for a later date

As usual, interesting tidbits from various websites

- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Reviewing a Review

Leybl, thanks for your review of Pesakh's "White Curtain."

The story actually ran in one of the late Gardner Dozios's *Year's Best* anthologies. I was particularly interested in your sense that you are not sure the story should have appeared in **Zion's Fiction (ZF)**. As you should have inferred from the book's intro, we sought to present Israeli SF from ANY Israeli, local or expat, religion or ethnic group included. At no time did we commit to publishing only SF/F with direct or even oblique connections to Jewish, Israeli, or Middle Eastern themes. I'd like to offer you this quote from a recent review of the book [LB: "**Zion's Fiction**"] and the more recently published "**Palestine+100: Stories from a Century after the Catastrophe**" (they used the term "**Nakba**" [LB: **instead of "Catastrophe"**]) in an earlier title and were savvy enough to understand that if they were to reach out to a wider English-speaking readership, Nakba would not fly). Anyway, here is the quote, which I think is as artful as it is accurate:

"...the goal of the anthology is to showcase Israeli sci-fi to the greater world, not to win the Nobel Prize for Peace."

(From : <http://www.tarb.co.il/an-enemy-from-another-dimension-israeli-and-palestinian-science-fiction-and-fantasy/>)

I think our greater, indeed greatest lapse, was that we did not include a single story that either had any significant Arab character or, indeed, addressed in any way (save, maybe, Gail Hareven's "The Slows"), the exigencies of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**^(*). Our intent was to showcase Israeli SF/F, not to present an ideological response to the Conflict. But as the author or the review correctly noted, it was more than passing strange that some of authors engaged with such conventionally

SF'nal tropes as alien invasions (however brilliantly done, IMHO), none thought it obligatory to engage with the aliens living a scant 12 miles up the road.

I suspect this reflected the Israeli public's exhaustion with the conflict as well as a profound desire to wrap itself in a bubble universe within which to explore and express its various individualistic interests and passions. Moreover, my sense is that after 100 years of conflict, Israelis believe (despite some profound changes within Palestinian society as a whole) that they know the Palestinians like they know their own reflections in the mirror (apologies to Rotem Baruchin, whose story "In The Mirror," is included in ZF).

I think an admonition of Israeli SF on this count is more than due on this account. I think we were especially amiss in not addressing this in our introduction. Indeed, from my continued scouring of the assorted volumes of *Hayo Yihiyeh*, I think we are going to encounter similar problems in a second volume. If any of your readers can recommend a high-quality story that we may have missed, we'd be grateful for a tipoff.

- Sheldon Teitelbaum, co-editor of *Zion's Fiction*

*** LB: I think it is more correct to call it the "Arab-Israeli conflict" (and not "Israeli-Palestinian conflict")**

LB: Thanks for this comment, Sheldon, and your insider's observations of the ZF anthology. As I wrote in my review, I liked Pesakh's "White Curtain". However, since the anthology is a unique collection with a very 'loaded' title, I would have expected "all" the stories to be a reflection of that title in some way – not just that the writer was born and or lived/s in Israel.

It would, as you say, be interesting to see how Israeli Arabs (and even Hasidim, Ethiopians, Shomronim, and other unique groups – if there are SF writers among them) express their own speculative/fantasy views of the world. That having been said, I would still expect some Israeli/Jewish [or even non-Jewish, but still Israeli] perspective, else why use the title "**Zion's Fiction**" and place an image that looks like Theodore Herzl on the front cover? (Wouldn't that be considered 'false advertising'?)

As for the 'conflict' as you call it, most Israelis (Jews and non-Jews) are usually too busy with family, health, work, social issues, etc. to be focused on the 'conflict' 24/7. Except for running to the bomb shelters every once in a while, their lives are not that much different from how Westerners live in Europe or America or elsewhere (I suspect, that many Westerners are more 'sensitive' in many ways to what is happening here in Israel, than Israelis – for better or for worse. In many ways, those living in Israel have (mostly or at least most of the time) become desensitized to many aspects of our lives, and of our neighbours' – the so-called 'aliens' – who we don't want them to be aliens, but rather full citizens in Israel, just as Israeli/Jews can be full citizens in France/England/Canada/etc.

I just (very quickly) read the review in the link above (highly recommended) and it was interesting to note, how some of the Arab stories (in "Palestine +100") had Israeli characters, and how the Israeli stories had almost no Arab characters. This probably reflects the fact that most Israelis have little or no contact with Arabs on a personal/social/work/business level, whereas – as a minority – many Arabs tend to have a more diverse contact with Israelis.

AS for SF stories that touch upon the 'conflict', this issue has just such a story – coincidentally – and focuses on a more universal aspect, that the 'conflict' is not about the Arab-Israel war(s) but a more universal issue of anti-Semitism that, unfortunately, some Jews in the Diaspora tend to downplay. Theodore Herzl (who is depicted on the cover of ZF) dreamt of a safe haven for Jews. The Land of Israel is that place. Hopefully, our neighbours will come to realize that there is no other place for the Jewish nation to reside, other than in their own homeland – the place we've returned to after almost 2000 years of being 'kicked around' (to put it mildly) by our immediate neighbours, as well as those in Europe.

Maybe via SF we can speculate and influence others, that this tiny planet can and should accommodate everyone, and we should work together to make it a better place for one and all – instead of the continual warring, and bickering, and ..., that is just ruinous for everyone. **Mankind can do better.**

Some fun from the Websites (10 Best... 50 Best ...):

Oldies but Goodies ...

Ten 1980's Sci-Fi Masterpieces You've Probably Never Seen

In an era of absolute classics, here are ten SF masterpieces from the 1980's that you probably haven't seen, but need to.

By Hilary Elizabeth November 2019

The 1980's was a pretty wild time for film making and for the world in general, and although some of the classic films from the 80's are now nearly 40 years old, many of them still haven't lost any of their luster. But it's hard to determine what exactly turns a film into a classic, and to be honest it doesn't seem like "classic" status is always determined by actual film quality.

But one thing is for damn sure. There are plenty of movies that are worthy of becoming classics that are unfortunately forgotten as time goes on. The 80's was a real high point when it comes to science fiction films, with unforgettable classics like *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop* coming out, in addition to the continuation of some of the most iconic sci-fi film franchises of all time, like *Star Wars* and the *Aliens* series. But instead of looking back at movies everyone knows and loves, let's take a look at some unfairly forgotten flicks you may have never seen.

Continue reading at:

<https://screenrant.com/unseen-80s-sci-fi-masterpieces/>

And sometimes, they even get it right

The Ten Best Sci-Fi Movies Of The Decade (According To Rotten Tomatoes)

We're taking a look at some Certified Fresh sci-fi films from the last decade based on Rotten Tomatoes' Tomatometer!

By Scoot Allan Nov 23, 2019

There is no doubt that the film critic website Rotten Tomatoes can be divisive at times, but at the very least, they offer users a huge sampling of reviews on any given movie, based on an aggregate score of approved critics and fan reviewers. So today we'll take a look at a few of the best sci-fi films from the last decade, as decided on by the adjusted Tomatometer rankings of Rotten Tomatoes.

It's important to note that while in most cases superhero films are considered science fiction, we will be ignoring them for the purposes of this list, as we will be taking a look at those films separately in our ongoing countdown of the best and worst films and TV series we saw over the last decade. It's also important to note that in some cases the adjusted score (which accounts for the audience reviews as well as critics) may place the film higher than the Tomatometer rankings.

Continue reading at:

<https://screenrant.com/best-sci-fi-movies-decade-rotten-tomatoes/>

The 50 Best Sci-Fi TV Shows Ever

These big and small series completely elevated the genre.

By Jordan Hoffman And Gregory Wakeman

Jul 12, 2019

Although recent sci-fi movies might be letting you down (the less said about *Dark Phoenix*, the better), there's still lots of great sci-fi to watch—albeit on a smaller screen. From the whiz-bang and cheesy to the far-out and prematurely cancelled, these are the 50 best sci-fi tv shows of all time.

Continue reading at (FOLLOW THE "GALLERY" SLIDE SHOW):

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/culture/movies/g156/the-50-greatest-sci-fi-tv-shows/>

LB:

BTW, #50 is the Jetson's cartoon; #49 is Space 1999 ... and then I don't recognize anything until #39 - Buck Rogers in the 25th Century; After this, I start recognizing some of them, but there are a lot I don't.

Ten Best Post-Apocalyptic Sci-Fi Films (According To IMDb)

Apocalyptic sci-fi films usually contain disease, death, warfare, and/or mass destruction but they also usually provide an element of hope (via IMDB).

By Stephen Lagioia Nov 23, 2019

When it comes to engaging sci-fi odysseys, post-apocalyptic settings can really color the scene with a distinctly rich and usually dismal aura. These foreign, decimated landscapes can help engross the viewer in a new, unfamiliar world, enhance the narrative, and provide some creative world-building. Despite the glum nature of the disease, death, warfare, and/or mass destruction that post-apocalyptic films usually contain, there's typically a glimmer of hope; of rising from the ashes and starting fresh.

Continue reading at:

<https://screenrant.com/best-greatest-post-apocalyptic-sci-fi-films-movies-according-to-imdb-movie-database/>

If at first you don't succeed... Israel's private space 'agency' is going for it once again

SpaceIL reveals new moon mission set for 2022, with Mars attempt in works

SpaceIL is working on ideas to get to Mars as well, says co-founder Kfir Damari.

By Batya Jerenberg, (World Israel News) Nov 25, 2019

The NGO that sent the world's first private spacecraft to the moon in April, only to see it crash at the last moment [on the Moon], is going to send another one by 2022, *Sputnik News* reported Sunday.

SpaceIL cofounder Kfir Damari told the Russian site that the second attempt would cost even less than the \$100 million shoe-string budget for developing its original Beresheet, or Genesis, lander.

"The second attempt will take us about three years and will be significantly cheaper than the first project – costing roughly \$80 million," said Damari. "Firstly, because we already have the experience, the know-how and the design, and secondly because we learned from past mistakes." The technical failures that led to the crash were already identified and investigated in the weeks that followed the crash landing on the lunar surface.

Damari's announcement is perhaps surprising because SpaceIL said in June that it would "search for another significant challenge" rather than simply repeat a similar journey, which "does not set the bar required of groundbreaking missions." However, the successful entrepreneur revealed that the startup has not broken its word, saying that no less than a Mars exploration mission was in the early planning stages.

Such a target would put the tiny Israeli NGO in the rarified company of the world's superpowers – the United States, Russia and China. But SpaceIL's founders and financial backers wanted to do more than reach outer space. Its stated goals include inspiring children all over the world to love science and reach for the stars, figuratively if not literally.

Continue reading at:

<https://worldisraelnews.com/spaceil-reveals-new-moon-mission-set-for-2022-with-mars-attempt-in-works/>

LB: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a new reader – Yehezkel Laing – and to thank him for the following contribution:

Jews in Space By Yehezkel Laing

I am not the type of person who seeks publicity for myself and I wouldn't even be writing this if it could be avoided. But since circumstances leave me no choice, I have decided to break my silence and reveal my true role in the events of the past two decades. While many of these facts are known to the general public, their order and cause are often obscure or confused. So please bear with me as I recount the events in their proper order, as I remember them.

I will start all the way back in 1948 – three years after the destruction of European Jewry, the State of Israel was formed – within two years Sephardic Jewry having been expelled from all the Arab lands fled to the newborn state and joined their Ashkenazy brethren.

Jump ahead 72 years...

In January 2020 the Iranians announced they had decided for "defensive purposes" to build a nuclear arsenal. The US responded that it was "shocked" by this development and

quickly instituted "robust" new sanctions, but said it would not instigate any hostilities.

Following this announcement, the final Israeli government instituted "The Month of Defense" – wherein all citizens were told to prepare for war with Iran. Riots broke out against Jews in Europe and even in North America. Two weeks after the Israeli declaration – the US announced it would not support any Israeli "aggression" against Iran saying it feared this would lead to nuclear war in the region.

It was at this point I went to the Prime Minister. For many years I had been toying with the idea of a lunar colony. My background in environmental physics gave me the perfect training for this experiment. It's true that my Noble Prize in physics was won for discoveries in Isotopic Negativity, what many consider an unrelated field.

However, any post-doctoral physics student can tell you that the underlying principles of the two disciplines are quite the same. In other words, the original idea was mine and not the Prime Minister's, but for political reasons it was believed it had a better chance of success if he would propose it and not I.

In February 2021, I was appointed Director of the Jewish Lunar Colony Project. By the way, the space elevator was not my idea but rather that of Yakob Farche, a Czech engineer of Jewish extraction, who approached me shortly after the Prime Minister publicly designated me with the task of designing the plan for the colony.

In July 2022 the UN passed a resolution declaring that "for the Jews' own safety" it has been decided to evacuate them to the moon where they would be granted rights to colonize, with the understanding that the world's lien to the moon would "not be harmed or diminished". The same resolution removed all Jewish citizenship rights on Earth.

Of course, the far right "Earth Homeland Party" led by Hezy Ben Arroche fought the plan arguing that Jews had a right to live on Earth just like all other human beings. The Prime Minister, however, eloquently explained that the Jewish people "had to be practical and not just ideological". While no referendum was formally held on the matter – rigorous polling showed a consistent majority of Jews in favor of the project.

The UN said it would only back the plan if World Jewry itself would fund the move. Since Jews could no longer legally live on Earth this was accomplished much more easily than was originally imagined. One

trillion dollars were raised and the plan was set in motion.

After all the Jews completed evacuation of the Land of Israel in 2025 – the UN passed a resolution formally recognizing the Arab State of Palestine. Unfortunately for the UN, the Palestinians themselves rejected the move. They insisted that the Jews had "ravaged the land of all its natural resources" and that without massive funding, the new state would collapse. A \$500 billion world investment plan was quickly instituted to prop up the foundling state – but the subsequent civil war over control of the funds destroyed most of the population, and with no prospects for self-support, the remaining survivors immigrated.

With the collapse of the State of Palestine, Iran declared its rights to the region claiming that Palestine had always been "a natural extension of Persian autonomy". The Europeans said this was preposterous and noted that the former State of Israel had once held observer status in the EU and that the land was actually closer to Europe than Iran.

What seemed to be a squabble over a small piece of property quickly escalated into hostilities, resulting in the First Nuclear War. While this was limited in scope and resulted in the loss of only 4 million lives, the lessons of its destructiveness were unfortunately not learned and by the Third Nuclear War most of the planet's populace had been wiped out and most of the Earth is now uninhabitable.

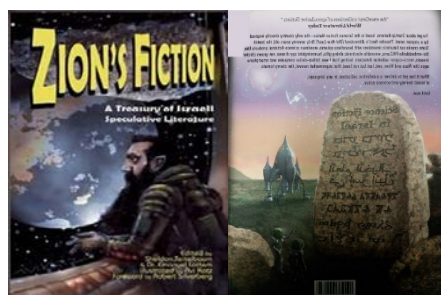
During this time the Moon Colony flourished. The first dome held up remarkably well and within two years it was decided to expand the dome and institute the lunar landscaping project. Eight years ago I was approached by a young astro-physicist by the name of Aaron Belzberg originally from Bnei Brak.

He suggested an incredible idea whereby using a process of reverse ionization of the colony's oxygen we could create an artificial atmosphere that would remove the need for the dome and make the moon inhabitable. That is how today we have a living moon with 500 million trees, ten lakes and 15 million inhabitants.

All this I recount in order to properly put into context the latest "development". As most of you have no doubt heard by now, yesterday the UN assembly unanimously passed a resolution accusing the Jews of having "Stolen the Moon". The resolution states that if we do not relinquish full rights, the world community will be left with no choice but to attack.

While there are several influential Jewish politicians and scientists who claim we can colonize Jupiter – I do not believe this is feasible at this time. Even if we were successful, where would it end? Would we be forced to colonize another solar system, another galaxy, another universe? If we do not make a stand here, where will we ever make a stand? Don't the Jews deserve a place to live just like everyone else?

"Zion's Fiction" ed. Teitelbaum & Lottem - Reviewed by Leybl Botwinik (Coming to you, from the world's prime SF nation)



Story #13 – A Man's Dream by Yael Furman

In this enjoyable story, Yair has a teleportation 'quirk': When he dreams of someone, that person pops up in bed with him – and naked – literally wrenched out of that person's whereabouts and transported to immediately next to him. Imagine the consequences.

In the opening few lines, we find that Galia (the person Yair dreamt about) was literally sucked out of her car while she was driving, and the car just kept on going, driverless.

Yair is known as a 'Dreamer' – and apparently, there are more like him in Israel (the world?). In most cases, this is a one-time occurrence: A Dreamer would dream of someone he met, the person would be teleported into bed with him, and – notwithstanding the shock and embarrassment – the Dreamer would then forget that person, and it would never happen again – to that person. Unfortunately, Yair keeps dreaming of the same young woman. Yair is married to Rina. Both she and Galia are suffering. Rina loves her husband, and so puts up with it. In some ways, she befriends Galia whose life is disrupted every time Yair dreams of her – but there is nothing much anyone can do. The doctors and psychiatrists have tried... Is there hope for a solution?

Yael Furman touches on a very interesting ability: teleportation based on a semi-conscious 'whim'. In fact, it's not clear in this story if there are also women Dreamers, or if there are men who dream of other men, or animals, or objects – would those also be teleported? Is there a limit as to the number of people (i.e. dreaming of, say, a dance group of 20 women)? Could this be manipulated for Good: have someone dream of a lost person or wanted fugitive? Could it be used in an evil way to kidnap people or help criminals escape incarceration? – As I said, very interesting ...

The story takes place in Israel, with some mention about Israeli place names, stereotypes, and idiosyncrasies.

MORE ZION'S FICTION QUICK STORY REVIEWS – NEXT TIME !

For more on the book, see the official website at: <http://www.zionsfiction.com/>

Also: https://www.amazon.com/Zions-Fiction-Treasury-Speculative-Literature/dp/1942134525/ref=sr_1_1

Feel free to send comments / reviews of related books & movies (or tell us about your own experiences with time-travel or alternate realities – Déjà vu is also fun to read about...).

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!

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