





12-19.5.22

כסטיבל על חלל

הצטרפו לאירועי "מיורי לבראשית" ברחבי הארץ.
מגוון פעילויות חווייתיות לכל המשפחה!



לפרטים space.gov.il

Yuri Gagarin Night 12-19 May

סוכנות החלל הישראלית במשרד החדשנות, המדע והטכנולוגיה, עמותת Spacell מזמינות את הציבור הרחב להשתתף באירועי "כסטיבל על-חלל", המתקיים בשיתוף רשות הטבע והגנים בין ה-12 ל-19 במאי 2022, ברחבי הארץ. מרבית הפעילויות בחינם, בהרשמה מראש.

האירועים יתקיימו במקומות ברחבי הארץ, בהם מוזיאוני מדע, מרכזי מדעים וחלל, מצפי כוכבים, גנים לאומיים וחניוני לילה נבחרים של רשות הטבע והגנים. שלל הפעלות וחוויות סביב הכוכבים, המדע ובחיק הטבע. בין האירועים: הפעלות במוזיאוני מדע וחלל, תצפיות כוכבים והפעלות חלל חווייתיות בחיק הטבע בהם נוכל להכיר מקרוב את פריצות הדרך המדהימות שנעשו ונעשות גם היום בתחום החלל - מהאדם הראשון שיצא מגבולות כדור הארץ דרך החללית הישראלית הראשונה שהגיעה לירח ועד האישה הראשונה שתצעד יום אחד על מאדים. הפעילויות יכללו שלל תצפיות שמיים בעזרת טלסקופים, יצירת מודלים חווייתיים של כוכבי השמיים, הרצאות על חללית בראשית, בניית דגמי חללית בראשית ועוד. כל זאת באופן חווייתי ומיוחד בחשכת הליל תחת שמיים זרועי כוכבים.

חדשות האגודה – מאי 2022 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

25 Years Young: Special Society Celebratory Evening 26th of May

ב-26 במאי בשעה 18:00 נחגוג באיחור קל 25 שנים לאגודה בערב עיון שיוקדש ליהודים במדע הבדיוני בעבר, בהווה ובעתיד. נגלה כיצד עיצבו היהודים את הספרות, הטלוויזיה והקומיקס בז'אנר, נלמד פרק בהלכות חלל יהודיות, נשמע מה השתנה בחזית הסיפור המד"בי המקומי ב-13 השנים האחרונות ונגלה אילו תוכניות לעתיד יש לקבוצת חובבים עבור העיר תל אביב - העיר היחידה הקרויה על שם ספר מדע בדיוני.

האירוע יתקיים בבית ציוני אמריקה בתל אביב בשעה 18:00



תל אביב: מועדון חודש מאי התל אביבי יתקיים ביום רביעי, 19/5 ב-19:30. המועדון יעסוק בספר "מוזת הסיוטים" מאת לייני טיילור. הספר הוא המשכו של "החולם" ומומלץ לקרוא אותו קודם. מנחה: תומר ארמניק. המועדון יתקיים באופן היברידי, בדירה באיזור רמת אביב וכן בזום. לקבלת המיקום יש להרשם במייל קישור לזום ותפרסם סמוך לאירוע בדף האירוע בפייסבוק.

ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים של המועדון הקריאה ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק: [מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה](https://www.facebook.com/irishsociety), או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - [גלי אחיטוב](mailto:glia@sf-f.org.il), ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטסאפ של המועדון.

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>



כנס בנין 2022
מזרח
16.6.2022 * חופה

כנס בנין

מהלבנט ועד האוריאנט, המזרח היווה מקור השראה כמו גם כח משיכה להרפתקנים – כאלה שיצאו אליו ברגל, בספינה או באוויר, כמו גם כאלו שהגיעו אליו רק על כנפי הדמיון. הצטרפו אלינו למסע אל המזרח! השנה ייערך הכנס ב-16 ביוני בתיאטרון "הסטודיו" בשדרות הנשיא 142, מרכז הכרמל, חופה, בשעות הערב.

לפרטים נוספים: [דף הפייסבוק](https://www.facebook.com/knessetbenin) ואתר הכנס.

This month's roundup:

- Yiddish-related SF material dedicated to my dear departed father, David Botwinik (ע"ה – o'h): Yoel Matveyev: Review of "Faktazye" - Velvl Chernin's book of Yiddish SF&F short stories
- In lieu of a "More ZF" Book review: a 1990 article by Sheldon Teitelbaum about SF in Israel + some history

Our usual, interesting tidbits from the Web. – Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

More Yiddish-related SF Material

Dedicated to my father's memory – David Botwinik, composer, but also far-sighted lover of Yiddish.

Another article by Yoel Matveyev, a Yiddish journalist and intellectual – and a fellow Yiddish SF writer.

<p style="text-align: center;">New Yiddish Sci-Fi by Poet and Short Story Writer Velvl Chernin</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By Yoel Matveyev</p>	 <p style="font-size: small;">Rosa Strokova's artwork is found throughout the book</p> <p style="background-color: yellow; font-size: x-small;">The following article was originally published in the online NY Yiddish Forverts, December 27, 2021</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">נייע יידישע פֿאַקטאַזיע פֿונעם פֿאַעט און דערציילער וועלוול טשערנין יואל פֿון מאַטוועיעוו</p>
<p><i>The author transforms Simon the magician [Simon Magus], an important figure in early Christianity, into a Yiddish-speaking Genie/Djinn.</i></p>	<p>דער מחבר פֿאַרוואַנדלט שמעון דעם מכשף, אַ וויכטיקע פֿיגור אינעם פֿרייקן קריסטנטום, אין אַ ייִדיש־רעדנדיקן דזשיני.</p>	
<p>The Yiddish poet and writer Velvl Chernin has recently published a collection of fantastic short stories entitled "Yidish Faktazye" (Yiddish Science Fiction). This book is published in Sweden, by Nikolai Olniansky, accompanied by beautiful illustrations by Rosa Strokova. This is an important event in Yiddish literature: although many of Science Fiction's most famous works have been written by Jews, little has been written in the genre in Yiddish.</p>	<p>דער ייִדישער פֿאַעט און שרײַבער וועלוול טשערנין האָט לעצטנס אַרויסגעגעבן אַ זאַמלונג פֿאַנטאַסטישע דערציילונגען מיטן נאָמען „ייִדישע פֿאַקטאַזיעס.“ דאָס בוך איז אַרויס אין שוועדן, דורכן פֿאַרלאַג פֿון ניקאָליי אָלניאַנסקי, באַגלייט מיט פֿרעכטיקע אילוסטראַציעס פֿון ראָזאַ סטראַקאָוואַ. סײַז אַ וויכטיק געשעעניש אין דער ייִדישער ליטעראַטור: הגם אַ סך פֿון די באַרימטסטע ווערק פֿון פֿאַקטאַזיע האַבן אנגעשריבן ייִדן, האָט מען ווייניק געשריבן אין דעם זשאַנער אויף ייִדיש.</p>	
<p>The author states that from an early age he was a lover of the Scientific Fantastic [Science Fiction] or, according to Uriel Weinreich's neologism, "faktazye" [an amalgam of the Yiddish words for FACT (fakt) and FANTASY (fantazye)].</p> <p>I've also been a fan of the Fantastic since I was a child, which is why I think I'm a bit of an expert in this field and may express my opinion: Chernin's work is quite surprising and Jewish, but belongs rather to the genre of 'softer', Scientific-like or [even] unscientific Fantastic – not to the "hard", really scientifically sound, style of Isaac Asimov or of the American movie series "Babylon 5" [link to Yoel's 2015 article].</p>	<p>דער מחבר גיט איבער, אַז פֿון דער יוגנט אָן איז ער געווען אַ ליבהאַבער פֿון דער וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער פֿאַנטאַסטיק אָדער, לויט אוריאל וויינרײַכס נעאַלאָגזים, פֿאַקטאַזיע.</p> <p>איך בין אויך פֿון קינדווייז אָן אַ ליבהאַבער פֿון פֿאַנטאַסטיק, דערפֿאַר מײן איך, אַז אין דעם געביט בין איך אַ שטיקל מומחה און מעג אויסדריקן מײן דעה: טשערנינס ווערק איז גאַנץ חידושדיק און ייִדישלעך, נאָר געהערט גיכער צו דעם זשאַנער פֿון „ווייכער“, כּמוֹ וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער אָדער ניט־וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער פֿאַנטאַסטיק – נישט צום „האַרטן“, טאַקע וויסנשאַפֿטלעך געשטימטן נוסח פֿון אייזיק אַזימאָוו צי דעם אַמעריקאַנער קינאַ־סעריאַל „בבל 5“.</p>	
<p>This is actually not a deficiency. Many famous fantastic works are based on mythological subjects and folk tales. The book actually belongs to the genre of "faktazye" – imaginings based on facts. In Chernin's stories, real facts are deeply intertwined with imagination and poetry.</p>	<p>דאָס איז בעצם נישט קיין חסרון. אַ סך באַרימטע פֿאַנטאַסטישע ווערק זענען געבויט אויפֿן סמך פֿון מיטאַלאָגישע סוזשעטן און פֿאַלק־מעשיות. צום זשאַנער פֿון „פֿאַקטאַזיע“ – אויסטראַכטענישן אויפֿן סמך פֿון פֿאַקטן – געהערט דאָס בוך דווקא יאָ. אין טשערנינס דערציילונגען ווערן רעאַלע פֿאַקטן טיף צונויפֿגעפֿלאַכטן מיט דמיונות און פֿאַעזיע.</p>	

<p>Most of all, I enjoyed the story "A Djinn, Called Shimen". Ancient, medieval, and contemporary Jewish history is masterfully blended with unique interpretations of the Christian and Muslim traditions.</p> <p>In the New Testament and the early Christian tradition, a certain magician named Simon (Greek/Latin: <i>Simon Magus</i>) is mentioned. Chernin says that when he was – as recounted in the story – an IDF soldier, he once entered an old cave and thought that there was a crazy "decrepit" pious Jew hiding there – in the Israeli slang a "shabavnik".</p> <p>It turned out, however, that the strange cave dweller was the magician Shimen, who became a Djinn – a kind of demon of Islamic legends. For some reason he speaks a mixture of his mother tongue, Aramaic, and an archaic dialect of Yiddish.</p> <p>The story also weaves in interesting details about the Samaritans – the ancient people or Jewish sect, which since ancient times has practiced its own religion, similar to Judaism.</p>	<p>צום מערסטן איז מיר געפֿעלן געוואָרן די מעשה „א דזשין, וואָס הייסט שמעון“. די אוראלטע, מיטל-עלטערלעכע און היינטיקע ייִדישע געשיכטע ווערט מייסטערליך אויסגעמישט מיט אייגנארטיקע אָפּטייטשן פֿון דער קריסטלעכער און מוסולמענישער טראַדיציע.</p> <p>אינעם ברית-חדשה (דעם „נייעם טעסטאַמענט“) און דער פֿרייקער קריסטלעכער מסורה ווערט דערמאָנט אַ געוויסער מכשף מיטן נאָמען שמעון (אויף גריכיש סימאָן מאָגוס). טשערנין דערציילט, אַז ווען ער איז געווען, לויט דער מעשה, אַ סאַלדאַט פֿון צה"ל, האָט ער אַמאָל אַרײַנגעדונגען אין אַן אַלטער הייל און געטראַכט, אַז דאָרט באַהאַלט זיך אַ צעדרייטער „אַפּגעפֿאַרענער“ פֿרומער ייד – אינעם ישראליקן סלענג אַ „שאַבאַוויניק“.</p> <p>האָט זיך אָבער אַרויסגעוויזן, אַז דער מאָדנער היילמענטש איז יענער שמעון דער מכשף, וועלכער איז געוואָרן אַ דזשין – אַ מין שד פֿון איסלאַמישע לעגענדעס. צוליב אַ געוויסער סיבה רעדט ער אויף אַ געמיש פֿון זײַן מאַמע-לשון, אַראַמיש, און אַ פֿאַרצײטישן דיאַלעקט פֿון ייִדיש.</p> <p>אינעם סיפּור-המעשה ווערן אויך אַרײַנגעפֿלאַכטן אינטערעסאַנטע פרטים וועגן די <u>שומרונים</u> – דאָס אוראלטע פֿאַלק אָדער ייִדישע סעקטע, וואָס פֿון קדמונים אָן פֿאַלגט אַן אייגענע רעליגיע ענלעך צו ייִדישקייט.</p>
<p>I was almost certain that the story 'Six Monologues' was influenced by the American Fantasy writer, Philip Dick, who seriously believed that our reality was not what the audience thought, and constantly wrote about strange different lifestyles, about how to accept reality.</p> <p>In Chernin's monologue, there is talk about a world in which the inhabitants think that the earth is a scroll — a kind of living Torah scroll.</p>	<p>איך בין געווען כמעט זיכער, אַז אין דער מעשה „זעקס מאָנאָלאָגן“ שפּירט זיך אַ השפּעה פֿונעם אַמעריקאַנער פֿאַנטאַסט, <u>פֿיליפּ דיק</u>, וועלכער האָט ערנסט געגלייבט, אַז אונדזער רעאַליטעט איז נישט דאָס, וואָס דער עולם מיינט, און כּסדר געשריבן וועגן אויסטערליש אַנדערע שטייגערס, ווי אַזוי מע קאָן אויפֿנעמען די ווירקלעכקייט.</p> <p>אין טשערנינס מאָנאָלאָגן גייט אַ רייד וועגן אַ וועלט, וווּ די תּושבֿים טראַכטן, אַז די ערד שטעלט מיט זיך פֿאַר אַ מגילה – אַ מין לעבעדיקע ספֿר-תּורה.</p>
<p>In an interview with the Yiddish <i>Forverts</i> publication, when Chernin was asked who his favorite fantasy writers were, he did not mention Dick, but did mention Polish writer Stanislaw Lem (who was, incidentally, a Jew). Lem wrote extensively about virtual reality; In his collection "Cyberade", the world is depicted as a series of computer programs, written on magnetic tapes.</p> <p>Whether or not Chernin's narrative is relevant to this book, his story has a distinctly Jewish flavor. It is influenced by Kabbalah, translated in an original artistic manner.</p>	<p>בעת אַן אינטערוויו מיטן פֿאַרווערטס, אַז מע האָט טשערנינען געפֿרעגט ווער זענען זײַנע באַליבטסטע פֿאַנטאַסטן, האָט ער דווקא נישט דערמאָנט דיק אָבער יאָ דערמאָנט דעם פּוילישן שרײַבער <u>סטאַניסלאָו לעם</u> וואָס איז, אַגבֿ, געווען אַ ייד). לעם האָט אַ סך געשריבן וועגן דער ווירטועלער רעאַליטעט; אין זײַן זאַמלונג „<u>קײַבעריאַדע</u>“ ווערט די וועלט געשילדערט ווי אַ סעריע קאָמפּיוטער-פּראָגראַמען, אַנגעשריבן אויף מאַגנעטישע טאַשמעס.</p> <p>צי טשערנינס דערציילונג האָט אַ שײַכות צו אַט-דעם בוך, צי נישט, האָט זײַן מעשה אַ בולטן ייִדישן טעם. עס שפּירט זיך אַ השפּעה פֿון קבלה, אָפּגעטייטשט אויף אַן אַריגינעלן קינסטלערישן אופֿן.</p>
<p>Chernin emphasizes in the introduction, that his stories are connected with the <i>Bible</i>, <i>Mishnayos</i>, and <i>Gemara</i> [holy books of laws]. It is true, but he also deals with such issues as a serious delving into the history of Czarist Russia and of the Ottoman Empire.</p>	<p>טשערנין באַטאָנט אין דער הקדמה, אַז זײַנע מעשיות זענען פֿאַרבונדן מיטן תּנ"ך, משניות און גמרא. ס'איז טאַקע אַזוי, אָבער ער פֿאַרנעמט זיך אויך מיט אַזעלכע ענינים, ווי ערנסטע גריבלענישן אין דער געשיכטע פֿונעם צאַרישן רוסלאַנד און דער אַטאָמאַנישער אימפּעריע</p>
<p>Of course, like most fantasies, Chernin does not forget about outer space. In his "A Chapter of the</p>	<p>אָוודאי, ווי ס'רובֿ פֿאַנטאַסטן, פֿאַרגעסט נישט טשערנין וועגן קאָסמאָס. אין זײַן „פרק מסעות בנימין החמישי“</p>

<p><i>Voyages of Benjamin the Fifth</i>", Yiddishists build a Jewish "Gaeltacht" (as the Irish-speaking regions are called in Ireland) on the planet Mercury, in a crater bearing the name of Sholem Aleichem. The Jewish Gaeltacht spreads throughout the solar system. For example, on the asteroid Ceres there is a museum of the Jewish poet Shimon Frug.</p>	<p>בויען יידישיסטן א יידישן געלטאכט (אזוי הייסן אין אירלאנד די געגנטן, ווו מע רעדט אויף אירלענדיש) אויפן פלאנעט מערקורי, אין א קראטער, וואס טראגט שלום-עליכמס נאמען. דער יידישער געלטאכט פארשפרייט זיך איבער דער זונסיסטעם. למשל, אויפן אסטעראיד צערעס איז פאראן א מוזיי פונעם יידישן פאעט שמעון פרוג</p>
<p>As is well known, Jews bless the moon every month. But what do you do when you really live on the moon? According to Chernin, there are differences of opinion. Some Jewish lunar colonists have adopted the custom of saying the blessing "Kiddush-Hoorets" [blessing planet Earth] because, of course, they see our Earth in the sky.</p>	<p>ווי ס'איז גוט באקאנט בענטשן יידן יעדן חודש די לבנה. וואס טוט מען אבער, ווען מע לעבט טאקע אויף דער לבנה? לויט טשערנינען, זענען פאראן וועגן דעם חילוקי-דעות. בני א טייל יידישע לבנה-קאלאניסטן איז אנגענומען דער מינהג צו זאגן די ברכה, "קידוש-הארץ", ווייל זיי זעען דאך אונדזער ערד אינעם הימל</p>
<p>What do you do if time is twisted, and someone's bride can be revealed to be his own mother or grandmother from another version of History? If there is only a doubt, can one marry such a woman? Such a question is considered by the characters in another story, who, as in Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five", are stuck in a "time-hole".</p>	<p>וואס טוט מען, אויב די צייט ווערט פארפלאכטן און עמעצנס פלה קאן זיך ארויסווייזן זיין אייגענע מאמע אדער באבע פון אן אנדער ווערסיע פון דער געשיכטע? אויב ס'איז נאך א חשש, צי מעג מען מיט אזא פרוי חתונה האבן? אזא קשיא באטראכטן די פערסאנאזשן פון אן אנדער מעשה, וואס זענען, ווי אין קורט וואנעגוטס, " שחיטה-הויז פינף", "געבליבן שטעקן אין עפעס א, ציט-לאב"</p>
<p>A couple of stories in the collection are not exactly fantasy but read well in the context of fantasy. For example, the author thinks of David Hofstein's tragic fate [one of the intellectuals arrested and then executed under Stalin's orders] and wakes up in a Soviet prison. Does he himself become Hofstein, as in the story, or is it just a dream? Read and decide for yourself. To order this book, click here.</p>	<p>א פאך דערציילונגען אין דער זאמלונג זענען לאוודווקא פאנטאסטישע, אבער ליינען זיך גוט אינעם פאנטאסטישן קאנטעקסט. למשל, דער מחבר טראכט פון דוד האפשטיינס טראגישן גורל און וועקט זיך אויף אין דער סאָוועטישער טורמע. ווערט ער אליין האפשטיין, לויט דער מעשה, אדער ס'איז בלויז א חלום? ליינעט און באשליסט. בדי צו באשטעלן דאס בוך, גיט א קוועטש דא.</p>

More Zion's Fiction:

In lieu of another "More Zion's Fiction" short story review, I'm happy to present a 1990 article by Sheldon Teitelbaum (a co-editor of both 'Zion's Fiction' anthologies). He wrote me (slightly edited):

Leybl, here's a scan of the 1990 Foundation essay. Feel free to reprint it if you like. You might also consider reviewing the book *Palestine +100: Stories from 100 Years after the Nakba* (Comma Press, 2019) for comparison's sake.

It is an essay about stories set in Israel or featuring Israelis published in the peer-reviewed British academic journal 'Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction' (Issue #40). This April's issue of what is now called 'Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction' will feature an adaptation of the intro to 'More Zion's Fiction'. Also, an amalgam of both intros will appear in Elana Gomel's forthcoming academic compendium on Israeli SF, which is due out by year's end.

Meanwhile, Emanuel and I have submitted a significant update to the Israel entry in the online 'Science Fiction Encyclopedia', which John Clute and David Langford are now formatting. And Valerie Frankel and I are working on a voluminous entry on Jewish SF for same, using, among other things, material from my enormous entry on Jewish and Israeli SF/F in the 'Encyclopedia Judaica' (2nd Edition) and Frankel's recently published tome on Jewish SF through 1945.

With best wishes – Sheli Teitelbaum

Hey, Sheli,

I'm very impressed by your above efforts, and your essay from 1990 is really fascinating. It should be compulsory reading for academics anywhere, who are studying SF in Israel! – Leybl

Our contributors sometimes tread strange corridors. A few years ago, armed with a 9 mm Beretta in a shoulder holster for protection and a copy of Foundation in his hand, Sheli Teitelbaum visited the literary editor of the PLO-affiliated newspaper Al-Fajr in East Jerusalem to begin an enquiry into the extent of Arab interest in sf—only to be assured that sf was simply not the thing to write within Arab society, least of all within Palestinian society. Yet on the other hand writers of Jewish descent play a central role in modern sf—and there is no dearth of Israeli writers either, though most are quick to deny the genre roots of their material.

Currently Mr Teitelbaum is editing an anthology tentatively entitled Joshua's Trumpet: Prophetic Tales of Mideast Armageddon, with some stories translated from the Hebrew but mostly British and American, set against the backdrop of the conflicts engulfing the Middle East, and aimed at jolting an Arafat or a Shamir out of their conceptual ruts—although one contributor noted that the book would possibly have to contain plastique to achieve that noble end...

A former feature writer and sf and horror book reviewer for the Jerusalem Post, as well as story-editor and film critic for the Israeli sf magazine Fantazia 2000, Mr Teitelbaum spent five years in uniform as an officer in the IDF. He currently lives in Los Angeles, acting as Hollywood correspondent for Cinefantastique and Present Tense, and as staff writer for the University of Southern California magazine Trojan Family. His work also appears regularly in the Los Angeles Times, and in a number of Israeli newspapers and magazines. The following piece was originally written for the Israeli newspaper The Nation, which asked him to interview sf writers at the 1988 Nebula banquet in Los Angeles on the theme "Whither Israel?" The article was due to appear during a visit by Tom Disch to Israel—but the newspaper ceased publication the day before the piece would have been printed. Though Mr Teitelbaum demurs as to its merits, we feel Foundation readers will be interested.

Tales of Zion's Fiction

SHELDON TEITELBAUM

In 1985, a few weeks before leaving Israel after an eight-and-a-half year sojourn there, I was dispatched to East Jerusalem by *Foundation*. Responding to a query I had sent, the magazine's features editor asked me to visit the offices of the PLO-affiliated newspaper *Al Fajr* on what might have been the most unique and unlikely assignment in that publication's history.

"Bring back," he instructed, "some word regarding the role of

science fiction in Palestinian society."

This was, I should add, before the *intifada*, when to venture through the dank alleyways of that part of the city without one's fellow platoon members covering one's back, though dangerous, was not universally regarded as suicide. This was also, I believe, before it became a crime to speak with professed members and supporters of the PLO, though as a journalist I might have been spared prosecution, and anyway, what resident of the West Bank wasn't?

Science fiction fans, not to mention writers, have been known to wage the wars of Gog and Magog over their craft. Few, I expect, had ever been called upon to venture into the lion's den, as it were, for love of the genre.

It was, in retrospect, a foolhardy quest, given the priorities of the country and the time, but I was leaving soon, perhaps for good, and after having engaged Palestinians in various military and journalistic relationships over the years, this was, *dammit*, interesting. Arabic literature veritably bursts with fancy—these are, after all, the people who had inspired *The Arabian Nights*. Perhaps their penchant for the fantastic had collided, unbeknownst to the rest of us, with the industrialisation and modernisation overtaking some parts of the Arab world, gelling as some variant of science fiction.

And the Palestinians, I thought—surely after twenty years of peering at their despised yet oft-admired nemesis, and through them at the West; surely it had dawned on some of them that, if not as an apt metaphor for their own political situation, the distancing mechanisms of sf offered a handy way to beat the censor. It's an old trick—Jonathan Swift had couched his own eighteenth-century political satire, *Gulliver's Travels*, in fantasy because this presented the only way he could get his message heard within a Britain polarised over the Irish question without risking a hanging.

My own interest in the fantastic, though nowhere nearly as momentous as Swift's, predated my arrival in Israel in 1977. I had been a fan since childhood, having been enticed, for years, by a copy of Robert Heinlein's novel *Red Planet*, which the Talmud Torah I attended in Montreal, in its stupidity, had reserved for sixth and seventh graders only. Had I known this stuff was called science fiction, I would have asked for it by name at my local library. Unfortunately, all I could do was to ask for books about monsters. These, sadly, were in short supply and hard to read.

In Israel, science fiction books sometimes served as a useful anchor in a world that, for me, occasionally seemed as alien as Heinlein's Mars. I volunteered for army duty within a few months of arriving there for the first time. During my six month regimen of basic training, for which nothing in my life had prepared me, I toted around a well thumbed copy of *Who's Who in Science Fiction*. It was not a good reference book by any standards, but the entries about various writers were familiar to me, and provided no small comfort

on those cold, moonlit nights of guard duty when I and my buddy Ed, an ex-U.S. marine who chafed at the prospect of boot camp the second time round, grew bored of our idle scheming to shoot each other in the foot so we could finally, please God, get a decent night's sleep.

After graduating from officer school, my interest in the genre reasserted itself. During my time off, I began writing reviews of science fiction and horror books for *The Jerusalem Post*. This eventually led to a regular column and to the start of a career in journalism. It also led to my first encounter with the considerable disdain which many Israelis, cultured and otherwise, reserved for the genre.

The army, you see, does not permit its recruits to work on the side without permission. Mine had to be obtained from the paratroop corps adjutant, a portly colonel called Shlomo and the nastiest bit of business I had the misfortune to encounter during nearly five years in uniform. During a brief interview in which I was asked to explain my intentions, Colonel Shlomo made rude gestures with his fingers suggestive of flying saucers alighting on his desk—had he been an American, no doubt he would have rendered the dee-dee dee-dee strains of the old *Twilight Zone*. Permission denied, he intoned. "If you have time left over from your duties for this kind of bullshit, perhaps we can find you another set of responsibilities."

I appealed against his unreasonable ruling, and it was, in fact, overturned by a brigadier general whom Shlomo loathed. The brigadier general insisted, however, that all monies gleaned from my writings ought to be turned over to LIBI—the army education fund. With this I had no problem, but Shlomo, "antipath" par excellence, eventually wreaked his revenge by holding up my scheduled stint at jump school for six months.

During this time, out of spite more than passion, I also contributed book and film reviews to the Hebrew sf magazine *Fantazia 2000*, sometimes also identifying for its editors stories I thought ought to be translated into Hebrew.

Of course, these pursuits must have appeared as odd to *Al Fajr's* befuddled literary editor as they had to the loathsome Shlomo. We had spoken briefly over the telephone, and he was gracious enough to be willing to pursue the matter further, but it was obvious he didn't know what all of this was really about. Our attempts at communication were further complicated, I suspect, by the 9 millimeter Beretta peeking out obtrusively from under my windbreaker, and my copy of *Foundation*, a stately looking literary journal—indeed, one of the few science fiction magazines in existence which felt it could get by without a lurid cover. I brought it along thinking he might be impressed by the apparent sobriety of the publication, not realising that a garish cover might have gone a long

way toward explaining to him precisely what I meant by science fiction.

We sat at his desk, this editor and I, and after engaging in the usual pleasantries, which included my imparting the benediction that my host's hands would endure as a bounteous fount of coffee throughout eternity, we drank some of the sweet, muddy brew he proffered quietly, and reflected, both of us, on how best to proceed.

This learned gentleman, I quickly discovered, didn't know science fiction from Zion's fiction.

"No, no, no," he said, once I had succeeded in translating the term Star Wars into the street Arabic I had learned as reserves press spokesman for the Gazan military administration. "All our literature—our journalism, our poetry, our novels and stories—is geared toward the cause of national liberation. We have no time for this, ah, fantasy you speak of."

I sighed audibly, and after several more minutes of inconsequential chit-chat about matters other than political, we both expressed the bleak hope—*de rigueur* in such instances—that our peoples would find it in themselves to coexist before he and I might have to confront each other under less pleasant circumstances. I returned, somewhat forlornly, to Tel Aviv.

There it was. Israelis and Palestinians alike had precious little use for fantasy and speculation. This damned conflict was killing off the imagination. Rather like the time-bound denizens of the Middle Ages, when one generation could rightly expect to live precisely as had its forebearers had or, interchangeably, as its progeny, neither party to the conflict felt comfortable with the idea of change. Neither, quite understandably, could grasp the notion that, perhaps in fifty years or in a hundred, the world, the tenor of life in this area, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict itself, might be entirely different. Neither had any use for a literary genre that suggested otherwise.

Indeed, during the years preceding the founding of the Jewish state, and well into the 1950s, literary pundits in Israel had described Hebrew literature in terms nearly identical to those used by *Al Fajr's* literary editor. The task of the writer, it was widely held, was to advance the creation and secure the achievements of the homeland.

A new generation of Israeli writers eventually emerged during the 1960s—people like Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua and Amalia Kahana-Karmon—and they rebelled against these outmoded strictures with a virulence that shook the literary establishment. Suddenly fancy was in vogue, symbolism rife, and existentialist angst the rage.

Science fiction and outright fantasy, however, were largely dismissed—if indeed ever considered—as too crude, too commercial and too distinctly American (this would have surprised the British and Russians no end) to merit serious attention. These hard-nosed, self-acclaimed literary and political realists believed that their country's grim lot in life did not permit the luxury of what they

assumed were merely escapist flights of fantasy. And as for horror, as Cynthia Ozick wrote to me recently when asked to contribute to a collection of sf stories I am now editing, all of them set against the backdrop of the Middle East: "What, twenty-two Arab nations and the PLO aren't nightmare enough for you?"

The irony of this resistance to the genre, of course, is that the Jewish contribution to science fiction has been seminal. The very term itself was effectively invented by a Jew, the Belgian-born Hugo Gernsback, editor of the first magazine devoted to its propagation, *Amazing Stories*: the genre's Oscar is the "Hugo".

Jews had also invented the world's first utopias—the Garden of Eden and, subsequently, a promised land of milk and honey, in which the children of former slaves would, it was hoped, be reclaimed by the soil. In this land, a hill commanding a strategic route from ancient Egypt to Asia in the north became, perhaps not coincidentally, an enduring symbol for a rather novel concept in Western thought—the end of man, the world, and historical time. That hill, which still exerts a powerful grip on the science fiction mind as the Ground Zero of Judaeo-Christian thought, is called Megiddo, or Armageddon.

Jews would also offer the world its first "robot"—a Golem fashioned from clay by the able hands of Judah Bezalel Loew, the sixteenth-century Rabbi of Prague. Other Jewish stories of mysticism and magic would follow out of that tradition, notably Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and the Margarita* (in Israel read as *The Devil in Moscow*), Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories, and, down into the 1980s, Shalom Babayof's *Kadur Ha'esh*—"The Fireball," replete with venerable Kabbalist whose daughter marries an alien (a subject treated during the '70s in a hilarious story called "Look, You Think You've Got Troubles?", published in the first of Jack Dann's two memorable anthologies of Jewish-American science fiction, *Wandering Stars*).

Perhaps accordingly, humanity would also come to view the Jews as time-travellers—the only people to have endured for millennia with their history, culture and sense of mission in the world intact. It was perhaps this otherworldly, ghostly attribute—as well as rebellion against the restrictive Christianity which Judaism had inadvertently delivered upon the world—that earned them the wrath of Hitler's Nazis, who gave flesh to another science-fictional concept—the combined use of eugenics and industrial mechanization—in an attempt to eradicate an entire people.

In the US, many of the genre's pioneering figures—Isaac Asimov, Stanley Weinbaum, William Tenn, Horace Gold, Robert Sheckley—were, of course, Jewish. One of them, Avram Davidson, in fact an Orthodox Jew who is reputed to have served with the *Machal*, the overseas force of volunteers which assisted the fledgling Israeli army during the 1948 War of Independence.

What many scoffing Israelis overlooked, also, is that their very state exists, in no small part, because of a science fiction novel, Theodore Herzl's depiction of a Jewish utopia, written between 1899 and 1902, and published in German as *Altneuland*. This and other samples of utopian writing are widely regarded today as having served, to some extent, as the floor map for the prospective Jewish state.

As a distinctive genre, science fiction made its earliest inroads in Israel via Hollywood. The 1950s were, like the late 1970s, a golden age for science fiction filmmaking, and Israelis saw many of the movies produced then—films like *When Worlds Collide*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still* and *This Island Earth*—at their local, sunflower-seed-strewn theatres. This influx of garish movies, however, had the unfortunate effect of trivializing a genre which, in written form, had produced works of considerably greater and ever increasing aesthetic merit.

Of these, precious few were translated into Hebrew. The "mainstream" publishing houses like Ramdor and Yanshuf were content to restrict themselves to a few translations of now little-remembered works like K.F. Crossen's *Adventures in Tomorrow* and Wilson Tucker's *The Man From Tomorrow*.

One publishing house, however, Matzpen (Compass), did chance commissioning translations of some early sf classics, notably Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters*, Fredric Brown's *What Mad Universe* and Frank Robinson's *The Power*. The firm discovered, however, that the local market for its wares were slight (a function, to be sure, of the small number of people who actually spoke Hebrew—some 600,000 in 1948, now, including Israeli Arabs who consume Hebrew literature, some ten times that number), and it went under. This and the subsequent demise of no less than three science fiction magazines—in 1958, *Mada Bidioni* (the accepted Hebrew term for science fiction) cratered out after thirteen issues, *Cosmos* folded after four, and *Flash Gordon* burned up in orbit after seven—put an end to the minute groundswell of interest. Their grisly fates sent out the message to other publishers that, even in these gray days of *tzenah* (frugality), most people were too busy merely getting on with the task of nation-building and consolidation to spare time for seemingly decadent flights of imagination.

Neither was this observation lost on would-be Israeli science fiction writer Mordecai Roshwald, who wrote and published two accomplished novels—*Level Seven* (1959) and *A Small Armageddon* (1962) in English. Although his efforts were noted in the Hebrew press at the time, and although his books, particularly his first, were well received in the West, neither of them were ever translated into Hebrew. Roshwald himself is currently reputed to be living in London.

During the late 1970s, however—not surprisingly during the

consumerism-crazed days following the election of Menachem Begin's Likud government—science fiction reemerged in print in a big way. For the first time in years, Israelis had money to burn and a taste for leisure pursuits. For a brief spell, imaginations caught fire, together with an overheated economy. Suddenly, major publishers such as Am-Oved, Ma'ariv, Masada and Zmora-Bitan discovered a market for handsomely bound, hard- and soft-cover science fiction translations. Between these and other companies, over 200 books, most of them gleaned from what might be considered a core collection of genre offerings of the preceding thirty years, ultimately found their way to the shelves and into people's homes and consciousness.

During this time as well, a number of new magazines were launched, among them the short-lived *Olam Hamachar* (*The World of Tomorrow*), a new version of *Cosmos* (which survived for six issues and served largely as a Hebrew version of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*), *Mada Bidioni* (*Science Fiction*) (which lasted for one issue), and the best and most enduring of the lot, the slick, well-edited and thoughtfully compiled *Fantazia 2000*. This latter magazine, which came out in December 1978, ran for forty-four issues until the end of 1984, and served as a rallying point for Israeli science fiction fandom.

Unfortunately, as during the 1950s, this science fiction boomlet in Israel was largely the result of the boom in films that began with George Lucas's *Star Wars* and Stephen Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and which encouraged, in Israel, a number of well-attended SF film festivals. In the public mind, however—and especially among the majority of film-goers who never went beyond the films to the literature—science fiction, despite its considerable literary gains since the 1950s, remained tinged by the frivolousness of the movies.

During this boom, however, a small number of Israeli writers, who discerned a local market for home-grown science fiction, experimented with the genre in Hebrew. David Melamed, an El Al employee, compiled a collection of seven short stories, some of the first published in *Fantazia 2000*, called *A Hyena in Corundy*. There was little noticeably Israeli in the stories however—which is the case with a fair number of such stories by local authors, most of whom looked to the West, and to the traditions and tropes of magazine sf, for inspiration.

In 1982, however, Hillel Dameron, a filmmaker (*Hasamba*) and Histadrut employee now living in Pasadena, wrote a well-regarded novel called *The War of the Sexes*, about the war being fought by men living under the knuckle of women: the story begins, no doubt to the horror of Hebrew literary mavens and all three kibbutz movements, in the "masturbation room" of a well known kibbutz.

The 1980s also saw the publication of two novels written by

Israeli geneticist Rom Moav while suffering from a terminal illness—*Zirmat Hachamim* (*Genes for Genius, Inc.*) and *Luna—Gan Eden Geneti* (*Luna—The Genetic Paradise*). Dealing with the social implications of genetic manipulation, the books earned their author accusations of tendencies toward fascism—tendencies he hotly denied in interviews.

In 1983, Ruth Blumert published *Hatzariach* (*The Turret*), a fantasy story reminiscent of Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* trilogy, and I. Boussidan wrote the largely forgettable *Sod Harishonim* (*The Secret of the First Ones*), about an alien invasion.

Perhaps the most important novels published during this boom period, however, were Amos Kenan's *The Road to Ein Harod*, about a near-future military takeover of Israel by a mad general who finds a unique and terrifying way to fight the historical forces that had ravaged Jews throughout history. Published in 1983, the novel was filmed as a feature motion picture starring Anthony Peck, the son of actor Gregory Peck, and Benito Mussolini's granddaughter. Kenan, who had published an earlier science fiction novel, *Holocaust II*, in 1973, is a well-known left-wing columnist who was responding, in part, to the then Prime Minister Menachem Begin's abortive war in Lebanon and his penchant for regarding all of Israel's enemies as latter-day incarnations of Adolf Hitler.

During an interview with Kenan which I conducted for the *Jerusalem Post*, the writer hotly denied that what he had written was science fiction, though his story contained clear-cut dystopian elements and techno-thriller tropes, and it ultimately hinged upon time travel. Kenan did so out of fear that his novel would be tainted, and consequently dismissed as so much tripe (and so it was, largely by the right—for the more doveish elements in Israeli society, however, the book reflected a pronounced dystopic tenor, chiming in with a feeling that the country had, in fact, been hijacked by alien forces—a feeling that is still, to some extent, evident.)

Also during this time, the renowned Israeli novelist Binyamin Tammuz, now deceased, published *Pundako Shel Yermiyahu* (*Jeremiah's Inn*), in which he postulated a near-future takeover in Israel by fundamental theocrats. Tammuz will doubtless not be remembered as a science fiction author, and his story will likely be dismissed as a temporary aberration, at least for the foreseeable future.

In 1984, largely because of the recession that followed the lost war in Lebanon, *Fantazia 2000* folded and science fiction book publishing—together with some other kinds of book publishing—ground to a halt. By 1985, one could count the annual output of translations on a single hand. These were largely, moreover, the result of previous contractual arrangements.

Nachman Ben-Yehuda, a Hebrew University sociologist who has researched the vagaries of the Israeli science fiction scene extensively, has argued, correctly, that economics and mindset combined to

conspire against an ongoing "science-fictionization" of the Israeli popular psyche. The low premium placed on pluralism within Israeli society, a national sense of destiny among Jewish Israelis that precluded variant conceptions of the future and, increasingly, the growing tribalistic intensification and concurrent calcification of the sundry conflicts between Arab and Jew, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, secular and Orthodox, deprived science fiction of a serious literary and sociological role.

The Palestinians, who have wasted no opportunity to plagiarize from the Zionist script, have followed suit with equal aplomb. Few Palestinians can reconcile themselves emotionally (though I suspect many will ultimately make do on a pragmatic basis) to any future that contains a thriving Jewish national presence in the region.

And so, it appears, Israelis and others interested in speculation on the fate of the region and its conflicts will have to rely upon Americans and Brits.

Robert Silverberg, for instance, envisions a 98 percent probability of a military takeover in Israel within the next 25 years. "It wouldn't upset me at all," he says.

Silverberg has sustained an abiding interest in the region: in 1970, he wrote a book on Jewish-American relations with Israel—*If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem*. Lately, he has concluded that the country appears in danger of being dislodged in space and time yet again.

"The strains within Israel seem almost terminal," he says. "Yet it seems necessary that there be an Israel. An internal adjustment of the political structure may therefore be required to prevent the entire country from flying apart centrifugally into hawks, doves and religious fanatics.

"I believe that now and then in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to discard democratic institutions. For me, the prototype is De Gaulle's revolution in 1958. Of course, when he had stabilized the political system, De Gaulle returned France to democracy. I would like to think that Jews would have the sense to do that as well."

Silverberg would not, however, advocate the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza. Such extremism, he believes, would be little more than "an overreaction into Nazism". Indeed, he believes that Israel may ultimately serve as the centrepiece for an integrated Middle East, in which Jews and Palestinians live as allies—a concept that recurs frequently among sf writers. "This is going to require major head changes among both Jews and Arabs," noted Silverberg. "But time will take care of that. The theological issues that divided Europe in the fourteenth century seem absurd to us. What looks impossible now looks preposterous over a 500-year span. Do not underestimate the power of change in human society."

David Brin's achievements as an award-winning science fiction writer have brought his father, a Los Angeles-based Jewish newspaper publisher and editor, a lot of *nachat*—paternal pride. But David's frequent references, in his books, to future versions of Israel must have been hard for the elder Brin, whose politics sometimes put him somewhat to the right of Meir Kahane, to swallow. Herb Brin demanded a reverential approach to the Jewish state. The editorial line pursued by his ultra-right wing newspaper held that Israel must never be criticized publicly, and criticism offered by American Jews in private must be proffered with humility. Recently, he attended a Peace Now counter-demonstration in Roxbury Park, waving an umbrella and shouting appeasing slogans like a latter-day Neville Chamberlain.

His son, however, had grown up after Israel had achieved a modicum of military might. He could afford to be playful. Thus, in his first novel, *Sundiver*, Brin made brief, entirely unserious mention of an alliance between Israel, Vietnamese Americans and the Cherokee Nation. Together, they were making a name for themselves as the solar system's premier producers of solar-powered satellites. It was, he admits, a lark.

In a later novel he wrote with fellow scientist Gregory Benford, *Heart of the Comet*, however, one of their protagonists, Saul Lintz, was a near-future Israeli exile, a *yored*. Only Lintz didn't move to New York or Los Angeles—he fled into space on an expedition to Halley's Comet. But this was only after Israel had been taken over by a triumvirate of high priests representing fundamentalist sects of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; after the anti-intellectual mobs had razed the Technion in Haifa, where he worked; and after the rest of the country had been balkanized and invaded, its native-born Jews expelled.

"How could the descendants of the Negev pioneers," wrote Brin, "the most potent warriors in two centuries, slowly decline into superstition and cultism? What had turned clear-eyed Sabras into cowed sheep?" Brin notes that this is hardly, given his druthers, the kind of fate he would hope for Israel. Indeed, he doesn't believe this scenario to be even likely, though he mentions "a certain Kohen" (or member of the traditional Jewish priesthood—in this case Meir Kahane) who, he believes, aspires not to become premier of Israel but, rather, "the first high priest the Jews have had in two thousand years."

"My job as a writer," says Brin, "is both to entertain people and to warn them, to ask questions, not provide answers." Science fiction, Brin believes, is almost ideally suited to this task. In *Heart of the Comet*, Brin was able to explore one Israeli's alienation from his homeland and the ideals of his youth, a predicament facing many first-generation Israelis.

"I hear from so many Israelis the fear that their children are

turning into a Middle Eastern people," says Brin. "There is a saying that every nation is invaded by a wave of barbarians—their children. The question is whether the new generations of Israelis adopt the underlying morality of the Middle East: the morality of revenge."

Brin also parts company with his father on the *Intifada*. Brin the elder believes that the uprising is a PLO/Communist-inspired plot against the Jews. The younger Brin finds in the "Awakening" reason for hope. "For the first time," he says, "Palestinians are actually obeying rules in a war against Jews. For the first time they are actually seeking confrontation with armed soldiers instead of preying on helpless civilians. We should think about whether there might be a way to reward them for this while punishing them for maintaining a deeper agenda of death and revenge."

In the end, both Brin and collaborator Gregory Benford believe that Israelis and Palestinians will have to pull together. Until then, says Benford, Israel will have an especially difficult mission to fulfill in the region.

"The real problem in the area is not the Arab-Israeli conflict," notes Benford. "Rather, the Middle East has experienced probably the worst case of environmental assault in human history. The main thing Israel can give the region is a truly rational and technological confrontation with this ecological catastrophe."

Benford argues that Islam was intended as nothing less than an attempt to grapple with the depredations carried out on the landscape two thousand years ago. "All religions," he says, "arise from efforts to accommodate the shifting pressures imposed by the environment. But Arab societies are now fundamentally incapable of implementing solutions. If Israel hopes to survive, it will have to bring western thought to bear on the common ecological threats facing the area."

Geoff Ryman says that writing about Israel was one of the hardest things he's ever done. A newcomer to science fiction in his early 30s, Ryman had set one of his first stories, as yet unpublished, in the Sinai on the eve of its return to Egypt. In it, a group of Israeli friends on a last visit to Sharm al Sheikh notice coloured patterns coming out of the ground at night. These patterns tend to reflect tensions, both personal and political, within the group itself. In the end, however, these patterns coalesce into a nightmare vision of Jerusalem aflame.

The story, which came out of a lengthy stay in the country, didn't work. Yet a novella he later wrote about the Cambodian holocaust, an event scarcely more accessible to him, received much critical acclaim within the field.

"There's a real block to writing seriously about Israel," says Ryman. "It's like an inhibition, a repression. You just can't see the situation clearly. It's very difficult being honest about Israel. People

are blocked. Americans don't understand what's going on there in the same way that they don't understand what's going on in Ireland. It's just not easy to sort out, and so what you get when sf writers do write about it is very surface.

"I think most have decided that they don't live there, they're not a part of it, and maybe they don't have the right to interfere without first doing a *lot* of research."

This has not, however, stopped John Shirley, one of sf's angry young turks and chief propagandist for Cyberpunk, which one critic has called "literature as MTV". "I've noticed that sf writers have an intensely apocalyptic regard for the Middle East," Shirley says. "They seem to believe that it is the likeliest place for World War Three to break out. I've never understood why that is."

Intensely political, Shirley believes that personal computers, not nukes, will one day become the weapon of choice for revolutionaries, terrorists and national independence movements. It is this, he predicts, that Israel will have to contend with.

"I realize that the Palestinians possess a low technological base," says Shirley, "but they also possess more western training and expertise than any other Arab peoples. If the occupation goes on for years, Israel may have to deal one day with an interlinked Palestinian PC underground."

Shirley's sense of what Israel must be like is not finely honed, but he imagines it to be a modern, westward-oriented country, and as such, not at all immune to the computer revolution engulfing the world. And if he can afford a computer that, ten years ago, would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, how long, he asks, before microchips become cheaper than food, and before the world's huddled masses embrace them as a weapon of liberation?

PC-wielding Palestinians, says Shirley, may one day use bargain-basement Macs and IBM clones to afflict the Israeli defense and banking system with computer viruses, false programs and destructive access. Indeed, only last year the Israeli press was awash with rumours that one had, in fact, wormed its way into Israeli army military records. "Hell, I'm worried about terrorists doing that to the American banking system."

Jerry Pournelle is probably the most pervasively political of sf's writers. He has a Ph.D. in psychology and political science, spent fifteen years in the American space programme, worked as a consultant to government and private firms, and served in the American military. Pournelle, who has written a number of fabulously successful novels with co-writer Larry Niven, fancies himself a conservative libertarian, and his right wing politics often enrage the liberal sensibilities which so many sf writers possess.

Pournelle says that the prospects for a fascist Israel are not

merely a matter of science fiction. "Unless you people let go of the occupied territories," he says, "you'll have to impose a dictatorship. You just can't have a democracy with a large subject population."

Pournelle says he's aware that the Israeli occupation has not been as abhorrent as previous occupations. The British, however, similarly argued that their rule of India provided that country with better government than it would have had otherwise. "You come back to the notion," he says, "that was popular during our own colonial days—good government is no substitute for self-government."

"As an old military man," he adds, "I'd rather have Israel as an ally than Jordan, the only Arab country that ever had an army worth a damn. But military solutions alone are not going to work. In the end, Israel will go the way of the Crusaders, because while the Arabs can lose a hundred wars, the Israelis can lose only one. If you play poker, those are lousy pot odds."

Pournelle, who says he gets most of his information on the region from the conservative magazine *Commentary*, notes, however, that he has no idea how to get Israel out of the mess it's in. If he were in charge of the country, he says he'd withdraw unilaterally from the West Bank and "let them stew". If the residents resumed incursions of Israel's borders, "then it would be back to war. You could clear them all out for good."

"But I don't live there, and it's easy to put the other guys like on the line. I spent some time in South Africa and I decided I didn't know how to run their country either. One man-one vote in a country where half the population is one step up from the Stone Age is probably going to be one man-one vote once. Which will be Israel's problem if it doesn't find a way to get out of there."

Frederik Pohl purports to be confused by events in the Middle East. Arab fundamentalism, he says, scares him in a way that nationalism alone does not.

"I wish I had a solution to Israel's problems. I don't think one lies in anyone's hands. But if I were to deal with Israel in my writing, I would portray it as become happier, bigger and better. The kibbutzniks will all drive Cadillacs and own private jets. Which is pretty close to the way things are."

Acknowledgment

For information about the early publishing history of science fiction in Israel I am indebted to Nachman Ben Yehuda, author of "Sociological Reflections on the History of Science Fiction in Israel", *Science-Fiction Studies*, 13 (1986), pp. 64-78.

Fun from the Web

- Earth tells us to 'GO' in weird cloud message seen from space (photo)
LB: Maybe it said "GoD" but the "D" is just off the horizon, so the photo doesn't show it 😊
<https://www.space.com/earth-go-cloud-message-satellite-photo>
- Space video games that should be movies or TV shows
<https://www.space.com/space-games-that-should-be-movies-or-tv-shows>
- Mining the moon to help save life on Earth (op-ed)
<https://www.space.com/mining-moon-save-life-earth-op-ed>
- Robots That Were Actually Just Humans in Costume
<https://gizmodo.com/5-fake-robots-humans-in-costume-1848816403>
- Alien planet with 3 stars is actually a star itself, scientists determine
<https://www.space.com/three-stars-planet-discovery-retraction>
- New message to aliens will reflect on Earth in danger of climate crisis
<https://www.space.com/climate-change-message-to-aliens>
- Uranus by 2049: Here's why scientists want NASA to send a flagship mission to the strange planet
<https://www.space.com/nasa-uranus-orbiter-probe-mission-science>
- Satellites polluting Australian skies, threatening ancient Indigenous astronomy practices
<https://www.space.com/satellites-threatening-ancient-indigenous-astronomy>
- New contest will send artwork to the moon
<https://www.space.com/orbital-assembly-contest-artwork-to-moon>
- A total lunar eclipse will turn the moon red the night of May 15
<https://www.space.com/total-lunar-eclipse-blood-moon-coming-may-2022>
- Canada considers adding moon crimes to its Criminal Code
<https://www.space.com/canada-considers-adding-crimes-moon-criminal-code>

TV & MOVIES

- Best free sci-fi short movies
<https://www.space.com/best-free-sci-fi-movies>
- BBC announces Ncuti Gatwa as the new Doctor Who
<https://www.space.com/bbc-new-doctor-who-ncuti-gatwa>
- 'Star Trek: Voyager's' triumphant creation stars in crowdfunded documentary 'To the Journey'
<https://www.space.com/star-trek-voyager-documentary>
- Strange New Worlds Has the Classic Star Trek Vibe You've Been Waiting For
<https://gizmodo.com/star-trek-strange-new-worlds-review-paramount-plus-1848862048>
- Spider-Man's 'Hero' Is One of the Superhero Genre's Most Important Songs
<https://gizmodo.com/spider-man-hero-song-chad-kroeger-josey-scott-1848861777>
- What to Watch Before 'Star Trek: Strange New Worlds' Premieres on Paramount+
<https://www.reviewgeek.com/114615/what-to-watch-before-star-trek-strange-new-worlds-premieres-on-paramount/>

- Watch the new 'Obi-Wan Kenobi' trailer for Star Wars Day!
<https://www.space.com/obi-wan-kenobi-star-wars-day-trailer-disney-plus>
- Writing Sci-Fi for Broadcast
<https://scriptmag.com/television/writing-sci-fi-for-broadcast>

FASHION

- 'Star Trek: Strange New Worlds' Starfleet boots from designer John Fluevog
<https://www.space.com/star-trek-starfleet-boots-strange-new-worlds>

GAMES

- 'Warhammer 40K: Chaos Gate – Daemonhunters'
<https://www.space.com/warhammer-40k-chaos-gate-daemonhunters-preview>
- 15 Trippy Space Stories D&D Fans Should Check Out Before Spelljammer
<https://gizmodo.com/15-trippy-space-stories-for-dungeons-dragons-spelljam-1848836830>

BOOKS

- 'Blade Runner: Black Lotus' scores a new sequel miniseries from Titan Comics
<https://www.space.com/blade-runner-black-lotus-titan-comics>
- Obi-Wan and Anakin team up in the Clone Wars in new 'Star Wars: Brotherhood' novel
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-brotherhood-obi-wan-kenobi-book>

MORE BOOKS:

Published almost 1 year ago:

- Jewish Science Fiction and Fantasy through 1945: Immigrants in the Golden Age Hardcover – June 17, 2021 by [Valerie Estelle Frankel](#) (Author) Format: Kindle Edition
Science fiction first emerged in the Industrial Age and continued to develop into its current form during the twentieth century. This book analyses the role Jewish writers played in the process of its creation and development. The author provides a comprehensive overview, bridging such seemingly disparate themes and figures as the ghetto legends of the golem and their influence on both Frankenstein and robots, the role of Jewish authors and publishers in developing the first science fiction magazine in New York in the 1930s, and their later contributions to new and developing medial forms like comics and film. Drawing on the historical context and the positions Jews held in the larger cultural environment, the author illustrates how themes and tropes in science fiction and fantasy relate back to the realities of Jewish life in the face of global anti-Semitism, the struggle to assimilate in America, and the hope that was inspired by the founding of Israel.

NEW SF TV Series:

- Israeli-German Sci-Fi Series Set to Film at Space Center in Israel's Negev Simulating Life on Mars



Scientists participate in a demonstration of an experiment led by Austrian and Israeli agencies simulating a mission to Mars near Mitzpe Ramon, Israel October 10, 2021.
REUTERS/Amir Cohen

See: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/04/01/israeli-german-sci-fi-series-set-to-film-at-space-center-in-israels-negev-simulating-life-on-mars/>

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

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