

Dapim - Studies on the Holocaust



Congratulations to Dr. Rivka Brot on Winning our 2016 Annual Article Competition Prize

The 2016 award for excellence in the field of Holocaust Studies has been bestowed upon Dr. Rivka Brot. Her work was chosen from a pool of over 30 articles submitted to Dapim in 2016. Using records in Yiddish, German, and English, many of them revealed for the first time, Dr. Brot's innovative article analyzes and sheds light on a significant subject that has been studied very little to date.

[Read the article here](#)

Conflicting Jurisdictions: The Struggle of the Jews in the Displaced Persons Camps for Legal Autonomy

The article exposes the complex and fascinating legal system created by the Jews in displaced camps in the American Occupation Zone in Germany. At the center of the article is the tension between the Jewish displaced persons (DPs) and the American Army and Military Government over the question of the legality of the Jewish camp courts, and the attempt to put this tension in the correct legal and political context. The article focuses on the relationship between Jewish communal law and the law of the sovereign, namely the Military Government Law. It aims, first and foremost, to shed light both on the diverse and complex legal system created by the Jewish DPs in the American Occupation Zone and on the "legal" relationship between the Jewish legal system and the Military Government Law. The two sides differed over their scope of jurisdiction, with the Military Government applied to any person in the American Occupation Zone, including the Jewish DPs, and the Jewish internal law applied to Jewish DPs only. The insistence of the Jewish DPs on legal autonomy reveals not only the role of law in reconstructing the Jewish community after the Holocaust, but also its role in their ongoing sociopolitical struggle for national "self-determination" and recognition as a distinct national collective. With the dismantling of the DP camps and the emigration of Jews from Germany, the struggle for legal autonomy ended naturally. Indeed, it was a

very brief chapter in Jewish history; however, this does not detract from the importance of the political and legal aspects of the Jewish struggle for recognition as a distinct national collective. Within a short time, the Jewish DPs set up a "national laboratory" of sorts for the purpose of reconstructing a Jewish collective using the law as a significant measure.

Dr. Rivka Brot is a postdoctoral fellow at the Faculty of Law, Bar-Ilan University. She is the author of several articles, including "Tzivia Lubetkin: Between Private and Public"; "Between Body and Symbol"; Benjamin Wilkomirski: "'Fragments' of Identity"; Julius Siegel: "Kapo in Four (Legal) Acts"; and "There Wasn't a Righteous Person Among Them: The Gray Zone of Collaboration in the Israeli Courtroom." She is the Goldberg Prize winner for an excellent, original, theoretical manuscript for 2016, on the Junior Scholar Track, for her dissertation-based manuscript, "Between Community and State: Trials of Jewish Collaborators with the Nazis." The manuscript will be published by the Open University Publishing House, The David Berg Institute for Law and History (Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Law), and The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism. Her current research deals with the various representations of law in Jewish displaced camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy.