
Sports Journalism and Politics in Mandatory Palestine: The Story of Lipa Levitan

Udi Carmi*¹

¹Tel-Hai College – Israël

Résumé

Justification for the research

Lipa Levitan (1903-1951) was a sports and opinion journalist, a political activist and a colorful and complex figure. Through him, a new picture unfolds of the interplay between body culture, journalism, politics and national identity during the tumultuous period before the establishment of the State of Israel. The study I present here traces this fascinating and often contradictory personality. It also spotlights the birth of sports journalism as a political, ideological and social arena in Israel. Levitan viewed sports as a means of national education and shaping the "New Jew." The sports columns he edited reveal how body culture served as a mirror for the processes of political polarization, and how it influenced these processes. His writing characteristically blurred the boundaries between sports coverage and expressing political stances on contentious issues. He was involved in controversies that he simultaneously initiated and covered, and he succeeded in bringing sports from the sidelines to the center of public discourse. Levitan set out to learn from the Italian Balilla movement and the Czech Sokol movement about the relationship between body culture and nationalism. His final trip ended with his sudden death in Berlin; academic research is still trying to understand the mysterious circumstances of his death.

Sources

This study is based on sources from ten archives, historical sports articles and secondary literature.

Results

As a sports journalist, Levitan offers us an opportunity to examine national, security, political and social events from an unconventional angle – one usually relegated to the margins of the academic field of view. This study sheds light on how opinion journalism was used to bring sports from the sidelines to the center of public discourse.

Mots-Clés: politicization of sports, mobilized sports journalism, revisionists, jury of peers

*Intervenant