

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

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "כנס העתידנים" מאת סטניסלב לם. המועדון יתקיים ביום חמישי, 18.8 ב-19:30. המועדון יתקיים באופן היברידי, בדירה בדירה במרכז ת"א (איזור כיכר הבימה) וכן בזום. לקבלת המיקום יש להירשם במייל של [דפנה קירש](#). קישור לזום יתפרסם סמוך לאירוע בדף האירוע בפייסבוק. מנחה: הדס זעירא.

ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים של המועדון הקריאה ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק: [מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה](#), או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - [גלי אחיטוב](#), ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטס'אפ 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>

This month's roundup:

- More Yiddish-related SF material dedicated to my dear departed father, David Botwinik (ע"ה – o'h):
 - Velvl Chernin's book "Faktazie" of Yiddish SF short stories – Part IV & Conclusion
- Book review: "More Zion's Fiction" – More next month

Our usual, interesting tidbits from the Web.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

More Yiddish-related SF material

Velvl Chernin's Yiddish SF book "Faktazie" (2022) – Part IV & Conclusion

- Reviewed by Leybl Botwinik

The final 115 pages of the book contain 5 short stories (I only get to read on weekends, so it took a while to get to this point). In my opinion, these 5 comprise – by far – the most interesting contents of his book.

Story #6 – Remaking History

Weighing in at 69 pages, the 6th short story "Neviyim un Shoytim" [Prophets and Fools = נביאים און שוטים] is the longest story, and the second 'real' SF story in the book, and the most serious one, although there is less 'science' involved. Chernin presents a fascinating 'What-if' alternate world story with a mixture of time-travel, if you like.

You've probably seen something similar: a group of modern-day soldiers fully armed with late 20th / early 21st century weaponry and technology, ends up in the past, ... and changes the course of history.

Chernin's story is more complicated: An entire chunk of the Land of Israel, containing its entire infrastructure (roads, buildings, military bases, etc.) – specifically, everything that is considered 'beyond the green line' (parts of the Golan Heights, Judea and Shomron, and East Jerusalem) is miraculously transported back in time, to 1941

– at some very critical points in the midst of WWII. With it, are a few hundred thousand Israelis who wake up one fine morning, to find themselves next to the rest of 'Palestine' of 1941: British soldiers of the Mandate, Palestinian Arabs, and Palestinian Jews. Again, 'miraculously' no modern-day Arab village/town – or for that matter, any Palestinian Arab, from these areas – has joined them in their transported 'land chunk'. Only the 21st Century Jewish Israelis.

In short, the modern Israelis with their advanced weaponry (attack helicopters, etc.) join the initially reluctant British forces to annihilate General Rommel's Nazi forces in North Africa, turning the tide of World War II. They then force the Germans under Hitler to rethink the 'Final solution', leading to an earlier end to the war, and literally saving Millions of Innocents – Jews and non-Jews alike.

This also leads to opening up immigration of Jews from Europe to 'Palestine'. They are too late to

save the Jews of Iraq from the terrible pogrom that the anti-Semitic Nazi-sympathetic Arabs carried out (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farhud>) but the new historical circumstances lead the Palestine Jews to help establish an independent Jewish-Iraqi state west of Iraq. Various other modifications to 'history' as we know it, also take place.

Some of the more intriguing issues dealt with by Chernin:

- the ultra-Orthodox who have been transported from modern day to 1941, rethink their acceptance of 'Modern Israel' and are ready to join the Israeli armed forces (Many of today's 'Haredim' and 'Hassidim' do not recognize the modern State of Israel and/or avoid military service for religious reasons).
- The modern Israelis and the Palestinian Mandate Jews do not unite, but instead keep their territories separate – it's a different mind-set, with people from different backgrounds. The 'modern Israel chunk' contains Jews who are children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, as well as a large majority of Jews whose roots are North-African/Middle Eastern. The Palestine Jews are mostly Europeans and know almost nothing about the Holocaust – because in this alternate reality, it doesn't take place in the same manner that it took place in ours (in fact, in the 1950's, during the early years of the State of Israel, Holocaust survivors were often looked down upon by the Israelis – we've since matured...).
- Interestingly enough, the Rabbis of the 'Modern Israelis' have permitted them to celebrate Independence Day (for when the modern State of Israel was founded in 1948) – while the original Palestine Jews do not (it's chronologically only 1941).

Fascinating tale? Yes...

However, this, and all of Chernin's stories have one major, fundamental, flaw: His stories are almost all devoid of characters and character development (except for, maybe, the Diary – again a kind of monologue – in story number 3). His fantastic tales are either (almost all) monologues, or they feel like a professor presenting a (one-sided) history lesson

(*Chernin is a lecturer on Yiddish Literature at several universities. Maybe that's what he's used to – although he is a brilliant poet).

This is exactly what happens with story number 6, where he recounts everything that happens from his perspective, of waking up one day – he lives in a settlement across the green line – and he and his fellow neighbours discover the new reality. He then goes on to tell what the new (alternate) world now looks like...

This is rather unfortunate, because the entire monologue/history lesson (that I briefly outlined above) would have made a fantastic background for a full-length novel where the characters might seriously interact with and have a lengthy argument with, for example, Ben Gurion, or with a British mandate soldier – or even with some high-ranking Nazi official.

Story #7 – New World Map

Case in point is story #7 "*tsushnaydn fun dos nay*" [cutting up anew/recutting= "צושניידן פון דאס ניי"]. In this 28-page short story, Chernin deals with the environment – specifically climate change and global warming. Similarly, his story is mostly a first-person 'geography lesson' and outlines how the world's land masses become redefined (i.e. sea rises, and many cities/countries sink below sea level) – thus reshaping or 'recutting up' the world map.

Of course, he continues to inject material of what happens to Israel, to Jews, and also to the Russian territory Birobidzhan that was given to Soviet Jews to become an autonomous Jewish state (whose 'National language' is Yiddish) within the vastness of Eastern Russia – possibly also as a buffer between Russia and China (see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birobidzhan>).

Story #8 – Beat the Heat

My favorite story, however, is his fanciful 10-page "*Payzazh*" [from French Paysage = countryside – פייזאזש]. In this story, he tells us about how hot it can get during the summer in the Judean hills where he lives. So, he 'takes refuge' from the heat by taking short trips (teleporting?) into a small, framed, picture of a winter scene that he had picked up in Birobidzhan. This makes the tale into something like out of a *Twilight Zone* story.

Story #9 - Night of the Murdered Poets

The final 2 stories are the shortest: a 6 pager and a 2 pager. The longer one "*Hofshteyn*" is about Chernin thinking about one of the greatest Yiddish Soviet literary giants, the poet Dovid Hofsteyn (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hofstein) who was murdered with many other Yiddish intellectuals on Stalin's orders: arrested around 1948, held prisoner

and tortured, and then executed purportedly on or around August 12–13, 1952, called the “Night of the Murdered Poets”. This story is actually quite appropriate for this issue of CyberCozen, since this week we are commemorating the events that took place exactly 70 years ago (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_of_the_Murdered_Poets).

As he ‘thinks’ about Hofshteyn, Chernin is somehow transported right into the interrogation cell in the infamous Lubyanka prison, where Hofshteyn and the

others were kept, tortured, and then executed. Chernin, however, manages to break out.

Story #10 – A Bit of Philosophy

The shortest and final story in his book, on two pages, is called “Pshat” [literal meaning = פשט] – ... well, I’m not too clear on this one. Seems rather philosophical to me, where Chernin discusses his ‘not being’. Ironically, this reflects his ‘SF’ stories themselves...

=====

Overall, I’m sorry to say, that I was quite disappointed in the fact that Chernin called these stories ‘Faktazie’ [‘SF / fantasy’] stories. Yes, there is a certain amount of fantasy and/or SF, but the ‘stories’ are not the types of tales that I expected to read.

I found his stories to be overlong, and without character development or depth (there are very few characters in his stories). He has some great ideas that would make excellent settings for tales that could be ‘successful’, but you can’t make a good story just out of a good ‘setting’ – there has to be dialogue and/or action (intrigue, conflict, emotions, etc.) that can reflect the issues in his settings, such as in the Alternate history, or on the planet with Yiddish towns – not just a history or geography lesson or one of philosophy.

I was happy that he wrote the stories in Yiddish, and here and there ‘peppered’ a few of them with some ‘science’ and SF-ish terms and issues – but all told, I expected more.

Let’s hope that the future will see better stories by Velvl Chernin.

Mit hatslokhe, khaver mayn [Good luck/Be successful, my friend].

JOSE SANCHEZ - New Artwork: "Costa Rican Cryptid"



My completed illustration is based on a highly unusual cryptid sighting that was caught at night on a cctv security camera in Costa Rica in April of 2021. In it, you can see a strange "crablike humanoid" walk out from an opening in the back walls and is then chased down by two angry dogs that bark and growl at it ferociously following it for a few minutes. One of them, even getting close up to IT and then temporarily confused in response to IT's odd behavior as IT just walks past it and towards the camera with a weird wobbly gait. As IT moves across the back alleyway, you can see that IT has the torso of a crab but no head and four strangely bent limbs or "human like arms" that IT uses to quickly scurry across the pavement.

Check out the actual video in this YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/bCVcHPNcNRs>

Jose Sanchez
Science Fiction, Fantasy, UFO Phenomena and Paranormal Illustrator

Jose Sanchez also sent in this link:
Witness Makes Model of UFO He Encountered: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfMievKuUUQ>

MORE ZION'S FICTION: short reviews will continue in our upcoming issues

Fun from the Web

- [James Webb Space Telescope's 1st stunning photo is now a dress](https://www.space.com/james-webb-space-telescope-first-image-dress)
<https://www.space.com/james-webb-space-telescope-first-image-dress>



Webb's First Deep Field Katherine Dress is on sale for \$79.99 (Image credit: Svaha USA)

- [NASA's Artemis 1 moon rocket gets Aug. 29 launch date](https://www.space.com/artemis-1-moon-rocket-launch-date-august-2022)
<https://www.space.com/artemis-1-moon-rocket-launch-date-august-2022>
- [Watch NASA's next-generation lunar Gateway space station build up in concept video](https://www.space.com/nasa-moon-gateway-space-station-video)
<https://www.space.com/nasa-moon-gateway-space-station-video>
- [Food in space: What do astronauts eat?](https://www.space.com/what-do-astronauts-eat-space-food)
<https://www.space.com/what-do-astronauts-eat-space-food>
- [Is it possible to see what is happening in distant solar systems now?](https://www.space.com/curious-kids-is-it-possible-to-see-what-is-happening-in-distant-solar-systems-now)
<https://www.space.com/curious-kids-is-it-possible-to-see-what-is-happening-in-distant-solar-systems-now>
- [Russian Chess Playing Robot Breaks 7-Year-Old's Finger, Officials Say That Is 'of Course Bad'](https://gizmodo.com/russian-chess-playing-robot-breaks-7-year-old-s-finger-1849326936)
<https://gizmodo.com/russian-chess-playing-robot-breaks-7-year-old-s-finger-1849326936>
- [US Space Force tests robot dogs to patrol Cape Canaveral](https://www.space.com/space-force-robot-dogs-cape-canaveral)
<https://www.space.com/space-force-robot-dogs-cape-canaveral>



Two Ghost Robotics Vision 60 Quadruped Unmanned Ground Vehicles (Q-UGVs) pose for a picture at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., July 28, 2022. (Image credit: U.S. Space Force photo by Senior Airman Samuel Becker)

- **Just how big can a super-Earth get while staying 'habitable'?**
<https://www.space.com/super-earth-exoplanet-habitability-size-constraints>
- **Why is gravity so weak? The answer may lie in the very nature of space-time**
<https://www.space.com/why-is-gravity-so-weak>

TV&MOVIES

Nichelle Nichols, a 'Star Trek' icon,
trailblazer and space advocate, dies at 89



Actress Nichelle Nichols is seen at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, during a 2010 event with LEGO. (Image credit: NASA/Bill Ingalls)

- **Massive megastructures circle the Earth in trailer for sci-fi film 'Orbital'**
<https://www.space.com/orbital-indie-sci-fi-trailer>
- **6-part docuseries honoring Industrial Light & Magic (Star Wars FX)**
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-industrial-light-and-magic-documentary>
- **Everything about Star Wars: Andor - release date, cast, trailers**
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-andor-release-date-trailers-streaming>
- **Cassian Andor strikes back at the Empire in fantastic new 'Andor' trailer from Disney Plus**
<https://www.space.com/andor-trailer-star-wars-disney-plus>
- **The New Dungeons & Dragons Movie Has an Owlbear, Which Rules**
<https://gizmodo.com/dungeons-and-dragons-honor-among-thieves-owlbear-movie-1849348690>
- **'I Am Groot!' Marvel Studios' 1st trailer for 'Guardians of the Galaxy' animated spinoff**
<https://www.space.com/i-am-groot-marvel-disney-plus>
- **Jordan Peele's unsettling new invasion thriller 'Nope' redefines the nature of UFOs**
<https://www.space.com/nope-jordan-peele-review>
- **San Diego Comic Con – COSPLAY costumes**
<https://gizmodo.com/san-diego-comic-con-2022-cosplay-gallery-day-2-1849321813>

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

For Comments: E-mail: leybl_botwinik@yahoo.com. Tel: Leybl Botwinik +972-54-537-7729
Editor: Leybl Botwinik. Founding Editor: Aharon Sheer (א"ר). Logo by: Miriam Ben-Loulu (מ"ל).

For free email delivery (PDF format) write to leybl_botwinik@yahoo.com

Copyright © 2022 — Archives at: <http://www.kulichki.com/antimiry/cybercozen>

Also (archived issues from 2014+) at: <http://fanac.org/fanzines/CyberCozen/>

And <http://efanzines.com/CyberCozen/index.htm>

All rights reserved to specified authors and artists © כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים