

 **The  
MOFET Institute**  
Research Curriculum and Program  
Development for Teacher Educators

**Dor Ledor**

Studies in the History of Jewish Education  
in Israel and the Diaspora XXXVI

# **Children as Avant-Garde Childhood and Adolescence in Times of Crises and Social Change**

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## Abstracts of Papers

### **Zohar Shavit/ Children as Agents of the Hebrew Revolution**

During the first decades of the 20th century, children of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Eretz Israel) were recruited by cultural entrepreneurs and culture planners to advance the Hebrew revolution. Political and cultural leaders employed the education system, particularly the kindergartens, to promote Hebrew as a national language that would dominate all spheres of life.

A variety of primary historical sources – political articles, protocols, interviews, and autobiographies – testify to the special role assigned to children as champions of the Hebrew revolution. It would be the children who, with the help of their teachers, would acquire the language in kindergarten and at school; they would be the ones to use it for all their needs, daily and otherwise; and they would bring Hebrew into both the home and the public arena.

Many of the Yishuv's leaders, such as Menahem Ussishkin and Zeev Jabotinsky, saw the construction of Hebrew culture in Eretz Israel as a national project that had far-reaching political implications. The school teachers and kindergarten teachers became the most important cultural entrepreneurs both because they took an active part in propagating the Hebrew language and in creating its new repertoire and because they could turn the children into effective agents of the Hebraization project. The article analyzes the various activities of political leaders and teachers, as well as the methods whereby they carried out the Hebraization project among children and their parents.