

# A collection of Histadrut posters designed by the Shamir brothers

Yoram E. Shamir & Uri Shamir 24 May 2020

Posters pasted on billboards in the streets or in the workplace were the communication media of the Histadrut to its members and to a wider audience.



The Histadrut

From its inception, on December 4, 1920, the founders of the Histadrut, the General Workers' Union in Palestine, had aspirations above and beyond a trade union designed to protect the rights of its members. A major goal was to build an infrastructure for the Jewish settlement through its working communities, workers neighbourhoods and developing essential industries such as water, transportation, food, construction and immigrant absorption plans. The heads of the Histadrut were aware of the need to recruit its members for these tasks. The communication media in the early years were limited. Only a few households had the means to purchase a newspaper or radio subscription. The poster affixed to billboards in the streets or workplaces was a means of reaching the widest audience - even beyond the members of the Histadrut. The Histadrut newspapers 'Davar' and 'Omer' also needed outdoor advertising to promote their distribution.



Davar - Newspaper of Palestine workers



Omer – A daily paper for immigrants. Hebrew with vowel marks

The brothers Gabriel and Maxim Shamir specialized in designing posters in their studio in Riga, Latvia. With their immigration to Israel in the mid-1930s, they opened their studio in Tel Aviv. Among the first works was a poster for the Levant Fair and posters for 'Hapoel' - the Histadrut sports association. Their relationship with the Histadrut and all its branches lasted 40 years



Hapoel Sport Association



Hapoel Games 1966

Twice every year, the Histadrut's public relations efforts were concentrated on these festivals: 1st May - the International Workers' Day, and the Histadrut Day - the anniversary of the establishment of the Histadrut. Both festivals were celebrated with parades, rallies, parties and family events. The Histadrut's contemporary messages were expressed in the posters.



May 1<sup>st</sup> 1953 - We are free people



May 1<sup>st</sup> - Immigration



May 1<sup>st</sup> 1954 One hand working , one holding the sword

The Histadrut Day posters featured the tasks of a trade union: recruiting members, protecting employees, and partnering in the struggle of the workers. But even for the Histadrut day, the posters reflected national priorities – strengthening the State and security.



30 anniversary -  
Join the Histadrut



Your fate is in your  
hands



Your answer to shutdown:  
Strike Fund



Unemployment Fund



Together toward our goal



53 anniversary – One hand  
working, one with a sword

Shamir worked for the Council of women Workers and for the journal "Dvar Hapoalel" and included female figures in posters alongside the industrial and agricultural workers.



Women Workers  
International Day



40 anniversary of women  
workers magazine

During the pre-state period, the Histadrut undertook tasks typical of a government, along with the mandate government and the Jewish Agency and continued doing so in the first decades of the State. During the Great Aliyah, the Histadrut was mobilised to build housing for immigrants and supported Hebrew studies. During the austerity, the Histadrut participated in the struggle against the black market and encouraged the transition from the city to farming. During the difficult years of the fight against infiltration, the Histadrut focused on helping border settlements.



May 1<sup>st</sup> 1952 –Our home is your home



Volunteer to build homes for immigrants



Hebrew- A bridge to life in Israel



The profiteer is your enemy



From the city to the village



From the city to the village

The Shamir brothers, the designers of the state emblem, naturally combined their creation into several posters, using realistic or symbolic styles, as well as using the national flag in both styles; Thus reflecting the identification of the workers' union with the nation.



Israel's independence depends on the worker's strength



48 anniversary of the Histadrut

**All the posters in the article are from the Shamir Brothers Collection, the National Library's Ephemera Collection**



### Yoram E. Shamir and Uri Shamir

**Yoram E. Shamir:** Editor of [www.shamir-brothers.com](http://www.shamir-brothers.com) Since retiring from Tel Aviv University, where he served as Director of Public Affairs, Yoram Shamir became Researcher and Curator of Graphic Exhibitions. He edited "Only a Shout" - The Jabotinsky Institute Poster Collection" and "The Shamir Brothers – Designers who Became an Icon". At the National Library site, he (together with Rotem Kislev) curated "*Football under His Majesty's Auspices*". Yoram Shamir is a son and nephew of the Shamir brothers.

**Uri Shamir:** Manages the Shamir Brothers website and is editor of the English content. Uri was one of the earliest members of Mamram and worked all his life in the computer industry, most notably at Xerox and EDS, where he participated in some of the world's largest outsourcing projects of the time. He is the youngest son of Maxim Shamir. The Shamir family has permitted the National Library to use digital copies of Shamir work as part of the National Library's "Time Travel" project in collaboration with the University of California.