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Avi Picard

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Biography

Avi Picard is a visiting scholar from Israel. His specialty is Israeli society with an emphasis on ethnicity and the mass immigration in the 1950's. His Ph.D. dissertation (written in the History department at Ben Gurion University of the Negev) is about the immigration from North Africa to Israel in the 1950's and the way it was absorbed into Israeli society.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, he was a Fulbright fellow at the Taub Center for Israel Studies at New York University. During 2006-2007 academic year he was a Schusterman visiting professor for Israel studies at the University of Maryland in College Park and during 2007-2008 he will be a Schusterman visiting professor for Israel studies at Rutgers – Newark University.

He has published academic articles on immigration, development towns in Israel and about the Shas political movement (Sephardic ultra-orthodox party). He has also written about Israeli history and society in newspapers and magazines such as Ha'aretz Book Review, Azure and Makor Rishon.

Dr. Picard taught at Ben Gurion University, Achva Academic College and Hertzog College in Israel. In 2006-2007 he was a Schusterman visiting professor for Israel studies at the University of Maryland.

"My interest in Ethnic issues is not only academic. I have chosen to live in a development town (one of the communities established by the Israeli government in the 1950's and populated by new immigrants, generally from North Africa) for ideological reasons. I live in Yerucham, a small and disadvantaged city in the Negev desert. I played a part in the establishment of "Midreshet Be'Yahad" – a Seminar Center in Yerucham dealing with social issues, Judaism and Zionism, social gaps, and core-periphery relations. In Israel, I lectured about Israeli society in courses for teachers, youth movements, and student groups for social involvement.