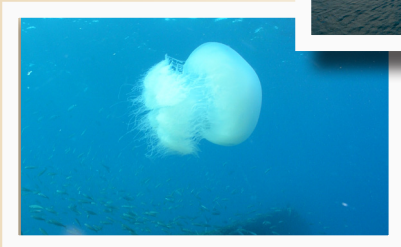
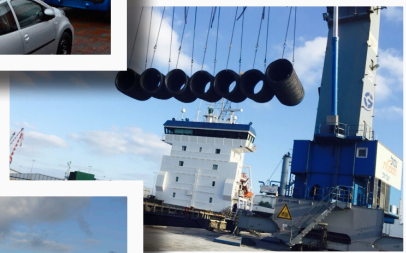
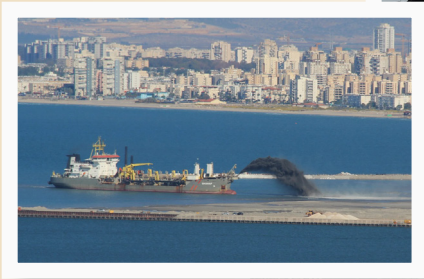


MARITIME STRATEGIC EVALUATION FOR ISRAEL 2018/19

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Profession Naftali Heinz Wydra / An Exhibition in his Memory

Ido Gilad

Professor Naftali Wydra was one of the fathers of Israeli shipping and the founder of the Wydra Institute of Shipping and Aviation Research. He was born in Leipzig, Germany in October 1909 and in 1933 made aliyah to Israel, after completing his doctorate in Law, Justice and Economics. Since then, he lived and worked in Haifa until his death in 1987.



During the years 1936–1947, he was the head of the Maritime Department of the Jewish Agency, where he developed the research of fishing in Israel, along with the establishment of fishing-based settlements along the coast of the Mediterranean and Lake Kinneret. These settlements were also connected to the activity of the Palyam¹ and the Aliyah B Mossad.² Wydra saw to the introduction of Jewish labor in the ports of Israel. At the same time, he worked to organize the training for 'maritime enterprises and occupations' in Israel as part of the Maritime School that was established near the Technion in Haifa (in 1938). At the request of Dr. Reuven Hecht, an old friend from his youth in Leipzig, Wydra was among the founders of the Dagon Group already in 1948 and served as a member of the Board of Directors and the Managing Committee of the Company until his death.

For two decades (1947–1966), he headed the Kedem Company, the first partnership company of Zim, and the owner of the first ship—the Kedma, and primarily as part of the Executive of Zim, as co-CEO and as CEO. Under his management, Zim grew to a fleet of about 150 ships, including passenger ships, tankers, cargo ships, and bulk ships. Of those, 70 were owned by the Company. In addition, during his tenure, 17

1 The military maritime branch of the Palmach.

2 A branch of the Haganah that served as the organizing body of the Yishuv leadership for clandestine immigration.

fixed shipping routes were established, as well as shipping services between foreign ports, which were also used by partnership companies from developing states.

During the period 1969-1981, Wydra served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Israel Ports Authority. This was a period in which there was significant development of the ports and in particular they were prepared for the handling of containers. In 1969, he established the Israeli Institute for the Research of Shipping, which later was renamed the Wydra Institute of Shipping and Aviation Research. Its goal was to study shipping in the State of Israel from an academic and independent perspective, while creating a high-quality database that would support decision making in maritime transportation, port planning and development, port-city relations, sea/coast interfaces, maritime history, exploitation of maritime resources, territorial rights and maritime law, ecology, international collaborations, etc.

Wydra was a member of the founding generation of the State and focused on "capturing the sea", which according to his view was intended to meet Israel's need to build an important maritime link to the world (in the absence of a safe land connection). His work was based on a Zionist vision but he was also influenced by German culture (a "yekke" in the classic and positive sense of the word, as a person who is precise, fair and level-headed and who is constantly aspiring to rationality and perfection). He viewed the integration of the Jewish people in general and the members of the Jewish 'Yishuv' in the Land of Israel in particular, among "seafarers" who are involved in fishing, seamanship and shipping, while at the same time coping with the forces of nature, as an important value. In his endeavors, he showed a spirit of perseverance which led to the development of the Hebrew fleet and Hebrew shipping despite the huge challenges.

His vision encompassed a variety of domains: the connection between the coast, the port and the sea; between the sailors and their ships; between Israel and other nations of the world; between the maritime reality which is a given and that which will develop in the future; and between thinking and doing. All these came together in the broad maritime domain – the "wide open sea"³, in the context of defense, economics, trade, the creation of a shipping and fishing infrastructure in Israel, modern technological development, education and occupational training, creation

3 Maximal development of the sea space, which means "to develop the maritime domain in all its aspects, with a broad and long-term perspective" from Gur Lavi (ed.) (2017), "A Model and Methodology for a Maritime Strategy for Israel," Haifa: Haifa University Press, Maritime Policy & Strategy Research Center, p. 6.

of standards and research. All these are part of providing a long-term solution in a changing reality.

Following is an excerpt from his writings from 1943:

At the end of the first decade of our sea endeavors, since the 'Yishuv' in Israel began to systematically develop its maritime projects, the foundations have been laid that will facilitate development on a much greater scale in the future. The development of Jewish maritime endeavor in Israel is conditional on the combination of three factors: Jewish-owned ships under an Israeli flag, Jewish workers and a Jewish-Israeli organizational framework that knows how to manage a maritime business. Wydra, N. (1943).⁴

As a result of his leadership role in the “capture of the sea”, his talent and his achievements, Wydra became a well-known figure also among maritime circles worldwide. For this and more, Haifa University had the honor of granting Naftali Wydra the degree of Associate Expert Professor and the Haifa Municipality named him as one of the “city’s notables” and named a square after him at the suburb of Kiryat Eliezer, which is near the Maritime Museum and the Museum of Clandestine; Immigration and the Navy. The commemoration of his legacy continues today—the staff of the Maritime Policy & Strategy Research Center has created a modest exhibition in the library of Haifa University in honor of Naftali Heinz Wydra z”l and his work, in cooperation with the daughters of the Wydra family.

The Professor Naftali Wydra Research Institute at Haifa University

Professor Wydra founded the Chair for the Study of Shipping, Ports and the Sea at Haifa University. He was a trustee and chairman of the University’s managerial board. In 1987, the last year of his life, he had the Institute for Shipping Research, which he founded in 1969, transferred to the University. According to his vision, he foresaw the added research value and academic spirit of the Institute under the auspices of the University. Thus, members of the University’s faculty, led by Professor Yehuda Hayut and Ms. Leah Romi, were closely involved in the work of the Institute throughout its years of activity. Other researchers from various academic disciplines also provided backing and support to the Institute. They provided a professional envelope to meet the Institute’s research and publishing needs. They included researchers from the departments of geography, economics and maritime civilization, as well as from other faculties that had some connection to maritime subjects.

4 “Achievements and Prospects” in “Ofek” a magazine published by the Hahovel Hayami Leyisrael, Haifa.

The Institute library has become a unique and comprehensive center of information for those in the maritime domain. The Institute has provided professional assessments and consultation, as well as mediation services in economic matters connected to shipping, in collaboration and coordination with the Chair for the Study of Shipping, Ports and the Sea.

The growing importance of the sea as part of Israel's strategic resilience has provided leverage for the development and deepened academic involvement in this domain. The relevance of the sea led in 2017 to a decision by the Executive of the University to include the Institute as a division of the Maritime Policy & Strategy Research Center under the leadership of Professor Shaul Chorev. The Center is part of Haifa University's leading role in the activity of the Inter-Institutional Mediterranean Sea Research Center of Israel (MERC I),⁵ whose goal is to deal with a diversity of scientific, technological, economic, security and environmental challenges that affect the development of Israel's maritime domain.

The Exhibition in Memory of Professor Wydra at the Haifa University Library

To mark 70 years since the founding of the State and to honor the establishment of the productive and educational infrastructure for the domain of shipping and ports, led by Professor Wydra, a modest exhibition in his honor has been put together at Haifa University. The exhibition includes three generations of endeavor: the first and founding generation which produced the legacy of Professor Wydra and the second and third generations—the daughter and granddaughter of Professor Wydra—who have added an artistic dimension to the exhibit by including their works. The theme of the artwork is the legacy of their father/grandfather and includes motifs that were significant in his life and his work, namely the sea, water and the coast.

We would like to thank the artists:

Yael-Lala Wydra-Yanur – daughter

Li Yanur – granddaughter

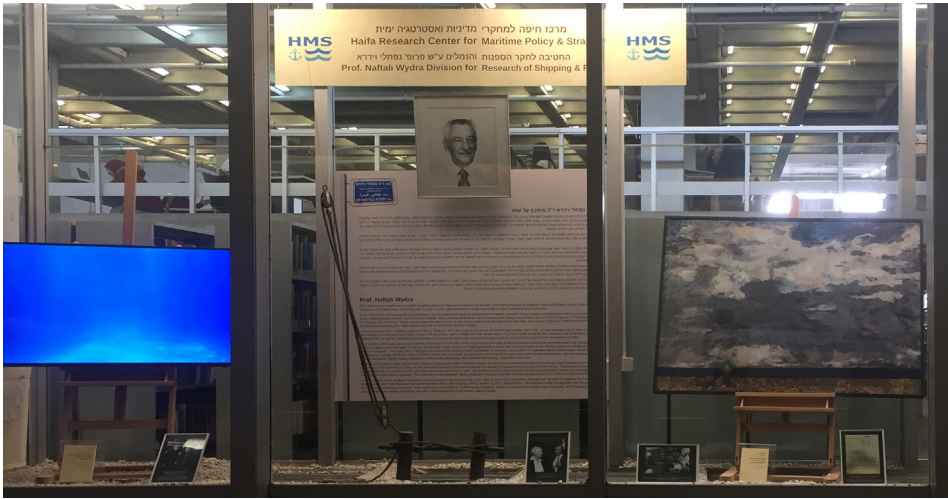
5 MERC I – Mediterranean Sea Research Center of Israel <http://merci.haifa.ac.il>



Naftali Wydra with David Ben Gurion



Wydra Square, Haifa



Wydra Presentation at the library of the university of Haifa