

**ASSASSINATIONS AND POLITICAL TRIALS: THE ROLE OF THE  
COURTS IN TWO CASE STUDIES**

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes the ways in which social ideological conflicts are reflected in courts decisions in criminal trials of individuals who are associated with political assassinations. It investigates two case studies: the case of Margalit Har-Shefi related to Rabin's assassination, and the case of Mary Surratt related to Lincoln's assassination. The study of these cases shows that the tendencies to put the blame for the assassinations on more than one individual perpetrator, as well as the ideological splits that threatened the two societies, are reflected in the court decisions and in the public's response to them. It also emphasizes the prices, in terms of the rights of the accused, embodied in the promotion of social and political agendas through the legal tool of political trials.

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