BEN-GURION'S CONCEPT OF *MAMLAHTIUT* AND THE FORMING REALITY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL[1]

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Ben-Gurion's concept of mamlahtiut *was at the center of his political ideology. It entailed not only the vision of an independent Jewish state, but primarily a set of principles and modes of operation which he deemed essential for the formation of the state and considered highly critical for its preservation.*

Ben-Gurion's ideological view of the state and statehood grew out of a critical perception of Jewish history. As such, it constituted an ideology of transition and transformation from a prolonged diaspora and communal organization to a sovereign state, as well as an expanding view of the legitimate functions and possible capabilities of the modern democratic state. Indeed, the concept of mamlahtiut *acquired its most conclusive, concrete and controversial significance during the political crises in the first formative years of the newly born state. The major issues of controversy between Ben-Gurion and his critics at that time related to the question of the authority and the functions of the state versus those of voluntary, primarily labor, associations and institutions which, in the absence of sovereignty, fulfilled executive governing roles in the pre-state era.*

This article discusses the origins of Ben-Gurion's concept of mamlahtiut, *the principles embedded in it, and his leadership initiatives to implement them.*

The concept of statehood, namely, the salvation of the Jewish people through a homeland and a state in the Land of Israel, is at the core of the Zionist ideology. Ben-Gurion's concept of *mamlahtiut* (literally, the abstract form of *mamlaha*, kingdom in Hebrew, which signifies statehood), added another dimension to it. Ben-Gurion strove to define a set of principles and establish modes of operation which he deemed essential for the formation of the state and considered highly critical for its preservation. As such, the concept of *mamlahtiut* constituted an ideology of transition and transformation from a prolonged diaspora, and more concretely from the semi-autonomous political community in Palestine (the Yishuv) into a politically sovereign state. This ideology and its underlying principles grew out of a critical perception of Jewish history and the organized political community which

preceded the state, as well as an expanding view of the legitimate functions and possible capabilities of the modern democratic state.

In May 1948, Ben-Gurion inherited a voluntary, semi-autonomous, political governmental system composed of the pioneering groups organized into political parties and camps and federated together through the "national institutions" of the Yishuv and world Zionism — the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Vaad HaLeumi, and the World Zionist Organization. Prior to the establishment of the state, they had conducted their common business through a politics of negotiation and compromise based on the voluntary nature of their organizations.

Ben-Gurion did not question the indispensable role of voluntary and autonomous pioneer associations within the newly-formed state, but insisted on redefining the boundaries between the former and the latter. He was all engrossed by the task of state-building and was sensitive primarily to the functional and structural needs of this process, and increasingly more apprehensive of the possible encroachment on the authority and the legitimate functions of the state by partisan organizations in the tradition of the non-sovereign political community. Ben-Gurion sought to assert as early as possible and in full the newly acquired legal authority of the governing institutions of the state, and to restructure its political system. He opted for a clear and radical departure from the overly divisive political structure, permissive coalition politics, and conditional attitude to governing authorities which were all part of the pre-state communal political tradition. Ben-Gurion's approach placed him in a state of conflict with former communal forces which were either slow or resistant in restructuring and adapting to the new ground rules of the political system of the state. Ben-Gurion emerged during that period as a revolutionary leader not only because of his efforts to form the state, but also for his attempt to make state formation a turning point in Jewish history through a process of radical political change.[2]

The internal political crises that appeared in the process of transition from a community to a state related to the status and future of pre-state communal institutions: the future of the Palmach and the integration of the Irgun Zvai Leumi into the newly-formed state army; the role of the Histadrut in the areas of defense, elementary education, employment service, and public health within a politically sovereign state; and the renewed claim of the kibbutz movement to be recognized as an exclusive pioneer institution even after the foundation of the state. These crises were either triggered or exacerbated by a conflict of political orientation — between the old and well-entrenched communal political tradition and Ben-Gurion's efforts to circumscribe it.

Questions of institutional roles were intertwined in this debate with questions of social status, political power and ideological supremacy. The institutions that benefited the most from the communal

structure in these terms wanted to restrain the assertion of the new state in areas which were formerly defined as pioneer or voluntary.

Ben-Gurion undertook the initiative in these debates as he did in developing and articulating a general concept of the state. He did so even at the cost of provoking crisis, and in doing so clearly preferred an early and radical solution of the crises of authority and functional responsibility over the solution of the crises of unity in the new state. The successive political crises which he either initiated or brought to a head, regenerated the hostilities of the past among Israeli parties and leaders. However, a common or similar solution can be identified in all these crises, which were finally resolved with the victory of Ben-Gurion's coalition of forces. These solutions contributed to the crystallizing concept of statehood and provided in time the basis for a consensual approach to the state — confirming the authority of its governing institutions within a democratic structure, drawing the line between the "state" and the "party" through a unified army under the sole supervision of the state, a state system of elementary education, and the acceptance of the principle of a de-politicized civil service.

A Critical View of Jewish History

Ben-Gurion was anxious to solve a critical problem in Jewish history vis-a-vis the state rather than to declare the state omnipotent. He was immensely and constantly concerned by the historical failure of the Jewish people to save their ancient state and by the absence of a collective tradition of statehood in their prolonged exile. On the one hand, the Jewish people demonstrated a rare collective skill at survival (in his writings he mentions a special Jewish "vitamin of existence"), on the other, the Jews were removed *as a people* from the realities and the responsibilities of a state during their sojourn in the diaspora. The formation of the restored state of Israel thus required, in his mind, a transformation of political skill and constitutional orientation.

In a letter to one of the founding fathers of the Zionist agricultural settlements in Palestine, Menahem Ussishkin, written on November 11, 1936, Ben-Gurion quoted a British friend who maintained that the Jewish people had shown prophetic capabilities but lacked those needed to maintain a state.[3] Ben-Gurion painfully accepted this critical historical comment, and then moved on to discuss the historical failure of ancient Judea to preserve its independence. He ascribed this turn of events to a lack of unity, to the failure to identify the approaching signs of danger, and to effectively organize to face them. Finally, and most critically, he pointed to the absence of political skill and statesmanship that could have prevented the catastrophe — the

destruction of the Second Temple and the independent Jewish state. Ben-Gurion writes in this letter:

> During the time of the First Temple we did not conquer the entire country, and we maintained our independence only for a few years because we were always divided and quarreled among ourselves, and the nations around "ate us with every mouth." First Israel fell, and then came the turn of Judea, and only a few returned until Ezra and Nehemiah; and even then, we returned only to a small portion of the country and were not independent except for a brief period at the end of the Hasmonean era. Internal strife broke out immediately and the weaker party invited Rome, which hastened to our aid, took over the country and destroyed us all. When the sword of destruction hung over Jerusalem — the Zealots slaughtered one another and Jerusalem turned into shambles. The legions of Rome would not have destroyed the country if the Jews had not prepared the ground for it. At the time of the gravest danger in our history — before the destruction of the Second Temple — the Jews did not know how to unite, did not identify the external dangers, and did not find in themselves the political talent to prevent the catastrophe, which would have been averted if such a talent had been found in the Jewish people at that time.
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> Even the few sages who could see into the future — or the one and very special among them — understood the importance of saving "Yavneh and its sages." "Yavneh and its sages" are important, but they do not constitute a Jewish state; and did we come over here, the people of Bilu, the members of the Second Aliyah and the New Aliyah — to build in this country "Yavneh and its sages?" And under the auspices of the Mufti?! We want to build a state, and we shall not be able to do so without political thought, political talent and political prudence. High-flown phrases, vision and emotion alone are not sufficient to build a state; they may be sufficient for "*Netsah Yisrael*" or existence in the diaspora, for maintaining a yeshiva, a university and a rabbinical court — but not for the construction of a state.
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> No external danger, even the worst one, has frightened me, but I am horrified by the internal danger — the danger of political blindness, the light-heartedness with which we relate to dangers that threaten us; the naivete with which we attempt to solve complicated questions,...the lack of talent to understand each other and appreciate each other's difficulties; and lack of talent to act as one entity in which a single member bends his will to that of the majority. We always behaved this way in difficult crises in our history. We did not disappear from the face of the earth as other nations did, but we failed to remain independent in our homeland;

we failed to save our state. This time our task is not to maintain a state but to build it; this constitutes a much more difficult political skill, and I do not see that we know it....

In the conflict of orientation symbolized by two historic Jewish leaders, Raban Yochanan Ben Zakai, who gave up hope in the great rebellion against the Romans in 70 AD, left the walls of besieged Jerusalem and established a religious center in Yavneh, and Bar Kochba, who led the second, futile, Jewish rebellion against the Roman Empire 62 years after the great rebellion, Ben-Gurion's heart was with a third leader, Rabbi Akiba, whom he described as "the greatest Jew after the destruction of the Temple."[4]

Raban Ben Zakai personified in Ben-Gurion's eyes the exclusive commitment to the spiritual element in Judaism; Bar Kochba personified the commitment to independence even against impossible odds; and Rabbi Akiba — the effort to reconcile between the two commitments. Rabbi Akiba actively supported Bar Kochba's rebellion, but still provided a desirable synthesis between the state-temporal and the religious-spiritual elements in Judaism.

While the Jewish problem of statehood had already been exposed in the Land of Israel in ancient times, another dimension was added to it during the prolonged exile. The diaspora bequeathed to the Jewish people norms and habits which conflicted with those needed to maintain an independent state. "We brought with us from the diaspora customs of disintegration, anarchy, lack of national responsibility and unity, and a lack of capacity to distinguish between what is truly important and what is trivial, what is permanent and what is transient."[5] The efforts to restore the Jewish state in Israel must, therefore, overcome two difficult national traditions: a problematic history as an independent state in antiquity and the absence of a collective tradition of statehood as a scattered people in the diaspora.

The Jewish community in Palestine, especially the pioneer sector in it, was impressively successful in creating an alternative society which brought the people close again to its land.[6] However even this community was not able to eradicate destructive elements of public life that were acquired in the diaspora: primarily, excessive divisions and precarious acceptance of the collective national authority. The key to the rehabilitation of the national skill and aptitude for statehood is thus to be found in the realm of political reform. Hence Ben-Gurion's master strategy called for an abrupt, revolutionary departure from the traditions of the past, which failed the Jewish people, through the establishment of a democratic framework that would arrest disunity and encourage responsibility and accountability in government. He was hopeful that the adaptive capabilities of the Jewish people would respond creatively, under proper constitutional arrangements, to the new

reality of an independent state.[7] However, this transition required a process of reeducation and rigorous social and political engineering. The pursuance of the principles that may be found in Ben-Gurion's concept of statehood was supposed to make this transition possible and durable.

The Acceptance of the Authority of the Governing Authorities of the State

From Ben-Gurion's point of view, the commitment to this principle even preceded the establishment of the state. He considered the Yishuv a transient community on its way to becoming a state, and viewed the voluntary adoption of this principle in relation to the organized national institutions as a mandatory condition for the future attainment of a sovereign state, as well as a necessary educational process leading to it. In the absence of legal sanction, the national institutions failed to prevent secession from both their political and military institutions and were faced with the need to reach wide and recurrent political agreements and encourage maximal political participation in order to establish authority without sovereignty.[8] These organized institutions were nevertheless successful in maintaining, even restoring, an impressive degree of unity in the process of transition to a state, making it possible to solve the constitutional and almost all institutional issues involved without crisis.[9] Nevertheless, these promising initial conditions of statehood did not prevent the eventual appearance of major crises of integration and authority in the army. The outcome of such a crisis is always the ultimate test in the forming process of a state.[10]

Immediately after the foundation of the state, the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel — the anti-British underground which operated outside the organized Jewish political community and was supported by the Revisionists) voluntarily signed an agreement with the state defense authorities undertaking to dismantle its organization and be integrated into the army of the state. However, this agreement did not apply to Jerusalem, whose status was not clear at that crucial time and which was under Arab military siege. The formerly secessionist military organizations (Etzel and Lehi — Lohamei Herut Yisrael, the ultra-extreme breakaway group) were thus given a de facto license to continue to maintain, without legal challenge, separate organizations in the besieged city. If there was any special purpose for this condition other than the force of circumstances it has not yet been exposed, but one may assume that this volatile political and legal situation in Jerusalem offered certain advantages to the provisional government. The latter claimed legitimacy for the state on the basis of the UN Partition Resolution — according to which Jerusalem was supposed to be an

international city — while in fact the government refused vehemently to abide by it, especially in face of the Arab attempt to undo the entire resolution by force of its invading armies. The continued existence of the Etzel units in Jerusalem, which obviously needed fresh supplies and armaments, and the emerging clash between pre-state and post-state political orientations, led to the Altalena affair which posed a violent challenge to the unity of the infant state.

The Altalena was a former American navy ship that carried several hundred members of Etzel and a cargo full of weapons and ammunition from France to Israel.[11] It was supposed to arrive before the proclamation of the state in order to strengthen Etzel's military capability toward the end of the British mandatory regime; however, because of difficulties in obtaining the weapons it arrived only after it, during the first UN-imposed cease-fire. The ship actually left France without the explicit orders of the Etzel command in Israel. Learning of its departure, Menachem Begin stood by the dismantling agreement and turned to the authorities of the state for instructions. The latter ordered the ship to dock and unload in secrecy (because of the provisional cessation of hostilities agreement) near Moshav Kfar Vitkin, midway between Haifa and Tel Aviv. However, Ben-Gurion's government refused then to accept Begin's demands concerning the distribution of weapons and the responsibility for unloading the ship, after some misunderstanding and even conflicting versions concerning this issue.

The critical fact remained that in the absence of an agreement with the defense authorities, the former commanders of the Etzel resorted fairly quickly to pre-state politics, attempting to unload the ship without either the sanction or the assistance of the provisional government. The former soldiers of Etzel deserted their newly-formed army units for this purpose and concentrated on the coast at Kfar Vitkin. Begin was confident that the provisional government would refrain from the use of force in dealing with this act of defiance but would seek compromise and agreement, in keeping with the communal political tradition. Hence, he even ignored a military ultimatum handed to him against the unloading of the ship and possession of its weapons. Facing military action, the former commanders of Etzel chose a split strategy: they signed an agreement putting an end to the hostilities in Kfar Vitkin and isolated most of their men from the ensuing conflict; however, Begin himself boarded the ship which, together with the people on board and the rest of the cargo, broke the naval blockade placed by the state's new navy and sailed for Tel Aviv, where Etzel enjoyed substantial support, especially on the outskirts of the city. An act of defiance in Kfar Vitkin turned into an open and potentially violent challenge to the authority of the provisional government on the shores and in the streets of Tel Aviv.

The Altalena affair exposed from the start a conflict of political

orientations between Menachem Begin, the former Etzel commander, and Ben-Gurion as prime minister. Begin, who did recognize the authority of the state and was prepared to dismantle his once-secessionist organization, expected the government to treat the Altalena affair as possibly the last crisis of pre-state politics, or to solve it through a negotiated compromise in the communal tradition; while Ben-Gurion was resolved to treat it as the first crisis of the newly-sovereign state and to deal with it within the newly-acquired sanction of law. He gave orders to shell the ship and then moved gradually but firmly to put an end to the last vestige of military secession. For him the authority of the state was the chief issue in this crisis rather than an argument over the allocation of weapons or the responsibility for unloading the ship.

The time to seek agreement over the authority of the national institutions had passed, never to return, so if "there is sufficient force," he wrote to Yisrael Galili, his leading military lieutenant, "it must be used at once and without hesitation."[12] He feared that any vacillation or compromise at that critical time would resurrect the historical internal threat of a larger civil war that had wreaked destruction on ancient Judea. Unity, according to Ben-Gurion's view of the state, must not necessarily be based on agreement and compromise but always on the recognition of the legally-constituted authorities of the state. The solution of the Altalena affair paved the way to his subsequent efforts to dismantle the Palmach and to draw the line between the "party" and the "state" within a unified and uniform state army.

Ben-Gurion's zealous view of the sovereignty of the state in its infancy was also reflected, though in an entirely different form, in the debate over the status of the Zionist movement after the proclamation of the state. Ben-Gurion rejected any notion, as vague as it may have been at the time, of sharing sovereignty even with the Jewish people of the diaspora and criticized any attempt on the part of Jewish leaders to interfere in Israel's internal affairs (for example, the participation of the American Jewish leaders Abba Hillel Silver and Emanuel Newman in the Israeli electoral campaign of 1951). He proposed to reorganize the Zionist movement and redefine its Zionist commitment in a very narrow sense (a Zionist to him was one who intends to immigrate to Israel), but he was also prepared and actually proposed to accord the Zionist movement the legal right to conduct operations within the state in the areas of settlement and immigration.[13]

Drawing the Boundaries Between the State and the Political Party

Ben-Gurion was far from being a critic of the institution of the political party per se. He himself was a builder and a long-time successful leader of a political party — Mapai. He believed in the indispensable role of parties in democratic regimes and till the end of his political career viewed the institution of the party as a critical instrument for political reform. However, the party, according to Ben-Gurion's view of the state, should aspire to and democratically compete for the opportunity to lead the state but should not be allowed to create a direct particularistic link with the civil service, the army, or any other administrative institution of the state. His attempt to enforce this principle in the formative period of the state conflicted with a deeply-rooted tradition of over-politicization and role expansion of political parties and their related institutions in the pre-state political community.

The intended radical change in the character of the civil service was initially received with varying degrees of acceptance. It was implemented, however, in a slow and incomplete manner: first on the basis of a coalition agreement in 1949 which adopted the principle of tests conducted by an independent commission as the only entry requirement to civil service; subsequently, on the basis of a state law (1959). The implementation of this law was hindered to some debatable extent by newly-created legitimate ways to circumscribe it; however, it was significantly aided by the civil servants themselves, even those who were initially appointed through partisan ties. These groups were naturally interested in obtaining clear lines of promotion within the civil service immune to external interference.

Ben-Gurion's move to depoliticize the civil service was only one departure from the previous norms of governing coalitions. He pressed to radically modify these and introduced three changes in the making and character of the coalition government: 1) the formation of a limited-majority coalition in the Knesset, with a majority party (his own — Mapai) at its center; 2) the formation of the coalition government on the basis of a negotiated program and the principles of coalition discipline and collective responsibility; 3) the depoliticization of the civil service, and consequently restricted coalition rewards. In the absence of a majority party in the Knesset a coalition government remained a necessity, but the creation of a limited-majority coalition in the Knesset still made it possible to have a majority party in government. This critical change served Mapai well and concluded its emergence as the dominant party in Israel in the first two formative decades in its

history.[14] The Israeli Labor party, which was founded in 1968 by Mapai and two parties that had split from it in the past — Ahdut Haavoda and Rafi, were successful in maintaining the ruling position of Mapai until 1977.

Ben-Gurion did not reject in principle the formation of a coalition government which, after all, represented the possible fulfillment of his declared goal of national unity. However, he wished to make this difficult form of government compatible with authority and responsibility. Turning it into an optional form of government on the basis of a majority party in the Knesset was obviously Ben-Gurion's preferred way to achieve this reform in full. However, he was repeatedly denied that option by the Israeli voters. So he opted to consolidate the coalition government by limiting its scope — maintaining a dominant position for his party in government in terms of allocation of ministries and assuming a leadership position in parliament on behalf of the government — and by reducing the actual role of minor parties in it and pressuring them to conform to his centralized concept of the coalition government and act according to the principles of collective responsibility and coalition discipline.

Ben-Gurion's assertive and authoritative style at the head of the coalition government contributed to the relatively large number of coalition crises throughout his regime, but it did not risk an end to rule by his party.[15] Mapai enjoyed a singularly strategic position in the Israeli party system throughout his tenure. It was the only party that could form and lead a coalition government in a defused system in which a divided opposition enjoyed only a precarious legitimacy on the political right and the political left. Ben-Gurion's prime ministership established the foundation for an alternative coalition tradition which benefited his successors in office. However, the pre-state communal coalition tradition resurfaced after 1977, not only through the pressure of minor coalition partners to resume the permissive practices of the past, but also through the more relaxed attitude of Menachem Begin to the coalition form of government and eventually through the optimal expansion of the principle of coalition in the governments of national unity — most noticeably and to a fuller extent in the unity government of 1984.[16]

Ben-Gurion's attempt to draw a line between the army and the political party created the second crisis of integration in the formation of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). It did not produce a violent confrontation as in the case of the Altalena affair, which involved an external, even illegitimate, military group. However, it did produce a long, difficult, and potentially equally harmful political conflict, especially within the Israeli labor movement, since it involved the Palmach — the most important elite group in the defense establishment before the foundation of the state, which continued to play a major role in the

formation of the IDF and controlled its most celebrated division.[17] The Palmach was the only fully mobilized unit of the Haganah and it bore the brunt of combat in the War of Independence.

The Palmach was in many ways the creation of the kibbutz movement, primarily Hakibbutz Hameuhad — the largest kibbutz movement in the 1940s. The decision to form the Palmach was taken in 1941 by the representatives of the labor movement in the national command of the Haganah at a time when the representatives of the political right were absent from its deliberations because of a dispute over organizational matters. But it was Hakibbutz Hameuhad that undertook the task of building and nurturing the Palmach, even protecting it from the pressures and temptations to disband and enlist in the British Army during the Second World War. Most of the units of the Palmach were stationed in kibbutz settlements; almost all of its commanders and at times even a majority of its soldier-members, who were largely graduates of the pioneer youth movements and organized in collective groups preparing for pioneering life on a kibbutz, belonged to this leading kibbutz movement. The latter undertook the initiative and were in fact given the opportunity to develop and mold the Palmach according to its political ideology, believing in an activist defense posture vis-a-vis the British and the Arabs in Palestine, and preferring to make a last stand against the Nazis in Palestine, if they ever arrived, over any other alternative. The Palmach thus played a critical role in this strategy.

Moreover, the kibbutz movement made a genuine effort to develop the Palmach as a spinoff of its collective and egalitarian social norms, minimizing the adoption of professional military values. The Palmach was indeed built as a special brand of a popular army or highly civilianized military unit with a clear political orientation, even open partisan association, in its command. At first, the Palmach's command group belonged to Ahdut Haavoda, which was led by a majority group in the leadership of Hakibbutz Hameuhad. Subsequently, they were affiliated with the Marxist-leftist and pro-Soviet Mapam which was founded by this group of leaders and the leadership of Hakibbutz Haartzi. Mapam became even more radicalized after the foundation of the state. Only its adherence to the Zionist creed kept it within the Zionist organization and prevented it from becoming an integral part of the Communist revolutionary camp at the time. Subsequently, in the mid-1950s, the two kibbutz movements that led Mapam started moving back gradually toward the social democratic mainstream of the Israeli labor movement.

The IDF was built on the foundation of the Haganah. The Palmach, which was an integral part of the Haganah, brought into the new formation a separate general staff that was still maintained even when its units operated in the various regional commands of the army.

Its commander, Yigal Allon, was appointed head of Southern
Command. A unilateral effort was even made by the deputy commander
of the Palmach to strengthen the authority of its general staff over its
units by claiming to be a mandatory channel for all commands issued to
them. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, who served also as Defense Minister
in the provisional government, blocked this initiative, which emerged
during his efforts to do away with this separate organization.

Ben-Gurion viewed the Palmach as a partisan, even factional,
army and moved to dismantle its general staff. His concept of a unified,
depoliticized and professional army converged on this issue with his
fear of the potential threat in the continued link between the Palmach
and a radical political form (Mapam) outside it. The commanders of
the Palmach and their political supporters denied being a partisan
unit, but did claim the right to continue to be under the "spiritual guid-
ance" of the Histadrut (and the labor movement) in order to be pre-
pared to effectively respond to the threat of "Jewish Fascism," which
they attributed at the time to Etzel and the political right. Ben-
Gurion, who had served as secretary-general of the Histadrut between
1921 and 1935, rejected this claim, argued against the authority of the
Histadrut to deliberate the case of the general staff of the Palmach,
and finally carried out his decision to dismantle this organization fol-
lowing a bitter controversy in the Israeli labor movement and the de-
fense establishment.[18]

Ben-Gurion was not an admirer of the military capabilities of the
Haganah and found flaws in the politicized and non-professional val-
ues of the Palmach. He sought an alternative structure for the forma-
tion of the state's army, which he was determined to build on a profes-
sional and hierarchical basis. Nevertheless, his new model army de-
viated from a purely professional army by its assumption of civilian
pioneer roles and the adoption of a non-sectarian Zionist national ide-
ology.

Introducing (in September 1949) the military service bill to the
Knesset (which provided for pioneer, agricultural training in the army
in a new military formation — Nahal), he stated that it would give
the army both the military and pioneer capabilities required for
Israel's defense. Nahal enabled the kibbutz movements to keep their
reserve pioneer groups intact while serving in the army, thereby keep-
ing operative at least one element of the organizational tradition of
the Palmach.

The dismantling of the Palmach which neutralized to a large ex-
tent the leading and radical elite group of the Yishuv in the area of
defense, and the recruitment of the former Jewish-Palestinian officers
who had served in the British Army during the Second World War,
enabled Ben-Gurion to shape the new army according to his own
blueprint and to establish his position of authority over it. The two

crises of transition to a unified army under the sole jurisdiction of the state took place in historical contexts in which it was sometimes extremely difficult to separate personal, partisan, political, and ideological issues. Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion was successful in the course of these conflicts in enunciating and enforcing a general concept of the army which was eventually acceptable even to his former critics and which became the only legitimate attitude toward this critical institution of the state. The solution of these crises and the emergence of a consensual attitude to the army did not prevent the eventual appearance of other political tensions around it relating to political considerations in political appointments and sporadic partisan attempts involving Mapai and its factions to mobilize support among the officers of the army.

In retrospect, it may be observed that the early and radical solution of the crises of transition to a unified army prevented the eventual development of larger and potentially more threatening confrontations with both the radical right and the radical left. Two political conflicts in the early 1950s created the potential conditions for such confrontation: a seamens' strike which was taken over by the radical left and was put down by the government through the use of force, and the campaign against the reparations agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany spearheaded by Herut (the party of the former Etzel leadership) which sparked off violent demonstrations in front of the Israeli parliament.

The State Should Provide Public Services to All and Exclude Partisan Involvement in their Administration

This third principle of Ben-Gurion's concept of statehood complements and expands the meaning of the previous one. Ben-Gurion strove not only to draw the line between political organizations and the institutions of the state, he wanted to make sure that institutions which provided indispensable public services such as elementary education, employment and public health would be placed in the realm of the state. The implementation of this principle, as well as the previous one, required the abrogation of the pre-state arrangement and stirred up another debate with the radical left of the Israeli labor movement. At issue was the structure of the system of elementary education — whether to continue the existence of multiple and competitive school networks sponsored by political organizations, the largest of which was sponsored by the Histadrut, or to institute a unified and depoliticized state school system.

Ben-Gurion charged that the communal system of elementary education, which actually continued to operate until the enactment of the

state education law in 1953, was deliberately designed to maintain po-
litical divisions through a process of indoctrination in early education.
Moreover, it threatened to block the integration of the vast numbers of
new immigrants into Israeli society. Due to political pressure, however,
Ben-Gurion was forced to compromise and accept the division of the
new state educational system into two sections: general and religious. It
was assumed at the time that many of the new immigrants who came
from traditional societies in the Arab states would not send their chil-
dren to secular schools. If that were the case, the only viable alterna-
tive would have been the establishment of a unified system of tradi-
tional schools; this conflicted with the educational philosophy of the
secular sector in the Israeli society and was not considered at all.

   Ben-Gurion was successful in persuading his own party, Mapai, and
the Histadrut to accept the proposed reform and give up the sectorial
labor network of elementary schools which accounted for 40 percent of
all pupils.[19] His message was both ideological, in the spirit of his con-
cept of statehood, and pragmatic. In fact, the educational reform pro-
vided his party the opportunity to play a major role, through its lead-
ers in government and education, in the construction of the new system of
education. Ben-Gurion believed in the power of his own political
movement to take advantage of the new reform in terms of programs,
curricula and values. He felt that the labor movement was singularly
suited to make an impact on the entire new system at the cost of giving
up its own partisan sponsorship of only part of the old system. He took
the same position in the case of the Palmach; if there was any reason to
offer pioneer training to the youth, why restrict it to the faithful few
in a sectorial military formation and not offer it to all in the regular
army?

   The second institution which changed its structure through Ben-
Gurion's initiative was the labor exchange. Traditionally, it was run
by the labor federations themselves. The overwhelmingly dominant
one among them was the Histadrut, with the religious and Revisionist
("national" in their terminology) federations of labor in a distant mi-
nority position. Ben-Gurion's reform was designed to sever the link be-
tween employment and political organization and to assert the state's
responsibility in this area. The state employment service was finally
established through a political agreement and on the basis of the ex-
isting system of labor exchanges, which was dominated by Histadrut
activists. However, turning it into a state institution led eventually to
the formation of a depoliticized and professional organization operat-
ing under the supervision of a public council within the confines of a
state law.

   The third institution that was supposed to be included in Ben-
Gurion's institutional reform was in the realm of public health. He
proposed to establish a state system of public health insurance even at

the expense of the Histadrut's sectorial system — Kupat Holim. The latter embraced the vast majority of the Israeli population (85 percent in 1987).[20] Ben-Gurion did not press for this reform while in power, though he still expressed his support for it by the adoption of a plank on it in the platform of his splinter party (Rafi) in 1965. A major, if not the single, reason for his procrastination on this reform had to do with the fear of the Histadrut leaders that the loss of Kupat Holim would cut deeply into its organizational leverage and pose a threat to its dominant unionist position. The same fear continued to dominate the position of the Labor party on the possibility of a health insurance bill at the end of Ben-Gurion's active leadership in politics.

The State Should Make Use of Its Resources in Order to Promote Pioneering Projects of National Importance

Ben-Gurion adopted an un-orthodox approach to the concept of pioneering after the proclamation of the state. He broadened its scope beyond the accepted pre-state definition, which had confined it largely to the act of settlement itself and had attributed it primarily to the institution of the kibbutz. Ben-Gurion claimed pioneer status for all engaged in the efforts of state-building and proposed to enlist the institutions of the state in promoting the realization of the old, more narrowly-defined pioneer goals, as in the case of Nahal. He was openly impatient with the emerging gap between the existing pace of voluntary pioneering and what he considered to be possible through the new institutions of the state.

Ben-Gurion not only modified the orthodox labor concept of self-realization through pioneering *(hagshama atzmit)* but posed a direct challenge to the kibbutz movement — the traditional standard-bearers of this concept. For Ben-Gurion, the ultimate test of pioneering was not necessarily related to the realization of a social utopia, as was actually claimed by the kibbutz. It meant a positive response to the immediate national tasks at hand, primarily the absorption of the hundreds of thousands of refugees who flocked to Israel after its foundation. This was not a new position for Ben-Gurion. Already in the 1920s, when the labor movement was debating the question of the ideological legitimacy of the moshav — a cooperative small-holders settlement — versus the purely collectivist kibbutz, he stated that "the single great problem which dominates our thoughts and work is the settlement of the land and building it by large immigration; all the rest is just high-flown phrases and paraphernalia."[21]

Ben-Gurion's attitude towards the kibbutz movement became ambivalent in the early 1950s. He more than readily affirmed the pioneering role of the kibbutz but increasingly questioned its exclusive

claim to that role, and he openly criticized the kibbutz movement for not being ready to sacrifice some of its collectivist values in order to absorb large numbers of immigrants into its midst. He wrote:

> We need now a renewed and resilient pioneer movement that will be at the disposal of the state in the ingathering of the exiles and improving the defense of the country; in making the desert bloom, in the afforestation of the mountains and the sand dunes, settling the outskirts of Jerusalem and the border areas, in developing the city of Eilat and the desert plains; in conquering the seas and the skies; in teaching the Hebrew language, knowledge of the land and the labor values to the new immigrants....Only pioneering that is pre- pared to serve the state faithfully in all its revolutionary tasks in their new form will from now on be worthy of the name.[22]

Ben-Gurion recognized the limitations of the state but did not share the defensive attitude toward it in the area of pioneering self- realization. His criticism of existing, voluntary pioneering organiza- tions was not coupled with a serious effort to build a new and/or state- sponsored pioneering organization. His pronouncements on this subject may thus be construed as an effort to affect the conduct of the kibbutz movements at the time, to educate them towards a greater and updated pioneering effort, and to support his new agenda for the forming institutions of the state.

Ben-Gurion's complex attitude to the kibbutz as well as the kibbutz movement was underscored by his own personal conduct. At the end of 1953 he voluntarily decided to take a break from active leadership in government and joined a young and maverick kibbutz in the distant Negev (Sde Boker). This kibbutz was founded by an independent group of individuals of various origins and at the time did not belong to any organized kibbutz movement. Joining this kibbutz carried a complex message: the kibbutz was still a leading pioneering organization but only when it settled the new frontiers of the state and not necessarily through the work of the existing kibbutz movements. Upon his final retirement from office Ben-Gurion settled in Sde Boker and spent the remainder of his life there.

The Governing Bodies of the State Must Act Within Their Constitutional Limits and the Rule of Law

For Ben-Gurion, this principle was of particular importance with regard to the separation of functions between the executive and the ju- diciary. In more concrete terms, it prevented the executive from assum- ing the role of the judiciary in any way. This possible intrusion caught Ben-Gurion's attention and even haunted him in the Lavon affair. This

prolonged and bitter political crisis hastened his departure from the prime ministership and shook his moral stature in Israeli society for some time.

Ben-Gurion reluctantly found himself at the center of the Lavon affair without having been directly involved in the 1954 security mishap that gave birth to it.[23] As Prime Minister in 1960-61, Ben-Gurion was pressured by Pinhas Lavon, Defense Minister at the time of the security mishap, to declare him not responsible for the direct order to activate Israel's intelligence network in acts of sabotage in Egypt in a desperate attempt to put a halt to the British evacuation of that country, and to do so on the basis of fragmented and/or unconfirmed evidence and without further investigation. The other party to this personal conflict, the former chief intelligence officer of the army, offered a conflicting version of the responsibility for this mishap. An investigating committee appointed by Prime Minister Sharett had in 1955 already rejected the conflicting versions presented to it by these two men and had left a cloud of suspicion hanging over both of them.

Without going into the details of this intricate affair, it is possible to isolate the two political and constitutional approaches that it brought into conflict, so that they clashed with great force, though not necessarily with sufficient clarity. Lavon and his numerous supporters in the Knesset, the press, the intellectual community and the public were anxious and impatient to clear the man whom they believed to be the injured party in this historic-personal dispute. Ben-Gurion, by contrast, insisted on the observance of due process, refusing to declare the innocence of Lavon without further judicial investigation. Assuming this position, he was viewed by his many critics as one blocking the redress of an injustice done to a political leader who turned out to be his political rival.

Facing a growing political crisis in the government and in the Knesset, Mapai's leaders bypassed Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and devised a complicated procedure.[24] First, they acquiesced to Lavon's demand for immediate exoneration by a ministerial committee composed of representatives of all parties in the coalition government; that is, through political justice. Then they moved to placate Ben-Gurion by dismissing Lavon from his top leadership position in the Histadrut for his alleged anti-party agitation in the struggle to further his cause.

Ben-Gurion objected to any substantive deliberations on this issue by the government but did not block the work of the committee, which had been appointed in his absence from the government session on the subject. Ben-Gurion expected the committee to restrict its deliberations to procedural matters rather than leap to substantive conclusions on the case itself and he received assurances to this effect from its chairman (Pinhas Rosen). However, the committee finally did rule — without either declaring itself, or behaving as an investigating body — that

Lavon had not issued the order for the activation of the Jewish under-
ground network in Egypt in the security mishap of 1954, but neither did
it point out who had. Ben-Gurion charged that the committee had
overstepped its authority, had not observed due process, and had in-
volved the executive in a case that should have been decided by the
judiciary. He refused to accept the conclusions of the ministerial com-
mittee and resigned in an attempt to annul them.

Following his final retirement from government in 1963, Ben-Gurion
again examined the work of the ministerial committee with the help
of two eminent lawyers and meticulously prepared himself for another
showdown on the legal and constitutional aspects of the affair.
Equipped with the lawyers' report, Ben-Gurion appealed to the
Minister of Justice to appoint a commission of supreme court judges to re-
view the work of the ministerial committee. The Attorney-General
concurred in a written opinion with Ben-Gurion's criticism of the minis-
terial committee. He wrote in this opinion that the factual determina-
tions of the ministerial committee could not be upheld in a court of
law.[25] The Minister of Justice, however, refused to investigate the work
of a previous government and proposed instead to appoint a judicial
committee to investigate the initial question of responsibility for the
1954 security mishap. This recommendation was not even discussed by
the government because of the objections of Prime Minister Eshkol who
feared its political repercussions. The renewed and last crisis of the
Lavon affair in 1964-65 was thus finally resolved in party councils and
through the 1965 Knesset elections, leaving unsettled questions for
treatment exclusively by historical research.

Ben-Gurion was defeated in the political struggles over the affair
in 1964-65. However, this turn of events may have paved the way in
time for a greater understanding of his constitutional position and di-
vorced it from the multiple political and personal issues involved. Ben-
Gurion's criticism of the ministerial committee gained greater, almost
universal, understanding, and his constitutional position on the need to
guard the boundaries between the executive and the judiciary received
general vindication in the enactment of the law on commissions of in-
quiry (1968). This law served Israel well in managing subsequent criti-
cal political crises — the Agranat Commission examining the opening
stages of the Yom Kippur War and the Kahan Commission examining
possible Israeli involvement in the Phalangist massacre in Palestinian
refugee camps in Lebanon.

To Arrest Political Fragmentation and Promote Responsibility in Government Through a Change of the System of Election

The proportional representation electoral system was viewed by Ben-Gurion as the embodiment and purveyor of all the ills of the pre-state communal political tradition. He considered this system as a principal and active factor in encouraging political fragmentation to the extent that it might deprive a democratic regime of the capability to form a responsible government.[26] The proportional representation system, which indeed does not provide a legal constraint against fragmentation, well served the integrative and functional needs of the political system of the Yishuv. It responded fully to the need for vast and accurate representative participation in a system which constantly strove to establish an organized national authority without having sovereignty. The proportional representation system was maintained in both sections of the national institutions of the Yishuv (the Zionist Organization and the local organization of the Yishuv — *Knesset Yisrael*). It was even institutionalized in the sectorial, multi-party Histadrut as part of the general tradition of representation which emerged in the Yishuv.

The early critics of the communal proportional representation system belonged to the political right. However, in the early 1950s Ben-Gurion became the most fierce critic of this system and the principal advocate for the adoption of the British constituency system, hoping to gain thereby a Knesset majority for his party and change the structure and norms of the coalition government. All the other parties in the Knesset, with the exception of the General Zionists who supported a partial reform of the existing electoral system, objected to Ben-Gurion's initiative. They even went so far as to adopt a legislative obstacle by requiring the support of a majority of the Knesset, and not just a plurality as in the regular votes in the Knesset, in an initial vote on any proposed change of the electoral system.

Ben-Gurion was an avid supporter of the British system of elections. He succeeded in convincing the somewhat reluctant leaders of his own party to include his proposed reform in the party platform and present it to the voters in the election to the Third Knesset (1955). This was Ben-Gurion's single gain on this issue. The voters, who in the 1950s still held strong party affiliations, were not impressed, and the other parties adopted a successful legislative strategy to defeat it.

Under these circumstances, Ben-Gurion's move to change the system of elections turned out to be largely an educational campaign in which he articulated the need to reform the system of parties and coalition

government. Ben-Gurion viewed electoral reform as the key to far wider changes in the political system: the concentration of the voters into two or three parties, one of which could gain a majority in the Knesset, and the creation of a direct link between the voters and their parliamentary representatives. Ben-Gurion was not successful in implementing this critical reform; he even witnessed his former associates in the Mapai leadership temporarily suspend their previous commitment to it as part of the agreement to form an alignment with Ahdut Haavoda in 1965.[27] Nevertheless, his campaign did contribute to an eventual change of attitude on the subject in the Israeli public and among political parties. A proposal to change the existing proportional representation system and adopt a mixed electoral system, drawing from both the proportional representation and the constituency systems, twice passed the initial reading in the Knesset. However, the parties failed to find a concrete proposal that could satisfy their still skeptical attitude toward electoral reform, so in both cases the proposed legislation went no further.

National Compromise on Economic and Religious Issues

Ben-Gurion was a socialist who for a short while even admired Lenin's efforts in transforming Russian society.[28] He was also the builder of the Histadrut into a unique and powerful federation of labor.[29] But he was primarily a Zionist leader who clearly placed national goals above any possible class utopia. His chief concern was the construction of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. Accordingly, even the Histadrut was described by him as "an alliance of homeland builders and founders of a state."[30] Ben-Gurion's eventual move to an active position of leadership in the Zionist movement as Chairman of the Jewish Agency between 1935 and 1948 reflected both his political ambition, wanting to move from a sectarian to a national position of leadership, as well as the recognition of the supremacy of the Zionist executive in the governance of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel.

Ben-Gurion did not question the legitimacy of sectorial organizations. He expected them, however, to work for the realization of Zionist goals, namely, for common national interests. This was in essence Ben-Gurion's approach to his own political movement which, as early as the 1920s, he challenged to transform its orientation "from a class to a nation." This transformation did not require the abolition of the class definition of the labor movement or the dismantling of its sectorial institutions. It meant placing them at the service of a higher national calling while pursuing their own sectorial agenda. In this case, Ben-Gurion's argument entailed two almost tautological propositions: one, that the labor movement must identify with the nation at

large and its primary interests; two, that the labor movement was, in fact, "the nucleus and the future profile of a new Hebrew people."[31] The labor movement, according to this argument, was given an historic opportunity to shape the entire community (in Palestine) and the nation in its own image through a constructive pioneering effort of nation-building. However, Ben-Gurion's vision of the state gradually became pluralistic in terms of ideology and pragmatic in terms of policy. While rejecting any compromise concerning the national authority, especially after the foundation of the state, he stated the need for a compromise on major economic and religious issues.

At the beginning of 1951, Ben-Gurion stated that Israel must adopt a regime of compromise. Standing only at the beginning of the process of *kibbutz galuyot*, "the ingathering of the exiles," he argued that Israel was forbidden to try to decide the large issues that divided its people. "Those who wish now to launch a religious war or class war, those who are opting for either the rule of religion or its abolishment, for a capitalist or socialist state, commit an assault on the life of the *aliyah* and hurt the cause of Israel's security."[32]

The compromise or coexistence of both collective and private economic initiative was dictated by the efforts to build a new economy under difficult circumstances — an effort that was aided by the organized Zionist movement and the Jewish people; even the socialist collective settlements in Palestine were financed by the national institutions because of their pioneering Zionist role. Ben-Gurion was one of the chief builders of the labor society, but he accepted the general principle of compromise. This principle was philosophically compatible with his commitment to a pluralistic and democratic-socialist tradition. The continued economic support by the Jewish people for the State of Israel reinforced the tendency in the Israel labor movement to restrain the use of political power for the promotion of social and economic change other than concentrating on the development of the labor sector of the economy within a pluralistic economic effort.

Compromise was also Ben-Gurion's principal guideline on the issue of religion. It derived in part from the same reasons as in the economic sphere and led to the concept of the status quo. The scope and content of this condition was actually decided, despite its name, through a gradual bargaining process marred by conflict and crisis.

Ben-Gurion's position on the issue of state and religion comprised four elements:

The first was the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, hence his willingness to commit the institutions of the state to the observance of the Sabbath and *kashrut*. Such a commitment was made to the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael by the Jewish Agency even before the

foundation of the state (on 19 June 1947) in order to bring it into the transitional body, the National Council, which proclaimed the State of Israel.

The second was the acceptance of the principle of non-separation between state and religion in two critical respects: the exclusive authority of the religious courts on key issues of personal status (marriage and divorce), the recognition of religious institutions as part of the administration of the state (Chief Rabbinate, rabbinical courts) and municipal government (religious councils, local rabbis), and provision of religious services through both.[33] The basis for this arrangement between state and religion was inherited from the British Mandatory regime and no viable alternative was produced or presented during the transitional period from community to state. The decision by the Constituent Assembly (the first Knesset) to delay adoption of a constitution served as a reminder that the issue of religion had not been completely resolved at that point. However, a framework for such a solution had gradually been created through the conservative concept of the status quo.

The third was the distinction between the particularist needs and the universalist claims of the religious sector. Ben-Gurion was prepared to respond, though not in full and not always without crisis, to the ultimate integrative needs of the religious sector of the Israeli population: kosher kitchens in the army, which prevented the need to form two institutionalized sectors in the army; making Sabbath by law the official day of rest from work for the Jews (Sunday for Christians, Friday for Moslems) which prevented discrimination against religious workers; and the exemption of religious women and yeshiva students from military service. However, Ben-Gurion refused to accept any universalistic demands, which in the eyes of the secular population threatened to turn Israel closer to a theocratic state beyond the traditional framework of the status quo, most noticeably in the "Who is a Jew" case.

The fourth was Ben-Gurion's adoption of an ambivalent attitude toward the religious parties. The National Religious Party participated in almost all his governments and actually gave him a free hand in formulating foreign and defense policies. Nevertheless, he repeatedly questioned the very legitimacy of the religious parties as political organizations. He argued that religion alone was not a sufficiently legitimate foundation for a political party and often denounced their hard bargaining practices for political rewards as part of the coalition agreements.

A Concluding Note

Ben-Gurion's concept of statehood reflected an almost unreservedly positive and hopeful response not only to the very founding of the state but to its emergent institutions and potential capabilities. The state in Ben-Gurion's political philosophy was a necessary framework "...within which the collective and historic will of a people unfolds and develops."[34] The prolonged absence of such an entity created an anomaly and a risky condition for the Jewish people which, according to Ben-Gurion, could only be rectified through the restoration of the independent State of Israel.

The state in this perception was only a precondition, a vehicle for salvation, but not an end in itself. A special effort was still needed to keep the state faithful to the Zionist cause; more concretely, to keep the state open to Jewish immigration at all times, to continue to invest in the pioneering development of the country, even at the expense of the materialistic interests of its existing population, and to be attuned to the needs of the Jewish people at large. Moreover, the Jewish state must become an exemplary or a virtuous state in order to survive and fulfill its mission. This notion was an extrapolation of the biblical concept of a righteous and virtuous people.

Ben-Gurion took pride in the great contribution of individual Jews to civilization at large (he was so impressed with Albert Einstein that he offered him the presidency of the State of Israel, which the latter declined), but he believed that the restoration of an independent state would add a collective national avenue for a possible universal contribution. The previous link between the Jewish people and its land provided mankind with the Bible, which he considered the most authentic and important creation of the Jewish people. The uncertain role of the state and the anti-state tradition in Jewish history, which were maintained in the pre-state community, turned the task of state-building into a revolutionary process that required the emergence of a new attitude towards the state and the formation of a new tradition of statehood. Ben-Gurion strove to hasten this process during his stewardship of the State of Israel in its formative years.

Ben-Gurion sought remedies for four ills of the pre-state Jewish communal system in Palestine: first, over-politicization and the absence of clear lines of demarcation between the non-sovereign public entity that served as a surrogate for a state and the political parties; second, excessive disunity: "too many parties and too much partisanship"; third, a conditional attitude toward authority: seeking to establish a government or a governing body by consensual agreement with unchecked political tradeoffs rather than abiding by the rule of the majority; fourth, proportionalism without responsible government

— the need for inclusive coalitions without a majority party that might assume responsibility for the government before the parliament and the people.

Ben-Gurion's political initiatives were consciously designed to extricate the newborn state from the political traditions of the past. He emerged as the victor in most of the political conflicts of that period, but failed to alter some of the basic conditions, such as the proportional representation electoral system or a coalition government without a majority party in the Knesset, that he saw as an impediment to the institution of a constructive and enduring tradition of statehood. Ben-Gurion's approach contributed to the appearance and expansion of political conflicts, thereby forcing an early and clear resolution of most of the crises of transition from a community to a state. The solutions to these crises provided the foundations for the emergence of a new consensual attitude toward the state and its major institutions.

Politics is not a neutral process. Every institutional change and any resolution of a political conflict produces winners and losers. Ben-Gurion's political victories certainly strengthened his personal position of leadership and opened the way for critical political reform. They also consolidated his party's role in government at the expense of its rivals, though not to the extent that he expected and considered warranted or even necessary. His opponents on the political right and left failed to develop a viable alternative to Ben-Gurion's overall concept of statehood; they pressed for the continuation of communal political arrangements and norms, leaving him to represent and dramatize the logical conclusion and capabilities of an independent sovereign state. Personal rancor against him lingered for a long time, but most of the ideological challenges to his early and primary acts of statehood withered away.

Notes

1. An early version of this article appeared in Hebrew in *Cathedra* 45 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, September 1987), pp. 169-190.

2. See: Avraham Avihai, *Ben-Gurion, State Builder* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1974); Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion, A Political Biography*, 3 vols. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1975) (Hebrew); Shabtai Teveth, *Young Ben-Gurion* and *Ben-Gurion — Man of Authority* (the first two volumes of a biography of Ben-Gurion) (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1976, 1980) (Hebrew); Michael Keren, *Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals* (De-Kalb: Northern Illinois University, 1986). See also the following articles on Ben-Gurion's leadership: Shlomo Avineri, "Ben-Gurion — the Vision and the Might" in *Varieties of Zionist Thought* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1980), pp. 227-246 (Hebrew); Israel Kolat, "Ben-Gurion — the Great Personality" *Molad* 22 (1971), p. 340-351 (Hebrew).

3. The letter was written on the day of arrival of the British Royal Commission to Palestine. Ben-Gurion argued in it that the Zionist movement did not do enough to maintain the friendship of Great Britain. Ben-Gurion Archives, Sde-Boker.

4. David Ben-Gurion, *Netsah Yisrael* (The Eternity of Israel) (Tel Aviv: Ayanot, 1956), p. 126.

5. David Ben-Gurion, *Hazon Vederech* (Vision and Path) (Tel Aviv: Mapai, 1952), vol. 3, p. 159.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., vol. 5 (1955), pp. 135-139.

8. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, "Authority Without Sovereignty: The Case of the National Center of the Jerusalem Community in Palestine" *Government and Opposition* 8 (Winter 1973); *Origins of Israeli Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

9. Nathan Yanai, *Political Crises in Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1982), (Hebrew), pp. 7-24.

10. See Max Weber's definition of the state in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford, 1958), p. 78.

11. On the Altalena affair see: Uri Brenner, *Altalena* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1978) (Hebrew); Shlomo Nakdimon, *Altalena* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1978) (Hebrew); Nathan Yanai, *Political Crises in Israel*, pp. 25-38.

12. Uri Brenner, *Altalena*, p. 157. It should be noted that Begin had absorbed Jewish history and wanted to avoid civil war; hence, when fired upon, he refused to give the order to fire back and let the ship be sunk.

13. On Ben-Gurion's position toward the Zionist movement after the foundation of the state, see *Hazon Vaderech*, vol. 3, pp. 185-187. In a note to the veteran Zionist leader, Yitzhak Greenboim (on December 21, 1948), Ben-Gurion wrote: "The Zionists do not know how to, and are not capable of guiding the Jews; conversely, they stand as a barrier between the state and the Jews." Source: G. Rivlin and E. Oren, (eds.), *The War of Independence — Ben-Gurion's Diary* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1982), p. 892 (Hebrew).

14. On Mapai as a dominant party see: A. Arian and S.M. Barness, "The Dominant Party System: A Neglected Model of Democratic Stability," *Journal of Politics* 36 (1974), pp. 592-614; Peter Y. Medding, *Mapai in Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 299-307; Nathan Yanai, *Political Crises in Israel*, pp. 75-94.

15. Six coalition crises took place from 1949 to 1953, but only seven from 1953 to 1977.

16. The national unity government was confirmed by the Knesset on September 13, 1984. It was formed on the basis of the principle of parity in representation between the Likud and the Labor Alignment. Rotation in the office of prime minister between the two blocs epitomized this principle.

17. On the Palmach and the origins of the Israeli army, see: Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970); Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (London: Allan Lane, 1975), pp. 1-52; Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 1969), pp. 35-46.

18. On the dismantling of the Palmach, see: Anita Shapira, *From the Dismissal of the Chief of the National Command of the Haganah to the Dismantling of the Palmach* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1984) (Hebrew); Yoav Gelber, *Why They Dismantled the Palmach* (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1986) (Hebrew).

19. Shimon Reshef, "Ben-Gurion and Hebrew and National Education," *Cathedra* 43 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1987), pp. 91-114 (Hebrew).

20. According to the official figure published by the Histadrut. Source: *Histadrut Budget Proposal* 1987, p. 3 (Hebrew).

21. See Yonathan Shapiro, *The Organization of Power* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1975), p. 61 (Hebrew).

22. David Ben-Gurion, *Hazon Vaderech*. vol. 3, p. 48.

23. On the 1954 security mishap and the ensuing Lavon affair, see: Yehoshua Arielly, *The Conspiracy* (Tel Aviv: Kadima, 1966) (Hebrew); David Ben-Gurion, *Things As They Are* (Tel Aviv: Am Hasefer, 1965) (Hebrew); Haggai Eshed, *Who Gave the Order?* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1979) (Hebrew); Aviezer Golan, *Suzanna Operation* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1980) (Hebrew); Isser Harel, *Anatomy of Treason* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1980) (Hebrew); Eliahu Hassin and Dan Horowitz, *The Affair* (Tel Aviv: Am Hasefer, 1961) (Hebrew);

Nathan Yanai, *Split At the Top* (Tel Aviv: Lewin-Epstein, 1969) (Hebrew).

24. On the impact of the Lavon Affair as a political crisis see Nathan Yanai, *Political Crises in Israel*, pp. 101-184 (Hebrew).

25. See Nathan Yanai, *Split at the Top*, pp. 158-161.

26. David Ben-Gurion, *Maarechet Sinai* (The Sinai Campaign) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1959), pp. 181-192.

27. Ibid., pp. 68-76.

28. Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, vol. 1, pp. 160-181.

29. Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: Man of Discipline*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1980) (Hebrew).

30. David Ben-Gurion, *Hapoel Haivri Vehistadruto* (The Hebrew Worker and the Histadrut) (Tel Aviv: Tarbut Vehinuch, 1964), p. 133 (Hebrew).

31. David Ben-Gurion, *Memamad Leam* (From a Class to a Nation) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1974), p. 62 (Hebrew).

32. David Ben-Gurion, *Hazon Vaderech*, vol. 3, pp. 56-57 (Hebrew).

33. See Nathan Yanai, *Political Crises in Israel*, pp. 80-86. See also: Daniel J. Elazar, *Israel: Building a New Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 119-145; Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Religious and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); *Piety and Politics: Religion and Politics in Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

34. David Ben-Gurion, *Behilahem Yisrael* (When Israel Fought) (Tel Aviv: Mapai 1950), p. 197 (Hebrew).