ISRAELI HISTORY, POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Politics of Memory

The Israeli Underground's struggle for inclusion in the national pantheon and military commemoralization

Udi Lebel

ROUTLEDGE

Politics of memory

Politics of Memory illustrates how a ruling dominant political party, the Mapai (Israeli Labor Party), under the leadership of Israel's first P.M. David Ben-Gurion, chose to "hug," honor and commemorate "Her Fallen" and "Her Bereaved Families," whilst simultaneously ignoring the fallen that were identified with the rival political party, Herut, led by Menachem Begin. Designing legislation and cultural policy designated for teaching the public that those who sacrificed themselves in the Israeli War of Independence – were Hagana Members, one of three Israeli undergrounds movements, associated with Mapai specific ideological viewpoint. By that – the Israeli state created political legitimacy and dominance for Mapai – which was framed as the only political party which were involved with the struggle for national independence. "Her" fighters, battles and casualties became part of the collective memory and national ethos. This project was implemented by refusing to acknowledge "the Other" casualties of the Eztel and Lehi underground movements which were ideological identified with Herut Party. The state excluded their bereaved families from the wider official military bereavement circle and forced them to experience "disenfranchised grief", with no access to official commemoration or to rehabilitative support. It was only after the Likud's (ex-Herut) victory in the 1977 elections that enabled P.M. Menachem Begin to correct this "exile from national identity" and to initiate the inclusion of "his" fighters and casualties to the military cemeteries, to the history books and to the state commemorations, as recognizing their families as part of the National Military Bereavement circles entitled to honors and support.

A thought provoking study about the dark side of the Israeli nation building era, *Politics of Memory* explores the politics of historiography, bereavement and military commemoration, and the confrontation over boundaries of national pantheon, examining the effects of these factors on Israeli national identity and politics.

With introductions by **Moshe Arens**, former Israeli Minister of Defense and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and by **Yehiel Kadishai**, P.M. Menachem Begin's chief of staff, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of Israeli history; military studies; memory and heritage studies; the study of loss and bereavement, and politics in general.

Udi Lebel is Senior Lecturer in Political Psychology and Political Science, Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Ariel University Center and Researcher at the Samaria and Jordan Rift R&D Center, Israel. His research interests include; death and dying; cultural politics of loss and bereavement; politics of memory and commemoration and civil –

military relations.

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With Forewords by Moshe Arens and Yehiel Kadishai

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Dedicated to Neomi and Samuel Lebel, my beloved parents and closest friends.

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receiving perpetuation from the various institutions of the State of Israel, turned to him as the only person who helped to locate answers for their needs.

In addition, thanks are due to Professor Moshe Arens who acted as Minister of Defence in Menachem Begin's government. Professor Arens is a historical initiator: after having retired from political life he turned to fascinating historical research about the sacrifice of “Beitar” supporters and members while reviling and fighting the Nazis in the Warsaw's ghetto. a glorious and important chapter from the annals of the chronicles of the holocaust which Mapai's memory regime erased from the national formal history and collective memory.

Thanks to my friends and colleagues whose company and advice I have enjoyed, from whose intellectual inspiration, and encouragement I have benefited: Dr. Miriam Billig, Dr. Eithan Orkibi, Dr. Meytal Eran-Jona, Dr. Henya Shanun-Klein, Dr. Yitzchak Carmel, Mr. Gal Hermoni, Mrs. Judith Meisels, Mr. Asaf Lebovitz and Ms. Adi Lifshitz. Thanks also to Marianne Meisels, who spoke to me about the Zionist undergrounds during my early childhood. I miss deeply her wise commentary, feedback and support. Of course, generous thanks to Dr. Paul King for editing the book and accompanying me, throughout my research, for so many years. His advice, suggestions and insights raised the level of my articles and books. I thank my brother, Gadi Lebel, for his love, caring and friendship.

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This book is dedicated to them, Neomi and Samuel Lebel with immense love for their companionship, love and friendship.

Dr. Udi Lebel
Ariel, Israel

Foreword I
Divided in their deaths

Moshe Arens

During the initial years of Israel's existence, the ruling Labour Party tried to block from collective memory the contribution made by the Underground that had fought against British rule in the pre-state period to the establishment of the State of Israel This book deals with this attempt, which included the state not extending recognition to those who had fallen in the ranks of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and Lohamei Yisrael, and denying their bereaved families the assistance that was granted to the families of those who had fallen in Israel's War of Independence. It was only in later years, especially after the victory of the Likud, under Menahem Begin's leadership, over the Labour Party in the elections of 1977, that the injustice was fully rectified and the historical record was set straight. Begin had been the commander of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) during its Underground days, and he naturally saw to it that proper recognition for the struggle of the Underground was extended and embedded in the collective memory of the people of Israel.

The leaders of the Soviet Union rewrote history so as to make the written record suit their political goals. They made no bones about the matter – the Great Soviet Encyclopedia was used as a propaganda tool to further the aim of the party and the state and subscribers periodically received instructions to cut out and destroy certain articles that were inconsistent with changes in the party line. Historical truth was determined by the Communist rulers. For them, history belonged to the victor. This manipulation of history, a hallmark of dictatorial rule, became especially prominent under Stalin's regime. Falsifications were not limited to matters relating to leaders who had been renamed by Stalin as “enemies of the people”, but also included the fabrication that the Katyn massacre by the NKVD had been carried out by the Germans during world War II. It was only years later after the collapse of the Soviet regime that the Russian people and the world learned the truth.

In democratic societies it is the task of the historian to attempt to uncover the true course of past events It is therefore surprising to discover that at a certain period in Israel's history, a democratically elected government practiced manipulation of the recorded history of past events to suit its ideological and political premises. Israel, although born as a democracy, had little past tradition of democratic governance, and the ruling Labour Party and its other Socialist allies, had been imbued by the revolutionary spirit of early twentieth century Russia, which most of their leaders had experienced before they came to Palestine.

The tailoring of the historical record by the ruling Labour Party was also extended to the events of the Warsaw ghetto uprising so that recognition would be bestowed only on the fighters that belonged to the Socialist camp in the ghetto, to the neglect of the fighting organization led by the adherents of Zeev Jabotinsky that played a central role in the uprising. This injustice, forgotten for many decades, has only undergone correction in recent years. Thus, the doors to the pantheon of Israel's heroes have finally been opened for all those whose actions deserve recognition.

Udi Lebel's book makes a most important contribution to the study of ways in which collective memory is manipulated and embedded in the public mind. Since its publication in Israel, the book has become the focus of lively debate on the subject. Among the best books written on the politics of Israeli collective memory and military memorialization, it makes a major contribution to research on the exclusion of right-wing Zionist undergrounds from the national pantheon and their quest for legitimacy, recognition, and inclusion in the Israeli collective memory.

Professor Moshe Arens is former Israeli Minister of
Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs,
and author of *Flags Over the Warsaw Ghetto:
the untold story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising*,
Gefen Publishing House, 2011.

Foreword II

"Righting a distortion is a righteous deed"

Yehiel Kadishai

In the first year of the existence of the state of Israel, there was an absence of any evidence in the textbooks, press or state publications of the history of the Land of Israel during the last stages of the War of Liberation from the British yoke (1944–48), and of the war waged by the National Military Organization (Etzel) and the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel (Lehi).

Alongside the denial of rights to these organizations, the Palmah was also deprived of its rights since, for nine months, it participated as well in the struggle within the framework of the Resistance Movement, a Movement which united all the combatant bodies (October 1945 – July 1946).

The policy of disregard and estrangement from the War of Liberation violated the historical truth. But not only veracity was at stake. This orientation damaged basic interests of the fledgling state.

The War of Liberation against the British was living proof of our eternal right to this land. The intentional estrangement discredited our moral claim to the basis of the Israeli national honor and rights.

The pain concealed in the heart of Menahem Begin in regard to the immoral behaviour of the State's Governments, especially during the years under the leadership of David Ben Gurion, was the motivating force that drove him to re-right the disturbing injustice. Often one would hear the phrase: "Righting the distortion is a righteous deed."

Udi Lebel's book does justice in the sense proclaimed by the Psalmist (34:15): "Depart from evil, and do good."

There is no doubt that this book constitutes a source for conveying the historical truth to the people throughout the world, as well as to the eternal people, the Jewish people, amongst whom, too, there were those who chose to erase from the chronicles of history a very honorable chapter to its glory and of great value to its salvation.

Blessed be the author.

Yehiel Kadishai was Chief of Staff for
P. M. Menachem Begin, and today serves as Head of
the Board of Directors, Menachem Begin Heritage Center, Jerusalem.

Preface
“Private Loss”

Bereaved parents of unknown soldiers: the first struggles over the national boundaries of bereavement in Israel

After the Establishment of the State of Israel the parents of the brothers, Menachem and Chaim Ribbenbach who fell in the attack against the British during the War of Independence said:
Their dream has been realized but they have no part in it. They have left us: Parents, Brothers and a sister In pain and grieving. The State was established … and we, the parents of those who fought for freedom are not called to the arena of those to be lauded together with other bereaved parents, because our sons were Unknown Soldiers – when they were involved in their war against the British enslaver. So us, today, are not acknowledged as Bereaved Parents. We are Unknown Bereaved Parents. But despite this, the State is established, and that is the sole comfort for our sons and for us.
Who is this couple, Ribbenbach? How does it happen that in the State of Israel, which is well-known for the special status allotted to the bereaved parent, the belief in the ethos of recognizing and honouring each of the state's fallen in the collective memory – that parents whose sons fell while bringing the state into independence felt that the establishment withdraws from them and ignores their loss – experiencing disenfranchized private grief.

In the last years – more and more groups promote state recognition in their grief and framing as part of the National loss (the families of fire-fighters, prison warden's policeman, and families of the victims of terrorism). They are all interested in being included under the same “sacred” heading of the group to which the military bereaved families belong – those whose sons or daughters fell while in national service – which has lead to a special social status and particularly into productive and heroic framing in Israel. Such inclusions in the Israeli pantheon – are accompanied by much recompense, symbolic, financial and especially cultural: the loss becomes public and the grievers are assured of having a place in the considerable “Community of Grief”. In the same way their sons (military casualties) are assured of state-established perpetuation, which will enable them not to be forgotten, to be commemorated, acknowledged at all state ceremonies, on monuments, street names and in memorial books.

Judith Butler wrote on what she termed “Hierarchy of Grief” (Butler 2009) a condition in which public attention highlights the mourning of one group above the rest. Butler, however,

distinguished between the public attention that is accorded to the national fallen (American soldiers) and the attention that is given to those who were killed by her soldiers. In contrast to her, I am interested in showing the existence of a "hierarchy of grief" even among those who are "brothers-in-arms" – between those who belong to the same national group and who fell for the same reasons in the same missions. As this book shows – producing the bereavement of specific groups a public issue, while that of others remains private – is a step which is made from political/rationale motives.

This book shows how the dominant political party chose to "hug" and honour "Her Fallen" and "Her Bereaved Families" – and to ignore the fallen who are identified as supporting the competitive political party. A strategy for educating the public so that only the ones that are associated with a specific ideological viewpoint are those who sacrificed themselves, who fought for the establishment of the state – to grant political legitimacy and dominance. For this reason, as will be made clear in the book, the casualties of the "Hagana" (the Underground organization which was identified with the ruling political party) merited the status of "recognized fallen soldiers": after the establishment of the state their families became part of what is termed in Israel "The Family of Bereavement" (military casualties' families) while the fallen of the Etzel and Lehi (Underground organizations which were associated with the opposition political party) – were, after the establishment of the state, left outside the military bereavement circle and their families were forced to deal with what is called *disenfranchised grief* without there being any acknowledgement or recognition of the trauma they experienced or their sons' contribution to the independence of the state (Doka 1989).

It must be emphasized that this experience – the result of this exclusion beyond the bounds of public memory – has not only symbolic, political and cultural significance, but also a psychological–therapeutic outcome. The Private Grievers are experiencing "Hidden Sorrow" with less social support, and no "resurrection" of their dear ones in the public memory. As a result of this the general public – which is not exposed to their children's contribution and sacrifice – tends more and more to justify the rehabilitation differentiation that exists among those included in the State's "Family of Bereavement" and those who allegedly did not sacrifice for public reasons.

The "Anti-Hegemonic Bereavement"

In the era of nation building, the party in power (Mapai – Israeli Labor Party) encouraged politicization of all aspects of public life. Health services, education, business, welfare – in all these preference was given to those who were identified amongst the party (Mapai) supporters. Public commemoration and rehabilitative care of the army bereaved families was not exceptional. David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister and Mapai's leader, did not hesitate to advance the politicization of bereavement and also to use it as a channel through which it would be possible to promote political interests, by excluding the families and the fallen who were part of his political competitors from the national pantheon. The message he was trying to convey to the public was that he and his party alone were responsible for the Jewish miracle: of the creation of a state for the Israeli nation. For this reason – the loss of those associated with his political opponents is what I will term "Anti-Hegemony Loss": a loss which, if acknowledged, will undermine the Supreme Narrative of hegemony which tries to convey the message that the sacrifices for the sake of establishing the state were made solely by the hegemony (Mapai party and her ideological partners). For self-interest political reasons, the political elite wished to erase the sacrifice of grievers and casualties from public honours and recognition in spite of the fact

that they had fought side by side, sometimes in joint military operations. Only casualties who fell while serving in the Hagana (the Underground movement which was associated with Mapai [the ruling party] together with the IDF fallen) were identified with the pure sacred national holiness. But as Rene Girard pointed out, the idea of sanctity is based on the practice of violent exclusion (Girard, 1979). There will always be "others" who will be excluded from the "sanctity" and they will be presented as infectious and a ceremonial threat that is liable to defile national holiness, the purity of "The Nation's Fallen" (Douglas, 1988).

Methodology

Actions are not performed at random. In the same way everything connected to the creation of a culture, public memory, the design of what in retrospect appears spontaneous – the reason that we are better informed, more appreciative, acknowledge or identify more with one group over another – this "spontaneity" is frequently the result of social engineering, political symbolism, the "management of feelings" that leads to broad nomenclature, the inclusion in history books, monuments, even the language we use to "speak of the past" and most important – the action of those who stand at the forefront of the stage and who is behind the scenes. We believe in rational behaviour – such that, from a methodological point of view only the product of the behaviour will teach us about the actor's true goals. Aims which not infrequently contradict his open declarations (Riker, 1973).

By means of a political–historical approach, this book researches the perpetuation and memory of the war which moulds the Israel nation: the War of Independence – in order to include the area of political-rationale. For, by means of the policy of rehabilitation, welfare, memory and perpetuation – the ruling powers acted in order to advance the processes of inclusion and exclusion, in order to be related exclusively to the heritage of war, sacrifice and the establishment of the state.

The book follows both the policy "from the Top" by which means the removal was conducted and also the reactions and the reception of the same policy "from Below" in the sphere of those removed. For this reason, the many documents which were used were to be found in public archives and also in private ones. For, in the 1950s and 1960s, many bereaved families documented their pain about the non-recognition of their loss by the establishment, or they wrote to the policy–makers – and these documents were kept hidden, so the official archives could not "tell" their story of the tragic exclusion that they were living with.[1]

The structure of the book

The introduction: **Israeli politics of memory, bereavement and military commemoralization** provides a framework in which I place the research within the political side of Israeli perpetuation, emphasizing two [Memory] leaders of Israeli remembrance who are examined in the book: David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin.

The first chapter: **The politics of memory; theoretical framework and basic concepts** provides the academic framework of the book and deals with the connection between symbols, politics, bereavement and legitimacy. The second chapter: **The political sphere: building the infrastructure for memory exclusion and politics closure of bereavement** is the first of the chapters which is a test case and it clarifies the place that legislation has in creating the foundations for excluding groups from the collective memory. It follows the legislative process in the main, the laws that recognize bereaved parents and their rights and it analyzes how the

intricate clauses of law came about to create a dividing line between the "known" bereaved parents whose sons fell in battle and those parents, whose sons fell while serving in Etzel or Lehi and remained anonymous. The legislation provided the accepted norm for the infrastructure, which allows for such tragic exclusion. The third chapter: **Commemorative landscapes: the politics of hegemony in physical space** shows how the exclusion of the warriors and the fallen of Etzel and Lehi is expressed in the hego-physical sphere; particularly in all that is connected with their being distanced from military cemeteries, from public monuments and from the general Israeli picture. The fourth chapter: **The language of sovereignty** demonstrates how the language which was created to deal with loss, bereavement and heroism was exploited to create an identity between those and the party in power; how the official dates of the civil, religious events which infiltrated into the Israeli calendar were only those that marked military achievements which were associated with the party in power – and other symbolic and cultural illustrations which show how popular culture functioned in order to identify the achievements of the War of Independence with Mapai, alone. The fifth chapter: **The politics of historiography** illustrates how Etzel and Lehi organizations' contributions to the establishment of the state were obliterated from consciousness. This is done by closely following books about memorial and heritage, which were issued with the encouragement of the state. There were memorial books in which only those soldiers from the Hagana and not the fallen from Etzel and Lehi, appeared. This occurred also in the case of other historical texts which were published with the blessing of the establishment and were aimed at convincing the public that solely the party in power was responsible for the Israeli revival. The sixth chapter: **The period of ambivalence (1963– 77): first steps of inclusion in national commemoration and memory.** This chapter treats the period during which the warriors of Etzel and Lehi made their first incursions into the collective memory. This is the period following David Ben Gurion's retirement from the premiership – which opened the gates of memory. Ben Gurion was certainly the image which barred his political opponents from entering the gates of the national pantheon. In the period this chapter covers, many steps were taken that permitted the symbols of Etzel and Lehi to enter public consciousness slowly and moderately, including bringing Zeev Jabotinsky's remains to Israel to be buried on Herzl's Mount, the burial site of the national Zionist leadership. Jabotinsky was the ideological leader of the Herut movement\party. The seventh chapter – **The electoral turnabout: statism in the national-revisionist camp – the Eztel and Lehi belonging to the national pantheon** describes Menachem Begin's actions as Prime Minister to complete the *politics of belonging* concerning the warriors and the fallen of the revisionist underground by adding them to the national pantheon. Under his leadership, as is described in this chapter, the families of the fallen were officially acknowledged as bereaved families which are entitled to rehabilitation and state perpetuation; the fallen from Etzel and Lehi were included in the national memorial books and manifold actions were taken which ended the long-lasting period of exclusion. The concluding chapter, Chapter 8: **The** "**anti hegemonic bereavements**" **and the confrontation over national pantheon boundaries.** The conflicts of memory and bereavement are disclosed to the reader in a nutshell, in order to show that inclusion in the national pantheon is not only due to the motivation of the group which was observed in this book, but refers to a symbolic and psychological aim as one and the same – of many groups who are interested in their contribution to the nation and society being recognized and acknowledged. Anti hegemonic losses – whose recognitions will lead to undermining the ethos or status of the political elite – will be more and more excluded from public memory.

Introduction

Israeli politics of memory, bereavement and military commemoralization

This book is about the production and management of public memory in Israel. Specifically, it examines the struggle for inclusion in the domain of military commemoration by those barred from its patrimony. A policy of exclusion, originating in the government's orientation to losses incurred by those who fought for the defence of the newly formed Jewish state, is the reverse side of this contentious confrontation. The struggle is exposed through the lens of the politics of bereavement and remembrance, as well as concomitant efforts to fashion a ranking order of heroism and sacrifice through various means of memorialization. Chronologically, the events and debates studied here embrace two periods: the era of Labour movement hegemony under the leadership of the Mapai Party from 1948 to 1977; the Revisionist/Herut movement ascendancy to power in 1977 under the direction of the Likud Party and its tenure of rule until the turn of the century. The two periods were dominated by charismatic figures, David BenGurion in the Labour movement followed by Menahem Begin in the Herut movement.

While the main protagonists are the leaders of political parties which form coalition governments, in general, the clash is between two political movements, Labour and Herut, whose mutual antipathies can be traced to long-standing pre-State divisions regarding the strategy and tactics of the Zionist movement. The struggle examined here takes place in the political, cultural and civil/military sphere of nation and state-building and embraces a broad array of commemorative and dedicatory events, welfare entitlements, and honours marking the armed contribution to Israeli independence.

The efforts invested in forging an Israeli collective memory following the War of Independence were not simply marginal undertakings or side-issues of certain groups seeking to redress omissions in the chronicles of the state's establishment. They became the focus of political clashes between the Government and the official Opposition over entitlements in social legislation and, more significantly, recognition of the role played in the historical restoration of Jewish political independence.

When Menahem Begin and his colleagues sought to include the fallen combatants from the Underground organizations of Etzel and Lehi in state memory, along with the already honoured fallen of the Hagana, they were not aiming at quantitative equality since their dead were a miniscule percentage of the total number of killed and injured soldiers in the military

engagements for Independence.[1] Their articulated objective was official inclusion in the state ethos of remembrance and this entailed, among other rubrics of formal acknowledgment, accounts in the school curriculum in order that school children and new immigrants would know about all the movements and combatants who contributed to the rise of the Jewish state.

Against this background of a spirited drive for recognition emerges a description of the mobilization of the past for the purposes of informing the present and the future. It makes clear that concern with memory, bereavement and commemoration in the military context is a decisive element in the amassing and maintenance of political power. Events such as Remembrance Day ceremonies, war and battle anniversaries, and the naming of streets and settlements contribute to national solidarity. Those individuals and groups integrated into state memory will constitute part of the national pantheon; they will be cited and honoured by society as an integral and vital part of the Zionist renewal and serve as exemplary figures for prospective visions and deeds.

Confrontations over the content and contours of public memory were not extinguished when, after thirty years of statehood, the political opposition became the ruling power, changing places with its erstwhile rivals. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, national rituals and commemorative events continued to be the subject of contestations. “Balanced” representation in public remembrance ceremonies remained the order of the day and at least one major memorial project, a national museum for the war dead, failed to materialize after prolonged planning because of bitter feuding regarding the allocation of memorial space (see Lebel and Drory 2009). Nevertheless, new orientations of privatization in the observance of collective memory were beginning to share the limelight with public mourning and state tributes to its fallen.

Forgetting is the counter-side of remembrance. As symbolized in *Lethe*, it is a passage without return, whereas remembering is re-birth of consciousness. In a certain sense, forgotten history is a sentence of death for those assigned to oblivion. This accounts, in part, for the passion to control the production and diffusion of Clio's musings. This re-birth of consciousness, which we have termed the drive for political inclusion, entails an exerted effort to resurrect or constitute a suppressed narrative. Psychoanalysis is to memory as historiography is to collective memory. Both uncover what has been repressed or suppressed from mental life and tradition, respectively. Just as “the psychoanalytic liberation of memory explodes the rationality of the repressed individual”, so the historical liberation of collective memory through historiography shatters the gap between “inviolate social memory” (Nora, 1996: 2) and the problematic reconstruction of events known as “history”. After World War II, Germany suppressed its Nazi past and France suppressed its Nazi collaboration during the Vichy period. Following the War of Independence, Israel suppressed historical discussion of the fate of its Arab population or the admittedly difficult reconstruction of *Mahal*, volunteer soldiers from outside the country who had no voice during or following the War. The historiographer, then, can serve in the task of recuperating blocked memory, excavating below the screen of collective amnesia. Yet historiography contributes not only to catharsis, to the eradication of pathogenic historical narratives; it paves the way to reconciliations in the national arena and a more comprehensive and perhaps tolerant polity.

In regurgitating the chronicles and the incantations of the historians, the memory of the past becomes distanced from the past as memory. Historiography is a corrective and critique of that history, undermining the conventional wisdom of historical traditions which, in general, are composed of “authenticated” versions of national or universal heritages and personal and communal memories. Through the examination of memorials and monuments, national character disintegrates and becomes a form of social consciousness, of concern with identity. Thus, the

demand for inclusion, which infuses this study, is not only a cry that justice be done; it is a call for a "fusion of horizons" through a politics of recognition.

The historiographical turn is particularly problematic in the context of Jewish history. Yerushalmi (1988) addresses this in his path breaking book, *Zakhor*. Jewish history had always been embedded in a continuous tradition thus obviating the presumed need for historians to engage in historiography. Jewish history was transmitted in an entirely different literary genre and domain that maintained a monopoly on its meaning. Historiography, a secular undertaking, interrupts in a root sense the sacred transmission of the Jewish tradition. Returning briefly to Freud, the psychoanalyst argues that the individual must recoup "a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it" (Freud 1962: 15), whereas historiography, following Yerushalmi, attempts not "a restoration of memory, but a truly new kind of recollection"[2] (Yerushalmi 1988: 94).

When Jewish scholars turned to history towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, they sought to cope with the radical break that assimilation and the overthrow of tradition had engendered. Edouard Gans aspired to that intimacy which the diaspora communities had fostered for nearly two millennia, but not within the same framework of reference. Rather, he wanted a "deeper return to this intimacy" but he was unable to define what relationships would provide a newer insight into the Jewish past (quoted in Yerushalmi 1988: 86). One historiographical path to a consolidated Jewish history was what Salo Baron criticized as "the lachrymose concept of history". In the nineteenth century spirit, Dubnow, and to some extent, Graetz, found historical continuity through the concept of the nation. The Zionist variant of this latter course deftly solved the historiographical problem of intimacy through its fiat of "negation of the Galut (Exile)" and the construction of a direct link of the modern Zionist project to Biblical Israel through the notion of the resurrection of the ancient Jewish commonwealth. Declarations of this orientation abound in Zionist writings. Addressing Jewish youth in 1944, Ben Gurion pointed out that ancient Israel, though a poor and weak power, left a legacy of works and prophecies. Today's youth must also adopt this "orientation … the belief in its mission and its weakness, that has sustained the Jewish people and brought us to this point" (; see Shapira, 1997: 645–74). Jabotinsky and the Revisionists, on the other hand, stressed the heroic qualities of ancient Israel, venerating Samson the Nazirite and the Maccabean revolt. Menahem Begin in a chapter on the "Logic of the Revolt" against the British Mandate in Palestine wrote that "it is not Massada but Modi'in that symbolises the Hebrew revolt in our times" (Begin 1950: 47). In their historiographic efforts, then, both Ben Gurion and Begin, through different tenors of Zionism, found the intimacy that Gans sought, the former through a social and military lens of defiance and the latter through a political and martial lens of daring.

The spirit of this Zionist historiography was not grounded solely in enthusiasm and mystical passion. Recent historical events regarded as of great import for the Zionist enterprise were described in secular terms. "The recent revolt was not only produced by natural emotions; it was guided by commonsense and political logic. Emotion gave birth to its heroism; logic brought about its strategy; and good strategy ensured victory" (Begin, 1951: 47). Absent is history guided by providence. Begin's references to other movements for national liberation, such as the Italian Risorgimento led by Garibaldi and Mazzini or the first Russian revolution in 1905, show that he did not regard the Zionist undertaking as a unique historical project.

The interconnectedness of political enactments of exclusion and inclusion and historiography constitute an integral part of the politics of recognition. Identifying which fallen contributed to the re-birth of the state swept personal sorrow within the aegis of public awareness and

surveillance. The priority of the political cannot be placed in doubt despite the highly-charged personal and family emotions surrounding the topic of bereavement. It was not objective considerations of body count that determined which families of the fallen received state recognition, which events were included in the official combat chronicles and testimonies, which soldiers were singled out for inscription on cenotaphs or were buried in military cemeteries, not to mention whose names would dot the urban landscape as settlements, streets, squares, parks, and so forth. Those who made these decisions expressed political interests shrouded in a sacral veil of socio-cultural rituals and observances. Their eulogizing and epigraphy created a bereavement and memorial arena designed as much to exclude as to include, often adding to the pain and trauma of families of the fallen.

Pranger has noted that "political space furnishes an abstraction for isolating the special field of politics", and "allegiance to institutionalized arrangements confines the special action form" which citizens take in this designated public space. Those who create and establish a hegemonic hold on public space govern the rules of entry and legitimacy, monopolize the right to speak for the public good and public honour, and charge those who contest the established norms of discourse with the representation of particular, and even subversive, interests. When excluded groups establish a platform in public space, through democratic representation in state institutions, for example, they may seek entry to the given institutional arrangements while trying to alter the content of their special form. Their resistance to stigma, vilification, or de-legitimization may take the form of a struggle for a new political order or counterveiling efforts aimed at accommodation with the ultimate goal of holding the reins of power. This study follows the struggle of a politically excluded group for public identity and acceptance and the various means by which its marginalization was gradually overcome.

It is not only state appropriation of public space that gives emotional order to commemoration. It is also appropriation of time, of the past and the construction of national and individual identity. Bergson asserted that consciousness "signifies, above all, memory". By promoting national awareness through commemorative events, the state shapes collective identity by accepting and often redefining membership of that collective. This sense of belonging to the forging of national history is articulated by commemorations, which also orients in time, integrating those who never experienced what is being commemorated, into the continuity of a constructed heritage. Frijda points out that "avowing a common past, and participating in a common tradition with all the social interactions of jointly recognizing the truth of affirmations about history and the valuing of the major actors in it, form … the strongest glue." Time has become an indelible memory in Israel's wars: the War of '48 (the War of Independence), the Six Day War, the October (Yom Kippur) War. When Natan Alterman wrote his poem "Magash HaKesef" ("The Silver Tray") commemorating the sacrifice of Jewish youth in the War of Independence, he memorialized what came to be known as "the Generation of '48". This cohort became the ground for reinforced historical knowledge about the founding of the State. The basis for this historical knowledge, however, was generated by the leadership for independence. Determining who entered the pantheon emerges from the historiosophical origins of the fledgling nation-state.

David Ben-Gurion and the Israeli memory

Tzahor (1994: 237) relates that when Ben Gurion commenced his memoirs following his retirement from public life, he felt that he was about "to start the most important stage of his life: more important than his role as secretary of the Histadrut, as chairman of the Jewish Agency

Executive and as Prime Minister of Israel." According to Tzahor, Ben Gurion hoped that his account of events would become "the key to understanding the process of the nation's founding" (Tzahor, 1994: 237). In actual fact, his active concern for an authenticated history arose during the time when Mapai was losing its hegemony and alternative writings to the Ben Gurionist narrative began to appear, including works from Begin and people in Herut. For Ben Gurion this generated "signs of anxiety for his stature in Zionist history … a fear that he would be shunted to the margins [of history]" (Tzahor, 1994: 241),

The evidence for the tremendous impact of Ben Gurion on the formation of Israeli memory may be found in what occurred in this area after he ceased to be Prime Minister. Only then did Mapai leadership dare to soften the policy of delegitimizing the fallen of Etzel and Lehi. Only then did the heads of Mapai reply to the historical demands of the heads of Herut in all matters related to the inclusion of their fallen and combatants in the public memory. Starting with the agreement of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to the long-standing demand of Menahem Begin to return the remains of the Revisionist leader Zev Jabotinsky to Israel and ending with the change in the name of Remembrance Day for the IDF Fallen to Remembrance Day for the Fallen in Israel's Military Campaigns.

At the beginning of Ben Gurion's tenure as Prime Minister the term "statism" was coined. Known as "*mamlachtiut*" in Hebrew, it presented a concept that created social exclusion and was intended to circumscribe the political game and grant political legitimacy only to a portion of the "state" actors in the national arena. Despite the fact that in a rational, essentially formal sense the concept is equivalent to the term "melting pot", which expresses an ethos of inclusion and the opportunity for all groups to integrate and to take part in the national project, including collective memory, "statism" in effect served as a mechanism for the exclusion of political competitors while at the same time magnifying and preserving Mapai party hegemony. In Shapira's words, Ben Gurion made "identity indistinguishable between 'statism' and 'Mapaism'", so that "the party identity of Mapai was perceived as less partisan than the party identity of its competitors" (Shapira, 1985: 60). In everything connected to versions of historiography following the War of Independence, in Israeli memory, in commemoration and policy of Israeli bereavement, the promoters of statism with Ben Gurion as its leader, became "Ministers of Truth" (*sc*., George Orwell) who clarify for citizens which versions are "state" and which are not. In other venues, Ben Gurion acted to circulate "the truth" in a variety of cultural and educational projects, in line with his perception that "what can't be done by force of law or governance, may be accomplished by the force of idea and dogma. This the party will do."[3]

It should be pointed out that the politics of memory was not used by Ben Gurion solely against Herut. Even in his relations within his own political coalition, especially with his most powerful internal rival, Mapam, he created distortions of history. In all his confrontations with Israel Galilee, he sought to belittle the activities of the Palmah. However, there is no doubt that he focused more upon Herut, which he regarded as the most likely threat to replace his government

Begin and Israeli memory

Menahem Begin, like Ben Gurion, dominated his party without opposition, and thus the decisions he made were in effect his own. He regarded proper recollection of the past as a political resource of the utmost importance and undertook to redress the historical distortions that Mapai disseminated with regard to the combatants and fallen of Etzel and Lehi. In belabouring the need to expand the sphere of Israeli memory, he was strongly motivated to imitate Ben

Gurion's efforts in this sphere and eventually step into his shoes. Like Ben Gurion, he emphasized the importance of remembrance and commemoration ceremonies, attended many of them, and encouraged the publication of remembrance books about combatants and the fallen, for which he wrote introductions. He also sought to establish a "pantheon of Zionist heroes". In contrast to the period of Ben Gurion, all these endeavours were designed to include and sanctify the fallen of Etzel and Lehi who contributed to the establishment of the state. Begin raised this issue in every speech and at every ceremony.

Begin came to power through, and probably because, he sought to expand the circle of statism and in effect, exchange it for nationalism. The behaviour that Begin imposed upon his people from 1948 was of a type that would be labelled by Ben Gurion as statism, and it appears that this was done strictly and fully. For example, when the Seventh Brigade chose to send its "Altalena contingent" to march at the head of the first IDF parade, a controversy erupted among the soldiers as to whether they should salute Ben Gurion when passing by the honour stand where the Prime Minister would be present. Herut MK Shilanski made the decision: they would salute. Begin did not restrict his statism to symbolic acts of his political list, but sought to extend it to groups in the population who were excluded from the statist ethos, such as the Jews who immigrated from Asia and Africa, traditionally-religious Jews, and the ultra-orthodox. That applies also with regard to policies related to public memory, commemoration and bereavement.

I want to remind those present that there were times, and thank God they have passed never to return, in which honour was awarded only to those who sacrificed their lives – and all are heroes – from a certain date, and that date was the 29 November 1947. [Begin speech in 1967: 10]

Begin made it clear how much he and his comrades were the "true statists" who did not desire a sub-culture but always sought "to be included", a part of the national memory:

During the Underground period, we decided that the day on which our Etzel commander, David Raziel, fell, would be the Remembrance Day for all fallen, and we continued this. But when it was decided that there would be one Remembrance Day which would fall on the 4th of Iyar, our Remembrance Day was cancelled. … The remembrance Day of all the fallen would be honoured the evening before Independence Day on the 4th of Iyar together with all the fallen of Israel and it is good that it is this way; it goes to the heart of national unity, and the same holds for the remembrance book.[4]

While Begin and his comrades sought inclusion in state remembrance frameworks, the Establishment under Mapai leadership excluded them from memory sites using all kinds of legal manipulations. Begin referred to this on many occasions and remarked upon it in his book, *The Revolt* – the first revisionist book in Israeli print culture to present an alternative version of certain historical events to that of the Establishment. In his book, Begin makes clear that had the state-written history included the actions of his soldiers it would have been unnecessary to write an alternative version.

Justice requires that every action undertaken for the liberation of the nation should be recorded and justifiably remembered, so that each man who worked for … the establishment of Jewish power would be counted and remembered. In what we call "history", there is much injustice. History … recalls only those names of individuals who were leaders. But the truth of the matter is that the bulk of the task work in war is borne not by those who lead, but rather the "workers", the recruits, the anonymous soldiers. We must not acquiesce in this historical injustice. The complete history of the War of Jewish Liberation should be recorded; the makers of it, the unknown soldiers, should not remain anonymous. (Begin, 1950: 512–13)

In effect, Begin acted in just as determined a manner as Ben Gurion in all matters relating to

memory. He assumed the reins of political power with the objective of bringing about orderly change and did so masterfully and with full gusto. Unlike the security and economic matters, the policy of the government in commemoration, rituals and the remainder of decisions bearing symbolic significance was not delegated to another authority, but rather was concentrated in the Prime Minister's hands. It was clear to him when he took the reins of power that he would embark upon a campaign of correcting injustice, revising the historical record, and providing token compensation for the Underground at whose head he once stood. And more than anything else, he would seek recognition and restitution for the bereaved families who lost their sons in Underground actions.

The exposure of the politics of statism, and especially state appropriation of public memory, reveals the close connection between symbols, political legitimacy and exclusion. Ben Gurion, because he controlled the organs of government at the very beginning of Israel's statehood, was quick to build this system so that it would operate not only in the formal sphere of daily politics but also at the level of symbolic politics or in Gusfield's terms, the politics of status. In this aforementioned sphere, politicians operate on the cultural/symbolic level. They seek to influence prestige and image, thereby acquiring symbolic legitimacy for their status and decisions (Gusfield, 1966). Ben Gurion, beyond his unchallenged control over formal governance, operated with determination in the field of political symbolism. In this latter sphere, as part of his strategy of excluding political competitors from governance, he shaped the boundaries of collective memory. By defining individuals and movements who did not participate in the establishment of the state, he robbed his competitors of a place in commemoration, state entitlements, and public honours. The historical moment for the grounding of a politics of symbolism through founding myths is also the moment for a politics of forgetfulness. It is the moment for the legitimation and de-legitimation of memory.

While David Ben Gurion knew how to manage formal politics, advance interests, and amass power in his concern to preserve his political coalition, Begin was accused not once by his own party as concerned primarily with symbolic politics. Perhaps, a political saw variant declaring that “the party in power may sin, but the party that's out can't begin” carries some weight during his period of opposition when Herut was far from influencing policy.[5] As Prime Minister, Menahem Begin worked in many arenas, but the symbolic– cultural arena, and undoubtedly the dimension of memory, was closest to his heart and on that account aroused antagonisms among many people. Shulamit Aloni (MK of the Civil Rights Movement) remarked: “I don't remember a government in Israel that spoke so much about values and dealt so much with semantics and rituals.” Minister of Defence in Begin's government, Reserve-General Ezer Weizmann, too, complained that “the Palmah was disbanded, but not Etzel.”[6]

The memory confrontations described in this book did not reach a termination point with the ascendancy of the Likud to political power in 1977.[7] Likud initiated a policy of “corrections” in this field which effectively expanded the sphere of public memory. However, no sooner did this policy begin than internal in-fighting over inclusion erupted. Thus, those close to Feinstein and Barzany, the *olei hagardom*,[8] complained about the discrimination against these two heroes of the Underground in the various commemoration undertakings since Begin became Prime Minister. In addition, an internal debate arose over positions taken during the pre-State death sentence by the British of Dov Gruner.[9] Another incident that was thrust aside in Revisionist discourse about memory and commemoration occurred on 16 October 1982 when Foreign Minister and former Lehi member, Yitzhak Shamir awarded an Aliya and Lehi medal to the father of Yehuda Arieh. Arieh was sentenced to death by a firing squad of Etzel following a

summary field trial on 15 January 1948: “some 34 years after this tragic incident that befell my son, the State of Israel has recognized me as a bereaved parent, whose son fell in the campaigns establishing our country. … ” Lehi, which had fought long and hard for State recognition of their fallen could only be embarrassed by this particular “honouring” of its dead.[10]

Additional combatant groups learned to appreciate the connection between memory, political power, and public legitimacy. State legislation in this field continued to generate partisan debate, especially with regard to the scope of its significance. For example, following a decade of continuous effort, a Bill for Veterans of World War II was brought forward in the Knesset.[11] The initiator of the Bill, chairman of the Immigration and Absorption Committee, Naomi Blumenthal of Likud, made clear that this was legislation that carried “symbolic” benefits. However, Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Labour realized that the legislation was aimed at the Likud's Russian constituency through the honouring of thousands of Red Army veterans now living in Israel. Not wanting to alienate this constituency as potential Labour Alignment supporters he spoke of the legislation helping these veterans to feel equal and a part of Israel. In his words, the aim of the legislation, beyond its economic aspect, was to ensure in law the contribution of the World War II veterans to the Allied victory and thereby to ensure the continuing existence of the Jewish people. Interior Minister Sharansky pointed to the connection between memory and politics considering it symbolic that a Bill concerning these veterans was put forward in the Knesset only after a Minister representing them entered the Knesset in 1996. Thus, only when the potential political power of the claimants for entry into state memory was identified were they granted this symbolic payment.

The battle for combat-related recognition took a new turn when families whose dear ones were casualties of terrorist actions sought official recognition and state relief in a context that lacked the halo of heroism. Towards the end of the 1990s, this sector of Israeli bereaved endeavoured to have the memory of their loved ones recalled on the occasion of the military commemoration ceremony held annually at Mt. Herzl on Remembrance Day. Whether by chance or not, it was a Likud Government that applied the report recommendations of the state committee examining this subject, thereby for the first time including civilians as an integral part of Israel's military campaigns, that is, as “soldiers” in the home front.

New ideological confrontations in the politics of Israeli memory

Contemporary Israeli youth are not only unaware of the place of Etzel and Lehi fallen in the War of Independence; they perhaps are not connected to this period of their country's history at all. The orientation of political ideology has also changed. After years of Left–Right antagonisms as the central schism in Israeli society, whether they reflected socio-economic positions or, since the Six Day War, positions on security issues, it appears that new camps are being formed in Israeli politics, including its sphere of public memory. In May 2001, the Education Minister announced that a textbook on the history of the twentieth century would be withdrawn from the curriculum because it places little emphasis on the legacy of national values and distorts Zionist history by focusing upon a critical perspective regarding the struggle of the State for independence, on what began to transpire in the in the previous decade as a post-Zionist narrative.[12] The Minister, a daughter of Lehi activists and a Revisionist family, belonged to the Likud Party heading the Government coalition and held a rightist political stance. From a historical perspective, Limor Livnat's decision was surprising. The book didn't satisfy her, not only because it placed Etzel and Lehi on the historical margins, but because there were faults and

distortions, in her view, of central Zionist undertakings. In effect, she fought the battle of the "Mapai" elements on behalf of their political and public image and standing.

During her term of office as Education Ministry, the daughter of a Lehi member voiced her opposition to any attempt to harm the positive image of those very parties who had at one time harmed the image of Lehi and Etzel. The constellation now was not the Revisionist or Socialist camp, but rather a Zionist camp that began to cope with post-Zionist orientations. In this new ideological constellation, the two political camps stood united, both laying claim to their constructive and vital roles in the formation of the Jewish state. Post-Zionist writing placed Meir Pa'il and Limor Livnat together, a Hagana member whose writings had negated any positive role of the political Right in state-building, and a Revisionist/Lehi family member, who fought for the legitimate place of her political movement in Israel's struggle for statehood. The "new" Zionist history launched a moral critique on the means and direction by which the state founders, both of the Left and Right, attained their objective.[13]

The entire range of confrontations, debates and discussions about the boundaries of Israeli memory and the political hierarchy of Israeli bereavement arose, then, in this very exclusionist activity directed towards Etzel and Lehi. The study seeks to reinforce the claim that bereavement and memory are not formed spontaneously and emotionally, but rather are a product of political policy, cynicism and rationalism. These guiding elements in the building and maintaining of political hegemony lead even to the graveyard. Politics, it would appear, is not just a matter of living citizens, state and the living, but of the dead as well. As a Mapai MK once phrased it: "Not just any person is admitted into the national pantheon."[14] This book attempts to show that the path to this pantheon is sometimes quite long.

Part I

Theoretical and historical framework

1 The politics of memory

Theoretical framework and basic concepts

> A remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before it and after it.
>
> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 202

When Howard Zinn criticized Henry Kissinger's claim that "history is the memory of states", he was charging state memory with being exclusive by not "disclosing those hidden episodes of the past" that exhibited resistance. Zinn undertook a forgotten history of the United States. Paul Ricoeur regarded forgetting as "the disturbing threat that lurks in the background of the phenomenology of memory and the epistemology of history" and, turning to everyday life, he cited "the prime danger" as residing "in the handling of authorized, imposed, celebrated, commemorated history – of official history" (Ricoeur 1996: 412, 448).

Zinn, a historian, had no pretensions of rectifying the historical record. There were no objective histories *sub specie aeternitatis*. What he wanted to write was a new history from the perspective of the excluded social strata, from the classes, races and gender orientations that have been ignored by the official narrative. Ricoeur wrote in part because he was troubled by the impact of commemorations and the exploitation of forgetfulness. For Ricoeur, forgetting forms the horizon of memory and is not merely its nemesis. In the omissions and commissions of state-endorsed accounts there is a fluctuating cognizance of the memorable. Although the scope of memory is strongly shaped by the fading of recollections and triggers that often, in a seemingly mysterious way, suddenly bring traces into consciousness – what we wistfully and sometimes agonizingly call "memory loss" – it is the manipulation of remembrance by dominant narratives that motivates these two authors. These two approaches, then, the historical and the philosophical, conceptually inform the political formulation of collective memory.

Our concern is primarily with collective memory construed as history and its construction through political means.[1] It addresses not only the selection and embellishment of events but the question of why and how events become non-events or are judged as marginal historical occurrences. The subterranean sphere of collective consciousness has its agents of release who match in their therapeutic and interrogative tools of the trade what psychologists have developed

for the penetration of cathected memory.[2] Just as "the psychoanalytic liberation of memory explodes the rationality of the repressed individual", so the historical liberation of collective memory through historiography shatters the seamless web between "inviolate social memory" (Nora 1996: 2) and the reconstructed events known as "history".[3] For Nora, living memory-history, marked by the continuity and flow of tradition, has been replaced by discrete critical-history which attempts to capture a dead and distant past. The core of this latter history has the source of its rationality in the ideological orientation of its author, whether it be an individual historian or the political will-formation of the decision-making power. Historiography, then, is a self-conscious history of history, undermining the conventional wisdoms of historical traditions which are generally composed of authenticated versions of national or universal heritages, as well as personal and communal memories. In its examination of memorials and monuments, its national character disintegrates and becomes a form of social consciousness, of concern with identity. Thus, the demand for inclusion, which infuses this study, is not only a cry that justice be done; it is a call for a "fusion of horizons" through a politics of recognition.

The quotation from Walter Benjamin which heads this chapter lays bare the high stakes entailed in the determination or recollection of memorable events. Recollections serve as markers between the past and future, of the way we were and the way we became what we are. They are both caesurae and bridges in our life course. Halbwachs reinforces this insight by drawing upon its import for collective memory. Referring to family life reminiscences, Halbwachs asserts that "events and figures … which serve as landmarks … become pregnant with all that has preceded them just as they are already pregnant with all that will follow" (Halbwachs 1992: 61) Pierre Nora, in his seminal work on collective memory, contends that the signifying markers in which remembrance is embedded extend beyond the transitory content of the historical: "Museums, archives, cemeteries, collections, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, private associations – these are relics of another era, illusions of eternity" (Nora 1996: 6). Thus, the politics of memory appears as a struggle in public space for the representation of the immemorial and it is in this context that the tensions in its social construction are so forceful. The Israeli *milieux du memoire* provide an exemplary case of the turmoil surrounding the production and appropriation of a not-so-distant history.

When Menahem Begin, the leader of Herut, wrote the account of his Underground movement's role in the military effort to found the State, he opened with the evocative motif: "lest the Jew forget again"; and he concluded by urging that "every act performed for the liberation of our people [be] recorded and remembered."[4] (Begin 1950: xi, 379). Aware of the Underground's exclusion from this history, he insisted that "everybody … in the struggle for liberation should be singled out and remembered." Moreover, "the chronicles should be written in their entirety." The final phrase of the book affirms that the martyrs of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization) will be recorded in "memory eternal" (Begin 1950: 380). Here was an avowed call to preserve for the collective memory what witnesses experienced and observed. At the time, the fragility of conserving remembrances of the independence struggle by various participant groups was self-evident. Not only were some of these groups, such as Etzel and Lehi, a small proportion of the Yishuv's combatant forces, and thus liable to be overlooked or relegated to the margins of the war narrative; of greater import was the tangible awareness that the proportion of the population who lived through the hostilities was rapidly diminishing because of the mass wave of immigration during the first years of the State. This attenuation could only intensify the struggle among the eyewitnesses to imprint the "authentic" version of past events on minds whose recollections of the War of Independence were a blank slate.

The battle for the official version of collective memory was, of course, dominated by the ruling regime during the thirty years of its political tenure (1948–77). It is this canonical formulation and inculcation of a national narrative relating to sacrificial loss and its commemoration that constitutes the canvas for the struggle for recognition and inclusion by the state of politically dissident elements who had participated in the effort for national reconstitution of the Jewish people. Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, too, undertook in his speeches and writing the task of presenting the sanctioned history of the fledgling state. Ne'aman claims that

Ben Gurion is not only a man who made history, but also through his writings a man who sought to determine its content; he also exemplified the cunning of history, in so far as the intended outcomes of his actions were changed, sometimes unrecognizably.

Shapira, too, found that most of the historiography of the War of Independence is based on Ben-Gurion's writings, principally, his diaries; he not only was "the leader of the War – he even wrote its history." She adds that

> very few dared to present versions opposed to those of the prophet, the legislator, the Leninist-style leader. … With the passing of time … his shortcomings were forgotten. … Even his weaknesses were presented as advantages, as were his tendencies to unlimited government while condemning his domestic rivals and presenting them as enemies of Israel.
>
> (Shapira 1985: 9)

At the end of her book Shapira added that "the question of what Ben Gurion chose to list and what he preferred not to list is subject to research in itself." (Shapira 1985: 23). Israel's first Prime Minister sought "to secure the hegemony of labour throughout the Zionist movement. Without this hegemony," he warned, "the Zionist movement may stray from its course and emasculate its historical content in the process of realizing its goal" (Ben-Gurion, 1974). When Ben-Gurion retired from parliamentary politics, he devoted much of his time to writing his memoirs and summarizing the accomplishments of the Labour movement.[5]

The litterateurs among political leaders, from Solon and Julius Caesar to Churchill and de Gaulle were not averse to placing themselves at the centre of their accounts, frequently bending history to the perfection of language and themselves. Churchill's oft-repeated aphorism that "history will bear me out, particularly as I shall write that history myself" comes to mind, as does de Gaulle's account of France's liberation entitled *Salvation*. When the makers of history undertake to be its literary authors, the ambiance of the historical account is inevitably triumphant; it becomes a ready-to-hand monument to national acclaim. *His story* lays claim to a preferred place in history. If well-written or well-publicized, it becomes a beacon illuminating the landscape of public memory. As we shall indicate below, such a history is, following Gramsci, a tool of domination and exclusion.

Individual recollection raises a most difficult issue, namely whether the intimacy and interiority of personal memory can establish any relationship with collective memory. Halbwachs affirmed that our individual memory is primordially collective rather than an individual recall and recognition of our personal memory traces. We acquire our memories through a being-with others. For Halbwachs, "a person remembers only by situating himself within the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought" (Halbwachs 1980: 33). The implication for our current study is that memory is generated within a social setting and places of memory must be collectively captured in order to have mnemonic

resilience. The latter notion is Pierre Nora's contribution since it is through places that we recall others. Nora regarded his excursion into realms of memory as an exposure of "national memory", which had distorted the nation's true history. Thus, the more pragmatic issue is the acts of transference which convert memory into history and thereby fashion a common memory.[6]

In order to bring about a convergence or happy detente between conflicting collective memories, a reconciliation or mode of forgetting must take place. Begin addressed this possibility in his early writing, borrowing the notion of "black memories" from his Revisionist mentor, Zev Jabotinsky.

> Don't let your memory dwell on … mistakes or … chatter. And if the good of the people requires that you stretch out your hand … , don't let your memory be "black". Forget what must be forgotten and give him your hand.[7]
>
> (Begin 1950: 137)

It is doubtful whether the *politics* of memory can make a smooth bridge among the operations of memory, history and forgetting. Forgiveness and reconciliation are arduous psychological and political processes which even the passing of generations may not overcome. The reluctance to exonerate the person who has been cast as "other" nourishes identity. Moreover, the narrative of alterity, of positing the other as an historical outsider, serves as a trope supporting the saliency and authenticity of the authorized version of events. Through misrecognition or defamation of the other, collective memory takes on the appearance of a defence of the homeland against invasive influences foreign to national aspirations. Forgetting, as noted above, is a horizon, and not a moment, of memory. We can only remember *that* we forgot. But in historiography, forgetting is more often than not deliberate excision – exclusion of the other. In Ricoeur's phenomenological description of forgetting, this is termed manipulated memory (Ricoeur 1996: 80–86, 448 ff.). For Ricoeur, manipulated memory is primarily effected through ideology, which is selective and eliminative. When communal identity serves an ideological end, it is determined by a "canonical narrative" imposed "by means of intimidation or seduction, fear or flattery" (Ricoeur 1996: 448).

The subject of manipulated memory returns us to the theme of regime supremacy. The Labour Party's building and maintenance of political hegemony, spearheaded by party dominance in the *Yishuv* (the pre-state period), set the stage for the sharp reaction of Herut following the first Knesset elections in 1951. Ben-Gurion's guiding dictum in forming the first Government coalition was "neither Maki nor Herut" – neither the communists nor the right-wing dissidents. This became the watchword for political exclusion and set the parameters for the de-legitimization of the opposition. Its effectiveness was marked by the structural conditions of Israel's political development as *parteistaat*. The role of one-party dominance in liberal democratic states has been conceptually developed along quite independent paths by Antonio Gramsci and Maurice Duverger.

Viewed from the position of cultural Marxism, the conventional image of ruling elites as interested in establishing and reproducing their preferential political status implied the desire to attain and preserve political hegemony through cultural supremacy. Antonio Gramsci was the leading proponent of this approach.[8] He maintains that social control exerted through beliefs and ideas become so common and "natural" that they appear to reflect an uncontested order of things. The autonomy that he granted to the ideological and political superstructure challenged the economic determinism of the dialectical materialists and expanded on Lenin's party praxis in

What is to Be Done? For Gramsci, hegemony refers to the conceptual foundations upon which the political leadership constructs its claims to elevated social status. Belief in the political elite's worthiness and inherent qualifications for this position guarantees the elite's continued hold. Significantly, the situation described is neither that of arbitrary coalition majorities or of random parliamentary victories; on the contrary, Gramsci envisages a coercive group at the apex of the fledgling "ethical state" guiding a new economic order in which "cultural policy will above all be negative, a critique of the past; it will be aimed at erasing from the memory and at destroying" (Gramsci 1971: 263–64). Thus, historiography plays a key role in the revolutionary preliminaries. On these programmatic grounds, hegemony's active stimulant towards a new order is both repressive and accommodating. Antagonist groups are liquidated or subjugated whereas allied groups are incorporated into the hegemonic system through democratic and concessionary means. To sustain the compliant image of hegemony, dissension is diluted or circumvented, for dissension creates doubt, an attitude that undermines the "taken-for-granted" character of the dominant ideology. The "game" played by these societal actors – intellectuals, broadly interpreted by Gramsci – represents a cognitive process that entraps not only the ruled, but also the rulers, for both groups perceive the political elite as committed to the interests of all and the society's genuine rulers. Hegemony represents, in effect, the reverse of what the functionalists, the proponents of pluralism, call *consensus*, the normative agreement they perceive necessary for society's survival. In contrast, the cultural Marxists interpret consensus, now dubbed hegemony, as the product of a system of control that serves narrow interests using terms of universalistic discourse. Only through a concurrence of values between classes, between leaders and led, can society remain viable. (See Thompson 1986).

Gramsci divided his hegemonic concept between civil society and the state, attributing the means of influence to the former and the means of domination to the latter. Among the tools of domination were the educational system and the armed forces. Without unduly overloading the analogy, Ben-Gurion established political hegemony through labour-Zionist influence on civil society and dominance of his party through the policy of *mamlachtiut* (statism). Soldier commemoration ceremonies and war remembrance projects became part of a general mobilization not only for forging national unity but placing the ruling party at the centre of this effort.

An understanding of the centralizing impact of a political party in early Israeli society is illuminated by drawing upon an empirical school of political sociology. Like Gramsci, Duverger (1972), indirectly influenced by Michel's "iron law of oligarchy", introduced the notion of a dominant political party defined by the fact that its prospects for electoral defeat in the foreseeable future were deemed unlikely.[9] The Liberal Democrats in Japan, the Indian National Congress in India, and the Kemal Ataturk legacy in Turkey were among the examples cited of this phenomenon. The Israeli Labour Party, too, may be included in this category, its tenure of rule extending from 1948 to 1977. The strategic interest of every political party holding the reins of government in a democratic order is to guarantee the continuity of its regime through continued re-election. This political goal determines the current behaviour and future decisions of every party in power. Adopting the terminology of dominant party theory, we can state that the aim of every party in power is to convert itself into the nation's dominant party.

Duverger maintained that party dominance is not confined to parliamentary superiority. In his view, a clear electoral majority is not a requisite for the enforcement of dominance. A party's sway over cultural rather than political phenomena, what he calls the *zeitgeist*, is a sufficient condition. Also known as the *sociological factor*, this variable represents the spiritual superiority

held by the party and by those who identify with it, a condition that allows the party to maintain the loyalty of its adherents over extended periods of time. Stated differently, the *sociological factor* provides cultural and psychological advantages because of the way in which the general public perceives the party. "The party is dominant," according to Duverger, "when it is identified with an epoch; when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, so to speak, coincide with those of the epoch." (Duverger 1972: 308). Thus, Duverger differentiates between party influence and party power ("strength" in his terms). Because party dominance is "linked with belief," it is a consensual phenomenon: the entire public – not just party leaders – accept this status. In essence, we are dealing with a case where perception and image meet:

> A dominant party is that which public opinion *believes* to be dominant. … Even the enemies of the dominant party, even citizens who refuse to give it their vote, acknowledge its superior status and its influence; they deplore it but admit it.
>
> (Duverger 1972: 308–9)

Duverger's approach goes beyond the traditional theories of coalitions, alliances, or political structuration to include the party's image as the embodiment of the spirit of the times. Attainment of this symbiosis facilitates maximization of the party's political power. This cultural goal resembles what Antonio Gramsci (1971) termed *hegemony*. More than political superiority, *hegemony* reflects an interlocking between the collective consciousness and cultural perception of the occupants of that status and those others who abide by that perception. Hegemonic leaders are perceived as controlling the system's operative reins – they are responsible for managing the public administration and its ongoing decision-making process, as well as embodying the society's moral leadership through symbols that represent society and identify its values (see Bocock 1986: 11).

Dominant parties are often dependent upon coalition partners for long-term maintenance of their governing position. Huntington (1968: 414–15, 422) has argued that a dominant party develops institutionalized procedures for assimilating factions and groups, thereby enhancing its ability to maintain control of multi-party legislatures over an extended period of time. Arian, subscribing to this view, states that such a situation is characterized by "the absence of conditions conducive to an opposition … to provide alternatives to the party in power" (Arian 1973). Almond contends that dominant parties strategically occupy the centre of the ideological political arena, protecting their flanks on the right or left as the situation dictates. Dominant parties are frequently found at the helm of national liberation movements (Almond 1960: 40–42). Blondel, Burger and Sartori have contributed more precise definitions of dominant parties by introducing quantitative variables. According to Blondel, who bases his conclusions on comparative studies of political systems in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and France conducted over a number of years, a party attains dominant status when it gains at least 45per cent of the vote (Blondel 1969: 98). Burger, who based her research on political developments in India, argues that a dominant party must obtain at least 56per cent of the seats in parliament (Burger 1969: 5). Sartori, who prefers the phrase "para-dominant party," employs both electoral support and chronological criteria. A party must win three consecutive elections before it is considered dominant (Sartori 1976: 125).

Goldberg (1992), like Duverger, did not confine himself to estimates of parliamentary majorities as the necessary or even sufficient condition required for consolidation of party dominance. In his pioneering study of Israel's political system, he proposed quantitative

parameters for determining a ruling party's dominance. He explored the specific question as to whether Mapai's hegemony conformed to three conditions:

1 *an inter-party context* in which the party achieves at least 10per cent more seats than its closest parliamentary rival in three consecutive elections;
2 *an oppositional context* in which there is no chance that two-thirds of the elected members will become a bloc that constitutes an alternative to the ruling coalition;
3 *a social context* in which the ruling party maintains an ideological supremacy over the opposition parties and the public regards it as expressing the spirit of the times because of its association to fateful events that occurred (such as the achievement of national independence).

Goldberg's investigations rely in the main on the work of Duverger who made the claim that a dominant party need not attain a parliamentary majority in assuming a prevailing political position in the state. The necessary condition for pervasive influence resides in control over economic, spiritual and psychological resources over an extended period of time, or, through the channelling of antagonistic groups into mutually beneficial coalitions, thereby widening the ruling class and converting it into a dominant political power. Grasping the *Zeitgeist* was a means of grasping the reins of power.

Zeitgeist (spirit of the times) as a political resource

Both Gramsci and Duverger ascribe a legitimizing function to the "spirit of the times". Through adaptation to, or production of, a broad cultural ethos in society, political movements and parties are able to achieve public recognition that they embrace the "spirit of the times" and thus are the legitimate representatives of the nation. This is neither a mystical nor metaphysical concept; rather it reflects the natural, legal, economic, moral and intellectual conditions which form the historical development of a nation.

According to Duverger, dominance, like hegemony, relates not only to the formal dimensions of control but also to its informal, implicit dimensions. Whereas studies of overt forms of control entail an examination of the allocation of economic resources, parliamentary behaviour, and ruling group preferences, studies of the latent dimensions of control unveil hidden aspects of cultural control, and in particular, how the allocation of social values ensures the preferential status of select groups. Thus, despite Duverger's positivist approach to political parties, which focuses upon electoral methods, leadership, party organization and alliance formations, he on occasion drifts into a subjective mode that draws upon Weber and the reasons for according legitimacy to a given institutional order. For Duverger, "an institution is legitimate when it corresponds to the dominant doctrines of a period, to the most widely held beliefs on the nature and form of power." In his formulation, key party institutions conform "to the ideas of the times. … " (Duverger1966: 26–27). Whether this accord was an adapted congruence of the party to the reigning spirit or the party was the very agent that created the intellectual, cultural and moral climate of the times is left undetermined by Duverger.

Gramsci, on the other hand, confers party agency in the creation of an ideological atmosphere for the emergence of its dominance. Although he heaps scorn on the notion of "the spirit of the times" claiming there is a pluralist "esprit de corps", that is, an independent spirit of various bodies in any one historical period, the capacity to form an amalgam ideology embracing the masses and the elite is the mark of a hegemonic party. "The philosophy of an historical epoch is therefore, nothing other than the 'history' of that epoch itself, nothing other than the mass of

variations that the leading group has succeeded in imposing on preceding reality." (Gramsci 1971: 345)

Cultural anthropology and media analysis delve more directly into the structure and motivations of the *zeitgeist*. Following Geertz (1973: 215) culture is a collection of creative processes and the distribution of social interpretations. These processes and interpretations arise out of "local knowledge, namely, 'vernacular' characterizations of what happens. … " Moreover, political culture is a collective aggregation of resources exposited from the natives' point of view, and these natives are society's political elite. It is through the manufacture and manipulation of historical signs and markers that they enforce their rule and simultaneously engender assent to it. Thus, Geertz shows affinities with Gramsci and the *en passant* remarks of Duverger. Let us quote him at length:

> At the political center of any complexly organized society … there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of the elite are chosen (usually not very) or how deeply divided among themselves they may be (usually much more than outsiders imagine), they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented.
>
> (Geertz 1973: 124)

Thus, political initiatives are, by themselves, insufficient to stimulate public acceptance of new ideas. What is required is the creation of an appropriate atmosphere, the cultural conditions amenable to acceptance of these ideas (see Doron and Lebel 2004). This cognitive ambience appears, in Gamson's terms, as an "interpretive package", a cultural derivative, whose meanings and associations are ascribed to events and institutions by a society's members. Hence, according to Gamson, the competition between political actors is, to all effects, the competition between the different interpretive packages constructed from meanings produced within the public discourse (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Moreover, political actors themselves construct these interpretive packages, some of which gain dominance and provide the normative principles (or worldview) from which subsequent political behaviour and political stratification are derived. From a political vantage point, culture is not created in a vacuum. Culture is the breeding ground for those political institutions that structure reality and prescribe the behaviours and knowledge that will later appear to be independent of their origins and thus taken for granted.

This cyclical reasoning is meant to explain materialization of the self-fulfilling prophecy within the framework of which groups, who control the production of meaning and allocate cultural values – that is, the groups who achieve hegemony – act. This process upholds those elites most effective in their reception of social messages, thereby reinforcing their political dominance. In general, effective interpretive packages endow actors, parties, and messages with acceptability, significance and normative pre-eminence; they thereby construct the links that bind institutions to processes of social self-maintenance. As theories of decision making and social psychology teach us, any object or action that is perceived as furnishing advantages that ensure survivability – or, in sociological terms, are related to individual preservation – acquires a preferred place in the hierarchy of values. These objects and actions are therefore perceived as more meaningful vis-à-vis other institutions, and as associated with "secondary" values, such as self-actualization or social well being. Objects, personalities, and provocative or engaging ideas

that gain popularity are incorporated into self-maintaining interpretive packages that link those objects, individuals and ideas to social survival. There is little doubt, then, that the inculcation of political demands motivated by these interests in the minds of the public will hasten their internalization as critical values. The same occurs with respect to political parties: parties that focus on security and are perceived as actively working to fulfil the related function attract greater attention and support than do those parties which deal with other, more "mundane" subjects, in Maslow's terms, found at the periphery of the pyramid of human needs (see Shapira 1988).

Relating to the cultural superstructure in an activist vein, this study regards the spirit of the times as a dependent variable. Consequently, the ruling party's challenge is the creation of this spirit which is then manifested through political action. The spirit of the times, as an entity, is therefore perceived as subjective, a sociological factor produced by calculated, rational, political manipulation. Those of its constituents that pertain to communal survival and security, whether in the form of values or symbols, are none other than the products of political practices employed by the elite to preserve its status. The allocation of values, in conjunction with the preoccupation with economic assets and coalition formation, enables the ruling group to manufacture the very ambience that facilitates its integration within the socio-political structure and continued social sanction of its rule. Stated differently, this same atmosphere, ideological climate, or spirit of the times is presented here as the product of rational political engineering. Such a project doubtless entails long-term investments, especially when compared with the short-term investment of resources and energy made in the bargaining involved with coalition formation, budgeting, and the other undertakings that characterize day-to-day public policy-making. This extended time frame is warranted by the outcome of those investments – continued dominance – the elemental goal of any political or social movement. As will be demonstrated, the long-term perspective adopted by the actors in question enabled them to manipulate values and normative assets to the benefit of the needs, perceptions and images created and engineered by them.

The past in the service of the future: the art of political simulation

The appropriate location for construction of the "spirit of the times" is collective memory and the most effective agent for the formation of this "spirit" is the political party. But what need would a political movement, which acts in the present and looks to the future, have in focusing upon the past? It appears that the past, by means of the manner in which it is perceived, taught, and understood, is the key site for production of the worldviews and expectations directed at the present and future. It follows, I contend, that a society's view of its past directly leads to the shape of the contemporary spirit of the times and to the perception of political actors as having roots in that past.

Talmud and Yonai apply the term *hegemonic regions* to those cultural arenas, issues, and institutions that provide major hegemony-supporting assets. They argue that the entire society, the rulers and the ruled, sequester these sites from open public debate (which is subject to competitive market forces), and position them beyond the reach of public dissent and deliberation. These areas are bounded by a consensus that crosses all sectoral boundaries due to their status as intrinsic and thus unquestioned beliefs (the social ethos). (Talmud 1986; Yonai 1986) From the moment that it captures the reins of government, the political elite transform collective memory into a hegemonic site. This act of appropriation awards the party a clear-cut political advantage over its rivals. From its position in the regime, the party attempts to gain control over knowledge-disseminating institutions (especially educational and research

institutions), as well as access to all relevant assets, which serve as socialization agents in support of the ruling party's needs. We should note that the sooner this formulation of a community's or society's collective memory begins, the greater the benefits to the group that distributes the requisite interpretative packages by means of that memory. More time is thus provided for internalization of the (re)interpreted collective past and its incorporation as part of the group's taken-for-granted cultural identity.

Some scholars contend that a group's collective memory is the most significant of the social assets available for construction of political communities. Sivan, for example, argues that as part of its evolution, every community, and more so the nation state, must first become a *community of memory* (Sivan 1991). Memory is a fundamental condition; it binds individuals to the meanings and legitimacy underlying their sense of internal affiliation and demands for external recognition as members of a community. This process also has a "negative" side: Renan, among the first to deal with the issue of nationalism, notes that "nationalism is not just what is remembered, but also what is forgotten." As proof, he cites the omission of the French Catholics' massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Eve from official texts as an attempt to establish national unity (Renan 1882).

Memory is thus a mechanism for defining the individual's self-image as well as a tool for delineating the group's/state's boundaries, that is, for developing national consciousness. An elite wanting to achieve hegemony in an evolving society will attempt to impose uniformity on the mosaic of different memories found in its vicinity, and will initiate what Yoram Bronowski terms *narratives of remembrance or the history of forgetfulness*. (Bronowski 1993) In this context, the actors who frame memory fulfil a dual function: They reflect the society's evolving socio-political ethos while at the same time they determine the *coordinates* at which this political culture is fleshed out. In this way, a *perpetuum mobile* is initiated, in which changing forms of collective memory (e.g., state commemoration practices) reflect the dialectic tensions at the heart of every society at the moment when recollection is constructed.

The importance of collective memory as a unifying force is corroborated by the resources that incipient nation-states devote to the formation of a national civic culture, to an exclusive set of symbols, myths and rites. These elements provide the interpretations and meanings that place the new state on a cultural-historical continuum. They spin the narrative describing the advent of national sovereignty and, most significantly, they determine the accepted components of political identity. In doing so, these cultural products award preferential status to those considered responsible for the nation's establishment. In other words, by determining which individuals and groups would be numbered among the nation's "founding fathers", collective memory thereby awards them the right to make future claims for preferred political status.

The period of national (re)birth is pivotal when viewed from the perspective of collective memory and its relationship to all factors related to the establishment of the modern state. As the period most charged with significations and symbols, it provides the basis for the political status of national memory formation to the degree that three additional elements are present: an ideology; a suitable cultural ambience; and motivated actors who can actively influence the process. Eliade (1963: 183) notes that a passion for national historiography marks the formation of Western nation-states but all too often ends in "cultural provincialism".

Some scholars consider collective memory to be a methodological artefact, capable of being identified as an objective entity in a social framework. The first to put forward this view, as noted above, was Maurice Halbwachs (1992). Halbwachs attributes a social a priori to memory; we remember through others and not through solipsistic retrieval. Thus, individual recollections

are not spontaneous phenomena, but rather reminiscences embedded in groups and society recalled in certain places. Funkenstein defines collective memory as "a system of clear signs, symbols and practices: times of memory, names of places, monuments and victory arches, museums and texts. …". As such, collective memory involves "reliving" events selectively experienced by numerous individuals and sub-groups who are now united in the name of that shared history, identity and fate. For subjects, memories are the main factor guiding construction of their collective identity and social consensus. While Halbwachs discerns collective memory as an identifiable social object capable of being researched scientifically, the phenomenon itself is a social construct; it is a product of the here and now. It is precisely the contemporaneity of collective memory that challenges the scholar to reveal the past, locate bits of information, and wipe society's spectacles clean on route to ascertaining what really happened. Accordingly, the past is an objective entity, real and immutable, invoking its discoverers to raise it from the depths and distribute it far and wide. Paradoxically, this "objective" history feeds into collective memory.

Leadership desirous of achieving and retaining political dominance as well as hegemonic control over a society's collective memory cannot be content with unmanageable historical or scholarly inputs, or with unadulterated knowledge drawn from a community's heritage. Such a leadership is well aware of the need for new versions of the recollected "past," renditions which will, first and foremost, have the capacity to unify the greatest number of community members about its party and programme. In his paper on the traditions associated with national movements, Hobsbawm argued that elites "invent" such recollections; they make political use of history to substantiate their legitimacy and unite the community about their desired agenda. For Hobsbawm,

> The history that is the nation's, state's or movement's store of knowledge and ideology is not what is truly ensconced in the people's memory, but what was chosen, portrayed, distributed and institutionalized by those whose task it was to do just that.
>
> (Hobsbawm 1983: 12–13)

It is, in effect, a political construct, designed to appropriate the past for the sake of advancing the elite's present and future interests. Pierre Nora refers to *remembrance sites* (*les lieux de memorie*) to capture this phenomenon established by a ruling elite which controls decision making in the political and national arenas. These sites are used to penetrate the societal discourse which stamps it with memories favourable to the regime. (Nora 1996)

Nora argues that collective memory is a "meaningful quality associated with a real or imagined entity transformed into a symbolic communal element through deliberate acts … ". It links the physical – geographically placed objects such as monuments, flags or street names that commemorate leaders and heroes – with the temporal, such as the annual celebration of Bastille Day. In Nora's view, any expressive vehicle for the dissemination of memory that introduces and preserves that memory within the public discourse is a remembrance site. The range of a community's remembrance sites he labels *the community's symbolic repertoire*. Collective memory thus constitutes the signs and mechanisms that a group preserves temporally and spatially in order to remind its audience of those past events. These events are not random public recollections; on the contrary, they have been recruited by state leadership to further political ends and thus mark, the "monopolization" or nationalization of remembrance. Nora himself describes remembrance sites as inert matter, "the empty shells that remain on the beach after the

sea of memory has retreated" (Nora 1996: 12).

Collective memory is constructed in three main stages: initially, there is a *screening* of facts and events from the near and distant past in order to ascertain what is worth remembering and what conforms to the desired image of the elite that will consolidate its position. The ruling group subsequently *appoints agents* to classify and select the preferred version from among the historical sites available. The selection of what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is emphasized and what is ignored, who are the heroes and who the villains, is guided by ideological and moralistic directives. The second stage is *interpretation* – mediation of all past events or the placing of those events within the narrative – prior to their presentation to the public. These interpretive packages are chosen from among competing meaning-imposing interpretive options. Stage three is *distribution* – in Nora's terms, the establishment of official remembrance sites to be marketed for the purpose of public internalization of their information and meanings. This internalized public memory is nothing other than the product of calculated political action, conducted to facilitate achievement of hegemony over the public discourse. As James Young writes in the introduction to his book *The Texture of Memory*: "Memory is not created in a vacuum; its motives are never pure." (Young 1993: 2).

It is important to understand the process by which recollection is severed from the personal memories of its individual bearers and replaced by a collectivized ego. In other words, the personal recollection or memorialization of the past, whether derived from first-hand experience or adopted through interpersonal or social reportage is shaped and reworked as acculturated memory. Remembrance sites are nurtured; archives are established, anniversaries celebrated, festivities organized, eulogies delivered.

> Memories require "tangible points of reference" by means of which society's members can relate to the remembered event. We are speaking of a social process, the result of social dynamics and interpersonal communication, a product of the social influences to which the individual is subject. This phenomenon is not dependent upon individuals although it is located solely within them; it is due to the fact that individuals are members of the society that formed them.
>
> (Bar-On 2001: 29)

Hence, study of a society's collective memory necessarily shifts to the level of the dominant political discourse. The congruence between the groups participating in or excluded from that discourse is what interests us. Comparisons will undoubtedly reveal significant variance in the perception and comprehension of events among different groups; in the present study, however, the major questions focus on the groups that have established hegemony over formation of official remembrance sites, especially textbooks and state-supported commemoration practices.

Followers of Foucault have also called for a re-reading of collective memory, historiography and, in effect, all human knowledge. The construction and structure of collective memory takes place within the context of the struggle for power. From the perspective of critical theory, the group possessing political and societal power attempts to cast human knowledge in a form benefiting its continued hegemony (Foucault 1973). This insight has recently prodded contemporary academic scholars to unveil the history of groups omitted from public discourse, of sectors and populations which have no voice or speak in a voice which is delegitimized by the dominant discourse. Their aim is to tell the story of the marginal and the weak, those whose contributions have been expunged from the official narrative. This school relies on Marx's

accusation that the bourgeoisie refuses to study itself critically and/or relinquish its unilateral view of its own history (Marx 1973: 105–6).

These insights basically redefine history, although not necessarily official history, as a subjective, political sphere. Here, "the whole truth" is not only alien, it is inadmissible. This is necessarily so because the "writing" of history must survive political barriers, struggles, and interventions. We can conclude that history is but one additional remembrance site created by the powerful in order to foster an atmosphere amenable to their goals. Bar-On argues that memory is nothing but myth. There is no importance in the amount of truth it contains. It does not confront what has occurred in the past but rather is concerned with its degree of correspondence with elements of identification found in the present.

> Collective memory is closer to myth than to researched history. The element that characterizes myths is the irrelevance of any link the story might have to recorded history. Collective memory's linkage to historical events also plays little part, irrespective of any connection that once existed among some of its components.
>
> (Bar-On 2001: 29)

Positing an analogy between myth and collective memory facilitates our comprehension of remembrance sites as products of the political interests and actions operative at their formation. A historical myth is an interpretive mechanism that sanctifies a historical event by classifying it as a universal collective experience; as such, the myth is subject to society's ongoing interpretation of its past. The social relevance of a myth is expressed by the manner in which it is incorporated into the network of social and communal ceremonies. More than retelling the past, a myth embodies a cultural code that exalts a distinctive set of moral values and behavioural norms. The myth's inculcation represents a mechanism for reproducing that code. Hence, a myth is, by definition, enlisted: the group that formulates remembrance sites for its needs automatically creates a myth that inherently rebuffs memories supporting its competitors. In the case to be explored, namely Zionist symbolism and commemoration practices, I will show that the plethora of remembrance sites and myths dealing with agricultural settlement helped to engender an ambience congruent to the needs of the Labour movement. These will be compared to other, competitive myths, expressive of other values, which were either rejected or which did not survive as official remembrance sites.

This analysis rests on the characterization of myth as more than a historical narrative, nostalgic in nature. Myths are political assets; they represent models of political behaviour approved by the ruling elites. More than mere components of the socio-political reality, myths are powerful instruments for the disposition of groups in socio-political space as well as a source of legitimation for that disposition. This is so because the political order is more than a hierarchical collection of positions and governance processes. A political order's effectiveness (as a measure of its hegemonic control) is reflected in the degree to which the population internalizes the myths that "tell" the story of society's creation and thereby rationalize the present social structure. Mythmaking is thus an effective practice for ordering "facts," causal ties, and interpretive inferences into one mass, exhibiting internal logic and persuasive power for the sake of political goals (Azaryahu 1998: 4).

Specifically, a myth is a story that relates momentous events that have, in their retelling, acquired an aura of sanctity; that is, a myth is a tale, not an objective account of historical fact. The myth's "truth" does not rest on objective verification of its details. Instead, we are speaking

of subjective truth, available for marketing to the myth's consumers. These consumers reside in the general community, beyond the bounded estates of power and influence. This description parallels the observation made by British anthropologist I. M. Lewis: myths "tell a big truth by means of big lies" (Lewis 1974: 121). Occupants of key positions and members of ruling political elites are conscious of the historical and symbolic manipulation perpetrated by themselves and their competitors for power through these myths. Competitors, however, are uninterested in sustaining a universalistic vision; instead, they are intent on introducing alternative myths into the socio-political space. As a result, only extrinsic actors, strangers to the society in question, can discover the objective truth hidden from the masses. Moreover, the myths that enter official remembrance sites as authorized versions of historical truth always "belong" to the current political order. A myth's decline will occur, as stated, not in response to public enlightenment but through replacement by an alternative myth, the consequence of power struggles or contests over political hegemony. Hence, we can state that, as a rule, every form of political consensus or hegemonic vision is the outcome of conflict and competition.

Since the dawn of history, elites and governing dynasties have been aware of the indispensability of myths for the preservation of their status. They thus produced primal myths that told of their rise to power and legitimated their rule. In prehistory and antiquity, this legitimacy was based on the web woven between the ruling groups' origins and divinity or divine intervention. In modernity, myths are secularized: the gods have been replaced by "history." With respect to the nation-state, scholars have connected primal myths to acts performed by political elites and intellectuals. The strength of these myths rests on the fact that after establishment of the state, these myths were integrated into the popular patriotic folklore – their contents came to appear natural, taken-for-granted. In either setting, primal myths evolve into hegemonic concepts, controlling a society's perception of its history and the experience of statehood.

It follows that immediately upon its accession to power a political elite will initiate production of collective memory as it selects the elements to be employed as official remembrance sites. The remembrance sites will be chosen according to the myth-related functions they are meant to fulfil. These two cultural artefacts will be constructed as exclusive representatives of the elite's version of the national ethos for the coming generations. It should be stressed, again, that selection is a premeditated and rational process, involving the calculated adjustment and adaptation, reproduction and recycling of the mythic materials. Yet, to repeat, the fabrication, obfuscation and plain disregard of fact does little to reduce the myth's power to arouse emotions and identification among its target population. Therein lies its strength.

The previously referred to competition for power provides the context for the production of myths. Rivalry over prestige and position is expressed here in the contest for control over the production, content, and proprietorship of national myths. During this battle, groups attempt to reinforce those myths that support their claims to preferential status at the same time that they attempt to undermine the myths supporting the claims of other groups (Lipset 1963).

Viewed from the perspective of the ruling group, the preceding analysis suggests an enigmatic attitude toward the dimension of time. On one level, it is seems obvious that a group successful in its attempts to attain power should focus on the present with a strategy meant to solve urgent problems and formulate a suitable public policy. The same applies to the future, whether for reasons of the public interest (e.g., responsible elites make long-term investments) or for private interests (e.g., the distribution of patronage). These two time frames direct attention to a profusion of means, resources, and issues. Therefore, why look to the past? Going deeper,

however, reveals that involvement with the past does not contradict the other two viewpoints. Preoccupation with the past and its re-production represent but one additional mechanism to be employed in creating the spirit of the times, the sociological factor that sets the stage for ruling parties to substantiate their merit for re-election, for example.

Although such efforts do not exhaust the available historiographic materials, it surprisingly impels the ruling elite to add the dead to its roster of political devices. This raises a further conundrum: why should the elite turn to the dead at all? What do the dead offer that the living (and yet unborn) do not? Intuitively, all relations carried on with the dead are intimate, extra-political; they revolve around mourning, bereavement, commemoration and other means for coping that are activated on the level of the family or, in extreme circumstances, the group. The objective of this dissertation is to resolve this conundrum. In the following, I will show that the dead provide significant advantages to elites concerned with maintaining their political dominance and cultural hegemony. In terms of the analytic perspective adopted here, bereavement represents a political arena, one where the state duplicates its behaviour regarding history and official remembrance sites. Whether intentionally or not, individuals who sacrificed their lives on the alter of national (re)birth – soldiers and their families, civilians participating in underground movements – become actors, players in the value-allocation game manipulated by the ruling elites for their own narrow interests. During the course of this game, the dead are appropriated by the state, made its property and denied their identities as members of the private sphere.

Addressing the past offers tactical as well as strategic advantages. This date is crucial because it segregates the chosen few from the others. The nation-building enterprise was not completed by a ruling elite acting alone; other actors, including competing groups, participated in the events, each in its own way supported by different ideas and attitudes. Some were involved in the diplomatic effort, others in waging war. We can therefore assume that the group that gained prominence with establishment of the state was either stronger or more resilient, or perhaps its activities on the eve of independence appeared more dominant. This dominance was the outcome, among other things, of its control of mechanisms that were formally identified with the national effort – such as leading positions in governing institutions, and its recognition by other state actors as the exclusive and symbolic representative of the entire population.

Proceeding chronologically, upon conclusion of the nation-building enterprise, the dominant elite, after its assumption of the reins of government, will be required to construct the new nation's collective memory. This means setting the date when the nation's history “began” and determining who contributed to its emergence. If their contributions are recognized and extolled in collective memory and remembrance sites, inspiring events and fallen martyrs will become standards for the coming generations.

Establishing the national narrative's temporal framework is therefore an effective ploy – read manipulation – for purging national myths of those actors and efforts identified with competing political factions. This means denying their participation in the formation of contemporary culture and political policy. We can therefore conclude that what is considered to be the onset of history and its objective facts – the crucial moments of the national enterprise – are subjective. They reflect political decisions, and are “inauthentic.” Michael Young has written that

> any year can be considered the first year … The most important step is to place some events within a specific time period and to transform them into “ours” – an opening date replete with meaning must be selected for this purpose.

(Young 1988)

Dates are particularly crucial for national bereavement and commemoration, the subjects of this dissertation. Decisions as to who will be counted among those fallen in the service of the state and, it follows, which groups sacrificed their sons and daughters to the national effort are political at their core. As Young puts it, this group embraces the martyrs who fell so that the nation-state could be (re)born. Casualties of the wars waged prior to the politically determined base year will, in contrast, remain outside the burgeoning mythology; they will not be considered, martyrs. The groups associated with them will be denied political as well as extra-political (i.e., cultural and economic) rewards. Recognition of their contribution to the national effort, especially in the form of the children they sacrificed, will be ignored if not erased from the national consciousness.

The literature on the efforts made by ruling elites to impose their mark during the early years of the nation-state is very broad in its reach. Education, health, citizenship, the establishment of democratic institutions and the public administration, and certainly the military and defence are the major examples of the projects explored. The issues of bereavement and commemoration, however, have been neglected for the most part (Gellner 1994), even by students of the rebirth of the Jewish state (Lissak and Horowitz, 1977).

Bereavement is a neglected component of collective memory. From the perspective of this study bereavement will be viewed as a political asset, rationally structured by political actors. This approach requires a shift in analytic focus from individual response to a mode in which that response is converted into a collective framework in the national arena, namely the commemorative mode.

The preoccupation with bereavement has accelerated since the advent of modern psychology. The way in which a person responds to loss has a marked influence on his psyche throughout his life. The plethora of traditional research on bereavement produced by the behavioural and social sciences can be summarized in three main points:

1 *Bereavement as a private event*. Bereavement is an intimate experience, belonging to the individual, familial or community realm. Commencing with Freud and Breuer, numerous studies have observed and analyzed how subjects cope with tragedy. Freud described a woman's symptoms in a response to her father's fatal illness (Breuer and Freud 1895). Again, in *Mourning and Melancholy* (Freud 1917), Freud gives an account of the many characteristics associated with mourning such as the preoccupation with the deceased and the imaginative reliving of the death itself, observations that continue to serve as the foundations of this literature. The majority of studies dealing with the personality aspects of bereavement, including the social and cultural support systems, have continued to focus on the private aspects of bereavement, that is, the individual and the family, and not the community or the nation (see Caplan 1974).
2 *Bereavement as a temporary phenomenon*. The psychological mechanisms employed allow the individual to perceive response to the trauma of bereavement as a short-lived, powerful experience.
3 *Reactions to bereavement as emotional and irrational l episodes*. The majority of approaches to bereavement focus on affective responses to processes that are initiated following loss: anger, depression, anxiety, shame, and guilt (see Raphael 1983). Research on the subject concentrates on the dynamics maintained between thought and feeling, based on the

> distinction between functional cognitive thought patterns and the dysfunctions introduced by bereavement. A further differentiation is made between mourning and grief. Grief is an individual, emotional response to loss from death (Averill 1968: 347–58), whereas mourning is a socio-cultural activity, constructed by society to mark the tragic event as a means of reintegrating survivors into the existing web of social relations (Rosenblatt et al. 1976).

This being so, the shift in emphasis to political behaviour of the nation-state enjoins the scholar to perceive bereavement as an asset, or a resource whose properties go beyond the confines set by the traditional approaches just as summarized previously. Thus, a rational-political approach to the phenomenon depicts bereavement as free of temporal constraints: memories of the dead and their families' behaviour subsequent to loss are available for appropriation by the nation-state, to be used to further its long-term political goals. This process is far from impulsive: as will be shown, bereavement, as a policy, is one the nation-state's innovations. It is a calculated policy, planned and motivated by political considerations, a product of the competition waged among the leaders of social groups, all of whom comprehend the long-term political significance of the phenomenon and who identify with its inordinate political value. We are definitely not discussing an intimate, familial, extra-political phenomenon but an event requiring scrutiny from a purely public and rational-political perspective.

In its confrontation with bereavement, the nation-state has been rather innovative. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state took responsibility for the burial of war casualties and their official commemoration. Up until the nineteenth century, war dead were left to rot in the field, a situation that changed with the transformation of armed forces from a collection of paid mercenaries to national armies. From this juncture, state agencies assumed responsibility for burial of the war dead in military cemeteries. Although this appears to be a humane act, the benefits of the gesture are primarily one-sided. The state's treatment of its war dead actually represents, in effect, a shift in the deceased's status from the private to the public sphere. As a public object, the deceased is converted into a public symbol susceptible to manipulation by the mass media. Cemeteries become theatres of mourning, available for the play of politics and political communication. Cemeteries are also sites for restructuring memory, and transmitting patently clearly political messages.

Although most of these messages are for the most part implicit, they are meant to fulfil two major functions. The first function is the penetration into collective memory of war casualties. The precedent for such a function can be found in Europe following the end of World War I, with its millions of dead. During the 1920s, England, France and Germany were absorbed in commemorating the War's toll of human lives by means of memorial days, ceremonies, and statues erected in major cities as well as remote villages. The spirit of the war dead became an integral part of Europe's public and political existence.

The second function belongs to the epistemological: the area of the establishment of the community's boundaries. Once the battle dead enter the sphere of political communication, military cemeteries become the focus for the perpetuation of their memory. The horizon of this recollected memory is the geo-political entity for which they sacrificed their lives and the political entity that sent them into combat. In the case of state foundation, the departed, as well as the veteran warriors, belong to those politically targeted groups recognized as fulfilling the national dream or, as in the Israeli case, of reconstituting the nation. However, not all the dead will receive identical treatment: authorized acts of commemoration are the products of processes entailing screening of all the related events, including events following the state's establishment.

Such screening is the logical outcome of the socio-political function of commemoration. That is, the remembrance sites designated for state commemoration are rationally chosen according to their contribution to myths portraying national heroism and their capacity to reinforce support of the contemporary political and military leadership. Moreover, they are selected on the basis of their ability to motivate the young to join the military, the institution that, more than any other, expresses the collective values of sacrifice and deference to the state. Victims of events that ended in tragedy, failure, or defeat, incidents potentially embarrassing to the political and military elites, will be excluded from mention in the national myths and other remembrance sites. Any elevation of the excluded to the status of national heroes, if it occurs at all, arises from private initiatives. Such occurrences usually encounter regime resistance since they are anomalies to the official commemoration *topos*.

The link established between the intimate, extra-political level, where efforts are directed toward rehabilitating the victim's family in its confrontation with death, and the political state-oriented level, where state intervention in bereavement is a political effort motivated by interests of power and governance, can be categorized as one of exchange (Doron and Lebel 2004). Through representation of the dead as national heroes, a mechanism is contrived for compensating the victims' families for their personal loss. Incorporation of memories of the dead into the socio-political discourse grants the victims everlasting life on the symbolic level while at the same time acknowledging the nation's debt to their families. This assignment of meaning for their loss, and the recognition of the depth of their sacrifice, especially when the event of death is depicted as an ultimate act of heroism for the sake of national rebirth, serves as a crucial resource in the state's programme for the rehabilitation of bereaved families. In exchange for this gift, the victims' families accept the clear strictures imposed by the state regarding their political behaviour. On the one hand, their passivity resulting from trauma effectively guarantees that the terms of the exchange will be kept. On the other hand, this arrangement converts bereaved parents of victims of national insurrections and wars of independence into political activists, ready to legitimate the state's social and political undertakings. They are assimilated or actively mobilized into the leadership's unofficial retinue, taking their place on the grandstand at public ceremonies and mass gatherings (Lebel 1998). From these platforms, they dispense their children's legacy along with the prescribed political conduct through ceremonies, rituals and planned state events prepared by authorized agents of the regime. In the national arena, bereaved parents may encourage youth to join the army in the name of the very goals for which their own children died; in the political arena, they set examples for the public to follow regarding continued support for and trust in the leaders who had sent their children to their deaths. Both arenas illustrate the calculated use of memory for securing the desired public response to challenges facing the nation, as conceived by the political elite. One of Israel's Chiefs of Staff, inaugurating a memorial park dedicated to those who fell in the nation's War of Independence exemplified this call for total commitment: "They gave us independence; they bequeathed to us a tradition of bravery, a readiness to sacrifice, and a burning faith. … Their legacy … is our readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake of Israel's independence."[10]

In its construction of collective memory and remembrance sites, the political elites attend to the history of groups as well as to the fallen associated with various collectives. This preoccupation with bereavement, bereaved families, commemoration of the dead and the incidents in which lives were lost has an important place in the web of political manipulations discussed here. These activities are the behavioural manifestations of the crucial decision related to the cognition of the evolving nation-state's political structure. The decision as to which victims

and events will be included in the repertoire of commemorative activities is designed to establish a clear identity between the latter and identification of the respective individuals and events with the elites considered responsible for the national enterprise project. This identification process in turn ensconces those elites within the nation's collective memory.

Contrary to Azaryahu, who argues that the memorial ceremonies include all those who fell in battle (Azaryahu 1995), this analysis suggests that there is a selection which is dictated from above. The consequence of this selection is denial of access to a major symbolic asset, namely official recognition that an individual is part of the community responsible for the nation's birth. This asset endows political legitimacy upon the ascriptive group to which the individual combatant belonged or with which he identified and thus has direct implications regarding eligibility for resources provided by the state. Alternatively, those groups whose members' bereavement is driven to the periphery of public consciousness, whose grief is excluded from the national narrative and commemoration, receive no social recognition. Moreover, their personal and historical contribution to the national enterprise may be denigrated, further delegitimizing their social status.

Commemoration of bereavement – strategies and practices of symbolic manipulation

How is the political use of bereavement conducted? How is the linkage between bereavement and collective memory constructed? This study of collective memory focuses on identification of political content and the messages contained therein as defined by the producers of that memory. However, we should not ignore another important aspect of the phenomenon: the practices and acts that make memory possible (Connerton 1980). I refer to those mechanisms available to the ruling group by means of which ideas and myths are institutionalized, penetrate social channels of communication, and become accepted as normative. A political elite interested in preserving its status cannot be content with devising a sociological factor favourable to it; it must actively distribute this factor.

Moreover, aware that political bargaining is conducted within the various memory sites, scholars intent on identifying the political bargaining conducted over the formation of the boundaries of state myths/the state must focus on those sites – such as national ceremonies, stamps, street names, customs, holidays, memorial days, and textbooks. These sites serve as instruments for the penetration of appropriate myths into the substance of everyday behaviour throughout society. We would therefore expect to find intense political debate conducted among the groups holding the reins of government/power, namely, the exclusive producers of the content of those sites and those groups denied access to those sites. We can assume that existence of such debates bears witness to the political stakes involved and the weight actors attach to these issues, not least because these sites clearly represent keys to the regime's continuity.

In the literature on national memory, the term "commemoration" applies to the mechanism that, through channels of social communication, integrates fragments of the historical past by endowing them with unique meaning while stressing their salience to the experience of present and future. Commemoration, operating through channels of social communication, is described as the cumulative product of disparate strands from the past, woven into a uniform narrative. This narrative supports the story of national genesis distributed by the political elite at the same time that it provides fertile territory for the reproduction of the social and political stratification order. Consider the term "military heritage/legacy of war," one of the nation-state's standard

mechanisms used to invoke national unity. According to Mordechai Bar-On, a former IDF Chief Education Officer and one of the first to apply the term in the context of Israel's national effort, this phrase was never intended to refer to the lessons learned from particular battles or assessments made subsequent to specific campaigns. Instead, the term's intent is that of "narratives of battles used as didactic stories focusing on values … morale … pride in one's unit and loyalty to the army … sacrifice, solidarity." Thus, according to Bar-On, this legacy's creation entails "selective memory." Such a process demands, in his view, rigorous selection of those same "memories" that contribute to the desired message (Bar-On 2001).

Furthermore, this process involves more than "memory" and "recall"; "forgetting" and "generating forgetfulness" are constituent parts of narrative construction: "Memories will always be found that support and construct meaning; however, memories also exist that undermine these memories and offer to replace them with alternative or contradictory meanings." (Bar-On 2001: 37)

In general, the study of commemoration has been nurtured by the work of Emil Durkheim, who wrote that commemoration preserves and exalts traditional beliefs and attitudes, bolsters their existence, and reproduces the status of the social agents that distribute them. As the seeming validity of these beliefs increases, the possibility that these beliefs will forfeit their place in society's collective memory decreases; as a result, basic values and their cultural foundations grow in strength. According to Durkheim, the cult of commemoration, like any religion, kneels not before the Almighty but before society. Society is thereby fortified in the process (Durkheim [1912] 1965).

Thus, from the functionalist point of view, commemoration projects represent assets that support the public's confrontation with trauma and loss, provide the glue of social consolidation, and produce a unique national identity. Such a process is identifiable in the rites of collective commemoration carried out in England following World War I. It commenced in the schools, colleges and military units, and was accompanied by public pressure to observe Armistice Day annually as the nation's official memorial day. At the same time, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was erected. This memorial soon became a hallowed site for communion with the dead, a place where the entire public, and not just bereaved families, gathered (Malkinson and Witztom, 1993). In Israel, too, the demand to build memorials swelled from below (Azaryahu 1995). Azaryahu maintains that national commemoration is democratic in nature, a collective act in which all members of society participate. However, by persisting in this line of argument, Azaryahu continues to ignore the exclusion of certain groups from participation in those commemorative practices.

At one superficial level, commemorative national ceremonies are universally used to impart a sense of communal authenticity, of collective or national unity. Creation of authenticity is thus one of the major objective goals that producers of national communities try to create. For example, the specific forms that ceremonies take are derived from images and attitudes configured in the cultural arena. Nevertheless, although they tend to be the products of defined (though potentially variable) political needs or interests, the unity represented by such ceremonies functions as a cornerstone for the full range of national ideologies. Consequent to its employment, the dominant ideology comes to be perceived as fundamental, as taken-for-granted objective fact, in short, as hegemonic. In this fashion, national unity sustains the political demands made in the name of society. At the same time, the founding fathers implicitly grasp that in order for them to survive, such unity must be moulded, safeguarded, and more than anything else, expressed on the symbolic level.

Commemorative ceremonies in the national arena are, therefore, striking examples of the processes undergirding nation-building projects. They do not burst forth spontaneously as though they were inventions of a national spirit or collective identity, or as forms of unfettered self-expression. Rather, they are products of complex political processes. According to Azaryahu, two stages are involved: in the first place, definition of the needs to be fulfilled and choice of the ceremony's subject; secondly, the ceremony's institutionalization and choice of its disseminating agents. Regarding the first stage, this represents a self-conscious choice among options competing for priority within the cultural arena. The final choice is therefore political, motivated by the needs of those responsible for determining national identity and, accordingly, their views of the meanings they wish to be attached to that national identity. With respect to the second stage, the specific course institutionalization takes is determined by the social communication channels and agents available and/or acceptable to the public at large.

National ceremonies are therefore prime examples of the intricate nature ofcommemoration. To summarize, commemoration is not only a means for transforming collective memory into political culture; it is a mechanism for translating memory into political attitudes. Commemoration is a cultural medium used by those who authorize the nation's historical narrative and its contents draw from a pool of recollections that have become a collective habit-memory.

Nachman Ben-Yehuda (1995: 272) argues that "[t]he word 'remember' has a dual meaning: the first, to recollect; the second, to commemorate" (Ben-Yehuda 1995). Baumel (1996) contends that the two meanings are permanently and cyclically interrelated: The way in which a memory or event is recalled determines the manner in which it is commemorated, which elements are emphasized and which effaced and therefore forgotten. It follows that producers of commemoration ceremonies revive images taken from collective memory, an act that influences the way the event will be recalled in the future. As Shamir writes: "The [war] memorials' initiators were asked … to include the fallen among the remembered, a group immersed in the past, having participated in building the homeland [my translation]" (Shamir 1996, 34). Obviously, those who participated in building the nation may legitimately, we assume, be expected to participate in managing it.

In-depth observation of the historical field of commemoration reveals another story. Even if the demand to erect a memorial originates from the general will – that is, a consensual project, it benefits the political goals of the ruling elite, since the project is appropriated to serve the political needs of those in power. In cases where a the memorial's fundamental message is problematic for the ruling elite – for example, the elite will prefer to erase the event or hero from the collective memory. Using the public's need for symbolic ceremonies, a pattern is contrived for nationalization of memories of the dead which accrues to the advantage of the current power structure.

In drafting the "official "interpretative package" the political elite enlarges its political capital. The fallen, identified with favoured groups, receive preferential treatment in the form of official commemoration, while casualties belonging to other peripheral or competitive groups receive fleeting if any mention. This increases the elite's standing among the groups honoured and its implicit control over those same groups. Vagner-Pacifici (1996), in his study of Vietnam War memorials, discusses this process in terms of the ambivalence and political trials associated with commemoration of events that undermine the political hegemony of the governing elite but which cannot be ignored due to their scope and attendant trauma.[11]

In general, state commemoration reflects the political elite's attitude towards the period in

question and the figures memorialized. Hence, changes in the governing regime inaugurate changes in the spirit of old as well as new commemoration projects. The needs of different elite groups must now be met. Schwartz describes how the meanings of historic events changed in the wake of alterations in prevailing social attitudes and how these transformations influenced the construction of the memorials built on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC (Schwartz 1975). In a similar light, Mayo categorizes US war memorials according to whether they commemorate what are considered just or unjust wars, and victories or defeats. To his mind, both types can exist side-by-side as part of a conflict over memory (Mayo 1988). Conceptions of what type of memorial to erect, dedicated to which event, and within what framework vary over time because the "truth" that motivated memorialization changed with time. Accordingly, we should add that attempts to obliterate any mention of rival groups from memorials and other remembrance sites carry the seeds of their re-entry into the discourse. The question is under what circumstances these groups will openly challenge the elite's control over the collective memory.

Memorials and flags, national cemeteries and memorial rites, street names and stamps, are political symbols strategically positioned to invent an "imagined community" in Anderson's terms (Anderson 1991). The community is "imagined" because it has no bodily substance. In this instance, its members are the dead but they link the past with the present and future. By specifying who contributed, who died, who held a controlling share in the nation-building project, the selective commemoration reinforces the legitimacy of the current holders of power.

Among the salient symbols nurturing the political process of hegemonization are heroic exploits and their bearers, memorial sites, military cemeteries, memorial days, and official memorial books.

National heroes

The designation of national heroes, especially those tied to military engagements leading to the establishment of the state, is a highly effective political strategy. These heroes attain the status of founding fathers. All are identified with ruling political ideologies and movements, either through open association at the time of their courageous acts or appropriated into their ranks following their deaths. Lipset presents two basic scenarios, each dependent on a different political culture (Lipset 1963). In the US, a homogeneous culture arose that incorporated within it universal reverence for the founding fathers, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, and the values they represented. In Europe, on the other hand, the political Right and Left offer different pantheons, each choosing its own individual heroes and symbols.

Determination of the historical narrative is a *praxis* aimed at "enlightening" future generations. The process responds to a vital question associated with construction of community identity authoritative enunciations. Which heroes and values spearheaded the establishment of the state? Public responses to these heroes and values are akin to those celebrations in the Greek *polis* where rites for the veneration of the eponymous founders were transformed into ceremonies celebrating the city as a political entity.[12] More modern examples are the cults of personality surrounding William Tell, George Washington, and Lenin. These figures are given saliency by the parties in power, peering forth from authorized texts, stamps, coins and money bills, and street names. They provide an historical association with national values and legitimate the existing political order. Monopolization of this subject matter enhances the ruling party's hegemony.

Memorials

Erection of memorials is a common commemorative practice throughout the world. Because of their physical longevity, memorials provide lasting testimony to the way in which events and casualties are etched in collective memory. To guarantee that these memorials indeed operate as sites for mass pilgrimage requires intricate and careful planning. Licenses must be obtained from numerous government agencies, and long-term funding canvassed for their maintenance. Inevitably, only governments or ruling elites are capable of such undertakings. This is especially true when the memorial's theme is nationalistic in nature. The penetration of memorials into the fabric of public life may be what motivated Annette Becker to label them examples of “official art” (Becker 1987). Hobsbawm, who studied memorials and monuments constructed in Europe in the period 1870–1914, has maintained that this process entails a “production of tradition” (Hobsbawm 1983: 263–307).

He argued that socio-political transformations necessitated the creation of new tools by the elite to reinforce their control and to guarantee loyalty. We may conclude by stating that one substitute for the unifying glue formerly provided by the church and the crown was found in the mechanism of commemoration in all its variations. It emerged as a product of the secular realization that memorials, national holidays, and symbols make significant political contributions to the construction and preservation of the socio-political order.

Military cemeteries

The earliest military cemeteries were inspired by the values of the French Enlightenment in combination with practical considerations of sanitation. During the French Revolution graves were arranged in rows in order to uphold the ideal of equality. France's commemoration projects adhered to this demand for universality to some degree: Armistice Day is celebrated as Memorial Day; “Independence Plaza” at Verdun and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier attract countless pilgrims. An unprecedented number of memorials – 38,000 in all – initiated by local governments and veterans associations and located throughout the country, carry the names of the dead, and are infused with the republican spirit of sacrifice (Sivan, 1991). However, prior to World War I, soldiers were buried in common graves at the place where they fell. Only the graves of their commanders were awarded special attention. It was only in 1915 that civilian cemeteries were differentiated from military cemeteries.

Military cemeteries are official sites for the masses – schoolchildren, soldiers and their families, bereaved parents and siblings, politicians, military and civilian leaders. On national memorial days, speeches are delivered and homage is paid to the dead. But some are forgotten, erased from memory, because their patriotic endeavours were taken up under a now-derided ideology or a de-legitimized political party or movement. These dead are not found in the military cemeteries; but they are not among the genre of the “unknown soldier”. Their local comrades-in-arms conduct funerary processions at privately-designated sites and inscribe their exploits through heroic epigraphs.

Memorial Days

Memorial Day ceremonies are among the most effective channels available to the state for the transmission of political and normative messages. It is obvious that the state pours considerable effort into planning and producing these rituals. Official ceremonies are funded by the state;

senior officials, in well-staged appearances address audiences. Well-known speakers, especially representatives of government ministries guarantee that huge crowds will attend and imbibe the messages. Memorial Day ceremonies are, in short, optimal platforms for the distribution of official versions of the nation's history.

Anonymity does not preclude ceremonial effectiveness. An individual identity is far less important than the act of participation in a communal communications network: everyone makes the pilgrimage to the founding fathers' graves, views the monuments, and experiences the force of the messages conveyed.

The crucial variable defining the political significance of Memorial Day ceremonies is not the past but the present, or "real time", as Yerushalmi refers to it (Yerushalmi 1998: 28). The memorialized story, its heroes, order of events, reasons and outcomes, is repeated routinely annually. This consistency creates, in effect, a convention for the transmission of political messages. Yerushalmi concludes that Memorial Day rituals are among the most potent vehicles available for the reinforcement of collective memory, in part because they are regarded as sacred time, marking the profane from the holy (see also Hermony and Lebel forthcoming).

Official memorial volumes

As early as the Middle Ages, Jewish communities throughout the world introduced several practices for the distribution of collective memory, two of which are especially relevant to our subject. The first practice, developed within the framework of spiritual-literary texts, involved preparation of volumes of prayers and hymns; these responded to the need to preserve and distribute Jewish religious memory. The second practice, preparation of books of remembrance – termed *Yizkor* after the liturgical prayer for the dead – was particularly popular among Ashkenazi (European) communities. These volumes documented the history of local persecution and pogroms; they were read to worshippers from synagogue pulpits and preserved in Jewish archives.

After the rise of the modern nation-state, memorial volumes appeared in a civic context rather than as traditional "remembrance books" of the synagogue. Today, these volumes are published either privately, by the victim's family, friends, or military unit, or publicly, by state/public agencies. Thus, there is some overlap between the types of memorial volumes. However, authorized volumes do not contain the names of casualties who are not buried in official sites. These authorized remembrance sites, especially school textbooks and documents found in the national libraries, are treated as "sacred" texts, recalling those who died for the sake of other citizens. Clearly, those excluded from these texts are also excluded from the nation's collective memory. The very hallowed ambiance ascribed to founders and fighters likely generate, rather than contribute to, strong animosities on the part of those who regard their particular heritage as removed from the founding narrative.[13]

This imagined community of the dead, therefore, persists by means of standard mechanisms that enable members of the living community to experience its existence. Among these mechanisms are agents that enable contemporaries to overcome those discontinuities in space and time which prevent direct communion between the two communities. The device employed by social agents to bridge these gaps consists of the channels of social communication that allow community members to be present in all the time frames chosen by the social agent. As an "editor," the agent determines what is important, what is relevant, and thus what is excluded from the content and experience of collective memory.

Establishing legitimacy: the function of remembrance sites

This survey of selected memory sites raises some basic questions pertaining to the political production of culture and its manipulation: why use memory? Why is the particular intentional object embraced by mourning and loss on the battlefield subject to organization and mobilization by an elite wishing to maintain its rule following establishment of the nation-state?

According to Max Weber, the foundations of government rest in the legitimacy awarded its rulers. The preoccupation with collective memory, especially bereavement, provides the foundations for structuring that legitimacy. This legitimacy rests in the past, in traditional authority, not in the present. Stated differently, the quality of a regime and its decisions is not judged by the effectiveness of its economic, infrastructural, or defence policy, apparent to all, but by its loyalty and dedication to the nation's past. Crises of legitimacy arise when none of the groups competing for power have access to the historically sanctioned political system. When the current government is viewed as a continuation of the regime prior to establishment of the nation-state, opposition groups become particularly vulnerable to exclusion from a share of the commemoration and other memory-posts established as the legacy of state foundation. Their influence in determining patrimony is limited since they find themselves outside the centres of power and influence.

We are in effect referring to an attempt to continue to prevent competitors from acquiring access to centres of power by presenting them as illegitimate. The conduct of this campaign is waged by manipulatively diverting the public's attention away from current problems and solutions offered by competing groups, as well a self-serving interpretation of those competitor's rivals' past decisions and conduct. Let us assume that the contest for political power in the present is an open game, the object of the public's on-going attentive review of arguments, decisions and programmes. In such circumstances, government failures immediately triggers alternative proposals, offered by the public, again to be weighed by the public. In contrast, the past is not a game played according to the rules characterized by free competition. It is open to manipulation by the party in power, which can determine the dominant images, emphasize or play down events.

As to the actions taken during the nation's infancy, the dominant party is the only party open to criticism of its management of the state. The role of opposition parties is to criticize, to identify failures, and point out defective policies. By means of constructed images, the ruling party's investment in the past will cushion it from the effects of the often fitting criticism issuing from its opponents.

At the same time, the ruling regime undertakes a process of delegitimation of opponents. This delegitimation is an instrument available for use used in the preservation of political hegemony. The strategy accompanying its use is marked by the attempt of political actors to vitiate their rivals' symbolic assets. To the degree that they succeed, their rivals arguments and claims will be assessed not by their substance but by the image thrust upon them as unworthy of wielding the reins of power.

Implementation of a policy of delegitimation policy is preceded by manipulation of the definition of the situation held by the rival party or group. This means initiating a campaign of labelling and stigmatization of the target group's images. Campaigns of this sort are typically waged by the authorities against underground movements (Resnick, 1988: 57). When nation-building is the prime orientation, this state of affairs usually represents an outgrowth of political relations that existed prior to the establishment of the state when the now ruling and opposition parties had either shared authority or been members of the same underground movement. Once

the shared goal of statehood was achieved, dormant competition could become flagrant. In most cases, delegitimation efforts tend to be aimed at groups and parties perceived as threatening the ruling party's hegemony.

A related issue is the reciprocal objectives adopted by each party immediately after statehood. During the struggle to achieve independence, groups identified with the opposition parties are preoccupied by attempts to present alternatives (i.e., delegitimate the commonly accepted agenda program) for the purpose of differentiating themselves from the leading dominant group. The ultimate aim of these efforts is the incorporation of these divergent groups into the hegemonic camp. Following independence, the leading group, now the ruling party, continues this process of delegitimating the opposition in order to protect its position of power. At the same time, their rivals seek the legitimation necessary to gain entry into the political mainstream.

The purpose of delegitimation following establishment of the state is not to eliminate the rival parties but to control them or to exclude them. Delegitimation through stigmatization reinforces the authority of the dominant party's hold upon legitimacy in the eyes of voters (Marx 1976). The outcome is a stigma contest, a rivalry over negative images. This invalidation campaign is achieved when the rivals are perceived as “deviants,” in the sociological sense of the word. Deviance is a product of the reciprocal relations maintained between specific social groups, subgroups or individuals wherein the violation of laws or strongly held norms casts those who do not conform as anomalous and socially aberrant. The “deviant” or illegitimate groups do not necessarily challenge authority or society despite the label attached to their behaviour and goals, but they are portrayed by the political authorities as doing so. This label then sticks. Erving Goffman's observations confirm that contests over legitimacy and stigmatization conducted between rivals are waged at a symbolic level, a process described by Gusfield as a “symbolic crusade” (Goffman 1980; Gusfield 1966).

Within this environment, the party in power has superiority over the others because it commands the channels of social communication. It has more effective access to the press, theatre, film, and especially state commemoration and the production of collective memory through legislation. This process is, in effect, a contest over the right to manipulate information and knowledge (Turk 1982).

The concept legitimation is particularly salient for any analysis of the relations between parties and groups in democracies. Weber argued that the state is the only entity with the capacity to claim exclusivity over the legitimate use of force. His discussion of the concept of *control* is essentially an exploration of legitimacy. Government, in his view, cannot base itself solely on coercion or obedience to orders; the continuity of control (or rule) rests on agreed-upon claims to legitimacy. A government/regime that fails to abide by these conditions will either collapse or face difficulties when functioning. Legitimacy is thus rooted in the means of violence and policies of violence; control over both is exclusively reserved to those members of society who have already proven their loyalty to the state and society through their trustworthy employment of violence in the struggle for independence and their defence of the state.

Weber does enlarge upon the use of public myths and images for the purpose of obtaining legitimacy. He distinguishes between justification and legitimacy. Whereas justification represents the claims rulers make, legitimacy is the subjects’ willingness to accept those claims. Stated differently, justification flows from the top down while legitimacy flows from the bottom up. We are thus referring to communication, a process composed of two main elements: transmission of a message and its reception. The effectiveness of the message, from the standpoint of the transmitting agent is, obviously, gauged by the proximity and fit of its reception

by the recipient. The message's effectiveness declines in direct proportion to the distance between the two. From the perspective of the regime, manipulation of the spirit of the times – that is, the explicit identification of the dominant party with that spirit together with control over historiography and the other symbolic processes referred to previously – if properly managed, awards political legitimacy to the regime while it denies legitimacy to its rivals. The content of the respective messages delegitimates the rival groups by claiming that any part they played in the glorious nation-building process enterprise was marginal and far from heroic.

During the period in which the foundations of Israel's political system were laid, considerable efforts were expended in labelling, in legitimating and delegitimating. The impact of these parries and thrusts continues to exert influence up to the present day. During this period, the nation's institutional structure was constructed.

Traumatic experiences of the War of Independence were distilled. The war became a heroic chapter in an epic of nation-building. The party that could associate itself with the events – identify itself with the spirit of the times, as Duverger would put it – was bound to gain political ascendance, especially if it was able to expunge rival parties from the same historical effort. The collective undertaking acquired the aura of *organizational charisma* and incremental institutionalization of the state apparatus only served to strengthen this status with the public.

This returns us to Lipset's statement that a major test of legitimacy is a shared secular culture, what others have termed the state's civil religion, involving the creation and management of state ceremonies and holidays. Continuing this line of thought, collective commemoration thus represents the acts that produce the political legitimacy awarded to ruling groups.

Construction of collective symbolic boundaries

The construction of commemoration rituals and ceremonies, as described above, had long-term effects on Israel as a nation-state. What were these outcomes? How did they influence the political culture and political reality of the nation during the phase of state institutionalization?

Dan Handelman argues that rituals are none other than the written, official versions of the community's social and moral order. As such, they represent important elements in the determination of the society's cultural space and its boundaries (Handelman and Shamgar-Handelman 1997). Erickson defines society as a community with protected boundaries (Erickson 1964). These boundaries, he argues, are symbolic; they define the collective's identity. Nevertheless, “boundaries” are dynamic; they are constantly being redrawn as a result of bargaining between social control agents and non-conformists, between guardians of the status quo and those wishing to change it. A community's boundaries simultaneously determine its identity and symbolize its values. With respect to death and bereavement, the conflict surrounding their substance and representation in commemorative ceremonies indicates their centrality to the community's sense of being.

Societies finding themselves at this stage are characterized by conflicts waged between groups regarding the community's boundaries. The attendant rhetorical exchanges label groups as deviant and ultimately delegitimize them politically (Resnick 1988: 62). Weber views *social closure* as the process initiated by social groups to reinforce their advantages by limiting access to assets and opportunities to a circumscribed circle of political actors and their adherents. This is a carefully thought-out process, during which social attributes are compared and weighed with respect to how they support the political exclusion of other groups. Weber continues: Any a subgroup trait – race, language, social or religious affiliation – can serve as a vehicle for the

management of access to opportunities and assets. In the Israeli case of this dissertation, the respective assets were primarily land, exclusive knowledge, and weaponry, regulations governing health services, employment, and economic concentration of wealth (state monopolies and oligopolies). The insight at the heart of this study is that even in the area of bereavement and official memory, a similar political dynamic operated. Stated succinctly, bereavement and death are political assets.

Politicization of this sort applies to every aspect of the metaphors produced during construction of a society's collective memory. In the case of nation-building, construction of collective memory allocates attributes (whether rewards and/or penalties) to social groups according to their assumed participation/non-participation in the national project. Construction of collective memory resembles Weber's observations regarding exclusion or, as he terms it, delegitmation. It portrays the political competition that culminates in denying access to social and economic opportunities to those identified as competitors [see Aron 1965: 92]. Thus, social closure shapes society's social distribution system, its power relations, and political culture.

Parkin, who extended Weber's analysis of politics as exclusion of rivals and the construction of social political closure, argues that this analysis should not be limited to the dominant group. Of equal interest are the behaviours and strategies adopted by those excluded (Parkin 1979). This is Parkin's challenge: to examine the responses of the excluded to the experience of exclusion. This entails an analysis of the construction and use of the symbolic instruments already discussed, all of which were initiated by the ruling group to preserve its political dominance. In his discussion of social closure, Weber likewise indicates that exclusionary acts will draw reciprocal responses. Neuwirth expands upon this theme in his discussion of “the status of the underprivileged” (Neuwirth 1975: 74). According to Parkin, the feature that distinguishes exclusionary closure from social closure is *subordination. Subordination* is the attempt of one group to guarantee its own preferred position at the expense of another group. The associated political acts inevitably lead to the creation of social categories of the “unworthy,” the “excluded,” or the “restricted.” Parkin stresses that exclusionary closure involves acts of “downwardly directed power,” that is, political strategies initiated by the ruling party to produce, by necessity, a group, status, or layer of people who are legally defined as inferior. The latter, by the very imposition of this status are forced to adopt behavioural strategies derived from this definition and to initiate, in Parkin's words, acts of “upwardly directed power” in order to gain a larger slice of the resource pie. By doing so, they invariably threaten the preferred status of those who define themselves as “superior.”

We are speaking of a veritable challenge to the recognized system of social distribution, as well as to the normative justifications of the apportionment of social rewards. Parkin notes that this strategy is the inevitable outcome of political exclusion. Application of this analytic perspective discloses a phenomenon that I term ***the politics of symbols***, the persistence competition carried out among rational political actors by means of symbols representing nation-building acts. This phenomenon appears whenever the ruling party attempts to preserve its political status by exploiting its dominance. In the process, the social factors required to maintain political dominance include the construction of collective memory, emphasis on bereavement and sacrifice among those identifying themselves with the dominant party, and the delegitimation of political rivals. If realized, this process means that the ruling party's rivals will be erased from the official narrative of national resurrection and blocked from re-entering. At the same time, opposition parties excluded from active participation in mainstream politics will remain preoccupied with exercises in self-legitimation through introducing its heroes into the

national opus, and with threatening the long-term interests of the ruling elite.

The politics of symbols

Gusfield and his colleagues differentiate between *class politics*, which include the formal political arena, the framework in which groups tend to the economic interests of their constituencies (e.g., budget allocations, patronage, regulatory codes), and *status politics*, the mechanisms by which symbolic conflict over prestige and imagery is waged within the public discourse. It appears that class politics represent the everyday practice of politics, the means by which the regime is preserved in the short run. This is carried out by means of parliamentary coalitions. In contrast, status politics represent the play of symbols, those same instruments whose fruits will be gathered in the long term. Both types of politics are geared toward the same goals but function in different time frames.

There is little doubt that during the infancy of the nation-state, as opposed to the situation where the party in power is long-established, ruling elites are simultaneously preoccupied with control of both political dimensions – that of class and that of status, that of practice and that of symbol. This means that the party in power expends all its efforts in daily exercise of power: decision making and construction of the public agenda. Its ability to do so is based on its monopolistic access to two mechanisms, the system for the distribution of economic, administrative, and political rewards, and the system for production of collective symbols, history and remembrance sites. At the same time, opposition parties, just experiencing political closure during this period, because they are located far from crucial positions of power and hence bereft of any access to distributive systems mechanisms and concrete goods, are almost totally preoccupied with status politics, with symbolic justification/rationalization of their position. They will remain free to battle for the prestige they believe was originally denied them by the ruling group (Gusfield 1966).

Contrary to class politics, which leaves room for pragmatism and compromise, status politics are conducted as a zero-sum game. Allocation of status to one group indubitably means denial of status to another. Acknowledgement of the efforts and sacrifices of the opposition party in the nation-building enterprise undermines the added value of those acts for the ruling party's re-election. Hence, this type of political contest stimulates hyperbole in the content as well as style of the engagement. The debate over national myths and political symbols sheds its pragmatic character. Instead of concrete answers to concrete questions, instead of bureaucratic politics conducted in parliamentary committees and behind-the-scenes bargaining, political leaders become engrossed in symbols. Competition is exacerbated; the public square is the preferred scene for dramatic campaigning oriented to the masses. In these settings, politicians gifted with rhetorical flare create what Sperber terms a *symbolic discourse*, whose content revolves around glorification of one party's myths and denigration of the rival party's myths (Sperber 1975). A symbolic discourse rejects moderation. The contenders' attributes are treated in polarized terms. Politics becomes a struggle waged between good and evil, saints and sinners, patriots and traitors, categories typifying debates held over the mass media for purposes of resolving political questions with the aid of public opinion.

Summary

According to the self-interested approach to politics, public policy serves group interests, by definition. Policy issues are determined only when they further particularistic group self-

interests. This contrasts with the public interest approach, which claims that policy (sectoral regulation, for instance) serves the general public.

It appears that every society, especially in its infancy, experiences a period in which active civil arenas and the separation of powers of the western liberal tradition model are absent or nascent. Such a society, where the state is far removed from the arenas in which civil decisions are made and the public agenda set, is a "society held captive by its politicians" (Shapiro 1996). Such a society fulfils the conditions set by Alessandro Pizzomo for *absolutist politics* (Pizzomo 1987). This type of political regime dictates the rules of behaviour in every major area of public life, imposes moral standards throughout, and defines what is considered to be an exclusive version of the truth. Absolutist politics also contains a transcendental element, marked by a significant dose of sacrality. In order to identify the dominant actors, the political parties must be set at centre stage. As Yonathan Shapiro noted in the introduction to his study of Israel following establishment of the state:

> My guiding assumption was that political parties are the most important organizations operating in a democratic country, and that an understanding of their structure and functioning is requisite for our grasp of the nation's structure of control.
>
> (Shapiro 1989)

This study extends the theoretical framework described to the arena of bereavement, an experience assumed to be intimate, individual, and located far from public space. I will show that bereavement as expressed through a policy of commemoration serves and supports the interests of the nation's most significant actors, the ruling political parties. Among these interests, we will find those having collective significance, designed to produce a society based on widely-shared ideational and symbolic foundations as well as an agreed-upon common identity. Alternatively, we will also find narrow functions, interests embodied in the symbolic consensus that were scrupulously sculpted to impose a hegemonic worldview and to further the particularistic interests of ruling groups. The political history of commemoration in Israel, as described and analyzed in the following pages, can therefore add to our understanding of how parties maintain their dominance in new, democratic societies.

The intimate connection between memorialization and political domination is empirically exposed in the following four chapters. Nora's places of memory arise out of the diktat of a hegemonic rule whose fervent desire to strengthen national cohesion must resort concomitantly to a politics of exclusion. The field of implementation for this deficit mode of hegemony is commemorative practice. This is demonstrated first through legislation whose universal codes belie selective attribution of authority and legitimation in the War of Independence effort. This is followed by a chapter on commemorative landscapes. The third chapter examines the language of interpretative packages employed to uphold sovereignty, especially the construction of adversarial frames to delineate "we" from "they". In the last chapter, the historiographical project comes under scrutiny, both its documentary phase, as well as the hagiographic and other literary genres amenable to remembering and commemorating.

Part III presents a chronological account of reparative commemoration when the politically excluded take over the reins of government. In an underlying sense, it follows the fusion of horizons of different Zionist ideologies, both through inclusion of the excluded in the mainstream political culture as forged by the former hegemonic regime and through comparative narratives whose contrasts show a growing respect for wider political diversity.

Part II

The exclusion from national pantheon

2 The political sphere

Building the infrastructure for memory exclusion and political closure of military bereavement

Legislation is the stage at which public policy is formulated into compulsory mandates. These mandates are implemented in the administrative arena and overseen by regulatory agencies. In many Western democracies, those who implement legislative decisions are regarded as civil servants who are guided in their tasks by professional considerations attached to the skills of making policy work. In terms of political partisanship, they are entirely neutral and any discretion they may employ in their occupational labours relates to means whose ends have already been determined. Scholars have contested this model of democracy pointing to the temporary nature of elected officials as opposed to the entrenched position of the executive branch of government. Thus, putting aside democratic ideologies which embrace a "spoils system" approach in the holding of administrative office, modern bureaucracies professing dependence upon rules and regulations, both by virtue of their size, remoteness from policy formulators, and intrinsic constraints of field implementation, assume a leading role in policy determination.

In the Israeli case, a variant of the spoils system had been embedded in the political system in the pre-state period. The bureaucracy initially was stocked with party faithful according to a "key" criteria by which administrative posts were allocated on the basis of democratically-elected representation in the major Zionist political organs. Thus, the executive arm of the Zionist movement was openly an arm of the dominant political coalition and remained so following the first Knesset elections. Legislation, which has a universal orientation and in theory allows for a rather seamless thread between legislative intent and executive implementation, is in fact immediately subject to political interests that particularize the application, opening the door to inclusion and exclusion of target populations subject to various legislative enactments. Whereas the exigencies of legislation demanded universal intent and application, its indivisible character was ruptured by a diffusely distributed partisan bureaucracy dominated by the ruling party.

In fact, the executive branch succumbed to overwhelming influence of the legislative rulers. The tasks entailed in the formation of a state, and ultimately a meta-political "statist" orientation, challenged the traditional criteria for the authoritative allocation of values, namely the "key" system, since sovereign power was now the central underpinning of the new political order. In the eyes of newly-elected state leadership, the exigencies of state- and nation-building, and the requisites of eradicating a long-standing Jewish culture of powerlessness, justified a policy that

was labelled in Hebrew "*mamlachtiut*", the rigid application of state sovereignty in all aspects of public policy and the subordination of the citizen to the collective ethos of re-forming the Jewish nation within a Jewish state.

Mapai, the hegemonic party during the period of the Yishuv, sought to reproduce its former status and to attain dominance over Israel's parliamentary process as well as its ideological and political existence. This dominance was realized through parliamentary elections in which Mapai emerged as the leading party, formed a political coalition, and relegated its ideological arch-rival, the Revisionist party, to the Opposition. Numerous legislative initiatives designed to fulfil this overriding objective placed weighty subjective demands on the public with respect to the new reality, especially regarding their perception of the War of Independence, the pivotal event in the life of the young nation. The laws not only reflected these new political circumstances; they significantly helped to create them. Insights obtained from the direct as well as indirect reading of the laws were translated and internalized as social values, a process influencing subsequent political behaviour. Ben-Gurion's dual aspirations – construction of his self-professed image as the War's exclusive leader and the establishment of Mapai's status as the sole organization supporting him throughout the period – would find expression in massive legislation. The impact of that legislation, beyond its short-term effect on government structure and process, was the public's acceptance of Ben-Gurion's claims that he and his movement were the lone institutions responsible for Israel's statehood.

The second challenge awaiting the new regime was the mission, again defined by Ben-Gurion, of erasing from collective memory all mention of the contributions to national independence made by what he called the "dissident" Underground organizations, Etzel and Lehi. This challenge was, in effect, the direct sequel of his policy during the Yishuv period, when he publicly labelled the Underground as illegitimate. In the pre-Independence period, Ben-Gurion's policy was based on the fact that the very existence of these organizations threatened Mapai's exclusive authority throughout the civil arena and in everything related to the monopoly Mapai demanded over the means of violence. Establishment of the State did little to divert Ben-Gurion from this political agenda, namely the exclusion of Etzel and Lehi veterans (as members of the largest dissident Underground organizations) from any access to positions in the state administration. After 1948, he was able to accomplish this by appropriating the War, its course, and its human costs to the benefit of Mapai's sustained hegemony. To the extent that the spoils system was based on playing a part in the War of Independence, civic legitimacy was withheld from some by the repeated official assertions that the Underground had contributed nothing to the miracle of national resurrection. In other words, sovereignty tempered the distribution of political resources by confining them to Government coalition parties.

The democratic rules of the parliamentary game in which a "loyal" opposition had a legitimate role in the parliamentary process were effectively trumped by the ideological hegemony of "*mamlachtiut*". Statements to this effect found their way into laws that socialized public perceptions of Israel's War of Independence. These laws identified the community that bore the brunt of the War, assigned categories among the war dead, established when, where and in what form public memory sites could be established; they also determined who would be excluded from enjoying the associated rights and privileges attached to the fallen and their families. The overt aspects of these laws – for instance, the eligibility criteria for State compensation and economic assistance awarded to disabled veterans and survivors of the fallen, state support for commemorative projects, tax benefits and legal protection of employee status in the workplace – were rather marginal in their absolute application. All told, only a few hundred individuals

and/or families were affected. However, it was the covert aspects of these laws – that is, the latent interests behind the legislation – that had the more far-reaching impact. Ben-Gurion quickly grasped that legislation was an ideal mechanism to promote long-term political interests and maintain political dominance while maintaining the momentum of the statist project. Laws became key instruments for the sustained identification of the dominant party with the crucial event of nation-building – national independence – and for the exclusion of competing groups. Through the passage of parliamentary bills, collective memory could be constructed by those having exclusive access to the sites of its formation. Legislation was, then, a highly effective instrument for the production of "historical truth".

In the following, I trace this legislative process as it was expressed in a select number of memory sites: the culture of commemorative volumes, the impact of history texts in the area of education, practices in the area of national symbols and ceremonies, and treatment of the fallen in Israel's struggle for independence. All these sites were subjects of parliamentary debate and legislative enactment.

Delineating the War's time frame: excluding an era from the national historical chronicle

Since Israel's War of Independence was not an officially declared war and since it took place within a historical framework of on-going conflict, the formal determination of its beginning and end in the wake of the truce accords was of paramount importance for allocating awards and compensation to its individual participants and their families. The social anthropologist, Michael Young, has argued that

> every year can be considered the inaugural year. … The crucial step involves framing several events within a specific time and transforming that period into "our" time – an opening date having special meaning must be linked [to the events] for this purpose.
>
> (Young 1988: 197)

It appears that Young's claim was rigorously implemented in Knesset decisions regarding the opening and concluding dates of the War of Independence. Although the date marking the outbreak of the War is still a matter of contention, the political arena was called upon to mark the temporal boundaries of the War in order to recognize its war dead and disabled as eligible for state support. Ben-Gurion, desirous of implementing his political goals through public administrative means, decided that such temporal bounds would assist him in denying the Underground access to that same status and those same rewards. Hence, it was decided that the War's duration would cover the period between 29 November 1947 and 30 May 1948.

Indeed, the two dates enclosing the War of Independence met Young's criterion of a foundational event. On the 29 of November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly recognized a Jewish state by approving of the Partition Plan for the establishment of two states in Mandatory Palestine. For all intents and purposes, the date had no military significance. The British Mandatory forces were not scheduled to depart until the beginning of August 1948 – they eventually left in mid-May – and while the UN decision resulted in heightened Arab violence against Jews in the major urban areas and along the country's thoroughfares, the actual invasion of Arab armies into Palestine did not occur until the declaration by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948. The terminal date of the 30 May 1948 also carried no battle significance – the war would not end for some months. However, it did mark the end of the politically-formed military force of the Yishuv, the Hagana, and its striking force, the Palmah.

The next day, an order of the day announced the formation of the Israel Defence Forces. This order of the day traced the military heritage of the new state's army from the Shomrim and the Jewish Legion of World War I to the Hagana. No mention was made of the "dissident" armed units of Etzel or Lehi.

Because of the direct continuity between the Hagana and the IDF, deliberately implicated in the aforementioned order of the day, these dates enabled state recognition of those who fought under the direction of the hegemonic pre-state leadership. Retroactively, the Hagana was conceived as the fledgling IDF. Ensuing legislation made this clear. In the laws stipulating the criteria for eligibility as state-recognized dead, a clause was added that endowed the Prime Minister with the discretion necessary to include Hagana yet ignore Etzel and Lehi dead who had fallen not only during the years preceding the War but also during its course. Specifically, the clause stated:

Military service – its interpretation: During the period between 30 November 1947 until 30 May 1948 – every service that the Minister of Defence declares to be so, as published in *Reshumot* [the Official Gazette of the Knesset], is military service for this purpose.[1]

The War's dates, in effect, define a preferential community supportive of the hegemonic elite.

The discriminatory legislation caused unease among some Knesset members. Nathan Yellin-Mor (MK, HaLochamim, who had established the Lehi Veterans Association) demanded that the Knesset expand the scope of the dates so that the State could recognize those who had fallen earlier. His proposal declared that the State would uphold its economic and symbolic obligations to the families who had lost their children "from the date of publication of the *White Paper* [the British government's policy paper limiting immigration to Israel], from 17 May 1939 until 14 May 1948, including all operations organized against the British Mandate in the Land of Israel." He justified his position by declaring that

by means of this proposal I place before the Knesset the rights of dozens of individuals, fighters who died in battle in the pre-State period. … The State at whose head stands Mr. David Ben-Gurion cannot escape its obligations to the families of these fighters who volunteered and died during the War. … Is it at all imaginable that such feelings of vengeance and resentment should be felt toward brothers?[2]

The Minister of Defence thought differently. "By the authority vested in me," Ben-Gurion stated on 2 August 1950

according to Article 1 of the *Law: Families of Soldiers Who Died in the War* (*Compensation and Rehabilitation*), *1950*, I declare that military service in the Hagana and military service in all planned operations against the Arab bands and invading armies during the period 30 November 1947 until 31 December 1948 – is to be considered military service for the purposes of the stated law.

On 16 August of that same year, his notification was entered as a binding clause in the *Yalkut HaPirsumim*.[3]

These politically motivated statements accompanied pronouncements and decisions carried out by the state's administrative bodies. The Head of the History Branch in the Ministry of Defence actually lengthened the War, assigning the official dates from 29 November 1947 until 20 July 1949 (the date on which the last of a series of cease fire agreements with neighbouring belligerents was signed).[4] The Soldiers' Commemoration Unit, responsible for every phase of care given to families of the fallen and to disabled soldiers set strict parameters regarding the definition of IDF fallen by shortening the War's duration to 1 March 1949. The fluctuating war

dates were subject to political oversight at the highest levels. Ben-Gurion (in his role as Minister of Defence) made clear to Shaul Avigur during one of their meetings on the subject that only the fallen after 29 November would be recognized.[5] Avigur was a perfect audience for such a comment. He was head of the Hagana's intelligence unit (known as *Shai*), had organized the persecution of Etzel (the period known as the *Season*), had served as Ben-Gurion's personal advisor after the establishment of the State and was actively though informally involved in determining policy for the Commemoration Unit.[6]

On the face of it, the stipulated date should have been an impediment for Hagana veterans given that they, like Etzel and Lehi veterans, had fought prior to 29 November. In effect, as will be made clear, veterans of the three organizations were not treated as equal by the bureaucracy. Procedures were devised or later "discovered" in order to nullify the temporal constraints that might deny Hagana veterans access to state recognition and the basket of veterans' rights while denying these same benefits to members of the other two groups. Mordechai Olmert (MK, Herut) addressed these inconsistencies in response to Yaakov Govrin's (Hagana veteran and MK, Mapam) claim that the Hagana, Etzel and Lehi, were in the same category concerning their rights as soldiers:

[I wish to comment] about the rights of the families of Hagana soldiers who were wounded before 30 November 1947. He [Govrin] has stated that no discrimination exists between Hagana and Etzel members in this area because Hagana members are also denied [physical] rehabilitation. Perhaps this is true legally although the practical reality is quite the opposite. Hagana members are rehabilitated and cared for by what were then called "national" institutions … whereas the families of Etzel and Lehi members who were wounded prior to that date receive no assistance whatsoever. Discrimination does in fact exist.[7]

Mamlachtiut worked hand in hand with universal legislation. National institutions were selectively incorporated into the official state-building process and thus were included in the parliamentary enactments. Yet there was a far more blunt means of proscription. The Underground movement soon discovered that they had been fighting the wrong foe.

Who was the enemy? Excluding campaigns from the national military history

The second message that Mapai was eager to transmit concerned the identification of the War of Independence as a struggle solely against the Arabs. Recall of the fight against the British would have demanded recognition of Etzel and Lehi, organizations formed for the purpose of driving the British out of Palestine. Contrary to the battle against the Arab forces, the campaign against the British found no expression in any area of legislation. On paper, then, the only armed conflict conducted on the road to independence was that waged against the Arabs. This policy of evasion was manifested in the law defining "military service" as it appeared in *Reshumot* in February 1951: "service in the Hagana or in any other planned operation against the Arab bands or invading [Arab] armies as of 30 November 1947 until 31 December 1948."[8] The inaugural date for the War had removed the British from Palestine as effected by the United Nations Partition Resolution.

The pattern was repeated with respect to the *Law: Compensation and Rehabilitation Law* (1950). A commotion erupted in the Knesset when the opposition learned that the law did not recognize Etzel and Lehi veterans as soldiers. Although Hagana's disabled veterans also gained no direct benefits from the original law, they were eventually covered by it through a clause delegating to the Minister of Defence the authority to extend eligibility. In the wake of

parliamentary pressure exerted by Herut, the law was amended to read that eligibility for compensation would be extended to families of the dead "who had participated in operations against the Arab bands and invading armies." Removal of the dates allowed agencies to assist some Etzel and Lehi disabled veterans under the condition that they were wounded during operations against the Arabs alone. The State continued to disavow the victims of the campaign against the British forces.

"Can you imagine what we would look like today," asserted Chaim Landau (MK, Herut) addressing the Mapai benches, "had it not been for that struggle, for which no one seeks any reward. … You would be drinking tea with MacMichael [the British High Commissioner for Palestine] somewhere in Jerusalem – without it, you would be subject to the British High Commissioner's decisions and you would be imploring him for 300 certificates [immigration permits]. … " But Landau's words were of no avail. Mapai continued to refuse to recognize the contest against the British. Hence, the families of those who died or were wounded during this struggle against an imperial power, but did not belong to the Hagana, were deprived of all forms of state assistance.

Yehoshua Lankin (MK, Herut) lamented:

We have not yet been able to convince this house [i.e., the Knesset] to set aside the party bickering that guides the government and the majority of [Knesset] members in their actions regarding that same segment of the Yishuv that took upon itself the entire burden of the War of Independence. … To date, they [i.e., Mapai] are still attempting to dispossess these Jewish youths, to deny them their rights, to transform them into non-citizens and lacking in any economic and moral foundations.[9]

On 1 April 1951, the budget for the fiscal year 1952–53 was passed. During the debate, Esther Raziel-Naor (MK, Herut) proposed an enlargement of the amount allocated for compensation and rehabilitation of veterans and their families. Her objective was to benefit the entire community of veterans who had survived the War. "Under this item we propose allocating the sum of IL £150,000 to [care for] the disabled from the war to free Israel from British rule during the years 1939–48." From her perspective, the War of Independence that began, in effect, with Etzel's war against the British in 1939 "captivated the nation's youth, the entire country, and [inspired] them to … struggle for freedom. … " At this sitting she also raised the issue of the needs of veterans and families of war casualties who had not been granted any state support.

The State, she claimed, "denies the rights of those who participated in operations against the British."[10]

Raziel-Naor's words were translated into Ministry of Defence policy. Lt. Colonel Amnon Zair was assigned the task of classifying the Etzel fallen whose names Shelach (Freedom Fighters' Rehabilitation), the *Freedom Fighters' Service Association*, forwarded to the Ministry. The first list was sent by the Association's Centre for Fighters and Soldiers on 6 December 1948. Lt. Colonel Keis, working with Zair, listed the names according to the battles in which they had participated. Soldiers who had fallen in Etzel actions against the British were categorized as "*unconditionally ineligible*" (emphasis in the original). Nevertheless, Keis reports, other names were accepted. Among those were "the fallen from the Rosh Ha'ayin, Yehudia, Wilhelma, Tulkarem, Ayn Razel operations" against the Arabs.[11] The dead were deferred if they had been involved in actions against the British, even those undertaken within the framework of the short-lived common underground movement (*Tnuat HaMeri*, late 1945 to June 1946) with the blessings of Yishuv institutions and in cooperation with the Hagana:

Approved were almost all the Jerusalem dead. … all the dead and missing-in-action from Rosh

Ha'ayin. … Unapproved were the dead from the Underground movement; approved were the Mishmar Hayarden dead, 41 out of 51 dead and missing-in-action from Ramla; all the dead from the Defence of Tel Aviv and the capture of Jaffa. … all the dead from Yehudia. … [12]

Regarding these events, some years later, Uri Avneri wrote the following in his newspaper, *HaOlam HaZeh*:

No state law exists that guarantees compensation to members of the underground who had fallen in the war against the British Mandate. The Government has abstained from legislating such a law lest it indicate that Etzel and Lehi actions had benefited the Jewish people in some form … It is difficult to fathom the obscure party interests that motivate Israeli legislation. … A wide political gap separated the Hagana from Etzel and Lehi. To this very day, they continue to argue over their various routes. However, one detail cannot be argued: Members from both sides died in the belief that they were serving their people, not one party or another, not a fleeting government coalition.[13]

Exclusion was not confined to defining when independence-related belligerency began or ended, or who was the adversary; it also pertained to asserting who had authority retroactively. The issue is analogous to Humpty-Dumpty's reply over multiple definitions: "The question is *which* is to be master – that's all."[14]

The principle of authority: excluding battle victims from the social and welfare policy

Another legislative principle that took root was the message that the only partners to the war effort, as soldiers and as casualties, were those who had fought under the orders and with the approval of the official institutions that managed the Yishuv. Thus, after the boundaries of the community of dead had been set in Knesset legislation through calendrical parameters, another restriction was established. This was not, to employ an oxymoron, simply a case of benign discrimination. It bordered on ex post facto legislation describing treasonous activity. What was involved in the legislation was the determination of whether the military activities in which the dead had participated entailed any subversion of the authority of the Yishuv's leadership, headed by Mapai, or the authority of the Hagana, which was its designated armed force. Joseph Dekel, who was head of the Department for the Commemoration of the Fallen (DCF), requested that Israel's President or Prime Minister declare that all those who fell in the war against the enemy "in any operation that did not accord with the policies of the authorized institutions as of 1 December 1947, would not be considered servicemen."[15] Despite Ben-Gurion's position that there was no sense in formally setting down such a limitation, the Ministry of Defence informed Herut that "the rights of the individuals who served in the unofficial organizations would not be recognized."[16] On the other hand, the rights of Hagana veterans were acknowledged even if their service ended prior to Independence.

The political debates over these issues were surprisingly similar to the disputes waged during the period of the Yishuv. "All those who did not comply with official discipline [i.e., orders] did not serve the state" declared Reuven Sari (MK, Mapai) during Knesset deliberations on the law. Rather, Sari continues:

Whoever complied with the mobilisation orders of the Jewish Agency, which was the Government of the state-in-the making in the pre-State period, must be covered by the law, together with the members of the Hagana from its very inception. The law delegates this authority to the Minister of Defence. … A state that gives in to anyone who denies his obligations, or even to rebels, and then awards him a prize, undermines its very authority among

the citizenry and thereby threatens its own foundations. Israel will not consent to being such a state.[17]

Another example from this genre of discrimination is the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* (*1954*). The first clause, "Disabled veterans from the period of the Yishuv," specifies that among those wounded prior to 30 November 1947, only soldiers "who had served on the basis of the military call-up emanating from Israel's national institutions" would be eligible for the services stipulated in the Law.

The Herut movement viewed the position manifested in the Law as a continuation of the pre-State conflict. At that time, operational issues had not led the Hagana to object to the Underground's actions; rather, it was the challenge to Mapai's authority that instigated their wrath. But Herut now gave a humanitarian cast to their call for the removal of exclusionary policies. They viewed this policy as a "system based on disregard of the suffering experienced by the families of Etzel fallen and wounded who had shed their blood in operations denied official 'approval' by the 'organized Yishuv'".[18] The Mapai leadership, however, associated statism with unremitting loyalty. "Why such arrogance, why this self-satisfaction over their unwillingness to recognize the authority of the national institutions?" railed Golda Meir (MK, Mapai) in response. She went on to explain that her objections were political in character, and were aimed against those powers that had formed alternative institutions to the government in power:

In its [Herut's] own way, it attempted to subvert anything official. … The World Zionist Organization exists – it must be destroyed; independent national institutions exist – they must be assailed and their authority undermined. … The Yishuv is faced with a bloody war against a foreign power – its forces must be divided.[19]

On the other hand, Meir would delineate, on another occasion, what she believed the State should do for the benefit of Hagana veterans. During the first roll call vote on Amendment No. 3 of the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (1952*), brought before the Knesset on 30 December 1952, Meir, from her position as Minister of Labour, argued that "when first discussing the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* in 1949 … we were not in a position to expand the law nor to grant its benefits to other disabled veterans, even those whose rights we had always recognized." She immediately specified which veterans she was referring to:

I was referring to the disabled veterans who served in the British Army and the combat units of the Hagana. The proposed law is meant to complement the 1949 Law; it expands the Law's scope and incorporates those who enlisted in response to the appeals made by the national institutions and were inducted into active units. … According to the proposed law, these veterans will be guaranteed full eligibility for the same compensation and rehabilitation benefits as those granted to IDF veterans.[20]

Similar efforts for recognition and restitution on the strictly administrative level took place between Herut's Veterans' organization, Shelach, and civil servants in the Defense Ministry. The Ministry's Branch for the Settlement and Rehabilitation of Soldiers informed Herut that only injured soldiers and bereaved families of soldiers that had served with officially approved military units would receive satisfaction. Herut sent its list of soldiers and families to the head of Military Manpower which checked for eligibility.

A slight change in eligibility criteria was acknowledged. Government care for some members of the dissident organizations was provided where it could be shown that casualties occurred in a military operation that had been coordinated with the Hagana or the IDF.[21] Thus, lists had tick

marks which would read as follows: Jaffa – "no!!"; Ramla – "coordinated"; Jerusalem – "not in practice"; Yehudia, Wilhema and Rosh HaAyin – "yes." The lists were examined by Hagana veterans familiar with the events and were approved at the highest military level, the head of IDF Manpower and the Office of the General Staff. So strong was the "we" and "they" orientation towards Herut requests that the formal third person language of the bureaucracy occasional gave way to the personal/collective identity. At one juncture, Tsadok wrote to the Adjutant General Branch GHQ (Military Manpower): "All cases of disabled soldiers resulting from actions coordinated by *us* [author's emphasis – U.L.] should be dealt with."[22]

Legitimation: the politics of belonging as a rationale shift

The translation of legitimacy into legislative parameters was necessary to grant a normative imprimatur to the behaviour of a political leadership that had persecuted "subversive" organizations, initiated acts of political and physical violence against them, and delegitimated their operations and goals. Far from entertaining some manner of reconciliation, the Government sought to justify in its legislation its manifest hostility towards the dissident organizations both in the past and the present. Any recognition of the legitimacy of Herut's participation in the political discourse and practice threatened the total fabric of negation woven in the pre-State period and exposed that policy as rooted in political interests devoid of the moral attributes claimed by Mapai. The transition from bitter political rival to loyal opposition was negated through the Prime Minister's non-recognition of the Herut leader's position in the Knesset. In addressing remarks to Menachem Begin, Ben-Gurion would repeatedly refer to "the man seated to the right of Knesset member Bader."

The first time that the issues of the rights and status of Etzel and Lehi disabled veterans and casualties appeared on the public agenda was during the eighteenth session of the First Knesset. The subject at hand was *Law: Demobilization (Return to Place of Work) 1949*, which ensured that demobilized soldiers were to be rehired by their former employers in the jobs they held prior to their mobilization. During the debate, Ben-Gurion replied to Yaakov Meridor (MK, Herut), who had suggested that the law also be applied to soldiers belonging to Etzel and Lehi before the War. Since Meridor refused to maintain a division between the two organizations, Ben-Gurion corrected him: "And I thoroughly object to [your proposal], and I hope that the Knesset rejects all those amendments." According to Ben-Gurion, Meridor's proposal meant granting equality to everyone.

Equality is an exquisite word, just as "liberty" [*herut* in Hebrew] is an exquisite word. The question is: What content do we associate with these beautiful words? Equal rights and obligations for everyone – Yes! Equal treatment for all acts, good and evil alike – No! In the course of public affairs, in law and morality, there are acts to which we allot prizes and acts to which we allot punishment. We are not prepared to respond impartially to all the acts previously committed in this land. We distinguish quite carefully between acts. There are acts that we vetoed in the past and continue to do so in the present, just as there are acts that we approved in the past and continue to approve in the present. It appears odd to be asked, as the petitioner requests, that we react to evil and despicable acts in the same way that we react to beneficent acts.[23]

Ben-Gurion's fierce objection to providing support to the survivors of the Underground's dead was based on his grasp of the political and symbolic significance of such a move, shared with his Mapai colleagues. Eliyahu Golomb (MK, Mapai) would say as much. Including the dissidents

under the law would signify "public approval of their methods of action." Only instances in which activities were "coordinated, integrated and authorized operations, cases such as these – will be acknowledged. And the Central Committee states that the remainder will be left to the discretion of the Minister of Defence." Pinchas Lubiniker (MK, Mapai), the Chairman of the Knesset Labour Committee, also argued that the inclusion of Etzel and Lehi veterans among the eligible would retroactively sanction the Underground's activities.[24] In his war diaries, Ben-Gurion wrote that when "Herut voiced their demands, I told myself not to discuss the matter with Etzel – it is enough that we forget their crimes; they ought not to demand a reward for their machinations." (Ben-Gurion, 1952: 910)

Etzel and Lehi: mention in legislation

The strong motivation to exclude Etzel and Lehi from official collective memory was likewise expressed in the determined effort to avoid any specific reference, by name, to these organizations in the area of legislation. In 1953, when Herut MK Arieh ben Eliezer inserted the names of Etzel and Lehi along with the Hagana during a debate on a bill concerning demobilized soldiers, there was adamant opposition from the Government benches. A year later, in reference to a clause that granted recognition to soldiers who provided "security service" before the establishment of the State, Yaakov Riftin (MK, Mapam) argued that "there is no basis for such anonymity. The organization that preceded the Israel Defence Forces had a clearly assigned and recognized name, 'the Hagana'." Riftin suggested that instead of using the standard wording found in Israeli legislation until then – "service declared as military service for the purposes of this clause" – a revised version should be used that would clearly state "[service] in the regular forces of the Hagana in the State of Israel or in a unit active in the war against Nazism as well as any other service declared as military service for the purposes of this clause." He believed that the candid inclusion of the Hagana in state law would not alter the preferential status of the Hagana vis-à-vis the Underground organizations, that is, its meaning would remain purely symbolic. By incorporating the phrase, the IDF would preserve "the grand historical continuity with the same forces that created it. … This organization [the Hagana] has a place in history, and should not be remembered as some mysterious 'military service'."[25] Riftin's position was adopted, and the name "Hagana" entered the legislation.

Herut gave Riftin's request its full support. At the same time, it petitioned, as could be expected, that the name of Etzel and Lehi be included as well. Eliezer Shostak (MK, Herut) proposed that the amendment

clearly indicate the name [of the organization] and state that a military tour of duty meant a tour of duty in a service declared as Defence service in the regular forces of the Hagana in Israel, of the National Military Organization (Etzel), of the Fighters for the Liberation of Israel (Irgun), and of any other service that will be considered as military service for the purposes of this clause.[26]

The symbolic and political significance of spelling out the names of the Underground organizations was made salient by the fact that the Minister of Defence could exercise his discretion in awarding survivors the designated basket of government support without specifically mentioning their organizational allegiance. It was, in fact, the mention of only one of the three pre-State organizations – the Hagana – to the explicit exclusion of the other two that enflamed the argument. The discriminatory practices elicited widespread political opposition. "We demand a clear statement in the title of the Law: Military Service in the Land of Israel, in

units of the Israel Defence Forces, Etzel, and … Lehi combatants – these boys have names," proclaimed Esther Raziel-Naor (MK, Herut). Her position was supported by several Knesset members from the Government coalition.

Ben-Gurion remained resolute, insisting that words construct historical consciousness. It is an "historical fact [that] from November 1947 to June 1948, the IDF did not exist, and that the organization that fought [in Palestine] was the Hagana." Herzl Berger (MK, Mapai) amplified the Prime Minister's remark: "We do not wish the occasion of the ratification of the disabled veterans' law to provide an opportunity to distort the history of the 'alliance of thugs' [the appellation given a small right-wing group headed by Abba Ahimeir]."[27] Surprisingly, Hagana veterans voiced few objections to Raziel-Naor's demands. Only Mapai strongly objected to this step, interpreting the act in concrete political rather than historical terms. This stance reflected Ben-Gurion's political rationality, namely that the construction of the past was an investment in the politics of the future.

Herut's entreaties were met, for the most part, with silence. A number of Etzel and Lehi disabled veterans did gain Ben-Gurion's permission to be counted among those eligible for compensation (based, *inter alia*, on their participation in the few coordinated actions against the Arabs), thanks to a very broad interpretation of the respective clauses. Direct mention of the organizations' names in the legislation was nevertheless avoided throughout. As Eliezer Shostak (MK, Herut) noted: "The Minister of Defence has decided in the cases of these disabled veterans … and they will be included among those eligible for compensation … but he refuses to explicitly mention their organizational affiliations.[28]

The attempt to penetrate the normative consensus was a challenge whose lack of realization was considered a failure by Herut, even if partial gains with respect to eligibility for compensation were achieved. Ratification of the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* (amended 1954) expanded eligibility but none of the laws passed by Israel's Knesset expressly mentioned either Etzel or Lehi – except the law that declares Lehi a terrorist organization.[29]

The "Includers": state attitudes toward Hagana fallen

Hagana veterans, in contrast to other underground veteran groups, displayed acute political consciousness facilitated by easy access to official policy-making arenas. Despite their advantageous position, families of the Hagana fallen were aware that they, too, would selectively pay the price of ineligibility for material support if their peers from Etzel and Lehi were excluded. The dead of all three organizations were killed in similar periods officially designated as prior to the commencement of the War of Independence, and sometimes during operations whose purposes were identical Hagana's representatives in the Knesset undertook a dual offensive: they operated to bias legislation in their favour; at the same time, they supported elimination of Etzel and Lehi in legislation institutionalizing the status of casualties and disabled veterans, as well any legislative benefits that might be awarded to their survivors and dependents.

A coalition Government member from Mapam, playing upon the Hebrew word for "freedom" [*herut*] stated: "I have sympathy for those who placed the struggle for Herut [Freedom Party] above the struggle for Israeli freedom," and went on to explain that Hagana combatants contributed to the war for the liberation of the country, in contrast to the combatants of the Right-wing organizations, even though "there were injuries to those who did not fight in the ranks of

the Hagana. … But here we are talking about the War of Liberation." He was referring to Herut's attempt to appropriate the appellation for the War of Independence from one conceptual objective to another which was consonant with the Revisionist Party's new name. "Although others than those who fought with the Hagana have suffered," he continued, "… our subject here is the War of Independence." Since the War of Independence was already defined in law so as to eliminate the contributing role of the dissident underground forces, it was as though there were only Hagana combatants in this War. In response, Esther Raziel-Naor shouted: "And those [the 'dissidents'] didn"t fight?"[30]

Mapam, however, objected to the temporal limitations that excluded the pre-29 November 1948 dead and wounded. The group targeted by Mapam was not that associated with the dissident underground, a point they scrupulously stressed. For instance, when Herzl Berger (MK, Mapam), Chairman of the Knesset Labour Subcommittee, warned that the related legislation deprived "disabled veterans from the British Army's Jewish battalions [the 38th, 39th, and 40th King's Fusiliers] who had fought in World War I,"[31] Yaakov Riftin, of Mapai, who supported the inclusion of these soldiers within the framework of the law, remarked that "the proposal had no relationship to the personal fate of members of the [dissident] underground."[32] Riftin's suggestion, which was eventually accepted by the Committee, gave discretionary power to the Minister of Defence to decide upon the eligibility of disabled veterans who did not fulfil the formal criteria stipulated by the law. Furthermore, he claimed that the purpose of the clause was to permit support for Hagana veterans and should not be applied to dissident combatants. He termed his support for the Hagana veterans as "humanitarian".[33] Arguments couched in similar terms were raised with respect to all the laws that touched upon the rights of survivors and disabled veterans.

Pinchas Rosen, the Minister of Justice was willing to concede that where the issue touched upon widows and orphans of the Hagana fallen, the Government was open to taking on the responsibility of caring for them, irrespective of the period involved.[34] The net for combat eligibility was cast wider. Hannah Lamdan (MK, Mapam) demanded inclusion of families of soldiers who had served in the Jewish Brigade, participated in the ghetto uprisings in Europe, joined the partisans, and fought in foreign armies against Hitler during World War II. She included any form of armed engagement prior to 30 November 1948, except that undertaken by membership in the armed underground.

The result of the political discourse and the legislation passed in the Knesset left Ben Gurion's position indelibly clear, namely that Etzel and Lehi veterans could definitely not be counted among the community responsible for the independence project. The statist ethos, rooted in the dedication to collectivist values, found expression in the obligation to sacrifice oneself in the Defence of the Third Temple, the new State of Israel; it unquestionably excluded the Underground, which did not abide by this ethos.

The "other" victims: the Underground's efforts to obtain support for their casualties' families and wounded fighters

Etzel and Lehi veterans, under the Herut umbrella, had little faith that a political and institutional structure capable of inaugurating "the Season", the Israeli establishment's policy of Etzel harassment and persecution during the British Mandate, was likely to change its attitude. Nonetheless, they did hope for some state support for the families of the disabled and killed. Chaim Landau (MK, Herut) attempted to reintroduce the compensation eligibility debate.

We are not discussing the writing of history – even if attempts to distort it occur daily. Where will the honourable Knesset members be, will their consciences remain unstirred by the fact that the Gruner, Kahani and Habib families have not been recognized as survivors of those killed in action?[35]

Spokesmen for the Underground used every opportunity open to them. When veterans of the Mishmar HaYarden battle (in which the Syrians were repelled with the participation of Etzel forces) wrote to the Chief of the General Staff, they were asked:

What organization do the fallen belong to? On learning that they were members of Etzel … the response was … that the IDF could not be responsible for their families. … These dear soldiers were abandoned twice, once before their deaths – we will tell the story at a future date – and once after their deaths, after they had sacrificed themselves for the homeland's Defence.[36]

Knesset members belonging to the Revisionist camp made ceaseless attempts to include the families of disabled veterans and Etzel and Lehi dead among the groups eligible for State compensation and support. Just as ceaselessly they were met with what Eliezer Shostak (MK, Herut) described as "open denial by the State and the current government of the families and victims of the War of Independence. … ." Shostak noted that the potential recipients would exceed "two hundred and sixty Etzel soldiers of whom 70 fell in the war against the British, and dozens from Lehi. … "[37] Shostak called upon the Knesset to provide help for the survivors.

Several of the Underground's bereaved families, although accustomed to disdain and opposition, remonstrated against the institutional obtuseness to their plight. "The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence must know that even if Etzel's activities were not to his liking, its members nevertheless bled just like those of the Hagana,"[38] wrote Yaakov Gelbgisser, father of the twins Shlomo and Menachem. Although both brothers had been killed during the War, only Menachem was officially recognized as a casualty because he had died following the incorporation of his Etzel unit into the IDF. Although Gelbgisser was recognized as a bereaved father, he renounced this status.

Two trees have been hewn from my home – they were equally dear to me and they equally sacrificed themselves for their country. If the nation and the army want to commemorate the name of one and forget the other because the burst of fire that killed one killed an Etzel and not a Hagana soldier – I protest.[39]

Failure to ensure eligibility of Etzel and Lehi members within the welfare legislation led the Underground to focus exclusively on the political dimensions of the issue. Which pre-Independence fighting elements did the IDF inherit?

Figure 2.1 "Separated in their death": the twins Menachem and Shlomo Gelbgisser as British brigade soldiers (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

For the first time, an authorized government institution openly admits that the State of Israel differentiates between the fallen according to their affiliation with pre-State organizations. … The question here is fundamental and important: Are we to officially approve the attempts made to describe the War of Independence as the product of the Hagana's endeavours on one day and deny its involvement the next, yet declare that the IDF is the continuation solely of the Hagana and not a universal fighting force that does not discriminate among its members?[40]

Herut took advantage of every forum open to them to advertise their exploits, whether against the British or the Arabs. Although small in numbers, they stressed the centrality of their military efforts. Yaakov Meridor (MK, Herut) pointed out that important attacks were made by Etzel and Lehi forces: Jaffa was liberated, as was Yehudia and settlements in the Ephraim Hills, and Ramallah was attacked. In Jerusalem, Ramat Rachel was protected by Etzel forces and the liberation of Malcha was undertaken by Etzel.[41]

Shelach – the alternative non-governmental institute for recovery, rehabilitation and commemoration

In April 1949, Menachem Begin, as Etzel's former commander, announced the establishment of a special fund, Shelach – ***Sh****ikum* ***L****ochamei* ***H****ofesh* (Rehabilitation for Freedom Fighters) – in response to the need for care of its veterans and their families.[42] The organization replaced the Herut Movement's Combatant and Soldier's Office that had been functioning since October 1948 in an effort to serve as a link between families of Etzel casualties and the various governmental welfare bodies. Instead of continuing the ineffective liaison work of the former organization, Shelach took upon itself the task of rehabilitation for the Underground's fighters and support for

the families of the fallen heroes. It set up a public Board[43] and formed a number of committees: the Commemoration Committee, the Organization Committee, the Fun-draising Committee (Diaspora and Tourism), the Information Committee, the Finance Committee which operated within the Monuments Committee, and the Compensation and Rehabilitation Committee.[44]

Shelach's initiatives raised expectations among veterans of both "dissident" organizations. *Mifleget HaLochamim*, the political party founded by Lehi veterans, which had obtained one seat in the first Knesset, directed its representative, Nathan Yellin-Mor, to advance a small number of initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of its war dead and disabled. However, HaLochamim represented an ideologically heterogeneous membership and was unable to devise a political objective sufficiently clear to rally support and penetrate the collective memory. Thus, upon the formation of Shelach, it submitted its list of names to the new Herut organ.

Review of the correspondence between Lehi's Knesset member and Shelach officials on the subject of eligibility for compensation reveals that its appeals to the Minister of Defence for case-by-case recognition of eligibility, based on the discretionary powers delegated to him, frequently won approval. We may venture that this success was based on Ben-Gurion's continuing assessment that Lehi did not represent a political threat on a par with Herut. Lehi veterans formed the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Jerusalem's Fighters for Liberation. This organization's purpose was to "attend, as much as possible, to every fighter who fought for Jerusalem's liberation … and to work for the commemoration of the fallen. … "[45]

As stated above, the Ministry of Defence was given the legal mandate to deal with households that had lost a member in operations against the Arabs after 29 November 1947. The boundaries of that mandate left Shelach to deal with the survivors of Etzel casualties.[46] About 260 persons fell during National Liberation Organization operations. The majority left families without any source of support. According to the Government's decision, also transmitted by the Ministry of Defence to its delegation in the United States, these families were supposed to receive assistance similar to that provided to the survivors of those who fell while serving in the ranks of the Hagana.[47] In response to the de facto dearth of support, Shelach provided legal counselling, advice regarding the rights of the disabled, and, when necessary, intervention.

We summoned and urged … all the Underground's disabled veterans who have been recognized by official agencies to turn to the Ministry of Defence with their claims, we assisted them in solving many conscription problems for the Underground's fallen and achieved recognition of the rights of their dependents – their bereaved parents. We should note the fact that many among the bereaved families and the disabled do not turn to the Ministry despite the fact that those cases have been promised assistance.[48]

The endless bargaining between Shelach and the Ministry of Defence over inclusion of Etzel and Lehi fallen among IDF dead was fruitless. Shelach adopted a moralistic attitude and demanded "treatment equal to those awarded the [IDF] casualties' families" in order to avoid "intensification of the discrimination and hunger among families whose breadwinners had sacrificed their lives to defend and liberate the homeland."[49] The institutional establishment remained adamant. It was oblivious to the personal, moral element of their position and was conscious only of the broader implications of a change in its policy.

Another task, shared with HaLochamim, was the treatment of those soldiers from the Underground who were missing in action. Parents would claim that the attitude towards the bodies of their sons, who were buried in Arab villages, was discriminatory when compared to the attitude towards IDF soldiers missing in action. In one case in which the son fell and was buried

by the enemy in an Arab village, the family asked all the relevant institutions to search for the grave and return the body for interment in Israel. No response was received from the Ministry of Defence.[50]

The bulk of the resources available to Shelach were allocated to these humanitarian activities, which required the raising of large sums of money. Funds were collected in the United States and South Africa in order to send the wounded to the United States where they underwent complex medical operations. At the time the Welfare Department was set up, about 190 individuals required medical treatment as a result of their participation in Etzel operations. The majority of cases fully recovered after appropriate medical treatment in hospitals, convalescence centres and National Sick Fund clinics.[51] In addition, Shelach was

striving to guarantee the rights of the Underground's casualties at the Movement's community centres in Yad Eliyahu and Shikun HaVatikim in Kiryat Shalom. [It] has also arranged for the return of three Etzel prisoners from exile (two in Germany and one in the UK) and for their rehabilitation after their return to Israel. Likewise, contact has been maintained with prisoners, as well as with their families, from the Old City [of Jerusalem] and from Mishmar HaYarden.[52]

Shelach also initiated follow-up procedures and procured medical treatment for Etzel veterans who, as a result of parliamentary activity following futile court cases, were eventually included among the community of IDF disabled veterans. Ninety-five percent of those presenting claims obtained a full settlement and authorization for compensation.[53] With time, the number of cases handled by Shelach rose to 250. For those counted among the underground, Shelach was the only address to which they could turn in their hour of need.

Shelach organized branches (called “committees’) throughout the world. The most important were to be found in the United States, Canada, Central and South America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela), South Africa and Australia. These committees prepared shipments of food and clothing and financed therapy for the disabled, some of whom were treated abroad. Herut Knesset members, especially Menahem Begin,[54] who headed the contingent to South Africa,[55] and Chaim Landau, journeyed to these countries to gather contributions.

Shelach's activities abroad disturbed Hagana's supporters. Despite the closure of Israeli space to the Underground's activities and their reception of public funds, Hagana veterans feared that the collection of contributions abroad would elude local barriers. After the Israeli elite had succeeded in abolishing “The American League for a Liberated Israel,” one of Shelach's branches, a worried editor of *Al HaMishmar*, the Israeli daily identified with Mapam, wrote:

Although the League has been officially disbanded, it continues to collect funds and distribute distorted propaganda. … Its [Shelach's] new fund raising campaign for the “Rehabilitation Fund for Discharged and Injured Etzel Soldiers’ is ignoring Ben Gurion's announcement that the Government of Israel will care for all the injured discharged soldiers, irrespective of their movement or party identification.[56]

The activities engaged in by Shelach and its committees prompted the elite to constrict Shelach's fundraising activities abroad. On 26 October 1948, a cable was sent from the Ministry of Defence to Israel's Consul in the United States after the Ministry had been informed of the scope of Shelach's fundraising activities. The cable clearly stated that

the Government of Israel views itself as responsible for the provision of assistance to those of Etzel's members who were wounded prior to that organization's dissolution and to do so at the same level as that given to the Hagana's disabled.”[57]

Israel's government was desirous of making it clear to the Jewish organizations abroad that there

was no need for additional fundraising and that the activity launched by Shelach was superfluous. An internal Shelach document noted that

these funds, which have not been authorized by the Jewish Agency or by the Board of Directors of the United Jewish Appeal, are the objects of fierce opposition and any public figure openly supporting the project must confront pressure of the strongest kind. … Shelach … is not, in general, viewed in favour by the official institutions of the Israeli Government or of the Jewish Agency.

The latter two were doing their utmost to constrain Shelach's activities abroad at the same time that they refused to allocate it any funds, as stipulated in the law. Shelach stated that it was not interested in operating independent projects abroad and therefore turned to the United Jewish Appeal with the claim that it receive its portion of the funds raised. Its request was left unanswered, and it had no choice but to engage in independent projects and to establish Shelach branches in those places where official Zionist funding was blocked.[58] In Australia, for example, Shelach's envoy was able to report establishing "branches in Sydney and Melbourne despite the opposition of the official Jewish institutions there. … "[59] Smaller projects were also initiated in order to recruit funds for the support of the dependent families. These included a sale held at Metzudat Zeev, charity balls in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, [and] special film showings throughout the country.[60] Herut Knesset members donated half their salaries to Shelach's coffers.[61]

Dov Gruner and Yaakov Wise left no surviving family. Shlomo Ben Yosef's family was killed in the Holocaust. Uri Avneri was to write: "The crucial factor was not economic. Economic wounds heal. The wound's to a man's soul can remain open, to fester until his final hours." Following Avneri, it should be stressed that from the perspective of the families, economic claims were not at the heart of the issue. The majority were able to make ends meet with the help of Shelach or other organizations. What they desired most throughout this period was official recognition by the State of Israel.

Summary: the dominance of Ben-Gurion in the policy of recovery and commemoration

The vitriolic confrontations over legislation exhibited an additional issue that hovered, it appears, above every aspect of Israel's public administration during the period covered by this research: Ben-Gurion's exclusive control over policy. His sway was felt in the principles, values and policy objectives that emerged in Knesset activity. As the supreme authority in the political sphere, his power was unshakable, to the point of smothering any spark of an idea that ran counter to his own viewpoints. His obstinate determination to view the Revisionists as "dissidents" or "rebels" and to exclude their survivors from the family of the bereaved was not shared by his colleagues in Mapai. On the tenth anniversary of Israel's independence, during the debate over the *Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* (1954), Beba Idelson (MK, Mapai) stated that

the question regarding the widows and orphans of those who fought among the ranks of organizations such as Etzel and Lehi, represented an opportunity to remove the partition dividing widows and orphans. It would be to our honour, to the nation's honour, if we, at the tenth anniversary [of our Independence] were wholeheartedly to do so, and to cease to discriminate between widows and between children. … I turn to you and ask that you find a way.[62]

Idelson called upon the Knesset to discontinue its politicization of bereavement:

We are not about to enter into an historical argument over the justice of the ideological paths taken by the fallen. … Such arguments can be conducted among the living; let us leave the dead in peace and tend to their families just as we tend to the families of those who fell in the War. …

We are obligated to do so in memory of the victims.[63]

Nor did Mapai Knesset members consistently object to Herut and HaLochamim demands. During the debate over the Lankin (MK, Herut) and Yellin-Mor (MK, HaLochamim) proposal to include within Knesset legislation Etzel and Lehi wounded during the entire period of the conflict with the British, many Mapai Knesset members preferred to abstain rather than vote against the amendment.[64] The directive regarding party discipline was imposed by Ben-Gurion himself. His reasons may have been historical, namely to preserve the legitimacy of his decisions regarding the anti-Underground "Hunting Season," during which Etzel activists were persecuted and often handed over to the British. Or, they may have been calculated and rational: to prevent legitimation of a political rival.

It appears that Mapai's undisputed head, who had been unwavering with respect to the imposition of his authority during the pre-State period, was to remain wedded to this position, ready to castigate any group that had dared to contradict him. "The law does not delegate to the Minister of Defence the implicit power to include Etzel and Lehi disabled veterans [within its framework]," wrote Uri Avneri with respect to the *Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* (1954) law. He was referring to the clause delegating discretion over eligibility to the Minister of Defence. This clause was interpreted as a statement recognizing Hagana veterans as having rights equal to those of IDF veterans:

Other laws, such as the *Law: Military Cemeteries, Law: Veterans Disabled Prior to Establishment of the State, Law: Families of Soldiers Who Fell in the War of Independence*… all incorporate the same wording: "… every service that the Minister of Defence declares to be so, as published in the *Reshumot*, is military service for this purpose."

In every instance when rights were extended to Etzel and Lehi members who had been wounded after 30 November 1947, the day the United Nations declared establishment of the State of Israel, not one openly cited Etzel or Lehi by name. This was all that was written: "I declare herein that participation in any planned activity against the Arab bands and invading armies will be recognized as military service for the purposes of the indicated law." Thus, Etzel and Lehi dead who had been killed or wounded during the War of Independence, or fought against the Arabs, were awarded rights whereas those who had died or been wounded in the Underground's struggle against British rule were not. Avneri continued:

The death of a son is a horrible blow dealt to every family … the death of a son, with no guaranteed compensation to be awarded to the family to ensure its survival is doubly painful. However, that blow is a thousand times more painful when the nation repudiates the freshly dug grave by denouncing that son as a pariah, a traitor.[65]

The uneasiness incited by the ongoing legislation's design was not the sole property of the press. In a published article, Rabbi Mordecai Nurock (MK, HaPoel HaMizrachi) argued that "the religious front naturally objects to discrimination; after the proposal for the convening of a special committee [on the subject] was rejected, members of the front abstained from voting." Nurock recalled that the events surrounding the decision resembled his

experience as an elected representative abroad [Latvian Parliament], when the government demanded that those members of parliament who were covert communists be tried and unseated. I was then the only Jew among all the members from the Commons that voted against the law. Hence, I did not always agree with the Underground's actions, which sometimes caused spiritual damage and sometimes material damage. But the undeniable fact is that the Underground sacrificed themselves on the homeland's alter, in rapturous love for their people and their country. … They climbed the scaffold singing *HaTikva* [the national anthem], with *Shema*

Yisrael [a declaration of faith] on their lips. We cannot desecrate the graves of Israel's sacred and pure heroes, Jewish patriots, who gave everything, everything. We do not have the right to disgrace their bereaved mothers or ostracize their widows … and orphans. We cannot ignore their disabled. … Thus, even though I am a member of the coalition and a veteran member of parliament, loyal to my party, as well as a friend and admirer of the Prime Minister, … I cannot deny my conscience. … My heart has been lightened … [for I can admit] that I have not shed blood nor discriminated against others.[66]

Subjectivity: politics of the state definitions and interpretation of fallen soldiers and war victims

In general, legislation in the period following achievement of Israel's independence was devised so as to differentiate between the community that contributed to the Independence project, those who had sacrificed themselves in its name, and those who did not, on the basis of the accepted political criteria. Identification of the fallen and their bereaved parents, as well as decoration of the ordinary soldier who paid the price for independence and sovereignty, was integral to this activity. Formal, objective criteria for such differentiations are readily available. One Hebrew lexicon defines those who died in the course of their military duty as: "deceased, murdered, dead, fallen, departed" (Avieneon 2000). Another dictionary defines the concept as follows: "A soldier who died as a result of the injuries acquired on the battlefield or in a combat accident."[67] However, the political legislation that was orchestrated under Ben-Gurion's baton ignored such definitions. Ben-Gurion exploited parliamentary legislative mechanisms as if they were primary assets, raw materials to be used in the construction of political barriers against opposition groups that might wish to stake claims in the historical events that endowed the dominant party and its leader with political legitimacy. Those events were presented by Ben-Gurion as a project completed exclusively by the IDF and the Hagana, to the astonishment of opposition members who declared that "the armed forces are not pawns in a game played between the opposition and the regime or the government; the armed forces are the property of the entire nation."[68]

In effect, after years of political delegitimation based on their daring to deny the authority so central to Ben-Gurion's being, Etzel and Lehi veterans expected no change in public attitudes toward them. They were fully aware that just as in the period of the Yishuv, contemporary legislation was motivated by politics:

It is clear that the Government will recognize only those Etzel wounded soldiers who participated in authorized operations; [it is also clear] that this list will undergo "review," investigated and confirmed by Hagana veterans. The question of how we are to define "authorized operation" also demands a response. The reasons for the government's refusal are political. Government acceptance of responsibility for the Underground's wounded would acknowledge the war waged by Etzel against the oppressor – contrary to the will and against the decisions made by the national institutions.[69]

Recognition of the dead and wounded – those who had violated Ben-Gurion's authority by taking up arms with a military body not recognized by the Yishuv establishment – would be interpreted as admission of the error of their past exclusion.

Knesset members belonging to other factions also grasped the character of the interests driving legislation. "I do not think that we need place ourselves among those nations that rewrite their history every few years according to the era's politics," argued Avraham Stopf (MK, General Zionists).[70] The Knesset, however, did notneed to formulate hypotheses regarding Ben-Gurion's

aims: the State itself provided them. When bereaved families from Etzel and Lehi turned to the Ministry of Defence with the request to recognize their sons and daughters as state dead despite their deaths prior to 29 November 1947, it was Ben-Gurion, as the sitting Minister, who responded.

On what basis does Begin claim the right for recognition of Etzel. … Confirmation that a person served from 1 January to 30 May in an operation against the [Arab] bands will not lead me to recognize Etzel. I must prevent discrimination between the Hagana and others who were active during the same period and for the same purpose, although I will never accept Etzel as equivalent to the Hagana.[71]

It appears, then, that irrespective of the objective-historical and/or rational-political justifications for excluding Etzel and the other underground organizations from Israel's collective memory, the genuine reasons for doing so were ultimately subjective.

The restrictive legislation was translated into an historical agenda transmitted to future generations. In *IDF Casualties of the War of Independence*, a report prepared in March 1953 by the History Branch of the General Staff in cooperation with the Office of the Chief Adjutant and the Statistics Bureau of the Office of the Prime Minister, a clear definition of the concept "war dead" was presented, as were the definitive dates of the War of Independence. In the subchapter entitled "Definitions," it was written:

Figure 2.2 Independence Day, 1954 – National honour to national soldiers: David Ben-Gurion honoured with National Award the Hagana fighters, while Etzel and Lehi fighters were excluded from national recognition and honours. Independence Day, May 5, 1954 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

War dead are considered to be all individuals who were killed under all circumstances during the period in which they served as soldiers in the IDF or who died as a result of injuries suffered during active service in the IDF, even if they were not regular soldiers enlisted in the IDF at the time. The identifying trait among all the above is that each received a military serial number. However, to those persons who fell during active service as members of the "Hagana" yet before establishment of the armed forces, a military serial number and rank were awarded posthumously.[72]

The Right's claims for equality were implicitly addressed by Golda Meir (MK, Mapai) when she summarized the attitude guiding formulation of the respective legislation: "It would have been much more pleasant for me if I could say that everyone is equal. But that would be only an illusion."[73]

The labyrinthine system of laws brought about a situation in which the families of the Underground's wounded and dead were left deprived of any and all state support, rejected by the social services as well as denied government recognition. In effect, until early 1949, Herut was the only body that accepted exclusive responsibility to assist all the War's casualties and bereaved families coming directly from Etzel's ranks and indirectly from Lehi. The Public Council for the Care of the Soldier's Family, an administrative body established by the pre-State Provisional Council, became the official state organization in this field. It was composed of 15 representatives: three from the Ministry of Defence, three from women's organizations, and nine members of the Provisional Council. Of the latter, two were affiliated with Mapai, one each from Mapam, the General Zionists, HaPoel HaMizrachi [a Zionist religious party], the Yemenite community and the Sephardic community. The Council thus reflected the ruling political constellation of the Provisional Council, meaning that politics had invaded the State's response to bereavement.

3 Commemorative landscapes

The politics of hegemony in physical space

Another sphere through which Mapai established its political dominance following the War of Independence in 1948 was the physical landscape. The erection of monuments and commemorative plaques marked Mapai, the institutions it controlled, and its supporters as the main contributors to the Independence enterprise. At the same time, it enabled Mapai to exclude from these environmental memory sites associated with the founding of the state those contributions made by its political opponents, Etzel and Lehi. Among these sites were state military cemeteries and cenotaphs. In addition, following Laclau's insightful remark that "the essentially performative character of naming is the precondition of all hegemony and politics", appellations assigned by the Mapai regime for new settlements, streets and public squares are also noted (see Zizek 1989: xiv).

The landscape of the Holy Land is filled with place names and events whose historical authenticity is habitually overshadowed by the authority of the cited traditions. Mark Twain, touring Jerusalem and its environs in 1867, noted that every nook and cranny had its historical referent and that the occasion was surely true because, in his words, the guide knows best. Mapai leadership was clearly aware of epic aspects in constituting a political order. As Arendt (1961) pointed out, state-making draws upon historical antecedents and fabrication, uneasily mixing continuity and contingency. In both instances, the choices undertaken – that is, which historical antecedents are drawn upon in the fabrication of the state – reflect preferences and symbolic identifications of the dominant political entity. The political opposition to Mapai also recognized that the establishment of the state of Israel marked an historical watershed in the communal life of the Jewish people and that those engaged in this endeavour, especially those who sacrificed their lives so that the state would stand, should be incorporated into the foundation story. The construction of a founding "mythology of truth" as an integral element of the public ethos is given classical Western expression by Herut's leader, Menahem Begin, in his contention that the exploits of a comrade in the struggle for Jewish freedom was an "odyssey, a tale of fact … perhaps no less thrilling than that of which Homer sang" (Begin 1950: 65). Not less than his political arch-rival, Ben Gurion, he was pre-occupied with the trials and tribulations of Jewish home-coming and its imprint upon "memory eternal"[1].

Pierre Nora, in his monumental collection, *Places of Memory*, observes that the disjunction

between history and memory becomes more evident as commemoration begins to dominate the landscape. Jewish commemoration, however, has always had an overwhelming liturgical element of written history – the Bible – a continuing commemoration of recollection itself. As noted in an earlier chapter, full-blown Jewish historiography appeared at the moment of Jewish emancipation from tradition and has been treated by Yerushalmi (1988).

Funkenstein, borrowing from Halbwachs, argues that personal memory is socially and symbolically embedded. In seeking to bridge the gap between individual and collective memory, he ascribes "a degree of creative freedom" in the interpretation of collective memory. Collective memory, then, becomes a tool in the present. Ricoeur (1996: 393) notes this possibility in a discussion of the relationship of memory to history, namely "the claim of collective memory to subjugate history by means of the abuses of memory that the commemorations imposed by political powers or by pressure groups can turn into." When memory becomes predominately expressed in commemoration, it prioritizes an act in the present. In this chapter, the struggle of an excluded group to commemorate its members is traced from the period of its status as the chief political rival to the ruling regime to its ascendancy and control over government and hence over the means of commemoration. Far from being a marginal phenomenon, commemoration has come to dominate the cultural ethos of our times. Nora notes the pervasiveness of institutionalized recollection in modern nation-states, issuing in a "bedlam of commemorations. … No era has ever been as much a prisoner of its memory" (1996–98: III, xii).

Unlike most nations, Israel is embroiled in "thick memory", now fashioned by creative forgetting. The "negation of the Diaspora", which has guided Zionist ideology, entails an eclipsing of much of the past in order to come to grips with the phenomenon of Jewish sovereignty. In some sense, this would appear to be a radical dilution, if not enforced amnesia, of what ought to be remembered. Yet the Zionist's drew selectively upon Biblical history, emphasizing the heroic and more autonomous periods of Israelite existence, while at the same time they configured contemporary Zionist endeavours in the mould of modern movements for independence. Landscape markers extolling the struggle for this independence filled public space with the same motives for amplitude and territorial control as the mighty effort to populate the land with people. Both the demographic and semiotic endeavours became carefully orchestrated programmes for political domination. An illustration of this may be drawn from the role of monuments inserted into the nation's topography. Monuments are recognized instruments for enhancement of national consciousness. In his study of mass movements, Mosse (1981: 42–72) demonstrates that monuments are iconographic as well as textual symbols that inculcate the myth of self-sacrifice and patriotism. A notable instance of this process can be found in Germany in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71). At that time, numerous monuments were constructed to give iconographic expression to the myth of the German people and its power to vanquish its enemies. The majority of monuments represented fallen soldiers as patriots who had sacrificed their lives on the altar of nationalism (see I. Shamir 1996:10). Military cemeteries were transformed into secular religious sites, temples for the practice of nationalistic rites. Moreover, these sites prepared the public for legitimization of hegemonic politics. When the masses came to pay their respects and to honour national institutions, the dead resting in the military cemeteries and the groups identified with them were perceived as those who had sacrificed themselves for the national project. Commemoration vested the dead with new life, but in the public rather than the private sphere. Those individuals and groups who took no part in this project, or were perceived as foreign to it, were deprived of any substantial participation in public life.[2]

The chapter opens with a review of Labour movement attempts prior to the establishment of the State to structure a national commemoration project that reflected its ethos and bore a narrative that would identify the nation's story with its own movement's undertakings. This is followed by a description of institutions founded after Independence for the purpose of sustaining the spatial dimension of collective memory. These institutions were of two orders, each reflecting a distinct political camp. The first was composed of state organizations mandated to implement state commemoration policy as formulated by Mapai's leadership. The second set of institutions, founded by the Underground's veterans from Etzel and Lehi, strove to obtain recognition of its dead and their contributions to Independence *within* the landscapes appropriated by Mapai for State commemoration. Failure to penetrate that landscape often led to parallel and largely imitative projects of commemoration. The chapter illustrates how Mapai's policy of exclusion was executed, providing impetus for the conflicts that raged between the rival organizations over the form and content of commemoration practised at specific memory sites. That the objective and material places of memory were often common sites to both political blocs points to the polysemic potential of these locations and ultimately the conservative nature of the Underground's ideological telos.

Pre-State commemoration projects in physical space

During the period of the Yishuv, leading Zionist institutions initiated memorial projects designed to reflect and foster ideological values ascribed to its fallen combatants. The dominant position of these institutions, which represented the Labour Movement of pioneering Zionism, was reinforced through the symbolic realism[3] expressed at commemorative sites, a prime component in the assortment of memorial projects. An illustrative example evoking Labour's conceptual hegemony is the monument dedicated to the defenders of Kibbutz Hulda.[4] The statue, entitled *Work and Defence*, was erected under the auspices of the Jewish National Committee and the Histadrut. It was planned and produced by the sculptress Batya Lishansky, the sister of Rachel Yanait (wife of the future president of Israel, Yitzhak Ben Zvi). Two of the three figures that appear on the statue are those of Efraim Tchizik, who was killed during the Arab attack on Hulda during the 1938 riots, and his sister, Sarah, who was killed at Tel Hai. Beneath these figures, at the base of the statue, is a plaque displaying tools used to work fields of grain. Thus, in figurative content as well as in name, the statue expresses the Labour movement's ethos: the integration of defence and agricultural settlement, a symbiosis between the soldier who protects his people by the strength of his sword and the pioneer who redeems the nation's land with the sweat of his brow (Y. Shapiro 1984:110; Levinger 1993).

Dedication ceremonies for the Hulda monument took place on 26 August 1937. Representatives of all the Yishuv's national institutions, envoys from the Mandatory government, America's delegates to the Zionist Congress then visiting Israel, members of the Tchizik family, and the surviving Hulda defenders were present. An article written by Rachel Yanait, a member of the committee convened to select the monument's design referred to the statue as

not simply a monument to an unknown soldier sent by leaders to the battlefield to die, but a monument to living workers, individuals who, motivated by inner personal drive yet conscious of the general good, devoted themselves to construction and creation; through their labour they defended us all.[5]

Yanait and others expressed Labour's purpose behind the monument's design – commemoration was meant to remind the nation that striking roots in Israel involved defending the land (I.

Shamir 1996: 25). Commemoration at Hulda was thus linked to the Zionist narrative, which had been formulated earlier based on the episode at Tel Hai. In Volume I of *Sefer Toldot HaHagana* (*History of the Hagana*,1973), we find that "Hulda, like Tel Hai, symbolized … the bravery of the Yishuv's pioneers" (Dinur 1959: I, 378).

The Hulda and Tel Hai monuments, both erected in the 1930s, represent institutional Zionism's first memory sites in physical space. Although commemorative monuments had been erected during the 1920s, these were initiated by a plethora of private, voluntary groups, operating alongside the established, pre-State bodies – the National Committee, the Zionist Federation, the Histadrut, and the Jewish Agency (I. Shamir 1992: 367). The Jewish Agency was the chief formulator of commemoration policy for the Yishuv. The Hulda and Tel Hai memory sites soon hosted commemorative rituals that quickly became a permanent fixture of Yishuv life. Financial and institutional control of the messages transmitted ensured control over the construction of collective memory during the formative days of nation-building. By way of contrast, the private voluntary bodies that engaged in erecting collective memory sites were dependent upon donations and initiatives from a circumscribed circle of fallen soldiers' families and were incapable of penetrating national consciousness.[6]

Analysis of official commemoration initiatives illuminates the spirit of the times that the national institutions were desirous of constructing. Thus, for example, although erected after Independence, the Negba commemorative monument sculpted by Rappaport in 1953 effectively expresses Labour movement values and the majority of the political elite's ideological expectations. It shows a seamless ideological continuity from pre-to post-State commemorative icons. The monument at Negba celebrated the defence of this settlement during the War of Independence. It repeats the image of the ideal soldier–hero: a young man holding a rifle against a background of agricultural implements – a hoe – and symbols of the produce grown at Negba – sheaves of wheat, clusters of grapes, and olive branches.

At the Negba site, the soldier's uniform resembled that of the farmer on the kibbutz although in appearance the former was better kempt and wore boots in place of sandals. The similarities signify that both figures – the soldier and the kibbutz farmer – were fashioned from the same material, were members of the same family, the Labour family. They were men of the soil who would take up arms in its defence when called, a ploughshare in one hand, a sword in the other (Levinger 1993: 21).

Labour's leadership was interested in transforming the conduct of the Negba defenders into an edifying example of educational and artistic values, especially among youth. The monument became a popular site for organized visits by groups of schoolchildren and members of the Gadna, the pre-military training units established in Israel's high schools.

Etzel and Lehi failed to attain Mapai's success in presenting the War's victories as the product of its leadership through the placing of commemorative objects in the visible landscape. They chose a different historical epic, belonging to another tradition – that of loners, of an underground that went against the accepted Yishuv policy of collaboration with the Ottoman Turks in World War I. Thus, the paucity of monuments and markers for certain exploits in the pre-State Zionist narrative is in large part a function of political alignments at odds with the Zionist establishment's policy. What is interesting, to turn a phrase of Conan Doyle, are the monuments that were not erected in the spatial landscape.[7]

Etzel and Lehi were the progeny of a different movement, Nili, a group of "renegade" Jews who had co-operated with Allied intelligence during World War I in the hope of ensuring future Jewish settlement in Palestine. Nili's objective was to hasten liberation of Palestine from the

oppression of Ottoman rule; it hoped to do so by joining the Allied effort to weaken the Turkish hold over Palestine. Such a goal was considered inappropriate and potentially dangerous by the Yishuv's leadership. Yishuv attitudes towards Nili during and after the period of its activity closely resembled Labour's attitudes towards Etzel and Lehi. This group had also been expunged from official memory by Labour yet appropriated by the Underground as a model for emulation. The story of Nili provided a source of strength and meaning for Underground members faced with the political ostracism forced upon them.

At the outbreak of World War I, the Zionist leadership adopted a policy of neutrality though some of its factions sided with either Germany or the Allies. The *Poalei Tziyyon* party spoke in favour of Palestine's integration within the Ottoman political sphere. David Ben Gurion and Yitzhak Ben Zvi, then studying in Constantinople, imagined that they would one day represent Palestine as delegates to the Ottoman parliament. When the war broke out they exhorted the Yishuv's residents to accept Ottoman sovereignty. Even the *Shomer*, a voluntary defensive association enjoying full elite backing, was pro-German: as early as 1913, Yisrael Shohat, its leader, suggested that a civilian militia be established within the framework of the Turkish army. Few Yishuv residents or community leaders were willing to adopt a pro-British stance in view of Ottoman occupation of Palestine. Among the leaders outside Palestine who did take a pro-British position were Dr. Chaim Weitzman, who paved the way for Britain's Balfour Declaration, and Zeev Jabotinsky, who founded the Jewish Battalions that fought beside the British on the Eastern Front during the World War I.

Nili members strongly objected to Ottoman rule. Sara Aaronsohn, one of its founders, had personally witnessed the Turkish massacre of the Armenian community in 1915 while on her way home to Zikron Ya'akov from Constantinople. The career of Yosef Lishansky, Nili's founder, was similar to that of Jabotinsky in that he, too, had been a member of Poalei Tziyyon. The departure of Lishansky's faction from the party incited public condemnation of Nili, rationalized by its members' rejection of Yishuv authority. Aaron Aaronsohn, Avshalom Feinberg, Sara Aharonson and Yosef Lishansky, the group's leaders, were considered to be rash young people who dared to object to the Turkish presence in contradiction to the Yishuv policy of cooperation. Nili's actions were portrayed as endangering the entire community, and potentially inviting a massacre similar to that experienced by the Armenians. Although the details of the group's demise lie beyond the framework of this study, the treatment of its memory by the ruling elites is more than relevant for the pattern that it established.

To illustrate, Lishansky was persecuted for his views even after death. Apprehended on 19 October 1917, he was incarcerated in Damascus and sentenced to death by a military tribunal. In 1919, his body and that of Na'aman Belkind, who was also hanged in Damascus, were laid to rest in Rishon LeTziyyon. His grave was frequently desecrated and many attempted to prevent public mention of his activities.

Avshalom Feinberg was killed in 1917 in the Gaza area under mysterious circumstances. A monument to his memory, erected south of Hadera four decades later by his family with the aid of the Hadera municipality and the local Farmers Association, received no government support. Its dedication was organized by the city founders, which included the Feinberg family and members of the Association, on the "fortieth anniversary of his death in the Sinai Desert."[8] At its dedication on 20 January 1957, a plaque was displayed with the inscription: "A testament to Avshalom, … founder of the underground dedicated to liberation of the nation during World War I … who fell in the Sinai Desert for the sake of Israel's independence. … "[9]

The heirs of the Shomer and the Labour movement saw to it that the story of Nili, the first

Zionist Underground (or "liberation movement" in current parlance), was removed from collective memory. After establishment of the State, the history of Nili continued to be viewed negatively and remained outside the established myths. No mention of the group could be found in the official historiography until after Herut came to power in 1977.[10] One of the first authors to describe the events in a positive light, I. Yaari Poleskin, was forced to add a question mark to the title of his book: *Spies or National Heroes?* Nili was also totally boycotted by the educational system; none of its exploits appeared in school textbooks. Mention of the group and its feats could only be heard in the clubhouses of Betar, Herut's Zionist youth movement. As part of the Revisionist political counter-culture, Betarists adopted their messages and symbols, which were still considered illicit, in solidarity with others who had also been denied entry into the collective memory project. Parallel to its absence from literary and symbolic space, Nili remained more or less absent from physical space as well.

Post-State commemoration

Central vs. local commemoration

National independence created a new context for the production of collective memory in physical space: the shared landscape. In these circumstances, use of space is no longer the prerogative of spontaneous initiatives launched by one or another private group or colonially-favoured entity. Space is now a public good whose development is determined by public administration and legislation. Despite this quintessential change characterizing the spatial dimension, numerous bodies continued practices to which they had become accustomed in the pre-State era. They sporadically erected commemorative monuments while neglecting to co-ordinate their actions with the authorities. At the same time, state enforcement of coordinated commemoration was weak.

Azaryahu (1995) in his study on commemoration in the former German Democratic Republic distinguishes between official and unofficial monuments that parallel the differentiation between the national and the municipal level. Broadly speaking, monuments that contain official (i.e., national) symbols are the property of state agencies, as opposed to monuments that do not contain such symbols, which are usually erected at the initiative of local entities. Symbols such as the national flag, which appear on bank notes, coins and stamps are designed and produced with state authorization; municipal street names, on the other hand, tend to be determined locally. In totalitarian regimes, the differentiation between the national and local arena is devoid of political significance because the political centre controls all organizations, as well as all vehicles for the use of symbols, at every level of government. In pluralistic societies, however, the differentiation between national and local government projects may have meaning, especially when private symbols are involved. The conquest of visible public space provides groups with a voice and the potential to grow from an interest group to a social or political movement and ultimately a challenge to the ruling authority.

With respect to commemoration in physical space, the significance of these distinctions can be weighty. The meaning or implications of official monuments erected by the state or with state approval are national in scope, whereas local monuments constructed under municipal auspices are not. National monuments are incorporated into the compulsory state network of social communication through the related literature, addressed to the coming generation, and included in school texts and other educational material prepared by the Ministry of Education. Such projects are also awarded state financial support, guaranteed maintenance, and remain in the

public spotlight during the numerous rituals attended by government notables. The latter ensure media coverage of the events and intensified public exposure. Official monuments, therefore, not only convey political ideas falling within the social consensus, they display circularity: they create while they reproduce that consensus vital to regime support. Monuments representing ideas outside the consensus remain, a priori, removed and excluded from the state-controlled network of communication. This process likewise affects the strategy devised by a monument's initiators. Organizations within the consensus interested in instilling events or remembrance of the war dead into the public's collective consciousness can turn to state agencies for funds and approval. Others, outside the consensus, in this case outside that represented by Mapai's sovereignty narrative, will court municipal policy makers and seek admission into the local network of social communication.

State institutions tend to be far from pleased with the appearance of private and municipal initiatives, however marginal in number, because little control can be exerted over the form and content of the messages transmitted. As early as 1949, the Ministry of Defence announced that "it would be preferable to cease all activity and wait until the public institutions decide how and in what manner to commemorate these saints."[11] The activity referred to was an attempt by Shelach, a commemorative agent of Herut, to inscribe the memorialization of its fallen at sites independent of the official memory sites that honoured only Hagana and IDF soldiers (see below). Although the latter appear together in the *Yizkor* volumes (see Chapter 5) and lie side-by-side in military cemeteries, the sole place where Etzel and Lehi dead were commemorated and buried together was in a private institution, the *Achdut Yisrael* synagogue in Jerusalem.

In the absence of government sponsorship, the raising of commemorative projects faced many obstacles, financial and legal alike. Yoni Greenfeld, Chairman of Yad Labanim, refers to this issue in a letter written to Ben Gurion, informing him that bereaved families were erecting commemorative obelisks independently:

> The deep spiritual need to commemorate the memory of their dear ones has unsettled them and become a life-or-death issue. … They nevertheless began the project and stopped only when their funds were depleted. This is the source of their request, that the Minister [of Defence] assist them so that they may conclude their mission.
>
> (Shamir 1996: 80)

The notification of the Defence Minister [Ben-Gurion] was as far as sensitivity to the memorial issue reached.

State institutional agents of commemoration

The commemoration unit

To all intents and purposes, Israel's commemoration project began with Ben Gurion's order in 1948 to create an administrative department – the Commemoration Unit – to centralize policy regarding construction of monuments throughout the nation's countryside. (Azaryahu 1995: 133–34). Ben Gurion sought to nationalize commemoration and manage all its aspects in a manner that suited his purposes.

The unit functioned as the State's institutional framework for all commemorative activities. It was headed by E. Z. Eshkoli, a military rabbi who had served in the Jewish Battalion under British Army command during World War II. In October 1948, Rabbi Eshkoli signed a policy

paper dictating establishment of a “Division for the Commemoration of Jewish Soldiers Who had Fought in the War of Independence”. In December 1948, he was succeeded by Joseph Dekel, a Hagana veteran who was previously the Chairman of Semech, the Hagana department responsible for families of fallen soldiers. The new unit was in fact a continuation of the Semech department, but now responsible for all IDF dead.
The Commemoration Unit undertook the following functions:

1 Establishment, administration and maintenance of military cemeteries.
2 Treatment of the literary commemoration of the dead.
3 Location and re-location – searching for the bodies or re-locating the missing-in-action.

Thus, ceremonial as well as practical issues were combined in one administrative body which had a dual mandate, the first relating to the content of collective memory sites per se, the second flowing from substantive military actions. A year after cessation of the fighting, the Unit was transferred to the Ministry of Defence and renamed “The Ministry of Defence Commemoration Unit”.
Ben-Gurion's control over commemoration policy was thereby ostensibly strengthened.

Council for National Monuments

On 21 July 1953, the Ministry of the Interior's Assistant Director for Planning authorized the creation of the Council for National Monuments and agreed to transfer responsibility for the maintenance of monuments to local councils.[12] Two years later, in response to a legislative query, the Office of the Minister of Defence stated that many monuments had been erected without approval from the Commemoration Unit, and that any group undertaking such initiatives in the future should go through the proper channels.[13]

Government Names Committee

The Government Names Committee, located within the Office of the Prime Minister, had been established to assign names to the settlements springing up throughout the country. The selection of names was entrenched in the normative conflict between the Right and Mapai. Mapai's programme was to appropriate and nationalize the landscape as part of its public policy agenda. Assigning names to streets and recreational areas was an extension of Mapai's place-name imprint on history from above.

Council of Bereaved Parents

Another area in which consolidation of military matters required attention pertained to the private initiatives of parties intent upon erecting monuments at sites where battles had taken place. After the monument was erected, however, it was discovered that other battles had also been fought there and that others had died. Omitting the latter resulted in considerable anguish on the part of many bereaved parents. This led to suggestions for a legislative framework for commemorative undertakings in which a council would be established composed of parents, representatives of the military, and experts.[14] On 24 June 1953, the Director General of the Interior Ministry replied that such a proposal had been adopted and implemented in February 1953. The first meeting of the Council had been set for 3 May 1949 at the offices of the Ministry

of Defence in Tel Aviv.[15]

The Council was to include representatives of bereaved families and public figures from every part of the country. De facto, the Council was composed exclusively of bereaved families. Its mandate, formalized by *Article 12* of the *Military Cemeteries Law – 1950*, stipulated appointment of a public advisory council for the Commemoration Unit, whose members were to be appointed by the Minister of Defence. The Council's mission was to "advise and propose alternative programs for construction of a war memorial to commemorate the memories of our martyrs who had fallen during the War of Independence … and to create military cemeteries."[16] The latter function was set forth in the *Regulations Regarding Military Cemeteries (Responsibilities of the Public Council for Commemoration) 1956*. With respect to monuments, the Council was to offer its advice as to their establishment and to coordinate sponsorship with the Commemoration Unit.

Ostensibly, this initiative had the potential to appease parents who might take umbrage at the "nationalisation of bereavement," a policy that removed from their hands the decision as to where their sons and daughters were to be buried and what was to be inscribed on their gravestones. Organized opposition to this policy only began to crystalize in the 1990s. At the time these decisions were first made and translated into the Council's mandate, trenchant criticisms from other quarters were heard. First, the fact that bereaved parents on the Council were not elected but personally appointed by the Minster of Defence created the impression that it was a rubber stamp for Ben Gurion's decisions regarding the project (Doron and Lebel 2004). Secondly, as the only candidates for seats on the council were parents legally recognized as the bereaved – that is, their children had died while serving in the IDF, the Palmah and the Hagana – parents of Etzel and Lehi dead were excluded. Discrimination was more or less total.

The identities of the Council's initial members, announced by Ben Gurion on 2 March 1951, are revealing. Among the 13 members we find Shaul Avigur, a Hagana veteran and representative of the Ministry of Defence; Yitzhak Ben Zvi, a Hagana veteran, bereaved father, and soon to be Israel's second President; Reuven Maas, father of Danny Maas, a Palmah hero; Rivka Guber, whose two sons had fallen while serving in the Hagana and who had come to symbolize a generation of bereaved mothers; Avinoam Grossman-Reuven, Ben Gurion's representative on the editorial staff of the *Gvilei Esh* (*Parchments of Fire*, part of the commemorative literature project); and Joseph Dekel, head of the Commemoration Unit. This roll call is strongly associated, both organizationally and politically, with Ben Gurion and Mapai. It should come as no surprise, then, that during one of its first meetings, the Council should turn to Ben Gurion with the demand that "IDF dead be officially termed 'Heroes of the War of Independence'," an appellation that would embrace Hagana dead only.[17]

Yad Labanim: the formal NGO of commemoration for IDF and Hagana fallen

Another supposedly unofficial body established at this time was *Yad Labanim*, a non-governmental association of bereaved parents. At its first meeting, it was decided that it should act as an advisory forum on matters concerning commemoration of War of Independence dead and that The Commemoration Unit should invite bereaved parents to co-operate in its commemorative activities to the extent feasible.[18]

As late as 1963, in the face of highly effective private efforts to commemorate Etzel and Lehi dead, Yad Labanim, together with the Hagana Veterans Association, decided to combine efforts for the purpose of constructing a public structure in Jerusalem to be called "The Hagana-Yad

Labanim House". The building was designed to serve as a memorial to the fallen who had fought for liberation and as a meeting place for Hagana veterans and bereaved families. Jerusalem's Municipality even allocated a plot for the project, located beside today's Sachar Park. However, Yad Labanim initiated additional memorialization activities, projects in the areas of education and culture, public ceremonies and congresses, and scholarship awards, but continued to exclude Underground veterans from its programmes. Once again, despite the organization's outwardly public nature, parents of Etzel and Lehi dead were denied the opportunity to participate in this institution, based on the legal definition of a bereaved parent.

Shelach: the unrecognized institute for commemoration and rehabilitation for Etzel and Lehi fallen

As noted in Chapter 2, the Herut Movement formed Shelach in response to the political and organizational constraints encountered in their memorialization petitions to the Israeli establishment. Herut, like those Etzel veterans who had completed a full tour of duty within the framework of the IDF, and certainly the Underground's bereaved parents, wished to be included in the statist project whose declared purpose was to recognize the contribution of all the fallen and honour all the bereaved families. Even before the War of Independence had ended, bereaved families had been labelled according to their political affiliation. This process placed transmission of the collective meaning of death on the battlefield within a partisan framework. Inclusion within the official definition of martyrdom meant allocation of a moment of collective memory to the dead. Incorporation among the list of "patriots" meant public recognition of their efforts and sacrifice. Non-recognition suggested that their deaths were in vain in so far as the national Zionist enterprise was concerned. Non-recognition also excluded these families from practical assistance and state benefits awarded to the wounded and to bereaved families.

Shelach's founders grasped the significance of their own commemoration project in its broadest sense, including its temporal dimensions. On the eve of Israel's tenth Remembrance Day, a flyer advertised that

Shelach is an institution that … battles against the distortion of history and against those who would conceal the truth. One of its objectives is to erect a memorial to those neglected heroes so that their memories will be eternally etched in the nation's history.[19]

The purpose of the flyer was to inform the public of Shelach's intention to fill the gaps in the State's commemorative projects, and to penetrate the nation's collective memory as well as its landscape.

Shelach's administrative recruitment process imitated the pattern of "old-boy" appointments employed by the government for its commemorative organizations. The latter had placed a good number of Palmach and Hagana veterans as heads of these organizations. This was part of its design to enhance elite monopolization of commemoration. Because these bodies mounted commemorative projects and undertook assistance to bereaved families, they naturally established strong emotional attachments and feelings of gratitude, binding the bereaved ever more firmly to the entire statist project and to those who led it. Shelach recruitment, then, was oppositional but not subversive or of government intent.

In effect, then, two organizational networks filled the public landscape with commemorative monuments. The first, official and institutionalized, operated according to a legal mandate and with the blessing of the Defence Ministry; it granted participation in the project to selected groups of bereaved parents and leaders who had either lost children during the War of

Independence or who were themselves Hagana or IDF veterans. The second network lacked significance in official public discourse. It was poor in resources; but its programme was adamantly upheld by its supporters. The points of contention between the two commemorative entities were the absence of any mention of the Underground's dead from monuments erected under State sponsorship, and opposition to Shelach's attempts to raise privately funded monuments as a remedy. This split continued the pattern, formal and informal, established during the Yishuv, when one set of defensive organizations operated with the sanction of the Labour-dominated institutions while another operated without it.

Appropriation and inversion of the funereal

Ben Gurion, speaking *in loco parentis*, claimed that nationalization of mourning and memory provided the sole mechanism by which the State could repay bereaved parents, to the extent that such recompense was feasible, for their sacrifices. These burial places and commemoration spaces were meant to recognize the parents' loss in positive terms. Ben Gurion used ritual occasions to applaud parents for their contribution to the State's rebirth and its development. During the 1950 Remembrance Day ceremonies, after the reading of the prayer for the dead, the Prime Minister stated: "Above the images of the sweet boys and girls glow the images of their parents … the wondrous lions of Israel."

Nationalization of bereavement did not take place without comment. Members of the Left who shared Ben Gurion's collectivist views with respect to other issues objected to placing bereavement under the statist-Labour umbrella. Some expressed consternation that the first concerns to be nationalized would be "the bodies of our dead soldiers"[20] There was shock that parent's feelings and preferences were given no consideration in the legislation whereas "everyone else you might imagine is mentioned: the Chief Medical Officer, and the Rabbinate, of course, but not bereaved parents!"[21] However, the sensitivities and expressions of loss were not the linguistic habitus that the political leadership wished to expose in the public domain. Sorrow and lamentation were too closely associated with two thousand years of diaspora mentality and it was this disposition that the Zionist ideology wanted to dispel. It sought to invert the funereal ethos from grief to celebration of sacrifice. Military cemeteries became a social field in which to express the general will, as well as a locus for relating the narrative of Israel's rebirth and survival.

The various social fields of commemoration now embodied rituals formed by the "objective" demands of their spatial settings. The compatibility between the dispositions and performances and the social settings emerge from inscribed cultural conventions designed to reinforce official state strategies. In Bourdieu's formulation

> rituals are the limiting case of situations of *imposition* in which, through the exercise of a technical competence which may be imperfect, a social competence is exercised – namely, that of the legitimate speaker, authorized to speak, and to speak with authority.
>
> (Bourdieu 1991: 41)

State appropriation of authoritative spokesmen from amongst the bereaved brought about a subversive re-signification of funereal space.

The social and physical infrastructure of the bereavement field was carefully determined by the political regime. Terms of admission into this community were elaborated during the

parliamentary debates held surrounding the *Law*: *Families of Soldiers Killed in the War* (1950). In the pithy phrases of Minister of Justice Rosen: "The military cemeteries express the principle that all those who fell during the War were comrades with a single objective – this invites uniformity." In this context, uniformity meant participation in an exclusive community. This principle was firmly put into practice in the physical field as well. Headstones displaying the IDF seal and their location in military cemeteries marked their subjects as participants in that community. Those buried outside the cemetery's perimeter, or close by but devoid of headstones bearing an official seal, were marked as non-participants. To complete the cycle of signification, the task of gathering the bodies, their interment, the placement of the headstones and their inscriptions, as well as maintenance of the grounds was assigned to state agencies, primarily the Commemoration Unit.

A journalist in the popular press determined the new site's identity in the title of his article: "Military Cemeteries – Pantheons to Heroism."[22] As pantheons, Israel's military cemeteries not only accelerated the transmission of ideological and political messages outward, from the family of the bereaved to the rest of the nation, they also functioned as sites for socialization of the community it represented, namely, the "family of the bereaved" (Naveh 1993: 159–60). In other words, these sites were converted into collective spaces, arenas used by the State for labelling members of the in-group, the elite, and for transmitting the pertinent social messages, reinforced through annual repetition of the state rituals enacted there.

Izhar Harari, a Progressive Party (liberal camp) member of the Knesset verbalized the spatial dimension attached to the symbolic marking of this community:

Perhaps we should allow the Ministry of Defence the opportunity to occasionally expand the law's boundaries. … I know of cases where soldiers died during training with the Underground, under conditions requiring that they be buried on the spot in order to prevent the British from discovering the incident. … Perhaps the time has come to collect the remains of these fallen, who are few in number, and to bury them in a military cemetery; after all, the cause of their deaths is not very different from that which brought on the deaths of those who fell during the War of Independence.[23]

To Harari, determination of burial criteria was within the State's purview, and therefore should involve application of a uniform, universalistic policy. His remarks supported Ben Gurion's demands to nationalize bereavement and to subordinate bereavement to laws that transfer discretion in these matters from the family to the state.

Harari's approach even touched upon the design of these cemeteries and the graves themselves. A model was at hand, available for adoption or rejection. Following World War I, the British had established cemeteries in Palestine dedicated to the servicemen killed in the campaign to conquer the Turkish-held territory. The guiding principle was western in the basic equality attributed to the dead, expressed in the uniformity of its graves and symbols. The ruling perspective was that "military cemeteries were to be rooted in the idea of homogeneity, that everyone had dedicated their lives to a common purpose. … The uniformity should be unmistakable and absolute."[24] For their own reasons, representatives of the Right joined Harari who, as a staunch liberal, had suggested expanding the boundaries of the community entitled to rest in the military cemeteries.

Thus, state leadership successfully established a standardized setting and format for the burial of the nation's war dead, thereby minimizing personal expression and identification with loss while elevating its collective significance. Yet it went further by determining who undertook the supreme sacrifice thereby shaping the social and political contours of national identity.

Inclusion and exclusion dynamics in the sphere of landscapes

Following internal Ministry of Defence consultations, it was determined that for the purpose of commemoration, "all those who fell while serving in the Hagana or on one of its missions as of 29 November 1947" would be included in the project. Later, in a letter dated 23 May 1949 sent to Shaul Avigur, Dekel requested that the President or the Prime Minister declare that all those killed in action against the enemy "in operations that did not contradict the positions taken by the authorised institutions, starting from 1 December 1947, would be considered [IDF] servicemen." He hoped that such a declaration would remove all doubt about the status of Etzel and Lehi dead who had acted in contradiction to the "position taken by the authorised institutions," meaning Mapai-controlled organizations. Surprisingly, it was Ben Gurion who objected to a strict date, arguing that it was impractical.[25]

The issue was once more raised for discussion in connection with the condolence letters that Ben Gurion planned to send to the families of the fallen to be buried in military cemeteries. At the time, Ben Gurion explicitly stated that he would sign letters to Etzel and Lehi families "only in those cases that it becomes clear, after uncompromising, painstaking investigation that they really died while on duty in the war against the Arabs."[26] Several years later, Mordechai Orbach, as Director of the Commemoration Unit, would inform Shelach that

we have received numerous requests to transfer the remains of members of the Hagana and other organisations who were killed prior to 20 November, including cases such as yours. Please note that they do not comply with the conditions allowing burial in military cemeteries … We [therefore] cannot transfer their bodies to the military cemeteries.[27]

The intent of the decision was clear: Ben Gurion refused to allow the story of the rebellion against the British any place within Israel's collective memory, including a place among the military dead. In a later version of the decision appearing in the February 1951 edition of the *Reshumot*, the Knesset gazette in which new regulations and laws are published, the binding definition of military service is given as "service in the Hagana or any other planned operation against the Arab bands and invading armies from 30 November 1947 to 31 December 1948." In effect, this definition states that only IDF and Hagana dead were eligible for the State's patronage.

Those interred in the military cemeteries, as well as those inscribed in the Remembrance books, were singled out as members of the group to which the young state owed its resurrection. Burial in a military cemetery became one of the passkeys to social acceptance, status, and material rewards. Inclusion in or exclusion from this select community, again based on decisions regarding the right to military burial, acquired political nuances almost from the start.

A good number of Mapai representatives in the Knesset surprisingly agreed to broaden eligibility for interment in the military cemeteries, although their sights were not set on Etzel or Lehi dead. They had others in mind, fighters who might be excluded due to strict obedience to the law's stipulations. Chaim Ben Asher (MK, Mapai), declared:

I feel I must focus on one specific point. … the matter of returning volunteers who fought in World War II for traditional Jewish burial on Israeli soil. … This entails the retroactive acknowledgement of these volunteers as members of our country's army, which implies a gradual change in the definition of the term "soldier" for the law's purposes. … We should work to obtain recognition of volunteers as participants in our pre-independence armed forces.[28]

Because the graves of Etzel and Lehi dead were thus officially ignored, Shelach once again took upon itself the performance of all tasks otherwise assigned to the Public Council of Bereaved

Parents for Commemoration with respect to the treatment of its fallen. Shelach's Department for the Underground's Martyrs tended the graves of Etzel fighters located in 18 cemeteries throughout Israel, including the placement of headstones on their graves. Shelach adopted the same rules legally required of the Public Council for Commemoration: concentration of graves in military cemeteries, uniformity in headstone inscriptions and headstone design, with the latter resembling the official version; the Etzel seal, patterned after the IDF seal, was placed on the headstone. In addition to the transfer of bodies from numerous plots throughout the country and their burial in central locations, Shelach also took it upon itself to bring the bodies of those who had died abroad for interment in Israel. These included the remains of Israel Epstein, leader of the Aviel squadron, who had died while trying to escape from prison in Rome and the bodies of the Eritrean dead.[29]

Many of the fallen from the war against the Arabs were thus excluded from admission into the designated community of the dead, especially if they were associated with the Underground. Even after lengthy legal battles had confirmed that the Underground's dead were entitled to be considered IDF dead – that is, they had died while fighting the Arabs in operations approved by the official institutions (e.g., the action in Dir Yassin) – the responsible agencies did little to amend the situation. Only after the Courts had decided against the Ministry of Defence decision to prevent these fallen soldiers from enjoying the same survivors' benefits given to their comrades in the Hagana were their bodies transferred, in a military ceremony, from their temporary graves to interment on Mount Herzl.[30]

The legal proceedings were not addressed against the policy per se, expressed in the definition of official war dead, but against what the Courts considered to be faulty implementation of that policy. But again, even in the wake of the trial and the burial of the Etzel and Lehi dead on Mount Herzl, delay characterized official actions, such as the lethargic placing of headstones bearing the IDF seal at the respective graves.[31] In February 1956, in response to the ruling and Shelach's repeated demands, the Director of the Commemoration Unit wrote that

the Ministry of Defence has agreed to place headstones at the graves of the five Dir Yassin dead located in the military cemetery on Mount Herzl. The headstones will follow the pattern of the other military headstones, and display identical inscriptions but not the IDF seal. The IDF seal can be incised only on the headstones of fallen who have received a military serial number.[32]

The objective now before Herut was to retroactively construct the military status of its soldiers in order to qualify them for the official IDF seal. This meant retroactive enlistment in the IDF. In his letter of 26 January 1956 to Major Uri Vrum, the head of the IDF's Personnel Division, Katznellenbogen demanded that he "complete the enlistment procedure and inform the Ministry of Defence of that fact."[33]

To substantiate his demand, Katznellenbogen repeated the details of the Baranes case (1953), in which the court ruled that the Dir Yassin operation had been declared an operation approved by the Minister of Defence, which entitled the bereaved families of the Etzel and Lehi soldiers to compensation. Peres eventually replied, advising Katznellenbogen that "the Minister of Defence has decided to enlist the Dir Yassin dead; hence, the IDF seal will be incised on their headstones."[34] Ministry of Defence sources not only resisted the appearance of the IDF seal on Lehi and Etzel headstones; they also did not approve the appearance of the Etzel seal beside that of the IDF seal.[35] Thus, it fell upon Lehi, in addition to Herut, to attend to the issue of the headstones to be placed on their members' graves. Numerous letters from bereaved parents expressing their wonder that no headstones had been placed at their sons' graves were sent to

Lehi offices as well.

The case of the Dir Yassin dead and the efforts that had led to their ultimate inclusion in the community signified by the IDF seal indicates much about the meanings attributed to the attempt to deny them this distinction. First, these efforts were based on principle, which only judicial intervention could resolve. Second, from the standpoint of Herut, the effort to include Etzel dead in the official community of the dead was symbolic in character: even after the bereaved families were recognized as eligible to enjoy the same rights as their Hagana counterparts, Shelach refused to desist in its attempt to arrange for headstones similar to those of Hagana dead. Although the Underground's dead were transferred to the military cemetery on Mount Herzl, their symbolic and political recognition – epitomized by the IDF seal – was again delayed, until judicial intervention put an end to Ministry of Defence policy.

Exclusion from military cemeteries

The debate over a durable solution to the issue of burial and the format of cemeteries began immediately upon the War's close. Prior to statehood, military dead were buried in civil cemeteries, sometimes in temporary plots located in small communities. In March 1949, the committee mandated to devise an orderly policy sat for the first time. The solutions they discussed ranged from the construction of civil cemeteries containing sections with plots for soldiers, to that of military cemeteries. In the end, the Ministry of Defence decided to establish military cemeteries.[36] The plans were all-inclusive, beginning with the location of the graves and their design.

The [Commemoration] Unit will plan and implement the organisational, technical and aesthetic arrangements in accordance with Jewish tradition. These functions include: burial, setting a headstone at each dead soldier's grave, and the placing of a general commemorative plaque, in each cemetery.[37]

In 1950, the Knesset approved the legislative bill *Law: Military Cemeteries*. Passage of this bill meant that the remains of the fallen would be concentrated in military cemeteries, burial plots would be properly maintained, and architectural design and landscaping would provide a fitting atmosphere for obsequies and memorial events.

These activities paralleled the efforts exerted to produce *Yizkor* (commemorative) volumes, another task assigned to the Commemoration Unit. The names selected to appear in these books would be those of the soldiers buried in the designated military cemeteries.

Construction of military cemeteries proceeded with alacrity and full support of the public administration. The Prime Minister's Office issued instructions that all grave sites bear appropriate markings and proper form. However, the graves belonging to the Underground movements' dead were left unattended, with no markings or appropriate arrangements. Revisionist Movement dead, like the dead of other combined Etzel-Hagana operations, were never to earn comparable markings, those symbolic tokens of affiliation which appeared on establishment-approved gravestones. "Cemeteries do not recognise 'frameworks.' Etzel dead rest next to Hagana dead, but someone decided that even here, deceit was to enter." So wrote Chaim Lazar-Litai in the foreword to a book in memory of the Jaffa campaign dead edited by him and published by Shelach. He continued:

> On the top of the graves of Hagana soldiers who died protecting Jaffa hovers the phrase "fell during the liberation of Jaffa," whereas above the graves of Uzi and Yehoshua and all 40

> who paid with their lives so that the campaign could succeed, only the words “fell in Jaffa” are inscribed. … We therefore stood before their sacred graves and felt an inexpressible anger: “Will lies be spread even in the next world?”
>
> (Lazar-Litai 1951)

Even Yosef Weitz from the Mapai camp candidly objected to these practices, as evidenced by a diary entry dated 11 April 1951:

> I met with [a member] … from the Commemoration Unit to discuss the construction of a monument to the 14 who fell at the Achziv Bridge. He, that is, the Unit, is following routine, inasmuch as the Ministry of Defence is officially responding only to cases of casualties who fell after 29 November 1947 [the date of the UN declaration announcing the partition of Palestine], and not prior to that date, so as to exclude Lehi and Etzel casualties. We are therefore continuing the ancient tradition of discrimination.
>
> (Weitz 1985: 134)

Grave tending

Discrimination extended to the tending of graves. The sites of fallen Etzel members were neglected while the graves authorized by the Ministry of Defence were well kept.[38] The problem initially stemmed from the predominance of cemeteries having a private status. Many were physically neglected and forsaken, visited only rarely by relatives of the deceased. Numerous complaints concerning maintenance were forwarded by bereaved parents to the responsible institutions. One complaint, made in April 1950, concerned the lamentable condition of the Beit Keshet cemetery, where the son of Yitzhak Ben Zvi, then President of Israel, was also buried.[39] In response, Shaul Avigur noted that the phenomenon deeply worried him.[40]

Inscriptions and icons

With the creation of the Public Council for Commemoration, a Knesset subcommittee was also created, mandated to determine what would be engraved on the headstones.[41] Shortly before Remembrance Day in early April 1951, the subcommittee announced that a format had been devised. Its content included the soldier's name, rank, serial number, parents’ names, date of birth and of death according to the Hebrew calendar, in addition to the IDF seal. The Public Council had also hoped to secure control over use of the IDF seal through a regulation entitling the Council alone to place headstones displaying the IDF seal.[42] In response, the Chief Counsel of the Ministry of Defence informed them that such a regulation could not be issued separately from new legislation.[43]

The IDF seal that appears on the headstones of recognized military casualties is more than decorative. It is a highly significant symbol that awards official and social status to its bearers. Such a symbolic process could be adopted because within the context of Israel's political culture, the IDF has come to be perceived as a fitting reflection of the values dominating the Israeli public arena. The IDF seal that appeared on the graves of those who had died while defending the State represented an imprimatur of the successful acquisition of Israeli citizenship.[44] As a result, when groups other than those specified in the relevant laws, especially the *Law: Families of Soldiers Killed in the War (1950*) dared to use the IDF seal in the design of headstones for

their own dead, the authorities were infuriated. This was so despite the fact that the "outsiders' had been comrades in arms with the Hagana and the IDF on various occasions. In a letter dated 23 June 1953, sent to the Legal Counsel of the Ministry of Defence, the Director of the Commemoration Unit, Joseph Dekel, wrote the following under the heading "The IDF seal as it appears on commemorative statutes and monuments":

As I have already explained to you, a rule is needed that will forbid the use of the IDF seal in the absence of special permission given by the responsible officer. During my recent tour of military cemeteries … I noticed numerous instances in which the IDF seal was placed on civilian as well as on military headstones. … [45]

This preoccupation with the IDF seal illustrates that nationalization of bereavement had political as well as socio-cultural dimensions. Permission to use the IDF seal became a potent tool in the hands of policy makers as it enabled the political elite to signify with the utmost efficiency who would be included and who excluded from this select community.

Uniform headstone inscriptions make strong statements about the role played by the dead in national tradition. The holistic pattern of cemeteries expressed the view that "each and every one dedicated his or her life to one shared goal. … Uniformity must be achieved in a conspicuous and decisive way."[46] Military cemeteries belong to the public space; myths, interpretations and the meaning of bereavement are constructed both as military and civilian experiences. Gravestone inscriptions, therefore, reveal attitudes towards those buried in cemeteries and the function of the cemeteries themselves. The government statement published in *Davar* is exemplary of this orientation:

The fathers and mothers who bequeathed us their sons as warriors and defenders of the national honour can be assured that the Jewish people will not forget those who volunteered to fight against the enemy. … The War of Independence and establishment of the State have raised new problems that were previously unheeded. One of these problems, related to the War in the most tangible way, is that of commemoration of our fallen and, closely related, the construction of military cemeteries.[47]

Accessibility and public attendance

Public participation in commemoration rituals was far from spontaneous. This applied to every avenue in which commemoration might materialize, including burial. Apathy to commemoration of the War of Independence fallen did not go entirely unnoticed. E. Israel, a columnist for *Davar*, the Labour movement organ, wrote a series of articles on the subject. One of his claims was that the paucity of memorial sites was a major reason why the public did not attend memorial services or heed the appeals for a proliferation of memorial sites.

Despite all the sincere and protracted attempts made by individuals, institutions, households, and the Commemoration Unit, these parties remain thoroughly bewildered by the question of why their voices remain unheard. To this very day, our three major cities have not erected a single monument in memory of their fallen sons. Hardly any streets have been named after individual dead, groups, or even the main battles where they died, especially when compared with the commemorative activities conducted with respect to the more distant past. Think of how we commemorate World War II dead, for instance. Yet today, not one major institution or place of work has done more than the bare minimum to commemorate its lost employees. … Nor have any high schools – excluding Bilu, Gymnasia Herzliya, and Tichon Hadash – exerted any effort to even passively commemorate their students within their walls.[48]

It was not merely budget constraints, however, that hampered the construction of additional and more readily accessible commemoration sites for the majority of the public. Ben Gurion embraced the commemoration idea from a highly centralist perspective. He proposed that only three military cemeteries be established, one each in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.[49] His opinion, however, did not prevail. In September 1949, it was decided to build eight military cemeteries: in Jerusalem, Nachlat Yitzhak (Tel Aviv), Netanya, Kfar Warburg, Haifa, Nahariya, Afula, and Rosh Pina. An additional 25 small, local burial plots were also established.[50] Had the cemeteries been more rigidly centralized, performance of standardized commemorative rituals would have been easier to exact. In reality, the distribution of burial sites made it possible for the rituals conducted to deviate from official formats. In 1954, the prescribed Remembrance Day rituals were conducted in only 14 cemeteries.

Despite efforts to attract the public to the State's commemorative rituals staged at the gravesites, attendance was poor and limited to bereaved families.[51] Similar reports were delivered to a meeting of the 1955 Independence Day Planning Committee, noting that the public attended such events only in communities located in the periphery.[52] The country's leadership was thus blatantly informed that they could not rely on the public's spontaneous participation.

Their realization that this was in fact the case prodded officials to find ways to expand public attendance through institutional manipulations. Hence, the Commemoration Unit turned to the Ministry of the Interior with a request that it ensure that the local authorities under its jurisdiction close their offices and enjoin their staffs to “go to the cemeteries and participate in the commemorative rituals conducted there.”[53] Similarly, participation of schoolchildren was scheduled for the first time in 1955, during that year's Remembrance Day rituals.[54] One fact contributing to the success of this move was that Remembrance Day is not treated as a holiday, meaning that school was in session; hence, the children could participate within the framework of their daily activities.

Mount Herzl and other shrines

Statist symbols did not appear solely in connection with military burial or IDF cemeteries. Ben Gurion sought a symbol that would more quickly and effectively link the national ethos with that community of the dead which he believed to have expressed the spirit of the times. In mid 1949, Dekel turned to the Jewish National Fund with a request to allocate “about 40–50 dunams” of its holdings in the vicinity of Jerusalem for use as a military cemetery. This site was designated as a final resting place for the remains of Theodore Herzl, the visionary founder of the Jewish state. In addition, sufficient space would be allocated for a military cemetery. Plots would be set aside for the transfer of those buried abroad and for soldiers missing in action. The location would be known as Mt. Herzl and would serve as the IDF's main burial grounds (Azaryahu 1995: 178).

Construction of the cemetery and the tomb began in 1951, immediately following that year's Remembrance Day rituals, as stipulated in the associated law. However, due to the low level of spontaneous recognition of the symbol and its association with the dead, the political leadership requested that a grandiose public ceremony be held at the site, accompanied by the appropriate solemnity. Now, a year after the first Independence Day had been celebrated, the site would be dedicated together with Herzl's tomb. So, in summer 1951, Herzl's casket was interred in a state funeral conducted on the eastern heights of Jerusalem.

Mount Herzl was indeed designated to become Israel's national pantheon, where the nation's prophet and his disciples were to be buried in what eventually would be called the “Founding

Fathers Plot" (*Chelkat Gedolei Ha'ouma*). According to Azaryahu, Mount Herzl was to replace the Temple in Jerusalem as the centre of Israel's civil religion.[55]

The Mt. Herzl site established a symbolic relationship between the tomb of the acknowledged originator of the Zionist dream and those who fought for the realization of that dream. Ben Gurion had already aligned the historical nexus before the landscape was left to speak for itself. In 1949, the first annual Defence Forces Day was made to coincide with the anniversary of Herzl's death. On that occasion, Ben Gurion had asserted that

this is no day for mourning or lamentation but of exaltation and thanksgiving, of victory and self-fortification, for our vision has been realised. The mortal Herzl is no more, but … his spirit floats above a reborn state of Israel, above its builders and defenders.[56]

War dead had been interred on Mount Herzl since the closing days of 1949; the bodies of 300 Hagana and IDF soldiers and officers had been lain to rest in November of that year with impressive ceremony. During the mass funeral, work ceased in Jerusalem as 50,000 residents, including teachers and their pupils, awaited the funeral cortege along its route.[57] Interment of another 600 dead was planned for 1950.[58] A suggestion to erect an elaborate "Heroes Shrine" on the future Herzl site received the Prime Minister's approval but never obtained the exorbitant financing which accompanied the proposal.

Also at this time, Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir, responsible for the *Yizkor* project, suggested that a "Heroes Shrine" be constructed on Mount Herzl. She hoped that the shrine would house all the rich material that has been gathered in memory of the dead.[59] Pinkerfeld-Amir assigned a museum-like, historical meaning to the space:

We intend to bequeath a complete and comprehensive record of their lives. … We have an obligation to them to inform the coming generations about who they were. … The shrine to be built will be a richly endowed monument, a place of study and communion with their memories.[60]

Pinkerfeld-Amir directed the proposal to the Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, who accepted it in principle. Upon receiving his decision, Pinkerfeld-Amir turned to architects and the Jewish Agency to advance her plan.[61] The proposal also met the demands of those bereaved parents who had participated in the establishment of Yad Labanim the previous year. In the end, the project was not undertaken due to the massive funds required.

The special status of Mount Herzl rests in the symbolic function it fulfils as the national pantheon. For this reason, soldiers who fell before establishment of the State, such as the 25 Yordei HaSira, or those who fought in the Jewish Brigade during World War II, were likewise honoured.[62] In 1957, a "Commemoration Lane" was dedicated to the War of Independence dead who were buried on the Mount of Olives. A unique feature of the lane is that the commemorative plaques placed along its perimeter list the names and identifying details of all the fallen in the very same format as these items appear on their headstones.[63]

From the perspective of the State, Mount Herzl became the focal cemetery. A preponderance of resources and attention were channelled towards it, a fact that often irritated bereaved parents who were forced to wait until preparation of other military cemeteries could be concluded.[64] The proximity of the cemetery to the tomb of the founder of modern Zionism as well as to the graves of the Zionist Movement's and the nation's leaders endowed the site with a special aura. The process thus produced one of the main texts of Israel's founding myths, and fixed that text within the landscape. Mount Herzl expressed the national consensus with respect to the place of the War of Independence within the nation's heroic tradition. Etzel and Lehi dead were denied a final

resting place on Mount Herzl.

Statues and monuments

Before the founding of the State, several monuments were put up in memory of comrades in the struggle against the British. In December 1946, the cornerstone for an eternal flame was laid in Emek Hefer in memory of the seven who fell there during the British blockade of the Jordan valley settlements.[65] In 1947, Kibbutz Tel Yosef raised a commemorative obelisk in memory of Chaim Harudi, who was shot by the British on "Black Saturday" (29 June 1946), (Shamir 1989: 178), while in June 1947, a commemorative plaque was placed in memory of two individuals who had fallen during attempts to assist Kfar Giladi after this kibbutz, situated in northern Galilee, was blockaded by the British.[66] Following Independence, Ben Gurion made a calculated decision to remove the battle against the British from the map of Israel's collective memory.

Commemoration of the Night of the Bridges is engrossing because it was an operation undertaken within the framework of the combined Underground movements (the "Resistance Movement," late 1945 and June 1946). During this brief period the three camps – the Hagana, Etzel and Lehi – joined forces under a unified command to arrive at a common strategy against the British. The incident in question took place on 16 June 1946. Units from the three organizations were assigned to blow up bridges used by the British to transport supplies and troops throughout Palestine. During the attempt to sabotage the Achziv bridge, 14 Palmach fighters were killed.

On 5 December 1946, in the wake of the Achziv operation, Moshe Sneh, the commander of the Underground, wrote as follows to the bereaved parents:

> These 14 martyrs … join the list of national heroes and patriots that sacrificed their lives in the war for Israel and its independence. In the name of the Jewish underground movement and its members, I wish to express my deepest regret for the calamity that has befallen you. … The day will come when the nation and its people will be able to openly express its gratitude and fittingly commemorate their memories.
>
> (Shamir 1989: 59)

After Independence, families of the dead turned to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Sharett, as well as to the Commemoration Unit with the request to commemorate their loved ones. In accordance with the rigid policy stipulating that the State would recognize and commemorate only those dead who had fallen after the creation of the IDF (November 1947), the parents were denied their request and formally notified of that decision by the Council for National Monuments.

The Council itself had no objection to complying with this request. However, as an instrumental body subject to the legislation and regulations formulated in the political sphere, in this case by the Minister of Defence, there was little room for discretion. Nonetheless, although the law was binding with respect to the policy of the national commemorative bodies, a loophole did exist. As noted earlier, circumvention of the law was a prerogative of the Minister of Defence, stipulated in law. This loophole had been utilized to recognize the Hagana's dead as national martyrs or war heroes. It appears that a similar strategy was eventually adopted in the current case as well.

Eventually, due to the parents' rebukes, Shaul Avigur, assistant to the Minister of Defence,

ordered the head of the Commemoration Unit to respond to their wishes. These included an additional demand, made later, to "bury our sons' remains under the monument next to the bridge."[67] Thus, in 1955, a memorial was erected on the site of the incident. It was designed by Asher Hirem, the Unit's "house" architect, who carried out commissions fully financed by the Ministry of Defence exclusively for the Commemoration Unit. Before construction began, the Council for National Monuments transmitted the plans to the parents for their approval. But only in 1963, 17 years after their deaths, were the bodies of some of the fallen transferred from temporary graves in Haifa and interred at the monument's site. On 13 June 1968, the remains of the rest of the fallen were transferred to the monument from their original common grave, also located in Haifa.

On 17 June 1946, the morning following the Night of the Bridges, Lehi members set out to blow up the warehouses used by the Haifa railroad. This operation, like that of the Night of the Bridges, was part of a co-ordinated campaign to disrupt British transport capabilities. Lehi was given the task of blasting the workshops in order to halt rail transit, while the Hagana was given sabotage assignments of various bridges, including the Achziv bridge. The operation failed and nine Lehi fighters were killed; others were captured and sent to the Acre fortress. The men in the group were sentenced to death and the women to life imprisonment.

During the Acre rescue attempt in 1947 two of the prisoners who were participants in the Haifa raid were killed.[68] The only governmental body to identify with the parents' grief was the Municipality of Haifa. In June 1949, the acting chairman of Haifa's City Council expressed to Lehi leadership "my condolences on the anniversary of the deaths of the 11 fighters who fell in the attack on the railroad workshops. … "[69] Yet, despite the "timely" recognition of the event, only in 1970, on the 24th anniversary of their deaths, was a monument to the Lehi dead erected in Kiryat Ata (a suburb of Haifa) (see Chapter 5).

About 160 (75 per cent) of all the statues erected by official agencies to commemorate the War of Independence represented a patriotic landmark of the events that furthered the cause of national liberation. Each contained a description of the event and the names of those who fell. These official monuments also displayed the emblem of the contingent: the Palmach, Hagana, IDF, or the unit to which they belonged. Conspicuously absent were the names of the Underground groups, their fallen and the incidents during which they had lost their lives. Throughout the 1950s, commemoration of Etzel and Lehi dead was excluded from the agenda of official commemoration projects except for those independently-funded initiatives produced largely at the municipal level. But even these local undertakings agitated the Labour elite.

The Underground's appropriation of monumental space

In face of the State's success in perpetuating Mapai hegemony through the messages transmitted by commemorative monuments and place names, Shelach began a similar set of projects. Among these was construction of the David Raziel Museum of the Jewish Underground, which would "present the underground's battle in its entirety, and will be permanently open to the public." These plans rankled the bureaucratic and Defence Ministry elite. For support, Shelach turned to the mayors of various cities and requested that they erect monuments and other municipal markers in remembrance of Etzel dead and operations. Thus, the Mayor of Jerusalem received a request in September 1957 to erect a monument to the memory of two local heroes, Moshe Barazani (Lehi) and Meir Feinstein (Etzel), who had blown themselves up while captives in the Jerusalem prison rather than await the gallows. It claimed that a memorial site could function as

an educational attraction for the many young people, new immigrants, and tourists coming to Jerusalem.[70]

Jerusalem, where many soldiers and civilians had been killed during the War of Independence, was one of the cities willing to take on the obligation to commemorate the Underground's fallen. Because this was a local initiative, the municipality did not turn to the central government for guidance. The first monument was erected in 1949; later, another honoured the 18 Etzel fighters who fell in the liberation of Dir Yassin.

Whether the product of state or private initiatives, an object's placement within the landscape or any other public space allows for its images, symbols and messages, as permanent objects, to be imprinted within collective memory. It is therefore quite understandable why these activities worried the political elite controlling the central government. The Commander of the Jerusalem District sent a secret and personal letter to the Commander of the Central Region, in which he wrote:

Shelach, founded by Etzel, is placing monuments … in various places. … These monuments may, in the distant future, create the impression that the sites were conquered by the same group that placed them there. … I believe that we should pass a law that will regulate permission to erect a monument, and the form it will take … to prevent the historical distortion of the campaign to establish the State of Israel. Please bring this issue to the attention of the Ministry of Defence.[71]

The letter was transmitted to the head of the IDF's Personnel Division and passed on to Pinchas Sapir, the Director General of the Ministry of Defence. On 9 January 1950, Sapir wrote to Joseph Dekel of the Commemoration Unit. Fear of the same "historical distortion" continued to irk Mapai policy makers, who kept track of these so-called "biased" initiatives. Nevertheless, contrary to Ben Gurion's position, Sapir clearly instructed Dekel that he was "to be broad-minded regarding commemoration of Etzel and Lehi dead."[72]

Among the monuments that Shelach was to erect (such as those to the Wedgwood and Margolin Units at Nordia and to the 14 casualties at Kfar Aviel), the "Memorial to the Conquerors of Dir Yassin" was particularly important because the highly charged operation had been co-ordinated with State institutions and its status had been confirmed by the courts (see Chapter 5, below). The decision to allocate land for construction of an obelisk in memory of the 18 Etzel dead killed during the operation was made in the Jerusalem Municipal Planning Subcommittee in response to Shelach's request. The monument was to be raised on the main road to the village.[73] Although approval was obtained in principle, the plans were never realized.

Another project involved the renovation of the Acre Fortress. The break-in conducted by Etzel and Lehi forces, which t succeeded in freeing many of the captives held by the British, was to become part of the heritage of the two Underground organizations. In order to alter the site's function, more than municipal consent was required because to the astonishment and anger of the families of those hanged there and of Etzel and Lehi veterans, the State had converted the fortress into a mental hospital run by the Ministry of Health. Shelach charged that

it would have been more fitting to convert the Acre Fortress, whose walls had witnessed the unfolding of the epic of Jewish heroism ranging from the arrest of Zeev Jabotinsky to the armed entry of his disciples and their submission to the hangman's noose, into a national museum. The government, stubbornly continuing its policy of distortion and concealment, did not see it appropriate to respond to Shelach's petition to transform the fortress to a monument to Jewish heroism.[74]

Shelach's efforts, however, did bear some fruit. The execution chamber was eventually converted into a room for solitude and communion with the dead, a commemorative site for Etzel and Lehi rituals.

We managed to save only the most hallowed space in the fortress – the execution chamber – which was kept in its original state. Commemorative plaques dedicated to each of the executed dead were place round the room, including one in the room where the father of the Jewish insurrection – Zeev Jabotinsky – had been jailed.[75]

In effect, two rooms were preserved. Herut fully understood the State's disdain for the fortress's history. It was meant to scorn the Underground's role in the national narrative.

As part of the Etzel and Lehi counter-commemoration, the "Martyrs' Shrine" became a major site, a pantheon to their heroes' valour. These initiatives would parallel the State's programme to erect a "Heroes Shrine."[76] Shelach organized a special ceremony for the opening "Memorial to the Executed in Acre" on 14 October 1954, which was attended by the families of the fallen, Herut officials, surviving members of Nili, and Etzel and Lehi veterans.

The site was chosen to commemorate the dead beginning with those belonging to Nili, which had been incorporated into Shelach's mythology as the Underground's historical predecessors.[77] R. Kotlovitch, Shelach's chairman stated: "Anyone interested in erasing the most glorious act of heroism of our people, will fail in his schemes."[78] Rivka Aaronsohn, Sara Aaronsohn's sister, was escorted by Herut MK Haim Landau, who represented Etzel's commander, and Yaakov Banai, a member of the Lehi command; she was invited to light a memorial candle. In a letter to the prisoner of Zion, Rabbi Arieh Levin, cites the exploits of the executed as models for emulation. Also present was Zvi Dresner (his brother had been executed by the British), the spokesman for the bereaved families, who bemoaned the fact that so many in the country were ready to repudiate the fallen's contributions. He used this occasion to recite daily acts that illustrated how the assembled group had been prohibited from entering elite circles. This estrangement was enacted in ordinary events. He related how a passer-by had torn down the signboard on Olei HaGardom Street (named for the Acre dead) in Tel Aviv. Dresner expressed hope that those commemorated at the site would find their place in Israel's collective memory not simply as heroes associated with a specific group but as "heroes of the entire nation," that is, as part of official collective memory.[79] Menachem Begin, the leader of Herut, spoke as well, noting that the Acre site was sacred, like others that had been sanctified in the name of the new civil religion: "When coming hither, please remove your shoes because you are standing on hallowed ground."[80]

Just how weighty political interests were in the determination of commemoration policies can be learned from a letter written by a Defence Ministry official, A. Gilad, in response to the announcement about a proposed celebration of the "Anniversary of IDF Martyrs and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier". With respect to the construction of the Tomb, Gilad pithily noted that "the most important element affecting choice of the site is the political factor" and he continued: "The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier must be located in the nation's capital."[81] In this case, however, the political considerations referred to were international in nature: in addition to its local purposes, the Tomb was meant to reinforce Jerusalem's position as Israel's capital. However, as we shall see, many domestic and often narrow considerations played an important role in commemoration policy throughout Israel's history.

Altalena – *Herut's symbolic anchor*

The efforts of the Underground in bringing commemoration of the victims of the *Altalena* into the national consensus embrace most facets of the struggle for political hegemony in public space. Just how acrimonious the conflict became over the Underground's efforts to commemorate its fallen in physical space is demonstrated by Ben Gurion's treatment of the remnants of this vessel. If the wreck had been left on the Tel Aviv shore, its scorched metal frame, betraying hues of burnt iron and rust, could have transmitted powerful messages. At each anniversary of the ship's being shelled, a small group might have gathered at the site to recollect where their colleagues had stood on its deck or fallen wounded on the sand, and listened to a recording of radio transmissions from that eventful night. These gatherings could have become mass events, thick with meaning, especially if conducted in the midst of electoral campaigns. The beached hulk's image might have been movingly employed to differentiate "them" from "us," to remind the audience of the Underground's vision and of its betrayal by Labour, and of the injustices done. A political reporter for *Herut*, reflecting back to the incident, wrote that "the Altalena's burnt skeleton rests on the Tel Aviv shore as a monument symbolising the civil war fought by the Jews in all its ugliness, an eternal mark of Cain" (Nakdimon 1978: 465).

Such a scenario may intimate why, on 5 July 1949, 13 months after the ship had been set ablaze in the course of the IDF's attack on the vessel, Ben Gurion, as Minister of Defence, ordered its removal and oversaw its dismantling. Ben Gurion's signing of the order was based on the Mandate's *Emergency Measures (1945) and Ordinance: Government and Due Process* (1948):

As Minister of Defence, I hereby order that the vessel known as the "Altalena" … be confiscated by the Government of Israel due to its use as a site for criminal activities … [it] will be hauled from the water and dismantled as directed by the Commander of the Israeli Navy.[82]

Seen from the perspective of history, the narrative of its removal from the seabed is tragi-comic, in direct proportion to the vessel's potential as the consummate memorial to Etzel and Lehi dead. The removal was begun, however, two weeks before the order was signed, as indicated by a message addressed to the Commander of the Navy: "Dismantle the remnants of the Altalena that has run aground in Tel Aviv. The operation is to be completed with dispatch." It was even given a name: "Operation: The Altalena Razing."[83]

Figure 3.1 Private memory: Herut's Memorial Ceremony commemorating one year to the *Altalena*'s bombing casualties – June 1, 1949 (Israel National Press Division Archive)

Figure 3.2 Private memory: Herut's Memorial Ceremony commemorating one year to the *Altalena*'s bombing casualties – June 1, 1949 (Israel National Press Division Archive)

Figure 3.3 The *Altelana* battleship – part of the Tel Aviv beach, 1949 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Removing or, perhaps more appropriately from Labour's point of view, making the *Altalena* vanish, proved to be a Sisyphean task. At first, Navy personnel tried to drag the ship from the shoals by means of rollers, floats, bulldozers, and cables. When these failed, they were assisted by navy vessels, which also proved ineffective. The Ministry then turned to a private company, *Ogen*, one of Solel Boneh's[84] daughter companies, again in vain. Still later, expert consultants from the US were invited to help complete the removal. The final report prepared by the Ministry of Defence notes that the operation was so unprecedented in its complexity that it provided the infant Navy with an "opportunity for intensive training in an important profession": salvaging. In the end, efforts to raze, remove and demolish the *Altalena* failed. Instead, the ship was sunk in location. It would take 50 years before the *Altalena*'s survivors could organize a commemoration service at the site, even in the absence of a visible physical monument.

The removal of the *Altalena* embodies the embryo of Israel's statist commemoration project, a project that expressed the political elite's aversion to incorporation of the conflict against the British espoused by the Underground as part of the evolving collective memory. More poignant examples of this reluctance are the monuments dedicated to the fallen in other actions against the British, such as those near Kibbutz Givat Chaim and the "Night of the Bridges." These monuments, erected early in Israel's history, describe the dead as falling in action after Palestine had been closed to immigration in the years immediately following the Holocaust. The British are not mentioned by name. It is therefore interesting to discover that prior to Independence and the formation of an official commemoration policy, monuments commemorating the Yishuv's battle against the British *can* be found.

In January 1956, after the Ministry of Defence continued to refuse to place headstones at the graves of the *Altalena* dead, Shelach's Director, B. Katznellenbogen notified the Commemoration Unit that

due to the lack of response to our request regarding placement of headstones at the graves of the casualties from the Altalena munitions carrier, we wish to inform you that we have ordered 16 headstones, which we will place in the military portion of the Nachlat Yitzhak cemetery.[85]

M. Orbach, Dekel's successor, hastened to warn Shelach that "no seal is to be incised on the

headstones, and that the place of their deaths is to be noted as 'died on the Altalena munitions carrier'."[86] This conclusion is supported by an internal memorandum dated May 1956 and classified as "top secret." The memorandum contains a summary of a meeting held with the Minister of Defence, on 24 May 1956: "The Ministry of Defence will not provide headstones for the graves of Altalena dead and orders that they be interred outside the military portion of the Nachlat Yitzhak cemetery."[87]

On 24 May 1956, the eighth anniversary of the attack on the *Altalena*, the unveiling of the headstones at the graves of the 16 *Altalena* fallen took place at the Nachlat Yitzhak cemetery. No representatives of any State institutions attended. At this cemetery, next to the graves of Hagana fallen, Shelach's Department for the Underground's Martyrs observed that

the graves of Altalena martyrs lying in the military portion received no military seal. They appear to find it difficult to place a military seal on the grave of Avraham Stavksy and the others whom they murdered … If they do not put headstones on the graves of the Altalena martyrs we will do so against their will. … [88]

A letter from a mother whose son fell in the *Altalena* incident also illustrates that exclusion arose when local commemoration was implemented. In Hadera, a commemorative plaque was installed "with the names of all the dead – Hadera's sons – who had fallen for the sake of the homeland." Yet, despite declared intentions of listing the names "without reference to their organisational affiliation," wrote Miriam Kellner, "my late son's name was not noted." Kellner's son had died during the Altalena incident.

My son Dov served his country as part of Etzel and was martyred for its [i.e., Israel's] sake on the Altalena armaments vessel. I find no justification in discriminating against his memory. I am thoroughly shocked by unreasoning hatred, especially because [Yad Labanim] has subscribed to this virulent discrimination between citizens. … I strongly request that the bias be corrected and that my son's name be added to the list of Hadera's heroes.[89]

Naming settlements and streets

Although Government policy did not wish to extol those who fell fighting the British, it did make exceptions. Kibbutz Yechiam was named after Yechiam Weitz, the commander of the above-mentioned Achziv operation. A bereaved mother wrote to Ben Gurion and to Yigael Yadin, the Chief of the General Staff, expressing her distress at the neglect of the others who had fallen together with Weitz. The specific appeal was directed towards the placement of a commemorative obelisk next to the bridge which "will serve as our only remaining link to our lost sons … and to change the name of *Kibbutz Gesher Haziv*… so that its name will recall *all* those who fell there. …" (Shamir 1996: 61) The parents' active involvement did not end there. On 29 January 1951, a parent addressed a letter to a major newspaper. It was never published. The letter expressed the parent's objections to a similar act: the naming of a forest, again after Yechiam Weitz, while ignoring his fellow soldiers:

> Has not severe pain been caused to the other families when only one of the 14 [martyrs] has been commemorated? … A settlement has been established, called Yechiam. Doesn't the fact that a forest has also been named after Yechiam, without mention of the other boys who fell, increase the hurt felt by the other parents. … ?
>
> (Shamir 1989: 61)

This letter came into the hands of Yechiam's father, Joseph Weitz, then Director of the Jewish National Fund's (*Keren Kayemet LeYisrael*) Settlement Department, another organization that played an important part in the commemoration project thanks to the forest and recreation areas it contributed to this effort. The elder Weitz attached himself to the parents' cause and, taking advantage of his unique position within the state's institutional structure, expedited several commemorative projects.

The conduct of commemoration with respect to the Underground movement emphasizes the selectivity in the elite's treatment of fallen soldiers even when their operations were conducted within a shared and mutually agreed upon framework. In order to justify the erasing of any hint of Etzel and Lehi actions against the British from the nation's collective memory, the illusion had to be created that the Hagana also suffered from legal stipulations. Hence the Council for National Monuments was formally prevented from responding to the requests of the bereaved parents of Hagana dead. However, in practice, as we have also seen, "an order was immediately given to deal with the issue" (Shamir 1989: 60). Every detail of the treatment of the Achziv Bridge commemoration and of similar operations executed by units identified with the Labour movement, indicate that this group of "Hagana" parents spoke with a potent political voice. The State's commemorative organs recognized that voice and responded to it by granting them the opportunity to participate in the formulation of Israel's commemoration policy.

The political behaviour of the families and survivors of the workshop operation did not resemble those of their peers in the other camp. They addressed no claims to the government, which was still at the height of its campaign of delegitimation and persecution of the Underground. In effect, it appears, they never expected the Yishuv to permit them to engage in any commemorative or related activity whatsoever, and certainly not to financially support any such acts.[90] For this reason, no correspondence regarding such initiatives is to be found. Positive action to commemorate all the fallen in the "Workshop Operation" only commenced twenty years later. On the 8 November 1966, Lehi's Commemorative Unit asked the head of the local council of Kiryat Ata, to erect a monument within the boundaries of the municipality. Unlike the monument to the fallen at the Haziv bridge, the Kiryat Ata memorial bears no IDF insignia.[91]

The symbolic and political significance of efforts to exert control over the landscape did not escape the ken of the Underground. Many regarded government prohibitions in this field as a personal invasion of a private right. The government Names Committee was subjected to continuous attack on this account. During a Knesset debate over the Names Committee's performance, Herut Knesset member Esther Raziel-Naor argued that

people living in villages established on public land and desirous of calling their settlement after a person dear to them are denied this elementary option. Someone may appear who thinks that he has the right to intervene and tell them how to name their sons and daughters.

Raziel-Naor cited instances in which the Names Committee had refused to let communities founded by Etzel and Lehi veterans call themselves as they wished. For instance, residents of a village in the Jerusalem Corridor were denied the right to call themselves "Ramat Shimon" after Shimon Amrani, killed in the attack on the Acre garrison. Instead, the Committee allotted them the name "Bar Giora," after an early twentieth-century defensive organization. Another community was "Nachlat Shlomo," a village in the Upper Galilee. Its residents wished to name themselves after Shlomo Bar Yosef, who was hanged by the British, but the Names Committee charged that they call the village "Hosen" (stalwartness). Yet another case was that of "Ramat Raziel," a community resting in the Judean Hills, originally named after Etzel's first commander, David Raziel. This name as well was denied approval; the name "Kasalon," resembling the name

of the Arab village "Kasale" that once existed in the area, was given instead.[92]

Residents of these communities refused to accept the Committee's decisions. They continued to call themselves by the names of their choice (e.g., Ramat Raziel, Kfar Aviel, Nachlat Shlomo, Ramat Shlomo) and returned letters to the Postal Service that were addressed to the settlement names given by the Committee. In a number of instances the Committee overturned its own decisions and allowed residents the freedom they wished. Herut Knesset members demanded that the authority to determine settlement names be removed from the Prime Minister's – that is, Ben Gurion's – office and transferred to the Knesset's Internal Affairs Committee, where they could participate in the debates. There, they believed, Ben Gurion's control over their daily lives could be somewhat attenuated.[93]

Because of its paltry ability to influence national commemoration policy, Shelach chose to direct its efforts to the municipal level. Yet even here success was minimal because the majority of local governments were controlled by Mapai. Only in Gush Dan (Israel's central region), where the liberal camp controlled a number of local councils, were its achievements noteworthy. A salient example was Tel Aviv. As early as November 1948, Shelach had demanded that Jaffa's streets be named after its hero-liberators. Etzel's central publication related that "the blood of 35 Etzel fighters and infiltrators who fell in the [Arab] defence of Jaffa during Passover 1948 … have been ignored by the authorities, who chose to name the streets with insensitive, inarticulate numbers."[94]

Just prior to Independence Day, 1950, the Municipality of Tel Aviv announced plans to name or rename 22 streets and roundabouts in honour of the War of Independence. Only one name was associated with Etzel, *Conqueror's Square*, a reference to their occupation of Jaffa and an implied adoption of Etzel's ideological lexicon which stressed offensive military action. To them it implied that the Tel Aviv Municipality, ruled by the liberal camp, had adopted Etzel's version of the Jaffa campaign. In the end, the word "conquerors' was used for a street rather than for the area's main public square.

In Haifa, where the Hagana's victorious campaign involved Etzel's somewhat marginal participation, there was a similar effort to memorialize history through street names. The city's new Mayor, Abba Hushi, immediately upon his election in 1951, convened a special committee on the subject. His stated purpose was to Hebraize Haifa's street names. To this end, he turned to the Haifa branch of the Hagana Veterans Association in April of that year, and requested that it prepare a list of names that would commemorate important sites in the campaign for the city's independence. The list came to include 41 names, all of them Hagana units and battles.[95]

The process repeated itself throughout the country. In response, the director of Shelach, BenZion Katznellenbogen, when writing to Herut officials, commented:

I would like to draw your attention to the paucity of our cities' streets that carry the names of Etzel and Lehi operations or of the Underground's heroes. … There is no need to refer to the significant educational value of commemoration of the feats committed by the underground's heroes for the younger generation and new immigrants. … With the renaming of the streets in Tel Aviv's new neighbourhoods, but especially of Jaffa's streets, which are numbered, this urgent problem has again arisen on the [public] agenda. …[96]

In the flurry of commemorative activity, Shelach turned to Tel Aviv's mayor Rokach with the suggestion of erecting a monument to Jaffa's liberators opposite the local mosque, *Hasan-Bek*. Shelach even expressed willingness to finance the project. The proposal was rejected by Rokach, who explained his refusal in statist terms: "Commemoration cannot be divided according to

organisational affiliation; it must be universal in character."[97]

Shelach had been forced to wait for municipal initiatives in attempting to influence policy. In April 1951, the mayor of Tel Aviv had decided to erect three monuments to the memory of fallen from the War of Independence. One monument was universal in nature. Dedicated to all the residents of Tel Aviv who had died during the War, it was to be constructed on Malchai Yisrael Square, the future site of the municipality's main building. Another monument was to be erected at the former Tel Aviv–Jaffa city limits, in memory of the dead who had fallen in the Jaffa campaign. A third would be placed in Independence Park on the Tel Aviv seashore, in homage to the pilots killed while defending the city. The monument to the memory of the Jaffa dead proposed by Michael Karo would eventually be erected in what was then called "Liberators' Park." The monument's facade displayed the symbols of the Hagana and Etzel next to that of the Municipality of Tel Aviv (Azaryahu 1993: 116). It's cornerstone would be laid on Remembrance Day, 1957.

Shelach remained persistent in its goal of conveying the message of Etzel's responsibility for the success of the Jaffa campaign into the collective consciousness. In March 1963, on the eve of Israel's fifteenth Independence Day, a committee was formed to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the liberation of Jaffa. The committee organized a string of observances including the unveiling of the commemorative plaques that were placed in the proximity of the areas where the soldiers fell in Jaffa. Etzel veterans placed a commemorative plaque on the Clock Tower in Jaffa. The plaque's text told their own version of the campaign and emphasized their responsibility for the city's surrender. Their place in the national narrative was thereby established within the physical environment of Tel Aviv: "Eternal glory to Etzel soldiers, the nation's heroes and liberators, who fell in the historic battle for the liberation of Jaffa. Victory was won with their blood. … " Six similar brass plaques were mounted at sites where Etzel fighters had been killed. As opposed to the monument in Liberators' Park, these plaques retained their strict association with the Underground organization and remained devoid of any official municipal seal.

A more prominent commemorative initiative, also promoted by Shelach, was the placing of a reproduction of the mortar used to shell Jaffa during the first four days of the operation at the head of Lutece Street in Jaffa.[98] It was rejected by the municipality. Another rejected request involved broadcasting the ceremonies dedicating the commemorative plaques over national radio, during which eyewitness reports would be given. The official reason for the denial was that the broadcast schedule had already been finalized.[99]

Etzel's commemoration efforts throughout 1963 can be understood against the Municipality's decision, confirmed by the City Council, to rename Jaffa's Clock Square as "Hagana Square" during the Jaffa independence celebrations. Members of the Etzel Veterans Association convened a press conference and expressed the insult they felt as a result of the decision because, in their view, the initiative behind the Jaffa assault was strictly their own. Yitzhak Livni, Chairman of the Association and a former Etzel operations officer, decried the decision as "an attempt to pervert history, and the public's views, especially among those who have not yet touched Israel's shores." Shmuel Tamir sent a letter on behalf of the Herut faction of the City Council to Tel Aviv's mayor, Mordechai Namir, threatening to petition the High Court of Justice to nullify the decision. In response to the threatened attempts by Etzel's bereaved families to disrupt the renaming ceremony, the municipality reversed its decision and postponed the celebrations. The renaming ceremony itself was cancelled.[100]

In the end, Etzel activists succeeded in preventing the change in the Clock Tower's name, and

they also managed to place a commemorative plaque on the structure itself. A pamphlet issued by Shelach in connection with the plaque's dedication described Etzel's version of the events as follows:

And what would have happened had we waited, as the Hagana demanded, until 15 May, the date slated for the evacuation of British forces? … The Hagana attempted to overtake Tel Arish but failed, to conquer Abu Kabir but failed. … A miracle was about to visit our people once more. Our timely attack on Jaffa, at the last moment, not only saved Tel Aviv, … it saved the entire front. … But we paid a heavy price for the conquest of Jaffa, 38 officers and men. … The price might have been higher.[101]

On that same day in 1963, Shelach held its own official ceremony in Jaffa. This ceremony would become a ritual among members of Herut.

Etzel's experience in Ramat Gan was different from that in Tel Aviv. There, attempts to plant a reminder of the Underground's contribution to independence within the urban space went more smoothly. A case in point is the monument in memory of Dov Gruner and the three Etzel members killed during the attack on the British police station located in Ramat Gan. (The wounded Gruner was arrested and eventually hanged.) With the consent of the Ramat Gan municipality, the statue was erected in 1954 opposite the very same station-house attacked by Etzel forces in 1946, now the home of the local police. The statue, sculpted by Hannah Orloff and cast in Paris in 1953, depicts an aged lion struggling with a cub. The lion motif was borrowed from the statue of the lion erected at Tel Hai. In the statue, the cub represents the Lion of Judah who does battle against the aging British lion. The larger British lion likewise represents the power of the British police, attacked by the cub, Etzel, in 1946. Shelach described the statue's connotations in the accompanying brochure: “The monument … will visually demonstrate the war of a minority against the majority, a war of the type waged by the Underground against the foreign enslaver. … ” The inscription on the statue reads as follows: “A monument to the soldiers belonging to the National Military Organisation: Dov Gruner, hanged by the British, and three others who fell in the attack on the British police station on 25 April 1946.” Another inscription, also incised on the statue's brick foundations, reads: “Nili, the glory of Israel will not lie nor repent (First Samuel 15, 29), the first national underground resistance for independence. [sic]” This reference to Nili confirmed that organzation's place in the historical ethos of the Underground. A similar message was associated with the monument to the Ten Martyrs (Nili, Etzel and Lehi), erected by the Rishon LeTziyyon municipality in 1955. Contrary to its official status, the latter project was, in effect, a private initiative: the town's Mayor, Eitan Belkind, was the brother of Naaman Belkind, one of the Nili fallen.

Compared to the scope of official commemoration on the national level, these successes were highly local and negligible. As could be expected, when central and local bodies approached the subject of commemoration, they naturally searched the official records for the names of those killed while serving with Etzel or Lehi; none were to be found. Shelach received numerous letters from parents who had found that the names of their sons were missing from the public monuments, even when they had participated in battles fought against the Arabs.

Another case occurred in Ramla. In a letter dated 30 March 1950 addressed to the mayor, regarding the first request made by the Underground to allocate a memorial in memory of their fallen in that town, Shelach's Department for the Underground's martyrs wrote:

We respectfully turn to you once again in the matter of placing a commemorative plaque in honour of the Etzel dead and missing in action who fell. … The bereaved families frequently request answers from us about the status of the request yet there is nothing we can relay.[102]

Their request was to be fulfilled in 1992, 22 years later, in the form of a State memorial to all Etzel dead.

Israel's landscape was thus transformed into an arena for the play of political and social dynamics, an arena for the distribution of images and the marking of political understandings having long-term implications for the status of the governing elites and parliamentary movements. The organizations founded by the state for the purpose of constructing Israel's landscape in all its manifestations – museums, memorials and military cemeteries – were utilized by Mapai to support its hegemonic status as the party responsible for Israel's Independence project and, consequently, the sole party worthy of public trust. Contrary to Shamir's conclusion that "the network of relationships woven by parents, friends, the Ministry of Defence and the IDF during the late 1950s and early 1960s reflects attempts to consolidate a policy of non-intervention"[103] in all aspects of commemoration, I would argue that these relationships displayed tightly orchestrated intervention. Shamir's focus on the identities of the organizations involved in commemoration policy, "public" and state organizations that were not formally affiliated with any political movement or party has led her to deduce "non-intervention" by the State or, alternatively, the ruling party. An altered perspective, one focusing on the outcomes of that policy, indicates assiduous exclusion from the landscape of any trace of events or the dead not associated with the Labour movement or Mapai.

In effect, appropriation of state commemoration allowed Mapai's leadership to place material symbols of its own partial "stories" about Israel's war for national independence within the landscape; complementary narratives were left aside. Exclusion of Etzel and Lehi dead induced Herut to adopt a parallel strategy. Its resolute attempts to penetrate the landscape, accompanied by production of a counter-culture, promoted the commemoration of fallen soldiers belonging to their own political strain exclusively. Organizations closely resembling their state equivalents managed the process. It so came to pass that each party's audience was exposed to a different narrative of the War's events, leading figures, and dead.

Ben Gurion's response to the public's apathy regarding commemoration was "cultural engineering," manifested in legislation; he placed little trust in stygian emotions or mass-initiated acts. By fixing celebration of Remembrance Day in a series of commemorative rituals stipulated or supported by law, he hoped to induce the requisite political behaviour: massive participation and social recognition of Labour's legitimacy, rooted in the immense price paid by bereaved families. This motive was reflected in the statement made on 18 June 1958 by Shmuel Dayan (MK, Labour), himself a bereaved father, when he raised Proposal 609, *Law: Remembrance Day in Honour of the Martyrs of the War of Independence* on his party's behalf:

I propose, in the name of the Public Council for Commemoration, to legislate the law legalising observance of Remembrance Day in honour of War of Independence dead. It is true that we already instituted a memorial day, but its observance is haphazard, piecemeal, and voluntary. In some villages, loved ones are honoured by visits to the cemeteries where they are buried, but they are few in number. We should note that thousands of fathers, mothers, and orphans do not wait for Remembrance Day to honour their dear ones, they do so nightly and daily. And they are very much aggrieved. But in the cities, where the majority lives, Remembrance Day is not observed, especially in the cafes and theatres, where life goes merrily on as if nothing had happened. For this reason, we propose a law requiring public places of entertainment to be closed on Remembrance Day eve, so that during at least one day a year, everyone will be able to pay their respects to their war heroes. Therefore, we propose that … the law will be binding on the entire population.[104]

These events articulate how Mapai managed its campaign of symbolic politics. Neither economic benefits nor any of the other rights awarded to bereaved families were involved. What was involved was a symbolic process conducted along channels of social communication. The official IDF seal incised on headstones was simply its tangible form. Contrary to a family's rights to benefits, such as tax deductions or financial assistance, issues that belong to the private sphere, a monument erected in full view at a public site – in this case, in military cemeteries – qualified the dead soldier for mention in the commemorative literature published by the Ministry of Defence. Commemorative literature is a highly effective vehicle for transmitting social and political messages to the masses. This effectiveness was reinforced through the official rituals and commemorative services held at the burial sites. Accordingly, the battle of Etzel and Lehi veterans waged for recognition of their dead was symbolic and political in the main. For this reason, even though the eligibility of the bereaved families of Dir Yassin dead and similar events for compensation and burial in a military cemetery were eventually recognized, the two sides continued a lengthy, often vituperative battle to realize their respective symbolic demands.

4 The language of sovereignty

Symbolic exclusion from popular culture, national heroes, martyrs and rituals

"Ben Gurion: The Champion of Israeli Sovereignty."

Rivka Guber[1]

"Spiritual sovereignty" comes before political sovereignty.

Menahem Begin[2]

One of the main instruments used in constructing the spirit of the times is language. Language, as a system of signs and symbols, produces and structures, as well as describes, the constituents of reality, especially political reality. When harnessed to social technologies of communication administered by an authoritarian regime, it induces "habits of thought" conducive to identity formation and uniformity of expression. It is thus an effective tool for distributing and inculcating political consciousness and collective memory. Citizens are encouraged to speak, write and act out the language. As Marcuse notes, concept becomes absorbed in words whose functional capacity, through the narrowing of meaning, excludes alternative modes of functioning. One of Mapai's central linguistic creations was the term "mamlachtiut", roughly translated as "statism", but bearing connotations of politically correct behaviour as well as imperative orientations of commitment to state and nation-building. Thus, for example, orientations promoting self-development or the prioritizing of alternative objects of loyalty were discredited as subtracting from the national effort. The employment of officially-instituted language defines public sites and processes. Language serves as the basic medium for expression and construction of a collective worldview, for the penetration of values and dominant cultural givens.

For its users, language is therefore a lens through which its speakers view and construct reality. In order to comprehend the lens and its contours, students of language attempt to expose the *interpretive package* at its core. This package includes assumptions and ideas that are mutually supportive; in tandem, they construct interpretations of the past and present. In general, fundamental statements and, in our case, political statements about various subjects encapsulate all the names and descriptive phrases used by individuals in the process of social discourse.

These statements produce while they reflect the conceptual frames anchored in social consensus. As the frames adopted and cultivated by language disseminate social and cultural narratives about reality, they become ingrained in individual consciousness.

Among other things, frames are distributed as a result of their authors' demands for a plethora of devices, for symbols that succinctly and parsimoniously transmit the essence of a society's interpretive packages: its metaphors (images that resemble the specific form of the perceived reality), representative events (stories that confirm the package's perspective), slogans (concise statements or sayings that express the frame), images and reiterated phrases (events frequently mentioned by key figures). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argue that the dissemination of these frames through language is as vital a practice as is their construction. Penetration of the frames into the media, textbooks and state rituals is a condition for the transformation of these linguistic devices into daily speech; as such, the frames transform political interpretations of reality into the social consensus.

It is important to understand that these frames are, employing Marcuse's terminology, one-dimensional; that is, their assertive formulations put forth *the* history, *the* rationale, *the* spirit of the times, occluding alternative interpretations and meanings of reality. This chapter deals with one segment of Israel's cultural production, the *language of sovereignty*, that is, the efforts of a political party – Mapai – to impose a dominant system of symbols and thereby identify itself with the national sovereignty project. Political interpretive packages, dressed in the names of historical events, annual observances whose meanings were nested in the Hebrew calendar and designed to uphold and exalt warriors and fallen heroes were incorporated into the dominant culture. In the process, those dead who were clearly associated with the ruling political elite acquired a standing that awarded them elevated social status and intensified societal recognition of their deeds. These ideas or themes may have been expressed in a concrete idiom, such as the monuments placed within the Israeli landscape (see previous chapter) or literature. For the most part, they remained on the level of language, in a system of phrases, disseminated and inculcated within the national consciousness through the premeditated choice of the dates with which they were associated. Events and rituals thereby acquired unequivocal political significance. This was accomplished while expressly ignoring or avoiding use of any reference to items such as dates or locations that might award recognition to competing political camps irrespective of their contribution to the national independence project at the heart of the political competition.

The main practice explored in this chapter is that of political labelling. Labelling and its outcomes became part of daily life and the culture disseminated. Dissemination is a tool for the transformation of the subjective and equivocal to the objective and taken-for-granted. Regarding national politics, some scholars have argued that dissemination of labels is the requisite strategy for establishment of a civil religion as these labels encompass all the symbolic social behaviours initiated by the state in the creation of its doctrine. The purpose of civil religion, as a competitor to church religion, is to disseminate rituals, symbols, and nationalist interpretations among the populace by means of secular rites; it thereby "acquires' an aura of holiness. In his research, Azaryahu, for example, delves into what he terms "state rituals", the ceremonies and other practices involved with observance of memorial days (Azaryahu 1995). The scope of this chapter is broader: it will illustrate how more subtle practices, such as naming and labelling, the fruits of rational political manipulation, construct political perceptions of the past and translate those perceptions into present and future political behaviour.

The meaning of political hegemony rests on the ability of the hegemonic group to persuade the populace that only one story is true, that one narrative alone describes reality. This version is

perceived as consensual, as indisputable. Here, I deal with the less obvious aspects of the attempt to construct that same irrefutable version. In doing so I will reveal the political structure beneath the linguistic and behavioural institutions just mentioned, the same institutions through which political hegemony is constructed. With the aid of individuals who assess events, images, and contexts, these institutions are themselves constructed. In order to expose these processes, an in-depth content analysis will be conducted. Such an analysis will reveal the conceptual frames with which Israel's hegemonic political elite modified society's vision so as to produce the desired political socialization.

Specifically, the content analysis will reveal the political texts that underlie the labels, names, dates and national martyrs that became the substance of Israel's civil religion. The challenge lies in exposing the interpretative package etched within each text, including its mutually supporting assumptions and concepts. To the degree to which the various elements of the frame are internalized, they acquire precise political signatures. The frame, which is the vehicle for the covert dissemination of political ideologies, can be viewed as a narrative, in our case, the story of Israel's national sovereignty. This seemingly fortuitous narrative employs metaphors, verbal labels, illustrative examples, and prominent figures. Taken together, these elements inform the political interpretations and enhance the political power of the established elite.

The narrative deals with sovereignty: how it was achieved and by whom. The very use of the word sovereignty has political connotations that are still debated in the literature. Hence, this chapter will review several junctures in the construction of a language that informs the description and comprehension of the past as it relates to Israel's national sovereignty.

Naming the State's military organization

The fighting forces of the new state of Israel obtained their official name, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), on 25 May 1948. At a government meeting held the previous day, *Order No. 4: Israel Defence Forces (1948)*, based on Article 18 of the *Law: Government and the Judiciary*, was passed and signed by the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. The Hebrew name of the IDF, *Tzevah haHagana l'Yisrael*, captures the dual reference encapsulated in the appellation: “Hagana” means “defence” but the designation was also chosen to show clearly that the Jewish State's army was a successor organization to the underground Hagana, the armed wing of the Yishuv. This pre-State military force was under the political control of Mapai, the dominant party in the first Israeli government. Emerging as a people's army, the IDF became the personification of Israeli sovereignty, the banner organization of the fledgling state. Over the years, it strengthened its image as a consensual institution, untainted by partisan political rivalries and dissension. For decades, criticism of the IDF was considered intolerable within Israel's political culture (Lebel 2002). At the same time, through its generative association, the Hagana acquired the sacrosanctity to which it had aspired; the overlay of historiography demonstrated that the Hagana had responded to statist burdens in the pre-State era and steadfastly acted as the sole organization to express patriotic values and collective fealty.

The stipulation of continuity between Hagana and the IDF undergirded the seamless thread of succession that Mapai sought to project between its pre-State dominance and its post-State political leadership. As part of the above-cited law, Ben-Gurion wrote that “with the establishment of the State, the Hagana emerged from the underground to become a regular army.” He then went on to summarize Mapai's version of modern Jewish warfare in its various stages and organizational formats:

The Yishuv and the Jewish people are greatly indebted to the Hagana at each phase of its existence and development, from the isolated buds during the first days of its founding in Petach-Tikva, Rishon LeTziyyon, Gedera, Rosh Pina, Zikron Yaakov, and Metula; during the days of the Shomer, recruited amongst the pioneers of the Second Aliyah; the Jewish Battalions of World War I; the Tel Hai defenders, and the steady growth of the National Defence forces in the period between the two world wars; the creation of the *Notrim* (Guardians) during the 1936–38 riots; the founding of the Palmach and the infantry; the mass volunteering during World War II and the founding of the first Jewish Brigade, until the great struggle waged by the Hagana … between 30 November 1947 until 31 May 1948.

In Ben-Gurion's version of the story, repeated in *Order No. 4: Israel Defence Forces (1948)*, a document that became a widely distributed primary text, Nili, Etzel and Lehi were conspicuously missing. Prior to the founding of the IDF, Hagana efforts alone had led to Israel's attainment of sovereignty. According to Ben-Gurion:

Without the Hagana's experience, operational planning capacity and power of command, its loyalty and brave spirit, the Yishuv could not have met the test of the awful bloodshed that fell upon it during the first six months [following the UN resolution partitioning Palestine] nor could it have achieved statehood. … All those who served in the various Hagana divisions and branches until 1 June [1948] and who participated in the Defence of the Yishuv and in the war for Israel's freedom, as well as all those who now re-enlisted according to the terms of the new law will be members of the Israel Defence Forces.[3]

Throughout his political life, Ben-Gurion stressed this continuity of the concentrated overlap between the IDF and the Hagana. Etzel and Lehi veterans remained ambivalent for many years because of the title "Israel *Defence* [that is, Hagana] Forces' and the exclusion implied in the proper noun understanding of the IDF's name.

In the public statement (May 1948) announcing Etzel's dismantling and incorporation within the IDF, Begin's attempt to avoid direct use of the name "Tzvah Hagana l'Yisrael" (IDF) was quite conspicuous. The phrase he preferred was "the unified army":

With the creation of the Jewish military force, Etzel's fighting units are prepared to join the ranks of the unified army. Our battalions, its war-tested commanders and units, will be at the service of the general command in the fulfilment of their duty during the nation's struggle.[4]

Etzel veterans tended to use the term "Israel's army," as did the daily newspapers, *Herut* and *Haboker*, which represented the entire liberal camp and not exclusively Herut.[5]

In Begin's view, Etzel, too, had been established as an army in the traditional sense; hence, its inclusion in the newly-established IDF was comparable to that of the Hagana. But Begin essentially derided the notion of a standing defensive armed force for the State. He preferred a dynamic rather than a static appellation and associated defensive military postures with something less than a full-scale military.

My basic assumption is that Etzel was not mobilised solely for defensive purposes … but as a [full-fledged] military force … An army of liberation is differentiated from a regular army primarily by the political function of the battle. … An army of liberation cannot and must not abstain from creative political ideas or from independent political operations whose purpose it is to obtain help, to intensify the fighting, and to hasten victory.[6]

To illustrate his point he added during the height of hostilities: "While the fighting in the Negev continues, Israel's army opens a new front in the Hebron hills."[7]

Hagana members, on the other hand, viewed the name "Israel Defence Force" as recognition

of the Hagana's superior contribution to the nation. Yaakov Riftin (MK, Mapai), in a Knesset debate on the *Casualties Law, 1954*, stated: "The army was established on steadfast and sure foundations; it is no accident that the name 'Israel Defence Forces' [was chosen] … nor that Herut has removed the word 'Defence' from the IDF's name."[8]Later, Zvi Shiloach (Mapai) would note the same Herut omission.[9] Abba Eban, by way of linguistic contrast, consistently referred to the "defending forces' ("hagana") whenever he mentioned the IDF.[10]

Ben-Gurion's Order, establishing the status of the Hagana as the incubator of the IDF, became engraved in Israel's collective consciousness. Although these language "wars" over military appellations had their roots in the opposing camps' ideological orientations regarding the defensive or offensive nature of national liberation, the performance speech act embodied in the executive Order no. 4 was exclusionary. Nevertheless, the dissident forces merged with the IDF and fought for their historical identity within the unified military framework.

Official celebrations – Defence Forces Day

The Hagana was honoured and projected in state memory in more ways than one. After Independence, Tel Hai Day (11 Adar in the Hebrew calendar), which had acquired special significance in the cultural ethos of the Yishuv, was set as Defence Forces Day (*Yom Hahagana*). Prior to statehood, this site had become a centre of contested commemoration in a struggle over symbolic identity. Both political camps attempted to appropriate the occasion of pioneer heroic defence into their historic mythos. In 1949, the date became identified primarily with the Hagana. A military parade was organized with the Chief of the General Staff issuing a special Order of the Day:

Today, we will review all the Defence forces and units from the past to the present: the *Mishmar*, the Jewish regiments, the Field Command, the Palmach, the Notrim, the Jewish Brigade that fought with the British, the fighters behind enemy lines, the soldiers and sailors who aided the illegal immigrants and the [weapons] smugglers – a huge assembly that paved the way for the Israel Defence Forces. … [11]

This seemingly inclusive list clearly differentiated between the Labour-associated pre-State fighting forces and Etzel Lehi, and Nili, which were excluded. From that day forward, the pilgrimage to Tel Hai, which had always been organized and identified with the incipient state, became dominated by symbolic rituals whose participants were identified exclusively with the Hagana. At the 1951 ceremony, the Minister of Education and Culture and the representative of the Hagana Veterans Association each addressed the gathering. The myth of Tel Hai gradually lost its salience and was superseded by Remembrance Day, observed on another calendar date. This official memorial day was set aside to mark the bravery of the post-Independence IDF. Tel Hai Day and its connotations, because of the symbolic content it contained for the Hagana and the political Left, continued to be observed, but on a lower key. In 1953, it was the Histadrut – and not the government – that financed the site's refurbishment.[12] Commemoration of Tel Hai Day gradually faded into desuetude.

Celebration of the founding of the Hagana Veterans Association

Authorized celebrations were not the only events that became unequivocally linked with the Hagana. What could be considered private events organized by Hagana veterans also received state sanction and acquired the aura of "pseudo-official" events because they were patronized by

members of the political and military elite – ministers, generals and, of course, prime ministers – who became permanent fixtures as guests and speakers. This custom began at the founding convention of the Hagana Veterans Association, held on the morning of a day infused with symbolic meaning – 15 May 1949 – the date Israel was accepted as a member of the United Nations. The Association felt as if international recognition of the young state's existence was the fruit of only one group's labour, namely, their own. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion referred to the event and its connection with Mapai in his address at the convention:

We have been privileged in holding this meeting of the Hagana Veterans Association on the very day that our nation's independence has been conclusively recognized by humanity's supreme authority, the United Nations. … I believe that we would not be exaggerating were we to say that it is to the honour of our defensive, fighting forces, which were born as the Hagana … and matured into the Israel Defence Forces.[13]

Ben-Gurion continued in this vein and concluded by stating that the IDF was "the Hagana's legitimate offspring."[14]

The symbolic identification of the Hagana with the IDF materialized in the decorations placed on the rostrum. Next to the national flag hung pictures of Herzl, Trumpeldor and Golomb. Two organizations – Hashomer (led by Trumpeldor) and the Hagana (led by Golomb) – were presented as pioneers in the efforts for rebirth as foreseen by the nation's prophet (Herzl). Ziporah Zayd, widow of one of the Shomer's founders, Alexander Zayd, placed the first revolver used by the group on the podium.[15] The list of invitees also reflected the three groups.

The Hagana Veterans Association set for itself the goal of influencing the country's cultural, educational and communications arenas so as to perpetuate the status of the Hagana as the foremost armed contingent to participate in the national independence project. The political leadership supported this goal and its wide reach. At this first convention, educational and cultural programmes were presented to the audience, all of whom, as stated, had received political approval. As if to confirm the organization's aims, Nahum Ziv-Av, a Hagana district commander, and an Association founder, noted that the organization was to operate "in co-operation with military institutions and the Ministry of Defence."[16]

Another participant, Yaakov Dori, the Chief of the General Staff, firmly stated that in his view, "the values at the core of the Hagana … should represent the moral and spiritual foundations of the IDF."[17] Dori's words effectively summoned the Hagana Veterans Association to act as an instrument of normative and ideological influence on IDF soldiers. The response to this invitation was a plethora of initiatives and intense Association involvement in the preparation of IDF educational programmes that was to last for many years. The Minister of Education as well gave his blessings to the transformation of this group into an instrument for influencing the historical perspective of the nation's youth.

Another message which later would be widely distributed was delivered by Shaul Avigur, one of Ben-Gurion's most trusted friends and advisors. He had been responsible for the Hagana's procurement programme. Avigur stressed Hagana's contribution to the unification of the Yishuv:

Prior to establishment of the State, the Hagana was the main bond forging the disparate factions of Yishuv society into a whole. More than any other tie, and more than any other framework … the Hagana unified people from every class, party and individual loyalty.[18]

A precedent was set that night. Hagana ceremonies were made part of state ritual, with the heads of all major state institutions, from the Prime Minister to IDF senior officers, acting as their honour guard.[19] The Hagana Veterans Association thus became an accessible vehicle to ordinary

soldiers for the dissemination of the Hagana/Mapai tradition and its version of the War's narrative and its protagonists.

The anniversary of Herzl's death

After Mapai had officially appropriated the memory of Trumpeldor, who was universally accepted as a politically uncontroversial figure, the Revisionists sought to tie themselves to some other national figure in their efforts to achieve political legitimation. They turned to Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, as their idyllic and symbolic state figure. Similar to the bargaining that had attended the appropriation of Trumpeldor and the Tel Hai site, attempts to attach Herzl to the Revisionist Movement began before Independence. As early as 1938, preparations were made to commemorate the anniversary of Herzl's death, 20 Tamuz (Hebrew calendar) in a "major display of Nationalist Movement strength."[20] This represented an opportunity to use the "national" lexicon as a tool in its competition with Mapai's language of state sovereignty, which left no place for Herut.[21]

On 20 Tamuz, the following invitation was transmitted to Herut members: "All of us, every true student of Herzl and Jabotinsky, will ascend to the modest grave of B. Z. Herzl in recognition of the greatness of his vision and in commemoration of his deeds. … " In 1954, the day was declared a holiday for members of the National Workers Federation, founded by Jabotinsky as an alternative to Mapai's Federation of Labour (the Histadrut). The day's proceedings were described as "a demonstration dedicated to those who toiled to realise the Herzlian miracle."[22] Herut organized the events with great care: a publicized agenda, transportation, placement of national and Movement flags, and registration of members, advertisements in *Herut* as well as the daily press. A review of the event's programme indicates that it sought to demonstrate the political power of the Right. On 11 July 1954, a national convention was held to finalize preparations for the 20 Tamuz demonstration. A procession to Jerusalem of the Movement's membership, with vehicles carrying large signs displaying each branch's name, was also planned. Significant attention was also given to the vehicles' decorations, which included state flags and a photograph of Herzl.

The Herut Movement diligently worked to connect Herzl to Jabotinsky, arguing that the 1954 events would be dedicated to the two ideological "cousins' who had stubbornly adhered to political Zionism, as opposed to the practical version associated with Mapai: "This year, all members of the Herut Movement will go up to Jerusalem in order to commune with the memory of the founder of ideological Zionism and to demonstrate the integrity of our philosophy. … "[23] The demonstration's effectiveness as a display of immense power by a huge number of participants was crucial to the organizers: "From the moment that the branch delegates reach the [YMCA] courtyard, no one will be allowed to leave. … "[24] The parade's participants represented organizations and groups aligned with the Revisionist camp. The cohort carrying the state flag was accompanied by a unit holding pennants bearing either the Betar or the National Workers Association emblem. They marched through the centre of Jerusalem and then buses carried them to Mount Herzl. There, a ceremony was held in the plaza before Herzl's tomb. Betar songs were heard, the movement's manifesto and Jabotinsky's eulogy of Herzl were read, wreathes were laid, and the national anthem sung. The event concluded with the Herut leadership marching around the vault.[25]

At the gravesite, Herzl's image was equated with the motifs of self-sacrifice and bereavement. Herut used this connection to identify its own view with official positions on the subject in an

attempt to topple the barricade of Mapai's pervasive statism and to inform the public that its movement was the proper representative of patriotism:

The National Workers Association subscribes to Herzl's program in its entirety. … [its members] object to every form of class struggle … [and] declare … 20 Tamuz a national holiday, a day for national pioneers to express their loyalty to Herzl's ideas in their pristine form, the idea of national liberation.[26]

In its effort to wrest the Herzl icon from the clutches of Mapai without abandoning the needs of the workers, Herut declared 20 Tamuz a general holiday in all employment sectors and charged that Mapai had blurred Herzl's image and significance.[27] Thus, Herut chose its own Labour Day to replace the traditional and socialist-inspired first of May.

The 20th of May … is an alternative to the 1st of May not only because it is the anniversary of Dr. Herzl's death, but because it is a day for demonstrating the existence of a socialist model that completely contradicts that represented by the Left … Our philosophy has yet to be realised and is awaiting its final formulation … [it] rests on total belief in the individual. Betar's leader [Jabotinsky] constructed the fundamental precepts of this philosophy; it is our responsibility to demonstrate its validity through explicit acts.[28]

More than expressing the substance of Revisionism, it was meant to negate the collectivist ideological themes that Mapai celebrated in its own holidays: "The 1st of May … the red [Labour movement] holiday is not ours, the red flag is not our flag … We will band together around our flag, the blue and white flag [Israel's national flag]."[29]

Herut's leadership had hoped that over the years, the event would be recognized as a general holiday and celebrated by the profusion of political streams active in the country: "May 20, the national workers holiday, will acquire the character of a nation wide demonstration. … We should expand its framework in order to transform it into … a tradition for everyone, a *national holiday* [emphasis in original]."[30] As a means of emphasizing their strength, Herut supporters were called upon to decorate their homes and to display the national flag. They were also invited to Blue and White Balls that took place annually throughout the country.

On the 50th anniversary of Herzl's death (21 July 1954), Herut decided to present the nation's prophet as the spiritual father of Revisionism. Herzl, like Jabotinsky, believed in a political Zionism, and, again like his assumed disciple, Jabotinsky, Herzl had been called a "rebel":

Two decades ago, under the shadows of exile, in the ghetto's gloom, Herzl had unfurled his banner. He was alone, forlorn, a rebel, yet far-reaching in his vision … an historical figure who by the force of his vision changed the world's direction. … The instrument Herzl envisioned – the State of Israel – fought for by his adherents, chiefly his [spiritual] heir, Zeev Jabotinsky, who paved the way for his other spiritual and ideological followers – the soldiers of the Jewish underground.[31]

This was not the first time that Herzl had been presented as a dissident. As part of the defence delivered during the Acre trial of the *Oley HaGardom*, Matitiyahu Shmuelevitch, one of the defendants, declared that "Herzl, as well as Jabotinsky, were rebels."[32] This attitude acquired a permanent place in Herut indoctrination and symbols. From the day that 20 Tamuz was declared as National Workers Day, the dais would be decorated with pictures of both Herzl and Jabotinsky. Pictures of the two, as a pair, first appeared on the Tel Hai Fund logo.[33] After Herut's first national convention, which took place at the Ohel Shem hall in Tel Aviv on 19 October 1948, large photos of Herzl, Jabotinsky and David Raziel were to hang over the stage (see Weitz 1993:352–53).

The relative success with which Herut was able to appropriate the image of Herzl was in part made possible because Mapai was not eager to emphasize the place of the country's prophet in its own sovereignty project. While Herut's purpose in linking itself to the image of national consensus was to acquire political legitimacy, Ben-Gurion, from his unassailable position of power, had no intention of allowing another figure to overshadow his own in the coterie of those responsible for the rebirth of the State (also known as the "third temple"). This position was buttressed by the fact that Herzl had taken no part in the Labour movement or socialistic activities. The exact opposite was in fact true: Herzl's movement, the General Zionists, upheld liberal and secular values and would eventually tie itself to Herut within a right-wing political bloc. Herzl had also been involved in diplomacy, the same "political Zionism" that Ben-Gurion and his movement eschewed if not despised. Nevertheless, when confronted with Herut's intensive efforts with respect to Herzl's image, the Knesset decided in 1948 that the anniversary of Herzl's death would be observed as "State Day." An editorial in *Davar* commented that this occasion should be considered as "a memorial day to the contemporary author of the idea of the State of Israel."[34] Yet, State Day was observed only once. In its place, the date of May 14 when Independence was declared would subsequently be celebrated as the national holiday. This was institutionalized in a law passed on 27 April 1949. This declaration relieved Ben-Gurion of the need to share prestige for the achievement of independence with another figure.

On the first Defence Forces Day celebrated in 1949, Ben-Gurion did call upon Herzl's image:

Although today is the 45th anniversary of the death of the prophet of the Jewish nation, it is not a day of mourning or lamentation but of exaltation and thanksgiving, victory and strength, because our dream has been realised. The mortal Herzl is gone … yet, the immortal Herzl [remains] … his spirit floats above the renewed State of Israel, its builders and defenders. From this day forward, 20 Tamuz will also be an auspicious day – celebrating Herzl as well as those who realised [his dream] – Israel Defence Forces Day. … [35]

In Herzl's play, Solon in Lydia, written in 1900, Solon unsuccessfully tries to convince the king that a young boy's invention for manufacturing flour should be rejected outright for it will result in indolence and rebellion. Appealing to the ultimate authority of the king, he calls upon him to put the boy to death. "A king must know how to put to death … even the good, if the welfare of his land is at stake." This fixation on the sovereignty of national territory is penned while Herzl was engaged in preparations for the fourth Zionist Congress. Herzl, indeed, placed a sovereign Jewish state as his political priority. He toggled between literature and diplomacy, pursuits which engaged his word skills; he was a playwright, had poetic ambitions, but finally chose journalism for a career. The literary and the political persona were in some ways associated in the young Herzl's mind: "sometimes I think of myself as a young David Copperfield, sitting in the gallery of the House of Commons and taking stenographic notes … And then sometimes I actually think of my self as a statesman." (Bein, 1970: 78). In a last will and testament written in 1897, Herzl gave expression to his passionate yearning for expressing the truth in writing. "I am conscious today, as I have always been," he wrote, "that I have used my pen as a man of honor" (Bein 1970: 214). Appropriating Herzl the literateur, Herzl the political Don Quixote, was ideally suitable to sustain the commemorative praxis of a malleable mythology of foundation. Literary craftsmanship and political acumen marked both Herzl and Jabotinsky, both of whom understood that the power of language could be converted into the language of power.[36]

Independence Day and Remembrance Day

On 14 May 1948, following the departure of the British Mandatory government, David Ben-Gurion declared the rebirth of the Jewish State in the land of Israel. Armies of the surrounding Arab states immediately invaded, bent on destroying the newly born entity. During the ensuing military struggle to consolidate the newly born state, Ben-Gurion put forward legislation for the observation of a national holiday which would symbolize and mark political and national sovereignty, similar to those celebrated by other nations. Two symbols already existed: the national flag and the national anthem.[37] The debate surrounding the choice of a date was initiated by the Ministry of Defence in late 1949.[38]

Several options were considered. Among them was 20 Tamuz, the anniversary of Herzl's death, a date shunned by Ben-Gurion following Herut's fairly successful appropriation of Herzl's image. Another date, 11 Adar, Tel Hai Day, the anniversary of the death of Trumpeldor and his comrades (1920), had become Defence Forces Day. Although this date suited Ben-Gurion's purposes, it nonetheless prevented broad segments of society from identifying with its substance and from participating in the ceremonies. Another option raised was 21 Tamuz, the date of the death of Chaim Nachman Bialik (1935), Israel's poet laureate. However, Bialik's life was devoid of any clear symbolic connections with Ben-Gurion or the Labour movement. Two additional dates were associated with colonial history: 2 November, the date of the Balfour Declaration (1917) symbolizing external recognition of the Jewish national aspirations, and 29 November (1947), the date the UN partition resolution passed and Jewish sovereignty in Israel was recognized internationally. Although the last two dates were perceived as fitting alternatives, the moment when independence was declared contributed an alternative that focused on the personality of Ben-Gurion. This date was viewed as an act of "procreation" at the hands of Ben-Gurionand represented the transition from the nation's "absence" to its "presence," an occasion that separated "before" and "after," the beginning of a new temporal sequence for Zionists and for Jews.

Ben-Gurion was intent upon stressing his role in the process. At his initiative the Interim Government was convened at the Tel Aviv Museum in April 1949 and ratified Israel's Independence Day as the day on which Ben-Gurion declared the coming into existence of the Jewish state. The holiday's date in April 1949 thereby confirmed that Ben-Gurion was indeed responsible for Israel's transition to a full-fledged state. According to Azaryahu, time was pressing – it was shortly before the first celebration of Israel's Independence Day – and the alacrity with which the decision was taken prevented an in-depth and principled discussion which "under other conditions could have triggered an important public debate touching on questions concerning the foundation of national existence" (Azaryahu 1995: 24).

The choice of the date on which national independence was declared is not self-evident. Many countries have preferred to celebrate the occasion on the date of their release from colonial bonds, a pattern set by the United States. Conceptually, there is a distinction between "liberation from" some form of dependency or necessity and "freedom of" those who are liberated to begin anew. The former marks an end to a state or condition whereas the latter inaugurates the constitution of a new authority.[39] In Israel, some members of Herut rejected Mapai's choices. Y. Rubin, editor of *Herut* wrote: "We consider our national holiday to be the day when the British were ousted and not 29 November. … The Israeli public never accepted 29 November … [They] know that the true date that changed Israel's history is the withdrawal of the British."[40]

Debate over the date intensified when the subject of its name arose: The name of the observed holiday would also imply the official name of the war which secured the state. Legislation proposed by the government stipulated "Sovereignty Day" (*Yom HaKomemiyut*):[41] "The Knesset

hereby declares that the date 14 Iyar as 'Sovereignty Day' is to be celebrated annually as the national holiday."[42] Etzel and Lehi veterans preferred the name "War of Liberation Day" in reference to liberation from the British Mandate. Herut was interested in presenting the war as an anti-colonial national war for independence because, among other things, this interpretation stressed its members' role in the process. Ben-Gurion, in his attempts to ignore the conflict with the British, especially the part played by Herut, moved to prevent use of the word. Yet, as a name, "liberation" was very popular. Within the framework of the Zionist discourse, it expressed the view that Zionism is a movement for the liberation of Jewry. Ben-Gurion preferred the name "Sovereignty Day" because it also stressed the institutional aspects of the war. For him, the word "liberation" raised associations with the past, a past in which the dissident organizations were actively involved. The concept "sovereignty," however, alluded to the present, a present that Ben-Gurion and his movement, as members of the ruling group, would steer on a daily basis.

The Right, in its turn, continued to view the word "liberation" in its own political context. "Liberation" had already become ingrained in its rhetoric. As early as 1941, the word appeared in the eulogy written by Joseph Vinitzky on the first anniversary of Jabotinsky's death: "Israel's liberation movement will remember his words and his vision."[43] After statehood was gained, the public was invited to attend Etzel's exhibit on the subject of the War of Liberation, mounted by Shelach in order to publicize the Underground's part in this achievement.

The view of the War as a struggle for liberation was accepted and internalized by large segments of Israel's population. In its account of commemoration services held in April 1949, *Davar* reported that the fighters fell "in a war for the liberation of the land of our birth."[44] Ben-Gurion, who purposefully ignored the struggle of pre-State organizations, including the Hagana, against the British, avoided the term "War of Liberation" and remained fixated on the term "War for Sovereignty". Through this linguistic usage he placed emphasis upon present undertakings rather than a past event and it was his ruling coalition that was undertaking the current constitution of sovereignty.

Thus, Ben-Gurion sought to seize upon the act of statehood and make it a symbol for "one of the principal events in the history of the Jewish people" on a par with the exodus from Egypt, receipt of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, Joshua Bin-Nun's conquest of ancient Israel, as well as other major events in the course of Jewish history and national consolidation. Significantly, he viewed himself as solely responsible for the re-establishment of Israel's independence, exhibiting little willingness to share his accomplishment with others. In the end, the first clause of the legislation stipulated that "the Knesset declares the fifth day of Iyar as Independence Day. (*Yom HaAtzma'ut*)"[45] Thus, the same series of events were perceived as two different projects, headed by two different leaders – Ben-Gurion and Begin – each jealous of his place in their respective missions of liberation and sovereignty.[46]

Ben-Gurion continued to insist that the proper usage ought to be "sovereignty" (*komemyiut*). Mapai soon began its campaign to inculcate "sovereignty" into the national consciousness. In February 1951, Joseph Dekel and Yitzhak Ben Zvi sent a letter to Ben-Gurion in which they transmitted the decision reached by the Commemoration Unit's Public Council, according to which "IDF dead are to be officially called 'Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty'."[47] Similarly, the caption for the stamp to be issued for Israel's fourth anniversary read: "In Honour of Independence Day and the Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty."[48]

In 1953, in response to Uri Avneri, a publisher, publicist and former Lehi member who had argued in favour of the name "Independence Day" and who had complained about the use made

of the phrase “Sovereignty Day,” Ben-Gurion detailed why he favoured “sovereignty”:

I prefer sovereignty to independence for two reasons: Independence is an artificial and contrived word, whereas sovereignty can be found in the Scriptures. Sovereignty … is a deeper and more daring expression for the status of free men.[49]

The word “sovereignty” was incorporated into the texts of every event connected with statehood that required official authorization. For instance, the history published by the Ministry of Defence in 1959 was entitled *The History of the War for National Sovereignty*. In every instance where a name for a settlement or site was to be assigned, the highest reaches of the Israeli government became involved, as in the case of the new settlement established in 1959 in the Lachish region, named *Komemiyut*. Letters sent to bereaved families on the eve of Remembrance Day, 1951 were addressed as follows: “To the family of martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty. The Israel Defence Forces has decided to distribute the Sovereignty Decoration to all the soldiers who participated in the War.”[50]

As noted above, the alacrity with which the naming of Independence Day was passed enabled Ben-Gurion to install himself as the decisive force in the culture of state ritual. Since the interim between the planning and celebration of Independence Day was short, the Knesset subcommittee's decision to transfer all the relevant items to the government also transferred discretion for how the holiday would be realized throughout the country.[51] The law in effect assigned responsibility for crafting the ceremonies to the Prime Minister since control over national holidays was placed within the authority of the highest reaches of government. The military parade held in Tel Aviv in 1948 had included Palmach Units, who marched with their banners. Ben-Gurion announced that the Hagana would not participate in the 1949 military parade; he wished to ascribe a distinctively statist character to the parade, meaning that the IDF alone would participate.[52] He stressed that statist values transcended the various political factions that had survived the period of the Yishuv.

Remembrance Day for the War Dead was an additional occasion that Ben-Gurion used in his efforts to affix the label “sovereignty”. In summer 1950, Dekel had requested that Ben-Gurion raise before the Government the issue of permanent observance of a memorial day in the schools.[53] The schools were to become the major mechanism for the inculcation of Labour movement and Zionist values. The official name assigned to this day, Remembrance Day for the Fallen in the War for Sovereignty, emphasized rather caustically the political advantage of one political camp over the other even in the area of death. Etzel and Lehi combatants were not among the fallen in the war as defined. An Order of the Day for Remembrance Day 1953, prepared by Major General Mordechai Machleff, the Chief of the General Staff, made no reference to the Underground's fallen: “On this Remembrance Day we shall honour the memory of our comrades, the IDF soldiers who fell so that our nation could be reborn … [and] share their memory with their parents and families.”[54] IDF war dead, it should be recalled, included the Hagana dead who had been officially recognized as belonging to the first group by virtue of special legislation.

In 1958, the term “sovereignty” appeared in a legislative proposal intended to institutionalize Remembrance Day observances.[55] Knesset Member Shmuel Dayan (Mapai), himself a bereaved father, acting in the name of the Commemoration Unit's Public Council, proposed a law: *Remembrance Day in Honour of the Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty*. The legislation was completed only on 28 March 1963, 15 years after Independence. When passed, *Law: Remembrance Day in Honour of the Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty (1963)*,

which set 4 Iyar as the official date of its observance, was received by a standing ovation. Yad Labanim, the leading civil organization active in commemoration, noted this achievement that very year: “This is the fifteenth year that Israel recognises, with the greatest respect, the memories of its sons, its heroes, the fallen in the War for National Sovereignty and the Israel Defence Forces.”[56]

The Right's reservations about how the day would be called were raised in the debate that preceded the vote on the law. “I will begin with its name,” lectured Esther Raziel-Naor (Herut) from the podium; she suggested as an alternative that the law be called “Remembrance Day in Honour of the Heroes of the War of Independence and the Israel Defence Forces.” In the body of the law, she continued, it should state that

[this] is a heroic day of remembrance for all the fighters for Israel's independence and for the IDF soldiers who fell in campaigns for the establishment of the State and its security – to share in their memory, to ponder on their sacrifices and valiant deeds.[57]

Acknowledging the convoluted phrasing of her suggested title, Raziel explained that from her perspective, it should refer to the many groups whose sons had fallen for the sake of national rebirth because she felt that the name originally suggested excluded them:

A nation's independence – when does it occur? … From the moment that its sons do not fear to submit to the yoke of destiny. … Therefore, those who fell on the Night of the Bridges and on the barbed wire surrounding Sharona, in the battle for the conquest of Jaffa and in the airport at Kastina, at the refineries and at railway workshops or, in simpler, more prosaic terms: the martyrs of the Hagana, the Palmach, Lehi, Etzel and Mahal[58] – all these are worthy of our respect. … [59]

In response, the Minister of Justice, D. Yosef, rejected Raziel Naor's suggestion to change the name of the proposed law, while noting that in his view, “there is no significant difference between the expression ‘war of national sovereignty’ and ‘war of independence.’ … It refers to everyone, without exception, who fell for the sake of the revival of the Jewish nation and its security.”[60] Thus, the war's name became legally sanctioned as the War for National Sovereignty with respect to the nation's Remembrance Day as well. For the time being, the term “independence” was excluded from the official rhetoric.

In response to Raziel-Naor's demands, Mapai limited the law's referents to those who had been recognized as IDF war dead, meaning mainly Hagana troops who had been incorporated as soldiers in the IDF and who had fallen after declaration of statehood. Nonetheless, the possibility of including the Underground's members remained implicit, depending on the date Etzel was disbanded and their consequent behaviour with regard to their ultimate allegiance.

As part of the 1957 ceremonies, wreathes donated by various bodies were placed on the rostrum. Again, no representatives of the Underground were invited.[61] The symbolic identification of Remembrance Day with Mapai continued into the 1960s. During the 1963 Remembrance Day observance, an official ceremony was held at the military cemetery in Nachlat Yitzhak, Tel Aviv, where a number of Lehi and Etzel dead, the majority of whom had fallen during the Altalena incident, were also buried. Conspicuous by their absence were members of Lehi and Etzel. Hagana veterans had become standard fixtures at Remembrance Day ceremonies throughout the country, either as honoured guests seated on the stage or as active participants in the proceedings.[62]

The Underground's attempts to enter collective memory

Etzel and Lehi veterans did not despair. Despite the absence of any reference to their dead at official Remembrance Day rituals, they continued to cite and extol their fallen comrades at their own ceremonies. In 1953, a group of Herut members from Tel Aviv initiated a ceremony in Tel Aviv to mark the fifth anniversary of what was termed "the victory of the revolt against the British oppressor and the capture of Jaffa." The mention of the dissidents' contribution during an official ceremony organized by Hagana veterans and decked with Hagana symbols riled the official organizations who regarded this as a provocation. One official warned that such intrusions might dampen the festive spirit of the coming Independence Day celebrations. Although the event was cancelled, Herut did make its mark on Tel Aviv's commemorative activities by means of a permanent commemorative plaque on the Jaffa clock tower (see Chapter 3). Remembrance Day observances, however, retained their general and official aura, bereft of reference to the Underground's dead.

Yizkor (Remembrance)

The Labour movement's imprint on official symbols was expressed through *Yizkor*, the liturgical portion of the canonical Remembrance Day ritual. This prayer would be periodically revised, according to the ideological and political powers in place. The first version was written in 1920 by Berl Katznelson, one of the Labour movement's founding fathers, as a secular equivalent to the prayer for the dead invoked during religious funerary services. Early in 1949, the Jewish Agency's Information Department raised the idea of preparing a commemorative prayer dedicated to the fallen in the War of Independence (Azaryahu 1995: 151).

Katznelson's early version of *Yizkor* was written in homage to the eight Tel Hai defenders, especially Trumpeldor. It was printed 10 days after their deaths, on the front page of *Contras*, the Achdut HaAvoda gazette. It began: "May God remember the valiant men and women who braved mortal danger in the days of struggle. … " The text is replete with images reflecting the Labour movement's soldier–farmer ideal, whose one hand held a gun and the other a plough. The eulogy became a national symbol, a text to be read whenever someone fell by Arab hands.

During the transition period between the pre-State Yishuv and statehood, many IDF officers turned to Ahuvia Malkin, an editor of the Am Oved publishing house and a member of the IDF's Department for Cultural Affairs, for guidance regarding the texts to be read during military funerals. Joseph Kariv (Karkovy), head of the Department of Cultural Affairs, set before Malkin and the poet Aharon Zeev, the future Chief Education Officer, the task of adapting Katznelson's prayer to the IDF context. Moreover, it was decided that the authority to determine future versions of *Yizkor* would rest with the director of the Government Information Office, a body then headed by Yehuda Ilan, the Palmach's former Officer for Cultural Affairs. Although all the phrases directly identified with the Labour movement were expunged from the revised version,[63] the public was conscious of its source, a politically rooted eulogy. The eulogy was revised to focus on the IDF fallen that fell only during the War.

In 1955, *Yizkor* was revised once more. The new version, whose references were expanded to include IDF dead from campaigns following the War of Independence, appeared at the opening of the first *Yizkor* commemoration volume, the book that listed all those officially recognized as fallen during the War of Independence (see Chapter 5).[64] The present version retains the main body of the text, with the community of the dead enlarged to include "the valiant men and women who braved mortal danger in the days of struggle prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and the soldiers who fell in the wars of Israel."[65]

Eulogies in the form of commemorative prayers had existed earlier, during the period of rebellion against the British. Both the Palmach (Brenner 1987) and Etzel[66] had their own versions of *Yizkor*. These were printed in the commemorative volumes prepared for the fallen of each respective group. However, the Palmach volumes, like the later IDF-authorized *Yizkor* volumes, stressed the war against the Arabs; hence Etzel and Lehi dead were again excluded. Shelach was forced to utilize its own version of the prayer[67] in its struggle to draw the public's attention to two issues that Labour and Mapai wished to avoid – that the War of Independence had begun as a struggle against the British and that several members of the Underground had been assassinated by the Hagana, as we shall see.

The production of national heroes – decorations and citations

The Left excluded the Right from many areas related to commemoration, not least of which was official recognition of its heroes. On the eve of Remembrance Day 1951, a letter was sent to bereaved families in which Ben-Gurion announced that "the Israel Defence Forces has decided to award the *Komemiyut* [Sovereignty] Decoration to all the soldiers who had participated in the War of Independence."[68] In November of that year, a public competition for the design of the decoration was announced.[69] The design chosen was a ribbon coloured blue and white (representing the nation), and red, representing blood and sacrifice, the ultimate price paid by all those to whom the State owed its existence. Eligible recipients included "every soldier who served in the IDF between 1 February and 10 March 1949," the period Israeli forces were active in the Eilat area proximate to the official close of the War of Independence.[70] Given the announcement's wording, it was clear that fighters belonging to organizations not incorporated within the IDF by that date were ineligible. All told, the Disabled Veterans Decoration was awarded to more than 1,500 ex-servicemen.[71]

Aware of the symbolic and political functions of decorations, Ben-Gurion appointed a committee whose task was to set policy with regard to the awarding of state decorations and citations to individuals who had made outstanding contributions to the defence effort in the period preceding the State's creation. Established in 1952, it became known as the Golomb Committee; its members – Eliyahu Golomb, Yisrael Galili, Major General Yaakov Dori and Colonel Nahum Shadmi – were all veterans of the Hagana. Ben-Gurion's instructions clearly reveal the tendency to ignore members of organizations from the Rightist camp:

You are requested to act as a committee that will propose decorations, such as the Sovereignty Medal … to all those who helped defend [the Yishuv] prior to the establishment of the State, that is to members of the Shomer, the Jewish regiments during World War I, the Hagana before the IDF, those who served in the Jewish Brigade during World War II, individuals who participated in the Defence of our settlements during the War of Independence but were not members of the IDF, to settlements that, as units within regional divisions (Jerusalem, Negba, etc.) had distinguished themselves in their steadfastness during the War, as well as all those unaffiliated individuals who sacrificed their lives for their country. … [72]

As can be readily seen, Etzel and Lehi were not included by name in this rather comprehensive list.

The Golomb Committee put forward four categories for commendation: three for individuals, and one for kibbutzim and other settlements (moshavim, villages and towns). The Committee's intentions were revealed in its report, presented to the Minister of Defence. They suggested that 26 decorations and citations be distributed, including "about 20 chosen from among our

comrades. … It would be preferable for those selected to represent, as much as feasible, every type of [major] operation and event from the period."[73]

The first decoration, intended for "our comrades' was the Hagana Medal. The idea was not original: in February 1949, it had been announced that a special decoration would soon be awarded to members of the Hagana, including those already released from service.[74] The Hagana Medal would mark

the nation's gratitude to those of its sons who fulfilled their duty to protect the nation and to defend the Jewish settlements in Israel, from the period of the First Aliyah until the formation of the Israel Defence Forces. … On one side of the medal the symbol of the State of Israel will be found, on the other side, the symbol of the Hagana, a sword encircled by an olive branch. … [75]

The second decoration recommended by the committee was the "National Volunteers Medal." The medal resembled the Hagana Medal, but in different colours. It would be awarded to those who had volunteered to defend Jewish settlements from the period beginning with the First Aliyah and ending with the establishment of the State of Israel.

The third decoration proposed by the committee was the "Magen David Medal," also known as the "Medal for Excellence." This decoration was to be awarded to whoever could be considered "an example of his generation for risking his life – this medal will be awarded to 35 individuals only … the Minister of Defence will appoint a committee authorised to recommend the 35 candidates." In form, the medal would "resemble the Hagana Medal."

The "Jerusalem Medal" was the fourth decoration proposed. The committee suggested that it be awarded to the "settlement, village or town for its independent collective resistance during the enemy blockade and for its determined resistance."[76]

Etzel and Lehi veterans were ineligible for the first decoration, an award based on political parameters, yet they were also disqualified from receiving the second. The ploy used to exclude them was affiliation. Had they been defined or categorized as members of the Jewish Brigade, the Palmach, the Yishuv's Jewish police forces or Jewish units serving in the British Army, blockade-runners, Hagana servicemen involved in weapons production or purchase, in addition to anyone "who had served as a regular officer in the Hagana," or "voluntarily served as an officer in the Hagana," or had participated "in an emergency mission on behalf of the Hagana," or had been "any man or woman, Jewish or otherwise, living outside Israel, who had made a contribution to the Hagana and to the Yishuv's security", they might have been, in theory, eligible. But they were not.[77]

In December 1954, State decoration policy was again debated and confirmed by the Knesset in the form of the *Law: Israel Defence Forces Decorations (1954)*. The original proposal had been raised by MK Baruch Kamin (Mapai). He stressed that the project provided a framework in which the State would identify its heroes, those individuals whose acts would be etched in the collective memory regarding the State's rebirth. Kamin also commented that he was referring to all those brave individuals who promoted emergence of the new state, and not exclusively to IDF troops: "The medal for military bravery can also be awarded to civilians who performed exceptionally courageous acts … on the battlefield. … "[78]

A further reading of Kamin's remarks indicates that the recipients of these decorations were to serve as cultural, normative and educational instruments, as models for emulation:

Decorations for bravery play an important part in the lives of the people and the nation … The more a nation struggles, suffers, and sacrifices, the more it commits acts of bravery, the more important are the decorations it awards as patriotic, educational and normative tools. After all,

the European nations conferred medals not only for their regular armies, but also for acts of patriotism, beginning with soldiers standing at the rear, where they were joined by civilians and youths who gradually became part of the regular army under military command. … .The decorated must retell their stories to their companions. What has undermined and continues to undermine our youth in many areas appropriate to volunteering is … "Did you do it, did you act, and who knows about it, who appreciates it?". … As to the ancient adage "the Moor has done his work, the Moor may go" … this law is meant to rectify … the distortion.[79]

Kamin called attention to what he termed "oversights." As he saw it, among the ranks of the eligible for commendation were

citizens in the agricultural collectives who volunteered for missions during World War II. … I refer to the parachutists, members of the Jewish Brigades and the Palmach … who left their families … and volunteered to fight … the Nazi enemy. …[80]

These, he argued, unlike Hagana members, "lack any IDF status," a fact frequently overlooked. Zeev Shefer (Mapai) supported Kamin's position, and suggested to the Knesset to award the medals also to members of the Shomer, as well as those who fought at Tel Hai, the defensive campaigns in Jerusalem, Petach Tikva and Jaffa. Shefer underscored his demands with the statement that Jewish Defence did not begin with the creation of the IDF, and that

the Knesset was obligated to pay homage to the leading members of this group from its outset … If there is any value or symbolic importance to this commemorative medal, we should make sure that it is … considered as a sign of universal, national commemoration. We will never regret it; the nation can only gain from it.[81]

Kamin's and Shefer's comments, as might be expected, ignited Herut MKs. They sorely felt the truth of Kamin's comments about those who lacked any IDF status. Yohanan Bader (Herut) expressed his support for the suggestion to broaden eligibility for the medal but voiced Etzel and Lehi fears that their members were to be barred from this group as well.[82]

Bader's words induced others to voice their bitterness over trends that they were beginning to observe. The decorations project, they realized, was another layer in the commemoration project whose realization was just beginning to be felt in Israel's landscape and its historiography, all orchestrated by Ben-Gurion. The response was, surprisingly, non-partisan. "Ben-Gurion wants independence to be identified only with the undertaking that he directed – the War of Independence" implored Shmuel Dayan, a member of Mapai. His colleague, Abraham Herzfeld, warned that the proposal to distribute medals was threatening internal harmony:

I have serious doubts about our objective capacity, divided as we are [as a nation], to single out these events and to place each in its separate framework, as suggested by this legislative proposal … Friends, we should avoid the issue. We cannot foresee how much bloodshed it can incite. … A history rich [in such events] brought us to Statehood. … It may even have begun more than 80 years ago.

Herzfeld believed that politically motivated attempts to identify and dramatize national heroes would, by definition, slight a significant number of worthy individuals and goad many others: "It would be a mistake for our comrades and for those of us like myself who are aware of the current history of the Yishuv to demand award of these decorations. … "[83]

Nevertheless, opposition to the law did not have any effect. It was only in May 1959 that a government decision was reached as to its final version, which determined that "in future, the Ministry of Defence would award decorations only according to government decisions or a specially legislated law."[84] That is, decorations policy would be determined by the Knesset. The

debate had, in effect, been further politicized. Just a few months previously, it had been decided to award the Hagana Medal during the celebration of Israel's first decade (*Hag Ha'asor*) that Ben-Gurion had decreed.

The medal was awarded to veteran Hagana officers in a ceremony involving the participation of the President of Israel, Yitzhak Ben Zvi, and the IDF's first Chief of the General Staff, Yaakov Dori. The President pinned the medal on the lapel of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's coat who, in turn, pinned medals on the uniforms of the members of the General Staff. The ceremony, conducted as a state ceremony attended by invited public figures, was held in the National Stadium in Jerusalem, and declared to be part of Defence Forces Day festivities.

In his address, President Ben Zvi stated that from his perspective, being awarded the Hagana Medal was "the greatest honour a person in Israel can receive." Ben-Gurion reviewed the history of Jewish defence of the Yishuv. He noted that the IDF is the "offspring and disciple of the Hagana and that Hagana veterans know that the IDF is their descendant."[85] The Hagana Medal thus became an official decoration, part of the dress uniform[86] worn by IDF soldiers who had also served in the Hagana, whereas regular servicemen and officers were required special permission to wear the medal during ceremonies.[87]

David Raziel – reinterrment

Etzel war veterans made strenuous efforts to include their foremost commander, David Raziel, in the pantheon of heroes. Raziel was killed in Iraq in 1941 while on espionage activity on behalf of the British. Bauer notes that "Raziel's death gave Etzel the myth indispensable for any underground group" even though his "political views were diametrically opposed to the philosophy of their idol." In 1952, Esther Raziel-Naor (Herut), while sitting in the Knesset, began her activities among influential figures and government officials in London for the purpose of returning Raziel's remains to Israel from his burial place in Iraq. Her activities led to contacts between the British Embassy in Baghdad and the Iraqi Minister of Health; together they convinced the Iraqi government to transfer the coffin to Cyprus with the aid of the British Royal Air Force. On 19 December 1955, the coffin was transported from Habniya, Iraq to Nicosia and then interred locally, in the village of Margo, Cyprus (Naor 1991: 282). During the whole of 1956, British pressure on the Cypriot government prevented the coffin's transfer to Israel. Only the intervention of Menachem Begin, who wrote to Archbishop Makarios, addressing him as "one freedom fighter to another," persuaded the Cypriots to allow the coffin to reach Israel.[88]

Herut efforts to return David Raziel's remains to Israel were abetted by the fact that his legacy did not include a worldview that threatened Mapai. To accomplish their goal, his heirs focused on preserving his military legacy. Herut turned to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and to the Deputy Minister of Defence with a request to conduct a military funeral for Raziel in the national military cemetery on Mount Herzl. Agreement was reached thanks to the intervention of Shimon Peres, who was particularly active in obtaining the permission for such funerals.

Upon the coffin's arrival in Israel, a police cortege accompanied it from the airport to Metzudat Zeev, Herut headquarters in Tel Aviv. Thousands of Herut supporters awaited its arrival and that evening, Herut leaders held a vigil dedicated to Raziel's memory. The next day, on 15 March 1961, the military cortege made its way through the streets of Tel Aviv accompanied by thousands including Knesset members and local government officials associated with the Right. Meridor [Herut] delivered the farewell address: "so many Israelis will accompany you as an Israeli army honour guard salutes [you,] the commander of Etzel," (Naor 1991:284)

words that imply that Meridor was ashamed to admit that the name of the Hagana – i.e., in its denotative sense, defence – had been incorporated into the name of the nation's armed forces. The procession continued to Tel Aviv's main synagogue with the surrounding streets closed to traffic. Crowds gathered on the pavement along the route to pay their respects, and police officers marched in the procession, which wound its way to Jerusalem, accompanied by two military policemen on motorcycles. Despite its official designation as a military funeral, the only signs of this status were the two military policemen on motorcycles, and the military vehicle that carried the coffin. Government representation was also low-keyed: at the ceremony held at the Russian Square in Jerusalem, neither Yitzhak Ben Zvi, the President of Israel, nor the Minister of Defence was present. In their place, there appeared the President's deputy and the Minister's Military Secretary. At the interment service, also conducted in military fashion, no senior officers participated, as would be expected. Instead, the armed forces were represented by the IDF's Chief Rabbi and by a colonel. Hence, although official permission was granted to bury Raziel on Mount Herzl with military honours, the honours were more low-key rather than stately.[89]

During the debates over passage of the law *Remembrance Day in Honour of the Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty and the Israel Defence Forces (1963)*, MK Raziel-Naor regretted that

no representatives of the Knesset or the government or any of the important institutions … have visited … the graves of the martyrs of Jaffa's conquest, of the Altalena, of those who were hanged … even on the eve of Independence Day. It appears to me that the time has come to abolish this type of abysmal and strident discrimination.[90]

Raziel-Naor's plea fell on deaf ears. In 1953, Herut had decided to adopt an alternative strategy. It boycotted the official Remembrance Day rituals while observing an alternative Memorial Day: 23 *Iyar*, the date that David Raziel was killed. The date had, in effect, been declared "the Memorial Day for David Raziel and Etzel martyrs' by Herut as early as 5 December 1948.[91]

Considering Herut's goal of obtaining legitimation, it is understandable, if not surprising, that the practices associated with 23 Iyar would more and more come to resemble those initiated by the State: honour guards, with the presence of former commanders on the rostrum, sites chosen for their symbolic import, commemorative services conducted throughout the day at the cemeteries where the dead were interred or at sites where the dissident's had displayed exceptional bravery. Like the official models, Herut's rituals were repeated annually, until the practices could be treated as if they were elements of a unique subculture. The central event of the day was the ceremony conducted at Ramat Raziel in honour of David Raziel, followed by similar ceremonies at the execution gallery in the Acre garrison, at the graves of its attackers in Shavei Tziyyon, at the graves of the hanged Lehi fighters located in Safed, and, preceded by a parade, at the courtyard before the Gruner memorial in Ramat Gan. A special committee was likewise charged with guaranteeing that the services held in the cemeteries were all identical and that a eulogy honouring the dead was written and properly declaimed.[92] Herut's Commemorations Committee annually placed an advertisement in the daily newspapers and Shelach arranged transportation to the sites for the bereaved families.[93]

Despite the sub-culture that evolved, participants at the ceremonies complained about Labour's indifference to the ceremonies given the presence of military personnel and government officials at the Hagana ceremonies: "The involvement of IDF soldiers is permitted only during commemorative ceremonies organised by the IDF itself" responded General Moshe Tzadok, head of the IDF's Personnel Division, to the members of the Lochamim Party, then involved in

preparing a ceremony honouring the Haifa railway workshops operation. “Hence, your request for the participation of an armed military honour guard … is denied.”[94] The denial is illustrative: it represents a process that operated in all areas of commemoration. Because the ceremonies held by former Underground members and their current political representatives were treated as “political” events – as opposed to the Mapai Government's “consensual” events – IDF participation could be formally denied. At the same time, this “political” quality prevented their transformation into official, statist ceremonies. To paraphrase, on the declarative level, Ben-Gurion treated the ceremonies organized by the Labour elite and its supporters as national and thus apolitical events, whereas the ceremonies held by rival parties, excluded from power, were treated as sectoral and thus political. The structural consequence was the further marginalization of Herut and its supporters.

Commemorative observances in honour of Etzel and Lehi fallen were, in effect, located beyond the pale of official recognition and certainly of public or political legitimacy. No Ministry of Defence or IDF personages ever attended. Herut's response is illustrated by the following exchange of letters, the first written to its organ, *Herut*:

Was the nation's President invited to participate in the commemorative service to Etzel's commander and his soldiers? If yes, what was his answer? And if no, why? This is especially important today in light of the President's presence at a commemorative service and dedication of a monument to Palmach recruits.[95]

The letter's author received a personal reply from the Secretary of the Herut Movement, who also suffered the slight referred to:

We have frequently invited the President to attend several of our ceremonies, including those held on 23 Iyar … Each time, we received an evasive answer, and he never appeared. For this reason, we no longer extend any invitations.[96]

This practice continued throughout the first decade of the State, until 14 May 1959, when a change in direction, however partial, occurred. In 1959, Etzel and Lehi veterans decided to conduct commemorative ceremonies on Remembrance Day as well as to continue to hold ceremonial gatherings on 23 Iyar at the sites symbolizing the Revisionist heritage.[97]

Return of Jabotinsky's remains

The establishment's resistance to the interment of Raziel was minor in comparison to Ben-Gurion's attempts to sabotage the return of Jabotinsky's body to Israel (see below). Jabotinsky had been marked as the Labour movement's ideological rival, the person who had emblazoned the rejection of its political, social and economic programme on his sleeve.

Immediately following Independence, Herut began intensive efforts to convince the authorities to return Jabotinsky's remains for reburial in Israel. Their spiritual leader's will demanded that only a legitimate government in a Jewish state could order that his body be brought home. For this reason, Herut's leaders as well as Jabotinsky's family refrained from doing so independently and focused on pressuring the government to initiate the project, in compliance with the will's terms.

The first public debate on the subject took place in December 1951. At that time, Rabbi Modechai Nurock, a Knesset member (Mafdal), presented a query to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, in the framework of which he referred to the Jabotinsky issue. In his response, Ben-Gurion stated that

the obligation of the State of Israel is first and foremost to bring living Jews to the country, those

who would build our country and the Jewish people; this is what the Government of Israel is striving to do. The memory of individuals worthy of [the transfer of their remains to Israel] will rest in the nation's heart, irrespective of where their remains are to be found.[98]

Public and private organizations made similar demands over the years – including the Zionist Organization of America. Some Mapai members of the government, in co-operation with their coalition partners, likewise requested such an action. In 1954, Interior Minister Israel Rokach (Liberals) raised the issue before the government; but nothing was done. Pinchas Rosen (Mapai), while Minister of Justice, likewise attempted to acquire agreement to do so.[99] On 3 August 1958, after Rosen had once more made such a proposal, it was again rejected due to Ben-Gurion's personal opposition to implementation of the initiative.

Numerous Jewish organizations were amazed at Ben-Gurion's vehement objections. Justice Dr. Joseph Lamm, a Bnei Brith official, stressed that despite the organization's differences with Jabotinsky, "our order [i.e., Bnei Brith] has decided to do everything possible to return his remains." Lamm argued that the act was necessary because Israeli society faced "fragmentation on the basis of animosity and hatred." Lamm also noted that the return of Jabotinsky's remains could serve as "a major factor capable of unifying the populace."[100]

The pages of *Davar*, Mapai's newspaper, became filled with articles and letters objecting not only to Ben-Gurion's position, but also to his attempt to shape collective memory.

In Soviet historiography, it is customary to speak with certainty about the future; only the past is subject to change. It is even possible to rewrite the history of the Bolshevik Revolution in a way that Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev are not mentioned. … In a free country, in a nation that is not based on the dialectic approach toward absolute and relative truth, those who deviate from the party line will not remain anonymous, for if they do not contribute directly to the progress of our enterprise, they do so indirectly.[101]

In 1956, Ben-Gurion wrote to Jabotinsky's assistant, Joseph Shectman: "I would to give you my opinion, … [namely, that] the remains of only two Jews are to be brought to Israel: those of Dr. Herzl and those of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Israel needs living men, not dead corpses. … ."[102] The Prime Minister posted a similar response to Israel's President, Yitzhak Ben Zvi.

Jabotinksy's remains were brought to Israel on instructions from the Government in July 1964, shortly more than a year after Levi Eshkol replaced Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister. It may well be the case that Ben-Gurion's resolve regarding this issue was similar to his objection to leave the Altalena on the Tel Aviv sandbar. It was clear that return of the remains of the father of the Revisionist Movement would ensconce Jabotinsky within the national pantheon, an act that would entail state legitimation of his person, movement and followers. It was expected to result in a profusion of ceremonies held in his memory, pilgrimages to his grave, and demands by a wide audience that his tomb be transformed into an official site among the tombs of the nation's other notables. Ben-Gurion's resolve to prevent the body's return expressed more than a simple objection to the act:i expressed the attempt to suppress access to the means of social communication and one of its major symbolic instruments, national rituals. Ben-Gurion, as we shall see, preferred to monopolize determination of the nation's heroes, the leaders to be interred in the state cemetery on Mount Herzl, and the figures future generations would remember as major contributors to the Israel's Independence project.

Exclusionary practices: parades and medals

Military parades and other commemorative events staged by the Hagana Veterans Association

were awarded official recognition whereas similar happenings conducted by Herut were not endorsed by the state. Herut, therefore, pursued other options which it hoped might facilitate entry into the nation's collective memory. For instance, Shelach turned to the National Philatelic Services with the request that it issue a special postmark commemorating the 20th anniversary of Shlomo Ben Yosef's execution by the British. The request was denied.[103]

In order to force the issue onto the public agenda, Begin organized a parade of veterans from right-wing organizations along the streets of Tel Aviv during the 1958 Passover observances to mark the conquest of Jaffa.[104] The event was transformed into a demonstration of the Right's political power and opposition to Mapai's exclusionary practices. Mobilization efforts concentrated upon those who had been denied access to government office, to any official position, or had been excluded from the official historiography describing the ten-year-old nation's efforts to achieve independence. Resembling a meticulously planned military parade, thousands marched from Mugrabi Square to the Tel Aviv seashore, each unit bearing signs designating their exclusion identity. The public gained knowledge of some of these groups for the first time: “Sentenced to Death,” “Members of the Etzel's Fighting Units,” “Jaffa's Conquerors,” “Imprisoned or Detained,” “the Bethlehem Prisoners’ (the Underground's female members and wives of fighters imprisoned by the British), “Members of the Jewish Brigade,” surviving members of Nili, and others. References to Nili were reinforced by the presence of Rivka, the younger sister of Sarah and Aharon Aaronsohn. At the head of the parade marched Menachem Begin, surrounded by a hand-picked entourage: At his right, in addition to the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Chaim Levanon, marched Jacques Soustelle, a French resistance fighter in World War II and a member of the French parliament who was then serving as Governor of Algeria. Soustelle blessed the gathering in the name of the French Underground. The large crowd waved the flags of both countries while children threw flowers, with everyone shouting “Vive la France!”[105]

The presence of Soustelle was meant to bolster Herut's position as a political entity that viewed the war against the British not only as a war of resistance. Begin and Soustelle addressed the audience on Israeli–French relations and stressed the identity between the Underground's war against the British, and France's war against Arab imperialism in Algeria, respectively.

The parade ended in Jaffa. For the Underground, as well as Herut, the conquest of Jaffa, which was absent from the official historiography of the War, continued to signify their role in the nation's liberation. Hence the parade marched through streets where battles had been fought. In an article describing the parade, Avneri concluded: “They gave something in the establishment of the state and in the rising wave of forgetfulness they wanted this to be said openly.”[106]

At the parade's conclusion, a ceremony for the award of medals took place in a large open field which had been taken by the Etzel combatants ten years earlier. The awards were given as a substitute for the sovereignty medals denied to the Etzel fighters by the State. The ceremony itself followed the pattern of State ceremonies with the first awards, the *Rishonim Medal* (“Forefathers’), presented to distinguished members and ideological leaders of the movement: Abba Achimeir, Yermiyahu Halperin, Mrs. Jabotinsky-Kopp, Aharon Props, and Joseph Klausner. David Raziel's father pinned the medal on Menachem Begin.”[107]

Appropriation of bereavement

Bereaved parents

The national sovereignty project did not bypass the family of the bereaved. Living heroes were not the only ones viewed as deserving of senior posts, social status, and political power. The community through which the State remained in touch with the dead – the bereaved, especially parents – likewise acquired a role in the formation of Israeli public opinion, the production of a statist culture and the preservation of Mapai hegemony.

In effect, from the earliest days of the State, bereavement has been identified as an arena available for appropriation on behalf of political goals (see Lebel 2006). Bereaved parents, particularly mothers, were quickly identified by Ben-Gurion as a special group, which he entitled *the family of the bereaved*. This community was singled out to fulfil certain role demands connected to the national bereavement and commemoration processes and in carrying out these functions reproduced the socio-political order. Its members were elevated to a position of social prominence and were joined by another community, veterans of Israel's military campaigns, whose feats were often portrayed in epic frameworks. These communities reflected and communicated collectivist nationalist values, strengthened the commitment to military enlistment among the younger generation, and sustained support and legitimacy for military and political undertakings. In addition, appropriation of the fallen, as will be shown below, vindicated Mapai's and Ben-Gurion's assumption of exclusive responsibility for the success of the nation-building enterprise.

Bereaved parents were recruited and preened for national display as part of Government commemorative activities. Their presence in the public arena was usually accompanied by the sanctification of fallen soldiers and their transformation into parental role models for future generations. They became spokesmen for altruistic and collectivist values such as self-sacrifice, the common good, and dedication to the State. Mobilization of this population was so ingrained in the minds of several of the country's leaders at the time that it inspired some bizarre proposals. In 1949, the Knesset Committee for National Emblems suggested awarding a “Bereaved Parents Medal” to parents of soldiers who had fallen in the War of Independence. The suggestion entailed awarding a bronze medal to parents who had lost one child, a silver medal to parents who had lost two children, and a gold medal to those who had lost three or more children, accompanied by a certificate on behalf of the President of the country and personally signed by Ben-Gurion.[108] General Moshe Zadok, head of the IDF personnel division, supported the idea. Although the certificate was issued, the medals were never produced.

For their willingness to act as political agents of the regime, bereaved parents received vicarious rewards: official commemoration elevated their sons to the status of mythic heroes. “Their images will stand before us and glow even after the last of our generation passes on” wrote Ben-Gurion, touched after receiving *Kinneret: Days of Defiance* (Habas 1950), a book containing texts written by fallen members of the Kinneret settlement who had fought the Arabs during the War of Independence.[109] The term “hero” became attached to the names of the dead in popular speech and consciously drew upon the Biblical phrase “How are the mighty fallen” (*II Samuel* 1, 25), thereby linking the present to the sacred past and thus epitomizing the consecrated expression of public grief. Dying in battle was portrayed as the resurrection of an ancient tradition. At one of its first meetings, the Public Council for Commemoration demanded of the Minister of Defence that “IDF fallen officially be called ‘Heroes of the War for National Sovereignty’.”[110] Because of the dates chosen, such a step would symbolically equate Hagana with IDF dead. Although the government in the end did not bestow this title, it did acquire a semi-official status. In official correspondence regarding the annual award of medals to bereaved families, the Prime Minister referred to the recipients as “Heroes of National Independence,”

"Heroes of War for National Sovereignty," and "Heroes of Israel".

> Beyond the images of the boys and girls radiates the image of the parents. These wonderful young lions of Judah were not born of its granite and oaks. These lions and lionesses had parents, virtuous women and honourable men … dear parents who bequeathed their children to the coming generations and to their people.
>
> (Talmi 1952)

During construction of the family of the bereaved, it was Ben-Gurion who, more than any other public figure, remained in personal touch with the families. He wrote the foreword for many of the commemorative volumes published by bereaved families, spoke at numerous commemorative services, and frequently responded, in his own handwriting, to the letters sent him by members of these families.

Bereaved mothers received special attention. In an address whose subject was the role of parents in the education for sacrifice and patriotism, Ben-Gurion stated:

Perhaps fathers have a part [in the process] … but I am convinced that a much larger part, perhaps the main part, belongs to mothers. We have been blessed with mothers who have given us boys and girls who are the pride of their generation. It is they who will educate the future generations; it is their image that will burn like a pillar of fire before those same generations. I am aware of my incapacity to console a mother who has lost her precious child. However, it appears to me that the Jewish mother who educated her children in this spirit will not only know grief over her loss; she will also feel pride, justifiable pride, for the gift she has given her people at what may be their greatest moment in history. …[111]

In translating this policy into a programme, bereaved parents became regular invitees to State ceremonies, speakers at public gatherings, colleagues of national leaders on the reviewer's platform at military parades and State events. At the first Defence Forces Day celebration in 1949, which included the first military parade held in the fledgling state, the central stage was planned to seat 1,600 people. Each place was marked with the names of those invited. In front of the central stage and at both sides of the field where the parade would be held were other platforms, arranged in a horseshoe pattern, where bereaved parents would sit. Bereaved parents were also selected. For some, the absence of the parents of Etzel and Lehi dead was glaring.[112] In contrast, the parents of Hagana dead were not only invited, they arrived to find seats assigned to them on the specially arranged platforms.[113]

Ben-Gurion was not content, however, to differentiate between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" or "invisible," excluded parents. He also selected parents who could symbolize the type of bereavement that served national purposes, who could represent and help construct the spirit of the time. These parents became, on occasion, partners in the practice of politics, figures acquiring direct access to the Mapai leadership.

Rivka Guber: the creation of the National Bereaved Mother

Rivka Guber (1902–81) was perhaps the ideal woman to represent Labour movement ideals and recruited bereavement. She was a member of a moshav (initially Kfar Bilu and later Kfar Warburg), active in women's organizations of the Histadrut, and became known in 1942 when her husband, Mordechai, was rejected by the British Army for health reasons. She volunteered for military service in his place and was a member of the first cohort of women volunteers

inducted into the British Army's Auxiliary Training Service (ATS). Her decision to leave her two small sons and daughter at home and join the male war effort shattered all the norms of protective Jewish motherhood and made her a controversial figure. Convinced that her entire family should take part in the Yishuv's contribution to the War effort, she served for two years, until her son Efraim reached the age of 16. She then helped forge documents falsifying his age; Efraim then replaced her as the family's representative in the army. Efraim served as a Guardian (*noter*) in the Hagana for about six months, after which he joined the Jewish Brigade and saw action on the European front. "When I received your letter after the battle, I cried from happiness' responded Rivka to her son, "not only because you have survived but also because I have been blessed with the type of son I dreamt about. My heart, like yours, betrays no timidity."[114]

On 26 March 1948, while Efraim was commanding a Hagana convoy escort unit near Kfar Uriah, the Arabs attacked and he was killed. The sorrow that fell upon the couple did nothing to weaken their determination regarding the family's part in the Yishuv's collective effort against the Arabs. On 28 June 1948, Efraim's brother Zvi joined the Palmach. Three weeks later, on 8 July, Zvi was killed in the battle at Hulikat. His body was found only some months later.

In 1955, now past the age of 60, the Gubers decided to leave their original home in Kfar Warburg and settle in the Lachish region. Lachish had become the site of concerted development efforts, with many new communities established for the integration of immigrants. The Gubers settled in Noga, the first settlement established in the area. They lived in a small wooden shack, without electricity or running water, and became active in the community's development. From there they moved to Nehura, the first rural regional centre to be established in the Negev, following donation of their farm at Kfar Warburg to the National Fund. Mordechai Guber became head of the local council while Rivka became involved in early childhood education and spurred establishment of libraries in the surrounding settlements. Their activity continued into 1967, when they moved once more, this time to Kfar Achim ("brothers'), a settlement named after their sons, where they worked for the absorption of immigrants from Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Rivka Guber embodied the spirit of the Labour movement as it was physically expressed in the monuments scattered throughout the country.[115] She would often verbalize the core values of the Hagana – national Defence, pioneering, and settlement – which came to represent the core values of Israel's collectivist ideology:

Our unique situation demanded that we perceive life's meaning as a mission. … There was no need for us to search for goals: The massive wave of immigration, which swelled and engulfed us, was like spring rain. … This awareness and the circumstances provided [Mordechai] with the opportunity to do what he did in order to establish dozens of immigrant settlements – and I was there to help him, as much as I could. …[116]

Given her activities and beliefs, she became an exemplar in the campaign to recruit the masses to Mapai-directed national projects such as immigrant absorption on collective farms. Ben-Gurion's attitude toward *The Brothers Book* (Guber 1950),[117] in which Guber recounts the history of her sons' short lives and their readiness to volunteer and to do battle, transformed the book into a canonical text, an inspirational tome of the first order. The sobriquet "the boys' mother," attached to Guber's name until her death, reflected her status as a paragon to be emulated especially by bereaved parents.[118]

For Labour supporters, Guber became the voice of the fallen soldiers' parents. Whenever possible, Ben-Gurion presented her as the "state mother," an honour she attempted to realize. In

return, she came to call Ben-Gurion the *Champion of Israeli Sovereignty*.[119]

The Gelbgisser brothers: divided in their death

The story of the Gelbgisser family's sacrifice parallels that of the Guber family. Likewise it contains the loss of two sons – the twins Shlomo and Menachem – during the War of Independence, participation in settlement, belief in patriotic values and steadfast Zionist practice. However, the Gelbgisser family was awarded none of the recognition and public exposure accorded to the Guber family. The Gelbgissers had come to Israel from Eastern Europe and gone to join other pioneering farmers in Mishmar Hayarden. In 1929, they turned to raising strawberries. Three of their children joined the British Army in 1940. The twin brothers, Shlomo and Menachem, served in the Jewish Brigade, where they assisted in the rescue of refugee children in Europe. Their letters describe how they visited orphanages and monasteries in Italy, Belgium and Holland, searching everywhere for Jewish children who had managed to survive. The rescued children occasionally wrote emotional letters to the family as well as newspaper articles describing their experiences. Gradually, the brothers' political views came to approach those of Etzel, which they eventually joined. Both participated in the conquest of Jaffa. Shlomo, who joined Etzel after completing his tour of duty with the Brigade, participated in the Yehudia campaign and fell on 19 May 1948, five days after declaration of statehood, during the attack on Wilhelma. The attack, although officially an Etzel operation, was conducted in coordination with IDF forces. Menachem had joined the IDF after its absorption of Etzel forces.

As the father of three soldiers in the field, the elder Gelbgisser could have prevented Menachem's induction into the army and demanded that he not be put on active duty. He did in fact do so but rescinded his objection when Shlomo was killed: "I would like to cancel the appeal I presented regarding the release from mandatory induction of my fourth son [Menachem]. After one of my three sons, already serving in the army, was killed yesterday, my fourth son must take his place."[120] Gelbgisser thus brought about a situation where his three remaining sons were all concurrently fighting against the invading Arab armies. During the *Altalena* incident, Menachem deserted his unit and returned home; He had found it difficult to fire upon his ideological brothers stationed on the ship. With the incident's conclusion, he returned to the IDF and was assigned to the 53rd Regiment of the Givati Brigade, and stationed at Kibbutz Negba. He was killed on 13 July 1948 while fending off the Egyptian attack on the kibbutz. According to a fellow soldier assigned to his position, Menachem's last words were: "My brother is calling me." After his death, his mother expressed the hope that the death of her sons had contributed to the State's rebirth, and that they "were not needless victims."[121]

In the absence of any official State mandate to commemorate Etzel dead – as opposed to Hagana dead – commemoration became a personal and local government project. Six years after the deaths of the Gelbgisser brothers, several Etzel veterans decided to erect a synagogue in their memory on a plot owned by their parents in Givatayim. The name chosen for the synagogue was "The SM Tabernacle" (the initials of the two brothers, Shlomo and Menachem). In letters addressed to veterans of the dissident movements, pleas were made for financial contributions.[122]

Figure 4.1 A private ceremony for un-commemorated soldiers: Menachem Begin with Beitar's youth in a synagogue at Givatatim at a remembrance ceremony in honour of the Gelbgisser twins (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

On 7 July 1954, on the anniversary of Menachem's death, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the plot. The ceremony was staged as a Herut Movement gathering. None of the senior government officials invited to participate and address the audience arrived; invited representatives of the Ministry of Defence also failed to appear. Menachem Begin was the sole public figure present. Thus, despite the Gelbgissers' hopes that the ceremony would result in State recognition of their sons' deeds, they were awarded with official disregard. Comments made by the local Rabbi to Yaakov, the elder Gelbgisser – "Your sons' … dream will not be fulfilled until the Land of Israel extends over both banks of the Jordan River … [I pray] that this liberation is soon completed"[123] – irrevocably marked the ceremony as a political event irrespective of its original intent. Similar to Mapai's policy regarding such events, Herut had appropriated commemoration to its ideological needs and transformed the Gelbgisser ceremony into an instrument in its withdrawal from any attempt to enter the statist discourse.

The bereaved families of Etzel and Lehi, bereft of any government support, were dependent exclusively on Shelach and private contributions in their efforts to commemorate their dead:

They abandoned us. Parents. Brothers and sisters. Hurting and mourning. The State was born. Jewish policemen walk its streets. Jewish servicemen strut in parades on Independence Day. And we, the parents of these freedom fighters, are left, uninvited to the honorary rostrum, to sit among other bereaved parents for the sake of those who, like them, were anonymous soldiers in their war against the British oppressor. Today, we are indeed invisible parents, unknown bereaved parents. But the State exists nonetheless. That is our sole consolation for the loss of our two precious sons.[124]

In the face of the public recognition awarded to Mapai's bereaved mothers and its non-recognition of the bereaved mothers of those dead identified with the underground, many women associated with Etzel became embittered as they were repeatedly shunted into a corner of the public arena. They were thus obliged to construct a private culture of mourning and

commemoration in order to state their claims in the nation-building project.

The feelings of mothers belonging to the dissident camp were poignantly expressed in the bequest of Ziporah Gurion, the mother of three daughters who had served in Etzel and the wife of Yitzhak Gurion, also an Etzel member. Her husband and daughters were arrested numerous times prior to Independence. During her battle against cancer, Gurion wrote a will that was entrusted to Esther Raziel-Naor (MK, Herut). The will, opened after her death in 1957, read:

I remember the nights of turmoil and days of war and rebellion. … [What] I knew from my own experience and from the suffering faces of the mothers and wives of members of the underground. … I made a decision. I said to myself, only the body deteriorates and passes away, the spirit is eternal. … I would like a special fund to be established as part of the Museum of the Underground located in the Jabotinsky Institute for the collection of all the material on the roles played, operations conducted, the vision and execution of national liberation, the acts of defiance committed by women in the Diaspora and in Tziyyon. … The fund will provide all the means necessary for the collection of these documents, which will provide the foundations for an encyclopaedia in which the memories of all the women will be entrusted. [We will thereby learn] … to appreciate their character and quality, their contributions and actions … of those forgotten whether by choice or by accident. …[125]

After her death, her family began to implement her wishes. A public committee was formed and a collection of the material begun. This project paralleled the State's commemorative literature project. Each had a similar political purpose – to impress the image of the bereaved mothers whose children were sacrificed on the altar of national rebirth into Israel's collective memory.

However, in the face of the "counter-efforts" to commemorate these "private heroes," as the press described them, Menachem Begin surprisingly presented a statist approach in everything related to public commemoration of the nation's dead. At the opening of the inaugural meeting of Herut's National Convention, Begin outlined the difference between his approach and that of Ben-Gurion:

We … have no intention of discriminating between our undertaking and other Jewish undertakings. … We will also remember those Hagana dead … who fought shoulder-to-shoulder with us against the British oppressor … who fell while defending their country and their people at the hands of the British henchmen, the Arab bands. We will remember them all, whether they belonged to the Hagana, to Etzel or to Lehi, or to no one organisation, who united as Israel's forces and who fought and fell. … They are all sacred, they are all heroes … we will remember them all with love. In honour of them all, we will rise in a moment of silence.[126]

Summary

In order to put their respective messages across, the ruling regime and its political opposition resorted to language employing both innovative and familiar usage in order to delineate their policies and underscore their practices. Abstract terms became reified, and were associated with concrete acts and persons, as well as serving as identity markers for political movements. "*Mamlachtiut*" was a coined term which enfolded a host of meanings. Instituted by Mapai under the aegis of its authoritarian Prime Minister, it entailed both a programme of state-building and a moral directive of citizen commitment to the public good as outlined by the state's political vanguard. Nora's contested commemoration was generated in the Israeli case by a sovereignty reproduced through statism ("*mamlachtiut*") with its universalistic language ideologically camouflaging a patent exclusiveness.

The political opposition, led by Herut, chose an alternative, but not less inclusive, term in appealing to the nation and its values. In Menahem Begin's brief introduction to his book, *The Revolt* (1951), the use of "our people", "our own country", "national" is prominent and recurrent and reappears in the concluding chapter.

Harnessed to the overarching conceptual terms of state or nation were the constituent elements of family, generation, and latent groups made manifest by historical fate and converted by political agents into groups of historical destiny. Appropriation of "bereaved parents' or "the founding fathers' (*haRishonim*) were not only accidental latent and manifest groups singled out for distinction and political mobilization; the names themselves came to resonate with values of honour, respect, and exemplary merit. They became part of a hegemonic public narrative or a counter-narrative designed to induce internal and broad-based group solidarity.

For the leadership, language was a weapon. Both Ben-Gurion and Begin, as well as a number of their acolytes, were well-versed in pamphleteering, journalism, and the writing of contemporary historical events of which they were both the formulators and the participants. They were sensitive to the turn of phrase, the ideological nuances of political terms, the verbal ambiguities of a noun ripe for exploitation, if not manipulation. Ideas and ideals took precedence over material conditions. Begin expressed this outlook in a concise manner:

> … man's whole spirit must be utterly devoted to his ideal. …. Perhaps this is the only condition. All the rest will come of itself. If you have the anvil – (love of your country) – and the hammer – (the ideal of freedom) – you will undubitably [sic] find the iron from which to fashion the weapons for the struggle.
>
> (Begin 1951: 380)

Ben-Gurion was no less idealistic in his outlook although it was tempered by the necessities of being in power. In public speaking he was as bombastic as his rhetorical rival in Herut. Avneri (1958: 227) ascribes his "verbal aggressiveness of uncompromising rhetoric" to a screen masking his anxieties regarding the weaknesses of the Jewish state. At the same time, Ben-Gurion chose his words with care, pointing out, for example, that "the concepts of Zionism and Socialism are but different expressions and disclosures of a singular and solitary enterprise and vision. … " (Avneri 1958: 234). His sensitivity to the role of discourse, if not dialogue, in forwarding political objectives was clearly manifest in the arena of memorialization. In the regime's selective mobilization of bereaved parents, the choice often fell upon individuals like Rivka Guber, individuals whose lifehistory was already embedded in the enterprises that reflected the ideological values of the Labour movement. These individuals in turn, by their speeches from public commemoration rostrums and their writings conveying their personal bereavement reproduced and reinforced the regime's *weltanschuung*. In this manner, language itself was mobilized in the service of regime support and renewal.

5 The politics of historiography

The exclusion from military history and documentary of the War of Independence

Israel's War of Independence, one and a half years in duration, contributed the main content and symbolic thrust to Israeli culture in the early years of the State. Poetry and literature were dedicated to the subject; commemorative sites provided major targets for artistic expression; and school texts and educational activities focused on its narrative. A substantial part of these activities was not spontaneous. National leadership initiated a series of literary and historical projects to document and reconstruct from the diverse sources the story of Israel's rebirth. Official historiography, whether written as war diaries, historical works, literary collections, poetry, or letters from the front, was loyal to the official interpretative package decreed by Mapai. More particularly, Ben-Gurion's desire to stamp his mark on the nation's collective memory energized and channelled historiographical production.

Not all the narrators, nor all the historical events of the period, were included in the official historiography. As will be shown below, there were attempts to set forth parallel accounts exposing the contribution of other military forces to the independence struggle.

Ben-Gurion grasped the political salience of writing and distributing his own version of the struggle for independence. After retiring from government and secluding himself at Sde Boker in 1963, he turned to writing his memoirs. He had served as General Secretary of the Histadrut, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. He was thus acutely aware of his personal role in the State's rebirth and its maturation. At the time he claimed that writing his memoirs was more important than anything he had yet done (see Tzahor 1996: 138). The historical muse was a belated concern for this Zionist pioneer and statesman. In effect, as Anita Shapira notes, “until the establishment of the State, Ben-Gurion had paid little attention to historical issues or to culture in general.” (Shapira 1997b: 225–26)[1] However, once national rebirth was achieved, Ben-Gurion realized the long-term political value attached to his version of the events. He subsequently invested considerable effort in writing and distributing texts, in addition to his personal biography, that clearly informed readers as to who was to receive credit for this achievement.

Politically, Ben-Gurion's crafted historiography represented a direct extension of the legislation aimed at distancing Etzel and Lehi dead from the national pantheon. In 1950, the Prime Minister wrote: “I refuse to grant Etzel any recognition. … Although I must avoid differentiating between the Hagana and the others who worked toward the same purpose, I will

not rank Etzel alongside the Hagana. … ”[2] He identified the means and strategies required to promote his messages. Through the Mapai Party and the Ministry of Defence recruited colleagues would embark upon an enterprise of cultural education both for the population at large and for the military in particular.

A cornerstone of the official state history was the *The Hagana Chronicles* [*Sefer Toldot HaHagana*] published by Israel's Ministry of Defence. The Right expressed its fury over an official institution's willingness to publish a seemingly non-partisan history book that nonetheless ignored the opposition's role in the War. The eighth volume of *Chronicles*, entitled *The History of the Hagana*, was released in 1973, on the eve of the Jewish New Year. The idea was to recount the story of Jewish defence in Israel from Tel Hai (March 1920) to the order announcing establishment of the IDF (31 May 1948). A further aim was to “faithfully tell the story as a gift to the IDF and ensuing generations, to the entire nation, and its youth.”[3] Ben-Gurion put forward an editorial framework to prepare the volume. A group of historians headed by professor Ben-Tsion Dinur (a member of Israel's first Knesset and a future Education Minister from Mapai) had initially raised the idea for a publication of this sort. The two suggestions were combined at the initiative of Ben-Gurion and Professor Dinur, a leading academic of Jewish history, was asked to take on the task of chief editor. Within a very brief time, Yehuda Slutzky succeeded Dinur. The Ministry of Defence and the Zionist Federation were appointed publishers. The project was officially announced on 17 July 1949.

A review of the text discloses the total dearth of references to Etzel and Lehi. Only one organization, the Hagana, is mentioned. The text's intent was to position the Hagana as the forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces. In the face of the contradictory evidence regarding the events that was brought forth by the Underground's veterans, one of the editors, Shaul Avigur, adamantly stressed Labour's version of the IDF's origins:

> I believe it necessary to emphasize this point given the increasingly widespread and opposing view claiming that the IDF and the Hagana are ostensibly two distinct and separate historical entities. We are convinced that our book refutes this idea. … In the years following the War of Independence, many works appeared authored by recruits of what we consider to be renegade organizations. Their aim was, among others, to obscure the central role of the Hagana in the establishment of the State. The impression gained from their letters and publications is that three Underground movements were active in Palestine: the Hagana, Etzel and Lehi, each of which should be considered equal in its historical significance. I hope that our book will decisively refute this version of the circumstances surrounding the State's rebirth. I believe that every thoughtful reader will be forced to admit that the Hagana is the only organization that strode along the tracks of Jewish history in recent years. The other organizations were fleeting occurrences on the pages of history.[4]
>
> Beyond the ruling elite's ability to produce authorized texts recounting the past was its power to distribute those texts and guarantee their maximal exposure. The editors of the *Chronicles* produced an abridged version for popular consumption, as well as translations into other languages.

Ben-Gurion's version of the War of Independence also infiltrated other written works through publications directly connected with Mapam, such as Sifriat Hapoalim. As early as December 1948, this publishing house issued *With Our Troops*, a book containing reports written by IDF observers and notes chronicling the War's progress. These carefully selected and edited personal

recollections and correspondence were considered germane, “objective” accounts of contemporary events. The volume represented, in effect, the first stage in the socio-cultural production of a fixed collective experience of the War. In fact, it was heavily laden with references to Ben-Gurion's account of the War given in his diaries.

Subsequent literary activity substantiates this conclusion regarding post-War historiography. The majority of writers who documented the conduct of the War identified themselves with Ben-Gurion. Their overwhelming reliance on his narrative prevented cross-references to texts free of Ben-Gurion's direct involvement in their composition. This tendency incorporated an almost blind faith in the accuracy of the details reported by him, especially in his *Israel at War*, a book regarded as the authoritative historical record of the pre-War period and its early stages. Ben-Gurion's personal diaries were extensively cited in the introduction to *The History of the War of Independence*. Although published in 1953 in response to *The Hagana Chronicles* and supposedly meant to compete with that authorized rendition of the events, the two-volume *Palmach Yearbook* (Gilad 1953) refrains from suggesting an alternative reading of the past. Shapira (1985) found that few of the details mentioned or contentions made in these volumes deviated from the authorized historiography. Later works, although written in the 1970s after Ben-Gurion's departure from public affairs, likewise strayed little from this path: consider the works by John and David Kimchi (1973), Yehuda Slutzky (1978), and Michael Bar Zohar (1977). With the exclusion of Begin's *The Revolt* (1950), the story of Israel's War of Independence remained uniform and faithful to the interpretation proffered by Mapai's leadership.

Ben-Gurion was not content to mould the contours of the history recounted in “scholarly” texts. His incisive realization of the influence exerted by literature and the press on the public's perception of the past led him to diligently nurture close ties with writers and intellectuals, whom he viewed as Mapai's ideological agents. They were to be entrusted with creating the aesthetics of the party's political dominance (Lebel 2002). During Israel's first decade as an independent nation-state, writers became part of what Shils (1973:30) terms the “charismatic locus,” one of the sites of spiritual, cultural and political influence, or what Eisenstadt (1973:4) calls the “social core”. They became Ben-Gurion's companions and, as Zand (2000) has described it, they were engrossed by his personality. They helped Ben-Gurion construct a national culture and ideological consensus while accepting the accompanying social and economic privileges; lacking the traditions of an authentic autonomous elite, they fought no intellectual battles.

Ben-Gurion did not hide his attitudes regarding the normative and political roles of another elite, the nation's reporters. In a speech to senior editors and reporters, he expressed his view of media personnel:

Like teachers, journalists are educators. Teachers educate only the young; journalists educate everyone who reads a newspaper. Journalists cannot work just to support themselves. … Journalism is a public service, not merely a private pursuit. … The journalist is not employed by his publisher; he is employed by his public.[5]

Government relations with the press were to remain within Ben-Gurion's exclusive domain of influence for years.

In the campaign for construction of collective memory, political elites and dominant parties obviously enjoy several structural advantages. They control the media, nourish the press, and have privileged access to documents. This facilitates the relatively effective flow and distribution of political messages throughout the channels of social communication. The exclusionary outcomes of this structure can be illustrated as follows: in contrast to *Davar*, Mapai's journalistic

outlet, distribution of Herut newspapers through IDF channels was prohibited. Practically speaking, this meant that no IDF education officers openly identified with the Right. Moreover, these officers were explicitly ordered to screen newspapers and written material prior to their distribution to IDF soldiers.[6]

The similarity between attitudes toward journalists and those toward teachers was far from coincidental. Unlike literature or the press, education, as a distinct arena of public service, is formally subject to policy formulated in the political sphere. Considering the weighty influence exerted by a teacher, such regulation will be more strictly managed in fledgling nation-states where an autonomous, trenchant network of mass communication is missing. Furthermore, in such situations, where teachers and educators act as "political knowledge agents," whether explicitly or implicitly, their impact on the formation of political and normative attitudes is even more consequential.[7] Control over the teaching staff is, accordingly, the linchpin of control over an evolving political culture. In the present case, this structure of control effectively prevented teachers identified with the Underground's values from teaching in the public schools. Teachers who were former Etzel and Lehi supporters already employed in the system were discharged, and applicants with similar associations were barred from employment. This policy was soon brought before the courts. In 1950, Dr. Israel Eldad, a former Lehi member and one of its foremost ideologues, appealed to Israel's High Court of Justice to revoke the Minister of Defence's decision prohibiting him from teaching in a Tel Aviv high school.[8] Although the decision, handed down on 8 February 1951, declared that obstruction of Dr. Eldad's employment was illegal, Eldad was never to hold a teaching position in the Israeli public school system.

Etzel and Lehi veterans were not the only ones to lock horns with Ben-Gurion on the subject of national historiography. When challenges to the authorized narrative of the War of Independence and its actors arose, Ben-Gurion would launch into often-vitriolic tirades. Critics within the party and among its coalition partners were not exempted. For instance, as early as the First Knesset, a heated argument arose between Ben-Gurion and Yisrael Galili (representing Mapam and the kibbutzim). During its course, Ben-Gurion pointed toward Galili and asked: "What did the opposition do for the sake of national rebirth?"[9] A tumult immediately arose. Moshe Sneh angrily left the hall while Galili delivered his first Knesset speech, in which he detailed Hagana actions throughout the War. He closed with this painful comment: "How can someone say such things about me and my comrades?"

Such episodes were often repeated. At a Mapai campaign rally held in Jaffa prior to elections to the Third Knesset, Ben-Gurion again turned to Galili and his colleagues with the challenge: "Where were you?" In a Knesset speech delivered during Israel's tenth Independence Day celebrations, Ben-Gurion listed those who had helped to shape the IDF but excluded the names of Hagana leaders such as Eliyahu Golomb, Shaul Avigur, Yitzchak Sadeh, and Yisrael Galili. Such attacks and insults were not universally accepted. In an *Open Letter to the Chief of the General Staff* addressed to Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the author, apparently a Hagana veteran, wrote:

How could you forget? Can someone forget that the Israel Defence Forces sprang from the roots of the Hagana? … Who can forget that the Navy was built from the Palmach's maritime units? … You, apparently, have. They say that with age one tends to remember childhood experiences … Have you yielded to senility? If so, you cannot stand the test of your military heritage. Are you capable of reviving your youth, dear commander?[10]

Paradoxically, the conflict with Galili forced Ben-Gurion to admit to some of the contributions made by the Underground. In order to undermine Galili's claims regarding the Hagana's

historical status, Ben-Gurion granted Etzel and Lehi some recognition, such as the award of the Hagana Medal. But this gesture did little to alleviate Begin's wrath and derision, expressed in his comment that Ben-Gurion was ready to give credit to the Underground's dead but not to its living.

It thus transpired that the person who, by manipulation of institutions and symbols had invested so much to guarantee that the story of Israel's War of Independence would be *his* story, created a situation in which he was considered not only "the leader of the War of Independence" but, in the words of Mapai's authorized chronicler, Anita Shapira, "he verily wrote its history" (Shapira 1985: 9). Shapira continues:

> The question of what Ben-Gurion chose to write down and what he preferred not to is itself worthy of study … When he summarized a discussion after its conclusion, he would record the events as he understood them or as he wished to understand them.
>
> (Shapira, 1985:23)

She adds:

> Very few ventured to state an opinion that contradicted those held by the Leninist prophet, legislator and commander. … As the years passed, they forgot his faults … and even painted his weaknesses as strengths, such as his taste for absolute government and vilification of rivals within the party, while labelling them as troublemakers. …
>
> (Shapira 1985: 9)

Hence, these tendencies were not limited to relationships with his political competitors; the management of the war and its military operations were similarly treated. When investigating the historiography of Latrun (a battle in which Hagana ineptness led to a huge number of casualties), Shapira stated that "as long as Ben-Gurion continued to serve as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, criticism of the Latrun incident was limited to rumours and literary descriptions. For many years, Yisrael Barr's text was the only written account of this event." (Shapira 1985: 9)

Ben-Gurion's strategy was to appropriate history to political interests. Along the way, he was able to portray his role within national memory as perhaps the sole guiding spirit behind statehood and the general manager of the War of Independence. Shaul Avigur summarized Ben-Gurion's strategy as follows: "I, who saved you in the past, will also protect you in the future; you should defend and support my government."[11]

The pervasive hold of the Ben-Gurionist historical diktat cannot be underestimated. On 9 June 1959, a Knesset session was held on the subject of Jewish consciousness. During the session, Esther Raziel-Naor (MK, Herut), remonstrated:

A history book is being used that contains the sentence "Dov Gruner, the terrorist, was hanged". … This book was recommended by the Ministry of Education. … Is it possible to hide from our youth, that the Jewish State arose once more thanks to all those who fought, worked, produced, built, and died for its sake for ten full years? This fact has been forgotten by them [that is, the Mapai-backed authors of the text].[12]

Raziel-Naor had aptly expressed the Underground's sorrow over non-recognition of their dead as well as their increasing sense of exclusion, the consequences of delegitimization. This was a later expression of what had commenced more than a decade earlier.

The historiography and memory of military fallen

Beyond production of a general, historical account of the War of Independence, Ben-Gurion also supported a project that rather explicitly communicated his message regarding the events and his role in them. At some point, he decided to produce a book in which the names of all those who had fallen during the War would be inscribed. The book was meant to define for the reader, clearly and decisively, the boundaries separating those included from those excluded from Mapai's fellowship of self-sacrifice. Reference was also to be made, on a personal basis, to the families of those to whom the state was most indebted. In effect, the project sprang from an idea raised by Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir, a member of the editorial board of *The Hagana Chronicles*. A veteran of the Hagana, she organized the IDF Archives within the framework of the Ministry of Defence. On 29 January 1950, it was decided to transfer the department in which she worked to the Commemoration Unit,[13] and convert it into an authorized memory agent. Pinkerfeld-Amir's task, begun in April 1948, was defined as the "exhaustive collection of personal material regarding the War's dead so as to carefully prepare these materials as inclusive testimony to their sacrifice." The material would be deposited in a shrine. The work was to be done, at "her own initiative," as these activities were not included in any overall plan.[14] After receiving Ben-Gurion's blessings, her project was officially launched.

At a meeting held on 15 June 1950, Pinkerfeld-Amir and Ben-Gurion decided that material would be collected relating to every phase of a man's life: biographical information, photos, comments and reminiscences, testimonials and articles as well as objects related to an individual's spiritual legacy, such as letters, diaries, collected works of art, libraries, and so forth. It was also decided that a Heroes' Shrine should house the material. A reading room would abut the Shrine. The Prime Minister felt that it would be advisable to include soldiers active prior to Israel's declaration of its independence. Pinkerfeld-Amir noted that in the original plan the Shrine would include all national war dead from the period of the Shomer, the Hagana, World War Two, the period of illegal immigration and the rebellion.[15]

Pinkerfeld-Amir was subsequently placed at the head of the Servicemen's Commemoration Section. Her staff diligently laboured to collect all the personal effects available, from photographs to letters, but also eulogies and obituaries, commemorative pamphlets and books. Questionnaires were distributed to the friends and family of the dead in order to collect as much information as possible. The concept informing this massive effort was not confined to that of a national "memory bank"; rather, it was the assumption that the War's dead were characterized by "national personal values" whose "inculcation was a vital asset for the entire nation." To do so, the Section's staff requested any material that might "shed any light on the [fallen soldier's] views, attitudes toward the country and its problems. … "[16]

A summary review of the questionnaire quickly reveals exactly who displayed these "national personal values." Under "Details of Military Service," the following items are listed: service abroad, service locally, the Hagana, recruitment, training, active service, unit, battles. The possibility of serving in Etzel or Lehi was not raised. Because the only pre-State affiliation mentioned is the Hagana, the authors of the questionnaire imply that only Hagana members, whether living or dead, embody the national defence ethos.[17] Had this project been confined to archival purposes, it would remain interesting but tangential to our argument. Instead, the long-term goal of the project was to convert the Archives into a national education centre, where schoolchildren would be exposed to and encouraged to write about the "martyrs' heritage," as it was called, a source of lofty values. Pinkerfeld-Amir's idea received additional support from Yad

Labanim, the public association involved in commemoration whose members were primarily bereaved parents.

The first in the *Yizkor* series, the title chosen by Pinkerfeld-Amir, was published in 1955; it was based on a collection of about 5,000 files.[18] The editors note that, like the legislation that assigned official "war dead" status on the basis of the date of the incident during which the soldier died, the volume

includes the names of all those fallen in Israel's War of Independence, during the period beginning with the UN declaration of 29 November 1947 until 10 March 1949. … The book's direct aim is to commemorate our soldiers who sacrificed their lives to achieve independence and national redemption. We should note, however, that this collection … is to be used as an accurate source for those scholars who would devote themselves to describing the sociological background and psychological motives of this new generation of *Hashmonaim*.[19]

Pinkerfeld-Amir's efforts, heartily supported by Ben-Gurion, created an institutionalized, smoothly run system within the Ministry of Defence that laboured on behalf of the construction of national memory sites. The generous funding, the large and dedicated staff, together with support from the political leadership, facilitated the painstaking collection of items. Drafts of the written biographies were reviewed by parents who filled in the missing particulars. When basic personal details were missing, the names were sent to the Ministry of Immigration, local government offices and employers, and families residing overseas. The names of the fallen were published in the daily press and regularly transmitted over national radio, together with requests for additional information.[20]

The evolution of the Heroes' Shrine deserves some further attention. After the idea of creating a shrine housing the original documents was accepted, the issue of its location arose. It was Pinkerfeld-Amir who, as early as 1949, demanded that the shrine be erected on Mount Herzl, near the entrance to the military cemetery. Ben-Gurion objected to its proximity to the cemetery but pledged to locate the building within Jerusalem. He even approved the project's proposed budget and requested that a sketch of the structure be prepared. Both were prepared by her brother, the architect Yaakov Pinkerfeld.[21] Yad Labanim later accepted her proposal in principle, yet made a similar but independent request. Pinkerfeld-Amir viewed the role of the shrine as separate from that of military cemeteries and monuments. The need for such an institution was based on the fear that the documents, whose collection was on the verge of completion, would be neglected if a repository was not found for them.

To Pinkerfeld-Amir, the individual commemorative volumes to be placed in the library and personally managed by her as part of the Heroes' Shrine would be uniform in style and format, parallel to the uniformity characterizing the gravestones found in military cemeteries. The texts would be "typewritten, without a [carbon] copy," because "the volumes in the shrine would follow the principle of uniqueness – each one individual, and under the nation's protection."[22] It appears that she viewed the preparation of these books as a sacred act, similar to the preparation of arcane, well-guarded religious manuscripts. Consonant with this attitude, the volumes would be placed in a circular format, its "gallery empty but for the stacks housing the nearly 500 books placed around its walls; in the centre, an eternal flame would burn."[23]

A similar project begun at about the same time was preparation of the book entitled *Gvilei Esh* (*Parchments of Fire*). The project was rooted in Ben-Gurion's view that the community of the dead, as a symbolic entity, was of unique educational worth for inculcation of the values – such as voluntary extension of tours of duty – that supported the nation-building enterprise. Thus, on 7

December 1949, the first announcements of the intention to produce an "anthology of the creative works written by fallen soldiers" appeared in the press and on the radio. This request was directed to "parents and relatives, friends and acquaintances of those fallen during the War of Independence." Specifically, they were asked to forward "creative works – letters, diaries, poems, stories, travelogues, theoretical and scientific texts, paintings, sculptures, musical works and so forth – to the Commemoration Unit at their earliest convenience."[24]

The task of editing the anthology was entrusted to the poet Reuben Avinoam. Once again, "entry" into the confines of a cultural-educational project was limited to those who had fallen in the course of the conflict with the Arabs. Ben-Gurion made clear his preference for citations from A.D. Gordon and even his own works rather than the writings of Jabotinsky or Uri Zvi Greenberg.[25] His stance was rooted in the belief he wished to propagate that the War's dead were members of a spiritual elite who, by their deaths, had joined a select group, the carriers of ideologically edifying qualities of the first order. Therefore, one of the nation's moral obligations was to assemble their literary works.

At the literary event held to celebrate the publication of *Gvilei Esh*, Ben-Gurion made a speech directed at the nation's youth in which he described the models who displayed these virtues and, perhaps more importantly, those who did not:

You've all probably heard about young people apprehended in the process of committing a robbery or a rape, about bands of political hooligans like those who try to bomb the homes of government ministers or stone the Knesset … [yet] you have also heard about how other young people withstood the Arab bands before the State was established, and how they fought the Arab armies after independence.[26]

The "political hooligans' to whom he referred were the Etzel and Lehi sympathizers who had instigated a violent public confrontation a few days earlier in protest against the government's intention to renew diplomatic ties with Germany. That clash, organized by Herut, had ended with the participants stoning the Knesset. Ben-Gurion's speech – by mentioning only opposition to current issues – demonstrated his implacable evasion of any recognition of the Underground's contribution to the War. The Knesset session, which had been devoted to national memory and commemoration, was exploited by Ben-Gurion to verbally scuffle with his opponents. This tactic, all too common among politicians, nonetheless had serious impacts on the nation's collective memory of the past.

The first real test of the place to be awarded to Etzel and Lehi dead in the statist commemoration literature arose during the treatment of the Oil Refineries incident.[27] Yosef Dekel mirrored the operative exclusionary regulations in his statement that "casualties from the 30 December 1947 raid on the Haifa Oil Refineries are not listed in any military records as war dead, nor do they appear in our files as IDF dead." According to Nehemia Argov, Ben-Gurion's Military Secretary, they were not to be included in the *Yizkor* volumes given that "insufficient evidence has been found to submit their names to the Soldiers' Compensation Commission."[28] Hence, they were also ineligible for mention in the official commemorative literature soon to be written.

Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir stubbornly fought for inclusion of those who had died in the attack, as she expressed in a letter under the heading "the Refineries' victims are to be counted as recruits in all its aspects. … Many of the participants [i.e., Refinery workers] who were undoubtedly Hagana members and working under cover, confined to the site as an important first line position, have the right to be remembered just like those who fell during any other operation."[29]

By treating the Refineries' workers as "unofficial" members of the Hagana, Pinkerfeld-Amir hoped to incorporate them into the community identified as the wellspring of national heroes.[30] She went so far as to request that the said workers be conscripted retroactively so as to be eligible for inclusion in her book.[31] Pinkerfeld-Amir also made it clear that her purpose was not substantive, a ploy meant to help the families acquire compensation or other concrete benefits, but symbolic, as a means to accept them within the official family of the bereaved.

It should be understood that Pinkerfeld-Amir's efforts were in large part determined by the demands of standing legislation, which stipulated that retrospective conscription of the deceased enabled their inclusion in the official register of those "killed in action," a status that would have entitled them to State commemoration and their families to state support. At the same time, the Director of the IDF Archives requested that the Refineries gather "as quickly as possible all available information about the casualties, such as dates, biographical details, photographs, personal milestones, recollections, and so forth … " while noting that "the Refineries tragedy is an incident deserving special mention" within the framework of the Archives' commemorative activities. It appears that Pinkerfeld-Amir personally initiated inclusion of the victims within the commemorative literature, presumably without anticipating intervention from other authorized sources or political-legislative actions.

Cases of such acts of policy delineation by those responsible for its implementation – as opposed to its formulation – is commonly found in the scholarly literature. Administrators frequently deviate from the bureaucratically determined confines of their authority in order to promote policy appropriate to their organizational affiliations and professional values. Thus, questionnaires were sent to the dead soldiers' families from the office of the Director of the IDF Archives by way of the Refineries' management. On 22 December 1948, the Director also sent a letter to the Refineries' Commemoration Committee informing them that actions were being taken to "preserve the memory of our fallen soldiers; we intend to prepare an inclusive *Yizkor* book containing their names as well."[32] Although his response denied the Refineries' request to publish a special commemorative volume devoted to the incident's victims, he assured them that their names would be included in a future comprehensive volume prepared by his office.

The attitude of the IDF Archives toward inclusion of the Refineries' dead within the commemorative literature reveals that the procedures applied by the Commemorative Unit, as transmitted to Pinkerfeld-Amir, were to become official policy. Its announcement that "if any of the fallen were members of the Hagana at the time of their deaths, whether or not they were completing a tour of duty, they will be counted among those who sacrificed themselves during the War"[33] essentially broadened State recognition of the dead beyond what Ben-Gurion had intended.

This humanitarian expansiveness, which ignored attempts to maintain central, political control over the nation's memory sites, was not, however, extended to the Underground's dead. Families of those Etzel and Lehi members who had lost their lives during Hagana-led operations were categorically denied entry into the official family of the bereaved. This exclusion is pithily illustrated by the experience of the Gelbgisser family whose twin sons, Shlomo and Menachem, were killed in action. The names of the brothers – the only set of twins who fell during the War of Independence – do not appear in any State publication honouring the dead. Nor was one line dedicated to them by the period's "court poets." Although "they left no literary heritage to speak of, the editors of the polished and valuable commemorative book [i.e., *Gvilei Esh*] did not bother or feel it necessary to request any material about them."[34] This point becomes clearer when we consider that one of the twins, Menachem, is included in a volume commemorating IDF dead: he

was killed in May 1949, after his unit, originally part of Etzel, had joined the IDF; the reorganization qualified him as an IDF conscript. Shlomo, Menachem's twin, had died earlier, as a member of Etzel; he was therefore automatically excluded from mention.

Under the caption "Discrimination – Even in Condolence," the twins' father, Yaakov, wrote to Ben-Gurion:

I notified you in the same letter that I had lost both my beloved sons during the War of Independence. Honouring the memory of one son while ostracizing the memory of the other reveals how insincere are your condolences regarding the grief felt by bereaved parents. It shows a lack of understanding of their pain, and even adds to their grief.[35]

Together with his letter, Gelbgisser returned the condolence card he had received following Menachem's death, which had been sent from the Prime Minister's office.

Entry into the national "family of the bereaved"

Parallel to the production of statist commemorative literature, Ben-Gurion endowed privately published volumes with his imprimatur. His sanction was meant to convert the commemoration literature initiated by families or organizations into widely distributed and socially meaningful documents. He scrupulously collected these books, read them and wrote comments in the margins; he drafted emotional letters to the families, often adding a personal foreword to the separate volumes. An excellent example of this process of transformation of private texts into widely-distributed public property are *The Brothers' Book* (1950) and *Toward the Lights of Lachish*, written by Rivka Guber, a teacher by training, which became "best sellers," texts representing Israel's emerging statist culture. Introductions to the texts were written by the Mapai leadership, Golda Meir and David Ben-Gurion. The books' official aura gradually increased owing to a series of actions taken over the years by official bodies. After publication of *Toward the Lights of Lachish*, Rivka Guber was named "Israel's Mother" by *Hed Hachinuch* (*The Voice of Education*), the widely circulated gazette published by the Federation of Teachers.[36] Her books were defined as "instructional," "required reading" for schoolchildren.[37] In the process, Guber was transformed from a bereaved mother into an author, a leading intellectual and shaper of public opinion. As a political ally of Ben-Gurion she had access to all Mapai institutions. A letter from Ben-Gurion to Guber indicates his decision to transform the book and its format into a model for cultural–political indoctrination.[38]

The Ministry of Defence published and distributed several editions of Guber's book, followed by its translation into various languages, all financed by the Ministry. "We felt that the book would glorify the country for the Diaspora as well" wrote the Gubers to Ben-Gurion upon receipt of funds to cover the cost of translating the book into English.[39] Used as a statement of the evolving society's values during its battle for national survival, the translation was distributed abroad as part of the campaign to secure foreign support.

Locally, as could be expected, Rivka Guber became a prominent public figure, and earned the nickname "the boys' mother," as the quintessential symbol of bereaved Israeli motherhood. Many of the public events held in Guber's honour, including the tenth and twentieth celebrations of her books' publication, were attended by government officials and Mapai leaders. Guber was a member of the Labour Party.

The Gubers were not the only ones to enjoy Ben-Gurion's politically motivated assistance upon their entry into the official family of the bereaved. In March 1963, the parents of Varda Friedman, killed in 1956, wrote the following to Ben-Gurion:

At the … seventh anniversary of our tragedy, we turn to you. … Until now, the name of our cherished Varda has not appeared among the lists of revered victims that fell while on duty. … For us, heartbroken parents, the only thing left is her sacred memory. … For the sake of future generations, we think it appropriate to guarantee that her dear name be enshrined in a *Yizkor* volume.[40]

Although Varda Friedman was not a soldier in the strict sense – she was a volunteer working in a moshav for resettled new immigrants (*olim* in Hebrew) – she did participate in a project, immigrant absorption, having political as well as social significance, one that was strongly supported by Ben-Gurion. Thus, it was Ben-Gurion himself who suggested that a commemorative volume be published in the memory of Varda Friedman, whose parents were from Kfar Vitkin, a moshav closely associated with Mapai. Such a volume, which functioned as a means to appropriate her memory, was used as a lever to equate the immigrant absorption project with service in the IDF:

To me, the act of [moshav youth] meeting directly with immigrants and extending them human comfort and assistance is no less important than serving in the IDF … Such a book … will be enormously educational. …[41]

From his offices at the Ministry of Defence in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion subsequently organized the book's steering committee which included himself. The team visited villages where Varda had worked, gathered material, interviewed the young people she had worked with, and screened stories about her. Ben-Gurion "appointed" himself as editor-in-chief; protocols of the committee's meetings indicated his intense involvement in decisions about the book's content, its structure and chapter titles:[42]

To me, this book has two aims. In the first place, it is dedicated to the memory of Varda and those others who survived: but mainly, its aim is to inform the young about what it means to support immigration, … to be interested in [the immigrants'] fate. … It should serve as an example to [the young].[43]

Thus, in the case of Varda Friedman, like that of the Guber brothers, Ben-Gurion felt little compunction in bridling the recollection and commemoration of the dead to his chosen political goals.

Shelach as a counter histriography agent

Shelach's leadership saw itself as agents of collective memory, the guardians of its memory sites, avowed to present their version of the "true" story of Israel's rebellion against the British. Among its other tasks "Shelach, as an organization, battles against the distortion of history and the obfuscation of the truth. One of its aims is to construct a shrine to our heroes so that their memory will live forever in the nation's history."[44] So wrote Shelach's leaders about the goals they had set for themselves during the nation's first decade.

Shelach undertook a series of projects that paralleled those initiated by the state. As opposed to the *Yizkor* volumes, which excluded Etzel and Lehi dead from their pages, the organization published a volume entitled *Haporshot* (*The Renegades*), dedicated to the Underground's dead. On 5 December 1948, the Jabotinsky Institute and the Herut Office for Servicemen on Active Duty announced plans to produce a book to commemorate those who had fought in the rebellion against British rule, irrespective of their ideological orientation or organizational affiliation. This implied that the book would also include the names of all Hagana members who fell in the cause of independence. Thus, its intent was to recount a chapter in the nation's history that the

authorized historiography had neglected by focusing exclusively on the military conflict with the invading Arab armies.

Despite absence of government financial and organizational support and the lack of an orderly and detailed list of dead and their addresses, all the material was eventually gathered, including photographs of the majority of the dead, and transferred to the Jabotinsky Institute. Material relating to those killed after 29 November 1949 was transferred to the Commemoration Unit at the Ministry of Defence, which had guaranteed to include the names of Etzel and Lehi members within a *Yizkor* volume dedicated to all those who had surrendered their lives in the war against the Arabs.

In the end, the book, published by the Jabotinsky Institute and Herut in 1956, contained names of the Underground's dead only. This outcome, contrary to the project's original aims, was a direct response to Ben-Gurion's policy. Those who had served in the Hagana while fighting against the British were recognized as "legitimate" dead by Ben-Gurion and entered the authorized commemorative texts, irrespective of the dates or official confirmation of the circumstances of their deaths. Organizational – meaning political – affiliation was openly declared as the determining factor.

In protest, the editors of Shelach wrote the following in the introduction to their commemorative volume, entitled *To Their Eternal Memory*:

In the heat of the revolt preceding the United Nations' decision and during the war against the invading Arab armies, many died. Their perseverance in the face of the enemy … astounded the entire world. Among these heroes were those who willingly sacrificed themselves to the British executioner so that our nation could be reborn. However, after the establishment of the State, which was achieved at the cost of their blood, government leaders and ministers were averse to honouring their memory. Moreover, the government actually tried to dismiss and ignore them and their deeds. In order to pay homage to the Underground, its heroes and their acts of heroism … Shelach has gathered herein the biographies of all the heroes belonging to Etzel [and Lehi] … from the 1936 pogrom to the years of rebellion against alien rule and concluding with the War of Independence against the … Arab invaders.[45]

The book is divided into six sections, each dedicated to a watershed in the campaign for independence.[46] The internal organization of the book parallels that of the *Yizkor* series. It begins with "Remember!" a secular-statist "prayer" written by Menachem Begin, eulogizing the fallen. In the eulogy Begin singles out the Underground and the injustice committed to their memory by Ben-Gurion and his Mapai government.[47] The fifth section is devoted to the Underground victims of Haganah operations, especially during the period of the Season and the assault on the Altalena.

Shelach projects were, in effect, analogues to their Mapai predecessors. Thus, in addition to the analogous texts, it was decided to establish "Shelach Publications" that, together with the *Herut* publishing house, would publish books to retell the Underground's story as a counter-measure to the authorized texts. The list of published works was quite respectable. It included a book recounting the conquest of Jaffa;[48] an album on the history of the War of Independence; *To the Gallows*, which commemorated the memory of the Etzel and Lehi members hanged by the British; and the autobiographical *The Story of the Altalena's Captain*, by Eliyahu Lankin.

Ben-Gurion's focus on educational texts likewise prompted a response. For example, in September 1951 it was decided to publish a work to commemorate the operations conducted by the Jewish Underground and balance the impression created by *The History of the Rebellion*, published by the Ministry of Defence, which was to become the leading public school text on the

War of Independence. Shelach's version of the War, entitled *The National Revolution*, was intended to lend historical credence to the political project Begin called "the revolt," in which opposition to Mapai's official policy of cooperation with the British and the subsequent attempt to rid Palestine of foreign rule was continually in the foreground. Significantly, the book's opening chapter deals with Hagana qualms over the elite's position vis-à-vis the British Mandate and De Haan's murder,[49] whereas its closing chapter recounts the sinking of the Altalena and the absorption of Etzel and Lehi into the IDF. The identity of the book's editors is also revealing: Abba Achimeir, commander of the so-called "band of thugs,"[50] (*Brit HaBiriyonim*) and M. Segal, commander of Etzel's Jerusalem (Wailing Wall) contingent.[51]

The emphasis placed in these works on the "national" rather than "statist" character of the events reflects the differences in the respective attitudes toward the War and its outcomes. In contrast to the statist approach that glorified individual actors, Shelach's definition of independence as a "national" project opened the door to the participation of groups of all political colours. This approach was emphasized in all the works published by Shelach that recounted the story of the Underground movements. These accounts made public the Hagana's persecutions of Etzel and Lehi together with their implications for contemporary politics. In the introduction to the pamphlet *The Background of Israel's War of Independence – Factors Regarding the Relationship between the National Military Organization and the Hagana*, the author wrote: "We would have seen no cause to publish this report … if not for the campaign of vilification and polemics currently conducted by the Hagana leadership against Etzel."[52]

Shelach's activities likewise point to a clear separation between private initiatives and commemoration on the municipal level, and Herut's ability (or more aptly, its inability) to influence state and national policies on the same subjects. To illustrate, in September 1957, Oved Ben-Ami, Netanya's mayor and a veteran of the Underground, turned to Shelach with the request to provide updated material for the purpose of "preparing a pamphlet to inform the public about Netanya's participation in the War of Independence." The mayor requested "details … publishable testimony and documents," while stressing that he was interested in this material "for the sake of historical truth."[53] That is, the responsibility for doing so was seen to be local and unrelated to national programmes.

The same hegemonic control that Ben-Gurion attempted to exercise over the cultural production of pre-State historiography penetrated the individual sphere. As opposed to the writers and intellectuals surrounding Ben-Gurion, authors who professed Rightist inclinations found the road blocked to influential positions in the new state's literary establishment. Nevertheless, they, like the historians who prepared Shelach's published works, replicated the activities of the Commemoration Unit in their own meagerly funded efforts and therefore continued to isolate themselves from the mainstream. Figures such as Dr. Israel Eldad, Dr. Ben-Zion Netanyahu, and Professor Joseph Klausner, who were otherwise denied access to major public platforms, openly supported Shelach and its attempts to supplement the authorized statist versions of the past. As Prof. Klausner wrote:

Many things arouse anger in a man with moral convictions. … One such example is currently being done before our eyes in the State of Israel. During a period of four years (1944–48), several hundred members of Etzel and Lehi dedicated their lives to the liberation of Palestine. … Yet, the government of Israel is unwilling to provide these warriors with any comfort or support. … The injured and disabled, their widows and orphans … receive nothing. … Only Shelach provides them with any care. … At the same time, the organization makes sure that the history to be written about the War of Independence … will be free … of error. I believe that not a further

word is required to prove how much everyone in Israel must support Shelach.[54]

The politics of alternative memory sites

Due to their barred access to public outlets such as the educational system, mainstream publishers and the state-controlled mass media, the Right sought alternative forums free of censorship, whether overt or covert. It turned to political forums such as the Knesset and to legal forums such as the courts as well as to commemorative sites, academic forums, or any other venue that could propel their version of the War onto the public agenda. The parliamentary arena was particularly amenable for this purpose. As elected representatives, Begin and his colleagues had easy access to the press. They took advantage of the coverage of parliamentary debates to repeatedly restate their case: "You can't chain history,"[55] declared Eliezer Shostak (MK, Herut) with respect to Begin's attempts to counter Ben-Gurion's obdurate position regarding the character of the War. Yet, although Begin's major platform was the Knesset, his power as a member of the opposition was inadequate to his goals. His demands for parliamentary review were regularly rejected. This state of affairs forced the Right to adopt a different strategy and shift its efforts to an alternative public sphere. It turned to the courts, ostensibly to clarify the rights of fallen soldiers' dependents.

Over the years, Menachem Begin unceasingly demanded an historical inquiry into the conduct of the War's management. His hope was that such a public investigation would reveal the deficient, subjective and politically partial nature of the official narrative of the War. One of his objectives was to instigate a public debate regarding the official historiography pertaining to three disputed events that reflected negatively on the dissident organizations: the Arlozorof murder; the *Altalena* incident, and the Dir Yassin incident. He chose a commission of inquiry because its recommendations were inherently political in terms of their potential impacts. To the degree that a commission refuted, as he was convinced it would, the authorized versions of the incidents, the seeds of doubt would be spread regarding those narratives and their authors. However, appeals for commissions of inquiry were marginal in their effect.

It is interesting to observe how this strategy was employed by Begin and his colleagues against Ben-Gurion and Mapai in parliament. While the latter applied *class politics* in their budgetary proposals, the former utilized *status politics* to further their public and historical image. As the following shows, Begin, no less than Ben-Gurion, attempted to delegitimate rival interpretations of the events and texts that had come to construct collective memory. What is especially interesting – and supports the validity of the argument presented here – is the marginal difference of opinion over the facts; what varied was the status of the interpreter, his access to the means of distribution of his message, his control over those means, and the meaning attributed to the events.

A fine example of such a skirmish was the vote of no confidence proposed by Herut on 12 January 1959. "If Ben-Gurion wants to argue over history" announced Begin at the opening of the debate

he will be given the opportunity. Quite incidentally, this week marks the 15th anniversary of the day that Etzel, infused with the immortal spirit of our teacher Zeev Jabotinsky, marched to war against the foreign ruler in our land. … While we abandoned ourselves to the task, what was Mapai's leader doing? … He did not go into battle; he did not endanger his life, freedom, or occupation. … [Instead,] he cooperated with the British police in attempting to destroy the Jewish fighters for liberty. In November 1944, the head of Mapai called upon the Yishuv to

expel Etzel soldiers from their schools and places of work … to deliver them into the hands of the British. … In respect for the Knesset I will not list the names of those who cooperated with their people's tormentors during that terrible period in Europe [the Holocaust]; … their ignominious acts disgrace the history of their land. Your cooperation [with the British] will earn you, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, a similar judgment. …[56]

Over the years, Begin would continue in this vein, portraying Ben-Gurion as motivated by personal interests rather than the national good.

In closing, Begin attempted to show that he himself, the Underground leader, like his fellow militants, had displayed the greater sense of public-spirited loyalty: "During that same bleak November, we declared that under no circumstances would we enter upon a civil war despite the provocations. … Our soldiers' vision goes beyond that of our rivals, we look to history, not to factionalism. … " Moreover, he argued, it was Etzel's position regarding the War that would prove to be correct and eventually adopted:

> In the fall of 1945, that shameful period came to a close … The Jewish Agency, which had hoped for salvation from the [British] Labor government, was bitterly disappointed and forced to order the Hagana to commence with a military campaign against British rule. Our tormentors suggested that we join in battle … [and] an agreement was reached between the Hagana, Etzel and Lehi … [but] at the close of summer 1946, the head of Mapai decided … to withdraw the Hagana from the crusade for liberty. How could we have been able to oust the foreign rule if Etzel as well as Lehi had lain down their arms?[57]

The *Altalena*

Portions of another Knesset speech delivered by Begin, this time on the subject of the *Altalena*, brought the rhetoric to a fever pitch. Begin accused Government leaders of

attempt[ing] to ignite the fires of civil war in Israel just when the enemy is standing at the gates. I accuse you of the murder of dozens of innocent, saintly volunteers. … During meetings of the National Council you were far from modest; you were boastful, exuberant, and cruel while the dead were still draped before you, and you said that the cannon you had ordered – without any warning whatsoever – to bombard the vessel surrounded on all sides is a sacred cannon, which should be placed in a specially constructed temple.[58]

Irrespective of the opposition's public statements, Ben-Gurion and Mapai continued to portray their actions against the *Altalena* as a moral act, committed within the framework of a nation-state. Thus, the civil war accusation was tossed back against those who would undermine national sovereignty. "The entire nation has to eradicate the evil among us", retorted the Prime Minister.[59]

Begin suggested that the matter be subjected to a commission of inquiry. Ben-Gurion, predictably, objected to any criticism of his views and of the statism he was diligently attempting to construct. The ensuing dialogue encapsulates the attitudes of each with respect to their respective positions:

BEGIN: I propose that you compile your accusations and that I compile mine and that the two of us present ourselves to a commission of inquiry composed of three judges, to be chosen by the High Court of Justice. … The judges will decide between us, and the truth, the whole truth, and only the truth will be declared before all.

BEN-GURION: [I have no intention of] contesting the past. The protocols of the Interim Government are open to all. …

BEGIN: No, my dear sir, I will not join you anywhere outside the Knesset's walls. Here I am subject to the law, I respect the law, to which I must obligate you and every member of the Knesset as well. Here, we are all equal in our rights and obligations. … [60]

Ben-Gurion tenaciously presented Begin's demands as a benighted attempt to politicize history. This strategy, he maintained, was alien and invalid: "That parliament should revise history – this is truly a novelty worthy of broadcasting … the attempt to introduce politics to areas where it does not belong. … that political parties should appoint commissions of inquiry for the purpose of writing history!"[61]

During his entire defence of his version of the War of Independence, and no less his antagonism to commissions of inquiry, Ben-Gurion painted Begin as a minor player on the political stage of history, lacking in moral fibre and impudently daring to cast doubt on the war and its narrative: "What does he [Begin] want to say, … that a murderer is walking about – and not an ordinary murderer but a murderer who also happens to be the prime minister, the nation's representative before the Jewish people and the world, the person who directed the War of Independence and the Sinai Campaign?"[62]

Ben-Gurion's arguments throughout this debate were intended to present him as aloof to historiographical issues and his public image. According to this scenario, Ben-Gurion was exclusively involved with the mundane daily running of the government. It is from this position that Ben-Gurion responded to the proposal to appoint a parliamentary committee to investigate the history of the War presented by Begin's Knesset colleague, Arieh Ben Eliezer (Herut), on 28 May 1958. When making his proposal, Ben Eliezer stated that "the underground requires no special recognition," to which he added that Herut was motivated by educational and civic goals: "to educate our youth as to the truth."[63] In response, Ben-Gurion noted that from his perspective, attempts to politically influence the nation's recollections of its past were out of place. In order to demonstrate his unconcern for the construction of collective memory, Ben-Gurion announced that he had rejected a highly lucrative offer from a major American publisher to write his memoirs: "I am uninterested in writing my memoirs because I am uninterested in the past. I look only toward the future."[64]

The debate did not end there. Addressing the Herut seats, Ben-Gurion directed the next comment to Ben Eliezer: "Who is interfering with your writing about or describing the heroism you and your comrades displayed when expelling the British? … I've heard [this complaint] dozens of times and expect to hear it a hundred times more."[65] He rationalized his refusal to mention the Underground's efforts within any authorized texts by referring to his historical vision: "This country has a long history; many foreign rulers were driven out but the state did not rise. It rose only ten years ago."[66] Ben Eliezer's proposal fell due to the votes cast by Mapai, the National Religious Party, and the Progressives. The General Zionists, a right-of-centre party, abstained. Ben-Gurion's hegemonic control over national memory was sustained, with Begin and his movement abandoned, left to continue their involvement with this issue in political isolation.

Judicial rehabilitation for the Etzel and Lehi victims

Throughout this period, Herut's Knesset members would repeatedly demand review of those past events that Mapai had exploited in its attempts to besmirch the underground's reputation and

deny its members political legitimacy and access to government posts and political power. In their preoccupation with the status politics, sites meant to facilitate smooth management of the state's public administration, such as the courts and parliament, were identified by Herut as the appropriate memory sites to battle over the Underground's historical rehabilitation.[67]

Decades later, after coming to power, Herut would again demand that three incidents, the cornerstones of Mapai's campaign of delegitimization, be subjected to historical review by commissions of inquiry: the Arlozorov murder, the *Altalena* incident, and the Dir Yassin incident. Within the framework of this study, Herut's application to the courts is interpreted as a political act, an invitation to a political trial, a tactic adopted by a politically weak rival in the face of the structural advantages accruing to ruling groups. In constitutional democracies, the judicial sphere, contrary to other spheres, appears to be open to all (see Kirshheimer, 1961).

The first incident brought to court was the sinking of the *Altalena* by the Hagana (1948). On the ship's decks were 940 men and women, mainly Holocaust survivors; in its hold were arms and munitions meant for delivery to Etzel units then fighting Arab contingents in the battle for Jerusalem. Herut's efforts to initiate a judicial inquiry into the incident were preceded by a similar endeavour, undertaken immediately after the event. In a special meeting of the Interim Government on 23 June 1948, Y. Greenboim proposed that an investigative judge be appointed to question those arrested and decide on whether to continue their detention or release them. In addition, he proposed appointing a ministerial committee to soothe passions and arrange for clemency. In contrast, Herut hoped that the proposed committee would function as a full-fledged commission of inquiry with a mandate to conduct an in-depth investigation, interrogate participants, and publicize its findings. This proposal was later combined with one offered by Ben-Gurion: an investigative judge would be authorized to free the new immigrants among the detainees as well as those apprehended who had not borne weapons and who had not committed any crime. The proposal regarding an exhaustive investigation was rejected. In response, Rabbi Y. L. Fishman and Moshe Shapira (both of Hapoal Hamizrahi, an Orthodox Zionist party) resigned from the government.[68]

Herut and Shelach demanded that the victims of the *Altalena* operation be recognized as war dead and that their families be considered bereaved families (based on the incident's classification as a military action), entitled to government support and official commemoration of their dead. Specifically, they justified their claims by the fact that the incident took place after the formation of the IDF, and that several of the Etzel dead had been incorporated into the Hagana, with military serial numbers to prove their status. The sweeping rejection of their demands was formulated by C. Krishtein, Acting Head of the Department for Housing and Rehabilitation, who transmitted what was essentially Ben-Gurion's decision:

In response to your letter I have been instructed to inform you that the claim for compensation made in the name of the bereaved families listed in your letter has been rejected on account of the fact that all the dead perished during the Altalena incident.

Nonetheless, he noted that he had requested that the Minister of Defence express his opinion as to the possibility of providing these families with a beneficence similar to that provided in a different case.[69] The letter's phrasing reflects Ben-Gurion's policy, which was strictly kept: his objection was not to case-by-case support of families but to the global inclusion of Etzel and Lehi dead under the canopy of national martyrdom. This attitude was poignantly if not cruelly expressed in the Ministry's decision not to financially support the erection of headstones at the graves of the *Altalena* dead and to prohibit their burial within the military portion of the Nachlat Yitzchak Cemetery.[70]

According to Ben-Gurion and Mapai, the public lessons to be learned from the *Altalena* incident were that Herut could not be considered a legitimate partner in the sharing of power because its members had rebuffed official orders and betrayed the IDF by fighting against fellow soldiers. For Mapai, the *Altalena* incident encapsulated its belief that the Underground's adherents were traitors, about to incite a civil war. This may explain why, of all Herut's demands, Mapai was to object most strenuously to the inclusion of the *Altalena* dead within the category of IDF dead.

In the face of their inability to convene a commission of inquiry and to obtain positive decisions regarding the *Altalena* dead, Begin and his associates attempted to initiate an historical investigation in diverse formats and within different public arenas. Consider the case of those families of *Altalena* fallen who turned to the courts in order to sue for their rights as bereaved families. These private petitions, which may well have been served solely for economic reasons, transformed the courts into an arena for historiographical combat, a memory site for all intents and purposes. Shmuel Tamir, the attorney who represented the majority of families, was a Revisionist, a current member of Herut, and a future Minister of Justice in the Begin government. The overt purpose of the case presented to the Court was to clarify the rights of these families to state assistance, an objective that it achieved. However, its covert aim was to create a stage for a public review of the past. The following examples illustrate how this was accomplished.

The first petition was presented by the mother of Zvi Reifer. Reifer was killed at the age of 21, in Beit Dagan, in the outskirts of Tel Aviv, during an encounter between his unit and a unit of the IDF. A member of Etzel, he was assigned to the 57th Battalion of the Givati Brigade following Etzel's incorporation into the IDF. At the time of his death, the battalion had yet to be fully integrated. On 21 June 1948, a good part of the Etzel members of the battalion left their encampment and headed toward Tel Aviv after learning that the *Altalena* was being bombarded; their purpose was to help their comrades who were under attack. The IDF's General Staff warned battalion officers that the group's departure was illegal and that they were to be prevented from reaching Tel Aviv, where the *Altalena* was moored offshore, even if it required the use of force. Upon their arrival at Beit Dagan, the group was confronted by an IDF roadblock erected to stop them. When their vehicle tried to avoid the roadblock, IDF soldiers opened fire and Reifer was killed.

The Reifer case was, in some ways, a product of chance: his name had been included in the expanding list of IDF dead. Because Reifer had been killed after Etzel had been officially absorbed by the IDF, he was considered, as stated previously, a soldier in the regular army. In December 1950, his mother, Miriam, was declared a bereaved mother and entitled to compensation. However, in 1951 she was informed that her rights had been terminated and that her status as an IDF bereaved mother was null and void. The source of the decision was a group death notice appearing in the party's newspaper *Herut* in June of that year, on the third anniversary of the *Altalena* incident. The notice included the names of all Etzel casualties who had been recognized as IDF fallen. The Ministry of Defence carefully inspected the list and followed up on all the names, which included that of Zvi Reifer.

In light of this new information, the IDF's Compensation Officer, acting according to Ministry of Defence directives, decided on 9 September 1951 that Reifer's status as an IDF martyr was to be voided:

Whereas this notice serves as proof that the deceased fell during the Altalena incident, while a member of Etzel, and not during or as a result of an order given to an IDF soldier, and inasmuch

as such an individual … cannot be considered an IDF martyr … By law, I have no choice but to cancel the decision of 5 December 1950 and order termination of the compensation awarded to Mrs. Miriam Reifer.[71]

This decision escalated the conflict between the two camps. The said incident was not connected with the expulsion of the British. Rather, it had taken place after the IDF had been formed; that is, the victim was technically an IDF soldier. The criterion applied to change his status and end compensation to his family was not normative or universalistic but administrative. The Compensation Officer argued that the newspaper account provided

new evidence that was unavailable to the Compensation Officer at the time that he made his original decision of 5 December and proves that the said decision was based on his mistaken belief that the deceased had died as a soldier in the service of the IDF.[72]

Another case that resulted from the difficulties faced by the Ministry of Defence when examining the cause of death of those buried in military cemeteries was the claim presented by Haya Lifshitz. Lifshitz was the widow of Itamar Lifshitz, who had also been killed during the *Altalena* operation; she had also received compensation. Her status was likewise annulled in June 1951, this time based on the contention that her husband had not died within the framework of an official military operation against the invading Arab armies or during an Arab incursion. Etched on his gravestone in the Nachlat Yitzchak cemetery was Lifshitz's IDF military rank: sergeant. The attorney who presented her appeal, Shmuel Tamir, decided to convert the appeal into a debate over history. In the process, he requested that the court allow him to present witnesses from among the political leadership who, he argued, would help him prove that the *Altalena* incident represented a planned, legal, military operation and not, as Mapai claimed, an attempt to ignite a civil war. Among his proposed witnesses were Menachem Begin, Y. Meridor, A. Lankin, E. Palgin, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence David Ben-Gurion, I. Galili, Rabbi Maimon, Minister of the Interior M. Shapira, and Major General Y. Dori. On 21 November 1951, the Commission permitted Tamir to present the witnesses' written sworn statements.[73] After receiving the affidavits, the Court decided to allow cross-examination and re-interrogation in the courtroom.

Contrary to the previous cases, the court had decided that the Lifshitz case could serve as a precedent whose outcome would determine decisions in the other cases. In response to Tamir's argument that the *Altalena* operation was legal and planned against the Arab threat, the Ministry of Defence counter-argued that although a number of families, including that of Lifshitz, had received compensation, these were awarded prior to passage of the law *Families of Soldiers Who Had Died in the War of Independence* (1950). Following the law's enactment, the Ministry refused to continue to recognize these casualties as War of Independence dead.[74] In response to Justice Shiloh's question as to whether the families would be willing to receive compensation in the form of a Minister of Defence beneficence grant, Tamir replied in the negative.

As the hearing progressed, Tamir read the law that stated that any service would be recognized as military service if so declared by the Minister of Defence, as well as the Minister's announcement stating that any action planned against the invading Arab armies or bands would likewise be recognized as military service. This announcement, as discussed in Chapter 1, was meant to bend the law in order to cover pre-IDF Hagana dead. According to Tamir, the *Altalena* carried weapons to be used in the battle against the invading Arab armies. "[D] espite the fact that the law I have cited is unfair and highly discriminatory, it does include the Altalena operation within … [its] confines."[75]

Justice Shiloh, agreeing with Tamir about the operation's purpose, stated that the issue at hand

was what the Attorney General's position would have been had an accident occurred during unloading of the weapons. The Attorney General's representative sidestepped the question and argued that he [the Attorney General] differentiated between treason in its historical sense and treason in its judicial and legal definition. As he saw it, despite the fact that the vessel's cargo was supposedly meant to support the battle against the Arabs, its true mission had converted it into an instrument of revolution and betrayal. The government's position was, in effect, that the *Altalena*'s victims were not to be denied the status of war dead on the basis of procedural criteria – the legal definition of the military service covered the *Altalena* dead – but for moral and political reasons.

On the morning of 30 June 1953, the Magistrate's Court in Haifa voided the Compensation Officer's decision to terminate Reifer's compensation.[76] The Appeals Commission's chair, Tel Aviv District Court Judge, A. Mani, Maimon's replacement, claimed that Ministry of Defence arguments had not provided adequate cause for its act. The Commission's current position was considered binding with respect to similar appeals, including that of Lifshitz.

Another appeal in which Tamir was involved concerned the disability of Joseph Hadad, a former Etzel member. Hadad demanded that he be categorized as a disabled veteran following injuries received during the attack on the *Altalena*. The Ministry of Defence refused to do so and declined to provide him with assistance. Hadad's personal reasons for making the claim were financial. He was now supporting his mother and three brothers. He required repeated surgery, his income was limited, and the support that Shelach could provide him was limited. Ministry of Defence institutions claimed that he was not an IDF disabled veteran because his "injury was not caused as a result of serving in the IDF."[77]

Hadad, who had been shot while swimming from the *Altalena* to the shore, had spent over a year in hospital. His injuries, which had been treated in a military hospital and were the basis for his release from the IDF, qualified him for 60 per cent disability. He had even been awarded a commendation due to his participation, as an IDF soldier, in the War of Independence. Despite this, his request to be personally recognized as disabled and to realize his rights was denied. Shmuel Tamir represented Hadad as well before the Appeals Commission for Disabled Veterans at the Magistrate's Court in Tel Aviv. The Commission's chair decided that the hearing would be closed to the public. Tamir, who was interested in a public review of the case, objected, arguing that secrecy was unnecessary. Although he would eventually claim that he had asked the court "to consider the case from the perspective of human kindness and not to overload it with politics and the settling of accounts between Ben-Gurion and Etzel,"[78] it was obvious that he was desirous of the public exposure that might induce an improvement in Hadad's condition as well as lend political weight to his camp's position. In voicing his objection to closing the hearing to the public, Tamir stated that his client had "done nothing to be ashamed of. It is the Court's obligation not only to do right but also to show the public that it is interested in justice, especially since the case in question is of the greatest general concern."[79] The Court responded positively and the hearing remained open to the public.

Tamir had attempted to compel the Commission, whose task it was to deliberate disability issues, into acting as a forum for historical and public review of the *Altalena* incident. By complying with his request for openness, the Court was snared into doing so. From the start, Tamir claimed that he could provide evidence that the *Altalena* was supporting the war effort.[80] His arguments were meant to place all the military units that had operated along the Tel Aviv shore into a single context and award them historical symmetry: "My argument is that we should view the Altalena incident as a confrontation between two IDF units, the result of an error, and

that the State should treat the injured of both units."[81] For this reason, Tamir demanded that the Commission rule that Hadad was eligible to receive compensation "like any other disabled veteran because he was injured in an operation planned for the purpose of unloading armaments intended for the war against the Arab forces,"[82] in compliance with the compensation law. In his reply, Gorney, the attorney representing the state, wrote:

Sailing the Altalena [to Israel] was an open violation of a clear commitment, signed by Etzel's head. The Etzel leadership had attempted to ship arms to Israel without government approval and in gross disregard for its sovereignty. … Etzel's commanders had been informed of the government's decision that the weapons were to be transmitted to the IDF, but they refused to comply to their orders. … The actions taken by Etzel forces, with whom the plaintiff is identified, were illegal and acts of insurrection.[83]

In the course of the hearing of Hadad's case, Tamir requested that the hearings be interrupted in order to transfer the proceedings to the District Court. He claimed that "[a]fter receiving a verdict in principle that will determine the degree to which the Altalena operation was legal, it will be possible to continue to argue the appeal before the Commission dealing with levels of disability."[84] He believed that the present Commission, composed of a judge and two physicians, was not the appropriate body to decide in matters of historical principle. Tamir hoped to acquire a verdict that would mend the historical imprint of the *Altalena* incident within the public mind and collective memory. The courts, he argued, "with their entire moral, public and legal weight, will determine the eligibility of those injured … for qualification as soldiers during Israel's War of Independence."[85]

The court ruled in favour of the State and decided to limit the discussion to procedural matters and thereby avoid a decision in principle on the status of the original incident. Nonetheless, the Commission did permit Tamir to present verbal testimony that he believed would prove that the *Altalena* operation was part of the war effort.[86]

According to a detailed plan of action, senior Herut leaders were interviewed. Their testimony helped Tamir detail the reasons for the purchase of the vessel, explain its goals, and describe the negotiations that concluded in the agreement that had been finalized between Etzel and Ben-Gurion, Galili and Eshkol over unloading the weapons. Tamir then set about collecting evidence supporting the testimony, which he later presented to the Commission. These proved, he would claim, that the incident resulted from the Government's deceitful violation of its agreement.[87]

After presentation of the documents and testimony, Tamir decided to call witnesses before the Appeals Commission. These witnesses were members of Herut who had taken part in the vessel's purchase and preparing its orders, in addition to members of the government elite. "I intend to spread before you a wide tapestry and reveal before the Court the complete story of the Altalena"[88] proclaimed Tamir before the Commission. However, after announcing his intentions, he began to receive "signals that the Ministry of Defence preferred to avoid exposing all the details … and was seeking a way out that would not damage its reputation while solving the practical problems raised."[89] The Ministry of Defence decided to grant the plaintiffs their demands and thereby neutralize a political threat to its agenda; its strategy avoided granting formal recognition to the plaintiffs as bereaved families or disabled IDF veterans. Tamir was forced to bring the Ministry of Defence offer before Hadad. Driven by economic need and worn out by the hearing and its twists and turns, Hadad ordered Tamir to accept the offer.

Interested in further removing the potential political threat inherent in the plea, the Ministry of Defence, in the name of the Compensation Officer, wrote a letter to Hadad informing him that

the funds he so urgently needed would be transmitted only after he withdrew his appeal from the District Court and transferred it to the Ministry's Medical Commission. The same solution would apply to others injured in the incident, with the Hadad decision serving as a precedent. In reply, Hadad wrote that inasmuch as the Ministry had withdrawn its objections to his plea and was ready to recognize him as a disabled veteran, and considering his severe disability as a result of the incident, he was

unable to personally conduct, independently, an investigation into the essence of the incident, as demanded. Accordingly, based on your commitment. … I fully believe that the day will soon arrive when the whole true will come to light. … Please permit me to note that I will never see myself as a person enjoying charity but as someone deserving compensation from the State.[90]

Despite the result of the appeal, the arguments presented in association with the various pleas for compensation, and the manoeuvres planned to change the disability hearing's venue, the Commission hearings were converted into forums for the determination of historical truth and public morality. The Commissions and the decision therefore contained the potential to influence the evolving political culture of the infant nation.

The last event to be discussed within the framework of Herut's campaign to shift the political discussion of Israel's pre-Independence history to the courts is that of Dir Yassin. Whereas the *Altalena* incident was exploited by Mapai to show just how much Etzel and Lehi veterans were unworthy of reaching positions of power for political reasons, the Dir Yassin incident was used by Mapai to prove the same point, but this time on moral and normative grounds. Mapai made potent use of the episode to attempt to prove that the outcomes of the Underground's attitudes towards War – the mass murder of residents of an Arab village – reflected a clear dearth of military ethics.

Once more, the plaintiffs were required to raise historical issues, partially disguised as claims for compensation for injuries or deaths resulting from military actions, this being the only arena still open to debate during the formative stages of national development. In his opening speech, the attorney for the state, Gorney, declared:

Our main argument against the plaintiffs' plea is that the Dir Yassin operation was not an operation planned against the Arab gangs or invading armies because it was totally unnecessary in military terms; its only purpose was to enhance the political reputation of the Underground. … During the testimony for the defence, I will call witnesses representing the IDF who will prove the facts as stated. … On the one hand, that no military significance was attached to the capture of Dir Yassin, and on the other, that the Etzel and Lehi units had refused to participate in operations having greater strategic value. It is clear to all sides that this is a political trial; I therefore attach special importance to the presentation of clear and conclusive evidence by the state. …[91]

As in the cases of the bereaved and the disabled, Mapai would utilize the trial to delegitimate an alternative version of the nation's modern history. Tamir took an analogous position.

The controversy over Dir Yassin revolved around whether the operation had been undertaken with Hagana knowledge and consent. Etzel commanders held documents proving that this was indeed the case. On 7 April 1948, the Hagana's commander of the Jerusalem District wrote a letter to the commander of Etzel's Jerusalem units that the Hagana had learned of Etzel's intentions to invade the village. He stated that although his organization had also planned an attack, he had no objection to Etzel executing the mission. The sole intervention (if we may call it that) into Etzel's programme was a list of suggested actions and the recommendation that if Etzel could not hold the village, it should avoid acts such as demolition of buildings, which

would cause the residents to flee in panic and invite the entry of armed Arab bands. Prior to the battle, coordination between Etzel and the Hagana was reviewed, during which Etzel officers transmitted their plans to the Hagana, including their operational timetable. It was also decided that the Hagana would support Etzel in case the latter was forced to retreat.[92]

On 9 April 1948, a force of 150, ninety of whom belonged to Etzel and sixty to Lehi, assaulted Dir Yassin. According to Begin, Etzel had warned village residents to evacuate women and children in a conscious surrender of the advantage of surprise (Begin 1977: 274–76, 282–85). During the operation, Arab forces began to fire on the attackers. At this stage, Hagana forces intervened and prevented Arab reinforcements from arriving at the village; Palmach forces also participated in this defensive action.[93] The capture was completed by nightfall, at a cost of four Etzel and Lehi dead, seven seriously injured, and 28 slightly injured. According to contemporary accounts, Arab losses totalled 240, including women and children.[94] At the conclusion of the battle, Etzel promised to hand the village over to the Hagana within 24 hours. On 12 April, two physicians, Dr. Avigdor and Dr. Druyan, visited the village upon the Jewish Agency's request. They reported finding numerous corpses of men, women and children, none bearing signs of mistreatment, and piles of burnt bodies.[95]

In the wake of the operation, the Hagana printed a "yellow banner," similar to the yellow Star of David that the Nazis had required Jews to wear, condemning what it called the unnecessary killings and slaughter of women and children. It did so through persistent denials of its role in the incident and of its knowledge of the attack. In response, Lehi issued a public statement in mid April 1948, *Notice: About the Dir Yassin Incident*, in which it brought "to the public's attention the letter written by the Hagana's Commander of the Jerusalem District, no further explanations being required"; the reference was to the very same letter of 7 April, cited above. "We turned to Hagana headquarters," the placard went on, "and suggested that the Hagana enter Dir Yassin. … We did what we could. We captured the site and systematically transferred it, position after position, to the district's Hagana forces."

The placard's authors indicated their immense surprise at the Yishuv's perception of the operation because "on [that] evening … Hagana officers made the request that we coordinate the start of our attack with the attack on the Kastel … which they were about to undertake, and the two operations were indeed initiated simultaneously." We see, then, that an operation that Lehi had thought would improve its public image and political standing – just because it was conducted with Hagana cooperation – brought about the opposite. Moreover, upon their return, they learned that the Hagana and their political backers had used the Arab version of the events to further disparage the Underground as an organization and to portray its participants as war criminals to further their own political interests. As expected, this anti-underground version of the events captured the public.

Despite the attempts made by Etzel and Lehi to present their version of the events to the public by the paltry means available to them, primarily placards pasted on public notice boards, little could alter the image created of an Etzel and Lehi-instigated slaughter. Lehi even went so far as to print a placard bearing the opinion of a physician sent by the Israel Medical Society, who had examined all the bodies and determined that with the exclusion of those who had died by gunfire and explosives, there were no signs of atrocities committed to the bodies. "Furthermore," the same report stated, "upon entry of the Hagana forces, Solel Boneh [Histadrut-owned construction company] personnel had joined them in order to plunder the machinery and quarry stones located in the village; Lehi soldiers had not participated in the looting."[96] The outcome of this campaign was marginal. Therefore, it appears that the purpose of the Dir Yassin compensation hearing was

to provide the Underground with an opportunity to discredit the official versions of the events and the images disseminated by Mapai after the operation.

During the hearings, the plaintiffs' attorney requested that all appeals for compensation be combined[97] because the problems afflicting the families were identical; this was done.

All the plaintiffs' requests for compensation have been denied based on the fact that they had been injured in the Dir Yassin attack, an operation that, in the opinion of the Compensation Officer, was not planned against the Arab bands or invading armies; this was the purpose of the evidence I will bring before this Commission.

The documents and evidence brought forth convinced the Commission that the Dir Yassin operation was indeed a certifiable military operation conducted within the framework of the Hagana's campaign against the Arabs. In their concluding statement, the Commission members wrote that

> after hearing the witnesses, we have decided that the circumstances under which the plaintiff was injured in the present case meet the conditions [for compensation] detailed in the statement publicized by the Minister of Defence. Accordingly, we accept the plaintiff's plea and nullify Compensation Officer's decision dated 24 May 1953.[98]

The Arlozorov murder

Chaim Arlozorov was murdered in June 1933 while strolling along a beach north of Tel Aviv with his wife. The assailants were never caught and accusations directed at Herut and Right-wing extremists were never proved. At the time of his death at age 34, Arlozorov was a leader in the Mapai Party and held the senior position in the Political Department of the Jewish Agency.

Arlozorov's murder is another incident transformed by Mapai into an asset for its political delegitimization of the Right. After the murder, the dam of hatred dividing the two camps swelled with Mapai's efforts to blame the Revisionists for the act, while the latter rebuffed the attack with claims that they were being libelled. Several even claimed that the murder had been committed by the Hagana in cooperation with British secret police as a provocation in their campaign to slander the Revisionist political camp.[99] Abraham Stavsky and Zvi Rosenblatt, two Revisionist sympathizers, stood trial for the murder in Criminal Court, Jerusalem, with Abba Achimeir, the Right's leading spokesman and organizer of the "*band of thugs*," accused of masterminding the act. Although the three were acquitted by the Mandatory tribunal, Mapai ignored the verdict and continued its campaign of defamation. Stavsky was later killed while on board the *Altalena* but Rosenblatt, who was publicly identified as directly responsible for the murder, continued to struggle to repair his reputation.

With respect to Arlozorov, the public debate and call for an official investigation of the incident exhibits a paradox that summarizes one of the major aspects of the politics of domination that characterized the post-war period: Begin was not interested in convening a commission of inquiry that would reveal a "historical truth" different from the "judicial truth" embodied in the court's decision to acquit the defendants. With respect to its public image and standing, identification of the Right with the murder was so sweeping and effectively internalized that Begin felt obligated to confirm a verdict made five decades earlier as an instrument of legitimation. Correction of the record was aimed elsewhere.

On 6 June 1956, in the course of the Third Knesset Begin suggested that a commission of inquiry composed of three judges be convened to investigate the Arlozorov murder:

I look to my left, and plainly see the degree to which the honour of the State of Israel and its leaders are involved in this incident. We know who signed the placard and who is morally responsible for it. A whole generation has been indoctrinated according to its contents.[100]

In order to illustrate the labelling and agitation provoked by the authorities, Begin declaimed, with his characteristic combination of pathos and irony, the entire contents of the placard distributed by Mapai after Stavsky's acquittal as part of his opening statement:

> Rosenblatt and Stavsky … were both recognized by the High Court as Arlozorov's murderers. … The [Court] decision releasing the murderers from [formal] punishment reaffirms the dire charges against them. We are not interested in retaliation; we know that Arlozorov's murderers were victims of terrorist agitation and evangelical Revisionist indoctrination. Our struggle to reveal the truth will not cease. … [Our mission] is to purify our [civic] way of life, we will fight against the murderers' collaborators in order to protect Arlozorov's memory. We will especially combat the Revisionist movement and their associates who are transforming those who bear the mark of Cain into "heroes' and 'saints' … and to purify the Zionist camp.[101]

Begin continued: "A few months prior [to the verdict], in August 1933, *Davar* published the following statement: 'Irrespective of who the murderers were, they were agents of the Revisionist Party.' This appeared on 28 August 1933, at the height of the trial."[102] His recitation of Mapai's blasphemy, he believed, would be sufficient to will support for his demand.

Nonetheless, Begin's efforts to convene a commission of inquiry failed throughout Ben-Gurion's stay in office. The Left's sweeping and obstinate objections to an investigation suited its programme of political manipulation of the case, with its civic as well as political implications. Begin would be successful only years later, after changes in the distribution of power had made him prime minister.

The final illustration of attempts to alter Mapai's programme of deligitimization is the case of Yedidya Segal. Segal, a member of Etzel, had been abducted by the Hagana during the campaign against the Underground. His body was found several days later in the vicinity of Tira, an Arab village near Haifa. Rumours and different versions of the events surrounding his death travelled quickly. Etzel was convinced that Segal had been murdered by the Hagana who, in turn, claimed that the murder had been committed by Arabs. The Revisionist newspaper *Herut* (1949) published an article claiming that Paul Kollek, a former Hagana member, was involved, even if indirectly, in the murder of Yedidya Segal.[103] Kollek filed a libel suit against the newspaper and during the trial, the defence counsel decided to call several witnesses, including senior government officials, in order to expose to the public the acts of torture and abduction committed by the Hagana against Etzel members during the *Saison*.

It was Shmuel Tamir who once more took up the banner of historical redress. During the trial, Tamir questioned numerous agents as to the role of Hagana commanders in Segal's murder. In doing so, he raised additional issues, pleading that they would support his charge that "the Hagana murdered Yedidya Segal."[104]

The trial revealed that the Haifa Situation Committee (a para-civil defence organization), like the Nahariya Municipality following the Acre Prison break-in, had abstained from publishing a death notice after discovery of the body. It appears that the "Committee was wont to publish such notices only if the victim was 'one of their own,' meaning that he had died in action or was murdered by Arabs."[105] No public figure attended Segal's funeral. In order to support his

argument that the Hagana was responsible for Segal's death, Tamir introduced much testimony that revealed Mapai's policy during "the Season" as well as actions previously unknown to the public.

Tamir also called numerous witnesses from among the contemporary Hagana leadership. Among them was Issar Be'eri, head of Shai, the intelligence branch of the Hagana whose main activity involved stalking Etzel members, as well as the head of Shai's Haifa office. Also called were Rabbi Maimon, Yitzchak Grinboim, and Moshe Shapira, the Minister of the Interior, all of whom were members of the commission of inquiry called by the Jewish Agency to investigate the murder but whose conclusions were never made public. Their testimony revealed that Segal's autopsy report had disappeared, and that the death certificate had never reached Segal's family. "I understand that Segal's family is interested in correcting the injustice it has suffered and is seeking a way to place matters in their proper light,"[106] commented the presiding judge to Tamir, who straightaway responded that "we will demonstrate the Hagana's methods of torture."[107] Through questioning, Tamir was able to prove that Shai had openly persecuted the Underground activists, had brutally tortured them, especially by detaining them in solitary confinement, inflicting pain to genitals, tooth extraction, and singeing feet. Knowing full well that the details would not be broadcast in the government-controlled media or published in *Davar*, the Labour-aligned newspaper, Shelach produced a pamphlet, *I Will Not Be Silenced*, in the form of a commemorative volume, documenting the trial.[108] Tamir's closing statement took four hours to complete, and "became a dramatic 'I accuse' directed toward Shai, the Hagana leadership, and the regime. … [It] made the damages trial brought by Mr. Kollek against *Herut* an instrument for revelation of the truth."[109] Herut clearly supported Tamir's agenda with respect to the trial.[110]

From a purely legal standpoint, the judges declared (19 February 1951) that although Kollek's charges against the newspaper had not been fully substantiated, "sufficient [new] evidence has been brought before the court to initiate criminal proceedings against several Hagana members, and to charge them with first degree murder."[111] During the session held on 20 February 1951, Justice Zussman nevertheless proposed a compromise: "I believe we can agree that Defence Counsel has revealed items and events that, were it not for this trial, would never have come to light. However, the prosecution is interested only in what personally concerns the plaintiff."[112] Within the framework of the compromise transacted, it was agreed that although *Herut* would formally apologize to Kollek for its allegations regarding his connection with the murder, it would be allowed to emphasize that

this apology is purely personal and in no way detracts from the facts revealed in court about Yedidya Segal's murder … and about the other reprehensible acts committed or on the character of the brutality exercised in the nation toward members of Etzel and the Herut Movement as well as toward other citizens. The prosecutor is ordered to cancel the plea and the defendants are ordered to cover the costs of the trial.[113]

Thus, although the suit was lost, the trial itself represented an effective means for Shelach and Herut to continue their campaign to circulate their version of the past and the facts that the dominant party had so assiduously attempted to extricate from national memory.

After the trial had closed, Herut distributed a placard carrying the caption *The Truth is Revealed*. Under a photograph of Justice Zussman, who had suggested the compromise agreement, was written the following:

Attorney Tamir transformed the formal trial for damages against Herut into a moral and historical crusade against the reign of terror and for the revelation of the truth regarding the

murder of Yedidya Segal, may the Lord avenge him, and the other atrocities committed by the Hagana. The truth was further endorsed by the support the honourable justice expressed during the summation. Although the truth came to light, justice has yet to be served. Yedidya Segal's soul will not be appeased until … the freedom for which he fought and fell is achieved.[114]

Summary

Official historiography and national memory were totally controlled by the dominant ruling party. With their works published by houses linked in one way or another to the State or to the Party, Israeli authors active during that first decade supported the endorsed narrative. As Zand argues, history had become nationalized in practice. The rational bureaucracy in place, headed by an enlightened ruler who marked the period as an object of veneration, operated unhindered by any critique originating among the intellectual elite. This benign atmosphere supported Ben-Gurion's production of a monolithic political culture that silenced radical criticism from the Left as from the Right. Intellectuals who dared to challenge the product or its producers were ostracized and intimidated, perhaps more than they had been during the 1930s (Zand 2000: 157).

In opposition to this trend, veterans of the Revisionist Movement stubbornly refused to accept Ben-Gurion's version of the War's history. The Right therefore searched for and found an alternative arena that could operate as a site for their historiography. Commissions of inquiry and the courts were transformed into platforms for policy review, forums for the determination of their rights, and sites for the production of collective memory. Decades would pass before textbooks and other sites containing Israel's heritage would incorporate details about the roles played by Etzel and Lehi in the achievement of statehood.

Part III

Penetrating the gates of national pantheon and collective memory

6 The period of ambivalence, 1963–77

First steps of inclusion in national commemoration and memory

Political background of the period: the weakening of Herut's de-legitimation

The period analyzed in this chapter marks the establishment's ambivalence in regard to commemoration towards the dissident Underground's fallen. In the political arena, at least in the legislative field, there were initial indications that the long-executed injustices were about to be corrected and a new policy instituted. However, progress was slow and sluggish.

In a Knesset speech on 13 May 1963, Ben-Gurion disassociated himself from Herut's alleged identification with the Jewish people's most odious enemy in contemporary history. “I am not a party to their glorification and praise of the name of Hitler and their making him an exemplary figure,” he declared from the parliamentary podium (Bar-Zohar 1980: 1546). To his surprise, his pronouncement aroused a storm of protest in the Israeli legislature. This time the responses of his Party colleagues did not instinctively support the traditional epithets that the Prime Minister often used in describing his arch political rival and “honourable” member of the parliamentary opposition. The Knesset speaker, Kadish Luz, a member of Mapai, requested that the Prime Minister retract his remarks. For the first time, it appeared that representatives of Ben-Gurion's camp held reservations about his aggressive and hateful stance towards Herut and its leadership, and especially its demonization. Two days later, the newspaper, *Davar* (associated with Mapai), published an editorial stating that “it was difficult not to be astonished by these very words of the Prime Minister, that generated such outbursts from Herut members.” (15 May 1963). Haim Guri, a well-known literary figure on the political left, expressed similar sentiments in *LaMerhav*, a newspaper identified with a Mapai coalition party (15 May 1963).

Despite underlying discontent among his political supporters, Ben-Gurion persisted in this line of attack against Herut. “Begin is a pure Hitler-type,” he wrote to Haim Guri,

racist, prepared to destroy all the Arabs for the sake of a greater Israel, to devote all his efforts for a holy objective – an absolutist regime, and I see this as a grave danger to the internal and external situation of Israel. I cannot forget the little I know about his activity, and it bears a single, clear implication: the murder of dozens of Jews, Arabs and Englishmen in the blowing-up of the King David Hotel, the pogrom at Dir Yasin in which Arab women and children were murdered, the Altalena incident which aimed at seizing the government by force, hurling stones at the Knesset by a rabble who received their orders from Begin. … All these are not isolated acts; rather, they reveal a systematic effort, character and predisposition.

The letter continues, employing his worn script, warning of the day when Herut will govern the state and Begin "will replace the army command and police with his ruffians and rule as Hitler ruled over Germany. … When I first heard Begin give a speech on radio, I heard the voice and screeches of Hitler." (In Bar-Zohar, 1980: 1547)

In a letter to Moshe Sharett, Ben-Gurion characterized Begin as a student of Abba Ahimeir[1] whose articles made mention of other nationalist movements "associated with the outstanding names of Kemal [Ataturk], Mussolini, Pilsudski, De Valera, and Hitler". Ben-Gurion warned his associates that a Begin take-over would bring about dictatorship (Bar-Zohar, 1980: 1546).

Ben-Gurion, then age 77, did not in his worst dreams foresee that within a few months his party would engage in a joint effort that would convert his utterances into the grotesque. He certainly did not estimate that within a year, on the 15 March 1964, a Government led by Mapai would allow Begin's party to bring the remains of its mentor and ideological founder, Zeev Jabotinsky, to Israel for ceremonial burial on Mount Herzl. He undoubtedly did not foresee that within four years Begin would be invited to be a member of Mapai's Government. Even more, it never crossed his mind that before this invitation Begin would directly petition to return to the Government and indicate his willingness to serve in the new Government in order to lead the nation in the imminent war.

At the psychological level, one may perhaps speak of fatigue gripping Mapai from its efforts of trying to live up to the historical images that its leadership had blown up over the years. On the ideological level, one can perhaps speak of a realistic approach, of a desire to initiate political discourse that would be less hostile and more collegial. Either way, on the political level it was a clear expression of a fait accompli: the pivotal and all-pervasive power that Ben-Gurion enjoyed in Mapai – the capability of the very person who formulated and imposed the strategy of distancing Herut from the mainstream of Israeli political life – was nearing its end.

The resignation of Ben-Gurion from government

On 16 June 1963 Ben-Gurion declared his intention of resigning from the Government. The announcement to the press from the Prime Minister's Office explained that this was undertaken because of "personal needs". For the next ten years Ben-Gurion did not reveal the reason for his resignation. He became pre-occupied in emphasizing his legacy and reiterating his hatred for the Herut movement and his fear of it. He often reiterated that there was a danger of a "fascist ascension to power" under the leadership of Herut (see Bar-Zohar, 1980: 1556; 1557–58).

Levi Eshkol succeeded Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister and leader of the Mapai Party but did not employ the latter's abrasive language against Herut. Many attributed Ben-Gurion's objectionable language to old age and his detachment from reality.

In hindsight, what especially marked the years 1963–77 was the absence of Ben-Gurion from the head of the political pyramid. The passing of his leadership marked the beginning of the end of domination of the Israeli political arena by Mapai. The stature that Ben-Gurion had created with great care through regime appropriation of many public sites and locations disappeared from the stage.

Levi Eshkol, Ben-Gurion's successor as Prime Minister, was non-committal in his orientation to Ben-Gurion's legacy of a personal confrontation with the students of Jabotinsky. In part, this was a consequence of the strong personal animosity between him and Ben-Gurion. It was abetted by the desire to establish his distinctive style of leadership in the wake of the imprint left by the charismatic and domineering predecessor. Opportunities for new departures in other areas

presented themselves. During Eshkol's tenure, state television was inaugurated. Its format was divided between programmes for the general public and educational programmes for the school system. In addition, military administration in Israel's Arab villages and towns was abolished. In the political culture field, there were shifting orientations in the formation of public memory and the character of state commemoration ceremonies. Orientations of response in public bereavement over the loss of war dead also began to shift in new directions. Nevertheless, it was difficult to make a clean break from past patterns since they were rooted in locked-in values held by "true believers." (See Hoffer 1964). Thus, an element of ambivalence persisted. The introduction into public life of memory symbols associated with what the Mapai regime had labelled "the dissident organizations" – namely Lehi and Etzel – was only done half-heartedly, often only in part, so that there was a glaring gap on occasion between legislative concession and implemental will.

The aforementioned struggle between Ben-Gurion and Eshkol centred primarily upon Ben-Gurion's demand to re-open the investigation into the Lavon affair and place it at the head of the public and political agenda. The "affair" created the background to Ben-Gurion's departure from Mapai and the establishment of the Rafi Party with Ben-Gurion as its leader. The resultant political re-alignment of the Government coalition emerged on the basis of personal objection to the leadership of Eshkol in Mapai (see Bar-Zohar 1980: ch. 17]. In the elections to the 6th Knesset, the new party claimed to be the authentic Mapai but only won 10 seats in contrast to the 45 obtained by the Labour Alignment led by Eshkol. These results appeared to indicate that the Israeli public preferred to choose representative leadership based on established institutions rather than personalities.

With the disappearance of Mapai as a pivotal symbol, and apparently because of that, significant changes took place in the status of its rival, the Herut movement. In the first instance, there were signs of Herut's growing political legitimacy. The combination of these two tendencies led to the slow deterioration of its past image and made it easier to advance its formulations in state memory, an opportunity that had been almost totally denied until then.

During the course of 1965, while preparing for the Knesset elections, Herut joined forces with the Liberal Party in a parliamentary bloc under the name Gahal, and subsequently obtained 26 mandates in the national vote.[2] Within two years, this linkage bore fruit when the bloc was asked to join a national unity government during the tense waiting period before the outbreak of the Six Day War. From 1965 to 1967, communication links improved between the heads of the Herut movement and the Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, who was even present at the opening session of the eighth Herut Movement congress in May of 1966 (Weitz 2002: 179). Moreover, Gahal became a significant actor in parliament, far from its image of a "marginal extremist party" – a label attached to Herut by its rivals in the past. The Herut movement also entered into the Labour Federation [Histadrut] as the Blue and White Faction, an avenue that had been closed to it and its forbears since the Histadrut's foundation. Further developments along this line of openness to Herut may be seen in the invitations to its leader, Menahem Begin, to speak before gatherings of its sworn rivals of the past, among them the Hagana Convention and kibbutz assemblies.[3]

For the first time in Israeli parliamentary life, Menahem Begin enjoyed an image as a political partner, whereas previously he had been cast as a dissident. It is possible that the desire to strengthen this image led him on the eve of the Six Day War to suggest to Eshkol that he invite Ben-Gurion to head a national unity government, or that he, Menahem Begin, take up the post of Defence Minister.[4] In hindsight, there are grounds for doubting the sincerity of Begin's desire to see Ben-Gurion, the very person responsible for his political marginalization, in a senior

position. It is more reasonable to assume that Begin understood that his suggestion could not be realized in light of the background to the political situation at this time. At the same time, such a suggestion would show that he was committed to the general and state interest, graciously setting aside past recriminations.

In an attempt to give public exposure to his deliberately projected image of political deportment and dignity, Begin visited Ben-Gurion at his home in Sde Boker accompanied by the heads of Gahal – Arieh Ben-Eliezer, Elimelekh Rimalt and Joseph Sapir – and received the plaudits of the media for the significant gesture of reconciliation. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether he shed a tear, or felt that the national interest was harmed when it appeared that his political initiative had failed. Moreover, Prime Minister Eshkol made it clear to him that he would not agree to transfer leadership to Ben-Gurion.

The launching of the Six Day War, adamantly opposed by the "old man" at Sde Boker, marked "the final decline of Ben-Gurion as a statesman." (Bar-Zohar 1980: 1593). In the Government that went to war two sworn rivals of the former Prime Minister sat together: from the party arena, Levi Eshkol; from the ideological arena, Menahem Begin. In fact, it was this Government that left its imprint on the public consciousness, providing perhaps the greatest achievement in Israeli national identity since the War of Independence. In contrast to the 1948 War, the achievements of the Six Day War were not ascribed solely to Mapai. During the War, the Minister of Defence, Moshe Dayan, was not Mapai's representative, and Menahem Begin was a senior Government member from Herut. All this contributed to the deterioration in the standing of Ben-Gurion, as well as the standing of his movement. One of the clear symbolic expressions of this occurred in January 1968 when party amalgamations among Government coalition members resulted in the disappearance of the label Mapai from the Israeli political map.[5]

A State anchor for Herut

Another important development was the integration of the State List into the Likud coalition headed by Menahem Begin. The State List was established in 1969 immediately prior to elections for the seventh Knesset, and included for the most part members from Rafi who wished to avoid absorption into the Labour Party. It was led by David Ben-Gurion until his retirement from the Knesset and political life in May 1970, but its political policies, especially after Ben-Gurion's departure were "hawkish." The formation of the Likud before the elections for the eighth Knesset in the summer of 1973 emerged out of the Gahal party coalition. The State List joined Likud, and five of its members were among the first forty names on their candidate election list (Carmel 2000: 347). In addition, the Labour Movement for a Greater Israel joined Likud, the majority of whom were also former members of Mapai. One of its members was placed in a "safe" position on the Likud list, that is, given Israel's pure proportional system of representation, in a position where the likelihood of being among the Party's next Knesset representatives was high. This party merger within the political opposition reinforced Begin's statesman-like image, and Begin himself publicly expressed his pride that the Likud was a body which reflected "an alliance between the pupils of Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky" (Weitz 1993: 360).

In tandem with the legitimacy accorded the Herut movement in the political arena, recognition was finally awarded to those who fell while serving in the Underground factions of Etzel and Lehi. With the departure from government of the person who created the identity between

statism and the Mapai Party (Shapiro 1984: 60), people in Herut sensed that they faced new opportunities. They regarded the years of resistance to including their heroes among the founders of the State as "an act of caprice on the part of an angry Mapai leader"[6] rather than a steadfast position of his movement, and estimated that the distortion would now be corrected.

The period in which the fallen among the "dissidents" were pushed "outside the walls of the cemetery" (Ben-Gurion), the period characterized by the slogan "those who do not accept the opinion (of Ben-Gurion) in decisive matters, would be dealt with" (Nakdimon 1978: 457), was now exchanged for what might be termed "the period of ambivalence." The fallen of Lehi and Etzel entered into the state commemoration arena, but the formulators of commemoration policy looked upon this tendency half heartedly.

Commemoration in space

Acceleration of commemoration in the cities

During this period, the Herut movement undertook widespread activities in the towns and in the countryside to commemorate their dead and their combatants. Innumerable cenotaphs and monuments began to appear throughout the country. On 24 April 1968, a ceremony took place at a monument dedicated to the memory of Etzel and Lehi fighters who had been sentenced to death by hanging by the British in mandate Palestine (*Ma'ariv*, 23 April 1968). In 1976, the soldier commemoration hostel [*Yad Labanim*] in Petah Tikva became the first institution of its kind in the country to commemorate all the fallen in a "hero's pantheon" erected to the city's fallen extending from the disturbances in 1929 and 1936 through the War of Independence (it included those who died under the command of the Underground) up to the Yom Kippur War.[7] In 1969, a ceremony took place in Jerusalem to mark Etzel's breakthrough into the Old City in 1949 and similar ceremonies were held throughout the country.

Through the initiative of Herut Knesset members, the "citizen graves" of Underground fighters were retroactively converted into military gravesites and their families recognized by the State as families of the IDF fallen.[8] A concentrated effort was made to convert the ruins of the prison area of the Acre Fortress into a state commemoration site. Etzel and Lehi's prisoners commemorated in the Rishon Le Tzion monument (above) were incarcerated here The breach of the jail by units from the two Underground forces on 4 May 1947 was acknowledged as one of their major achievements, thus lending great weight to the symbolic significance for Herut of designating this location as a state commemorative site.

Ben-Gurion was determined to prevent the Acre prison from becoming a collective memory site in praise of Herut's military exploits. He thus ordered that the dilapidated fortress be used as a mental hospital. Over the years, Herut MKs sought to overturn this decision. Modern society's icon of historical preservation, the museum, was continually put forward as a respectable alternative utilization of the fortress compound. In 1961, for example, MK Haim Landau posed a question to the Minister of Health:

Our many requests to transfer the mental hospital to another location, and … [our claims that] this place is not at all suitable for this purpose [since it] endangers the health of the inmates, has not yielded results until now. Does he not admit that the time has now come to remove the patients to a hospital worthy of the name and to make the historic fortress into what it is supposed to be?[9]

The Deputy Minister of Health, Yitzhak Rafael, (Mafdal), who in the past had been the

counsellor to the Acre prisoner, Yehiel Drezner, when they were both in the youth movement, gave a surprise response. It was, in fact, the first statement by a government member about the heroic actions that took place there.

There is no one, I think, in this state that would not agree with the honourable gentleman about the ultimate future of the Acre fortress, which served as a focus for Jewish heroism and a centre for suffering and torture for the defenders and fighters of the rejuvenated generation. … This time it is in our hearts to turn the fortress into an institution that symbolizes Israeli heroism. … In the Health Ministry, we are working on a practical programme – we cannot promise how long it will take, but … I will accompany this matter conscientiously and with interest until an honourable solution to this problem is found.[10]

He added that at the time of his visit to the hospital adjoining the fortress, he arrived at the wing that formerly held the Underground prisoners and was shocked "at the lack of recognition of the memory of the nation's heroes. … Later that day I announced that this wing would be evacuated and handed over to those who wanted to make it a memory site" (Rafael 1981: 272).

Following this order, the wing was indeed evacuated and renovations undertaken for establishing a proper memory hall. Yitzhak Rafael even participated in the ceremonial opening of the renovated site organized by the Etzel Veterans Association.

On the other hand, from the same podium the Minister of Health, Haim Moshe Shapira, a close confident of David Ben-Gurion, expressed anger over the readiness of his deputy to aid in the establishment of a Revisionist memory site. Shortly after, the Association for Acre and Jerusalem Prisoners was formed; it included members of the Hagana. The heads of the Association lobbied for the establishment of a museum in the chamber where prisoners were hung. It then occurred to them, in the words of Eitan Livni, chairman of the organization, that "the majority of the Hagana prisoners were not prepared to raise a finger in order to help us, as if they were embarrassed." (Golan 1972: 28).

The political establishment was also ambivalent over the issue of revising its policy concerning the public functions of the Acre fortress. Aside from the declarations of the deputy Minister of Health to establish a commemoration hall, nothing was done to advance the conversion of the former prison into a state memory site. The mental hospital continued to exist and members of Herut continued to express their displeasure over this. Moreover, in a brochure distributed by the Ministry of Tourism it was stated that in the Acre fortress there was a commemorative hall to members of the Hagana who were imprisoned there without any reference to Etzel, Lehi, or the twelve prisoners that were sentenced to death by the British. In the end, the parliamentary complaints put forward by Herut led to a debate in the Public Services Committee of the Knesset. At one of the Committee's hearings, students at a high school in Haifa, following their visit to the Acre fortress, presented letters expressing their shock that one area was being used as a mental hospital. "I had a feeling of sanctity and awe upon entering the museum, but I nearly exploded when I saw mental patients scattered throughout the courtyard. … "[11]

Members of the aforementioned Committee who visited the Acre site were surprised to learn that despite the fact that there was only one commemoration hall abutting a mental hospital, approximately 35,000 people visited it annually. They indicated their support for converting the hospital into a memory site "which would commemorate Israel's heroic combatants from all the military camps" and concurred that "the admixture of a hospital and a museum constituted a major aggravation for the mental patients and interfered with visitors who sought communion with the memories of combatants."[12] An agreement was reached between the Health Ministry

and the Museum to have separate entrances to each facility and to affirm that at a future date the entire compound would become a museum.[13] Shortly after, Begin was appointed Minister without Portfolio and in his new position sought to forward the implementation of the project, but to little avail. The Acre fortress only became an official state museum following the Knesset elections in 1977 when Begin became Israel's Prime Minister.

Memorial rituals

In 1963, Remembrance Day was defined in law as an official state holiday for communion with those who fell in the War of Independence and to all subsequent IDF casualties. However, after Ben-Gurion retired from politics, members on the political Left began to include the fallen from the dissident organizations. Thus, Minister Yigal Alon paid official respects at the cemetery in Safed where the "Acre twelve" were buried.[14] There he gave an encomium praising their actions and placed a wreath on the grave of Dov Gruner. Not surprisingly, a right-wing newspaper perceived this action as "the first swallow in the public recognition of the Underground's fallen. … "[15] Songs of the right-wing Underground were played on the radio during Remembrance Day, past Presidents of the State and mayors were in attendance at ceremonies honouring the memory of the Underground organizations and were even present at ceremonies marking the day that specific leaders of these organizations fell in battle. Herut tallied another major success when it enlarged the responsibilities of the Public Council for Soldier Commemoration to include care and maintenance of the previously private monuments erected to Etzel and Lehi's fallen.[16]

At the same time, the Defence Ministry acquiesced to past requests from the Association for Etzel and Lehi soldiers and began to register the Association's fallen. A portion of the soldiers received official military numbers, allowing the military to take official responsibility for preparing their tombstones, rendering assistance to families and providing rehabilitation to those who had been seriously injured both mentally and physically. They were accorded treatment identical to that received by IDF soldiers and their families. For example, in this framework, Baruch Mizrachi, an Etzel soldier killed in action, not only attained military commemoration but also a military funeral. He had been sentenced to death by Arab forces in Jenin 18 April 1948 after he was captured while engaged in an intelligence-gathering mission. His remains were only found after the Six Day War and were now interred in an IDF military cemetery.[17]

Newspaper reports did not miss the unprecedented state ceremonies for the Underground's fallen. One related that "this year, for the first time on Remembrance Day, ceremonies honouring the memory of Underground fallen will take place and representatives of combatants who fought before the establishment of the state will participate in official military ceremonies."[18] In other news reports it was mentioned that the chief rabbi of the IDF, General Shlomo Goren, composed a new version of the mourner's prayer *El Maleh Rahamim* [*Merciful God*] that was incorporated by order of the IDF General Staff:

Merciful God, who dwells on high, grant perfect peace beneath the shelter of thy divine presence, in the exalted places among the holy and the heroic who shine as of the brightness of the firmament, to the souls of the soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces who fell in the War of Independence, in the Sinai Campaign, in the Six Day War and in defence, reprisal, and security operations and *to the souls of the Underground combatants and the fighting brigades in the national campaigns* [emphasis not in the original] who risked their lives to die for the sake of the Holy One and with the help of God, Israel's campaigns brought about the resurrection of the nation and the state and the salvation of the country and the city of God – for whose soul's ascent

we pray. Thus, O merciful Father, conceal them in the depths of thy sheltering care forever and bind their souls in eternal life. God is their inheritance, in paradise they will find their rest and rest in peace.

Rabbi Goren also wrote a version of the *Yizkor* [Prayer for the Departed] with similarly added phrases:

O Lord, remember the souls of our loyal and courageous sons and daughters, soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces, and *all the Underground and brigade combatants that fought in the nation's military campaigns* [emphasis not in the original] and fell as heroes for the sake of His name, and brought by the grace of God salvation of the country and the city of God. The memory of their sacrifice and their heroic deeds will eternally not depart from us. Their souls will be bound in eternal life and their names engraved in the heart of Israel from generation to generation – Amen.

The law of the fallen – new heroes in Israeli memory

One of the significant achievements for Herut during this period was the change in the Law of the Fallen so that it would recognize bereaved families as part of the sacrificial generation even if their sons fell while fighting under the command of Etzel or Lehi units. After a long struggle and seemingly endless parliamentary deliberations, the Defence Minister, Shimon Peres, informed the legal counsellor for the Ministry on 1 August 1975 that he had formulated a "positive position with regard to making an amendment to the law regarding recognition of Etzel and Lehi fallen" and asked him "to prepare a proposal for government authorization."[19] On 1 February 1976, the Government decided to apply the Law pertaining to "Families of Soldiers who Fell in Military Campaigns' to those who fell before 30 November 1947.[20]

The Israeli interment of Zeev Jabotinsky

The drama over the issue of returning to Israel the remains of the Revisionist leader, Zeev Jabotinsky, lasted for many years. In his last will and testament, Jabotinsky wrote:

It is my desire that I be interred or cremated (it makes no difference to me) in the place where my death occurs, and that my remains (if I am buried outside the land of Israel) only be returned to the land of Israel at the order of a Jewish Government in this country, a government that will surely come to be.[21]

After his death on 4 August 1940, he was buried in New York in a metallic coffin, with the hope that the day would come in which his will would be realized. With the formation of the Eshkol Government in the summer of 1963, there were public calls to return Jabotinsky's remains. Taking the lead in this campaign was the Revisionist Movement in the United States whose members believed that the new Prime Minister could advance the conciliatory atmosphere he was trying to bring about in Israel's public life by transferring the coffin to Jerusalem.[22]

The establishment newspaper, *Davar*, wrote that the refusal to relocate Jabotinsky's remains was no longer politically tenable for Mapai. Although Jabotinsky was responsible for a split in the Histadrut, according to the editor he still had a place in the history of Zionism as a leader in publicly forging the momentum of a state-in-the-making.[23] The issue was even raised in the country's most popular youth newspaper, *Ma'ariv L'Noar*, where Jabotinsky's initiatives in establishing the Jewish Brigade during World War I and the Jewish self-defence units during the Arab disturbances in Jerusalem in 1920, as well as his urgent calls for immigration to Palestine

during the 1930s, were noted.[24]

These were not the only occasions on which the matter of interment was raised publicly. Begin spoke of this subject time and again and did not cease promising before every election campaign that his government's first act would be the return of Jabotinsky's remains. Even Government members supported this position and attributed opposition to the isolated but strong-willed position of its leader.

Towards the beginning of July 1963, Menahem Begin again requested that Prime Minister Eshkol uphold the last will and testament of Jabotinsky. Eshkol refused, but turned to his Party for advice. It was suggested that Jabotinsky's son be asked to make the request in order that Eshkol might appear as responding to a personal and not a politically partisan request. On the 15 March 1964 the Eshkol Government took the following decision:

At the request of the family of the late Zeev Jabotinsky, who desire to transfer his remains for burial in Israel, but see themselves obliged to honour and fulfil the last will and testament of the deceased in all its particulars, and especially the clause that calls for the transfer of his remains to the land of Israel only at the decision of the government of the Jewish State, the Government has decided to assist the family in the transfer to Israel of the remains of the deceased through the issuance of an order in accord with the request in the will of the departed dated 3 November 1935.

While the formality of the Government response accorded well with the language of protocol in such matters, it seemed to convey an overbearing rigidity of style that reflected the distance the Government wished to convey by replying positively to the request. Moreover, in the decision and the surrounding chatter, there was no mention of a state funeral and the heads of Herut regarded this as a contravention of the essence of the will.

Ben-Gurion published a series of articles in *Davar* in which he attacked the decision of the Government to return Jabotinksy's remains and also tried to refute Jabotinsky's contributions to the establishment of Jewish military forces.[25] His efforts to remind the public of his traditionally-held positions with regard to Jabotinsky failed. In effect, he only contributed to strengthening the voices that supported the Government's decision. His commentary was met by a barrage of letters to the editor, articles and interviews expressing disagreement. The Israeli public was exposed to an unprecedented political discourse on the place of Jabotinsky in the formation of Zionist ideology and Israeli powers.

The daily, *Ma'ariv*, undertook a penetrating critique of Ben-Gurion's articles.

In his historical sense, and this characteristic won't be denied him by his most bitter enemies, Ben-Gurion knew that above and beyond past debates on ways to realize Zionism, the nation will view Jabotinsky as much more than a party leader alone. It will see him as an honest national leader, a persistent and incomparable fighter for the state … who laid the foundations for the Jewish army, a defender of Jerusalem and a prisoner of Zion, a fighter for Jewish culture and a radical adversary of assimilation and life in the diaspora.[26]

At a session of the Zionist executive in May 1964 words of praise were expressed for those who split from the Zionist Federation in 1935. There was also harsh criticism of Ben-Gurion's articles mentioned above. The head of the Executive, Moshe Sharett (who had his own accounts to settle with Ben-Gurion) openly differed on what was written in these articles, although he did not explicitly mention Ben-Gurion by name.[27] Referring to the words of Berl Katznelson he stressed that Jabotinsky was the father of the Jewish Brigades. “One cannot ignore the glorious past of Jabotinsky,” added Sharett, “from his contribution to the Russian Zionist movement to his part in

the resurrection of the Hebrew language."[28]

On the same occasion, Sharett even expressed his support of the Herut movement's demand to allot an individual plot for Jabotinsky on Mount Herzl in the section where the remains of the presidents of the Zionist movement are interred, or in another section. The message was that Jabotinsky be allocated a gravesite carrying the same symbolic significance as the visionary founder of the state, Theodor Herzl.

Although the Government decided to bring Jabotinsky's remains to Israel, it refrained from turning the funeral procession into a state event. Moreover, it claimed that responsibility for carrying out the event belonged entirely to the Jabotinsky family. The coffins carrying the remains of Jabotinsky and his wife arrived on 9 July 1964. At the ensuing burial ceremony, the Prime Minister was conspicuous by his absence. However, his "timely" absence, attributed to a pre-planned visit to France, was partially compensated for by his passing before the coffins at their intermediate station at the Paris airport en route to Israel. Ari Jabotinsky, the son of Zeev Jabotinsky, had to organize a committee to plan the funeral cortege and graveside ceremony in which representatives of the Herut movement, Etzel, Betar, the national workers' federation, veterans of the Jewish brigades, and representatives of the two bodies who over the years lobbied for the realization of this day. The committee assumed the name "Operation Jabotinsky – Repatriation" and decided to activate a broad-based public committee alongside the operative executive.

To everyone's surprise, the committee drew people from the full spectrum of Israel's political society: the wife of the President, Rachel Shazar; Government Ministers Haim Shapira, Joseph Burg, and Zerah Warhaftig (Mafdal); president of the World Zionist Organization, Dr. Nahum Goldman; speaker of the Knesset, Kadish Luz; four Knesset members from Mapai; and additional well-known public figures.

In the United States, too, a broad-based committee was established whose members represented various Jewish organizations, rabbis, and even members of the United States Senate. The heads of Herut requested that Jabotinsky be buried in a state ceremony with full military honours following the pattern set by the Herzl funeral.[29] The security forces decided that a comparison between the two personalities was not in order and arranged for military presence at the event but not in its preparation. The newspaper *Haboker* characterized the IDF's position: "To convey respects – yes; military funeral – no."[30]

Beyond the efforts to cloak the event in a military and statist atmosphere, the Herut movement called upon a host of bodies to mark the event. The Post Office responded with an issue of a special stamp on the day of the funeral: "Zeev Jabotinsky repatriated – 29th Tammuz 5724". The Education Ministry circulated instructions to school principals to set aside time in classrooms during the week of the funeral to Jabotinsky and his legacy; universities were requested not to hold examinations on the day of the funeral; the Office of the Chief Rabbi instructed synagogues throughout the country to conduct special prayers during the Sabbath services in memory of Jabotinsky. IDF units received a directive "to allow, as much as was possible, individual soldier participation in the Jabotinsky funeral" – Betar groups that served in the Nahal Corps received special leave on the day of the funeral.[31]

The funeral procession

The funeral became a pivotal event in the history of Herut's penetration into the Israeli consensus. The Government continued to exhibit ambivalence towards this process. An editorial

in *Ma'ariv* described it as

not officially a state event, but powerful and popular. The scope of the funeral and the respect and admiration expressed by the thousands and hundreds of thousands … bear out that the Government should have taken the second and reasonable step and ordered a state funeral. … It would have been fitting on the occasion of such a powerful popular funeral as this for the head of the state and the IDF to walk at the head of the nation.[32]

State representatives were not present at the ceremonies immediately preceding the procession to the burial site. During the service parents of Meir Nakar and Absalom Haviv, two of the "twelve who were hung", lit candles beside the coffin. Nor did state representatives participate in the laying of a wreath at Herzl's tomb. Written on the wreath were the words "to Benjamin Zev Herzl on the day of the repatriation of Zev Jabotinsky". Some Government representatives were present during the actual interment.

Herut leaders repeatedly made comparisons between Herzl and Jabotinsky, biographically, ideologically, and family wise – Jabotinsky, like Herzl, came to Zionism from an assimilated family. The comparisons with Herzl remained an integral part of the Revisionist camp's identification with the authentic foundations of Zionism. By latching onto the Herzl legacy the Herut movement sought to enter the political mainstream through the validation of its vision and its capacity for leadership of the Zionist movement and the Zionist state.

Figure 6.1 P.M. Levi Eshkol in front of the coffin of Zeev Zabotinsky, at Orly Airport, July 7, 1964 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

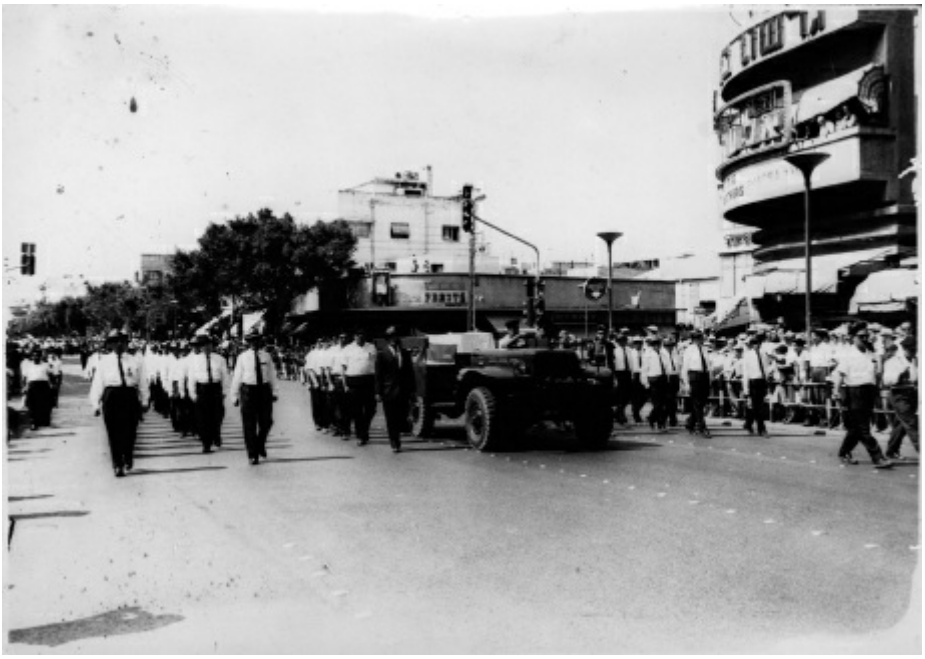

Figure 6.2 Zabotinsky Burial Campaign in the Streets of Tel Aviv (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Figure 6.3 Hezzy Yirmiya, a Beitar Youth Commander, accompanies Zabotinsky's Coffin on its way to its funeral, Ramat – Gan (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Figure 6.4 Zeev and Joanna Zabotinsky's funeral, Mount Hertzl, Jerusalem, August 11, 1967 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Conclusion: the era of ambivalence towards the "outsiders" inclusion

The era analyzed in this chapter was characterized by ambivalency of the establishment with regard to the commemoration of the fallen in the Underground movement. In the political arena, at least with regard to legislation, the first developments in the correction of the distortions were recorded. This indicated a new policy, but it was carried out in a lethargic and indolent fashion.

The first inroads with regard to recognition of the Underground focused principally on equalizing the material rights of all families of the fallen. In March 1975, the Labour Committee of the Knesset cancelled the relevant distinctions for payment of benefits from the state funds among the families of the fallen associated with the various Underground groups (and in so doing also recognized the families of those who had fallen between 1 September 1939 and October 1946, which embraced all those who served in British units, including the Jewish Brigade, as well as every organized unit that fought for the Independence of Israel until the establishment of the state).[33] In February 1976, the Families of Soldiers Killed in Action Law (Recompense and Rehabilitation, 1950), was amended in a manner that permitted its application to the fallen from all the Underground military organizations.[34] On the other hand, the commemoration initiatives for the combatants and fallen of Etzel and Lehi that were designated for construction in the Israeli landscape did not receive Government support. When they did appear, it was through the good will of the town mayors and local authorities who agreed to allocate land located within their jurisdiction.

A characteristic example occurred in the summer of 1969 when the Etzel Veterans Association initiated a memorial service on the anniversary of their combatants' breach of the Old City walls (Jerusalem) during the War of Independence. Menahem Begin, who at the time was Minister without Portfolio in the government of Golda Meir, saw to it that invitations were sent to hundreds of 1949 combatants belonging to *all* the Underground organizations in order that the

event would not appear to be a partisan undertaking. Nevertheless, the Etzel ceremony organizers felt obliged to apologize to the city. “We request,” they wrote, “that you take into consideration that there are already posters on display such as the one at Zion Gate put up by the Palmah.” Etzel wanted to put up their poster at the New Gate where their combatants had made the breach in 1949. They promised that after the ceremony they would remove their poster “in order that all the Old-City gates would exhibit a uniform and integral character.” They thus understood from the start that the acknowledgment of the deeds of their combatants was not granted the same memorial recognition as those of the “legitimate” Underground.

A somewhat similar situation emerged in the Acre fortress case. During this period of ambivalence, the first initiatives under state auspices were registered for memorial ceremonies and active commemoration events for “the gallows’ martyrs’. But the mental hospital continued to function there until the election of the Begin Government in 1977. The approved erection of a monument in Ramla to Etzel soldiers was similarly delayed until Begin's Likud Government undertook its implementation. The Etzel Veterans Association turned to the town's mayor in February 1968 with a request for a 20th anniversary remembrance ceremony replete with a memorial to the 40 soldiers who fell in the capture of the town in the War of Independence but the cenotaph was only constructed after the Likud regime came to power.[35]

One of the clearest indications of ambivalence was reflected in the decision of Levi Eshkol to bring back Jabotinsky's remains to the country as specified in the will, but, as noted above, he timed his absence from the country to the day of the funeral.

In the meantime, veterans of Etzel and Lehi were prevented from being active players in the formation of Israeli commemoration policy and they had to lobby the Government for this or that favour in the commemoration field.

Nonetheless, it appears that people associated with the Hagana and the legacy of Ben-Gurion began to feel that their monopoly over the formation of public memory was about to end and sought to undertake “defensive actions”. This was the reason that Hagana veterans made greater efforts than they had been accustomed to in the past to accord their ceremonies with statist symbolism and to use the offices of the Government in a wider distribution of their legacy and their perspectives of the past. Thus, for example, it was decided that the annual Hagana gathering in 1968 be approved by the propaganda bureau of the Government and the Prime Minister be invited as the guest speaker. In addition, the idea that the Hagana was the cradle of the IDF, a notion that was pronounced with absolute certainty during the Ben-Gurion years, was revived. Meir Pa'il, a leading military historian whose personal roots were in the Hagana, wrote that “the formal establishment of the IDF was by itself simply a legal enactment that gave an official and state status to the ‘Hagana organization’ that was formed in 1920.”[36]

The ascription “era of ambivalence” appears fitting not only in terms of what happened to the standing of members in Lehi and Etzel in Israeli state memory, but also with regard to what transpired in public perceptions of the dominant political party, Mapai. The connection between public memory and political status and power may be seen in the growing recognition and social esteem accorded the dissident organizations, alongside the diminution of the preferred status of those who were the bearers of the institutions which had dominated Israeli political life since the 1940s.

The end of Mapai's cultural and political hegemony

In 1974, the Mapai elite began to feel that they were losing a grip on the regime in light of public

reactions to their mishandling of the Yom Kippur War (1973). At a special session of the Labour Movement, the topic of safeguarding its hegemony was suggested as a prime matter for discussion. This was indicative of the pressures which the ideological leaders of Labour felt in light of the political and cultural changes occurring in Israel.

The gathering was an immediate response to the post-dominant era following the period of rule under Ben-Gurion. Up to this juncture, Labour's hegemonic status and central responsibility identified it with general national tasks, thereby preserving and reinforcing this hegemony. This supremacy, as the members of the gathering appreciated, was not solely dependent upon parliamentary strength or access to resources or privileges tied to Government, As Yohanan Peres explained to the assembled: "Even when the material-economic basis was already diminishing, circles that ceased to be dependent on the Labour movement for their financial, health, educational and cultural support continued to maintain their loyalty to the Labour movement, thereby preserving its hegemony for quite a few years."[37] Cultural efforts, and above all, the formation of past memory created a fusion between the Party and the State, and the party was perceived as solely responsible for the emergence of the state. This created a political psychology among the public according to which "voting against the ruling party created an emotional conviction that one was opposed to the state itself."[38] The data provided by Yohanan Peres suggested that the decline in status of the Labour movement was not necessarily connected to the Yom Kippur War, but rather had deeper roots.

Dr. Peres pointed to the distancing of leadership from the people, and of the people maturing in its evaluation of the functioning of its representatives, but he related in the main to the issue of "symbolic social exclusion" – a political strategy which characterized Mapai since the establishment of the state: "Without Herut and Maki" was a recurrent catchphrase uttered by Mapai leadership. It had been politically effective in the past, when it embraced more than a programme for forming one coalition or another, because it "determined who the creative and constructive forces were, and [affirmed] that the workers' party of the land of Israel stood at its centre."[39]

The reality changed, however, and because of processes put forward in this chapter, public memory expanded and pointed to additional groups, those that were defined as "dissidents' in the past, as constructive forces and partners in bringing about the emergence of the state. Hanan Tzioni pointed to past memory as a resource that the Party had lost, when he called upon his comrades to return to the strategy employed by Ben-Gurion, a strategy that turned past memory into a political resource in the present and the future. He claimed that Israeli youth for the most part did not know the history of settlement in the land of Israel and not even the history of the state since 1948. Another comrade, Bezalel Shahar, lamented the fact that the Party had ceased to secure automatically the hegemony of its ideology. The formation of the 'spirit of the age" was not confined solely to the manipulators of propaganda. The comrades longed for the days of Ben-Gurion when democratic values did not interfere with the determination of the Party to base its standing in the regime, an era when everything, in their words, was hegemonic:

What is the hegemony of the Labour Movement? Is it really the regime of the majority? Hegemony means dominant, political, ideological power, that even if it comes from the minority, or only from a chief factor in the popular coalition, it exercises a decisive influence upon the regime and ways of life in society.[40]

During this period, the party outlined for the public the social boundaries – who would be included in statism, and who not; who would be despised publicly and who admired; who was deserving of holding the reins of government and who was deprived of political legitimacy.

Nahman List, aware that the labelling of political competitors, as had been done in the past by Ben-Gurion to Herut, was no longer possible, complained about the "State List": "Even though there were similar situations in the past [of competition within Mapai], … and it was possible to shunt them aside, [that is] outside the political camp, this is something which is impossible to do today." Perhaps the comrades were tired of the attachment of demonic images to competing parties; perhaps they thought that this approach was no longer effective. In any case, the majority of those present at the gathering gave their consent that the era in which the reality of the public image could be shaped by the party leaders had come to an end. Berl Primer stated that a new propaganda system is being created where television commentators sometimes have greater influence than Knesset members. The party which, from the beginning of the state, was accustomed to being responsible for the formation of memory and public perceptions, was not prepared for that in the new era.

Yigal Alon, who was Minister of Labour under Eshkol, and later Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration, tended to ignore past confrontations and participated in commemoration gatherings organized by Etzel and Lehi. Herut members interpreted this behaviour as a continuation of the opposition he exhibited in the 1940s, when he was deputy-commander of the Palmah, to the reprisals raids carried out against the dissident organizations. Alon also had a positive evaluation of the courage and devotion that Lehi combatants exhibited during the War of Independence.[41]

Yigal Alon, on the right-wing of the Labour camp, was the first Government minister to pay homage to the dissident Underground's fallen.[42] In March 1963, he spoke at a meeting of the National Federation of Workers and then toured its offices and project. In 1972, as Education Minister, he directed that a circular be sent to teachers noting the contribution which the "gallows' martyrs" made to the struggle for independence. He appeared numerous times at events sponsored by the former dissident organizations.

To the surprise of many, even Ben-Gurion, the formulator of the hegemonic bereavement model, who distanced Etzel and Lehi from the borders of Israeli memory, changed his mind a little in this matter. In public, he continued to hold onto his rigid positions touching the policies of state memory, but in private the tone was changing. One of the indications of this changing orientation may be found in a letter he sent to Geula Cohen at the beginning of 1962. "Dear Geula," he wrote,

this morning at 9:15 I reached the last page of your story with bated breath [*The Story of a Female Combatant*, of her life and deeds in the ranks of Lehi]. Only in a few sections of your story was I returned to the great and intense debate between us. But throughout most of my reading of the book I was completely engrossed by the magic of your story. … There arose before me the wonderful personalities of your comrades. … I read your story with a beating heart and with admiration. In some chapters it seemed as if I was a partner in the deeds and exploits. The emotional intensity of the men who sacrifice their lives swept me and I lowered my head with awe to the heroic. … I did not know Ya'ir … I have no doubt that he was one of the dearest and greatest personalities that arose during the period of the British Mandate, and I honour with all my heart both the poetry and the steeliness of his stormy psyche and his endless sacrifice for the salvation of Israel. … Holy is the pen that wrote this book.[43]

It is possible that in 1962 Ben-Gurion allowed himself to relate in this manner to Lehi's members, who never were a political threat to Mapai, but not so with regard to Etzel. However, in May 1967, after Menahem Begin had suggested to Levi Eshkol that he appoint Ben-Gurion as Defence Minister, Ben-Gurion blurted out: "If I knew Begin then as I know him now, history

would have turned out differently."[44] During this period he even wrote to Begin that

> My Paula has always been an admirer of yours. … Personally, I never held any grudge against you, and the more I have come to know you in the past few years, the more I respect you, and my Paula is pleased with that.
>
> (Eichenwald 2003: 81)

The central factor which in hindsight allowed for the penetration of the heroes and fallen of the dissident organizations into the heart of consensus was the retirement of Ben-Gurion from the political arena and his increasing distance from any position in which he could shape policy related to Israeli memory and commemoration. Nevertheless, his legacy continued to hold sway over policy matters in this field. With his instructions and blessing, work began in the writing of a book on the history of the Hagana. Its contents almost generated a crisis in the national unity government after the Six Day War. It appears, however, that Ben-Gurion's very opposition to bringing the remains of Jabotinsky to Israel drove Eshkol, at the very edge of a bitter political confrontation between the two, to agree to the request of the Jabotinsky family, and the Herut movement to bury the departed leader in a state ceremony on Mount Herzl.

From the personal vantage point of Menahem Begin, the strides towards public legitimacy of his new status found expression in his signing of official state condolence letters to bereaved parents after the Six Day War. His advisors recommended sending condolence letters to bereaved parents who had ties to his political movement but he wanted to reinforce the statist image he had now acquired as a member of the government responsible for the military victory, and accordingly rejected the advice. For the first time, all who had just joined the family of the bereaved received a state letter written and signed by the person who for years had been assigned to the margins of Israeli politics and suddenly was now a partner in the country's political leadership.

The period of ambivalence led Mapai, as Peres observed at the same gathering, "from a position of relative monopoly to a competitive position." (Gotthelfand Shahar 1974a: 7). The penetration of many memory symbols commemorating the actions of those identified with the alternative to the ruling party and identifying them with the state, has led in effect to the realization of the scenario Ben-Gurion was trying to prevent. From the moment that this barrier was no longer effective, irreversible processes set in which culminated in those who longed to be included in the state arena actually leading it.

7 The electoral turnabout

Statism in the national-revisionist camp – the Eztel and Lehi belonging to the national pantheon

> "Hello, comrade. I really would like to know what you did the day after the election?"
> "I was very happy and went to work."
> "Yes, life must go on. But with me, it's a little different."

This was written by Rabbi Sonino a day after the Likud election victory of 1977.
I could no longer say that on that day it was "business as usual." I travelled to the Tel Aviv beach. Opposite Frischman Street I stood at attention, facing the sea, and searched for any remnant or sign of burning ship that had been shelled from the coast. But there is nothing – absolutely nothing. Neither the roar of cannon nor the sound of light arms fire. Nor are the people running on the beach drenched in blood. And then I had the urge to say: kudos to Mr. Begin, that we have the privilege of experiencing this great day. Twenty-nine years ago, you descended from this burning ship to this beach to give the last order of the day in the name of the Fighting Jewish Underground. This order of the day revealed your greatness. The very order of the day that said there would be no civil war. You prevented the very war that Mapai didn't care less about as long as it was assured of becoming the ruling power. And today the Mapai regime has fallen.[1]
Whether Rabbi Sonino was present at Herut headquarters [Metzudat Zeev] on the evening before his reflections on the beach or was confined to his home despite watching the electoral outcome on television, it was undoubtedly difficult for him to fall asleep after this. Like all the people in the "Revisionist Camp" in Israel, that evening appeared to him not only as the date of an electoral achievement for the party he admired. Beyond the unprecedented change of regime in Israel, there was this conveying of confidence and respect for his political camp for their sacrifice and contribution in the establishment of the state.

Over the years, many of the people from this camp became ordinary citizens who led regular lives, were family men and women who absented themselves from political and party activity. The election victory of the Likud to a great extent was attained with the support of those who

were not fighters in the ranks of Etzel (they were too young to have joined the Underground at the time); an alliance with political factions to which the slogan of Ben-Gurion "without Herut nor Maki" did not apply; and also by virtue of the skilful management of the Herut electoral campaign. But for the veteran adherents of Herut, who saw Menahem Begin not only as a political leader, but primarily as the commander of Etzel, this night was an event they would never have thought possible. Irrespective of the significance attached to the change of government, beyond any learned analysis of the processes which brought about this outcome – the personal experience of the Camp veterans was that of a correction of the wrongs done, of a renewal of self-worth and the warding of complete legitimation.

The silent reflections of Rabbi Sonino found expression in the victory speech of Menahem Begin. It was not a prepared speech and it was delivered in a monotone voice, without emotion. It was a speech that dwelled on history rather than politics and addressed the veterans who shared his journey rather than his electoral supporters.

Today marks a turning point in the history of the Jewish people and the history of the Zionist movement. … For the first time since the seventeenth Zionist Congress in 1931 when Zev Jabotinsky suggested that the declared aim of Zionism be the establishment of a Jewish state in our day. Zev Jabotinsky gave his entire life to this goal. … He did not live to see the establishment of the state and also the turn it took today. In the name of our doctrine and for the sake of its realization, [his students acolytes?] Fought to free the nation and continued … to strive to change the situation. … By means of the voter's ballot we achieved the dream through a loyal alliance with the acolytes of Haim Weizmann, Menahem Ussiskin, and Abba Hillel Silver – the General Zionists and the Liberal Party. We realized our dream through a loyal alliance with the followers of David Ben-Gurion and our dear friends from the Independent Liberals [which included part of the rump from Rafi] … and from an alliance with our good friend from the Independent Liberals, Hillel Zeidel. I wish to thank my friends, comrades, combatants in the Etzel and Lehi underground, my glorious heroic brothers. We went through a lot over a long period of time and they did not cease to believe that a day, and a night, like this would happen. I want to thank the comrades in the Herut Movement, loyal followers of Zev Jabotinsky. … the state of Israel proved that it is a free and democratic state. … I will propose that the Likud directorate turn to all the Zionist parties and those loyal to the state of Israel in an effort to establish a national unity government.[2]

From the perspective of Herut supporters, the turnabout was "the victory of democracy over the aristocracy".[3] After years of political domination and cultural hegemony by a group that Dan Horowitz characterized as marked by secularity, control by Ashkenazi Jews, personal success and linkage to the establishment of the workers' movement (Horowitz 1993: 144), there rose to power a party and political movement which had been denounced and denied all access to the means of determining the public life of the state. Moreover, it came to power within the democratic framework and not, as many opposed to its ideological views had claimed might occur, through a military "putsch".

There were those among the hegemonic element that did not regard the change of government as legitimate. The writer Yoram Kaniuk, for example, claimed, that "they stole the state from us." Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, a senior figure in the Labour Party, stated that "if this is the will of the nation, then it is necessary to change the nation."

Rabbi Sonino called for quick exploitation of the new situation in order to carry out an urgent mission: "If we respect ourselves", he wrote, " I suggest commemorating the memory of the 18 comrades who fell on the beaches at Kfar Vitki and Frischman Street by renaming Frischman

beach as Altalena Lives Beach."[4] The name of the beach was not changed, but one can draw from these words the beginning of a process of revision in official Israeli memory concerning how the struggle over the establishment of the state would be presented. This task would occupy the concerns of the new Prime Minister in the opinion of many more than the regular concerns to which a Prime Minister was obligated to pay attention. In fact, the above revision would be the clear-cut political horizon and the concept that the Herut movement would bring to the Office of the Prime Minister after 17 May 1977.

New legislation towards inclusion

When they sat as an illegitimate Opposition, Menahem Begin and his parliamentary colleagues did not refrain from using the Knesset podium to deliver speeches and criticize public policy, but their efforts rang on deaf ears. Although Begin's speeches were published in full in the Herut movement's newspapers and excited his supporters, it did not have the effect of mobilizing the required majority for even one of the bills put forward by his Party. Now for the first time since the First Knesset in 1948 the Herut movement had a ruling majority for its intended legislation.

It was MK Dov Shilansky, one of the immigrants on board the ill-fated *Altalena*, who put forward the first Herut bill in the ninth Knesset. In a bill entitled "Law for the Commemoration of the Fallen in the Campaign for the Independence of Israel", he sought to replace the beginning chronological date in the official legislation in all matters connected to the right of recognition of "the fallen" – and in one way or the other, state recognition of the family as a bereaved family, entitled to support from the Ministry of Defense (economic, rehabilitative, and symbolic). The first clause stated that the "fallen" was a person "who perished as a result of injury, illness or deterioration of health, occurring during the period of his active service before the 30 November 1947 in an organized unit that fought in the land of Israel for the independence of Israel". In explaining the bill, Shilansky said that the content of the new law intended to change the definition of "fallen" in the Military Cemetery Law (1950), which had confined the fallen to "the period of service in the IDF", and hence to service after the 30 November 1947.

An additional bill, Military Cemetery Law (amendment of clause 1) – was tabled in the Knesset on 2 March 1979. It stated that "in clause 1 of the Military Cemetery Law (1950), in par. B defining 'military service,' the words 'from 30 November 1947' would be expunged".[5] The MK who presented this Bill was from the left-wing Opposition party, Mapam. Omri Ron explained that

the present lw only recognizes the IDF dead who fell in security activities from the 30 November 1947 and after as entitled to commemoration at military cemeteries. Those who made the supreme sacrifice in the period from the Biluim (1880s) to the U.N. Partition resolution on Palestine on 29 November 1947 were excluded, and their service to the nation was not considered military service. The aim of the amendment is to terminate this discrimination and to recognize all the fallen who paved the way to the establishment of the state (approximately 2,300 individuals) and after the establishment of the state (approximately 13,000 individuals) – as entitled to commemoration in military cemeteries.[6]

Omri Ron's bill was passed in the Knesset plenum after its third reading on 17 June 1980, but already on the 11 July 1979 the standing committee of The Public Council for Soldier Commemoration decided that they would accept the Bill if the words "29 November 1947" were expunged from the text.[7] If Ben-Gurion and his acolytes identified the military cemetery as a pantheon which was "not open to just any body",[8] now these cemeteries became for the first time

sites in which “he who fought for the establishment of the state of Israel and fell before the 29 November would be buried in a military cemetery.”[9]

The inclusion of the Underground fallen in military legislation was completed on the 31 July 1982 when the Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon, announced, by virtue of the authority conferred upon him by law, that “service in the National Military Organization [Irgun, i.e., Etzel] and Fighters for the Freedom of Israel [Lehi] from the 14 of May 1948 to the 7th of July 1948, is military service in terms of the aforementioned law (The Law for the Disabled)”.[10] The effect of this Law was to include as retroactive members of the IDF those who were wounded and those who perished in the *Altalena* incident.

Reframing Remembrance Day

Because Etzel and Lehi casualties had for years been omitted from official state lists of the fallen, their families and friends had set aside an alternative day of remembrance to commemorate their sacrifice. The accession of the Likud to the Government in 1977 changed this dual arrangement. Two key government positions in the determination of the content of Remembrance Day, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Symbols and Ceremonies were held, respectively, by the former commander of Etzel (Menahem Begin) and a former Hagana member (Yitzhak Modi'i). In 1978, both decided on a singular format for all the Remembrance Day ceremonies: a mourning fanfare, the traditional mourning prayer El Ma'aleh *Rachamin*, the recitation of the traditional mourner's prayer for the dead by a bereaved father, the laying of wreaths, a gun salute, and a speech encomium by a government Minister assigned to the particular state ceremony. It was also decided that at every military cemetery a senior officer, army cantor and rifle squad, as well as representatives from the three Underground organizations – Hagana, Etzel and Lehi – would be present.

Two years later it was decided that “The Remembrance Day Law for the War of Independence and the Israel Defence Forces (1963)” would be called “The Remembrance Day Law for the Fallen in Israel's Military Campaigns (1963)”. From this juncture in time, separate remembrance ceremonies for Israel's fallen in the War of Independence ceased. On Remembrance Day 1981, the Prime Minister laid the Government wreath in the Safed cemetery and afterwards wreaths were placed in the name of the IDF, the IDF wounded, organizations and institutions. The ceremony ended with a three-gun salute fired by Golani soldiers, as if to make clear that the gallows’ martyrs were part of the regular army, who fell in the line of service.

Figure 7.1 Menachem Begin at the enactment of the State Declaration Ceremony, The Bible Museum, Tel Aviv, Independence Day, 1978 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Even the traditional remembrance prayer for the dead was changed to accord with the new Law. Now it referred to "Israel Defence Forces and all the underground combatants and fighting divisions in the nation's military campaigns, and all the Intelligence and Security community who gave their lives for the establishment of Israel" (Shamir 2003: 221).

The Underground march: initating honors for "forgotten" fighters

What could Menahem Begin wish for more than a military parade? Soldiers march in line, row after row, infantry and armoured forces, the power of "blue and white" steel, over flights of planes, – and all salute the honour platform where he himself, the Prime Minister of Israel stands, and beside him an admired general whom he appointed to be Minister of Defense. How much meaning was tied up in this march – a clear expression that ministers grasp authority through the civil politics – which is turned to a person who until now had lacked legitimation. What was urgent for Begin was to make his political inauguration felt and that a "new dawn" was awakening and that the person who was perceived as a threat to the Israeli political order was in fact endowing it with authority.

On 31 July 1977, less than six weeks after his election, Begin's Government decided to have a military parade on Israel's 30th Independence Day. The decision aroused strong opposition. Opposition Knesset members understood that a military parade might well help Menahem Begin become a state figure who could enjoy the same dominant status as Ben-Gurion had achieved. A Labour member explained that the achievements that one could be proud of on Independence Day were those that the previous government had attained and could not be attributed to the Herut movement.[11] The formulators of public opinion and the politicians forgot that over many years under the Mapai Government and the Labour Party, the IDF parade took place on Independence Day as an act in contrast to the diaspora mentality. You must also remember that

the Independence Day parades in the 1970s were very low-key compared to earlier years. They sought to portray the plans for the 30th anniversary parade as a fascist and dangerous display.

MK Ora Namir (Alignment) said that she would do all in her power to prevent the IDF parade from becoming a central event marking independence.[12]

"There were annual parades under David Ben-Gurion" replied Menahem Begin and he quoted Mapam MK Moshe Shamir to the effect that "the people follow after the armed forces". MK Haim Druckman from the right-wing of Mafdal, claimed in the same debate that "we are permitted to be proud of our own arms."[13]

Alongside political opposition to the military parade, there was, surprisingly, strong resistance from senior officers in the army who declared that the government would pay a heavy price for the military event. The military correspondent reported that the military system estimated that expected expenses would reach 150 million lira. A retired general, who stated that he represented former senior IDF officers, spoke of "financial opposition, from the perspective of lost reserve duty days, and superfluous military flights and tank hours in preparation for the parade". Even the Minister of Defense, who had been the head of the Likud election campaign and was responsible before this, in his career in the airforce, for a long line of expensive rituals and happenings, opposed the Independence Day parade for budget reasons.[14]

Begin decided to leave the decision of the military parade to the plenum of the Knesset and requested that all parties allow their members freedom from party discipline on the vote. In the Knesset debate, Menahem Savidor directed a question to the Alignment benches asking why there had been no protests from their members in past years when parades were extravagant affairs and the state budget had so many other urgent demands. In the face of parliamentary opposition to a military parade, a compromise position of calling for a "civilian parade" also met with opposition. MK Charlie Biton hinted that it would be a fascist parade of brown-shirts, a political party demonstration supporting Herut.[15]

MK Meir Pa'il (Sheli), a Hagana veteran, who through his historical writings at a later date would assign it a preferred status in the struggle for the establishment of the state, firmly asserted that

the Knesset must oppose the Underground parade. … The War of Independence was not a war of the underground organizations. … The struggle against the British – before the War of Independence – was a struggle [led] by the Underground organizations. … In the second stage, the war against the Arab states, the IDF was victorious, and in the first stage it was the Hagana, which fathered the IDF, which defeated the Arabs. It would be a travesty and a distortion of the first order to present the War of Independence as if it was a war in which the Jews attained victory through the Underground organizations.[16]

This was also the trend of remarks delivered from the Knesset podium by other Alignment members who warned about "attempts to reinvent history from the period of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel."[17]

Protest was not confined to the Parliamentary arena. Units and institutions that were historically identified with the Hagana voiced strong opposition to the parade.

As a senior political officer of the Hagana in the past and as its prominent representative today, I wish to pose the following question: Why is there no reaction to the plan for the parade of the Underground organizations? And from every side and in every way, elegantly and with sophistication, the new regime strives for legitimation and equality of the past and there is no complete response forthcoming.[18]

Amitz Peled went on to say that veterans of the Hagana and the Palmah would not join this parade in its present format but would consider participation if its representation were numerically proportional to the actual Underground forces at the time of the military struggle.

The fact that from the start Begin did seek to reproduce an Israeli memory map in the way Ben-Gurion had did not prevent Daniel Shavit from writing the following in a *Davar* article:

[Begin and his friends] cannot give birth to a successful idea from this. Prime Minister Menahem Begin on the honour stand receives the most outstanding among the combatants, members of Etzel and Lehi. … Before or after them smartly march Palmah, Hagana, Shomer members; all salute him, all in response to his salute. One can suppose that he prayed more for this moment than for an IDF parade.[19]

Another Hagana veteran went so far as claim that the parade of the Underground was part of a process of legitimating murderers, that they constituted no more than 20 per cent of the total Underground forces, and that this figure also reflected the percentage of missions they undertook in the entire War for Independence. He regarded it as a historical injustice to number the Hagana as simply one of several Underground organizations since "it constituted the single military force of the state-in-the-making." He believed that Lehi and Etzel would inflate their ranks in the parade while Hagana members would boycott the event, thus leading to a distorted picture of the military contribution to liberation of the nation.[20]

A petition sent by 23 members of Kibbutz Merhavia to Shimon Peres, chairman of the Labour Party asserted that as Palmah and Hagana veterans they would not participate in the Independence Day parade alongside the other Underground organizations whose ideology was so distant from their own and so removed from the national consensus. They suggested celebrating Israel's 30th anniversary around campfires, joined by former Hagana officers and entertainment people supportive of their values.[21] Yaakov Eshel, a teacher at Kibbutz Netzer Sereni, stated the reasons for his objection to the parade on the political plane. He reminded his readers that the leaders of Herut did not honour the authority of state leadership and that in the past they departed company with this leadership on their own initiative. But the issue is not loyalty, he stated, but their political course. Their decision not to join the organized struggle for a state and their actions against the British Mandate authorities endangered the very struggle for independence that they believed they were abetting. The planned parade, by demonstrating cooperation among the underground groups, would contribute to an historical distortion of the truth. He recommended boycotting the event in its present formulation.[22]

New heroes for Remembrance Day: expansion of the pantheon

The politics of symbols

During his terms as Prime Minister, Menahem Begin insisted upon admitting new heroes into the Israeli pantheon. In 1968, during the period of ambivalency under Mapai and the Labour Party, when Begin was Minister without Portfolio in the National Unity Government, he worked indefatigably to include Lehi and Etzel combatants among those entitled to receive the "State Combatants' Decoration". On April 1979, Prime Minister Begin distributed the "Rebellion Decoration" to 1,500 Etzel veterans. In fact, this was the second time that this decoration had been awarded; Begin had conducted a similar ceremony for his comrades-in-arms in 1958 but this was not an act of state. Retroactively, the state now gave official recognition to the rebellion that the Etzel Underground conducted against the British Empire in Palestine at the beginning of

1944.

"We have waited thirty-one years for this day, a day in which their rights have been recognized."[23] Begin did not forget to remind his audience of his inclusive approach in formulating state memory, a position that contrasted sharply with the orientation employed up to now by his political opponents.

The students of Jabotinsky never deprived anyone of his share in the efforts to liberate our nation. … Leaders of the Labour Party … should ask for forgiveness and penance from the thousands of Etzel and Lehi combatants, from hundreds of families who lost their dear ones in the Underground service, and from the entire people of Israel whose written history has been distorted for thirty years. They deprived Etzel and Lehi of their right in the establishment of our State and labelled them in derogatory terms as "terrorists".

Begin propounded these themes not only in his speeches, articles and books, but also in the school textbooks. He continued to clarify what would become a central motif during his tenure as Prime Minister: "From the moment that the Labour Party became the Opposition, my colleague and I have tried to correct the terrible wrongdoing done to the memory of our heroic fighters, of the 'gallows' martyrs,' and to those who sacrificed themselves for the liberation of the nation."[24] In addition, in January 1980, the government decided to legally define the right of combatants to these very same Underground groups.[25] For this purpose, a public commission was appointed that would determine who was entitled to receive the Combat Soldier Decoration and the Underground Decoration. The Commission was headed by a representative of the Defense Minister and its members included the Minister of Justice, a representative from the Hagana (Res. Gen. Shmuel Ayal), a representative from Etzel (MK Eitan Livni) and a representative from Lehi (Anshel Spillman). It was also decided to award decorations to quasi-military groups that had preceded the Underground and thus was born the Shomer Decoration and the Nili Decoration.[26] Four years later was added the Decoration for Prisoners of the British Government that was aimed at the Underground combatants who were jailed in internment camps by the British Government.[27]

Honouring of the Underground was also promoted through the issuance of stamps. On 23 April 1978, a first issue in the series of "Personalities", designed by C. Narkis, appeared. The subjects chosen were modern history personalities: Eliahu Golomb, Moshe Sneh, David Raziel, Yitzhak Sadeh, and Abraham Stern (see Tzahor 1998: 187). On 12 June 1990, stamps were issued in honour of the 70th year since the founding of the Hagana and in 1991 an "Etzel stamp" was issued with a picture of the Acre fortress in the background, a Lehi stamp with words of Yair Stern "to be a free man in the world" in the background. At the beginning of 1992, a "Palmah stamp" was being sold in Israeli post-offices.

The Underground members imprisoned and hung at the Acre fortress, the "gallows' martyrs", were also commemorated. Their families received Remembrance Day Medals for the Fallen in Israel's Campaigns and stamps were printed in their honour. The newspaper *Davar* criticized this initiative. The production of a sheet of stamps pointed to "the desire of the current establishment to commemorate in any fashion possible the history of the Betar-Herut movement, and this in the most stubborn manner which borders on blind fanaticism."[28]

In addition to all these commemorative initiatives of the Likud Government, Begin drew up a personal routine for each of the Soldier's Remembrance Days that he was in office. He began this day with a visit to the collective settlement of Shavi Tzion where he paid tribute to the nine Etzel combatants who fell in the raid on the Acre fortress. He then went to the fortress and participated

in the annual remembrance ceremony in the gallows' martyrs room. From there he proceeded to the official state gathering beside the graves of the gallows' martyrs in Safed, and then descended to the nearby town of Rosh Pina to the grave of Shlomo Ben Yosef. Unlike these visits when he was an opposition leader, these were now full military and state ceremonies, in the presence of military honour guards and a military entourage. On one occasion Begin noted: "Today, I have come as Prime Minister of the State of Israel in the name of the entire nation, to bow my head before your graves."[29] And he added defiantly: "If the gallows martyrs had not arisen, the state would not have come into existence."[30] In 1987, the Unit for Soldier Commemoration decided to include the graves of these martyrs under the category of military plots and to replace the original tombstones with official military headstones. Five years later, in March 1992, the Minister of Defense, Moshe Arens, saw to it that a remembrance ceremony for the "gallows' martyrs" in Safed would be included in the Remembrance Day list of official state ceremonies.

Figure 7.2 P.M. Yitzhak Shamir at the grave of Shmuel Zukerman and his Lehi comrades, June 28, 1987 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

In May 1997, at a fiftieth anniversary remembrance ceremony for those who fell in the Underground break-in to the Acre prison, it was revealed that the action cost the lives of 14 Jews, four of whom were prisoners that the action intended to liberate and 11 among the participants in the raid.

Who are the "fathers" of the nation? Honors to revisionist Zionist leaders

In the framework of the effort to change the public image of the movement and to shift it from the ideological margins of the Zionist arena to its centre, Begin determined that by taking

advantage of the thirtieth anniversary of the independence of the state, he could elevate the official public status of his teacher and mentor, the founder of the Revisionist Movement, Zeev Jabotinsky.

He undertook a special effort to emphasize that Jabotinsky was not only a significant ideologist, equal to Herzl in his development and application of the Zionist idea. Begin had written in the midst of military activities in 1948 that

Jabotinsky taught us to shoot. … Today, it is incumbent on every Israeli soldier to know that there was a time when only one man – Zeev Jabotinsky – saw the birth [of the state] and determined that weapons be placed at the disposal of the sons of those who were massacred [in the Holocaust] so that they would become free men.

In other words, this Zionist visionary was the spiritual father of the new Jewish armed forces, not David Ben-Gurion.[31]

The poems of Jabotinsky were read at the annual closing ceremony for Remembrance Day held on Mount Herzl in 1978 and the Betar hymn was heard during the Underground parade on Independence Day. On 31 October 1978, the Israeli Postal Service issued two stamps simultaneously honouring Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky as part of the series, "Personal Portraits from the Official History of Israel." Not only was a prominent historical niche being created for the leader of an excluded Zionist movement; he was now portrayed as on a par with the two leading founding fathers, Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion.

The government declared 1980 as "Jabotinsky year" in memory of his birth exactly a century earlier. The Government Medals and Coins Corporation produced a Jabotinsky medal and the Bureau for Information Dissemination published a booklet on the revisionist leader which aroused bitter protest on the pages of *Davar*: "History, ladies and gentlemen, does not repeat itself. It is created – formulated – and re-edited anew."[32] The central ceremony during the "Jabotinsky year" took place on 30 October in the Cultural Hall in Tel Aviv. Members of the Betar youth movement from inside and outside the country attended. The IDF orchestra accompanied the entire ceremony, Jabotinsky's poems put to music were sung by the rabbinate choir, and a film about Jabotinsky, produced by the Government Centre for the Dissemination of Information, was shown. *Davar* wrote that "the celebration was no longer a private, family affair, but rather embraced the entire nation. …"[33]

In 1981, the Ministerial Committee for Ceremonies and Symbols headed by MK Yitzhak Moda'i, and apparently at the initiative of the new Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, decided to conduct a military remembrance ceremony on the anniversary of Jabotinsky's death. "From now on," complained *Davar*, "IDF soldiers will salute the Betar flag and stand at attention while the Betar hymn is played."[34] The writer regarded the ceremony as an effort to compare Jabotinsky to Herzl.

State commemorative events for Jabotinsky continued after Begin retired from the political arena. In 1985, when Shimon Peres was chairman of the Labour Party, a 100 shekel coin was minted which bore the portrait of Jabotinsky, and on the 12 December 1990, a stamp appeared in memory of 50 years since the death of Jabotinsky. Along the border-lines were printed the words to one of Jabotinsky's poems (Tzahor 1994: 304).

In light of success in the education of the commander of Etzel, Menahem Begin, Lehi members felt that the time had come to inaugurate a transformation in their relationship to their own commander. In 1985, during the period of the national unity government, the Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Rabin responded favourably to the request of Anshel Spillman, the director of

Beit Yair, that the IDF assist in the organization of a remembrance ceremony for Yair Stern, the former commander of Lehi. The ceremony took place with an official wreath laying, a military honour guard, and the participation of the army's chief rabbi and cantor.

The expansion of commemoration in public space: the Etzel House as a national museum

The idea for the establishment of an Etzel Museum was broached as early as 1948 but its realization did not come about until after the Likud came to power in 1977.[35] Mapai Governments and the Labour Party expended efforts and resources to raise the Hagana House (Golomb House) but did not feel there was a need to commemorate other Underground organizations through similar construction projects. Initial discussion focused upon placing the Jabotinsky Museum under state auspices within the Defense Ministry. In July 1983, Defense Minister Moshe Arens ordered the integration of Etzel House into the framework of the IDF Museum. This was to be carried out in coordination with the Etzel Veteran Soldiers' Association and the Jabotinsky Institute. Thus, the museums of Etzel and Lehi became a part of the state museum system.

Yad Labanim: entering the military bereavement commemorative establishment

In the framework of Begin's plan to make the thirtieth anniversary of the State a turning point in Israeli memory, there was also a plan to commemorate the unknown soldiers who fell in the service of the three Underground organizations at the various Soldiers' Hostels in the country. Until the middle of the 1970s, letters were written to the head of Yad Labanim from bereaved parents who had lost their sons in military actions prior to the War of Independence complaining that their names were not inscribed in the halls of memory of Yad Labanim. Sara Zukerman, a bereaved mother whose son fell while in the ranks of Lehi, wrote to Prime Minister Begin:

The hearts of bereaved parents and families, comrades in arms and combat officers have suffered over many years because of the historical distortion imposed upon their dear ones and comrades who fell for the independence of Israel and whose names were not commemorated on the walls of the Soldier Hostels. It is astounding that in the year 1979, in the very modernized and refurbished remembrance room set aside to commemorate the fallen in Israel's military campaigns … the prohibition would continue and the names of the Underground heroes would remain missing.[36]

Her letter was one of many complaints sent to the Prime Minister by members of the Public Council for Soldier Commemoration and by people in the Defense Ministry. On 3 October 1979, a ceremony took place at the Soldier's Hostel in Tel Aviv in which the names of 3,258 soldiers who died in Israel's military campaigns were unveiled. No names of the Lehi and Etzel Underground were inscribed. Sarah Zukerman waited until 1982 to be present at a wall unveiling ceremony at the Tel Aviv Soldier's Hostel which finally bore the names of the dissident Underground's fallen.

It should be pointed out that the initiative for the commemoration of the underground fallen at the Soldiers' Hostels also included remembrance of the Hagana fallen whose names had been absented in the past as well. Now for the first time not only the names of David Raziel, Yair Stern and Dov Gruner appeared, but also the names of Dov Hoz, one of the heads of the Hagana who was killed in a road accident along with his friend Yitzhak ben Yaakov, Bracha Peled who was killed on the eve of the Wingate incident, and Moshe Neduman, Hagana's first casualty in

the Tel Aviv area. “We closed the circle; combatants from all the Undergrounds have achieved equal recognition,”[37] At one and the same time, Etzel veterans were especially proud that the demands of Hagana veterans to allocate separate walls for each group were not heeded. The new commemoration wall combined names of all 330 Underground fallen in alphabetical order and without any reference to their Underground affiliation. The wall also contained the names of 3,500 Tel Aviv residents who fell in all of Israel's military campaigns.

Figure 7.3 Shmuel Zukerman as a Tel Aviv teenager (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Figure 7.4 Sara Zukerman (second left) with her husband Mordechai and their children, Aviva and Shmuel, Tel Aviv (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

New commemoration initatives in the towns and cities

Herut had made requests to local authorities, especially the Tel Aviv authority, to name streets after members in their Underground. Hagana veterans vigorously objected to these demands. Although there was an Etzel Street, only personal names of Hagana fallen were authorized by the city's Names Committee. After 1977, the policy changed. By 1988, friends of the Hagana Veterans Association felt that the dissident organizations were being over-commemorated in the city, after more and more streets in the northern area received names of Lehi and Etzel commanders. In order to settle the conflict over street-naming and what entailed a "balance" in the distribution of street names honouring all the Underground organizations, a joint committee was established comprising representatives of Tel Aviv municipality and the three Underground organizations. The Committee recommended that each Underground would have the privilege of erecting 22 remembrance signs on sites of their own choosing. But even before Etzel and Lehi veterans put forward their suggestions, Hagana veterans had succeeded in erecting 33 signs and celebrated the occasion on the 29 November 1990 in a ceremony at which representatives of the city were present.[38]

In the end the anger over the remembrance sites abated. Walking the streets of Tel Aviv, one now encountered many signs from all three Undergrounds. Other cities followed suit.

To the great satisfaction of the Underground veterans, even the Acre prison was placed under the authority of the Defense Ministry at the beginning of the 1980s. Steps were taken to transfer the mental hospital from this premise and convert the place into a museum. The central commemorative event during these years, however, was the construction of an Etzel monument in Ramla and its dedication by the Prime Minister. The structure took the form of a Star of David with a window through which there was a vista of Jerusalem. On the monument was written: "We, Etzel members, took part in the battle for Jerusalem".

Historiography production: penetrating the state military history

In 1983, the Defense Ministry publications department printed a book written by Haim Gilad, an Etzel veteran whom the British had sentenced to death and, following appeals, was granted amnesty. In the forward to the book, Menahem Begin explained the historical importance that such books had for his movement.

> There are volumes of Remembrance books from the period of the Underground struggles and these were written by a hostile pen, distorting matters. Did we really have to wait dozens of years in order to confront the falsehoods with truth? … Were we really not obliged … to bring to the nation's attention the magnitude of the sacrifice, the dedication and the insight of our liberating sons? … Today, in the 1980s, we have, thank God, the ability not only to bring forward [our] remembrances, but also to correct the injustices.
>
> (Gilad 1983: 7–8)

Begin's call for official publications of the Herut movement's version of events as seen through the Remembrance books of their fallen was simply adopting the course taken by Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion had written many forwards to Remembrance books commemorating the fallen in the

Hagana. These books often contained descriptions of the battles in which these soldiers took part, as well as personal recollections about their lives and times. Thus, they became part of a growing collection of the history of the period. Begin now took the opportunity to redress the historical imbalance.

It took eleven years for Yitzhak Avinoam and his associates to collect all the suitable material pertaining to the fallen from 1860 to 1948. They divided the historical accounts into three periods: volume one included the Shomrim, Nili, the Jewish Battalion, the Jewish gendarmerie under the British Mandate, volunteers from the Land of Israel in the British army and in the Jewish brigade, as well as the fallen of Etzel, Lehi and the Hagana. The second volume covers the period of illegal immigration in which some members caught by the British were exiled to camps in Cypress and Mauritius where they succumbed to various diseases; the third volume planned was to be dedicated to victims of enemy terror activity. In the end, one volume was published combining all the periods. It is doubtful whether Begin, who passed away two years before this was published, saw any of the articles contained in it, but he did write an anticipatory introduction in which he wrote: "This book will instruct the young generation in the history of the period which preceded the establishment of the state, and will relate the renewed Israeli heroism which brought it about."[39] The editor added words of Ben-Gurion following the passage from Begin.

We will legislate and preserve the memory of our heroes that will be uttered with respect and admiration and live in the hearts of the people forever. Their blessed names will raise up our hearts and leave after us a sense of heroism and strong loyalty as in death.[40]

There was no hint that Ben-Gurion said these words from a narrow political perspective that excluded many fallen from the state bereavement arena and did not recognize their contribution to the Zionist enterprise. On the other hand, the president of the State, Chaim Herzog, wrote in his foreward to the book that the contents were an historical "revision".[41]

From aggressor to victim: change in the interprative package – reframing the Arlozorov and *Altalena* affairs

Arlozorov

In 1982 Shabtai Tevet published his book *The Murder of Arlozorov* in which he claims that "of all those accused [of the murder] only [the Revisionist] Abraham Stavsky was not cleared completely from the accusation against him. The book also claims that Shaul Avigur, among the mythological figures of the Hagana, said before his death: "I am convinced and sure that they killed Arlozorov." In addition, Tevet quoted a letter of Ben-Gurion to Yossi Ahimeir, young son of Abba Ahimeir in which he said: "I know who committed the murder." Tevet states that "there is no doubt that Ben-Gurion meant Stavsky" (Tevet 1982, 270).

This was not the first time since 1977 that Tevet pontificated publicly on the murder of Arlozorov. He dealt with this issue in articles published in *Ha'aretz* and drew a response from Menahem Begin. But the media repercussions from Tevet's publication were greater from the Right. There were more complaints, identification of errors in the text and claims that this was a continuation of past harassment on this issue.[42]

Except for historians and a handful of veterans (and of course the family of the main "heroes"), the public at large was not especially interested in this episode. The old de-legitimation of the Herut movement had long faded, and Menahem Begin was already in his

second term as Prime Minister. The political agenda was focused upon the Israeli evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula following Begin's dramatic peace initiative to Egypt in 1977. Behind the scenes, quiet preparations were being made for a military incursion into Lebanon. Despite these weighty security issues, the government decided to form a State Investigatory Commission to examine the Arlosorov murder that had taken place nearly fifty years earlier.

The background to the Arlosorov murder was hardly known to the public at large in 1982. At the beginning of the 1930s, the Revisionist movement strengthened its standing in the World Zionist Organization. In 1931, they numbered more than 20 per cent of the representatives at the 17th Zionist Congress and entertained high expectations for major electoral gains at the 18th Congress in 1933. However, the 1933 elections took place after the murder of Arlosorov[43] and Mapai based most of its election propaganda effort on the murder and its alleged perpetrators, the Revisionists. The Revisionist strength dropped to 14 per cent and it became clear to them that "Arlozorov's death destroyed the legitimacy of the Zionist Right, granted the Labour movement uninterrupted hegemony for 44 years, and dispatched the Revisionists and their descendants into the oppositional wilderness."[44]

In the 1930s, after the Mandatory Government's High Court of Justice cleared Abraham Stavsky of responsibility for the murder of Haim Arlosorov, Mapai published a proclamation in which it stated that "the murderers of Arlozorov were simply the victim of hooliganistic incitement and messianic Revisionist education. … "[45] During the trial, the Histadrut newspaper *Davar* wrote: "Whoever the murderer may be, they [sic] were emissaries of the Revisionist Party."[46] Begin demanded not only that those responsible for the murder be exposed, but above all, that political–historical accounts be drawn up with his rivals.

Almost two decades later, Begin called a news conference following newspaper articles that rekindled the Arlozorov controversy. Again there was no response to the claims of the Herut leader and no investigation was undertaken. Determined to change the image of his political camp in the Israeli memory, Begin announced in the wake of Tevet's publication that the state investigatory commission would seek conclusions regarding the involvement of the Revisionist camp in the Arlosorov murder. Above all pieces of testimony, according to Shlomo Nakadimon, convinced Begin of the need for a public commission. The first related to Shaul Avigur's words prior to his death: the second concerned the things David Ben-Gurion wrote implicating Zvi Rosenblatt in the murder, although Ben-Gurion did not explicitly name him (Nakdimon 1982: 141).

At the initiative of people directly involved who felt that their reputation was harmed by the media, the issue of the murder of Arlosorov also reached the courts on two occasions.

In 1964, Tzvi Rosenblat submitted a slander suit to the district court in Tel Aviv against the article by Shaul Avigur in which he wrote that Arazi changed his opinion with regard to Stavsky and Rosenblatt's guilt, not because there was a basis to the testimony or rationale, but rather because of his conviction that "a Jew must not be found guilty of the crime, no matter what."[47] On the 14 April 1966 the court ruled that the letter did not contain anything that changed the facts. Rosenblatt was not involved and the Court asked Avigur to apologize and pay a fine of 2,000 Israeli pounds and court costs. The journal *Molad* was required to publish the court ruling.

Following the 1970 publication of *A Lifetime in Jerusalem*, there was a second private litigation pertaining to the Arlozorov affair. This book, the memoirs of Edwin Samuel, the son of the first British High Commissioner in Palestine, was printed in part in *The Jerusalem Post* under the title "Murder and the Mandate". The motive for the legal charge was a passage that appeared both in the book and the newspaper: "Yehuda Magnes and I were on the black list of the same

group of rightist extremists that murdered Haim Arlozorov on the Tel Aviv beach because of his support for a Jewish-Arab agreement." In the newspaper version it was explicitly stated that this extremist group was the "Ruffian Gang" that included Rosenblatt among its founders. There was also the claim that Samuel warned Arlozorov weeks before the murder that his life was in danger and that he himself was saved only because a member of the Hagana responded to his demand for protection.

The veterans of the "Ruffian Gang", Zvi Rosenblatt, Yaakov Ornstein and Haim Tzadik presented a criminal suit and a civil suit against Edwin Samuel, his publisher, Keter, and Ted Lurie (editor of *The Jerusalem Post*) on the claim that the book and the newspaper version explicitly designated them as responsible for the murder of Arlozorov. In the end, in November 1974, a compromise was reached between the sides in which the accused paid the accusers 10,000 Israeli pounds and another 2,000 to cover the court costs. In addition, the accused were obliged to publish an apology in *Ha'aretz* and *The Jerusalem Post* and to include the words "there is no basis to the accusations or to this news … we hereby bring our full apology to Rosenblatt … and to Stavsky's family, as well as to the families of Stavsky, Ahimeir and Ornstein."[48]

From time to time appeals were heard, not only from the Rightist camp, on the orientations and actions of Mapai following the Arlozorov murder. For example, the story of Professor Dov Sedan at the end of the 1960s, shortly after he retired from the sixth Knesset (Mapai), on what took place at the time it happened in the corridors of the newspaper *Davar*. He testified that he was drawn into a blind trust and general falling into line with regard to the complicity of the Revisionists in the murder until he dared to ask "if the confidence in this version was so logically entrenched, why was it not enshrined in the protocols of the Histadrut? And the response was that the Histadrut would cling to its thesis even if the court completely back-tracked on its decision" (Ahimeier 1984, 158–59). Similar testimony was supplied by Eliezer Livneh (Mapai) After the murder Livneh asked Avigur if he was convinced that Stavsky and Rosenblatt were guilty. Avigur replied firmly: "That's not the important thing. It is important that the Jewish people will be sure that it is him."[49]

From another angle, the judge, Moshe Valero, who gave a minority opinion in the lowest court that Stavsky and Rosenblatt should be pardoned, was under pressure, according to the testimony of his son:

> this minority opinion raised a fiery storm of anger against him from people in the Jewish Agency. One could never have estimated how much influence they had on senior officials in the British Mandate. They succeeded in bringing pressure to bear on the district court judge in Jerusalem to demand that my father retire from his position. Just prior to the trial he was even a candidate for appointment to the high court of justice, but this affair wiped out all his chances.
>
> (Ahimeir 1984, 159)

In connection with the same, was an interesting article "The dark side of the sun" written by Amnon Rubinstein in *Ha'aretz*. Drawing upon all the publications relating to the affair, he concluded that

whoever reads the new testimonies … cannot free himself from the clear impression that at a certain stage in the trial several leading Hagana members knew that several of the testimonies were big lies, that the identification line-ups were fictitious, that an invisible hand organized

fabricated interviews, that the testimony of a man who admitted to the murder was concealed.[50]
He added that "when the newspaper *Davar* wanted to express its opposition at that time to the murder charge against Stavsky, a gang of people headed by Zalman Eran threatened a pogrom against the editors … " One of his conclusions was that

this was not a case of some kind of road accident that occurred to a number of leading people in Mapai and the Hagana, but rather a central event in the life of the Jewish Yishuv, an event that constituted the acme of an historical process that, in its wake, ensured the rule of the Labour Party in the Yishuv, a governance that continues up to this day.[51]

Relating to Begin's relentless demands to investigate the affair, Rubinstein wrote that "whoever still believes in the guilt of the Revisionists is either a simpleton or an evil person, and no investigatory committee and no new findings will move him from his extremist stance."[52] The murder in 1933, he asserted, was not only the murder of the man, Arlozorov, but was also an attempt to murder innocent people through the court system. Moreover, Mapai operated, according to Rubinstein

on the extremities of the disciplined Left whose leaders inherited from the land of their birth. Bolshevistic fervour and readiness to do everything for the sake of the movement, the party … personal loyalty to the party and the movement stands above all calls of conscience and above the rules of human reasonableness. … [When the heads of Mapai and the Hagan learned] that the conviction of the Revisionists would benefit the Left politically … it became clear that the trial would be a lever for victory over the ascending Revisionist party. Thus began the "process of 'for the good of the Movement'."[53]

The Arlozorov Investigation Committee began its work in May 1983 and completed it within 22 months. It sat 27 times and interviewed 63 people.[54] Zvi Rosenblatt, then 71 years old, died before the Committee published its conclusions. Yossi Ahimeir, the son of Abba Ahimeir, was present at all the Committee sittings.

The Committee clearly determined that "Abraham Stavsky and Zvi Rosenblatt were not the murderers of the late Haim Arlozorov and did not have a hand in the murder."[55] The Committee's report is an instructive document on the connection between politics and law, political involvement in a police investigation, the forging of testimonies, and the lack of precision on separation of powers.

Figure 7.5 Yossi Ahimeir as a reporter in the Arlozerov Murder's Inquiry Committee (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Altalena

Immediately after the Likud 1977 election victory, Begin attended the remembrance ceremony for the 16 comrades who died on board the ill-fated *Altalena*. [Among the dead was Abraham Stavsky.] In his address to the gathering he stated: "Ben-Gurion was mislead concerning the matter of the Altalena. Someone mislead him and told him that the ship arrived to help Etzel take control of the State. On this information, an order was given to shell the ship." He said that he heard this from a member of the Labour Party who had stated: "We investigated the Altalena incident and came to the conclusion … that Ben-Gurion was misled."[56] Thus, the ceremony's orientation shifted from remembrance to endorsement. He emphasized the democratic legacy of his movement that was absolutely the contrary to every label attributed to it in the wake of the *Altalena* affair. "We proved to the whole house of Israel," he continued, "that we could wait twenty-eight years, sometimes in suffering, in order to receive the confidence of the people on the basis of free choice of the voter's ballot."[57]

Begin's ascension to political rule is first of all the converse of the *Altalena* consciousness prevalent among the public at large. The *Altalena* incident would turn Begin from the symbol of a person who violates the law to an upholder of democratic order. The new image emerged slowly through gradual efforts of commemoration and embracement by the state authorities of the vessel's victims. The first step was to give the ship itself a commemorative platform in state remembrance. Dov Shilansky asked the mayor of Tel Aviv, Shlomo Lahat, to erect a monument on the beach or name a street after the ship. Rabbi Sonino asked the city's engineer, Abraham Schechterman, who was also Herut's representative on the Names Committee for the greater Tel Aviv area, to change the name of a Tel Aviv coastal area from Frischman Beach to *Altalena* Lives Beach, in order to commemorate the memories of the 18 comrades who fell on the beaches

of Kfar Vitkin and at the Frischmann Beach. This idea was discussed a year later at the annual gathering of veterans of the *Altalena* who adopted it as their official request, demanding that the Tel Aviv municipality allocate a place for a monument on the Frischman beach.[58]

The commemoration of the *Altalena*'s fallen gradually became a part of state ritual. Following Begin, Prime Ministers Shamir, Netanyahu and Sharon made appearances at the gravesites of the *Altalena* victims at the Nahalat Yitzhak cemetery in Givatai'im. On the 31 January 1982, the Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, amended the Law for the Families of Soldiers Who Fell in the Military Campaign (Recompense and Rehabilitation, 1950) and the Law for Invalids stating that "service in the Irgun and Lehi from 14 May 1948 to 7 July 1948 is military service". This amendment, the last in a long series of amendments to laws for the fallen and invalids, completed the state recognition of the fallen and wounded from the *Altalena* incident and the battles that occurred around it. A number of years after this amendment, when Yitzhak Rabin was Defense Minister in the National Unity Government under Prime Minister Shamir, the tombstones of the *Altalena* fallen were inscribed with the insignia of the IDF, replacing the Etzel insignia. Compensation was promised to their families. In 1988, the ship itself was honoured with a marker listing the names of the fallen placed on the beach at the site where the ship sank. A decade later a monument was erected on the same site. He berated Mapai who would have given out flowers instead of shells if the ship had brought survivors from the European Holocaust.

The initiative to erect a monument came from the second generation of Revisionists, namely Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Tel Aviv mayor Roni Milo. Milo said that he felt like a person who was fulfilling an obligation to his parents and to Menahem Begin. In his view, the lesson to be drawn from the *Altalena* incident was that brother should never raise his hand against brother.[59]

On the thirteenth anniversary since Begin's death, the speaker of the Knesset, Yuli Edelstein, said: "There is no leader who has done so much for the building of Israeli democracy. Begin solidly evidenced that there is no one greater than he on the question of democracy." Relating to the period when Begin was Opposition leader he explained that "in those years [Begin] tasted bitterness and suffered from slanders but … the rule of parliamentary democracy he honoured with all his might."[60]

For Mapai, the *Altalena*'s arrival on the coast of Palestine had signalled "a violation of state law … that poses a danger to the state and prepares the ground for civil war."[61] The Likud Government sought to replace this version of history that rested on Begin's radio broadcast after the event, when he called to his comrades "not to open fire on any front" and announced to the public in their name that "we will not open fire! There will not be a civil war." (Nakdimon 1978: 325). At the very least, regardless of which of these two versions is predominant among the Israeli public today, the earlier monolithic history has been replaced.

Figure 7.6 P.M. Benjamin Nethanyahu speaking during a remembrance ceremony unveiling a monument to the *Altalena*'s casualties at Tel Aviv, June 12, 1998 (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

Figure 7.7 The *Altalena* Casualties Monument at Tel Aviv (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

The inversion of interpretive frameworks

So great was the perceptive change in interpretative frameworks following the past disputes between the Revisionists and Mapai, that the former reverted from the aggressor to the victim,

from a contravener of law and violator of authority to an upholder of democratic values. Ariel Sharon attacked the government of Ehud Barak stating that

agitation from the beginning [came] from the Left. It began in the thirties with the blood libel over the Arlozorov murder. This is how the Left continued to lead the Zionist Movement. If it were not for this libel, the person who would have headed the Zionist Movement would have been Zev Jabotinsky. It may well have turned out that the fate of the Jewish people would have appeared a bit different or greatly different. Perhaps Jews would have succeeded to leave Europe and perhaps the whole wheel of history would have been different.

Sharon turned to the *Altalena* incident and then to Begin's second tenure as Prime Minister. “We remember that were shouted by the Palmah when they fired at the injured leaping from the flaming ship. And of course we remember the agitation during the period of the Lebanese War.”[62] The political use of these events was far from vanishing from the Israeli agenda.

Part IV

Politics of memory and the changing boundaries of national pantheon

Conclusion

The “anti hegemonic bereavements” and the confrontation over national pantheon boundaries

> For my part I consider that it will be found much better by all parties to leave the past to history, especially as I propose to write that history myself.
>
> Winston Churchill

More than six decades after the Israeli War of Independence, young Israelis are not only uninterested in the role of fallen Etzel and Lehi members in the war's military aspects; they are not particularly interested in that period's events. Political ideology has changed, too. After years of left/right divisions occupying the central political stage, the new millennium has brought new camps to the fore. In 2001 the Minister of Education announced her intention of rejecting a textbook on twentieth-century history because it underplayed references to the legacy of the nationalist camp and distorted Zionist history by addressing it from a critical perspective. This orientation had been adopted by a new school of Zionist historiography, which started emerging in the previous decade. The minister, like others in the Israeli establishment, saw it as a post-(if not anti-) Zionist narrative. The minister, Limor Livnat – daughter of Lehi activists who were staunch Revisionists – was from the hawkish right-wing of the Likud movement. From a historical perspective, her decision was surprising. She found the textbook discomforting not only because references to Etzel and Lehi were shunted to the margins of history, but because in her view it contained deficiencies and distortions to the central Zionist enterprise upheld by *both* ideological camps. Post-Zionist critique lumped together the Revisionist and the Labour camps, turning the Revisionist-oriented minister into a defender of her camp's bitterest enemies. Limor Livnat and Meir Pa'il now fought the same ideological battle against the new revisionists of Israeli history, who dominated Israeli academia, objecting to the inclusion of that textbook in the state educational curriculum. Pa'il, who had previously headed public efforts to remove the national contributions of Etzel and Lehi from school textbooks, expressed his solidarity with Livnat in attempting to preserve the historical legitimacy of the contributions of both their camps to the Zionist enterprise. For the first time, in the framework of this historiographical confrontation, the fallen, the fighters and heroic combatants of the past, formed a united front devoid of political, party or ideological distinctions.

This book may reinforce the one-man politics tradition, placing the behavioural, cultural, and political explanation on the leadership of one individual who achieved his total identification with political, diplomatic and public behaviour.[1] Observation through that prism appears to be

borne out through this study. For Ben-Gurion – Mapai's unchallenged leader, considered the organizer and leader of the party's entire behaviour and decisions – the value of authority meant prohibiting in the sphere of shaping memory and every other sphere, any hint of objections, disagreement, or questioning of his opinions and positions. The book elicits the accuracy of the distinction made by a follower, who said that "Ben-Gurion not only made history, but also wanted to enforce how it was written; he also exemplifies the cunning of history – which changed the results of his endeavours to an extent rendering them unrecognisable."[2] As Shapira found, a major part of historiography of the War of Independence was based on Ben-Gurion's writings, particularly on his diary, even after he left public life; she concludes that not only was he "the leader of the War of Independence … he also wrote its history".[3] She adds

Only a few took the trouble to put forward opposed positions to those of the prophet, the lawmaker, the Leninist leader of the camp … when the years passed … when his failings … even his weaknesses were presented as good points – like his tendency for unrestricted authority, deriding his local opponents and labelling them "haters of the Jewish people.[4]

The era of the state's Genesis is highly significant for everything pertaining to the symbolic and cultural array that over time would leave only actors with significant interests and those who, with patience, could eventually have an impact on that array.[5] Indeed, Ben-Gurion – because he was in power when the state was established – made haste to create that array. He acted both in the formal, mundane, political framework and in the symbolic–political sphere (which Gusfield calls the "politics of status"). It is where politicians act in the cultural–symbolic sphere to influence the prestige and image that imbues their status and decisions with symbolic legitimacy.[6] Beyond his unshakeable control of formal politics, Ben-Gurion worked determinedly in the symbolic political sphere, which was in fact the scene where he "murdered memory", as Vidal-Naquet[7] phrases it, as part of a strategy to sideline political rivals from the arena of memory and state symbols. It is there that Ben-Gurion took away legitimacy from their aspirations, claiming they were not partners in the statehood project, and that their families had not made sacrifices to enable Israel's birth.

And indeed, in everything connected to the historiographic versions of the War of Independence, as reflected in Israeli culture, memory, and commemoration, and in Israel's policy of bereavement, those who disseminate statism – and Ben-Gurion is their definitive leader – created a Ministry of Truth which, as Orwell wrote,[8] tells its citizens which versions are the state's and which are not.[9] It was only when Menachem Begin came to power that the "rectification period" started in which the Herut party's head restored what Assmann calls "competing narratives" to the Israeli awareness.

Uri Avnery, editor of "Ha'Olam Ha'zeh" a weekly magazine with a radical left-wing line, wrote in November 1952 an article presented as a letter to David Ben-Gurion, the prime minister. It was entitled: "Re.: Private Heroes."[10] Avnery's letter was addressed to the man about to end his term of office as prime minister and minister of defence, and requested him to perform "a great act of justice":

I ask you as prime minister, and as the defence minister, that you shatter all the miserable divisions that still separate blood from blood, and battle from battle, and generate uniformity and equivalence between my comrades, my generation, who fell for the founding of the State of Israel under different flags and slogans.[11]

It appears that, in continuation of the historiographical issues discussed in this book – additional identities have tried over the years to filter into the state memory and to acquire there social

significance and recognition and honours of their sacrifice. In the past few years, the Israeli public has witnessed struggles by families for the names of their loved ones to appear, finally, in the pantheon of state commemoration. It is a new confrontation. These families were not distanced because of their political background, but due to a psychological–cultural one. Israel's pantheon has historically underscored heroes, not victims, and so those killed in the Holocaust and victims of terror have no place in it. Only those killed actively and heroically could be commemorated there. Now the conflict is between heroization and victimization of Israeli memory.[12] Several groups have apparently identified the fact that presence in the Israeli pantheon – societal memory and "National Bereavement" – has long-term political, as well as therapeutic significance: all regard symbolic status within society, and in their ability – once achieving a place in the political discourse and system as a "legitimate voice" – even as part of the national leadership.

Figure 8.1 P.M. Menachem Begin speaks at the late Ben Gurion's 94th birthday, September, 30, 1980, Tel Aviv (Zabotinsky Institute Archives)

The test of blood, the recognition of sacrifice, and framing loss as productive and heroic – became the main test for positioning identities in the Israeli social hierarchy. It seems that the public has internalized what Menachem Begin put in words, "The amount of blood spilled is the only measure of an historical event."[13]

The boundaries of the National Pantheon – where there is evidence of that "spilled blood" – will reflect the whole national identity. But – as a Mapai parliament member decisively explained: "Not just any person is admitted into the national pantheon."[14]

Notes

Preface

1 The public archives which I used were: The archive in Bet Emir, Tel Aviv; The Hagana archive, Tel Aviv; the Knesset archive, Jerusalem; the state archive, Jerusalem; the central archive for Menachem Begin Heritage, Jerusalem; archive of the Kibbutz HaMeuchad, Ramat Efal; the Chaim Haza archive, Jerusalem; the Government News Agency archive, Jerusalem; the Ben Gurion archive, Kiryat Sde Boker; the Jabotinsky Institute archive, Tel Aviv; the Ma'ariv Newspaper archive, Tel Aviv; the IDF and the Defence Ministry archive, Tel HaShomer; the Labour Movement archive, Bet Berl; Gnazim Institute – Beit HaSofer Archives, Tel Aviv.

Introduction

1 The IDF Archives, 922/75 – 427, give figures of about 250 "dissident" combatants who fell out of a total of 6,000 (4.2%) and the Jabotinsky Archives, 8/22 – 1 heh, record that approximately 260 Etzel soldiers were war casualties.

2 With regard to memory, Freud holds that "everything past is preserved" and what is recollected through therapy is the kernel of reality (Freud, 1982, 18).

3 A meeting of comrades with Ben Gurion at the Prime Minister's office, 8 April 1949, quoted in Shapira, 1985: 64.

4 IDF Archives 1967\93 – 102.

5 The original quip proclaims: "The party that's in may sin; the party that's out is devout."

6 Quoted in *Yediot Aharanot* 22 December 1972.

7 With regard to the variant political quip cited above (see text to fn. 5), Begin launched two political initiatives upon attaining office, the neighbourhood rehabilitation undertaking, Project Renewal, and the peace initiative with Egypt.

8 Literally, "those raised on the gallows", referring to twelve Irgun and Lehi members who were hung by the British for militant actions against the Mandate power. For photos of their memorials, see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Memorials_in_Israel_for_Olei_Hagardom

9 Naomi Levitsky raised the possibility that Etzel was responsible for his death because of pressures placed on it to avoid requesting clemency from the British. This account was supported by Helen Gruner, the sister of Dov Gruner. See N. Levitsky, "Was Clemency Sought for Dov Gruner through the Influence of Etzel", *Koteret Rashit*, n.d. See also, http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=529971&contrassID=2

10 *Yediot Aharanot*, 17 February 1982.

11 The Bill passed its first reading on 14 March 2000.

12 The Minister adopted the position of a special investigative committee appointed on the recommendation of the Education Committee of the Knesset, especially for the examination of the book. See Report of the Committee for the Examination of the Book, *World of Changes*, 4 March 2001.

13 For a review of this literature, see Anita Shapira and Jonathan Penslar, 2003 *Israeli Historical Revisionism: from Left to Right*, Portland, Oregon, Frank Cass Publishers.

14 MK Haim Bar Asher [Mapai], debate in the Knesset plenum on the Netzer Sereni Bill, 1st reading, 3 January 1954.

1 The politics of memory

1 Clio, the Muse of history, is the daughter of Zeus and Mnemosyne, a connubial joining of power and memory.

2 Talcott Parsons applies the notion of cathected or fixated memory to the social system arguing that the balance of gratification/deprivation requires for its integration and "effective social control" "the cathexis of the individual actor as a social object, that is, of support. … " (Parsons 1966: 323.) Rosenstock-Huessy holds that "the historian is the physician of memory. It is his honor to heal wounds … to restore a nation's memory. … " (Quoted in Yerushalmi 1988: 93)

3 Note Plato's remarks regarding the invention of writing as causing irreparable damage to memory through its external imposition of recall on the mind. That Plato concludes the dialogue by referring to the writings of Homer and Solon implies that collective memory entailed in written history was included in his critique of the printed word and its injurious impact on any consciousness of what has been. Phaedrus, 275a; note also Phaedrus 258c for "winning immortality among his people as a speech writer."

4 What Begin did not want the Jews to forget was the active notion of self-sacrifice for values that make life worth living.

5 Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) wrote extensively on the history of the Israeli state, for whose constitution he dedicated his life from early youth. Among his writings, mostly collections of speeches and reflections: *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (1954); *Israel: Years of Challenge* (1965); *Israel's Security* (1960); *The Jews in their Land* (1966); *Memoirs* (1970); and *Israel: A Personal History* (1971).

6 The philosophic issues of collective memory and remembering are addressed by Casey (1993) and Ricoeur (1996), esp. 93–132.

7 Although this reconciliation did not take place, Begin attributes to undisclosed sources an initiative for mutual rapprochement on the part of colleagues of Ben-Gurion. (Begin 1950: 137)

8 Gramsci's thought shows some affinity with writings of the Frankfurt school of Critical Theory whose authors addressed the role of domination in ideology and culture. Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* may be construed as a full-blown elaboration of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, although Gramsci's name nowhere appears in the text. In his conclusion, Marcuse points to the illusion of popular sovereignty in liberal democracies: "'the people', previously the ferment of social change, have 'moved up' to become the ferment of social cohesion."

9 Duverger's naturalistic explanation for the prominence of two-party systems in modern democracies, that is, the tendency for voters to choose between two opposing tendencies, seems to counter, although it could be construed as independent of, some of the culturally-based causal factors he attributes to party dominance. (See Duverger 1972: 215, and below in text). Gramsci expressed disdain for empirical and statistically-oriented methodology which he termed "higgledy-piggeldy" (Gramsci 1971: 176) and also distanced himself from Robert Michels' adherence to Fascism.

10 Taken from a speech made by Gen. Yigael Yadin, Israel's Chief of Staff, at the unveiling of the war memorial, located at the Gan Anavim Military Cemetery, commemorating the casualties of the Har-El Brigade, 3 April 1951. The full quotation appears on signs at many military cemeteries, army bases and commemoration museums throughout the country.

11 The author examines this process in terms of the ambivalence and political trials associated with commemoration of events that undermine the political hegemony of the governing elite. The quandary arises when these events, though threatening, cannot be ignored due to their scope and attendant trauma.

12 For Theseus and Athena as founder and protector respectively of Athens, and the conversion of their adoration into civic festivities.

13 Nora notes, without called-for expansion, that the "reasons for the sacralisation of memory are always the same: confrontations between groups subject to constant change and consolidated through constant revival of the memories on which their identities are based. Usually, this confrontation takes the form of polemic and conflict, of which Jewish memory may provide a particularly good example." (Nora III, 1996–98: 636)

2 The political sphere

1 Law for Demobilized Soldiers (Return to Work) – 1949, *http://www.tamas.gov.il/NR/exeres/DD4FDFBE-F1E5–4248-B9C6-FDB9163D4FAC.htm*. The Head of the History Branch in the Ministry of Defence actually lengthened the War, assigning the official dates from 29 November 1947 until 20 July 1949, the date on which the last of a series of cease fire agreements was signed with neighbouring belligerents.

2 Yellin-Mor, N. 5 July 1950, Session No. 172 of the First Knesset, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

3 Government notices of all varieties are published in the *Yalkut HaPirsumim*, the Official Gazette of the Knesset.

4 Lorch, Lt. Col. N., Head, the History Branch, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, 20 March 1953, IDF Archives, 14 – 55\580. (Hebrew)

5 S. Avigur. 11 October 1949, letter to Y. Dekel, the Commemoration Unit, the IDF Archives, 59 – 56\580. (Hebrew)

6 For a biography of Avigur, see Boaz (2001).

7 M. Olmert, 12 May 1952, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

8 *Reshumot*, 8 February 1951. (Hebrew)

9 Y. Lankin, 8 September 1949, debate regarding the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (1949)*, Session 79, the First Knesset, *Knesset Protocols*.

10 Knesset Protocol, 1 April 1952.

11 A. Zair, 23 February 1949, letter to the Chief of the General Staff, Y. Dori, IDF Archives, 212 – 49\7335. (Hebrew)

12 Ibid.

13 U. Avneri, 19 June 1952, *HaOlam HaZeh*. (Hebrew)
14 Lewis Carroll subtly, but jarringly, reinforces the arbitrary element by the grammatical use of the *nonstandard* "which" for "who".
15 D. Ben-Gurion, 29 May 1949, letter to S. Avigur, Private correspondence. (Hebrew)
16 Cited in *Iggeret L'Ach*, 4 Nissan 1949. ZA 7335/49 – 212. (Hebrew)
17 Ibid.
18 *Herut*, 24 February 1954. (Hebrew)
19 Knesset Minutes, 30 December 1952, *Law: War Invalids* Before the Establishment of the State (1952), first reading.
20 Ibid.
21 Unsigned. 30 October 1948, letter to M. Tzadok, IDF Archives, 212 – 49\7335. (Hebrew)
22 Letter of 23 September 1949 from the Committee for the Inducted Soldier and his Family to the Adjutant General GHQ. Re: Concern for Etzel Fallen, in ZA 7335/49 – 212.
23 Knesset Minutes, 11 April 1949.
24 *Maariv*, 12 April 1949. (Hebrew)
25 Y. Ritkin,15 June 1954, Session No. 439, the Second Knesset, debate regarding *Amendment of the Penal Code (Crimes Against the State), Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
26 E. Shostak, 15 June 1954, Session No. 439, the Second Knesset, debate regarding *Amendment of the Penal Code (Crimes Against the State), Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
27 H. Berger, 6 April 1954, Session No. 411, debate regarding, the Second Knesset, Subject: *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (Amended) 1954*, Second and Third Reading, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
28 E. Shostak, 17 June 1957, debate regarding *Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (Amended) (1954), (Miscellaneous Orders)*, First Reading, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
29 Law passed after the assassination of Count Bernadotte, United Nations Security Council mediator for the Arab–Israeli conflict on 8 September 1948. The perpetrators were the Stern Gang, that is, Lehi.
30 *Knesset Protocols*, Debate on Invalids Law (Pensions? and Rehabilitation), 1957, First Reading, 17 June 1957. Bar-Yehuda (MK, Mapam).
31 H. Berger, 6 April 1954, debate regarding the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (Amended) 1954*, Second and Third Reading, Session No. 411, the Second Knesset. *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
32 Y. Ritkin, 6 April 1954, debate regarding the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (Amended) 1954*, Second and Third Reading, Session No. 411, the Second Knesset. *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
33 Ibid.
34 P. Rosen, 6 April 1954, debate regarding the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment (Amended) 1954*, Second and Third Reading, Session No. 411, the Second Knesset. *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
35 C. Landau, 12 May 1952, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
36 Secretariat, the Wedgewood agricultural settlement, cited in a letter from the Information and Public Relations Department, 16 March 1949, to Lt. Kis, Personnel Division, the General Staff, IDF Archives, 212 – 49\7335. (Hebrew)
37 E. Shostak, 13 August 1950, Debate on *Amendment* to *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Amendment* and *Amendment to Law: Families of Soldiers Killed in the War*. *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
38 Y. Gelbisser, 30 September 1949, letter to E. Gal, the Prime Minister's Secretary, private correspondence. (Hebrew)
39 Y. Gelbisser, 5 May 1949, letter to D. Ben Gurion, private correspondence. (Hebrew)
40 Y. Gelbgisser, 1949, cited in *Igeret L'Ach*, private document. (Hebrew)
41 Y. Meridor, 12 May 1952, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
42 Shelach, 1950, *Summary Report, 15 April 1949 to 31 October 1950*, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/12 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
43 President: Menahem Begin, Chairman of the Board: Raphael Kotlowitz, Director General: Ben-Zion Katznellenbogen; Members: Yehuda Bilu, Shabtai Vardi, Reuben Yellin, Dr. Yaakov Litmanovsky, Dr. Israel Lifshitz (US), Dov Milman, Yaakov Meridor, Betzalel Amitzur, Yehiel Kadishai, and Moshe Stein.
44 The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/2/1 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
45 Jerusalem Association of Former Lehi Members, undated, letter sent to each member personally, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel Archives, Beit Yair, file nos. 37-38-39. (Hebrew)
46 Shelach, 1950, *Summary Report, 15 April 1949 to 31 October 1950*, p. 11, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/12 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
47 The Office of the Soldier and the Fighter, Welfare Department, the Herut Movement, 21 January 1949, letter to Y. Gordon, Chairman, the Division for Servicemen's Return and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Defense, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 8/22 – 1heh. (Hebrew)
48 Shelach, October 1956, *The Association and Its Activities During 1956–1957*, p. 3, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/12 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
49 Herut Movement, 6 December 1948, letter to M. Tzadok, Head, Personnel Division, IDF, cited in *Herut*, 24 February 1949. (Hebrew)
50 Secretariat, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel list, 17 April 1950, letter to the Chief Military Rabbi, Fighters for the Freedom

of Israel Archives, Beit Yair, file nos. 37-38-39. (Hebrew)

51 Shelach, 1950, see fn. 67.

52 Jabotinsky Archives 17/5 – 16lamed.

53 Ibid.

54 Welfare Department, Shelach, undated, internal document. (Hebrew)

55 Shelach, October 1956, *The Association and Its Activities During 1956–1957*, p. 4, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/12 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)

56 Cited in *Herut*, 24 February 1949. (Hebrew)

57 Ibid.

58 Shelach, 1950, *Summary Report, 15 April 1949 to 31 October 1950*, p. 2, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1/12 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 R. Kremerman, 11 September 2001, personal interview, the Jabotinsky Institute.

62 B. Idelson, 12 May 1952, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 *HaOlam HaZeh*, 8 April 1958. (Hebrew)

66 M. Nurock, *Maariv*, 19 April 1949. (Hebrew)

67 Even-Shoshan, E., 1969, *Hebrew-Hebrew Dictionary*, Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer. (Hebrew) Even-Shoshan based his definition on the Biblical verse: “Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fell down slain in mount Gilboa” (Samuel, 31:1).

68 Y. Meridor, 16 January 1950, comments made in the debate regarding *Law: Military Service*, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

69 Herut Movement, 6 March 1949, letter to Herut's representatives in Paris, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 8/22 – 1heh. (Hebrew)

70 A. Stopf, 16 January 1950, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

71 Ben-Gurion, D., 1951, *Diaries*, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives, entry dated 26 March 1950. (Hebrew)

72 Lt. N. Lorch, 20 March 1953, *IDF Dead from the War of Independence*, IDF Archives, 14 –540\55. (Hebrew)

73 G. Meir, 30 December 1952, *Debate regarding Law: Disabled Veterans Prior to Establishment of the State* (1952), First Reading, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

3 Commemorative landscapes

1 These are the closing words of what Menahem Begin termed historical “chapters” on the Underground in his book, *The Revolt* (1950).

2 In discussing the cultivation of Christian saints and martyrs during the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, Brown (1981) points to exclusionary practices arising from *impresarios* who selected the privileged few, the “predestinate” (71) and developed public ritual around their idealized holy men. The issue of which deceased would be hallowed and which would be damned marked tensions in the politics of Church commemoration. Brown argues that the ceremonial integration of the saint with the community constitutes a “double preoccupation with concord and the exercise of power” (98) Sometimes the landscape becomes cluttered with conflicting tributes, turning a pantheon of the revered into a museum of variegated memories. In ancient Delphi, shrines became so aesthetically congested that “a monument of an Arcadian victory over Sparta” appeared “in front of a monument of a Spartan victory over Athens. … ”. Brown (1981: 7) quotes a complaint of Julian the Apostate that the cult of martyrs has resulted in “the whole world [being filled] with tombs and sepulchers.”

3 By symbolic realism is meant significations which transcend the given material representation without negating them. A military cemetery houses soldiers who fell in the line of duty but it also projects national values determined by architectural design, timing and content of memorial ceremonies, and so forth.

4 During the 1929 riots, hundreds of Arabs attacked an isolated agricultural training station situated in the midst of Arab territory. A group of 23 Hagana fighters managed to thwart the attack, during which their commander, Efraim Tchizik, was killed. British troops and Arab police, who arrived that evening, forced the defenders to vacate the farm. During the War of Independence, the farm was used as a base for the Hagana's Defence of Jerusalem.

5 *Davar*, 28 June 1937. (Hebrew)

6 Examples of these groups included the Bnei Binyamin Association in Petah Tikva, and the *HaShomer* (Protectors Society) in Ben Shemen.

7 In Conan Doyle's story, *Silver Blaze*, he notes that the curious aspect of the case is the dog that did not bark in the night.

8 Noted on the formal invitation to the event and included in the visit report written by the Commemoration Unit, cited by Shamir (1992: 23).

9 Ibid.

10 In 1967, a children's book, “Sarah, Nili Heroine” was published by Deborah Omer. See also Anita Engle (1997) for a history

of the Nili spies.

11 Ministry of Defence, 21 June 1949, press release. (Hebrew)

12 Ministry of the Interior, 15 September 1953, internal memorandum, IDF Archives, 49\73–81. (Hebrew)

13 Query No. 2155, 3 July 1955, IDF Archives 49\73–81. (Hebrew)

14 IDF Archives, 90\72–156. (Hebrew)

15 Peri, A. General Director of the Ministry of Defence, 13 April 1949, letter to Ben Gurion, D., Minster of Defence and Dori, Y, Chief of the General Staff, IDF Archives, 580\56–375. (Hebrew)

16 Lavon, P., Minister of Defence, 22 February 1955, request made to the Public Council's new appointees, IDF Archives, 90\72–39. (Hebrew)

17 Dekel, Y. and Ben Zvi, Y., 21 February 1951, letter to Ben Gurion, D. reporting on the decision made during the first meeting of the Public Council for Commemoration. IDF Archives. (Hebrew)

18 Summary of meeting held on 15 March 1950. IDF Archives, 62–28\60. (Hebrew)

19 Flyer mailed to members of the Herut Movement, Remembrance Day Eve, 1958, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 16–5/17lamed. (Hebrew)

20 Bar Yehuda, Y. 20 March 1950, Session 128, the First Knesset, see *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

21 Ibid.

22 A. Talmi, *Davar*, 30 April 1952. (Hebrew)

23 *Knesset Protocols*, 20 March 1950.

24 Ibid.

25 Ben-Gurion, D. 29 May 1949, letter to Avigur, S., IDF Archives. (Hebrew)

26 Ben-Gurion, D., cited in Ironi, Y., 9 January 1950, letter to Dekel, J., IDF Archives. (Hebrew)

27 Orbach, M., 4 June 1955, letter to Shelach, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 16lamed – 15/5. (Hebrew)

28 Ibid.

29 Graves of the Etzel Fallen – Activities Report, 23 January 1956, Jabotinsky Museum, 16lamed – 5/15. (Hebrew)

30 *Decision*, 24 May 1953, the Tel Aviv District Court, Case Nos. 56/51, 96/51, 90/51, and 92/51. (Hebrew)

31 This attitude was extended to Shelach's request to reissue a *Yizkor* volume that would incorporate the names of the Underground's martyrs. See Katznellenbogen, B., 23 January 1956, letter to the Commemoration Unit, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, unnumbered. (Hebrew).

32 Orbach, M., 15 February 1956, letter to B. Katznellenbogen, private correspondence held by B. Katznellenbogen. (Hebrew)

33 Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 16 – 5/16lamed. (Hebrew)

34 Peres, S., 8 April 1956, Letter to Katznellenbogen, B., Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 16/5. (Hebrew)

35 Shelach, October 1956, *Annual Report: Shelach, the Organization and its Activities, 1955–1956*, p. 6, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 12/1. (Hebrew)

36 Summary of the Judges of the Competition for the Planning of Military Cemeteries, conducted during 14 March 1949; see Azaryahu, 1990, p. 171, fn. 27. (Hebrew)

37 E. Z. Eshkoli, October 1948, working paper. (Hebrew)

38 For the wealth of correspondence, see the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 17/5. (Hebrew)

39 Interim Committee for the Families of War of Independence Martyrs 21 April 1950, letter to Avigur, S. (Hebrew)

40 Avigur, S., 24 April 1950, letter to Dekel, Y. (Hebrew)

41 Subcommittee to Determine the Inscriptions on the Permanent Headstones of War of Independence Martyrs, 28 February 1951, meeting protocol, IDF Archives, unnumbered; Azaryahu, 1990, p. 183 fn. 67.

42 Dekel, Y., 11 March 1951, letter to the Chief Counsel, the Ministry of Defence, cited in Azaryahu, 1990, p. 184, fn. 69.

43 Knecht, M., 12 April 1951, letter to Dekel, Y., cited in Azaryahu, 1990, p. 184, fn. 69.

44 To this very day, during the conduct of the public and political debates about the involvement of Israel's ultra-Orthodox citizens in daily life, the question is raised of who will be lain to rest in a military cemetery.

45 IDF Archives, 156 – 72\90. (Hebrew)

46 Rosen, P., Minister of Justice, 20 March 1950, Session 128, the First Knesset, see *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

47 The Commemoration Unit, Ministry of Defence, 24 July 1949, Introduction, Public Announcement: Competition: Design of Military Cemeteries. (Hebrew)

48 Israel, E., "How the nation commemorates its martyrs", 16 April 1953, *Davar, Weekly Supplement*. (Hebrew)

49 The *Commemoration Unit*, undated, internal working paper: *History of the Disagreements Regarding Commemoration of Soldiers*, p. 8. (Hebrew)

50 *Commemoration Unit*, 1950, *Proposed Budget*, pp. 5–6. (Hebrew)

51 Yad Labanim, 1 March 1954, Protocol of meeting with Minister of Defence Pinchas Lavon. (Hebrew)

52 Protocol, 16 January 1954, p. 6; *Protocols of the Public Council for Commemoration*, 27 May 1955, p. 1.

53 Commemoration Unit, 13 April 1953, letter to the Minister of the Interior. (Hebrew)

54 Independence Day Organizing Committee, 20 June 1955, *Protocol*, Meeting No. 12, Concluding Meeting, p. 2. (Hebrew)

55 Israel Studies, cited in Azaryahu.

56 Ben-Gurion, D., 1949, Defence Forces Day file, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives. (Hebrew)

57 Davar, 20 November 1950.
58 Proposed Budget for 1950 prepared by the Commemoration Unit, see Azaryahu 1995: 178.
59 Pinkerfeld-Amir, 23 March 1950, letter to Lotte Fuld, the IDF Archives, 758 \1913\262. (Hebrew)
60 Pinkerfeld Amir, A., 12 March 1950, letter to Julis, E., a bereaved brother, the IDF Archives, 758\1913\262. (Hebrew).
61 Pinkerfeld Amir, A., 7 March 1950, letter to Dr. Lauterbach of the Jewish Agency, the IDF Archives, 758\1913\262. (Hebrew)
62 *Davar*, 30 April 1952. (Hebrew)
63 *BaMachaneh*, 55, 4 September 1957, p. 8. (Hebrew)
64 See for example minutes of the meeting between representatives of the Yad Labanim and the Minister of Defence Y. Lavon, 1 March 1954, p. 1, cited in Azaryahu 1995: 181, fn. 59. (Hebrew)
65 *Al Hamishmar*, 16 December 1946. (Hebrew)
66 *Al Hamishmar*, 9 June 1947. (Hebrew)
67 Dekel, Y., 18 December 1949, letter to Dori, Y., Chief of the General Staff, IDF Archives, File No. 60/20–62, cited in Shamir, p. 60. (Hebrew)
68 Avneri, U. *Haolam Hazeh*, 19 June 1952. (Hebrew)
69 Acting Chairman of the Haifa City Council, 15 June 1949, Letter to the Lehi Party, Beit Yair Archives, Files 37 to 39. (Hebrew)
70 Katznellenbogen, B. Letter to Agron, Gershon, Mayor of Jerusalem, 4 September 1957, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16–5/17. (Hebrew)
71 The IDF Archives, File 211–20\70. (Hebrew)
72 The IDF Archives, File 213–20\70. (Hebrew)
73 *Herut*, 8 July 1954. (Hebrew)
74 *Herut*, 21 June 1949. (Hebrew)
75 Ibid.
76 Secretary of Shelach, correspondence to Israel Ginsburg, 16 June 1957. Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 5\17. (Hebrew)
77 *Herut*, 15 October 1956. (Hebrew)
78 Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 5\24.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 IDF Archives, 1551/51–199. (Hebrew)
82 Dekel, Y., Director, the Division of the Navy. Letter to the Assistant Minister of Defence, 23 October 1949, IDF Archives, 580\5 6–260. (Hebrew); see also Nakdimon 1978: 465. (Hebrew)
83 See various documents, IDF Archives, 580\56–260. (Hebrew)
84 Solel Boneh, a construction company belonged to Hevrat Ovdim, the Histadrut's industrial arm.
85 Katznellenbogen, B., 26 January 1956, letter to Orbach, M., the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 16/5. (Hebrew)
86 Orbach, M., 28 February 1956, letter to Katznellenbogen, B., the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 16/5. (Hebrew)
87 Unsigned, cited in A. Ben Yosef, A, 27 May 1956, letter to Amir, Y., Head, the Personnel Division, IDF, the IDF Archives, 285–74/20. (Hebrew)
88 Shelach, *Report of the Department for the Underground's Martyrs*, undated, probably September 1951, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 37/7 – 4ב. (Hebrew)
89 Kellner, M., 9 June 1957, Letter to Yad Labanim, the Jabotinsky Institute Archives, lamed16 – 17/5. (Hebrew)
90 Armoni, Hannah, 29 October 2000, personal interview.
91 Kiryat Ata Commemorative Monument file, various years, Beit Yair Archives, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
92 Details of the debate can be found in the *Knesset Protocols*, the *Netzer Sereni Law*, First Reading, 3 January 1955. (Hebrew)
93 Ibid.
94 *Herut*, 9 November 1948. (Hebrew)
95 Memorandum from the Haifa Hagana Veterans Association to the Secretary of Haifa's City Council, 16 April 1951, Haifa Municipal Archives, File 209. (Hebrew)
96 Katznellenbogen, B., 8 May 1956, letter to the Tel Aviv branch of Herut, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 16/5 lamed-16. (Hebrew)
97 *Report to Members, the Department for the Underground's Casualties*, undated but apparently written in September 1951. Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 37/7 – 4ב. (Hebrew)
98 Director of Shelach. Letter to Mordechai Namir, Mayor of Tel Aviv—Jaffa, 13 March 1963, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 5/4 – 1ה. (Hebrew)
99 Kenner, T., Assistant Director, the Israel Broadcasting Authority, 31 March 1963, letter to Shertzer, A., The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 5/4 1heh. (Hebrew)
100 *HaBoker*, 24 June 1963. (Hebrew)
101 Undated text, apparently a draft of a pamphlet, meant to be distributed in March 1963 by the Committee to Celebrate the

15th Anniversary of the Liberation of Jaffa, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 5/4 1heh. (Hebrew)
102 The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 7/37chaf. (Hebrew)
103 Shamir, I., 1996, p. 73.
104 Dayan, S., 19 June 1958, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

4 The language of sovereignty

1 Rivka Guber, 4 November 1957, letter to Ben-Gurion, D., Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives.
2 Begin 1950: 108.
3 Ben-Gurion, D. 31 June 1948, *Order No. 4: Israel Defence Forces (1948)*, cited in *Haboker*, 2 July 1948. (Hebrew).
4 *HaBoker*, 25 May 1948. (Hebrew)
5 See for example *HaBoker*, 2 June 1948: "During yesterday's search conducted by Israel's army in captured Jaffa, a large arms store was discovered." (Hebrew)
6 Begin, M., 20 October 1948, *Herut*. (Hebrew)
7 Ibid.
8 Riftin, Y., 6 April 1954, debate on the *Law: Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) (Amendment), 1954*, Second and Third reading, Meeting No. 411, the Second Knesset, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
9 *Yediot Aharonot*, 8 June 1986. (Hebrew)
10 Eban, A., 17 July 1949, speech made during Defence Forces Day, at the military encampment in Jerusalem, cited in *Davar*. (Hebrew)
11 Special Order of the Day, Office of the Chief of Staff, 11 Adar 1949, Hagana Archives.
12 Even-Zohar, S., 4 March 1953, letter to Horowitz, N. and others, the State Archives, gimmel 4460/5581. (Hebrew)
13 Ben-Gurion, D., 15 May 1949, the Yad Tabenkin Archives, Section 15, the Galili Archives, Container 140, Box 2–7. (Hebrew)
14 *Davar*, 6 January 1952. (Hebrew)
15 *Davar*, 16 May 1949. (Hebrew)
16 Ibid
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 For example, at the fifth annual convention of Palmach veterans in May 1957, in the course of which the monument to the 23 immigrants was dedicated on Mount Herzl, those attending included Israel's President Ben Zvi, the Chairman of the Knesset, Shprinzak, Knesset members and the Commander of the Navy. A Navy honour guard presented arms and the IDF cantor declaimed the prayer for the dead. Following the ceremony, Palmach veterans marched in a military parade along Jerusalem's streets. At the parade's head were Yigael Allon, Yisrael Galili, Lieutenant Colonel Michel Shaham, retired generals, and all in military dress. The parade's leaders were then received at the home of the President. See *Haaretz*, 23 May 1957. (Hebrew)
20 Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 5/1 – 2dalet. (Hebrew)
21 In time, Herut would call itself "the Nationalist Camp."
22 Preliminary draft in preparation of 20 Tamuz celebrations (July 1954), undated, Herut Movement Headquarters, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1 – 8\8het. (Hebrew)
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 See the National Workers Association placard, 14 July 1938, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 2 – 8\1dalet. (Hebrew) It should be noted that before Herzl alighted on the idea of a Jewish state as the solution to anti-semitism he had opted for a socialist path: "It is my conviction that the Jews … will ultimately find no other escape than into the arms of Socialism." (cited in Bein 1970: 91)
27 *Yediot 2*, National Workers Association information circular, 20 Tamuz 1954, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 21 – 5\7amed. (Hebrew)
28 Ibid.
29 National Workers Association placard, 20 Tamuz, year unspecified, probably 1970s. (Hebrew)
30 The Central Planning Committee for the 20 Tamuz Celebration, the Executive Committee of the National Workers Association in Israel, Department of Culture and Information, undated, apparently 1938, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 21 – 5 \7amed. (Hebrew)
31 Herut Headquarters, document prepared for the 20 Tamuz celebration, July 1954, undated, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 1 – 8\8. (Hebrew)
32 *Herut*, 24 December 1948. (Hebrew)
33 Jabotinsky Institute Archives,-2 1\5dalet. (Hebrew)
34 *Davar*, 27 July 1948. (Hebrew)

35 *Haaretz*, 19 July 1949. (Hebrew)
36 In preparing for the second Zionist Conference in 1898, Herzl was also engaged in sketching an outline for a biblical drama which he entitled, *Moses*. (See Bein 1970: 265.)
37 Some scholars assign the term "civil religion" to projects in which holidays and festivals exalt the national entity. See, for example, Liebman & Yehiya 1983.
38 Avigur, S., 18 December 1949, letter to the Dori, Y., Chief of the General Staff. (Hebrew)
39 For the distinction between liberation and freedom, see H. Arendt (1961: 141, 301)
40 *Herut*, 5 December 1948. (Hebrew). On the 29th of November, the United Nations recognized the State of Israel, admitting it into the new organization.
41 This term was taken from *The Sovereignty*, one of the vessels that conveyed illegal Jewish immigrants to Israel in early 1948.
42 Article 1, *Law: Independence Day* (1951). (Hebrew)
43 *HaYarden*, 23 July 1941. (Hebrew)
44 *Davar*, 13 April 1949. (Hebrew)
45 Bill in which the amended clause was passed at the Knesset session, 12 April 1949.
46 Labour's ideological perspective, according to which "liberation" referred to the system of social relations maintained between individuals or classes that was to guide construction of a just and egalitarian society, appears not to have been absorbed by the public at large.
47 Public Council for Commemoration, 21 February 1951, Minutes, IDF Archives, unnumbered. (Hebrew)
48 Dekel, J., 29 November 1951, letter to the Director of Postal Services. (Hebrew)
49 Ben-Gurion, D. 5 May 1953, letter to Avneri, S., Mapai Archives, 316/5376 gimmel/13.
50 Letter sent to bereaved families, April 1951. IDF Archives. (Hebrew)
51 Harari, Y., 12 April 1949, Meeting No. 23, the First Knesset, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
52 *Al Hamishmar*, 27 April 1949. (Hebrew)
53 Dekel, Y August 1950, summary of meeting with Ben-Gurion, D. IDF Archives. (Hebrew)
54 Machleff, M. 19 April 1953, *Order of the Day: Remembrance Day*, IDF Archives, 72\90 – 156. (Hebrew)
55 *Motion for the Agenda (Proposal No. 609)*, 18 June 1958, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
56 Yad Labanim Archives, 14 June 1963. (Hebrew)
57 *Knesset protocols*, 25 March 1963.
58 Volunteers from abroad who fought in the War of Independence.
59 *Knesset protocols*, 25 March 1963.
60 Raziel-Naor, E. Raziel-Naor File, Jabotinsky Institute Archives. (Hebrew)
61 Yesheyahu, S.H., 27 March 1953, letter to Arazi, S., cited in Azaryahu, 1993, Between Two Cities, *Kathedra* 68, p. 120, fn. 79. (Hebrew)
62 *Davar*, 2 May 1963. (Hebrew)
63 Shamir, I, 1999, *The Changes Undergone by Yizkor*, Lecture, Conference on the Culture of Commemoration and Remembrance, Ministry of Defence, Commemoration Unit, August 1999, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew).
64 The Ministry of Defence, 1955, *Yizkor*. (Hebrew)
65 See http://www.israel.org/mia/go.aspMFAH00yb for the latest version of the poem.
66 Shelach, 1949, *In Their Lasting Memory*. (Hebrew)
67 "Israel, remember your sons and daughters, the soldiers of the National Military Organization and its officers, those courageous and bold volunteers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation's liberty and the country's liberation. Israel, remember your heroes and your martyrs who were hanged, who fell in the Defence against the Arab hordes. … " [author's translation].
68 Ben-Gurion, D. April 1951, letter to bereaved families. IDF Archives. (Hebrew)
69 *Davar*, 25 November 1951. (Hebrew)
70 Ben-Gurion, April 1951, letter to disabled veterans, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives. (Hebrew)
71 The decoration was eventually awarded during the Remembrance Day 1954 observances. See Azaryahu, 1995, 112, fn. 2.
72 Ben-Gurion, D. 3 January 1952, Letter to Galili, Y., Yad Tabenkin Archives, Section 15 – the Galili Archives, container 140, file 5 – 20. (Hebrew)
73 Yisrael Galili, Yaakov Dori, Joseph Jacobsen and Nahum Shadmi to the Prime Minister, 20 July 1952. Tabenkin Memorial Archive, section 15, Galili Archive, container 140, file 5–20.
74 *Haaretz*, 10 February 1949. (Hebrew)
75 Yisrael Galili, Yaakov Dori, Joseph Jacobsen and Nahum Shadmi to the Prime Minister, 20 July 1952.
76 Yisrael Galili, Yaakov Dori, Joseph Jacobsen and Nahum Shadmi to the Prime Minister, 20 July 1952.
77 Galili, Y. Dori, Y., Jacobson, J., and Shadmi, N., 20 July 1952, report to Ben-Gurion, D., the Yad Tabenkin Archives, Section 15, the Galili Archives, File No. 5–20. (Hebrew).
78 Yisrael Galili, Yaakov Dori, Joseph Jacobsen and Nahum Shadmi to the Prime Minister, 20 July 1952.
79 Ibid.

80 Yisrael Galili, Yaakov Dori, Joseph Jacobsen and Nahum Shadmi to the Prime Minister, 20 July 1952.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid. Also, note that in light of Ben-Gurion's refusal to award the medal to those of Jabotinsky's followers who actively fought the British during the years 1936– 40, Etzel and Lehi veterans were surprised when he offered to award the medal to Zeev Jabotinsky for his participation in the Jewish Brigades.
83 Ibid.
84 *Government Decision No. 423*, 10 May 1959. (Hebrew)
85 *Davar*, 10 June 1958. (Hebrew)
86 Palmach Veterans Association, undated, placard: *Urgent Announcement to Palmach Members*, inviting its members to a ceremony, detailing the arrangements, Kibbutz Hameuchad Archives, 9 – 7/2ח. (Hebrew)
87 Only in May 1959 was it decided that "IDF soldiers are forbidden to wear the Hagana medal." *Decision No. 423*, 10 May 1959, IDF Archives, unnumbered.
88 Begin, M. Letter to Archbishop Makarios, *Herut*, 17 March 1961. (Hebrew)
89 Katznellenbogen, B., 2 May 1961, letter to Minister of Defence, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 23/5 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
90 *Law: Remembrance Day in Honour of the Martyrs of the War for National Sovereignty and the Israel Defence Forces* (1963), 25 March 1963, first roll call vote, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
91 *Herut*, 5 December 1948. [Hebrew]
92 Shelach Commemorations Committee, Iyar 1954, letter to bereaved families, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 23/5 – 16lamed. [Hebrew]
93 Advertisement, undated, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 23/5 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
94 Tzadok, Gen. Moshe, Head, the Personnel Division, IDF, undated, letter to the Lochamim Party, the Lochamim Party Archives, Beit Yair, files 37-38-39. (Hebrew)
95 Ben Meir, Y., 22 May 1957, Letter to the Editor, *Herut*, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 23/5 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
96 Secretary of Herut. 28 May 1957, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 23/5 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
97 Hall, G., 14 May 1959, In Memoriam, *HaBoker*. (Hebrew)
98 *Maariv*, 26 July 1957. (Hebrew)
99 Ibid.
100 *Herut*, 22 July 1963. (Hebrew)
101 Yehuda, Y., 10 November 1963, *Davar*. (Hebrew)
102 *Maariv*, 26 July 1956. (Hebrew)
103 Director of the National Philatelic Services, 14 January 1958, letter to Shelach, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 17/5 – 16lamed. (Hebrew)
104 *HaOlam HaZeh*, 16 April 1958. (Hebrew)
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid. The longest chapter in Begin's *The Revolt* (1950) was entitled "The Conquest of Jaffa". It details the denigration and diminution of the Irgun's military accomplishments circulated by the Haganah communiqués. Strategically, the taking of Jaffa was regarded as part of the struggle against British rule and "saved the whole Jewish front from breaking." (Begin, 1950: 371)
107 Shelach, undated, internal report to its members, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 16lamed – 8\7. (Hebrew)
108 Tzadok, Gen. M., 20 August 1949, letter to the Chief of the General Staff, IDF Archives, 18/1949/39. (Hebrew)
109 *Armor – the Journal of the Armored Division Association*, 2000, 9, p. 3. (Hebrew)
110 Dekel, Y. and Ben Zvi, Y., 21 February 1951, letter to Ben-Gurion, D. containing report of decisions made during the meeting of Public Council for Commemoration, IDF Archives, unnumbered. (Hebrew)
111 Ben-Gurion, D. 28 September 1961, address given at the party conference announcing publication of the third volume of *Gvilei Esh* (*Parchments of Fire*); cited in Avinoam (1961). (Hebrew)
112 *Haaretz*, 19 July 1949. (Hebrew)
113 Dresner, Y., October 2001, interview, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
114 *HaDoar*, 30 June 1972. (Hebrew)
115 For instance, the Hulda and Negba monuments.
116 Guber (1970) *Being Worthy*, address given at the twentieth anniversary celebration of the publication of her book, *The Brothers Book*, Beit Hasofer Archives, Tel Aviv.
117 Guber (1950) *The Brothers Book*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved. (Hebrew)
118 David Ben-Gurion on Rivka Guber after reading her book, Ben-Gurion Archives, file 10gimmel / 1.
119 Guber, R., letter to Ben-Gurion, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives, unnumbered. (Hebrew)
120 Gelbgisser, Y. Letter to the IDF Appeals Committee, private correspondence. (Hebrew)
121 Private archive of the Gelbgisser family.
122 Shelach, 28 June 1954, invitation to the ceremony. (Hebrew)
123 *Herut*, 8 July 1954. (Hebrew)
124 From address made by the parents of the Ribenbach brothers, killed during the Haifa Railroad Workshops attack, cited by

the Association for the Commemoration of Lehi Martyrs, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 5/9–5chaf. (Hebrew)

125 *HaOlam HaZeh*, 20 February 1952. (Hebrew)

126 *Herut*, 20 October 1948. (Hebrew)

5 The politics of historiography

1 Shapira also notes that the first inklings of a change in view are noticeable in texts from 1951. See especially Ben-Gurion, D., 1951, 197–202.

2 Ben-Gurion, D., 1951, *Diaries*, entry dated 26 March 1950, University of Beer Sheva, Ben-Gurion Archives (originally the Sde Boker Center). (Hebrew)

3 *Shadmot*, 1953, 50 (Winter), the Yad Tabenkin Archives, Section 25, Container 6, File 3. (Hebrew)

4 *Shadmot*, 1953.

5 Ben-Gurion, D. 1941, Speech before the general meeting of the Journalists Federation, *Davar*, 21 April. (Hebrew)

6 Anonymous. 30 April 2002. Personal interview with former Chief Education Officer, IDF.

7 On the authoritative aspects of political knowledge, see Shapira, B., 1993, *The Development of Political Attitudes among Youth*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tel Aviv University, The Department of Political Science. (Hebrew)

8 *High Court of Justice Appeal No. 144/50, Dr. Israel Sheib [Eldad] v. The Minister of Defence and Others*. (Hebrew)

9 Ben-Gurion, D., 23 June 1948, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

10 Zion, E., 5 June 1949, *Al HaMishmar*. (Hebrew)

11 Avigur, S., undated, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives, 4896. (Hebrew)

12 Raziel-Naor, E., 9 June 1959, remarks made with respect to the high school history text written by Dr. Efraim Shmueli, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)

13 Sirkin, E. 29 January 1950, letter to Shaul Avigur, IDF Archives 26/60–13. (Hebrew)

14 Taken from a detailed list of Pinkerfeld-Amir's activities as noted in a letter sent to an official of the Information and Public Relations Department, the Ministry of Defence, 3 July 1950, IDF Archives, 758/1953/133. (Hebrew)

15 See 19 June 1950 memorandum relating to the meeting between Pinkerfeld-Amir and Ben-Gurion, IDF Archives, 758/1953/133. (Hebrew)

16 Leaflet describing the activities of the IDF Archives, 1950, IDF Archives, 758/1953/8. (Hebrew)

17 Questionnaire distributed to the families of fallen soldiers that was sent to Kibbutz Manara (specific example found) and all the agricultural settlements aligned with the Labour Movement, IDF Archives, 758/1953/8. (Hebrew)

18 Edna Pinkerfeld-Amir, A., 26 December 1950, letter jointly addressed to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Education, IDF Archives, 220-70-39. (Hebrew)

19 The Hasmonean dynasty ruled over the land of Israel from 140 to 37 BC claiming political recovery of the territory of ancient Israel. See, for example, I Macc. 15:33–34.

20 These efforts were described in the volume's foreword.

21 Unsigned, 18 June 1950, protocol of meeting between Pinkerfeld-Amir and Ben-Gurion, D., IDF Archives, 758/1953/133. (Hebrew)

22 Pinkerfeld-Amir, A.October 1950, Letter to the Director General of the Ministry of Defence, IDF Archives 758/1953/133. (Hebrew)

23 Pinkerfeld-Amir, A. 20 March 1950, letter to the Chairman of the Committee of Judges for the Planning of Mount Herzl, IDF Archives 758/1953/133. (Hebrew)

24 Letter to the State Press Office from the Public Relations Department, December 1949, IDF Archives 758/1953/21. (Hebrew)

25 The leading Revisionist poet and intellectual.

26 *Davar*, 25 May 1952. (Hebrew)

27 Hagana action, conducted on 30 December 1947 meant to blow up the Haifa Refineries, which supplied the British army with gasoline. As a result of this operation, the Arabs initiated a massacre against Jewish Refinery workers.

28 Argov, N., 14 December 1950, letter to Pinkerfeld-Amir, A., IDF Archives, 758/1953/72. (Hebrew)

29 Yadin, Y. 15 June 1950, letter to Pinkerton-Amir, IDF archives 758/1953/72. (Hebrew)

30 Pinkerfeld-Amir, A., 19 December 1950, letter to Argov, N., IDF Archives, 758/1953/72. (Hebrew)

31 Pinkerfeld-Amir, A., 19 December 1950, letter to Ben-Gurion, D., Ministry of Defence, IDF Archives, 758/1953/72. (Hebrew)

32 Director, the IDF Archives, 22 December 1948, letter to the Committee for Commemoration of the Haifa Refineries Martyrs, IDF Archives, 758/1953/72. (Hebrew)

33 Pinkerfeld-Amir, A., 26 April 1950, letter to Ben-Horin, Y., IDF Archives, 758/1953/262. (Hebrew)

34 Ibid.

35 Quoted in a letter from Gelbgisser, Y. to the Editors, *Herut*, 5t May 1949, personal correspondence. (Hebrew)

36 *Hed HaChinuch*, Fall, 1952. (Hebrew)

37 *Davar*, 23 June 1961. (Hebrew)
38 Ben-Gurion, D. 24 August 1950, letter to Guber, R., Ben-Gurion Archives, File 1/10/ג. (Hebrew)
39 E. and R. Guber, E. and R., 3 April 1951, letter to Ben-Gurion. For the full correspondence and details regarding the project's financing, see Ben-Gurion Archives, File 1/10/ג. (Hebrew)
40 Friedman, F. and Y., 19 March 1963, letter to Ben-Gurion, Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion Archives. (Hebrew)
41 Friedman, F. and Y. 2 April 1963, letter to Ben-Gurion, Sde Boker, Ben-Gurion Archives. (Hebrew) Especially significant for the purposes of my argument is the suggested inclusion of Moshe Dayan, one of the charismatic leaders of the Hagana and future Minister of Defence, in the book's steering committee.
42 Protocol: Meeting regarding publication of the book in memory of Varda Friedman, Offices of the Minister of Defence, HaKirya, 24 May 1963, Sde Boker, Ben-Gurion Archives. (Hebrew)
43 Ibid.
44 Leaflet send from Shelach to members of the Herut movement on the even of Remembrance Day, 1958. The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 17/5–16L.
45 Taken from Begin, M., 1949 Introduction, *To Their Lasting Memory*, Tel Aviv: Shelach. (Hebrew)
46 These sections were: (1) Victims of British executions, (2) Casualties of the 1929 riots, (3) Lehi members who died during World War II, (4) Casualties during the rebellion against the British Enslaver, (5) By Cain's Hand, (6) Etzel martyrs who fell in the war against the Arab bands and invading armies.
47 Begin, M., 1949, *To Their Lasting Memory*, Tel Aviv: Shelach. (Hebrew)
48 Lazar-Litai, C., 1951, *The Conquest of Jaffa*, Tel Aviv: Shelach. (Hebrew)
49 Yaakov Yisrael De Haan, a Protestant from the Netherlands, arrived in Palestine in the 1920s. He converted and eventually became a member of an extremist ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist faction, *Neturei Karta*. Because of his intensive activity against the Zionist institutions, he was “executed” by the head of the Hagana in 1934.
50 Band of Thugs: the label assigned to a terrorist group whose ideology support Lehi.
51 *Commemoration of the War by the Jewish Underground and Its Operations*. Report to Shelach, 13 September 1951, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 3/37–4chaf. (Hebrew)
52 Hasson, 1948, Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 3/12–14chaf. (Hebrew)
53 Ben-Ami, O., Mayor of Netanya, letter to Shelach, 12 September 1957, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 17/5-L16. (Hebrew)
54 Joseph Klauzner, Prof. January 1951, letter publicly distributed by Shelach. (Hebrew)
55 Shostak, E., *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Begin, M., 23 June 1948, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 *Davar*, 29 May 1958. (Hebrew)
62 Ben-Gurion, 23 June 1948, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
63 *Davar*, 29 May 1958. (Hebrew)
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 This strategy had a somewhat curious precedent: Upon transfer of the State administration to Jerusalem, dozens of Christian clergymen turned to the Court's president, Zamora, with the request that the Court, as the contemporary heir of the Greater Sanhedrin, conduct a retrial of Christ's case in order to correct the original perversion of justice. (See Cohen, 1988)
68 Shapira was the Mizrahi Party's senior representative in the Government. Text of the decision, taken during a regular meeting of the Interim Government, 23 June 1949. Documents transmitted to the Tel Aviv District Attorney by Yosef Kokiya, Director General, Ministry of Justice, 23 July 1953. Ministry of Justice Archives, File 1015, No. 10288.
69 The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, 204–20.
70 Outcome of meeting with the Ministry of Defence, 24 May 1956, cited in Ben Yosef, A., letter to I. Pinkerfeld-Amir, Head, Personnel Division, 27 May 1956, IDF Archives, 285–74/20.
71 The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, L16–5/15.
72 *Decision of the Compensation Officer Regarding the Termination of Compensation Awarded to Miriam Reifer*, 23 November 1953, The Jabotinsky Institute Archives, L16–5/15.
73 *Haaretz*, 25 November 1951. (Hebrew)
74 *Herut*, 10 July 1951. (Hebrew)
75 Tamir, cited in *Herut*, 10 July 1951. (Hebrew)
76 *Hatzofe*, 1 July 1953. (Hebrew)
77 Tamir, S., undated, recording of personal reminiscences, Tamir Family archives. (Hebrew)
78 Tamir, S., undated, recording of personal reminiscences, Tamir Family archives. (Hebrew)

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 *Al Hamishmar*, 18 July 1952. (Hebrew)
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Gorney, U., Tel Aviv District Attorney, August 1952, letter to the Head, Department of Intelligence, General Staff, personal copy. (Hebrew)
92 *The Dir Yassin Incident*, Confidential Report, IDF Archives, 922\75–343. (Hebrew)
93 Ibid.
94 See footnote 156.
95 Confidential Physicians' Report, undated, *The Dir Yassin Incident*, IDF Archives, 433 – 922\75. (Hebrew)
96 Placard, April 1948, *Notice: About the Dir Yassin Incident*.
97 89, 90, 92, 96, 1951. Original archive files missing – taken from partial photocopies.
98 The Jabotinsky Institute Archives 4/10 – 4chaf. (Hebrew).
99 Commission of Inquiry into the Murder of Dr. Chaim Arlozorov, 1958, *Final Report*, p. 154. (Hebrew)
100 Menahem Begin on 6 June 1956, in the course of the Third Knesset (the original proposal had been made toward the end of the Second Knesset). Begin suggested that a commission of inquiry composed of three judges be convened to investigate the Arlozorov murder, *Knesset Protocols*. (Hebrew)
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 *Herut*, 8 August 1949. (Hebrew)
104 Shelach and the Segal family, 1961, *My Soul Will Not be Appeased*, *The Yedidya Segal Incident as Revealed in the Tel Aviv District Court*, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew) Pamphlet describing the legal proceedings, p. 10, the Jabotinksy Archives. (Hebrew)
105 Ibid., p. 11.
106 Ibid., p. 20.
107 Ibid., p. 39.
108 Shelach and the Segal family, 1961.
109 Ibid., p. 74.
110 Ibid., p. 75.
111 Ibid., p. 74.
112 Ibid., p. 82.
113 Shelach and Segal family, 1961. *Compromise Agreement, Civil Case File No. 503/49*. (Hebrew)
114 Shelach and Segal family, 1961, private documents. In 2009, Hagai Segal, nephew of Yedidya Segal, wrote an account of his uncle's kidnapping in which he places responsibility for his death on the Hagana (Segal 2009).

6 The period of ambivalence, 1963–77

1 Abba Ahimeir was a right-wing ideologist within the ideological spectrum of the Lehi organization.
2 The Herut Movement had obtained 14 seats in the First Knesset, 8 in the Second, 15 in the Third, and 17 in the Fourth and Fifth. The Liberal Party went under the name of the General Zionists in the first four Knesset elections obtaining 7, 220, 13 and 8 seats respectively. Before the Fifth Knesset the General Zionists amalgamated with the Progressive Party to form the Liberal Party. This Party split against the background of the formation of Gahal with a majority of the Progressive Party members forming the Independent Liberal Party which won five seats.
3 See *Yediot Aharanot*, 30 April 1970; *Ha'aretz*, 7 February 1971.
4 *Ha'aretz*, 28 May 1967.
5 This disappearance stemmed from the fact that after the Six Day War Mapai united with two parties that had previously split from it, Achdut Ha'Avoda and Rafi, to become the Labour Party (see Beilin 1985).
6 "A Tag", *Herut*, 12 August 1963.
7 *Ma'ariv*, 12 July 1976.
8 Jabotinsky Archives, 4/1 – alef20peh.
9 Knesset Debates, 28 November 1961.

10 *Herut*, 4 May 1962.
11 A letter from students of the Hugim high school in Haifa to the chairman of the kaf-het Committee, Shlomo Rosen (Mapam) 8 December 1966, Israel State Archives, file 490 – chaf.
12 Ibid.
13 The conclusions reached by the Public Services Committee on the subject of the Acre fortress were presented to the Knesset speaker on 28 June 1967.
14 Also known as "the gallows martyrs" (*olei hagardom*).
15 *HaBoker*, 30 April 1963.
16 Responsibilities of the Public Council for Soldier Commemoration according to regulations of 12 December 1967, amendment to the previous regulations.
17 Letter to the Committee for Military Registration in the Defence Ministry from Eitan Livni, chairman of the Association for Etzel and Lehi Soldiers, alef – 4/1 420peh, September.
18 *Ma'ariv*, 18 April 1969.
19 Letter to Yitzhak Moda'I, MK, from the Defence Minister, Shimon Peres, 31 January 1976. Ibid.
20 Clause 11 of the Law stated that after section B, section C would be inserted, determining that the period up to 30 November 1947 in which a soldier fought for the country and for the independence of Israel in an organized military unit, would constitute active service.
21 Written into the will as clause 5 on 3 November 1935. Jabotinsky Archives 13\vav – het9.
22 See the announcement of the Herut Movement in the United States, *Herut* 10 July 1963.
23 See *Davar*, 10 November 1963.
24 *Ma'ariv L'Noar*, 31 December 1963.
25 See *Yediot Aharanot* 10 April 1964; *Davar* 19 May 1964; *Kol Ha'Am* 13 April 1964; *Davar* 4 June 1964.
26 *Ma'ariv* 17 April 1964.
27 See *Yediot Aharanot*, 27 May 1964.
28 Ibid.
29 Herzl was buried in Vienna and the codicil of his will directed that his remains be transferred to the land of Israel upon decision of the Jewish people. Herzl's repatriation-burial took place in Jerusalem in 1949.
30 *HaBoker*, 3 July 1964.
31 *Yediot Aharanot*, 5 July 1964.
32 *Ma'ariv*, 8 July 1964.
33 *Ma'ariv*, 4 March 1975.
34 Jabotinsky Archives 7/12/-2?.
35 For the Acre initiative see *Davar*, 14 May 1967; on the delayed memorial in Ramla see the letter from the chairman of the Etzel Veterans Association to the mayor of Ramla, 8 February 1968, Jabotinsky Archives 4/1 – alef20peh.
36 M. Pa'il, 16 April 1972, Yad Tabenkin Archives, section ?35, container 6, folder 3.
37 Yohanan Peres quoted by Gothelf & Shahar (eds.), *The Hegemony of the Labour Movement – What will happen to it?* Intellectual Group in the Histadrut, 1974, p. 5.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Evidence presented by Yigal Alon on "The Season," State Archives 21/24.
42 See note 14 and preceding text.
43 In Appendix to G. Cohen, 1995.
44 See www.etzel.org.il/ac20.htm.

7 The electoral turnabout

1 The letter of Rabbi Sonino to the editor of *B'Er etz Yisrael*, 18 May 1977.
2 My thanks to Hanan Naveh who managed to locate the recording of this speech and even to make a copy from the archives of the second radio channel of the Voice of Israel radio.
3 This was stated by Limor Livnat on election eve following the announcement of the results. Quoted in Eichenold (2003: 144).
4 Letter of Rabbi Sonino to the editor of the newspaper *B'Eretz Yisrael*, 18 May 1977.
5 Military Cemetery Law (amendment to clause 1)
6 Ibid. This was not the last time that Omri Ron, who identified with the "Land of Israel" wing of Mapam (according to the author's definition) surprised his party colleagues with his parliamentary behaviour. Ron, a member of Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek, a captain in the reserve Paratroop Brigade, and former Secretary of the National Kibbutz federation (1972–76), was elected to the Knesset on the Ma'arach list. He was also a member of the leading organization in the Peace Movement,

Shalom Achshav, although he later said that "if you alienate yourself from the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus, you are also likely to alienate yourself from the Galilee (Carmel 2000: 1024). To the astonishment of his party colleagues, on his return from reserve duty service in Lebanon in June 1982, he attacked what some had labelled "the marginal people in Ma'arach who denounce the war in Lebanon." (Carmel 2000: 1024), and those who tarnished the image of the IDF. Soon afterwards he failed to attain the position of Secretary in Mapam and switched to the Labour Party (1996).

7 Protocol of the standing committee of the Public Council for Soldier Commemoration, 11 July 1979, Yad Labanim Archives, Tel Aviv.

8 Expressed by MK Haim Dayan (Mapai), *Knesset protocols*, plenum debate on the Netzer Sereni Law (1954. first reading, 3 January 1955).

9 Ma'ariv 18 June, 1980.

10 For The Law for the Disabled see *Yalkut HaPirsumim* 54, 355.

11 MK Moshe Amar (Alignment), 2 November 1977, Knesset debate.

12 See *Davar* 18 October 1977

13 Ibid.

14 *Yediot Aharanot*, 1 August 1977.

15 Knesset debate, 17 October 1977.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 See letters of Amitz Peled from Kibbutz Hulda to Israel Galilee, 5 November and 15 November 1977 in the Kibbutz Meuhad archives, section 15, Galilee archive, container 50, file 6.

19 *Davar* 26 September 1977.

20 See the letter from Yaakov Landau to Israel Galilee, 29 September 1977, Kibbutz Meuhad archive, section 15, Galilee archive, container 50, file 6.

21 Letter from Meier Talmi, secretary of Mapam and Abraham Brome, secretary of the Federated Kibbutz movement, ibid.

22 Letter from Ya'acov Eshel to Netzer Sereni, n.d., ibid.

23 *B'Eretz Yisrael*, April 1979, 12.

24 Quoted from A. Eshel, "The royal murdered whose memory has been commemorated, the royal murdered whose memory has been forgotten," *B'Eretz Israel*, March 1982, 11.

25 Decision 332 (6 tet samech), 6 January 1980.

26 Decision 385, 20 January 1980.

27 Government Decision 452 (44 tet samech) 1 March 1984.

28 *Ha'aretz*, 23 December 1982.

29 Quoted in *Ma'ariv*, 3 May 1979.

30 Words of Menahem Begin on Remembrance Day 3 May 1979 in *Yediot Aharanot*.

31 *Herut*, 5 August 1948.

32 From an article reviewing the events during the "Jabotinsky year" and examining them from an historical perspective, *Davar*, 26 March, 1982.

33 Davar, ibid.

34 N.Lanir-Palevski, "One Hundred years of Spiritual Seclusion on the 101st," *Davar*, 26 March 1982.

35 Interview with Judge Haim Adar, a member of Etzel and later Head of the Public Council for Soldier Commemoration, April 2004.

36 Letter from Sarah Zukerman to Menahem Begin, 6 October 1979, courtesy of the Zukerman family.

37 Words of Haim Tsippori, Minister of Communications at an unveiling ceremony dedicated to the memory of 330 Underground fallen in the Tel Aviv area, 1 September 1982. Personal communication to the author.

38 For these initiatives, see *Ha'aretz*, 30 January 1989; Jabotinsky Archives 38 – kaf 4 alef.

39 *Ma'ariv*, 15 April 1983.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ephraim Even, in an article entitled "Inexactitudes, Half-truths, where and where – on the margins of the book by Shabtai Tevet *The Murder of Arlozorov*" published in the Journal *Ha'uma*, 1984, 134–37. Haim Ben Yeruham, who finished his book on Arlozorov entitled *The Big Slander* during the same period and the efforts of Mapai to accuse the entire Revisionist leadership of responsibility for the murder (Ben Yeruham 1982,327–40).

43 Arlosorov was murdered on a beach in Tel Aviv on 16 June 1933.

44 Israel Karni, "Year Zero", *Globes*, 19 June 2003.

45 The proclamation may be found in the Abba Achimeir Archive and the Jabotinsky Archive.

46 *Davar*, 28 August 1933.

47 A section of the article was quoted in the Tzahor Committee Report, 120–21.

48 Quote from the Tzachor Committee, p. 123.

49 This is based on the testimony of Yesheyahu Leibowitz as it was told to Reuven Yaron, chairman of national University

Library at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. R. Yaronj, "Yesheyahu Leibowitz and the Arlozorov murder affairs," *Hauma* 118, Winter 1994–95, p. 204.

50 Amnon Rubinstein, "The dark side of the sun," *Ha'aretz*, 29 June 1973.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 *Ma'ariv*, 2 April 1985.

55 Report of the Investigatory Committee, 202.

56 *Ma'ariv* 3 June 1977.

57 Ibid.

58 See Jabotinsky Archives 2/21/6 – 1 heh; letter of Rabbi Soncino to the editor of *Eretz Yisrael*, 18 May 1977; letter of Dov Shilansky in the name of the families of the *Altalena* to Mayor Shlomo Lahat 30 June 1978, Jabotinsky Archives, op. cit.

59 *Ma'ariv* 12 June 2000.

60 Sitting 234 of the Knesset, 15 March 2005.

61 Speech of David Ben-Gurion to the Provisional State Council, 23 June 1948.

62 *Ma'ariv*, 16 March 2000.

Conclusion

1 When that tradition began, it examined totalitarian policy or resistance movements that were associated with a single person. The tradition later developed into explanations for democratic–political behaviour of a party. See, for example Barb, H., 1935, *A New World Seen Through One Man*, NY: Macmillan; Sinngh, K. (ed.), 1986, *One Man's World*, New Delhi: Allied Publications; Heiden, K., 1939, *One Man Against Europe*, Harmondsworth: Penguin; Friedman, T. L., 1990, *One Man's Middle Eastern Odyssey*, London: Fontana.

2 Ne'eman, S. "The Haim Arlosoroff affair as a case of history's cunning," *Zemanim*, Summer 1982, p. 10. [Hebrew]

3 Shapira, A. (1985) *From the dismissal of the Haganah commander to the dismantling of the Palmach: issues in the struggle for security leadership*, 1948. Tel-Aviv: Haaakibbutz Hameuchad, p. 9. [Hebrew]

4 Shapira, A. ibid, p. 9.

5 Eliade, M. (1963) *Myth and Reality*, NY.

6 Gusfield, J. (1963) *Symbolic Crusade*.

7 Vidal-Naquet, P. (1991), *Murderers of Memory*, Tel-Aviv: Am Oved. [Hebrew]

8 Orwell, G. (1971), *1984*, Tel-Aviv: Am Oved. [Hebrew]

9 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, "On the social contract," (1990) *Political thought: a selection of texts*, Tel-Aviv: Schocken, pp. 273–212.

10 Ha'Olam Ha'zeh, 26 November 1952.

11 Ha'Olam Ha'zeh, 26 November 1952

12 Lebel U. (forthcoming), " 'Second class loss': political culture as a recovery barrier? – Israeli families of terrorist casualties and their struggle for national honors and recognition", *Death Studies*, 2013

13 Knesset, 25 December 1963.

14 MK Haim Bar Asher [Mapai], debate in the Knesset plenum on the Netzer Sereni Bill, 1st reading, 3 January 1954.

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