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CRISIS, CHARISMA, AND THE CREATION OF
THE STATE OF ISRAEL: DAVID BEN-GURION
AND HIS INSTITUTIONAL LEGACY

BY

ALAN BRASS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
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MASTER OF ARTS

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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
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DAVID BEN-GURION AND HIS INSTITUTIONAL LEGACY

submitted by Alan S.J. Brass, B.A.,
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II

ABSTRACT

CRISIS, CHARISMA, AND THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL: DAVID BEN-GURION AND HIS INSTITUTIONAL LEGACY

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David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, did not just rule, but significantly aided in the creation of the state and molding of its institutions. Ben-Gurion, who assumed a number of characteristics common to charismatic leaders, proved to be an exceptional leader at an exceptional moment in Jewish history. This study adds another dimension to the examination of the Ben-Gurion phenomenon by drawing upon a modified adaptation of Weber's notions of charisma, in conjunction with a number of partial theories relevant to the subject at hand. This thesis suggests that Ben-Gurion's charisma was conditional upon the circumstances of the time; as they changed his style of leadership was no longer acceptable within the limits of a primarily "rational" system.

III

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Of course, any errors and opinions expressed in this thesis are my responsibility alone.

IV

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CHAPTER I

THE CHARISMATIC FRAMEWORK

The Israeli political system, despite severe external pressures and national cleavages, has demonstrated remarkable stability. Israel, which gained independence in May, 1948, has avoided the coups, military takeovers and civil strife that have plagued a significant number of states founded in the post World War Two era.¹ Most conventional works explain the emergence of this stability almost exclusively in terms of actions undertaken by the country's political parties, particularly Mapai.² (Israeli Labour Party.) Insufficient attention has been focused upon the crucial role performed by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, in implanting that pattern of stability in Israel and nurturing it to full bloom.

A study of leadership in Israel, or for that matter any other democracy, presents numerous conceptual problems; there is no consensus on a framework to which the student of leadership may turn.³ This paper does more than simply lament such a state of affairs; it will draw upon the notion of charisma, introduced into the social sciences by Max Weber,⁴ to examine Ben-Gurion's leadership. Adoption of Weber's notion does not require acceptance of it in its entirety;

Weber's writings on charisma have been modified by more contemporary students of charismatic leadership.⁵ The application of a charismatic framework to study Israel's first prime minister might make some contribution to the theory building process.

Organization of This Study

Chapter one delineates the conceptual framework to be employed in this study. It will draw on Weber's writings about leadership, along with the works of Rustow, Apter, Willner and Tucker. Huntington's formulations concerning the achievement of political institutionalization,⁶ as operationalized by Amos Perlmutter,⁷ provides the theoretical underpinnings to this study of Israeli institutional patterns in the pre and post independence periods; these notions have been coupled with Shils' model of center and periphery⁸ as modified by Horowitz and Lissak.⁹

Chapter two describes the pattern of political activity that emerged in the Yishuv (the preindependence Jewish community in Palestine). The Yishuv is portrayed as a highly institutionalized system which virtually precluded a leader whose authority rested on charisma.

Chapter three suggests that the advent of independence ushered in fundamental discontinuities. In contrast to the Yishuv era, the new state feared external annihilation. Internally, furthermore, massive immigration ended the

homogeneity of the Yishuv. It was under these trying conditions that Ben-Gurion assumed a number of characteristics common to charismatic leaders; the chapter examines his actions as he dons the cloak of charisma.

Chapter four attempts to explain the deeper sources of Ben-Gurion's capacity to legitimate those aspects of his authority that were based upon charisma. It is argued that Ben-Gurion was able to invoke and evoke the memory of the prophets and other legendary heroes of biblical times.

Chapter five focuses on those factors which militated against Ben-Gurion continuing as a charismatic leader. It is recognized that Ben-Gurion's charisma waned in accordance with Weber's notion that charismatic appeal is both unstable as well as inadequate as a permanent basis for legitimacy.

Chapter six draws together the lessons learned in this study and places them within a comparative schema. This final chapter answers questions posed in this paper about the role of charisma in a predominantly rational-legal system. Finally, it looks toward the future and tentatively suggests further directions in leadership studies and their relation to the political process as a whole.

The Conceptual Framework: General Background

In bringing forward his concept of charisma, Max Weber theorized that social entities derive their legitimacy on the basis of three ideal types of authority. Although never found

in pure form, these are: traditional, rational (rational-legal) and charismatic.¹⁰ Traditional authority is derived from an "established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them."¹¹ Rational-legal authority rests on a "belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands."¹² Finally, Weber designated charisma to be highly distinct from traditional and rational authority. Whereas the latter two types are relatively stable, both being institutionalized in a belief system, charismatic authority is transitory and unstable. Weber described charisma as follows:

The term "charisma" will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary man and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma Charismatic authority is thus specifically outside the realm of every day routine and the profane sphere. In this respect, it is sharply opposed both to rational and particularly bureaucratic authority, and traditional authority Both rational and traditional authority are specifically forms of everyday routine control of action; while the charismatic type is the direct antithesis of this. Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being foreign to all rules The only basis of legitimacy for it (charismatic authority) is personal charisma, so long as it receives recognition and is able to satisfy the followers or disciples. But this lasts only so far as the belief in its charismatic inspiration remains.¹³

Weber's notions on charisma have been open to multiple and often contradictory interpretations.¹⁴ The term charisma has been abused to the extent that it is now indiscriminately

applied.¹⁵ Regarding the vulgarization of the concept, Edward Shils has noted: "Charisma has come to be used in current and high middle brow speech, in sociological and political analysis."¹⁶

The concept of charisma has been weakened to the extent that Giovanni Sartori would classify it as vague or amorphous resulting in a form of "conceptual misinformation."¹⁷ Confusion results from this ambiguity. A number of students of the Weberian approach purport to explain precisely what Weber meant. All too often a reader of these works is presented with the lines: "Implicit in Weber's work," "Weber's real intention was," etc. . . . These interpretations often cloud rather than clarify the matter. As a result, the concept has suffered from extreme and unfair criticisms.

Along with the Willners this paper interprets charismatic leadership as being a reciprocal relationship connecting leader and follower. Charisma is defined as:

A leader's capacity to elicit from a following deference, devotion, and awe toward himself as the source of authority. A leader who can have this effect upon a group is charismatic for that group.¹⁸

A leader who possesses charisma must be distinguished from a routine or even a crisis leader, otherwise the term charisma will be devalued beyond meaning. While a popular leader can elicit responses including affection, admiration, respect and trust, a charismatic leader can evoke those of devotion, awe, reverence and blind faith.¹⁹ In addition, he must be able to operationalize his ideas so as to effectively combine the

"potentialities of planning with a moral ideology."²⁰

A prime minister who assumes charismatic characteristics must possess the capacity to inspire and sustain loyalty over and above the institutionalized charisma attached to the office of the prime minister.

The Conceptual Framework: The Specifics

Ben-Gurion's leadership will be examined under the following four headings: the political, cultural, historical and institutional setting; the crisis situation; charismatic vs. routine leadership; the scope allowed a charismatic leader during a crisis period, and his subsequent behaviour after the termination of the crisis period.

I. The political, cultural, historical and institutional setting

"Every political system is imbedded in a particular pattern of orientations . . . [known as] the political culture."²¹ By focusing on political culture, the charismatic concept becomes more operational. It can move away from a number of constraints implicit in Weber's model, especially its definitional rigidity.

Claude Ake has argued that the proponents of charismatic legitimization have not tried to give charisma a specific meaning.²² D.L. Cohen suggests that the "charisma concept does not offer any operational indices to identify or measure

the extent of charismatic appeal."²³ The criticisms by Ake and Cohen are somewhat severe and unfair. Societies do differ in their cultural definitions of leadership roles. What a leader may acceptably undertake in one culture might meet with disdain in another. MacGregor Burns, who adopts "A leadership in society approach," suggests that a leader must be examined within his environmental setting.²⁴

Thus, the attempt to apply a rigid all-encompassing cross-cultural definition of charisma might prove fruitless, due to the divergencies between societies. The criticism which Ake directs to charisma's lack of definitional specificity is dealt with appropriately in a comment offered by Willner:

Attempts to find specific similarities in the personal attributes of charismatic leaders in order to elicit a composite "charismatic personality" type may be suggested but are not likely to prove definitive.²⁵

This is not say that a universally valid definition does not exist, only that the definition of charisma must be modified if applied to different societies. The emergence of charismatic leadership, and particularly its limitations, are viewed as intimately connected with the political culture of the society in which it arises.

The historical cultural and institutional patterns present in a largely rational-legal system pose some problems regarding an application of Weber's concept of charisma. But if the modifications introduced by Rustow, Tucker, et al, are accepted, the concept can more easily be applied to a rational-

legal system.²⁶

Rustow points out that charisma is not a fixed datum. Degrees of charisma and beliefs can be more or less intense.²⁷ Charisma in the real world is most likely to appear in conjunction with the other ideal types of authority. Thus, in a rational-legal system, elements of tradition and charisma are present. Charisma is recognized as appearing in a rational-legal system; however, its scope is limited.

Edward Shils introduced into the social sciences the concept of a center as a focus of charismatic and institutional authority. The center has institutional and symbolic meaning. He described it as:

[A society's center is] the center of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which governs the society. It is the ultimate and the irreducible. . . . The center is also a phenomenon of the realm of action. . . . It is a structure of activities of roles and persons, within the network of institutions. It is in these roles that the values and beliefs which are central are embodied and propounded.²⁸

The periphery, on the other hand, encompasses "those sectors of society which are voluntarily or involuntarily subject to the center's authority, but which are not active partners in shaping the features of society and its regime."²⁹ The relationship between center and periphery represents the dominance of the former over the latter in shaping the features of a society.

Horowitz and Lissak suggest that the dichotomous distinction between the center and periphery can be adjusted when applied in a case study. In certain societies the

dominance of the center is restricted by subcenters bringing an element of autonomy, and by the coalitionary structure of the center. Horowitz and Lissak believe that the coalitionary nature of the center can best be examined by reference to the consociational model of democracy. In addition, Paltiel submits that the consociational approach illuminates factors contributing to the stability of the coalition system in both pre and post independence Israel.³⁰ The consociational model has been utilized in explaining the cooperation between elites which represent the ethnic, religious, linguistic or ideological subcultures in certain segmented Western European democracies,³¹ and evidenced by a considerable degree of subcultural autonomy. The center regulates conflicts by bargaining, rather than by majoritarian decision-making processes. Proportional sharing of powers and rewards occurs in the consociational system.

The consociational model suggests that consensus in a segmented society derives from a coalescence of apparently divergent interests, in the sense that maintenance of the system depends upon the overriding commitment of the political elites to preserve it. The center and periphery model, on the other hand, asserts that universally shared ultimate values are the basis of consensus within the society. The combination of these two models highlights the crucial contribution the constituents (periphery) perform in the building of stability. At the same time, the center still serves as the "embodiment of an ideological

consensus [at the elite level] as expressed in a common system of symbols."³² Identification with these symbols facilitates political mobilization in a system.

The center and periphery model can be used in delineating the boundaries of a system "without resorting to the formal criteria of territory and citizenship; affiliation to a community is defined in terms of attachment to a center as a focus of authority."³³ The framework can thus be applied to a system lacking formal coercive powers. While Horowitz and Lissak note that a center-periphery relation is a dynamic vibrant one, this point merits more emphasis.³⁴ It is possible to see an erosion in the powers of the periphery while the center expands. Where a concentration of important functions exists at the center, the possibility for the emergence of charismatic leadership is appreciably enhanced; especially when independence is achieved, the institutional charisma attached to the office of a prime minister or president can magnify the individual leader's charisma.

Samuel Huntington has advanced the thesis that the stability of a political system can be maintained providing the level of participation does not outstrip its level of institutionalization. Institutionalization is defined as the "process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability."³⁵ Huntington defined the level of institutionalization of any political system "by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of its organizations and

procedures."³⁶ Scope of support refers to "the extent of which the political organization and procedures encompass activity in a society."³⁷

Perlmutter, who applies Huntington's theoretical framework in a study of Israel, notes:

The creation of a politically developed order is the result of interplay between social theory, social forces, elite segmentation, and political institutionalization. A stable political order emerges from an equilibrium of the above forces. The absence of equilibrium results in a praetorian political order.³⁸

In order to achieve political institutionalization, successful political mobilization is necessary. Mobilization of ideas is defined by Perlmutter as:

The process by which various elements of an ideology are catalyzed, energized and unified into an operational entity, such a process leads to the modification of old ideological structures and to the development of new ways to stimulate preferences and expectations.³⁹

Huntington suggests that where traditional political institutions are weak, or collapse, or are overthrown, the possibility exists for the emergence of a charismatic leader. The charismatic leader, by utilizing his high personal appeal, might attempt to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. He might perform the role of a great legislator or founding father by pushing institutional development through the power concentrated in him. A leader who combines "political skill and rare devotion to purpose"⁴⁰ can undertake these actions. The possibility for the emergence of leadership based at least partially on charismatic authority can

occur during a crisis period where the established institutional order is severely challenged.

In order to comprehend how the charismatic component can become more accentuated in a rational-legal setting, we should examine what we shall term the crisis situation.

II. The crisis situation

The specific criteria to be employed in defining the crisis situation will be abstracted from the works of Weber, Willner, Tucker and Rustow.⁴¹ All of these writers view certain circumstances as conducive to the emergence of a charismatic leader. Weber noted that charismatic leadership thrives in times of emergencies, war or revolution and where the traditional or rational-legal bases of authority are weakened.

Similarly Willner writes:

Perhaps the most pervasive and dramatic social psychological collective crisis is that of war. The economic hardships and social dislocation, including losses of life and separations of families which war can impose on a population need not be spelled out here. It might be noted that wars can affect the perceptions of people in particular ways. They tend to create a general climate of heightened emotionalism as symbols of nationalism, patriotism and sacrifice are constantly invoked.⁴²

It is under these conditions that the possibility for charismatic leadership emerges. Tucker notes that "whenever or wherever human beings live in desperation or despair or similar states, charismatic leaders and movements are likely to appear."⁴³

III. Charismatic vs. routine leadership

The personal attributes and political style of a leader are crucial elements in discerning a charismatic leader from a routine leader. While the major determinant of a charismatic response is situational, a leader with the appropriate characteristics is required for the charismatic relationship to occur. He must emerge as the right man at the right time. The leader must be perceived, to a certain extent, as a saviour by political activists and the masses. Tucker notes: "Charismatic leadership is specifically salvational or messianic in nature."⁴⁴ The charismatic leader personifies the collective wishes of the people.

He must be an extremely capable and inspirational speaker. In addition, he must possess a specific vision of the future for his society that embodies the goals and dreams of his followers. This vision is combined with a program that offers corrective action for that society's present problems. He must have a keen sense of his society's past glories, tradition, and history. Willner notes:

More than any other aspirant or available leader, the charismatic leader is capable of combining the grievances of a variety of socially and psychologically disoriented individuals and groups into a collective grievance and common political goal. More than any other aspirant or available leader, he is able to formulate a compelling doctrine that embodies the private dreams and desires of many people and that elevates these into a public and frequently millennial vision. . . . The leader who becomes a charismatic knows how to tap the reservoir of relevant myths in his culture

and especially how to draw upon those myths that are linked to its sacred figures, to its historical and legendary ordeals and triumph.

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Weber regarded the charismatic leader as a "revolutionary force."⁴⁶ His authority is specifically irrational regarding the defiance of rules. The charismatic leader, according to Weber, disregards fixed rules, has no desire for a steady income, and generally scorns predictable regularity.⁴⁷ However, the stance adopted in this paper is that a charismatic leader can undertake "revolutionary" actions without dispensing with organization. Without the backing of a political organization the charismatic leader's capacity to mobilize public support would be severely curtailed.

IV. The Scope allowed a charismatic leader during and after a crisis period

Most authors who apply the charismatic framework have noted Weber's emphasis on the inherent instability of the charismatic appeal and its inadequacy as a permanent basis for legitimacy. Despite this, critics point to the fall of a charismatic leader as definite proof of the inadequacy of the approach. Ake's comment on the fall of Nkrumah is a specific example.⁴⁸ Charismatic leadership must be recognized as a temporary phenomenon depending upon the maintenance of specific situational factors. The fall of a charismatic leader generally marks the passing of a period. It should not be construed as a deficiency of this approach.

Perlmutter notes that during a crisis-prone period, a

high level of mobilization can occur. He takes into account that a number of rules operative during a crisis period will no longer be so, once the dynamics of that period have passed.

He says:

After the crisis has been met, averted or transformed, new units achieve the control of assets; in other words, the system is institutionalized. It achieves stability.⁴⁹

Modest claims are made here for the framework's application to an examination of Ben-Gurion and Israeli politics. At no time is it suggested that the framework is all-inclusive. The only claim is that the framework aids in stressing the significant contribution to Israeli statehood made by David Ben-Gurion.

V. Periodization of events

Ben-Gurion's role will be examined in relation to the following three periods: the Yishuv period from 1933-1948; statehood and early statehood era 1948-1960; the fall of Ben-Gurion, 1961-1967. These periods are broad; each contains various phases. Despite sharp discontinuities marking the separation of the periods, it is recognized that transition from one period to another was the result of lengthy and evolutionary processes.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

¹For an extended discussion of the sources of instability in the developing societies, see Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

²Examples of this party-oriented approach include: B. Akzin, "The Role of Parties in Israel," Journal of Politics, 19 (1955) pp. 507-46; Leonard J. Fein, Politics in Israel (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1967); Peter Medding, Mapai in Israel (Cambridge: University Press, 1972).

³Arthur Schlesinger Jr., in "On Heroic Leadership," Encounter, 15 (1960), pp. 3-16, has noted that democratic theory since Locke has downplayed the role of leadership in democracies. John Locke in The Second Treatise of Civil Government: An essay concerning the true original extent and of civil government, and a letter concerning toleration, ed. J.W. Gough, (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1966), believed that the people possessed enough intelligence and purpose to draw out of themselves the initiative necessary both for successful revolution and effective government thereafter. Despite some modifications to classical democratic theory by scholars like Joseph Alois Schumpeter, in Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (New York: Harper, 1950), and those within the pluralist tradition such as Robert Dahl, Polyarchy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), and David Truman, The Government Process, Political interests and public opinion (New York: Knopf, 1951), leadership has still not been treated adequately. Leadership studies became identified with elitist and anti-democratic social philosophers such as Pareto, Mosca, and Michaels.

One of the reasons why democratic theoreticians have avoided the role of leadership may be because it belies a number of tenets of egalitarianism upon which democracy is based. Schlesinger notes that:

Democratic theory has resisted emphasis on leadership for ideological reasons--because this emphasis has seemed to imply that some men should lead, and others should follow, a proposition which clashes with the traditional democratic commitment to equality and majoritarianism. (p. 7)

In addition, Lewis J. Edinger, in "Political Science and Political Biography: Reflections on the Study of Leadership," Journal of Politics, 26 (1964) pp. 423-39, has noted that studies by Americans regarding leadership have been relegated to the periphery. He says that "American political

scientists have been inclined to avoid the study of individual leadership." (p. 423)

Likewise, James MacGregor Burns, in Leadership (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), reasons:

There is, in short, no school of leadership, intellectual or practical. Does it matter that we lack standards for assessing past, present, and potential leaders? Without a powerful philosophical tradition, without theoretical and empirical cumulation, without guiding concepts, and without considered practical experiences, we lack the very foundations for knowledge of a phenomenon--leadership. (p. 5)

To disregard leadership as a factor which shapes social reality can lead to the adoption of a fatalist or historical deterministic argument. Schlesinger argues that by minimizing the role of the individual, the individual sheds accountability for his actions. Leaders can and do make a difference to societies. Neglecting the problem of leadership comes at the political scientists's peril, for that would miss a dynamic vibrant aspect of the political process.

⁴Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 328.

⁵The various contributors to Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, ed., (New York: George Braziller, 1970), and Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership: A Theory (Princeton: Center of International Studies, 1968).

⁶Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," World Politics, 17 (1965), pp. 386-430, and his Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁷Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization: The Case of Israel and Some Comparative Analyses (Harvard: Center for International Affairs, 1970).

⁸Edward Shils, Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975).

⁹Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

¹⁰Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp. 324-93.

¹¹Idem, p. 328.

¹²Idem, p. 328.

¹³Idem, pp. 358-62 (Emphasis mine).

¹⁴Edward Shils in "Charisma, Order and States," American Sociological Review, 30 (1965), pp. 199-213, views charisma as a free-floating universal element; Donald MacIntosh in "Weber and Freud: On the Nature and Sources of Authority," American Sociological Review, 35 (1970), pp. 901-11, sees it as a psychological estate. The various contributors to Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow (New York: George Braziller, 1970), see charisma as applicable to the modern world. Karl Lowenstein in Max Weber's Political Ideas in the Perspective of our Time (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), sees charismatic leadership as belonging to the pre-industrial world of the pre-Cartesian West or parts of present day Africa and Asia.

¹⁵Joseph Bensman and Michael Gevant in "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept," Social Research, 42 (1975), pp. 570-614, note that the term charisma among other things is the name of a perfume, a pop song, and a shirt brand.

¹⁶Edward Shils, "Charisma, Order, and Status," p. 201.

¹⁷Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," American Political Science Review, 64 (1970), pp. 1033-53, pp. 1034-5.

¹⁸Ann Ruth Willner and Dorothy Willner, "The Rise and Role of Charismatic Leaders," American Academy of Political and Social Science Annals, 358 (1965), pp. 77-88, p. 79.

¹⁹Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 61.

²⁰David E. Apter, "Nkrumah, Charisma, and the Coup," in Dankwart A. Rustow, Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, ed. (New York: George Braziller, 1970), pp. 112-47, p. 121.

²¹Gabriel Almond, "Comparative Political Systems," Journal of Politics, 18 (1956), pp. 391-409, p. 396.

²²Claude Ake, "Charismatic Legitimation and Political Integration," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 9 (1966), pp. 1-13.

²³D. L. Cohen, "The Concept of Charisma and the Analysis of Leadership," Political Studies, 20 (1975), pp. 299-305.

²⁴James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1956), p. 485.

²⁵Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 58.

²⁶The various contributors to Dankwart A. Rustow, ed. Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership.

²⁷Dankwart A. Rustow, "Ataturk as Founder of a State," in Dankwart A. Rustow, editor, Philosophers and Kings, Studies in Leadership, pp. 200-47, p. 217.

²⁸Edward Shils, "Center and Periphery" in Center and Periphery, pp. 3-4.

²⁹Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 10.

³⁰For an analysis of this concept see: H. Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme," World Politics, 26 (1974) pp. 604-21; A. Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," World Politics, 21 (1969), pp. 207-25; K. Z. Paltiel, "The Israeli Coalition System," Government and Opposition, 10 (1975) pp. 397-414.

³¹Countries included are: Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria.

³²Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 11.

³³Idem, p. 10.

³⁴Moshe Czudnowski, review of Origins of the Israeli Polity, by Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, in American Political Science Review, 73 (1979), pp. 1184-5, makes this point.

³⁵Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 12.

³⁶Idem, p. 12.

³⁷Idem, p. 12.

³⁸Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 2.

³⁹Idem, p. 8.

⁴⁰Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," p. 423.

⁴¹Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, and the various contributors to Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow.

⁴²Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 41.

⁴³Robert C. Tucker, "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership," in Dankwart A. Rustow, Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, pp. 69-94, p. 85.

⁴⁴Idem, pp. 80-1.

⁴⁵Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 47.

⁴⁶Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p. 359.

⁴⁷Idem, pp. 359-62.

⁴⁸Claude Ake in "Charismatic Legitimation and Political Integration," questions the validity of the charismatic concept as an analytical tool to examine the rise and fall of a leader with "supposed" charismatic characteristics. He suggests that the fall of Nkrumah raises serious doubts about the utility of the concept.

⁴⁹Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 2.

CHAPTER II

THE YISHUV PERIOD: A HIGH LEVEL OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Weber has specified certain conditions which could precipitate charismatic leadership; it thrived in crises "such as war or revolution or the collapse of established norms and institutions."¹ The Yishuv, as will be shown, could not support a leader whose authority rested primarily on charisma.² This chapter describes the patterns of political activity that predominated during the Yishuv era as a prelude to 1948.³ It will not offer a detailed historical description of the Yishuv nor of the rise of Zionism;⁴ rather it emphasizes those factors which are important to the role of Ben-Gurion in pre and post independence Israeli politics.

Late nineteenth century Palestine was a predominantly desolate and barren land containing a Jewish population of approximately fifty thousand and two hundred and sixty thousand Arabs.⁵ The Jewish population consisted mainly of aged and non-productive Jews engaged in study and prayer. Despite these conditions, a wave of Jewish immigration, known as the first aliyah, began in 1882. During the years 1882 to 1903, about twenty-five thousand Jews immigrated to Palestine⁶ mainly from Eastern Europe. A number of agricultural

colonies were founded on privately-owned land, the agricultural work increasingly carried out by hired Arab peasants.

But social development stagnated. Eisenstadt comments:

One of the basic manifestations of this stagnation was the very rapid normalization and stabilization of the immigrants economic and social structure. Had the trends of the first aliyah continued, they would have led to a total absorption of the colonists as merely another small, stagnant privileged group within the pluralistic setting of the Ottoman-Arab society.⁷

The second aliyah (1904-1913) brought approximately forty thousand immigrants to the Yishuv,⁸ among them Ben-Gurion. It differed fundamentally from the first wave of immigration, which had been motivated primarily by nationalism. In addition to these motives, the second aliyah was moved by the ideology of Zionist Socialism, which called for an egalitarian economic order.⁹ The third aliyah (1919-1923), which shared the socialist ideology of the second, brought thirty-five thousand immigrants to Palestine.¹⁰

Out of the second and third aliyot emerged Palestine/Israel's political elite which, according to Perlmutter, was "highly conscious, voluntaristic, and messianic . . . whose roles and values had been shaped during the course of their settlement."¹¹ These two aliyot created the image of the Halutz, the agricultural pioneer. According to Eisenstadt, the common factors demonstrated by the Halutz type were:

. . . first and foremost an element of social and personal self-sacrifice. The pioneer is a man ready to deprive himself and to live the life of an ascetic . . . The deprivation is not however

for its own sake . . . although very often asceticism became a very strong element . . . but for the sake of performing a task important to the community. Hence the pioneer's lack of interest in direct, immediate rewards of position, wages, material comforts, or even political power.¹²

The Halutz image legitimated the Socialist Zionists as the elite in Palestine. In order to build a new society they created three institutionalized but highly interrelated and complementary mobilization systems. They were the Histadrut, the United Kibbutz Movement and various labour parties (at a later stage Mapai). Each system responded to the economic, social and cultural demands raised by its constituents. These mobilization systems will be referred to as subcenters. The development of the subcenters preceded that of the institutional political center in the Yishuv; therefore a discussion of the subcenters will precede that of the center. The non-labour subcenters will not be discussed here.¹³

1. The labour subcenters: levels of institutionalization

The Histadrut: The Histadrut (General Federation of Jewish Labour) was established in 1920 by the major labour parties of the time in the Yishuv (Tze'irei Zion, Poalei Zion and Ahdut Ha'avoda). Working conditions and labour disputes, while of importance to the Histadrut, were not primary.

Eisenstadt notes:

the purpose of the Histadrut was more to create conditions beneficial to the development and

organization of a new privileged working class, rather than protect the interests of an existing underprivileged one.¹⁴

The Histadrut perceived itself as the precursor of the Labour Commonwealth. The Labour Organization ran a school system, published a newspaper, organized cultural centers, labour centers, and established a complete health insurance program. In short, the range of Histadrut activities went far beyond those associated with a trade union. David Ben-Gurion, the first secretary-general of the Histadrut, noted the organization's all encompassing nature:

The Histadrut is not a trade union, it is not a political party, it is not a cooperative nor a mutual aid society, although it is active in all these fields; it is more than all that. The Histadrut is a union of people who are building up a new home, a new state, a new people, new enterprises and settlements and new culture; it is a union of social reformers which is not rooted in its own membership book but in the common destiny and tasks of all its members.¹⁵

The Histadrut was regulated by highly institutionalized patterns which included permanent forms and governing bodies. Elections to the Histadrut were conducted on the basis of proportional representation in which the various labour parties participated. In theory, the highest governing body of the Histadrut was its conference, which was elected every four years. The conference, in turn, elected delegates to the Council. The Council controlled the executive committee "which became the executive director and the strongest political instrument of Labour."¹⁶ The secretary-general of the Labour Movement was, in practice, appointed by the majority party in Histadrut. Considerable overlap existed between

the Histadrut, the Kibbutz Movement, and Mapai.

The Histadrut maintained a tremendous power for mobilization. Members of the Kibbutz Movement were also permanent members of the Histadrut and became "the self-appointed elite mobilizers of Socialist Zionism."¹⁷

The labour parties: The labour parties perceived their range of functions as exceeding those normally associated with a political party. The parties engaged in activities including welfare, housing, education and employment. During the 1920's the Ahdut Ha'avoda and Hapoel Hatzair were the major parties in the Yishuv. Before the advent of the Histadrut, the parties were chiefly concerned with "the recruitment and settlement of pioneers and the control of cultural, institutional, and political activities of the agricultural workers in Palestine."¹⁸ The parties took upon themselves the responsibility for providing the immigrant pioneers with employment, housing and other necessities.

The wide range of activities of the political parties in their early stage can be attributed to the fact that they preceded what Horowitz and Lissak describe as the national (institutional) center (the Knesset Israel and Jewish Agency). Since the political parties could not concentrate on the achievement of political power in an institutionalized setting, as none existed at the time, the lion's share of their intellectual and organizational energies were devoted to catering to their members' needs. Horowitz and Lissak note that until the transfer of a number of responsibilities maintained by

the parties to the Histadrut in the 1920's, the parties perceived themselves in the following fashion:

. . . not content with strictly political roles, but also sought to organize the lives of their members in various spheres, primarily through cultural, economic and welfare services. The early economic and welfare organizations in the workers' sector were thus connected to political parties, though most of them were later transferred to the Histadrut when it formed in 1920.¹⁹

In 1930 Ahdut Ha'avoda and Hapoel Hatzair merged to form Mapai. David Ben-Gurion, then a leading member in Ahdut Ha'avoda was instrumental in achieving this merger. Despite the absence of a formal constitution, it still managed to attain an extremely high level of institutionalization.²⁰ Mapai possessed an organizational apparatus that was active both on the local and national levels. Furthermore, it was connected with the powerful Histadrut and Kibbutz subcenters from where it could draw organizational assistance. Operating within the parameters of the Yishuv's constantly changing circumstances, Mapai demonstrated a large degree of adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence in its organizations and procedures.²¹

(A) Adaptability: The Yishuv's political system was based, to a certain degree, on informal and often ad hoc arrangements. This system's lack of formal rules gave the party adaptability in resolving conflicts among its various constituents. Horowitz and Lissak state:

In Mapai's case, at any rate, a flexible organizational infrastructure made it possible for party leaders to mediate between the sometimes conflicting interests of the party's varied constituency

--kibbutz members, moshav members, urban workers, white-collar workers, and labourers in the moshavot.²²

Mapai attempted to adapt itself to represent more than labour groups when it modified its stance regarding class struggle and adopted the strategy of "from class to nation." This stance, which Ben-Gurion struggled to advance, suggested that interclass cooperation was necessary in establishing the state. It was also an attempt to broaden its base of support to include middle-class groups. Even if they did not flock to the party, at the very least Mapai would be perceived by them as representing a reasonable political partner.

(B) Autonomy: Huntington notes that a measure of autonomy is the "extent which political organizations exist independently of other social grouping and methods of behaviour."²³ In order to comprehend how this applies to the Yishuv, some factors should be noted about the society's political culture. While the role of the nonlabour elements was of significance, the dominant doctrine of the Yishuv's society was Labour Zionism. Within that setting, the Mapai was the most pluralistic party, since it was based on a varied constituency consisting of divergent labour interests. Mapai articulated and aggregated the interests of several groups, while at the same time attempting to appeal to middle-class voters.

(C) Coherence: "The more unified and coherent an organization is," according to Huntington, "the more highly institutionalized it is; the greater the disunity of the organization, the less it is institutionalized."²⁴ Despite some disunity in Mapai,²⁵ there nevertheless was great coherence. In a society

remarkable for its ideological cleavages, Mapai brought unity, esprit and morale; the party maintained its hold on power during troubled times and avoided fragmentation into splinter groups.

(D) Complexity: Huntington states that the more complicated an organization is, the more it is highly institutionalized.²⁶ He goes on to say that an "organization which has many purposes is better able to adjust itself to the loss of any one purpose than an organization which has only one purpose."²⁷ Rather than disintegrating after handing over many of its functions to the national center, Mapai then concentrated on political power.

The Kibbutz Movement: The Kibbutz Movement was successful both in maintaining a stable political order and in achieving a high degree of political influence. The major Kibbutz Movement during the Yishuv era was known as the "United Kibbutz Movement." This movement employed its power in Mapai and Histadrut. Although the movement's members represented only ten per cent of Histadrut's membership, ten out of the fifty-two members of the Executive were from the United Kibbutz Movement.²⁸ In 1941, four out of twelve Mapai executive members belonged to the movement. Medding notes that in 1942 five of the seven members of Mapai's inner secretariat were kibbutz or former kibbutz members.

In addition to the United Kibbutz Movement there was another movement known as Hakibbutz Ha'artzi. The movement

was the main political base of the Hashomer Hatzair when it became a political party in 1946. In relation to the United Kibbutz Movement, the ideology of Hakibbutz Ha'artzi placed it to the left on the political spectrum.

II. The national center: levels of institutionalization and coalitionary structure

The Jewish community in Palestine during the Mandatory era was a minority in a quasi-colonial social-political system. The Yishuv's two national institutions, which represented the institutional center, were the Knesset Israel and the World Zionist Organization (the Jewish Agency being the executive arm in Palestine of the World Zionist Organization). The Knesset Israel dealt exclusively with Yishuv matters, while the Jewish Agency "was the joint framework for the Yishuv and the Zionist Movement in the Diaspora."²⁹ Due to the presence of the Mandatory power, the Yishuv's central institutional bodies possessed only limited powers. However these bodies were lacking the formal coercive powers associated with a sovereign state. Despite this situation, the Yishuv's central institutions met with a great deal of compliance.

The development of the national institutions as stable and sustaining orders was a process that evolved during the Mandatory era. There were occasions when a diminution of the powers of the institutions transpired; nevertheless, during the Mandatory era this was matched by a steady growth of

their authority.

The original weakness of the national institutions emanated from the Yishuv's lack of a center with recognized authority during the Ottoman era. During the years of the British Mandate, the center could claim only limited authority. The growth in the center's powers occurred when a number of the dominant subcenters decided to participate in the formation of a national center rather than strengthen their respective subcenters.

In particular a number of events that transpired in the 1930's strengthened the center. In the early years of this decade, the locus of power in the Jewish Agency shifted from London to Palestine, and particularly to Mapai. When Mapai ascended to the upper echelons of power in the Jewish Agency, "it became the chief proponent of the demand to strengthen the center's authority and impose it on those sectors that had displayed a negative, ambivalent or apathetic attitude towards it."³⁰

The increasing Arab animosity towards the Yishuv necessitated a strong political organization for security purposes. Thus, during the thirties, the Histadrut transferred the responsibilities it had assumed over defense matters to the center. In addition, there was a need for effective representation to deal with the British.

The center's control over the flow of material resources and manpower limited the disintegrative process because the subcenters desired at least part of these resources.

Furthermore, one of the Yishuv's weaknesses also proved to be a strength. Since the representative bodies possessed limited authority due to the lack of sovereignty, the withdrawal of a subcenter could weaken the representative nature of the entire system. Consequently, the majority of the groups preferred compromise over withdrawal or attempt to gain exclusive control of the system. Certain "consociational" practices emerged.

The parliamentary framework of the national institutions was based on proportional representation, and the executive institutions assumed a coalitionary structure which assured minority groups of a voice in decision-making and resource allocation. Two examples included first, the concessions made to the religious block concerning a prohibition of Shabbath labour on lands in Zionist hands in exchange for political support in other areas, and second, the proportional sharing of immigration certificates via the party key. This "sharing of power principle" severely curtailed the scope for the emergence of a charismatic leader.

The center became the institutional framework for compromise and "coordination of the common activity of sectors of the organized Yishuv in areas where such activity was considered both necessary and possible."³¹ The subcenters in the Yishuv, rather than conforming to Shils' notion of being "a focus of authority whose existence detracts from the center,"³² performed a number of the center's functions. Horowitz and Lissak note:

The subcenters functioned as agencies of the center for the performance of certain tasks, chiefly political mobilization, socialization, and interest articulation.³³

Certain groups in the Yishuv did not share in the resources of the center. Thus, the non-Zionist Agudat Israel and the Revisionists who had broken with the World Zionist Organization, and the dissident underground Irgun Tzevai Leumi (I.Z.L.) and Lohamei Herut Israel (L.H.I.--Stern Gang) became peripheral. During the Yishuv period, these groups detracted from the authority of the center. However, the possibility loomed that these groups could pose a serious threat to stability once independence was achieved, insofar as the center had to extend its authority over these groups. In addition, the partial nature of the center's sovereignty facilitated a reduction in conflict in a number of contentious issues. Among these were the social role of religion, the status of education, and the formation of established norms for regulating governmental behaviour. Furthermore, under this partial system the subcenters were allowed a great deal of autonomy including serving as agencies for the Yishuv.

III. Elite recruitment patterns during the Yishuv era

The patterns of elite recruitment in the Yishuv strongly worked against the ascendance of a leader whose authority rested largely on charismatic appeal. Horowitz and Lissak suggest that there were two levels of qualifications for elite

recruitment in the Yishuv. The first level was based upon ideological identifications and membership in certain groups, while the second level pertained to personal abilities and merits. Within the Labour Movement, ideological criteria in the first category were determined by the "extent of one's commitment to the movement, loyalty to its values, and willingness to carry out its instructions in respect to policy making."³⁴ The coalitionary structure of the Labour Movement necessitated that elite positions be occupied by those representing a specific political base, such as a trade union, or Kibbutz Movement. The labour elite owed their position to a particular group, as opposed to deriving their authority exclusively on a personal basis.

The second level of criteria for elite selection pertained to personal qualities, such as "specific skills, style of behaviour and appearance stemming from socialization in a particular social and cultural milieu, as well as what may be described as 'personal merit'."³⁵ Specific skills could include initiative, flexibility and ability to improvise, necessitated by the constantly altering circumstances in the Yishuv. The criteria of style of behaviour and appearance, political rhetoric and interpersonal relations were not attained individually but rather "through socialization within a 'movement' which expressed the group's uniqueness." Indices of these criteria include style of dress, use of certain key words and expressions, living accommodation and use of leisure time. Thus, a member of the labour elite was expected to

behave in an egalitarian fashion. Within the Labour Movement the two major indices which measured past accomplishments were service to the movement before immigrating to Palestine and a record of "personal realization" in pioneering tasks in Palestine.

IV. Ben-Gurion's role during the Yishuv era

The personal attributes and leadership qualities demonstrated by Ben-Gurion will be analyzed in a later chapter; however, at this point, his role in the Yishuv's and World Zionist Organization elite should be discussed. In order to fulfill his vision, Ben-Gurion had to gain the support of the major institutions of Palestine and the World Zionist Organization. These included the Histadrut, Mapai, Zionist Executive, and Jewish Agency. By dominating these bodies, Ben-Gurion would have a solid organizational base behind him. In undertaking party functions and organizational work from the lowest level of the hierarchy, as well as succeeding to every elected office he pursued, he eventually rose to the upper echelons of these institutions.

Ben-Gurion's ascendancy within the Yishuv conforms to Horowitz and Lissak's criteria for recruitment to the political elite.³⁶ He was extremely active in Poalei Zionst affairs in Eastern Europe before immigrating to Palestine. Upon Ben-Gurion's arrival he achieved merit by performing pioneer tasks. He worked on a farm in Petakh Tikva, made

wine in Rishon-le-Zion and farmed in Sejera. Despite the relatively short time spent in actual work, Ben-Gurion actively took part in a central myth of the time--engaging in pioneering activities.

In the early 1920's, Ben-Gurion realized that if the Palestinian workers were united into a cohesive body, they could not only direct Zionist activity in Palestine, but also in the World Zionist Movement. In this vein a new political party known as Ahdut Ha'avodah was formed in 1920, but the major labour party of the time, Hapoel Hatzair, refused to join. Thus, the entity (Ahdut Ha'avodah) could not serve as the "principal instrument for integration, consolidation, and role expansion of all Socialist Zionist activities in Palestine."³⁷ Instead, the principal instrument for this integration in the 1920's was to be the Histadrut. Ben-Gurion became the first secretary-general of this organization, and even after leaving this position he retained his influence in the Histadrut through his association with another separate but highly related body--Mapai.

From its inception in 1930, the destiny of Mapai and that of David Ben-Gurion were to be intertwined. Mapai, with Ben-Gurion a major leader, dominated the Histadrut and became the strongest party in the Yishuv. Following the murder of the labour leader Arlosoroff in 1933, Ben-Gurion became the "unquestioned leader of the labour wing," working through Mapai's organizational base. He was elected to the Zionist Executive in 1933, and was chosen chairman of the

World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executive in 1935. The latter post was especially important inasmuch as virtually all policy-making in the Jewish community in Palestine during the Mandatory era was concentrated in the executive body since it was the main source of funds and controlled the allocation of immigration certificates as well.

A profound sense of insight characterized David Ben-Gurion in this era; it propelled him ultimately to become the outstanding leader of Zionism. This feature was evident at the Biltmore Conference, the first national conference of American Zionists held in New York in 1942. There Ben-Gurion received support for his program which, for the first time in Zionist circles, openly defined the final objective of Zionism as the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. The program stood for activism; as the traditional Weizmann approach of moderation and cooperation was abandoned in favour of a style that was likely to bring conflict with Great Britain. The site where Ben-Gurion launched his program was in and of itself significant. He realized that the balance of world power had shifted dramatically from Britain to the United States; therefore it was essential to gain acceptance for Zionist intentions in the latter. This need for a power base in the United States led Ben-Gurion into an alliance with Abba Hillel Silver, the leader of the American Zionist Movement.

Unlike the perceptive Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, the other dominating force within the Zionist Movement, could not

grasp that the power in world affairs would no longer reside with Britain. This led to Weizmann's final downfall. It came in 1946, when he received a vote of non-confidence at the World Zionist Congress for his moderate policy vis-à-vis the British. As a result, Weizmann was reduced to the role of an elder statesman rather than that of a bona fide leader. After the fall of Weizmann, Ben-Gurion emerged as the foremost among World Zionist leaders.

During most of the Mandatory era, the Yishuv's institutional forces restrained Ben-Gurion's rashness towards opposition political grouping from within and policy towards the British from without. In addition, his association with Berl Katznelson, a leading figure in the Labour Movement, acted as a check. Berl Katznelson died in 1944; Bar-Zohar notes:

Berl Katznelson's death was a cruel blow to David Ben-Gurion. He loved Berl with a rare devotion and later he was to say that Berl was "the man who was closest to me in my life." Katznelson's passing also brought about the fundamental change in Ben-Gurion's status. Now, he was on his own, he became the principal, and almost the sole, leader of his party. In his future decisions, there would no longer be anyone at his side to curb his impulsive outbursts and daring leaps.³⁸

Based upon the material presented in this chapter, the assertion by Horowitz and Lissak--that the Yishuv could not support a leader whose authority flowed from charisma--is accepted as valid. The Yishuv was a compact, relatively homogeneous society, drawn mainly from Eastern Europe. Furthermore, since the act of immigrating to Palestine was motivated by ideological reasons, a large degree of political sophistication existed among this group. Combined with a high level

of institutionalization as well as reduced conflict due to the partial nature of the Yishuv's authority, these factors quelled the societal desire and hope for a great leader. In this chapter a regular pattern of events has been shown to exist; in the next chapter, deviations will be shown.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

¹Dennis Kavanagh, Crisis Charisma and British Political Leadership: Winston Churchill as the Outsider (London: Sage Publications, 1973), p. 7.

²For an expanded discussion of those factors that militated against the emergence of a leader who based his authority primarily on charisma, see Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, especially chapter five, "Recruitment and Social Composition of the Political Elite," pp. 105-19.

³The discussion of the Yishuv period is based largely on the following three books: S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society (New York: Basic Books, 1967); Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity; Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization.

⁴For a detailed description of the historical background on the rise of Zionism, see: Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, A Historical Analysis and Reader (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970); Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel, From The Rise of Zionism to Our Time (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

⁵Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1963 (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1963), p. 18. and Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel, p. 167. Sachar notes that while the Arab population of Palestine was about 260,000 in 1882, by 1914 it had doubled, and by 1920 it was 600,000.

⁶Leonard J. Fein, Politics in Israel, p. 20.

⁷S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 15.

⁸Leonard J. Fein, Politics in Israel, p. 20.

⁹For an interesting discussion as to how the Socialist Zionists selected and energized several ideals from which an operational ideology resulted, see Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization.

¹⁰Leonard J. Fein, Politics in Israel, p. 20.

¹¹Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 13.

¹²S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 15.

¹³The non-labour subcenters included: the Revisionists (extreme nationalists), Ezrahim (middle-class groups), and religious groups. Whereas the labour subcenter's parties and organizations were well defined, relatively stable, and highly institutionalized, the center and right wing parties were not. In particular the Ezrahim parties demonstrated a tendency to fragment and combine in ad hoc groupings at election time.

The major party of the Ezrahim was the General Zionists. The General Zionists were divided into two groups, on the basis of cooperation with the Labour Movement. The General Zionists "A" who favoured more cooperation than the General Zionists "B", participated to a greater extent in the organized structures of the Yishuv. The two groups possessed meager organizational structures, and were not connected to any powerful subcenter that could provide additional organizational services. However, they benefited financially from their connection with groups in the Diaspora.

The Revisionists, on the other hand, participated in a very restricted fashion in the society's national centers. The Revisionists, who formed as an offshoot of the Ezrahim in 1925, stood against the official Zionist policy of accommodation with Britain and self-restraint towards Palestine's Arabs. This right wing, antilabour group believed in militarism and self-reliance. In 1935, the Revisionists left the World Zionist Organization. They maintained their own labour organization and health service. They possessed a permanent organizational structure and could draw upon the organizational framework of the Betar Youth Movement and groups of workers in the moshavot affiliated with Betar. Towards the end of the 1930's the Revisionists formed their own military organization known as the Irgun Tzevai Leumi (I.Z.L.).

The religious parties participated in various degrees in the organized Yishuv. The Agudat Israel (Federation of Israel) was a non-Zionist orthodox party which, like the ultra-orthodox Neturai Karta, did not participate in the organized Yishuv. In contrast, the Mizrachi (Merkas Ruhani, spiritual center) and its labour offshoot Hapoel Mizrahi, both of which were Zionist religious parties, actively participated in Yishuv life.

¹⁴S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, pp. 38-9.

¹⁵David Ben-Gurion as quoted in Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 13.

¹⁶Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 19.

¹⁷Idem, p. 18

¹⁸Idem, p. 17.

¹⁹Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 71.

²⁰Mapai did not institute a formal constitution until 1942; at best it was only a skeleton constitution. For a history of Mapai see Peter Medding, Mapai in Israel.

²¹Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies.

²²Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 84.

²³Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 20.

²⁴Idem, p. 22.

²⁵A major split took place in 1944 which led to the formation of Hatnua La'Ahdut Ha'avoda. The analytic framework presented in this paper suggests that Ben-Gurion provoked this split in order to ensure the emergence of a tighter, more cohesive party.

²⁶Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 17.

²⁷Idem, p. 18.

²⁸A Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 10.

²⁹Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 44.

³⁰Idem, p. 45. In its quest for power, Mapai was able to take advantage of the Yishuv's special status in the World Zionist Organization; the residents of Palestine had their votes weighted double in elections to the World Zionist Organization, in comparison with members from abroad.

³¹Idem, p. 219.

³²Idem, p. 12.

³³Idem, p. 219.

³⁴Idem, p. 107.

³⁵Idem, p. 107.

³⁶Idem, Chapter 5, pp. 105-19.

³⁷Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 17.

³⁸Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p. 117.

CHAPTER III

THE CRISIS PERIOD: THE FORGING OF THE CHARISMATIC BOND

Weber noted that charismatic leadership thrives in times of emergency and war.¹ There can be little doubt that in May 1948, Israel found itself in a state of dire crisis as the specter of external annihilation loomed on the horizon. This atmosphere was compounded by the controversy surrounding the declaration of independence and by the need to expand authority over dissident groups that were not part of the organized Yishuv. In addition, the institutional and administrative breakdown created by the departure of the British fuelled the crisis, as did the influx of large-scale immigration from traditional and transitional societies not sharing the European cultural and social background of the Yishuv majority.² The crisis situation resulting from independence created the potential for charismatic leadership; Ben-Gurion had the appropriate characteristics to assume such a role. This chapter examines the crucial functions performed by Ben-Gurion in stamping a pattern of political stability in Israel.

I. The building of the charismatic bond

The charismatic leader, according to Weber, is a "revolutionary force"³ spurning traditional methods and values. In the strains and stresses that afflicted Israel in May 1948, a major revolutionary act by the country's first prime minister might very well establish a claim to charismatic authority; Ben-Gurion's gambit in declaring independence in 1948 against the advice of a number of his colleagues may very well be considered such an act. While the decision to opt for independence was made collectively, Ben-Gurion's forceful actions proved decisive.

In order to achieve a broader picture, it is instructive to examine the attitudinal prism and elite images that were prevalent among the Yishuv--Israel's decision-makers of the time. Attitudinal prism has been defined by Michael Brecher as those "societal factors, such as ideology and tradition, which derive from the cumulative historical legacy,"⁴ while elite images refers to "personality factors--the idiosyncratic qualities of decision-makers."⁵

At the time of independence, the majority of Israel's decision-makers came from the second aliyah. While these people attempted to create a new type of assertive Jew, fears typical of Diaspora Jewry still existed. On the one hand, whether unjustly or not, Moshe Sharett,⁶ a leading member among the Yishuv/Israel's decision-making elite, was characterized by his critics, as Michael Brecher suggests:

In his temperament and character he displayed a greater affinity to the Diaspora Jew--hesitancy, subservience, a reliance on diplomacy, a tendency

to compromise, and a preoccupation with Gentile attitudes of Jewish behaviour.⁷

Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, was known for his "activism, toughness, and ruthless determination, [and] he heralded the coming of the free Jew in Israel prepared to fight for his rights."⁸ Aronson suggests that Ben-Gurion also suffered from the same type of fears that Brecher attributes to Sharett, but through iron self-will and discipline, he was able to disguise such fears and project the image of a tough decisive Jew. Ben-Gurion operationalized these characteristics in deciding to declare independence, for there was considerable antagonism from the United States.¹⁰ The American pressure affected a number of secondary leaders who favoured a postponement of the declaration of independence.¹¹

For Ben-Gurion the decision to declare independence would contribute to the morale of the nation, which he recognized as imperative in the military struggle facing Israel. He spoke of its symbolic value in August, 1948.

Much understanding, courage, and foresight were required for the act of proclamation. The historic opportunity could easily have been lost, either through exaggerated caution and doubts characteristic of a practical people without vision, or through a verbal maximalism that is detached from reality and makes demands on others only.¹²

Ben-Gurion's decisive action in declaring independence symbolized the break with the Diaspora past. To fall back on the citation from Weber above, Ben-Gurion's actions were those of a revolutionary repudiating the old ways.

The impact of Ben-Gurion's move on independence must be

viewed in the context of the perceptions and responses of the people around him. Yigal Yadin, Chief of Operations of the Israeli Defense Forces during the War of Independence, notes: "The decision to declare independence under those conditions was the exclusive responsibility of David Ben-Gurion . . . the decision was equivalent in its importance and influence to one thousand of our military actions."¹³ Ben-Aharon, not a follower of Ben-Gurion, nonetheless remarked: "Ben-Gurion has become fixed in the popular consciousness as the man responsible for the decision to establish the State of Israel in 1948."¹⁴

Ben-Gurion's decision was not only symbolically vital, but also legally crucial. A postponement of the declaration of independence would have led to a very serious void by casting further doubt on the authority of the provisional government.

II. Ben-Gurion and institution building

At the birth of societies, it is the leaders of the commonwealth who create institutions; afterwards, it is the institutions that shape the leaders.¹⁵

According to Apter a charismatic leader must be able to combine effectively the potentialities of planning with a moral ideology,¹⁶ and in this regard Ben-Gurion does qualify.

Ben-Gurion possessed a particular vision of the State of Israel. He wished to create a "new proud and sovereign Jew, beginning a new life after a long spiritual and political exile."¹⁷ In order to bring about these changes, Israel's

institutions were to embody universalistic rather than parochial and particularistic practices and norms.¹⁸

Ben-Gurion's approach to interrelationship between state and society is often termed Mamlakhtiyut, literally meaning kingship. However, this term should not be confused with the Weberian Traditional (Kingship) typology;¹⁹ Mamlakhtiyut comes closer to Weber's formulations on a rational-legal form of authority.²⁰ Ben-Gurion, who wanted the population to think in terms of statehood, sought to impose his vision of Mamlakhtiyut in the following areas: national security, the school system, employment bureaus, and the sick fund.

The country's first prime minister wanted to eliminate the "party key system" in the bureaucracy. In contrast to Weber's notion of rational bureaucracy, which consistently applies universalistic merit criteria, the "party key system" makes appointments according to strength among the participating parties in the system. Horowitz and Lissak define the "party key system" as one:

according to which the allocation of resources . . . was based on the relative strength of the political parties and other subcenters. Thus the balance of parliamentary forces was translated into a numerical "key" according to which the resources of the national center were distributed.²¹

Ben-Gurion believed that eliminating these practices would make the populace's support for the state unconditional, as opposed to conditional on mollifying particularistic interests.

He possessed an uncanny instinct for seizing the most

propitious circumstances to impose those changes he deemed necessary. Aronson writes:

Ben-Gurion was a "postulative" statesman; guided by a strong sense of sequencing and timing, he cognitively arrived at a set of principles and priorities. His political method, at the height of his intellectual and political power, was based upon his instincts for power, his understanding of where power lay or what might determine one's sovereignty and defense, and his habit of studying matters in depth, gathering data and analyzing it over a relatively long period until his opinion was set.²²

In addition, Ben-Gurion possessed far-sightedness.

Ben-Aharon, a contemporary of Ben-Gurion, noted:

. . . Ben-Gurion was distinguished by great far-sightedness.. In 1950 he already knew more or less what he would do in 1957. More than any of his peers he was endowed with historical vision and political intuition. When he was contemplating some radical change he would start preparing the ground well in advance. Thus, for example, in the matter of partition. He started working on it long before the issue actually came up in 1937 grooming Nahum Goldmann and sending him out to prepare the ground. When Israel had to withdraw from Sinai in 1948 and again in 1956, even though we were forced to do so by American pressure, the public did not sense that he acted solely under the dictates of a foreign power. He always managed to move before it became necessary to be moved. This was his strength.²³

Ben-Gurion aptly demonstrated his political skills in dealing with the Palmach and Irgun. Drawing on Aronson and Ben-Aharon, we will now discuss Ben-Gurion's modus operandi in the face of these private armies.

III. Ben-Gurion's actions in terminating the particularistic trends in the military

To Ben-Gurion, the army was, above all, to be a symbol

of the Israeli identity. As Defense Minister, it was his intention to eradicate the particularistic political trends in the post-statehood defense organizations, making the army the first truly Mamlekhtiyut instrument devoid of politicization --universal, professional, and routinized. Ben-Gurion expounded on his vision of the role of the army in the new state on May 12, 1948, before the People's Administration (thirteen member Provisional Government), listing his conditions for accepting the defense portfolio: "That the army and all parts of the army be subordinate to the authority of the people. . . All those that work for or are attached to the Haganah and military (in any other name) will work under the duly constituted authority."²⁴

In order for the Israeli army to become a truly universalistic rather than a particularistic interest, it was essential to disband the politically-connected military formations of the Palmach and Irgun. Ben-Gurion realized that independence brought the opportunity to undertake the changes he desired. It is easier to understand his desire to terminate the autonomy of the Irgun, since it operated outside the scope of the organized Yishuv. However, the disbandment of the Palmach calls for further explanation.

The Palmach was originally formed in 1941 as the shock force of the Haganah. Although not envisaged as a kibbutz-directed force, the Palmach drew upon the United Kibbutz Movement for men and morale. After 1942, Ben-Gurion perceived the Palmach as a growing threat to the center's

authority. For in that year, the Ahdut Ha'avoda, which drew a great deal of support and morale from the United Kibbutz Movement, split from Mapai,²⁵ and merged six years later with Hashomer Hatzair to form Mapam. To Ben-Gurion, Palmach seemed to be Mapam's private army and both appeared conditional and unreliable in their support for the center. Thus, Ben-Gurion's fight was not exclusively with the Palmach, but with its political sponsors--the Mapam. Worried that the Palmach, with its separate command, could bring political interference in the army, he was particularly concerned about the leftist orientations of the Mapam and its support for the Soviet Union. To cite Bar-Zohar:

Mapam was a left wing party, with clear pro-Soviet tendencies. Regarding basic national questions, it was Mapai's harshest critic. Mapam abstained in the Biltmore Program, it rose up against the partition plan, favoured continued confrontation with the British and was a standard-bearer for a bi-national regime. Nevertheless it jealously guarded its position in the Haganah. A strange situation was created with a minority party that represented no more than one-fifth of the Yishuv. It had great influence in the country's armed forces. This was not a healthy situation: There were those who worried that the pro-Soviet leanings of the Mapam could influence the comradely leadership of the Haganah in case divisions broke out in the Yishuv's leadership with respect to the U.S.S.R.²⁶

On April 26, 1948, Ben-Gurion made his first attempt to eradicate Mapam's influence by trying to eliminate the position of Israel Galili. Galili, intimately connected with the Mapam party, held the position of "head of the national command of the Palmach," which has been described as "wedged in between the General Staff and Defense Minister."²⁷ Ben-Gurion felt that this intermediary position, particularly

with Galili holding it, might lead to political interference in the army. Due to the strong resistance voiced by certain members of the military, coupled with a far deeper question --would there in fact be a state of Israel,--the matter was stayed with a partial victory for Ben-Gurion. Galili lost his post as head of the national command, but was retained on the general staff. Ben-Gurion postulated that the time was not ripe to make the qualitative changes he desired, demonstrating his skills for awaiting the most propitious time.

It also lies within the realm of possibility that Ben-Gurion foresaw a larger scenario. He realized that the elimination of Galili's position might antagonize the Palmach, whose unquestioned hatred for the Irgun could be counted on in what Ben-Gurion feared might be an inevitable showdown with that dissident organization.

The Altalena: In order to avoid a possible confrontation between the center and the various dissident groups, a modus vivendi was reached before independence. Included in these arrangements was the proviso that Irgun units join the regular army in battalion formation. At best a compromise, this situation could easily explode if external pressures for internal unity were in any way relaxed. This did occur with the first truce in the War of Independence, in June 1948. The arrival of the Altalena, a ship bringing arms and people to the Irgun, violated its agreement with the government. Furthermore, the action called into question the government's

exclusive authority over all the armed forces. Ben-Gurion realized that the Altalena must be stopped at all costs, even if it meant using the Israeli Defense Forces (I.D.F.), against them. Ben-Gurion's image as a strong leader among his colleagues and the general populace was reinforced through this move; he was offering more "proof" of his charismatic abilities.

His actions in Cabinet on the Altalena affair have been described by Bar-Zohar as:

The Cabinet was convened for an emergency session. Some of its members displayed uncertainty, anxiety, and even fear. A number were inclined to negotiate with the I.Z.L. and give in here and there so as to avoid fraternal strife. But Ben-Gurion spoke with considerable heat: "What has happened. . . endangers the state. . . This is an attempt to murder the state. On these two points there cannot in my opinion be any compromise. And if, to our great misfortune, it becomes necessary to fight over this, we have to fight." When the Cabinet put the issue to the vote, it decided to demand that the I.Z.L. hand over the ship to the government, with force to be employed if necessary. Ben-Gurion immediately ordered Yadin to take action in accordance with the Cabinet decision.²⁸

The Altalena, which represented a mutiny on the right, was quelled by the forces of the Palmach. To use Palmach had been a wisemove. By allowing it to "settle the score" with the Irgun, Ben-Gurion was essentially leading the Palmach to eliminate one of its raisons d'être--the capacity to contain the threat on the right.

IV. The reorganization of the army: the disbandment of the Palmach

Ben-Gurion seemed to postulate that with the victory

over the Irgun complete; the time was right to make the next move. Bar-Zohar notes:

As a sophisticated political strategist he quickly moved to exploit his victory in the Altalena Affair. He desired to unite the army and the labour camp behind him and to move forth into his next goal--to create a state army. Days after the Altalena Affair he went out again to do battle; this time against his closest allies from yesterday, against those who served him with devotion in the campaign against the Etzel (Irgun Tzevai Leumi).²⁹

Ben-Gurion's next step in reducing the influence of Mapam in the army was to remove a number of its members from senior positions. He had drawn up a list of appointments in his plan for reorganization of the army, but this proposal met with great opposition from General Staff, and Yadin and Mapam members of General Staff submitted their letters of resignation. In response, the Cabinet established a committee to investigate the problem. The committee criticized Ben-Gurion and suggested that Israel Galili be chosen as head of the revised post of national command. Ben-Gurion thereafter resigned on July 6, 1948.

But no other leader could be found. An attempt was made to persuade Sharett to take over the premiership, but he declined. The Cabinet's response to his resignation brought to the fore Ben-Gurion's charisma. Bar-Zohar described what transpired at the Cabinet meeting:

The final scene in the crisis took place at the Cabinet meeting on 7 July. Ben-Gurion did not attend the meeting, which was presided over by Sharett. For many hours, the Cabinet squirmed and wriggled, while its members protested at being coerced, presented with an ultimatum a "diktat." They criticized Ben-Gurion's character, his disobedience towards collective decisions; they

denounced him for his inability to work with others, for not getting on with the General Staff, for his responsibility for the Latrun debacle, for his outrageous appointments. And then, with something like a secret sigh of relief, disguised by their desire to capitulate with honor, they asked Ben-Gurion to come back, flinging the recommendations of the five-man committee into the wastepaper basket.³⁰

A crucial indicator of the charismatic leader is the recognition or belief among the followers that the leader is indispensable to the task at hand. Willner writes:

Finally, I would add another type of indicator not suggested in the original definition--the conviction of a following that the existence or continuity of the social order they value is dependent upon the life or presence of the leader.³¹

Ben-Gurion then moved to consolidate his victory, issuing the order for the disbandment of the Palmach at the beginning of October. By undertaking these actions Ben-Gurion felt that he was creating a "unitary army--an army that possessed no social or political allegiance except to the government through the minister of defense."³²

It is difficult to state with absolute certainty that had Ben-Gurion not been there, events would have taken a different course. Equally, however, it is not unreasonable to speculate that had Ben-Gurion not played upon his feelings of indispensability, his stubbornness, and so forth, the particularism that held sway in other parts of Israeli society would have taken place in the army. Bar-Zohar suggests:

Another leader might have been rash in his performance of these painful operations. Another leader might have waited until the end of the war to disperse the private armies. Ben-Gurion preferred

to undertake these actions in the midst of the storm of the battle and not just by chance. It was clear to him that at the termination of hostilities when calm and satisfaction came to the land, and an atmosphere of tranquillity existed, it would be difficult to smash the accepted frameworks. He understood that it was feasible to undertake painful basic changes only in a crisis atmosphere, when the enemy is knocking at the gate, when there is a need to unite the ranks, and there is no possibility to direct attention to bitter domestic squabbles. The separate command of the Palmach could have maintained itself until the end of the war; however, it is doubtful whether at the end of the war Ben-Gurion could have been successful in mobilizing political and military support to disperse the Palmach.³³

Ben-Gurion's success in molding civil-military relations was paralleled in other areas. By working through Ma-pai's organizational base, he was later able to attract the support of the General Zionists "B" who aided him in building the institutional political center in such matters as national labour exchanges and integrating the labour and religious trends into the state school system. Ben-Gurion was not completely successful in bringing about his vision of what he believed Israel should be; witness his defeat in nationalizing the Kupat Holim--Workers Sick Funds. But the measure of Ben-Gurion's greatness lies in the degree to which he succeeded, given the highly ideological nature of Israeli politics. The next chapter will examine his personal qualities and how he invoked and evoked a charismatic response from his followers.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

¹Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp. 358-92.

²Moshe Lissak in Social Mobility in Israel Society (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1969), notes that in the 1919-1948 period, 89.6% of the immigrants to Israel were of European origin and at the same time 10.4% were of Asian and African origin. In the 1948-1962 period, European and American immigrants amounted to 45.4% while those of Asian and African origin totalled 54.6%, p. vii.

³Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p. 342.

⁴Michael Brecher, The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 11.

⁵Idem, p. 14.

⁶In most conventional writing on the subject, Ben-Gurion is considered as the most courageous among Israeli leaders while Sharett is viewed as being extremely cautious. However, Sharett's actions in the Altalena Affair demonstrate that he was also capable of being quite courageous. For an examination of Sharett's actions in the Altalena Affair, see Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (Tel Aviv: Hoza'at Am Oved, 1977) (Hebrew) pp. 773-98.

⁷Michael Brecher, The Foreign Policy System of Israel: p. 254.

⁸Idem, p. 254.

⁹Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East, an Israeli Perspective (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 9-10.

¹⁰Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel, From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 279-314.

¹¹The depth of feeling that ran against Ben-Gurion can be seen in what Y. Sprinzak, a major leader in the Mapam, stated after Ben-Gurion decided to declare independence. He said: "Ben-Gurion is bringing upon us the destruction of the third (temple) house." See Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (Hebrew), p. 736.

¹²David Ben-Gurion, "The Battle for Israel," [an address

delivered at the opening session of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization, Jerusalem, August 22, 1948.] Jewish Frontier, 15 (November, 1948), p. 12.

¹³Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (Hebrew), p. 750. Translation mine. The original text runs as follows:

„ההחלטה של הכרזה בתנאים ההם, היא זכותו הנלעדיה של דוד בן-גוריון החלטה זו שקולה בחשיבותה ובהשפעתה כנגד אלפי פעולותיו.”

¹⁴Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, "Remembering Ben-Gurion," The Jerusalem Quarterly, 16 (Summer, 1980), pp. 40-53, p. 45.

¹⁵Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu, Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des romains et de leur décadence, as quoted in Dankwart A. Rustow, A World of Nations (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1967), p. 156.

¹⁶David E. Apter, "Nkrumah, Charisma, and the Coup," p. 117.

¹⁷Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East, pp. 9-10. and David Ben-Gurion, Israel, A Personal History (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1971).

¹⁸Following Parsons, universalistic practices are known in this study as those applying to all citizens of a society, whereas particularistic practices only affect certain sub-societies. See Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, ed., Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951); Talcott Parsons, The Social System (New York: Free Press, 1951). For an interesting discussion about the particularistic trends in Israel, see Amitai Etzioni, "Change of the System: The Decline of Neo-Feudalism in Israel" in his Studies in Social Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), pp. 180-97.

¹⁹Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp. 341-52.

²⁰Idem, pp. 329-40.

²¹Peter Medding, Mapai in Israel, p. 223.

²²Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East, p. 10.

²³Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, "Remembering Ben-Gurion," p. 45.

²⁴Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, (Hebrew), p. 779. Translation mine: The original text is as follows:

„שהצבא וכל חלקי הצבא כפופים לשלטון העם ורק

לשלטון העם ... כל מי שיפעל ב' הגנה ובצבא או
באיזה שם אחר - יפעל רק בסמכות המוגדרת שלו,
שהשלטון שיכול לתת סמכות כזאת - נותן לו."

²⁵"Split" is perhaps not the best word. In all likelihood Ben-Gurion manoeuvred this group out because he feared they were lacking the flexibility and pragmatism that would be necessary in the future. Furthermore, the Mapai under him would be a far more pliable party with the absence of this group. Ben-Aharon has blamed Ben-Gurion for this split. He notes in "Remembering Ben-Gurion," p. 41.

Ben-Gurion was opposed to pluralism not only practically but also ideologically. He had no tolerance for the need of small groups to preserve their distinctiveness within larger political frameworks. . . . When the united Mapai movement was established at the beginning of the thirties, we too joined it--a small group which had left Hashomer Hatzair for the Ha-kibbutz Hameuhad as a kibbutz movement and Mapai as a political party. Ben-Gurion, of course, approved of this step. But already by the beginning of the forties, on the eve of the great debate about partition and the state, he had come to the conclusion that his united party, Mapai, was incapable of providing the sharp political instrument he needed for the establishment of a state in part of Eretz Yisrael. And then in 1942 he took upon himself the responsibility for splitting the party without the slightest hesitation. He was determined to create a comprehensive, cohesive political body--but only on the condition that it would serve the realization of his goals. The moment, he felt, the instrument, was cracked from within, that it was not completely under his control--he split it without hesitation.

²⁶Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (Hebrew), p. 704.
Translation mine. The original text runs as follows:

מפס היתה מפלגה שמאלנית, בעלת נטיות פרו-
סובייטיות מובהקות. היא היתה בת-פלוגתא חריפה
למאפאי בשאלות מדיניות בסיסיות. היא הסתייגה
מי "הכנוית בילסמור", קמה נגד חבניית החלוקה,
חבעה להמשיך במאבק נגד הבריוסטים, דגלה במשטר
בין-לאומי, עס זאת, שמרה בקנאות על מעמדה
כ"הגנה" נוצר מצב מוזר, שבו חלשה מפלגת מיעוט,

אשר, "צגה לכל היותר חמישיה מהישוב, על הכוח המזוין העיקרי שלו: היה זו מצב, לא בריא. היו שחששו כי נסיוניה הפרו-סוביסיות של מפ"ם עלולות להשפיע על ההנהגות חבריה ב"הגנה" במקרה שתפרוץ מחלוקת בצמרה הישוב בדבר המדיניות שיש לנקוט כלפי ברית-המועצות.

²⁷ Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, (English), p. 154.

²⁸ Idem, p. 705.

²⁹ Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, (Hebrew), p. 705.
Translation mine. The original text runs as follows:

כסטרטג פוליטי מחוכם מיהר בן-גוריון לנצל את נצחונו בפרשת "אלטלנה", והתלכדות הצבא והמחנה הפועלי מאחוריו - להגשמת יעד נוסף במאבקו לצבא ממלכתי ימים ספורים לאחר פרשת "אלטלנה" יצא שוב להתמודדות; הפעם-מול בני-בריתו הנאמנים ביותר מתמול-שלשום, מול אלא שירותוהו במסירות במערכה נגד האצ"ל.

³⁰ Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, (English), pp. 178-79.

³¹ Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 19.

³² Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity, p. 191.

³³ Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion, (Hebrew), p. 710.
Translation mine. The original text runs as follows:

מנהיג אחר היה אולי נחפז כל-כך בביצוע אותם ניתוחים מכאיבים. יתכן שהיה ממחין לסוף המלחמה כדי לפרק את הצבאות הפרטיים. בן-גוריון העדיף לעשות את הדבר בסערת הקרב ולא במקרה. ברור היה לו, כי בתום המלחמה, כשישחרר שלום בארץ, באוירה של סיפוק ורגיעה, יהיה הרבה יותר קשה לנפץ מסגרות מקובלות, שהחשלו בקרב, הוכחו עצמן יתרמו לנצחון. הוא הבין כי ניתן לערוך ההפוכות

יסודיות ומכאיבות רק באוירה של משבר,
 כשהאיוב מתדפק בשער, כשיש ללכד את
 השורות ואין אפשרות להחפנות למאבקים
 פנומיים מרים. המטה המצומצם של
 הפלמ"ח יכול היה להתקיים גם עד, סוף
 המלחמה; אולם ספק אם בסוף המלחמה
 היה בן-גוריון מצליח לביים כוח פוליטי
 וצבאי כדי לפרק את הפלמ"ח."

CHAPTER IV

BEN-GURION: THE PROPHETS AND THE LEGENDARY HEROES OF BIBLICAL TIMES: THE EVOCATION AND INVOCATION OF A MYTH

Ben-Gurion had certain personal qualities which engendered a charismatic relationship between his followers and himself, and allowed that relationship to continue over a particular period. The deeper sources of his capacity to legitimate those aspects of his authority based upon charisma rested upon his ability to invoke and evoke the memory of the prophets and legendary heroes of biblical times. Charismatic invocation as understood in this study refers to "those attributes and actions they [the charismatic leaders] consciously and deliberately adopt and perform,"¹ while charismatic evocation refers to "those attributes and actions of leaders that fortuitously contribute to the linkage with cultural myths and symbols."² Ben-Gurion knew how to exploit the relevant myths of Jewish culture, and thus became assimilated into the thoughts of Israeli society and accepted as linked to its sacred figures.

Ben-Gurion's personal qualities

Ben-Gurion's personal qualities must first be assessed

to see whether he shared the characteristics associated with other charismatic figures.³ Of all the extraordinary powers held by Ben-Gurion, the most outstanding were his great determination and self-discipline. During his youth in Plonsk, he rejected Jewish life in the Diaspora and believed that the real Zionists settled in the Yishuv, while branding those claiming to be Zionists but not settling there as verbal maximalists. He perceived that a new type of Jew would be needed to settle in Palestine, one who was different culturally, socially and politically from Diaspora Jewry. Ben-Gurion realized that he would first have to transform himself, and thus his aliyah took on major significance. Shabtai Teveth notes:

In order to go his own way he had to forge his character from an emotional person who needed human warmth to a leader who could stand in cold loneliness. In order to pave his Zionist path he had to turn himself into an instrument which would serve himself effectively since he was a political person. In these two tasks he was assisted by his strength of will and his political talent.⁴

Upon his aliyah he became suspicious of the ability of the Jews to transform themselves, basing this observation on the stagnation that emerged among the members of the first aliyah who left Palestine. Some of Ben-Gurion's subsequent actions emanated from his mistrust of the Jews' capacity to change. A specific case in point were Ben-Gurion's work habits. Although during his time spent in pioneering activities he was sometimes perceived as being a dreamer, he showed a desire to become actively assimilated into his new life style. Teveth demonstrates this with an incident occurring during 1907, when Ben-Gurion was ill with a temperature of 40°C. Despite his illness, he left his sick-bed and went

to Rishon-le-Zion to participate in the village's twenty-fifth anniversary festivities. Remaining in Rishon-le-Zion after the holiday, he took on a bet with a companion to see who could tread grapes longer and won this contest by treading nonstop for thirty-six hours. At an early stage then, he demonstrated the high level of energy and the extraordinary degree of vitality which charismatic leaders are required to possess.⁵

In his earlier years in Palestine, Ben-Gurion was known as somewhat of a loner or an outsider. In his later years his aloofness and firmness distinguished him from other leaders. Bar-Zohar notes that Ben-Gurion could be excessive in his character. In his youth he excelled in the use of a sharp tongue. While rising in the political hierarchy, he showed a capacity to hurt others which set him apart from his labour colleagues. In the Yishuv, as in Israel today, one does not strike a comrade or cast him out, even if he failed or is redundant. But Ben-Gurion was willing to dispose of those who no longer seemed indispensable.⁶

In addition, Ben-Gurion possessed an intangible characteristic whose existence cannot be explained in simple logical fashion. Beginning in his early pioneer years, people instinctively turned to Ben-Gurion and saddled him with various responsibilities. Along with this magnetism went a sense of moral authority, although this was obviously not universal. As one example of his power, while he was in the Jewish Legion during World War One, even criminals followed

his orders;⁷ Ben-Gurion did profoundly affect a number of his close associates. As Moshe Sharett wrote in 1937:

For me you are not just a senior colleague in my work, not just the leader of the movement which is my life's home. For me you are a man whose personal moral authority I accepted when I was on the threshold of my youth. . . I shudder to think what would have happened to me if you had not been on my side and before me. . . I want you to know what you are for me, and what I wish you to be till the end of our paths.⁸

The ability to devote single-minded concentration on one subject to the exclusion of all others was another characteristic of Ben-Gurion. Yitzhak Ben-Aharon recalls one incident that illustrates this point, describing his first meeting with Ben-Gurion in London after having spent four years in a prisoner of war camp in Germany. Despite Ben-Aharon's emaciated and sick condition, Ben-Gurion ignored his health and instead uttered: "You know, Ben-Aharon, that we are in two separate parties now?"⁹ (i.e. referring to the split in Mapai in 1944).

Charismatic leaders are supposed to show presence of mind or composure under conditions of stress and challenge;¹⁰ Ben-Gurion did so during the Altalena Affair. Stubbornness, originality and the capacity for innovative thinking are characteristics common to charismatic leaders;¹¹ Ben-Gurion demonstrated all three of these at the time leading up to the Declaration of Independence. Another characteristic that charismatics are said to possess is that of unusual mental achievement.¹² Ben-Gurion was able to project this image from his voracious reading, and his apparent knowledge of

matters such as the Bible, philosophy and scientific problems. Weber argues that charisma rejects rational economic conduct.¹³ While Ben-Gurion did not exactly do this, he displayed a lack of interest in these matters, allowing first Eliezer Kaplan and then Levi Eshkol and Pinchas Sapir to handle economic affairs.

Ben-Gurion maintained the characteristics of iron self-will and discipline, which merged with his expansive personality to create a public perception of him as a decisive leader. His leadership profile was further enhanced by his association with the legendary figures in Jewish history. Ben-Gurion's appearance, manner, speech, style of action and ideas contributed to his image as "ennobled by the majestic power of ancient times."¹⁴ He became the "contemporary personification of one or more pantheon of dominant culture heroes and in turn he became a culture hero."¹⁵

The Bible appeared invariably at the center of Ben-Gurion's public pronouncements. He often referred to the Jews in their biblical term as the Chosen People, and secularized the visions of the prophets for use as a spiritual guide. His tendency to relate relevant parts of the Bible to the affairs of his time gave it new meaning and enhanced the sense of continuity--the Israelis were the descendants of an ancient prophetic people. Ben-Gurion had a definite purpose in relying on this approach. The Jews, he perceived, had certain weaknesses; to revive the strength of the biblical Jew would help to overcome these deficiencies. In particular, he

juxtaposed the military glories of Joshua and the Maccabees with the messianic vision of the prophets. Joshua was viewed as a military leader and state builder who helped create the appropriate circumstances wherein the prophets could express their messianic vision. The substantive conclusion drawn by the Israelis was that they were heirs to this tradition. The messianic vision was necessary for Israel to recapture its prophetic mission as a model state. The spirit of Joshua was crucial to preserve the state.

Communicating to the Israelis by reference to the Bible had a positive advantage in a society segmented by ideological and ethnic cleavages. Despite the cleavages between traditional and nontraditional, as well as between religious and nonreligious Jews, the Bible had relevance to each. Even for the nonreligious, it had historical significance. Thus, using the Bible as a common denominator, Ben-Gurion was able to communicate to the different sectors of the society in terms that were meaningful to all.

Ben-Gurion's invocation of the memory of biblical heroes was undertaken in two principal fashions: quoting directly from the Bible, and employing biblical symbolism. His style can be seen in his speech entitled "Preparing to Meet the Future," delivered at the eleventh session of the Provisional State Council, July 22nd, 1948. In this speech he noted how the first three stages of the War of Independence resemble the Bible stories from Joshua and Judges. He then went on to quote the Bible:

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side of Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite heard thereof: That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and Israel, with one accord.¹⁶

Ben-Gurion goes on in this speech not to quote directly from the Bible but to refer to it in order to draw his listeners' attention to the association between past and present. He states:

None of our recent foemen are strangers to our history. More than once have we met Egypt and Assyria, Babylon and Aram, Canaan and Amalek, but always singly, never in concentrated aggression, never in the whole Middle East together against us, never in our 3,500 years.¹⁷

Ben-Gurion particularly desired to link aspects of the Israeli military with the glories of the past. He stated:

The Israel Defense Army today is very young, but Jewish military history is ancient. Our first warrior was the Patriarch Abraham, who did battle with Chedarlaomer and the attendant kings, to rescue Lot and his people. Our first war was fought some centuries later, soon after the Exodus from Egypt, against Amalek at Rephidim. Our first general was Joshua, and Moses with Aaron and Hur by his side, watched the campaign from the hill-top.¹⁸

The navy was viewed in the same perspective. Although it was created in 1948, the navy was seen as a harking back to the days of the Judean kings. In a speech entitled "The Navy, Israel and the Sea" delivered to the graduating class at the Naval College, Haifa, on February 5, 1950, Ben-Gurion reminded his audience that sailors and shipmasters arose during the Hasmonean era. He went on to note how the Jewish seamanship tradition was preserved in the Book of Psalms.¹⁹

Ben-Gurion extensively referred to the absorption of the immigrants in biblical terms, specifically using the key words salvation and redemption. The immigrants were not viewed simply as arrivals in a new country, but as exiles returning to the Holy Land. In an address to the General Staff and Commanding Officers of the Israeli Defense Forces entitled "Mission and Dédication," he declared:

This is not the first time Jews have come back to their country to sovereign status in it. It happened before, some two thousand, five hundred years ago in the days of Zerubavel, Nehemiah and Ezra, when exiles returned from Babylon and founded the Second Temple.

While not specifically using biblical language, certain of Ben-Gurion's statements contributed to his being viewed as a new type of saviour. A prime example of these orientations was his reaction to a 1955 Fedayeen raid on a Kurdish immigrant village known as Moshav Patish. After the raid, Ben-Gurion appeared before the moshav people in full military uniform, which called forth the image of a protector. In a subsequent interview with a journalist during which he detailed his reasons for pursuing a policy of retaliatory raids, he asserted that in addition to security, there existed educational as well as moral reasons:

Look at these Jews. They come from Iraq, from Kurdistan, from North Africa. They come from countries where their blood was unavenged, where it was permissible to mistreat them, torture them, beat them. . . They have grown used to being. . . helpless victims. . . Here we have to show them that. . . the Jewish people has a state and an army that will no longer permit them to be abused. . . We must straighten their backs . . . and demonstrate that those who attack will not get away unpunished; that they are the citizens

of a sovereign state which is responsible for their lives and their safety.²¹

Ben-Gurion employed other than biblical strategies that elicited a charismatic response. Willner suggests that charismatic leaders have often attempted to tap the "variant values of the various segments of their pluralistic societies and to demonstrate that they are men who have not lost the common touch."²² Ben-Gurion desired to see the center of Israeli power shift to the Negev. He called forth a charismatic response when he personally settled in the Negev for two years during his retirement between 1953-1955. Despite the fact that few people followed his example, he was paying homage to the dominant myth of engaging in pioneering activities.

Ben-Gurion's features evoked the memory of symbols that were holy in Jewish mythology. The evocation of these symbols began with his adopted Hebraized name, apparently taken from Yoseph Ben-Gurion who was a general in the revolt against the Romans in the year 60 C.E. He was known for his courage, honesty, love for his people and fanatical battle for freedom. Ben-Gurion's very appearance recalled the memory of ancient Israel's prophets. Among Israel's founding fathers, he was the only one who projected a distinguished figure. In particular, his flying white hair and piercing eyes, together with his sculptured facial features and firm chin, added to the association with the ancient prophets. Having examined Ben-Gurion per se, the chapter now looks at the perceptions of and response from Ben-Gurion's followers, to determine

whether a charismatic relationship developed.

After the 1948 war, Ben-Gurion established an ad hoc kitchen cabinet, consisting of one or two cabinet ministers, Mapai's army specialists, chief of intelligence, chief of staff and several civil servants to advise him. Some of the people included in the group were Shaul Avigur, Isser Harel, Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres. These people met at Ben-Gurion's convenience and were loyal to him. Perlmutter notes the following on the relationship between Ben-Gurion and this group:

The type of authority which Ben-Gurion exercised in relation to his subordinates would be defined by Weber as charismatic authority. Weber's biographer, Bendix, has characterized this as "domination on the basis of leadership, the extraordinary power of a person and the identification of followers with that person." Such authority is legitimized by the creation of disciples which is not easy to do, especially in a democratic society like Israel.²³

Evidence of the charismatic impact of Ben-Gurion's leadership can be found in the writings of one of Ben-Gurion's disciples--Moshe Dayan. Dayan fell under Ben-Gurion's sway in 1948 when reporting to Ben-Gurion on his negotiations with King Abdullah. He writes:

But I now saw for the first time and at first hand how superior he [Ben-Gurion] was to his colleagues in his basic approach to problems, and I was impressed by his political wisdom, power leadership, and vision.²⁴

Dayan's almost blind faith in Ben-Gurion was shown when he wrote: "I thought well of Ben-Gurion, and even when we differed and I considered him mistaken, I would carry out his orders with an easy heart, knowing that in the end he might

turn out right."²⁵ Dayan goes on to write why he and others followed Ben-Gurion's wishes:

With a great artist or a great composer, it is possible to distinguish between the man and his work, but not with Ben-Gurion. He led as a man, and he influenced through the force of his personality, no less than through his doctrines. Perhaps in the sphere of religious and ethical principles, an impact can be made through the written word alone. Ben-Gurion's major pronouncements, however, were not abstracted principles but decisions on concrete measures to be taken at a specific time and in the context of specific prevailing conditions. They were decisions which not only committed his people but were conditional upon the people's acceptance of them as an expression of their own will. Ben-Gurion's strength lay in the fact that his people did accept them and followed him. They trusted him. The source of his influence and his persuasive powers stemmed not only from the wisdom of his words, but also from the deep and passionate faith with which his entire being was imbued and which he was able to transmit with great power.²⁶

Thus, within the defense department where he was minister, Ben-Gurion had people under him who would follow his orders almost blindly. To his followers, Ben-Gurion's orientations became their orientations. They accepted his normative vision of the future. He was perceived as "outstanding in wisdom, outstanding in prescience, and possessing the power to bring into being the goals they share."²⁷ The emotional response Ben-Gurion elicited from these people for a period was that of devotion, blind faith, and reverence.²⁸

In the same vein, a letter from the writer Zalman Shazar, later to be President of the State, to Ben-Gurion published in "Davar" October 21, 1956, on the occasion of Ben-Gurion's seventieth birthday, stated that Ben-Gurion was a man overpowered by a hidden but luminous mission. Shazar

went on to say that a "fire" existed within Ben-Gurion that consumed all doubts about him, and that with the aid of this fire he (Ben-Gurion) went forth "to strike like a sledge-hammer at a great rock."²⁹ While not stating explicitly that a comparison between Moses and Ben-Gurion existed, that is the substantive conclusion emerging. Shazar saw how Ben-Gurion's speeches brought forth the memory of biblical times. In reference to Ben-Gurion's speech on the day the Israeli Navy was inaugurated, Shazar wrote:

And you have truly lived--your whole being has felt--the continuity between Zerubavel and what came before him, and the "majestic deeds" of our day. For you it was self-evident--and you helped us as well to perceive--that what Uziah, King of Judea, had wished to do and had not been able to accomplish was at last being carried out by the Israel Defence Forces when it raised its banner above Eilat.³⁰

Sam Humburg, the famous American farmer, told Ben-Gurion that he reminded him of a poem he once read called "The Prophet."³¹ After Ben-Gurion appeared on a television show aired on an American network, a woman in Indiana wrote: "That dear white-haired man looked like a character out of the pages of the New Testament. I longed to put my hand out to touch his wind-blown hair."³²

A crucial indicator that Ben-Gurion's charismatic characteristics made his authority exceed the institution of the prime minister's office occurred during the years 1953-1955, when he took a "retirement" from "active politics." During that time he received a number of letters from the general populace encouraging him to return. Furthermore, army

officers, senior officials and party leaders came to visit Ben-Gurion to seek his counsel. The significance of these visits is that Ben-Gurion was no longer prime minister but a "private citizen." An example of Ben-Gurion's influence without official power occurred when he was asked to pass judgment on his successor as defense minister, Pinchas Lavon, (who was) minister during an ill-fated intelligence operation in Egypt. According to Bar-Zohar, a major determining factor in Lavon's decision to resign came after a high-level committee went to seek Ben-Gurion's advice, at which time he posited that Lavon had to resign.³³

Hence, he was much respected and loved. In this chapter, we have seen how Ben-Gurion's features, actions and statements contributed to the emergence of two beliefs in Israeli society: Israel was a strong and proud country which actively protected the life and property of its citizens; and that he, Ben-Gurion, was the personification of a moral and sovereign Jew living in a new and just society. In the next chapter we will see how his recourse to charismatic legitimation became increasingly less meaningful as public opinion became more sophisticated and the populace more capable of perceiving the incongruities between Ben-Gurion's image and his actions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

¹Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 75.

²Idem, p. 75.

³The best work undertaken in identifying the characteristics associated with charismatic leaders is in Ann Ruth Willner's Charismatic Political Leadership. The most pertinent chapters are "Social Origins and Early Environments of Charismatic Political Leaders," pp. 49-60 and "Some Other Shared Personal Characteristics," pp. 61-71.

⁴Shabtai Teveth, David's Desire (Jealousy): Young Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem: Zohar, 1976), forward. Translation mine. The original text runs as follows:

כדי ללכת בדרכו שלו היה צריך לחשל את
אופיו, להיעשות מרגשן הזקוק לחום הבריות
למנהיג היכול לעמוד בצינח הברידות; כדי
לסלול נתיב לציונות היה צריך להתקין עצמו
למכשיר שיסדרו, אותו עצמו, ביעילות. שכן
היה איש מדינה. בשתי משימותיו אלו נעזר
בכוח הרצון בכשרון המדיניות.

⁵Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 62.

⁶Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (Hebrew), p. 407. Paraphrasing mine. The original text runs as follows:

[בן גוריון] יכול היה להיות גם קטן במידה
מופלגת. בנעוריו הצטיין כלשון חריפה; וככל
שהעפיל בהיררכיה הפוליטית, כן החמיר בזה
פגיעתו. כוח זה בלש שבעתים על רקע הקציאות
החברתיות והמנטליות של תנועת הקבוצה הארצ-
ישראלית. בארץ ישראל של המנדט, גם בישראל
כיום, מסיכות שלא כאן המקום לפרטן, שוררת
בצמרת המפלגה המנהיגה מעין חרגשה של חבורת
רעים: כולם חברים, כולם ידידים, כולם
קרובים זה לזה, כולם סעודים זה את זה.
אסור, חס וחלילה, לפגוע בחבר, לסלקו מהפקיד
מרכזי - גם אם נכשל; אין להחליפו באחר, גם
אם האחר צעיר או מוכשר יותר. כל מעשה שכזה
חרי הוא "הדחה נוראה", "שפיכות דמים", "מכה
אכזרית" ועוד. בן גוריון לא נרתע מסילוקם
של אנשים, שלא נראו לו תיוניים.

⁷Michael Bar-Zohar in Ben-Gurion (English) argues that Ben-Gurion enjoyed special status among the Jewish Legionnaires. This was noted by the officers as Ben-Gurion's sergeant-major described Ben-Gurion as being "the best man in the Jewish Battalion," p. 36.

⁸Idem, p. 202.

⁹Yizhak Ben-Aharon, "Remembering Ben-Gurion," p. 46.

¹⁰Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 63.

¹¹Idem, p. 65.

¹²Idem, p. 65.

¹³Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp. 358-86.

¹⁴Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 74.

¹⁵Idem, p. 74.

¹⁶David Ben-Gurion, "Preparing to Meet the Future," [a speech delivered at the eleventh session of the Provisional State Council, July 22, 1948] in Rebirth and Destiny of Israel (New York, Philosophical Library, 1954), pp. 261-62.

¹⁷Idem, p. 262.

¹⁸David Ben-Gurion, "The Navy, Israel and the Sea" [a speech delivered to the graduating class at the Naval College, Haifa, February 5, 1950] in Rebirth and Destiny of Israel, p. 298.

¹⁹Idem, pp. 309-10.

²⁰David Ben-Gurion, "Mission and Dedication," [an address delivered to the General Staff and Commanding Officers of the Israel Defense Forces, 1950] in Rebirth and Destiny of Israel, p. 343.

²¹Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (English), p. 219.

²²Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 45.

²³Amos Perlmutter, Military and Politics in Israel, Nation Building and Role Expansion (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1969), p. 56.

²⁴Moshe Dayan, Story of My Life (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), p. 97.

²⁵Idem, p. 279.

²⁶Idem, p. 358. (Emphasis mine.)

²⁷Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership, p. 67.

²⁸Idem, p. 6.

²⁹Zalman Shazar, "A Letter to Ben-Gurion," reprinted in the Jerusalem Post, September 30, 1966, p. 7.

³⁰Idem, p. 7.

³¹Robert St. John, Ben-Gurion, a Biography (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), p. 248.

³²Idem, pp. 287-88.

³³Michael Bar-Zohar, Ben-Gurion (English), p. 215.

CHAPTER V

THE WANING OF BEN-GURION'S

CHARISMATIC APPEAL

. . . charisma is not a fixed datum. Since beliefs can be more or less intense, it follows that there can be degrees of charisma. Second, charisma is not a permanent estate, rather it can grow and wane, appear and disappear.¹

Weber repeatedly emphasized that charismatic appeal was unstable as well as inadequate as a permanent basis for legitimacy.² Maintaining the charismatic relationship depends upon the continued crisis atmosphere and the "leader's confirmation of his grace by performing outstanding feats or miracles."³ Above all, charisma is relational as it relies upon the follower's perceptions of the leader. Weber posited: "It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma."⁴ The charismatic legitimation of Ben-Gurion's authority was increasingly attenuated in the face of processes unfolding in Israel over the late 1950's and early 1960's. These included: a lessening of the crisis atmosphere in the wake of the 1956 Suez victory and the subsequent withdrawal from Sinai; the re-emergence of the political center as the focal point of institutional authority; socio-demographic changes producing an increasingly aware Israeli populace. Together, these processes

allowed for a growing recognition of the apparent contradictions between Ben-Gurion's positions and those he actually pursued.

I. The Sinai War and its aftermath

Most conventional histories⁵ maintain that the Sinai War affirmed Ben-Gurion's leadership qualities, particularly in the military sphere. While this viewpoint is accepted here, attention should be drawn to the long-range impact of this war on the relationship between Ben-Gurion and his followers.

With the conclusion of the 1956 campaign, a more tranquil atmosphere descended upon Israel. The war halted the Fedayeen attacks from Gaza for the next decade. Furthermore, the swiftness and decisiveness of the victory led to a psychological climate in which Israelis were less fearful of their destruction. Ironically, then, Ben-Gurion's great victory meant that it was no longer as viable to draw on charismatic legitimation as had previously been the case; a crisis atmosphere is crucial in order to maintain the charismatic relationship. To paraphrase Shakespeare, Ben-Gurion, at his height, was ready to decline.

With a more relaxed atmosphere prevailing in Israel, the substance of Ben-Gurion's policies could be scrutinized. First and foremost, the populace might wonder how Ben-Gurion could project a tough hawkish image and yet, concomitantly, withdraw rapidly from the Sinai, given mounting American

pressure. The answers were to reshape Israeli society.

II. The reemergence of institutional restraints

The political institutional center as known in this study serves as a focus of charismatic and institutional authority. At the time of Israeli independence, severe external pressures and national cleavages had weakened the new institutional center. As pointed out earlier, the charismatic mantle donned by Ben-Gurion had hidden and compensated for a number of weaknesses in the Israeli political system. In fact, mobilization of support for the regime in part revolved around Ben-Gurion, and this helped to ensure that a stable political order prevailed. His charismatic qualities enhanced the institutional image of the office of the prime minister in particular, and all government institutions in general. This situation was satisfactory until changing realities commencing in the mid-1950's, when the state's institutions began to normalize as a result of demobilization. Demobilization, according to Perlmutter, is "the process of releasing collectivist commitments, tensions, and obligations. It takes the form of normalization or psychological and institutional decollectivization."⁶ To use Weberian terminology, Ben-Gurion's charisma became increasingly routinized in bureaucratic structures.

Members of the Knesset, both inside and outside Mapai, became increasingly more familiar and comfortable in regard

to parliamentary power in a sovereign state. These changes were particularly significant within the context of Israel's proportional representational electoral system in which seats are apportioned according to the percentage of the vote received. The plethora of parties contesting Israeli elections ensured that no one party would receive an absolute majority; however, the electoral strength of Mapai allowed it to dominate any coalition. By working through Mapai's power base in the early years of statehood, Ben-Gurion was able to seek out coalition partners to the right and left of Mapai. These coalition partners were originally not overly exacting, but as they became more secure in exercising their parliamentary strength, their support became increasingly conditional.

A major change occurred in the mid-1950's when Mapai's moderate right-wing coalition partner, the General Zionists "B", whose support had been useful to Ben-Gurion in building an institutional center in such matters as a state school system and labour exchange, decided to move into the opposition. Having lost the mobility of dealing with a less demanding right-wing partner, Ben-Gurion now had to turn to a more demanding left. His serious reservations about the Left's pragmatism were justified when his "allies" eventually made public issues such as: the buying and selling of weapons to and from the West Germans; his efforts to join or achieve some type of security arrangement with N.A.T.O.; the nuclear deal with France. His free reign in security and defense matters was now seriously curtailed; no longer could he present to the cabinet faits accomplis, as he did during his

decision to go to war during the Sinai Campaign.

In addition, this era saw important changes among Mapai's secondary leaders. Figures such as Eshkol and Meir were increasingly disenchanted with Ben-Gurion; their complaints included no consultation on foreign and defense policy; they gradually drew away from him. The institutional restraints always present in his own party, Mapai, as well as in the political system, generally as a curb to Ben-Gurion's powers, were finally to come into play.

III. The socio-demographic changes: their impact on public opinion

The arrival of massive immigration in post-1948 Israel brought wholesale demographic change. Among this wave were large groups from traditional or transitional society, more commonly referred to as the "Oriental Jews." In the first phase after immigration to Israel, they were in a position of "extreme passivity, docility, and parochiality"⁷ vis-à-vis political matters. Lissak attributes this passivity as being:

. . . the natural result of the immigrants' lack of understanding of the network of political manipulations into which they had been precipitated, and resulted in a lack of ability to exploit their electoral strength and constitute effective pressure groups.⁸

In the immediate post-1948 era, these immigrants were susceptible to the appeals of a charismatic leader. This dynamic was evident during elections in the 1950's, when Mapai devised platforms which evoked a positive response to Ben-Gurion,

by identifying the state's achievements with his personality. This clarion call had its intended effect; as Eisenstadt notes: "Even immigrants who could not distinguish one party platform from another, recognized the dramatic figure of Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister and leader of the party that won independence."⁹

In the first decade of statehood, the immigrants possessed no indigenous elite and were viewed by the political parties as objects whose support could be mobilized through the allocation of benefits as thought best by the parties. Eisenstadt asserts that during the early years of statehood, the new immigrants were not overly concerned with affairs of state;¹⁰ nor did they critically examine the substance of Ben-Gurion's policies in areas that did not affect them directly. Naturally, their preoccupations were immediate personal and family needs, including housing, employment and sustenance, medical care, and educational services for their children.¹¹

As the "uninitiated," the public "deeply believed in the man [Ben-Gurion] and his methods."¹² Ben-Gurion's statements and orientations gave rise to certain expectations from his constituents, particularly in the realm of defense and in the creation of an egalitarian model society. But as time passed, his capacity to elicit a charismatic response waned; the public perceived that he did not "deliver the goods" that they hoped for.

Based upon the empirical work undertaken by Matras,

Eisenstadt and Lissak, it can be stated that an increasing level of sophistication characterized the "New Israel." Length of stay, in itself a major socializing element, combined with education, employment and military service, greatly enhanced the participation of the new immigrants in the political process. A significant number of them learned the basic reading and writing skills in the army. Furthermore, since Israel needed a trained industrial working class, the factories had to assume an educatory role in training workers from a nonindustrial background. Matras notes an interesting phenomenon regarding the social change in Israel. A decline in the business and commerce sectors of employment upgraded rather than downgraded the labour force, since becoming an industrialized society represented the attaining of industrial skills, literacy levels, and economic security.¹³

Regarding the gains made by the immigrants in the educational sphere, Eisenstadt writes:

As for immigrants from Asia and Africa the number of years [of education] acquired by males aged 15 to 29 increased from 5.1 years in 1954 to 6.5 years in 1961. Concerning the number of years of education acquired by female immigrants from Asia and Africa it increased from 3.6 years for females aged 15 to 29 in 1954 to 4.3 years for all females ages in 1961.¹⁴

Rising levels of education led to increased occupational mobility from one generation to another. The increases in education and literacy rates clearly stand out in tables 1 and 2. Nonetheless, making strides in mobility and the level of sophistication, these did not rise equally among all sectors

of population. Matras states:

The different intergenerational mobility rates by ethnicity and duration of residence bear much more detailed and careful study. Thus far, however, they seem to reflect inequality of opportunity for Oriental new immigrants in the occupational sphere; not only do differential rates of access to preferred occupational opportunities by occupational origin operate in their disfavour, but for a given occupational origin there are ethnically-differential rates of access to occupational opportunities operating in their disfavour.¹⁵

Thus there was a potential for discontent in the country emanating from this problem.

IV. The impact of these changes

The increasing level of sophistication in the Israeli populace, combined with its unequal rates of growth, had a major impact on the relationship between Ben-Gurion and the populace. Ben-Gurion's exhortations for an egalitarian society with a large scale back-to-the-soil movement to settle in the Negev increasingly fell on deaf ears. Intergenerational mobility and the development of an industrial working force led to rising expectations and the people became more interested in attaining material goods and not in the symbolism and rhetoric that Ben-Gurion had propounded. These changes, according to Matras, symbolize:

. . . diminishing involvement of the collectivity with manipulation of ideas and idealogues, and increasing manipulation of the physical and material world.¹⁶

The change in public mood was particularly noticeable among the increasingly integrated members of the Oriental

TABLE 1
Percentage of literates in the Jewish population
(1948, 1954, 1957)

	Total	Males	Females
JEWS			
1948(aged 15 and over)	93.7	96.8	90.4
1954(aged 15 and over) ¹	85.0	91.8	78.3
Old-timers ²	92.0	95.9	88.2
Israel born	95.2	98.0	92.7
Asian-African born	62.9	78.2	46.8
European-American born	97.1	99.0	95.2
New immigrants	78.6	88.0	69.7
Asian-African born	59.3	77.5	42.2
European-American born	95.5	97.4	93.7
1957(aged 14 and over)	85.6	90.9	80.4
Old-timers ²	93.8	96.2	91.3
Israel born	96.1	97.4	94.8
Asian-African born	68.5	81.7	53.3
European-American born	97.4	98.6	96.4
New immigrants	78.3	86.0	71.0
Asian-African born	60.6	74.8	46.9
European-American born	95.0	97.2	93.0
OTHERS			
1954(aged 15 and over) ¹	42.8	64.1	21.0
1957(aged 14 and over)	46.9	70.1	23.4

¹Percentage of those who attended school

²Israel born and immigrants until 1947

Source.

Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel Society, p. 33 - Table 16

TABLE 2
Secondary school students according to birthplace; distribution by percentage according to type of school
1956/7-1961/2

Type of school	All birthplaces			Continent of birth and year of study					
				Israel born		Asian-African born		European-American born	
	1956/7	1958/9	1961/2	1956/7	1958/9	1961/2	1956/7	1958/9	1961/2
Total number of students in secondary schools	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
General high schools. Day schools	42.3	45.2	48.1	45.7	48.8	48.0	25.0	30.9	32.2
Secondary schools. Night schools	7.1	6.6	5.8	5.6	5.2	5.0	11.9	12.2	10.8
Continuation classes	16.2	13.8	10.5	17.7	15.3	15.2	12.1	10.5	6.0
Trade schools	16.8	19.0	17.6	17.0	18.2	17.0	16.9	21.7	19.6
Agricultural schools	13.3	9.5	8.0	9.2	6.0	7.1	31.5	19.1	12.3
Teachers seminars	4.3	5.9	4.1	4.8	6.5	5.3	2.6	5.6	3.3
Other secondary schools	-	-	5.9	-	-	2.4	-	-	15.8

Source.

Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel Society, p. 40 - Table 20

communities. No longer could the political parties gain their support by allocating benefits from above without input from these immigrants; their support grew increasingly conditional on meeting the demands they placed upon the parties. By the late 1950's, the local elites in the immigrant towns emerged--becoming increasingly familiar with the rules of the political game in Israeli society. Lissak posits:

The gradual emancipation process, accompanied by anger and rancour against the party bosses, forced the parties to find suitable people among the immigrants themselves. The "clients" who had till then shown lack of understanding of their bargaining positions, turned into claimants who clearly saw the value of their "assets" (loyalty of the ethnic group) which became exchangeable in the political and economic [sic] market. Summarizing: in the late fifties we find, firstly, a considerable change of the weight of the immigrants in the local political systems. Secondly, the outside functionaries are substituted, and in many cases with greater success, by the local leaders, in the mediating roles between the government and their ethnic groups.

The varying rates of growth among the ethnic groups created discrepancies between Ben-Gurion's call for righteousness and equality on the one hand, and the realities that developed on the other. Among certain segments of the Oriental population, these feelings of resentment began to take a tangible form in the Wadi Salib demonstrations, occurring in Haifa in 1959, where the issue of alleged discrimination against North African immigrants emerged in this slum. Against such a backdrop, Ben-Gurion's pleas for equality sounded more and more like an anachronism in a quickly changing Israel.

In addition, there were other significant changes. By 1959 the phenomenon of the floating vote became manifest.

Eisenstadt saw this shift as occurring among immigrants in

the later stages of absorption. . . those rural settlements who felt capable of participating in the political process, mainly on the local, but also on a central level.¹⁸

The public's drawing away from Ben-Gurion was growing in other directions. Whereas during the early years public opinion was shaped by the government, as time progressed a number of newspapers took increasingly independent stands from those of the government.

The Israel of the early years was steadily changing. At the end of the 1950's, Ben-Gurion's charismatic phase was winding down, in effect "an accident looking for a place to happen." The Lavon Affair was the catalyst.

V. The Lavon Affair

The Lavon Affair, which was set in motion in 1960, ostensibly concerned the question of who was responsible for the ill-fated espionage attempt in Egypt in 1954. The minister then responsible, Pinhas Lavon, demanded exoneration when new evidence emerged which indicated his innocence. The issue of Lavon's guilt or innocence was soon dwarfed by questions regarding democracy in Israel and Ben-Gurion's relationship to it, as well as his habit of maintaining exclusive domain over security and foreign affairs. Overriding was the question of who was going to lead Israel after Ben-Gurion.

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Lavon, who had gone to the public with sensitive defense issues, thereby breaking one of Ben-Gurion's cardinal rules, was cleared by a ministerial inquiry. Rejecting this verdict as a perversion of justice containing half-truths, Ben-Gurion raised the issue of parliamentary and cabinet control over his conduct. Realizing that he had lost the confidence of the cabinet, he attempted to repeat his modus operandi of the past by calling for new elections in 1961. Essentially, he was again trying to draw on his charisma in seeking a mandate from the electorate.

The electorate did not accept his version of the affair, and consequently Mapai lost a number of seats. Ben-Gurion could no longer circumvent the institutional restraints by mobilizing public support in his favour. Furthermore, he did not appreciate the radical changes that had taken place in Israel, particularly among Oriental immigrants. A significant number of these people were turning to the major right-wing opposition party--Herut. It would not be unreasonable to assume that this transference of allegiance was related to the disenchantment of the immigrants with Ben-Gurion and Mapai. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate voting patterns in towns and cities where the population was overwhelmingly inhabited by Oriental immigrants. These tables bear out the phenomenon of the floating vote and the movement towards Herut described by the Israeli election expert Hanoah Smith.¹⁹

Whereas Ben-Gurion's past actions had been perceived by the electorate as indicators of firmness and decisiveness,

TABLE 3
Election results in immigrant towns and development towns (range and average) in Knessets 2-6 (percentages).

	Immigrant towns						Development towns					
	Knesset 2	Knesset 3	Knesset 4	Knesset 5	Knesset 6	Knesset 6	Knesset 2	Knesset 3	Knesset 4	Knesset 5	Knesset 6	Knesset 6
Mapai-average	45.9	37.1	32.1	37.4	34.4	34.4	47.7	45.2	44.3	44.4	35.9	35.9
Mapai-range	35.3-60.8	24-51.5	35-54.2	28-48	22-46.8	22-46.8	33-58.4	25-70	7-76	27-72	14.4-60.6	14.4-60.6
Herut-average	4.9	11.5	10.4	16.8	22.7	22.7	3.6	9.3	13.7	11.9	17.0	17.0
Herut-range	2.1-12.4	1-24	8.4-26.1	8-27.2	8.9-28.2	8.9-28.2	0.2-8	2.1-20	3-29.5	3-27.6	5.4-30.3	5.4-30.3

*For the sixth Knesset results refer to the Ma'arakh and Cahal - which are not identical with Mapai and Herut.

Source.

Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel, p. 78 - Table 39

TABLE 4

Voting patterns in immigrant towns

	MAPAI	HERUT
Tiberias		
First Knesset, 1949	30.2	7.8
Second Knesset, 1951	49.7	6.6
Third Knesset, 1955	38.7	16.4
Fourth Knesset, 1959	43.0	17
Fifth Knesset, 1961	38.7	21
Ramla		
First Knesset, 1949	16.7	2.4
Second Knesset, 1951	35.3	8.9
Third Knesset, 1955	28.4	20.0
Fourth Knesset, 1959	39	21
Fifth Knesset, 1961	31.6	24.9
Sefat		
First Knesset, 1949	26.1	18.5
Second Knesset, 1951	38.4	8.1
Third Knesset, 1955	34.8	18.0
Fourth Knesset, 1959	34	21
Fifth Knesset, 1961	28.2 (the figure is for Sefat Sub-District)	18

	MAPAI	HERUT
Lod		
First Knesset, 1949	0.6	0.8
Second Knesset, 1951	49.4	3.6
Third Knesset, 1955	37.3	11
Fourth Knesset, 1959	39	14
Fifth Knesset, 1961	not available	18

The following results group all the labour parties together

	LABOUR BLOCK*	HERUT
Ashqelon		
Third Knesset, 1955	57	12
Fourth Knesset, 1959	54	12
Fifth Knesset, 1961	51	15

Eilat		
Third Knesset, 1955	57	10
Fourth Knesset, 1959	54	23
Fifth Knesset, 1961	51	21

Bet-Shaen		
Third Knesset, 1955	61	4
Fourth Knesset, 1959	52	10
Fifth Knesset, 1961	47	13

	LABOUR BLOCK	HERUT
Kiryat Shmona		
Third Knesset, 1955	77	3
Fourth Knesset, 1959	66	11
Fifth Knesset, 1961	58	15

*Data unavailable for the popular vote received by the various labour parties.

Sources of this table are:

Yehezkel Dror and Emmanuel Guttman, The Government of Israel: A Collection of Readings (Jerusalem: The Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics and Social Sciences, 1962); Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel Society; Hanoah Smith, Ha-Kol Al-Biherot Bi Y'SRAEL.

they were now viewed as acts of authoritarianism. While the voters could accept his secrecy in dealing with security matters in a crisis period, it was no longer so now that more peaceful times had arrived. Furthermore, his persecution of Lavon stood in contrast to the concept of the moral sovereign Jew whom he desired to create and project.

The people reacted to Ben-Gurion's actions in uncanny fashion. Discontent with Ben-Gurion was registered among intellectuals, kibbutz members and in the independent press.²⁰ At the Hebrew University in January 1961, a number of prominent professors issued a public protest regarding Ben-Gurion's actions. This was followed by teachers forming a "Committee for the Defense of Democracy" which pursued its protest through the press and by means of public address.

Public opinion was not the only area wherein Ben-Gurion found himself in trouble. Within Mapai, the Lavon Affair raised the issue of advancement to the leadership ranks for "young people" such as Dayan and Peres. In the face of this new generation, the secondary leadership in Mapai felt in eclipse, and consequently felt threatened and resentful. They principally feared that Ben-Gurion might attempt to manoeuvre one of his "favoured people" to succeed him; thus explaining in part why the secondary leaders did not rally behind Ben-Gurion during the Lavon Affair. Furthermore, the secondary leadership believed that Ben-Gurion's charisma had largely become routinized in the bureaucratic structures of the party, and the Lavon Affair provided the proper setting

to ensure that only "Ben-Gurion's anointed" would not take over the leadership.

Despite being rebuked by the voters and his party in 1961, Ben-Gurion continued in office until 1963. Feeling isolated in Cabinet, especially regarding Israeli-German relations, still embittered about his colleagues' actions in the Lavon Affair, a physically and spiritually exhausted Ben-Gurion resigned on June 19, 1963, and Levi Eshkol assumed the office of prime minister. Thus ended an era in the life of Ben-Gurion and Israel; these two had often been synonymous. But the Ben-Gurion saga had not ended.

In 1965, Ben-Gurion's disenchantment with Mapai and its handling of the Lavon Affair led him to break away, forming a new party called Rafi (the Israeli Workers' List). Although headed by Shimon Peres, the new party revolved around Ben-Gurion's personality, leadership and charisma. Rafi failed, since the party's platform enunciated a number of Ben-Gurion's postulates from the 1940's and 1950's--now incompatible with Israel's new social reality. Furthermore, Ben-Gurion could be seen by segments of the population as a vindictive, resentful older leader attempting to "settle the score" with his former comrades. Contesting the 1965 election, the new party received only ten seats.

Rafi was stillborn in part because Ben-Gurion's charisma was conditional on his attachment to Mapai. Eisenstadt suggests that Israelis, particularly immigrants, were reluctant to support Rafi, for they feared that Rafi could not "deliver

the goods" in the fashion Mapai had and would. However, Rafi's major failure was its inability to understand that appeals to the electorate based upon charisma were largely fruitless. Ben-Gurion's charisma was routinized by 1961, as evidenced by the election that year when the voters censured him and opted for a political system that would overshadow the man. The 1965 election results confirmed this. Eisenstadt wrote in 1967:

The victory was first of all a victory of the institutional setting of the existing regime as such. It emphasized that the Israeli electorate was not ready to conceive the political system to be dependent on any one person, and believed that it could probably deal with most of the problems through existing frameworks--or at least that no better ones were in view.

This acceptance of the institutional setting was perhaps the most significant result of these elections. While, of course, in itself it did not negate the possibility that in the future this framework may be overthrown, a great crisis or breakdown would be necessary, especially as in the future, even the continuity given in Ben-Gurion's personality would become weaker.²¹

The showing by Rafi and Ben-Gurion in 1965 demonstrated an interesting contradiction. While prime minister, Ben-Gurion drew upon his charisma in attempting to gain the populace's acceptance for Israel's new institutions. The lack of electoral support for his new party underlined just how successful he had been. Ultimately, then, Ben-Gurion's defeat affirmed and complemented the course of action he had originally taken.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

- ¹Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Study of Leadership," p. 17.
- ²Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.
- ³Dennis Kavanagh, Crisis, Charisma, and British Political Leadership, p. 7.
- ⁴Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p. 330.
- ⁵See Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel.
- ⁶Amos Perlmutter, Anatomy of Political Institutionalization, p. 2.
- ⁷Moshe Lissak, "The Elections in Israel," in Alan Arian, The Elections in Israel 1969 (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1972), pp. 264-77, p. 266.
- ⁸Idem, p. 266.
- ⁹S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 288.
- ¹⁰Idem, Chapter 9, pp. 285-367.
- ¹¹Eisenstadt as quoted in Judah Matras, Social Change in Israel (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965), p. 156.
- ¹²Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East, p. 156.
- ¹³Judah Matras, Social Change in Israel, p. 151.
- ¹⁴S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 162.
- ¹⁵Judah Matras, Social Change in Israel, p. 165-66.
For a statistical analysis of the intergenerational occupational mobility among the immigrants, see Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel, Table 11, pp. 22-24.
- ¹⁶Idem, p. 205.
- ¹⁷Moshe Lissak, Social Mobility in Israel Society, p. 24.
- ¹⁸S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 346.
- ¹⁹Hanoch Smith has commented in Ha-Kol Al Ha-Biherot Bi Y'SRAEL, p. 57.

An outstanding shift occurred in the new immigrant cities. In 1965 the Labour Block received 2.7% less votes than it did in 1959. In comparison to the established cities (where support for the Labour Block rose 0.3%) this was a shift of 3%. The major beneficiaries of this movement were the center parties, and more precisely Gahal-Herut. In 1961 Herut received 16.4% of the votes cast (about a one per cent increase from 1959). In 1965 Gahal received 20.7% of the votes. Even though the Independent Liberals received only 2.4% of the vote, the center parties received 2.3% more than they received in previous elections in new cities. The religious parties increased their support 0.3% between 1959 and 1965. The shift in the new cities, in the 1959-1965 era was in general a shift from Labour to Gahal and in effect to Herut, because the relative vote for the Liberals and Independent Liberals in the new cities reached only 40% of the vote for them in the old cities. This is one of the most outstanding differences which differentiated the old from the new cities in the last three election campaigns. The remainder was divided equally between the Religious Block and the Labour Block. Translation mine; the original text runs as follows:

תזונה בולטת יותר התרחשה בערים החדשות. שם קיבל גוש עבודה ב-1965 ב-2.7% פחות מאשר ב-1959. בחשורה לערים הוותיקות (שם עלה גוש עבודה ב-0.3%), היתה זו תזונה בשיעור של 3%. חנהנים העיקריים מתזונה זו היו מפלגות המרכז, ליחור דיוק - גח"ל. ב-1961 קיבלה חרות 16.4% מן הקולות (עליה בשיעור של 1% לעומת 1959). ב-1965 קיבל גח"ל 20.7% מן הקולות. אף כי הליברלים העצמאיים קיבלו רק 2.4% מן הקולות, השיגו כל מפלגות המרכז ב-1965 ב-2.3% יותר ממה שהשיגו בבחירות הקודמות בערים החדשות. המפלגות הרתיות עלו ב-1965 ב-0.3% לעומת 1959. התזונה בערים החדשות, בחקופה שבין 1959 לבין 1965, היא אם כן, תזונה מעבודה לבח"ל, ובעצם לחרות - משום שההצבעה היחסית בעד הליברלים והליברלים העצמאיים, בערים החדשות, מביעה רק ל-40% מן ההצבעה בעדן בערים הוותיקות. זהו אחד ההבדלים הבולטים ביותר שהסתמנו בין ערים ותיקות לחדשות בשלוש מערכות הבחירות האחרונות. בהערש התחלקו באופן שווה, הגוש הדתי וגוש עבודה.

²⁰In particular the Ma'ariv Newspaper

²¹S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society, p. 357.

CHAPTER VI

LEADERSHIP STUDIES AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS: TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The purpose of this study has been to explain how Ben-Gurion, by assuming characteristics common to charismatic leaders, aided in the development of a stable political order in Israel. Particular attention was focused upon the actions and decisions of Ben-Gurion and how they were perceived by political activists and the masses during and after a state of acute national emergency in Israel. It is now appropriate to knit together the different strands of this study into a comparative schema. Thus, the charismatic framework will help in identifying the affinities between leadership in the Israeli political system and in other systems, as well as its uniqueness.

At its birth and in the ensuing decade, Israel was marked by a number of contradictions. The country had elements common to an established, rational system, coupled with those of a developing society. On the one hand, as in established nations, pre-statehood Israel experienced patterns of political activity that were highly institutionalized. On the other, independence demanded that Israel's institutions be redefined in some cases and constructed anew in others.

Hence, similar to many new states, the institutional order was unclear. Furthermore, the crisis atmosphere was redoubled by the war upon which Israel's survival depended, by the necessity to liquidate internal groups threatening to overthrow the government, and by major demographic changes. The fact of being both an established and a developing nation during a severe crisis period created the circumstances appropriate for the emergence of a charismatic leader; Ben-Gurion assumed this position.

I. The impact of Ben-Gurion's leadership
in Israel: a comparative note

Ben-Gurion was followed and obeyed because he was, of course, prime minister and commanded the support of parliament. Without that prime ministerial office, as well as his association with Mapai, Ben-Gurion's capacity to mobilize public support would have been severely curtailed. Nevertheless his charismatic characteristics allowed him to inspire and sustain loyalty over and above the institutionalized charisma attached to the office of prime minister. Ben-Gurion's power to attract the awe, reverence and blind faith that mark a charismatic relationship, in conjunction with his ability to combine the potentialities of planning with a moral ideology, and thereby operationalize a number of tenets of his vision, enabled him for a time to be Israel's institutional architect.

Ben-Gurion was an exceptional leader at an exceptional

time in Jewish history who tried to change the basis of accepted norms and succeeded in a number of areas such as depoliticizing the army, labour exchange, and education. In all likelihood, a leader not as charismatic as Ben-Gurion could not have succeeded in altering these particularistic practices which would have continued in the state's institutions. Rousseau believed that a leader toils in one century and reaps in another; Ben-Gurion, however, did reap the fruits of his harvest in his lifetime. The rebukes he suffered in 1961 and 1965 should not be seen as failures; rather they highlighted just how successful he had been in strengthening the institutional setting of the political system. To paraphrase Montesquieu, Ben-Gurion, at the birth of Israel, to a large degree molded Israeli institutions; however, at a later stage these institutions defeated him.

Ben-Gurion's power, at its height, exceeded that of Churchill during World War II. Churchill, head of government in a parliamentary system somewhat similar to Israel's, became prime minister during a time of dire crisis, with Great Britain facing the possibility of defeat and occupation. Despite Churchill's highly personalized leadership, the institutional and cultural restraints present in the British system did not allow him to impose his particular vision of England on the populace. There were parallels, though, insofar as crisis situations can bring forth leaders with charismatic characteristics in both established nations such as Churchill's Britain and nascent but reasonably

institutionalized systems such as Ben-Gurion's Israel. Furthermore, once the crisis period passed in both countries, a highly personalized leader was no longer acceptable. It seems, then, that in rational-legal settings, the emergence of charismatic leadership is associated with crisis periods.

While the comparison between Churchill and Ben-Gurion has been shown to be wanting, that is not to say that Ben-Gurion can be likened more effectively to another charismatic, such as Kemal Ataturk of Turkey. Because of the absence of institutional and democratic restraints, Ataturk was able to impose his particular vision on Turkey to a greater extent than Ben-Gurion could in regard to Israel. However, the presence in Israel of rational orientations, considered by Weber to be the antithesis of charisma, allowed Ben-Gurion's actions to have much greater permanence than Ataturk's. Ben-Gurion left an institutional legacy whereas with Ataturk his dreams were not institutionalized. With the fading of the crisis, rational orientations, always prominent in the Israeli polity, were sufficiently developed to attenuate the need for dependence on Ben-Gurion's continuance as a charismatic leader. Paradoxically, the charisma he had evoked had stabilized and ensured the permanence of his dreams in the country's institutional structures.

II. Conceptual implications of this study

The basic conceptual contribution of this work to the field of comparative politics lies in several areas. First,

it has shown that a framework based primarily on charismatic notions can be useful in examining a new state created during a crisis period where, in Weberian terms, the old order is destroyed and a new one created. It is even helpful in the more moderate case of an established country where the institutional and cultural patterns are called into question.

The framework should prove equally instructive even if the leader under analysis is not charismatic à la Weber; the framework assists in differentiating between routine, crisis and charismatic leaders. Crises such as war, civil strife, and the founding of new states are not uniform in their impact on variant societies in bringing forth charismatic leaders. The crisis surrounding "the formation of the Weimar Republic in 1918, the Irish Free State in 1921, and of the Fourth Republic in 1946, would seem to provide examples of institutional-cum-leadership change being achieved without the charismatic figure."¹ On the other hand, Nkrumah, Castro, Atatürk, Hitler, Lenin, and De Gaulle in 1958 arose as charismatic leaders in their countries. Yet, a third category seems to exist in the case of Churchill during World War II, where he assumed a number of characteristics common to a charismatic leader but could not shape England into the type of society he envisaged. He was a crisis leader.

The leader who emerges in a society during a crisis period may indicate more than just the availability of a certain personality type. Focusing on a study of leadership should aid in shedding light on a society's political culture,

and on the oscillations in its levels of support for its institutions during a crisis period.

Second, certain predictive hypotheses can be derived from the framework both for Israel and other countries.

The Weberian notion that charisma is born in times of distress and enthusiasm can be further developed. A charismatic leader can have an everlasting effect on future generations of leaders, providing a crisis of extreme proportions reemerges in that country. Leaders such as Castro, Ataturk, De Gaulle and Ben-Gurion gave their countries what this author calls the "permanent legitimacy of once having been led by a charismatic leader." This means that if a figure with the appropriate characteristics emerges during a crisis period, it would not be unreasonable again to expect the populace of those countries to willingly grasp at the presence of a "Great Man." The charismatic leaders of the past have established the precedent; thus, the populace can perceive recourse to a charismatic leader in times of crisis as being legitimate.

Israel in 1967 can serve as a suitable example of this tradition. In June of that year, fearing their destruction, a call arose in Israel for the reemergence of Ben-Gurion. Upon the realization that Ben-Gurion's perceptions were out of touch with the times, the country's charismatic yearning was filled to a degree by Moshe Dayan. Dayan did not, however, receive the prime ministry as the uncharismatic Levi Eshkol retained that office. While this demonstrated that

in the post-1961 period, the entrenchment of institutional and cultural restraints had largely precluded the emergence of *dramatis personae* in the pattern of Ben-Gurion of the 1948-1961 era, the crisis nevertheless resulted in the desire for a highly personalized leader.

Likewise, in the noted countries, the circumstances might be altered, whereby a highly personalized rather than a charismatic leader might emerge. The framework can still be of assistance in predicting the rise and demise of a leader of this variety and distinguishing between a routine, crisis and charismatic leader. Thus, the framework helps to relate generalizations and highlight patterns and trends on the basis of which predictions can be hazarded in addition to being able to transcend time and space limitations.

Third, research demands intuition and hunches; otherwise crucial material might be neglected. Bill and Hardgrave have commented:

The process of successful theory construction relies heavily upon such considerations as intuition, imagination, insight, guesses and hunches. Although the social and political sciences tend to play down this aspect of scientific inquiry, the more exact sciences cannot seem to stress these elements enough. The important role of chance and the unconscious is also an oft discussed topic in the literature on scientific method and theory construction in the physical and biological sciences. James B. Conant has written, for example, that "the great hypotheses in the past have originated in the minds of the pioneers, as a result of mental processes which can best be described by such words as 'inspired guess', 'intuitive hunch', or 'brilliant flash of imagination'. Sharp intuitive capacities are invaluable in the selection of key problem areas and in the generation of theory."²

It is here recognized that the framework which has been offered is not comprehensive and has been presented in a manner in which it can be proven false. For instance, empirical evidence might be put forward to refute the proposition that Ben-Gurion meets the criteria specified for classification as a charismatic leader. Further, it can be suggested that a charismatic framework illuminates nothing new since more conventional frameworks explain all that one basically needs to know about Ben-Gurion. Thus, it is probably too much to expect the reader to embrace this framework in its totality. But no researcher can legitimately claim that his or her approach is absolutely comprehensive. Such an approach would be lacking a key component of any approach or theory--the capacity to be falsified. Bill and Hardgrave have remarked:

In the social sciences there is often a deceptive confidence in low level theoretical statements since they appear to resist falsification. This confidence is certainly premature for two basic reasons: (1) no theory is ever confirmed and all such statements require time to be tested; and (2) many theoretical statements are presented in forms that make falsification impossible. As such, they cannot be referred to as theory. The political science literature is laden with statements that are purported to be theory but are in fact so broad, indefinite, flexible, and ambiguous that they indefinitely resist falsification. Feynman correctly points out that "you cannot prove a vague theory wrong." And as a leading scholar of applied mathematics writes: ". . . a theory that is not rigid enough to be disproved is just a flabby bit of talk. A theory is scientific only if it can be disproved. But the moment you try to cover absolutely everything, the chances are that you cover nothing."³

Since the explanatory power of any framework is incomplete, major studies must still be undertaken in assessing

the impact of Ben-Gurion's leadership in Israel. In their search for new knowledge, future students of the Ben-Gurion phenomenon will be well advised to follow Joseph La Palombara's advice to borrow and adopt without hesitation theories, models and methods of sister social science disciplines as an aid in research.⁴ By applying updated and more rigorous frameworks for the study of charisma that have integrated in a systematic and consistent manner elements from related disciplines and other approaches in political science into the charismatic framework, new facts may be discovered and breakthroughs occur.

To focus on one variable within the political system--in this case leadership--is no less valuable than applying works that attempt to embrace all of a political system. Dankwart Rustow reminds his readers that the more limited studies are capable of "extending our factual knowledge and testing and elaborating middle-level theories."⁵ Thus the study of charismatic leadership could alert us to new factors in the political process as a whole and possibly contribute to the theory building process in political science.

While the framework applied in this study is recognized as being a small contribution to an analysis of the role of Ben-Gurion, a step towards a complete portrait has been taken. Future work must strive for a complete explanation of the Ben-Gurion phenomenon. While this elusive goal can never be reached, the closer we come the more complete our overall understanding will be.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

¹Dennis Kavanagh, Crisis, Charisma, and British Political Leadership, p. 37.

²James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave Jr., Comparative Politics: The Quest for Theory (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1973), p. 34.

³Idem, p. 32 (Emphasis mine).

⁴Joseph La Palombara, "Macrotheories and Micro-applications in Comparative Politics: A Widening Chasm," Comparative Politics, 1 (1968), pp. 52-78, p. 71.

⁵Dankwart A. Rustow, "Modernization and Comparative Politics: Prospects in Research and Theory," Comparative Politics, 1 (1968), pp. 37-51, p. 45.

GLOSSARY

Agudat Israel (Federation of Israel)

A non-Zionist Orthodox party. During the Yishuv era its members did not participate in Knesset Israel.

Ahdut Ha'avoda (Unity of Labour)

A Labour Zionist party formed in 1919. In 1930 it joined with Hapoel Hatzair to form Mapai. In 1944 a group of left wing Mapai members re-formed the Ahdut Ha'avoda party. In 1948 it merged with Hashomer Hatzair to form Mapam.

Ezrahim (Citizens)

The nonlabour sector of the Jewish community in Palestine.

Hakibbutz Ha'artzi

The members of this kibbutz movement belonged to the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement. It is affiliated with the Mapam political party.

Hakibbutz Hameuhad (United Kibbutz)

Kibbutz movement affiliated with Mapai. The movement split after the establishment of the state. This followed the 1944 split between Mapai and Hatnua La'Ahdut Ha'avoda.

Hapoel Hatzair

A Zionist Socialist party during the Yishuv era. In 1930 it became part of Mapai.

Hashomer Hatzair (The Young Guardsman)

This youth movement became a political party in 1946, but in 1948 it became part of the Mapam party.

Hatnua La'Ahdut Ha'avoda (The Movement of the Unity of Labour)

Formed by left wing members of Mapai in 1944. In 1948 merged with Hashomer Hatzair to form Mapam.

Herut (Freedom)

Right wing nationalist party by former members of the I.Z.L.

Histadrut

The General Federation of Jewish Workers in the Land of Israel.

Irgun Tzevai Leumi--I.Z.L.
(National Military Organization)

Right wing nationalist military organization in pre-statehood Israel.

Lohamei Herut Israel--
L.H.I. (Stern Gang)

A paramilitary organization that used terrorist tactics in its fight against British rule in Palestine.

Mapai--Mifleget Poalei
Eretz Israel (The
Workers Party of the
Land of Israel)

The dominant Zionist Labour party. Founded in 1930.

Mizrachi--Merkaz Ruhani
(Spiritual Center)

Religious Zionist party.

Palmach

The striking force of the Haganah.

Poalei Zion

A Zionist Socialist party. During the 1920's its members were founders of the Ahdut Ha'avoda party. In 1930 it became part of Mapai.

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