

Politics and Society in Israel

Schnitzer Studies in Israeli Society, Volume 3

*Edited by
Ernest Krausz*

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL
Studies of Israeli Society
Volume III



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Preface

The object of this series, as defined in the previous two volumes, is to identify the major themes of sociological research on Israeli society, and to gather the best material that has appeared in international scholarly journals and books in English. Such a selection of previously published articles, accompanied by original integrative essays, is intended to provide a review process of sociological research in the field, and to generate discussion, reassessment, and further research.

The selection of the topic for each volume has been guided by two principal criteria: (1) that the subject should be of considerable interest both for Israeli society and for social science, and (2) that a critical mass of literature on the topic be available, to provide a comprehensive view of "the state of the art," and to facilitate a better understanding of Israeli society.

The current volume not only meets these desiderata but goes beyond that. A sociological view of political life in Israel demonstrates the links with other institutional facets of Israeli society, such as the class and ethnic factors at work; the ideological and religious dimensions in politics; the military variable; and so on. Since Israeli politics is of very wide interest, the special contribution of a sociological analysis is that it clarifies the important processes of change that have occurred in Israeli political life in the last decade, marked by the "political upheaval" (*mahapach*) of 1977; the Begin era; and the break in the national consensus since the 1982 war in Lebanon. This volume appears before the significance of the July 1984 election will be fully analyzed by social scientists. Nonetheless, we are confident that the volume will be useful in analyzing future developments in Israeli political life.

The volume contains a comprehensive bibliography, the first of its kind on the subject of politics and society in Israel, including some 500 items. We hope that this bibliography will serve as a significant resource for readers interested in studying the topic in greater depth.

The preparation and publication of this volume would not have been possible without the help of a number of organizations and individuals. First and foremost we are most grateful to the Schnitzer Foundation for Research on the Israeli Economy and Society, Bar-Ilan University, for its generous support in sponsoring this volume. We also wish to express our

gratitude to the Sociology and Anthropology Department of Tel-Aviv University, which has provided the excellent facilities of the Israel Sociological Society. We wish to express our appreciation to members of the Editorial Board and especially to two individuals who invested a considerable amount of time and effort in the preparation of this volume—Professor Elihu Katz (chairman of the Editorial Board) and Ruth Bokstein (secretary of the Israel Sociological Society). We thank Professor Yonathan Shapiro (chairman of the Israel Sociological Society), who wrote an original introductory essay, and whose guidance in the review and selection process of material for this volume was invaluable. We were also fortunate that two distinguished scholars—Professor Karl W. Deutsch and Professor S.N. Eisenstadt—agreed to write the introduction and the epilogue respectively. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the kind cooperation we received from the authors and publishers who permitted us to reprint their articles.

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1

Introduction

Karl W. Deutsch

The reality of Israel is presented in this book in many different ways. Israel is seen as a collection of successive waves of immigration, of traditions and ideologies, of ethnic groups, of social strata and classes, of basic themes of cultural orientation, or of stages of historical development. The authors are good at their jobs, and each chapter is written with professional mastery.

What do all those different perspectives add up to? One result could have been utter confusion, compounded by the length of the book. This the editors have avoided. Or it could have become a coherent work, full of light and depths and color, richer in content than a single author's work could be. This the editors have achieved.

It is hard to characterize this book in a few words. One might call it a treasury of information, an armory for future arguments, or a tool chest for analysis. It is a bit of all of these, but when read through, the whole book is more than the sum of its parts. Above all, it is a work of serious sociological research. Its scholarship is thorough, and the level of professional competence is high. Many of the authors are young, and their work proves that sociology is alive and well in Israel.

What do they tell the world about their country, and what are they telling their own countrymen?

Changes in Ideology

The authors are telling their countrymen, and indirectly the world of social scientists, that Israel has changed tremendously. The political changes that surfaced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they tell us, had their roots in social, psychological, and ideological changes that occurred during the preceding twenty years. The generations of pioneers that led the country between 1925 and 1955 came in many cases out of the socialist and labor movements of Eastern and Central Europe. They hoped to create in

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Israel a new kind of society and a new kind of human being. The results in many ways have been less new than expected, apart from one fundamental achievement that the authors take for granted. Israel has given millions of Jews for the first time in more than two millennia the chance to live free from discrimination, oppression, and the threat of physical and cultural extermination. It has given them pride and at least temporary military security, and it has worked a miracle in creating a common modern language and culture for millions of people from many countries, whose ancestors had spoken many languages for many centuries.

But this is not what the authors talk about, since they know it so well. The free upright walk of young Israelis is noticed by a foreign visitor who remembers the way many Jews used to walk in the countries and epochs of their persecution; in Israel many of the memories of the Diaspora are gone, and are a matter for a great museum or for drastic political simplification. These sociologists are talking about how the ideologies of socialism—of a new society and a new type of human being—have lost much of their power, how largely the motivations for economic effort and political behavior of most Israelis have become much like those of most people in other industrial countries. As elsewhere, Israelis center on the search for security, opportunity, better material standards of living, and higher social status, even to the detriment of their less-favored countrymen. The chapters by Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Daniel Elazar, Asher Arian, and Michal Shamir impressively document this change.

Change in Ethnic Composition

At the time of the establishment of the State of Israel the majority of the Israelis were European Jews, with small additions from the United States and Canada. By the late 1970s, a majority of the now larger Jewish population were immigrants from Africa and Asia and their descendants. Despite this Oriental majority, the Western Ashkenazic minority remained economically, socially, and culturally dominant.

The authors know that Israel offers its people one of the most highly developed welfare-state systems in the world, but they report in detail on the many disadvantages and slights—social, economic, cultural, and psychological—that Sephardic Jews of Oriental background, although now a numerical majority in Israel, are still suffering, often after more than a generation, much as people of “non-Western” backgrounds are suffering in other industrial countries formally and informally dominated by Western culture. The political awakening of this Sephardic majority and its large support since 1977 for the Likud coalition of the right-of-center parties is another one of the great changes that have occurred in Israel.

A Blind Spot with Changing Boundaries: Israeli Perceptions of the Arabs

In the early stages of Zionism, until the mid-1920s and even into the 1930s, Arabs in Palestine and in adjacent territories, we learn in this volume, were most often seen as a nonpeople. They seemed politically apathetic under Turkish and later British rule, most of them scattered in their villages like so much human dust. A writer spoke of the Jews as “a people without land” who had found in Palestine “a land without people.” Arab nationalistic activity was ascribed merely to the machinations of a handful of landowning *effendis* and reactionary Muslim clerics. After 1933, under the increasingly deadly threat of Nazism, Arab nationalism was seen mainly as an extension of Nazi penetration without any authentic existence of its own.

These fateful misperceptions of the 1930s and 1940s were enhanced by a decisive political error of many Arab leaders and their followers who during World War II openly sided with Hitler’s Germany, as did the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Iraqi nationalist leader El Geilani. Other Arabs, including an Egyptian government, declared themselves neutral in that war, and most Palestinian Arabs opposed the immigration of Jews fleeing for their lives. The United States and other Western powers in those years acted similarly by granting immigration to their countries only on a fatally small scale, claiming that they did more by avoiding the rise of anti-Semitism at home and fighting to defeat Nazi Germany on the battlefield—a contention that today weighs less than the memory of 6 million Jewish men, women, and children brought to death by the actions of the Nazi government.

It is necessary to recall these events because they have left, to this day, three lasting impressions in the minds of many Israelis of all ages: all or most Arabs are pitiless enemies; no other nation or group of nations in the world can be relied on to aid Israel in an hour of need; and no country or group of countries would offer shelter to 3.5 million Israelis—as distinct from a few individuals or small groups—if they should have to leave Israel.

These memories, often unspoken, still have an impact. They overshadow, to this day, in the minds of most Israelis any concern about the human, civic, economic, and cultural concerns of their Arab neighbors within Israel and in the territories that are occupied and administered by the Israeli armed forces, as well as in the rest of the Arab world. Within Israel, as Sammy Smootha shows, Arab affairs are not dealt with at the Cabinet level, but are usually left to special Arab affairs sections or departments, headed by Israeli “Arabists,” charged in substance with maintaining the status quo or changing it in favor of Israeli settlers and land-use projects. In the occupied territories, army rule has similar effects.

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Even the present volume, excellent and thoughtful as it is, illustrates Smootha's thesis. It contains not a single chapter by a social scientist of Arab background. Even if all Arabs should refuse any dialogue, their published views could be studied. Among the many references in the volume there is no appreciable number of citations from Arab newspapers, books, or scholarly papers, nor from the speeches and writings of Arab political leaders within Israel and the occupied territories, nor are even many names of such leaders to be found. So far as Israel's Arab citizens or subjects are concerned, Israeli sociological research still is at a stage where it resembles the work of an honest and hardworking veterinarian whose patients do not talk.

Difficulties of language cannot be a lasting excuse. If Israeli social scientists of high quality such as the authors of the present volume had no time to learn to read Arabic, translations could have been used. So far, a white patch has remained in the map of *Politics and Society in Israel*, to which this volume is dedicated. This is one major unfinished task for Israeli sociology; I trust that the high intellectual quality, realism, competence, and dedication of Israeli sociologists will fulfil it some day with distinction.

Even so, the authors already report changes. The Arabs are now seen as a real and permanent part of the political landscape, who will neither emigrate nor give up their language, culture, and Muslim or Christian religion. The same holds for the much larger Arab populations in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Their military occupation since 1967 can still be prolonged, but it can hardly be expected to last forever. Baruch Kimmerling presents important materials on this question in his second article.

Other Changes

Linked to the major changes discussed so far, smaller but politically significant changes are reported. Menahem Friedman analyzes the numerical decline of the National Religious Party (NRP) from more than 9 percent of the vote in the national elections of 1977 to less than 5 percent in 1981. He finds that after the victory of the rightist Likud coalition in 1977, many NRP voters of that and earlier elections no longer felt the need for a special party to protect their religious and traditionalist concerns against a secularized government, and hence felt free to shift their vote to other parties, expressing their interest about other issues.

Even earlier, as Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya show, a part of the religious tradition—divided as it was between the militant one of the Bible and the more passive one of the Diaspora—has been reinterpreted by the government, the educational system, and the media in the direction of

what the authors call a new “civic religion,” in which the contrasts between religious tradition and secular nationalism have become reduced, so as to end earlier periods of confrontation.

Yael Yishai reports the rise of a right-wing Jewish proletariat, recruited mainly from Sephardic Jews who feel disadvantaged and exploited as mere wage workers in the enterprises of the collectives—the kibbutzim in which they are denied full membership—and of the labor union organization—the Histadrut—both dominated by members of the major Labor Party—Mapai. The same workers often feel neglected and discriminated against in the new development towns, which appear to some of them as ghettos. Their political response has aided Likud’s rise to power, and it may influence the political landscape of Israel for years to come. Their protest has found a channel in one of the two major parties, and increasingly also in the other one. Hanna Herzog describes how ethnicity has served in other cases as well as a tool for political bargaining and thus, in the end, has aided in integrating various ethnic groups within a common Israeli political system.

Despite the authors’ emphasis on change, they also show how much has remained permanent in Israel. The new language and culture are here to stay. The reinterpreted Jewish tradition is still a recognizable tradition. Almost all Israelis continue to face Arab hostility with calm courage, although aware of some changes in it. The great influence of the armed forces has remained, too, and has even grown. But these and other elements of continuity form a background against which the many changes stand out.

What is the upshot of it all? Perhaps this: Israel has changed decisively in many ways during the last twenty years; hence her probable future may be no longer what it used to be; and these studies by Israeli sociologists offer the best overview of these changes that one could hope to find.

Israel is more than just a country of a people. It is a crucible and, in spite of its uniqueness, a representative exemplar of the world. Social scientists from many countries owe its sociologists a debt of gratitude for having analyzed so many of its problems so well.

2

Political Sociology in Israel: A Critical View

Yonathan Shapiro

The papers assembled in this volume represent the best selection of studies on political sociology in Israel available to date. As such, this volume both summarizes and reflects the functionalist approach, which has been dominant until recently, and the efforts of the authors to come to grips with the changes in political life in Israel. My essay uses this volume as a point of departure for a critique of this hitherto dominant school of thought. According to the functionalist view, the major problem Israel has faced since its establishment can be analyzed in terms of the processes of adjustment in the existing system, seen best in the acculturation and integration of the new masses of immigrants. Within this functionalist paradigm the developing relations between the immigrant groups and the establishment have not been seen as creating a class problem. Yet it is this emerging process of stratification in Israeli society and its exploitation in populist politics that appears to be central for the understanding of the more recent developments. Hence, although it may seem somewhat unusual, the aim of this essay is not only to criticize this theoretical framework, but at the same time to suggest an alternative approach to the study of politics in Israeli society.

Israeli politics has not been, until recently, the subject of much research among Israeli sociologists. They preferred subjects such as immigrant absorption or the study of the kibbutz, areas dealt with in the first two volumes of the *Studies of Israeli Society* series. This lack of interest is despite the fact that Israeli society is thoroughly politicized, with political parties and organizations affecting every aspect of life. Indeed, Israel was founded by political organizations that recruited their members for immigration to Palestine and raised funds for the establishment of the economic and cultural infrastructure of the new society. It was the Zionist Organization and its respective parties that created a new society and revolutionized the way of life and thinking of the Jews who came to Palestine. The Jews,

who had been a persecuted minority for 2,000 years, established there a sovereign state with a Jewish majority. The Jewish community in Palestine considered itself the inheritor of the ancient Jewish culture, identified itself with millennia-old Jewish history, and revived the ancient Hebrew language, making it the everyday language of Israel.

Perhaps this very politicization of Israeli society is the reason for the hesitation of sociologists to study its political system. The Zionist revolution took place in this century and Israel was only founded in 1948. Some of the founding revolutionaries are still living among us. Apparently Israeli sociologists are not yet capable of demystifying this revolution, an inevitable result of sociological research. In discussing the Israeli political scene, Israeli sociologists tend to sound very apologetic. Although signs of a more critical approach can be discerned, in general they prefer to focus on minor flaws and ambiguities in Israeli society and its political culture rather than to question its basic assumptions.

However, political events of the last few years have shaken the political system and raised basic questions about its core values, which heretofore were regarded as sacrosanct and unshakeable. These events began with the Six-Day War in 1967, which transformed Israel into an occupying power. Soon after, the Social-Democratic Party—Mapai (since 1968 the Labor Party)—began to decline. Mapai was the dominant party in Israel from its establishment—and even earlier in the Jewish community in Palestine (the *yishuv* as it was called)—and during the formative period of the new society. The 1973 Yom Kippur War brought in its wake the transfer of control in the Labor Party from the founding fathers, East-European born, to the first Israeli-born generation. Three years later, in 1977, this party fell from power. Its place was taken by a government headed by rightist parties (the Likud), at whose core was the Herut Party, founded and headed by leading members of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, a right-wing military underground which operated against the British during the *yishuv* period. In those years and during the first years of statehood, these groups were excluded from any influence on the political, economic, and cultural system of Israeli society.

All the essays in this volume were written after the Six-Day War; many after the downfall of the Labor Party and the rise of the Likud, an event referred to in Israeli political jargon as the “*mahapach*” (upheaval). This event was instrumental in stimulating new thinking about Israeli politics. A more critical approach among Israeli sociologists can be discerned in this book, which is a fairly representative sample of research in the area of Israeli political sociology in recent years. However, this collection is composed exclusively of papers and book chapters which have appeared previously in English only. A scholarly quarterly devoted to politics and

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international relations has begun to appear in Hebrew recently, and a number of important books on the subject, published in Israel, have not yet been translated into English.

Most of the studies of Israeli politics gathered here still exemplify the unwillingness, and perhaps the inability, of the authors to criticize the basic assumptions of their society. At the core of these assumptions is the belief that Israel is a pluralist democracy, and that in the formative period of the Jewish society before the establishment of the state, the founding fathers succeeded to a large extent in building a society in accordance with their socialist-Zionist ideology. They achieved this despite the fact that, as a result of the democratic pluralistic structure of the political system and the lack of political sovereignty, they had to reach compromises with various other social groups in the Jewish population. This political reality forced Social-Democratic leaders, who wished to lead the entire community, to mobilize maximum support for their socialist-Zionist ideology. Achieving a broad consensus in the community was of paramount importance. The achievement of such a consensus in turn, scholars argue, institutionalized the democratic process in the new society.

The theoretical sociological orientation adopted by scholars who support this interpretation of the history and the sociology of Israeli society is functionalism. Dan Horowitz, in an article published in 1983 in Hebrew, correctly observes that “the dominant school in macro-sociological research in general, and in political society in particular, in Israel, was structural-functional.”¹ This theoretical approach in the analysis of Israeli politics is epitomized by Moshe Lissak and Dan Horowitz in their important book *The Origins of the Israeli Polity*, a chapter of which is included in this volume.

Many scholars, following in their footsteps, seem completely oblivious to the fact that functionalism has been discredited among most sociologists in Europe and the United States in recent years. The explanation for this discrepancy between Israeli sociologists and the international sociological community seems to be the Israeli sociologists' identification with the national interest. They prefer a theory that treats society as a unified social system, each part of which contributes to the maintenance and stability of the system as a whole. Functionalism seeks continuity and not change; it deals with social integration and views negatively social processes and social organizations and institutions that do not contribute to such stability and integration.

Israeli sociologists are particularly enchanted with the functionalist idea which views the cultural values accepted by the majority of members as the core of any viable social system. The value consensus provides its axis. This idea sustains the assertion, already mentioned, that there was maximum

agreement with the dominant socialist-Zionist orientation during the *yishuv* period, a position accepted by almost all the contributors to this volume. All of them note the strength of ideology during the *yishuv* period. Only in contemporary Israeli society, they admit, has the power of ideology waned. It no longer mitigates the conflict of interests and the power struggles for political power, economic resources, and social prestige. But these sociologists have no convincing answer as to how or why this change took place. Most attribute it to the establishment of the sovereign Jewish state. In every sovereign state, they argue, there are conflicts between interest groups and contests over power and material resources. The Jewish society went through a process of “normalization” after the establishment of the state, and today it is a state like all others. Political parties must contend for votes; then national leaders must build coalitions based on pragmatic arrangements that allow them to keep the voters’ support and loyalty. In this process particularist interests of various groups in society become more influential in national politics while the influence of collectivist ideology weakens.

This explanation is not very convincing. It is surprising that most of the political sociologists in Israel, when studying their own society, ignore the rich tradition of political sociology that deals with informal political structures, with the covert activities of elites, and with the oligarchies that control ostensibly democratic political parties. They pay little attention to the political activity that goes on in informal meetings and in secret consultations, the covert operations of pressure groups, or the systems of interpersonal relations of politicians and its influence on their policies. The scholars prefer to discuss the formal structure of politics: official agreements between parties, party platforms and public statements of leaders, and public opinion surveys. This is not a lack of sophistication on their part, but an unwillingness to deal with the shady side of politics. We are still too close to the revolutionary generation, and our respect for them and their achievements prevents a critical analysis of their methods of operation and rule—the sort of analysis that is current among our colleagues in other democratic countries.

Nevertheless, there can be seen in recent years the beginning of a change in the attitudes of political sociologists to the study of Israeli politics. Yoram Peri’s essay on the relationship between the army and politics exemplifies this new approach. Peri points to the system of informal relations between the heads of the Labor Party and high-ranking army officers, which made possible the control of the army by the dominant party, and the changes that have been taking place following the decline of the Labor Party.

Lately we have witnessed a growing debate among political sociologists in

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Israel. This debate has developed mainly between those sociologists loyal to the notion that Israel is democratic, liberal, and pluralistic, and those who attempt to present the controlling elites, party oligarchies, and pressure groups as powers interfering in the formal democratic process and distorting it. The first group includes Moshe Lissak and Dan Horowitz, two of whose essays are included here. In their book, mentioned earlier, they made use of David Riesman's model of the autonomous veto groups in American politics in order to explain Israeli politics. They ignore the fact that Riesman used the veto groups as proof of the inability of the American political system to provide the United States with direction and leadership, while they assert that our politicians did succeed in leading Israeli society to political independence.² Another writer, Peter Medding, who studied the Social-Democratic Party from the establishment of the State of Israel up to 1969, concluded that its manner of functioning negates the iron law of oligarchy of Robert Michels.³ In Medding's opinion, the Israeli party mediates between the various social groups and the Israeli political system. Its control is based on the agreement of many groups within the population. Its power is therefore consensual power, Medding determines, rather than the rule of a party oligarchy.

Other scholars, including me, do not accept these theses. I believe Israel was governed until recently by a ruling elite that, with the help of the dominant Social-Democratic Party, gained control of the Histadrut (Israeli federation of labor), which had gathered under its control most of the trade unions and many industrial and financial enterprises that together made up about 20 percent of the Israeli economy. It should be remembered that the intervention of the state in economic life in Israel is greater than in any other noncommunist state.⁴

Many of the scholars who argue that Israel is a democratic pluralistic state based on consensus and on the ability of many groups in the population to influence government policy, adopted the consociational theory. According to this theory, consociational democracy arises in societies divided into groups that succeed in enlisting maximum loyalty of their members, usually religious or ethnic groups. A democratic regime that wishes to preserve integration and stability must permit the various groups maximum autonomy and even veto power over the decisions of the central government. In a democracy of this sort the government is composed of broad coalitions based on compromises and understandings reached by the leaders of the various groups.⁵

Attempting to include the Jewish society of the formative *yishuv* period in the family of divided political societies, these Israeli scholars claim that the Jewish community in that period was divided into religious and secular groups, and within the secular camp into a labor movement and a

bourgeoisie. The antagonisms between the groups were so sharp that only a consociational democracy was able to preserve the unity of the *yishuv*. A consociational democracy is so pluralistic that it lacks a real political center. And what, in the eyes of loyal democrats, could be better than extreme pluralism? It is difficult to accept this claim with regard to the political system during the *yishuv* period. There were conflicts between religious and secular groups, and between socialists and conservatives, which found expression in the various political parties. But there were no separate and autonomous communities of a cultural, ethnic, or religious nature with crystallized leaderships.

In the period of statehood a new differentiation developed among the Jewish population that was perhaps more meaningful than those existing in the *yishuv* period. The mass *aliyah* (immigration) following the establishment of the state brought to Israel many immigrants from Asian and African countries. The current distinction in Israel between immigrants from Asia and Africa (Sephardim) and those from Europe (Ashkenazim) is based on religious and historical differences between these communities, which have existed for hundreds of years. Cultural and social differences between European countries and Asian and African countries sharpened the differences between the two populations in Israel.

Relations between Ashkenazim and Sephardim were the central subject of sociological research in Israel after the establishment of the state. It became clear that to the cultural and historical differences that had existed previously between the two populations, a class distinction was added, with the Asian-African immigrants constituting the lower strata and those from Europe the higher ones. But an analysis based on class distinctions is not accepted among Israeli sociologists, just as it is not accepted among their American colleagues: A class analysis is likely to lead sociologists to deal with conflict and change rather than stability and consensus. In studying relations between the two populations, Israeli scholars prefer to deal with cultural and ethnic aspects rather than class. As for the differences between ethnic communities, the sociologists permit themselves to be very critical of their society, for the same reasons that American sociologists are critical of ethnic discrimination in the United States. The upper strata of those of European descent in Israel have experienced a dilemma of the sort Myrdal uncovered among members of the White majority in their attitude toward the Black minority in the United States. This dilemma results from the contradiction between the principle of equality of all citizens, which is a supreme value accepted by all in American culture, and the prevalent discrimination against the Blacks.⁶ In Israel, in addition to the value of equality, there is another core value: the absorption and integration of all immigrants. It sharpens further the contradiction between the agreed-upon

values of society and the social reality that made those of Asian-African descent into a stratum of low prestige and inferior economic status. Because of this contradiction between values and social reality, criticism of discrimination and of prejudice toward the Oriental Jews is expected and accepted among the Israeli sociologists.

In recent years the study of relations between Sephardim and Ashkenazim has assumed an important place in Israeli political sociology, as evident in this volume. This is because the relations between the two populations became a major factor in party politics in Israel. In the 1960s and 1970s, Sephardic vote began to move away from the Labor Party to the Likud. The explanations for this phenomenon center on the feelings of discrimination and deprivation of the Sephardim, which led them to oppose the dominant party and to support the Likud opposition. Scholars also claim that as a result of their religious and cultural traditions, the Sephardim are more attracted to the nationalist ideology of the Likud than to the democratic and humanistic socialism of the Labor Party. Their higher birth rate made the Sephardim the majority within the Jewish population during the 1970s, and their support of the Likud brought it into power.⁷

There are those who attribute the fall of the Labor Party mainly to internal developments,⁸ but there is no doubt that the support of the Likud by the Sephardim was an important cause of the change of government in Israel. To understand the changes in the voting behavior of the Sephardic Jews, the class dimension must be added to the analysis of Israeli politics, even though this approach is not, as I have said, favored by most Israeli sociologists.⁹

To understand the class structure in Israel, it is necessary to note that most of the immigrants who arrived before World War II were from Eastern Europe, where they were part of the petite bourgeoisie. In Palestine these immigrants split into two groups. There were those who continued their petit-bourgeois activities as storekeepers and small businessmen, while others, who called themselves pioneers (*halutzim*), aspired to become manual laborers. For the latter, Zionism was a national and a social revolution at the same time. They believed that physical labor had a central role in the process of liberating the Jew from his Diaspora mentality and creating a new Jew. With their labor they hoped to prepare the country for the absorption of more immigrants, and to establish a "workers' community" in Palestine.

This personal transformation was difficult for the young people who arrived in Israel. Their social-class background abroad did not prepare them for this; and most of them did not persevere in this aim for long. Despite their revolutionary fervor and their belief in the socialist-Zionist

idea, which necessitated their transformation into a proletariat, they preferred nonphysical work. The *yishuv* period was one of constant immigration and of great mobility among the immigrants. Many, even those who had no aspirations of this kind, began their careers as laborers, but in a few years moved to positions of office work and management in the public bureaucracy—Zionist and Histadrut—which developed rapidly. Large amounts of capital imported into the country as donations were turned over to the political leadership. The economic needs of a developing society undergoing rapid processes of urbanization and industrialization coincided with the interest of the politicians who aspired to establish an organizational bureaucratic machine that would strengthen their control of the new society, and the desire of many pioneers to become free of their wearisome physical labor.

A class of managers and clerks was thus created in Israel. This class, which is also developing rapidly in all European industrialized countries, is termed by Ralf Dahrendorf, following scholars of the Austro-Marxist school, a “service class.” I prefer to call it a “bureaucratic class.” The values, behavior norms, and life style of this class, says Dahrendorf, are formed under the influence of the bureaucratic-hierarchical structure in which they operate. This structure causes those operating in such a framework to be preoccupied with problems of promotion and prestige. “Status for the service class” says Dahrendorf, “is not a static notion. Hierarchy always implies the possibility of promotion; social mobility and the service class belong inseparably together.”¹⁰

The bureaucratic class in Israel continued to grow, and its values and life style became the dominant culture in Israel, just as has occurred in Europe, in Dahrendorf’s view. Moreover, since Israel contained many immigrants who began their working lives as laborers at the bottom of the occupational ladder and after a short time, became clerks and managers, there developed an interesting though paradoxical situation. Despite the dominant socialist-Zionist ideology, workers became bureaucrats, and a class-conscious proletariat never developed. This rapid mobility from manual labor to clerical and managerial positions increased even more in the early years of the state. During the first three years the population had almost tripled and with it the public bureaucracy. These clerks and managers were mainly recruited from among the veteran immigrants from Europe and their children.

Thus, the dominant Social-Democratic Party in the *yishuv* period, provided not only employment for the immigrants and assistance in housing, health, and welfare services; its policy permitted and encouraged rapid social mobility from manual labor to office work and management. This veteran population consolidated the culture of the bureaucratic class.

For those coming with the very large wave of immigration immediately after the establishment of the state, the reality was different. In the years during which these immigrants and their children underwent the process of socialization and absorbed the dominant bureaucratic culture of their new society, bureaucratic growth slowed down. This change inevitably created two distinct populations: (1) the old-timers and their children of European descent, who joined the bureaucratic class, and (2) the immigrants from Asia and Africa and their children, who, while absorbing the culture of the bureaucratic class, remained mainly manual laborers.

One of the results of this new social reality was the transformation of Israel into what Randall Collins calls "the credential society."¹¹ In order to move up in society, i.e. in the bureaucracy, it was necessary to attain academic degrees, and here the veterans of European origin had a decided advantage over the immigrants. The acquisition of university education and academic degrees required much preparation and the foregoing of immediate rewards for an extended period. Most immigrant families from Asia and Africa were not able to do this. Their economic situation did not allow it, nor did their culture prepare them for it. At the same time, they were not absorbed by a class-conscious proletariat, since such did not exist in Israel; instead they absorbed the values of the bureaucratic class, while access to it was closed to them. This situation brought about feelings of alienation from the dominant culture and estrangement from the establishment. This reaction found expression in the 1960s and 1970s in their political behavior. They voted in increasing numbers for the Likud opposition and against the Social-Democratic Party, which was identified with the establishment.

The dialogue that ensued between the Likud leaders and large strata of Asian-African immigrants brought the Likud to power in 1977, and resulted in a meaningful change in the political system and in the political culture in Israel, i.e., the crystallization of the populist political structure. In the case of Israel, it was a democratic populism, in which a populist leadership gained power through democratic elections.

Populism is composed of a distinct political ideology and a political structure.¹² Populism is not an ideology of social change. It is designed for groups that feel deprived and cut off from the dominant culture and the political center, and are nurtured by their hate for the establishment. It promises these groups liberation from their feelings of estrangement and deprivation. A populist movement produces from its midst leaders able to create a mystic tie with the masses, giving them the feeling of participation in decision making and giving expression to their longings, something that the parties and parliament representing the establishment cannot provide. Thus, populism is against the establishment, not against the state.

The support for populism in Israel came from different groups than in Europe; it came mainly from the members of the petite bourgeoisie who felt themselves abandoned and cut off in a capitalist society. The European working class was organized in labor unions and political parties that represented it and bestowed on their members an ideological orientation which made clear to them their role and position in the social and political system. As a result they were class conscious and proud of their class affiliation, and populism did not attract them. In Israel, as noted above, the immigrants who became laborers were not absorbed into a class-conscious working class. This reality strengthened their feelings of alienation and estrangement, feelings which grew greater among their children who were born and educated in the country, and served in the army. Many of them became attracted to the populist movement and its leaders.

Israeli populism crystallized after the Likud rose to power. Menachem Begin, its leader, looking for a formula to consolidate his rule and give it legitimacy, nurtured and developed its Israeli version. The spiritual baggage Begin and his comrades acquired as they matured in Eastern Europe before World War II, directed their adaptation to the new situation, but Israeli populism entailed for them a new way of operating the political system. The populist formula in Israel was created at the end of the 1970s and emerged in the process of the new leaders' adaptation to the reality they found when they came to power. Menachem Begin created an emotional tie with the masses in mass meetings in the town squares, and his associates have tried to follow his example. They based their appeal on the hatred of the masses for the establishment and its various institutions. The populists claimed that they were the real representatives of the masses because they exemplified the nation's will, identified with its aims, and worked to enhance and glorify it. They made use of a national mystique, giving all members of the nation a feeling of partnership, with no differences of status. This is a common formula in populist movements.

As every other populist movement, Israeli populism adhered to formulas suited to the culture in which it operated. Thus Begin adapted his slogans to the Jewish cultural tradition, a tradition which expressed both feelings of fear and inferiority, mixed with ethnic pride and arrogance. Begin and his associates, as proud Jewish leaders, encouraged the Jewish people to hold their heads high against those who wished to demean and even destroy them, promising a glowing future to the nation which had known great suffering and persecution.

Populist regimes are considered by scholars to be unstable and unable to continue in power for long periods. The vague promises of the populists to establish a society in which the whole population can participate raises expectations among their supporters that cannot be met by the leaders. The

feelings of belonging and identification with the nation through unmediated contact with the leaders cannot, in the long run, substitute for solving social and economic problems. One can therefore predict further changes in the political system of Israel, and we can only hope that they will not adversely affect the democratic framework of Israeli society.

Notes

1. Dan Horowitz, "The Yishuv and Israeli Society—Continuity and Change: The Yishuv as a Political Community in a Two-Community System," *Medinah, Memshal v'Yachasim Beinleumiim* 21 (Spring 1983):33 (Hebrew).
2. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *The Origins of the Israeli Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
3. Peter S. Medding, *Mapai in Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
4. Yonathan Shapiro, *Democracy in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1978); Nadav Halevi and Ruth Klinov Malul, *The Economic Development of Israel* (New York: Praeger, 1972).
5. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy and Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).
6. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1944).
7. Such explanations are scattered throughout this book in various essays. In addition see Asher Arian, ed., *The Elections in Israel, 1977* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1980); idem, *The Elections in Israel, 1981* (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1983).
8. Yonathan Shapiro, "The End of a Dominant Party System," in Asher Arian, ed., *The Elections in Israel, 1977*, pp. 23-28.
9. The following paragraphs of this article are based on my book, Yonathan Shapiro, *An Elite without Successors* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1984 [Hebrew]).
10. Ralf Dahrendorf, "Recent Changes in the Class Structure of European Societies," in *A New Europe*, ed. Stephen Graubard (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 291-336.
11. Randall Collins, *The Credential Society* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).
12. In this essay, the facts regarding the Israeli experience are based on a symposium on populism, held in London in 1968. The papers from the symposium were published by Ghita Ionesco and Ernest Gellner, eds., *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1969).

Part I

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT



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3

Authority without Sovereignty: The Case of the National Center of The Jewish Community in Palestine

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak

THE PROCESS WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE Jewish community in Palestine was a process of the formation of a non-sovereign political centre which progressively increased its authority through the exercise of control over the mobilization and distribution of resources. The bearer of this process was a power conscious elite – oriented on the formation of an institutionalized national centre. The mobilization of resources outside of the system enabled this centre to allocate more resources than it had to extract from its periphery. Thus, a dynamic equilibrium was created in which progressively increasing demands were balanced by an increased mobilization of resources. The operation of the system was dependent upon a division of functions between an evolving coalitionary national centre and various particularistic sub-centres. The lack of sovereignty paradoxically contributed to the development of ‘rules of the game’ which made the resolution of conflicts possible within a quasi-parliamentary framework.

The pre-independence Jewish community in Palestine has often been called ‘a state in the making’ or ‘a state within a state’. Despite its being a minority community within a wider political system, the Jewish community, or the *Yishuv*¹ as it was called, developed political institutions which enjoyed a large degree of authority, as well as mechanisms for the settlement of political conflicts which resembled those of a sovereign state.²

¹ The Jewish community in Palestine was called the *Yishuv*. The ordinary meaning of the word is settlement, but it is used also to describe an ethnic community living in a certain territory.

² For general historical, sociological and political surveys see the following publications: (a) historical, sociological and political surveys: Alex Bein, *The Return to the Soil: A History of the Jewish Settlement in Israel*, Youth and Hechalutz

The phenomenon of a national minority under foreign rule developing an elaborate and semi-autonomous political system raises questions of both historical and sociological significance. The most important of these questions are: first, what were the circumstances that enabled the central political institutions of the *Yishuv* to consolidate its quasi-state power and maintain a large degree of authority in spite of the limitations consequent upon its lack of sovereignty? Secondly, how did the central political institutions resolve the problem that arose from the existence of rival political centres operating within the same territorial framework, i.e. the Mandatory government and the leadership of the Arab community? Thirdly, what kind of interaction developed between the Jewish community in Palestine and the Jewish communities overseas which constituted the former's main source of demographic growth, economic aid and political support? Fourthly, how were political conflicts among social groups, ideological movements, political parties and economic interest groups resolved in the absence of those sanctions available to a sovereign state?

These questions may be tackled from several angles. One aspect, which emphasizes the ideology of Jewish colonization in Palestine, has been thoroughly explored by several authors.³ However, little

Department of the Zionist Organization, 1952. Shemuel N. Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society*, Basic Books, New York, 1968. Bernard Joseph, *The British Rule in Palestine*, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1948. Dov Weintraub, Moshe Lissak, Yael Azmon, *Moshava, Kibbutz and Moshav: Patterns of Jewish Rural Settlement and Development in Palestine*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1969. Leonard J. Fein, *Politics in Israel*, Part I, Little Brown & Company, Boston, 1967. Esco Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies*, Vol. 2, Yale University Press, 1947. *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, Cmd. 5479, July 1937. Government of Palestine, *A Survey of Palestine, Prepared for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine*, 2 Vols., Jerusalem, 1946. (b) economic surveys: David Horowitz and Rita Hinden, *Economic Survey of Palestine*, The Jewish Agency, 1938. Robert Nathan, O. Gass and D. Creamer, *Palestine: Problems and Promise*, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1946. Robert Szereszewski, *Essays on the Structure of the Jewish Economy in Palestine and Israel*, Falk Institute, Jerusalem, 1968. Ruth Malul-Klinov and Nadav Halevi, *The Economic Development of Israel*, published in co-operation with the Bank of Israel by F. D. Praeger, New York, 1968. (c) demographic and other statistical data: Government of Palestine, Office of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Palestine, Jerusalem 1937-1943*. David Gurevich and Aaron Gertz, *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine*, Jewish Agency for Palestine, Jerusalem, 1947.

³ See for example, S. N. Eisenstadt, *op. cit.* V. D. Segre, *Israel: A Society in Transition*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, Chaps. 3-4. Israel Kolat,

attention has been paid as yet to other aspects of the issues concerned, in particular the characteristics of the power structure of the Jewish community and its political centre and the manner in which the latter controlled the relationships between individuals and groups within the Jewish community on the one hand, and external political entities such as the Mandatory authorities, the Arab community and the Zionist movement in the Diaspora on the other hand.

The following analysis focuses on these specific aspects. Accordingly, its point of departure is the following inter-related propositions: (a) the political institutions of the *Yishuv* gradually increased their authority by extending their control over the mobilization and allocation of resources. The formation of an autonomous political centre was aided by the tendency of the *Yishuv* to expand and separate itself from the bi-national Palestinian society.

(b) The allegiance of ideological movements, political parties and economic interest groups to the emerging national political institutions was secured through a division of functions between the central political institutions and the various particularistic groups, which enabled the latter to retain considerable control over their own resources. Consequently, it became possible for various social groups to mould new patterns of social, economic and spiritual life without directly exposing themselves to the intervention of other groups.

(c) The national centre controlled many of the channels through which resources flowed into the system. Consequently, it was able to allocate those resources, not originating in the *Yishuv* itself, and thus meet the demands presented by various groups within it. In this respect, the process of accumulation of power was analogous to a levy imposed on the use of the services of the centre which acted as a provider of resources.

(d) A pragmatic attitude on the part of the dominant elite, the adoption of the principle of political representation as a basis for the allocation of resources and the coalitionary structure of the central institutions all enabled the evolving political centre to mitigate the impact of social and political conflict on the fragile integrity of the *Yishuv*'s political system.

'From a Community of Workers to a Nation-State', *Lamerchav*, 15 January 1971 and 22 January 1971. Dan Horowitz, 'Between Pioneer Society and Normalization', *Molad*, Vol. 19, No. 146-7, October 1960, pp. 413-31. Martin Seliger, 'Positions and Dispositions in Israeli Politics', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Autumn 1968, pp. 465-84.

THE EVOLUTION OF CENTRAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

One of the main features of Jewish colonization in Palestine from the last quarter of the 19th century was the aspiration to create the distinct communal entity associated with Zionist ideology. In spite of the marked national consciousness which characterized the new settlers who emigrated to Palestine in the last decades of Ottoman rule, the Jewish community failed to develop autonomous and authoritative political institutions until the end of the first world war.⁴ Only with the establishment of British rule and the arrival of new immigrants, inspired by the Balfour Declaration, did the Jewish community succeed for the first time in giving an institutionalized meaning to its yearning for separate political and social identity. From the 1920s onwards, two main political institutions played the role of a political centre for the Jewish community: (a) The Jerusalem Office of the World Zionist Organization (WZO);⁵ and (b) The National Council (*Havaad Haleumi*) of the Jewish community organized in the framework of the Jewish Assembly (*Knesset Israel*).⁶ These two bodies enjoyed a legal status under the British mandate. The Zionist Executive, whose main functions in Palestine were transferred in 1929 to the Jewish Agency for Palestine (*Hasochnut Hayehudit*), derived its legal authority from Article 4 of the Mandate according to which 'an appropriate Jewish Agency shall be

⁴ There were a few attempts to establish central political institutions of the Jewish community before the first world war. All these attempts failed. Worth mentioning in this context is the initiative of the Zionist leader Menachem Ussishkin who convened in 1903 an 'Assembly of the *Yishuv*' in Zichron Yaakov which formed the central organization which existed for less than a year. There was also the 'Palestine Office' of the World Zionist Organization established in 1908, headed by Arthur Ruppin. The 'Palestine Office' and its director played a crucial role in the development of agricultural settlements in Israel, in particular the establishment of the first *Kibbutzim*.

⁵ The main office of the WZO was in London, the location of the Executive of the WZO, headed for many years by Prof. C. Weizmann.

⁶ The term National Institutions refers to the World Zionist Organization (WZO) Executive (in a later period to the Jewish Agency Executive) and to the National Council of *Knesset Israel* (The Community Organization of the Jewish Population in Palestine). For a detailed description of these institutions see: Moshe Burstein, *Self Government of the Jews in Palestine since 1900*, Hapoel Hazair, Tel Aviv, 1934. The Jewish Agency for Palestine, *The Jewish Case before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1947. Moshe Attias, *Knesset Israel in Palestine: Its Foundation and Organization*, Havaad Haleumi, Department of Information, Jerusalem, 1944.

recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.⁷ On the other hand, the National Council, which was founded in 1920, operated without legal status until the late 1920s when it derived its authority from the Religious Community Order of 1926 and the Jewish Assembly Regulation based on this Order.⁸

The National Council was elected by the Assembly of Representatives which in turn was elected in general elections by all adults in the Jewish community.⁹ With regard to the Zionist Executive and later the Jewish Agency the situation was more complicated. The Zionist Executive bodies were elected on the basis of the results of the elections to the Zionist Congresses whose electorate consisted of all those affiliated to organized Zionist movements in the Diaspora as well as in Palestine. The establishment of the Jewish Agency was aimed at widening the basis of support for Jewish colonization by co-opting non-Zionists into the bodies that supervised it. These two political institutions, which were also known as the 'National Institutions' (*Hamosadot Haleumiim*), operated on the basis of a division of labour between themselves. The Jewish Agency dealt mainly with immigration and settlement while the National Council was responsible for education, welfare and religious services. Both institutions fulfilled representative functions *vis-à-vis* the British authorities. As from the 1930s, the Jewish Agency also supervised unofficially the

⁷ See Palestine Royal Commission, *op. cit.*, Article 4, p. 35.

⁸ The activities of the *Vaad Leumi* on the other hand were based on: (1) Article 83 of the 1923 order in Council in which it was said that 'each religious community shall enjoy autonomy for the internal affairs of the community subject to the provisions of any Ordinance or Order issued by the High Commissioner'. See Robert H. Drayton, *Laws of Palestine*, Waterlaw, London, Vol. III, 1934, p. 2588; (2) on the 1926 Religious Communities (organization) Ordinance. This provided that 'if any religious community in Palestine makes application under this Ordinance, the High Commissioner may, with the approval of a Secretary of State, make rules for its organization as a religious community and its recognition as such by the Government of Palestine'. See R. H. Drayton, *op. cit.*, p. 1292.

⁹ The elections were based on proportional representation and consequently there was a proliferation of competing political parties and *ad hoc* candidates' lists which took part in the elections. Elections were held in 1920, 1925, 1931 and 1944.

illegal defence organization of the Jewish community – the *Hagana*.¹⁰ The Jewish Agency was the stronger and more influential of the two ‘National Institutions’ since it controlled the national funds and even subsidized many of the activities of the National Council, particularly in the field of education.

Many of the political and social activities of the Jewish community did not take place in the framework of the central political institutions but in that of the particularistic institutions formed by political movements. The strongest among them was the General Federation of Jewish Workers (the *Histadruth*) which was established by the political parties of the labour movement in 1920. This organization did not confine its activities to conventional trade union functions but also operated both as the provider of health and other welfare services and as an economic entrepreneur. The *Histadruth* had no counterpart in the non-labour sector which was less organized and more fragmented than the labour sector in its political, economic and social activities.

The institutionalization of political roles within the Jewish community consolidated its separate national identity and enabled it to achieve the implementation of its common national goals more effectively.

CENTRIFUGAL AND CENTRIPETAL TENDENCIES

The evolution of a stateless political system was made possible through the attempt, exceptional in the history of the settlement by European emigrés of areas inhabited by native populations, to establish an immigrant society alongside, and not superimposed on, the existing social structure. The Jewish settlers did not follow the patterns of white settlement in South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya where the settlers became a privileged foreign upper class based on native labour. Guided by an ideology of an evolving national centre for the Jewish people, the *Yishuv* built a new stratificational structure alongside the local Arab society.¹¹

¹⁰ For a detailed description of this underground military organization see: Ben-Zion Dinur *et al.* (eds.), *The History of the Hagana*, Vol. 2, Part 2, Maarachot Publication House, pp. 1053–72. See also Y. Bauer, ‘From Cooperation to Resistance – the Haganah 1938–1948’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2, 1966, pp. 182–210.

¹¹ Moshe Lissak, ‘Patterns of Change in Ideology and Class Structure in Israel’ in S. N. Eisenstadt, Rivkah Bar-Yosef and Chaim Adler (eds.), *Integration and Development in Israel*, Israel Universities Press, Jerusalem, 1970, pp. 141–61. S. N. Eisenstadt, ‘Israel Society’, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–53. Josef Ben-David,

The formation of an economic structure characterized by a stratum of employers of European origin and cheap local labour was prevented by two factors:¹² first, the formation of a stratum of Jewish manual workers; and, secondly, the partly successful attempt to ensure a monopoly status for the Jewish worker in the Jewish sector. The process of separation between the two economies depended on the exercise of ideological and political pressure on Jewish employers. This pressure, exerted mainly by the organized Zionist labour movement,¹³ was supplemented by a counter-tendency towards separation on the part of the Arabs.

The striving for separation met with opposition both from the Mandatory government and from within the *Yishuv* itself. The latter was inspired by sectors within it which were unwilling to accept the ruling on the separation of the *Yishuv* economy and all that it implied – including expensive ‘Jewish labour’ and ‘Jewish produce’. The separation of the Jewish and Arab economies actually led to the formation of two different levels of wages, capital investment, organization and technology within one territorial framework.¹⁴

‘Professions and Social Structure in Israel’, *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, Vol. 3, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1959.

¹² On the attitude of the National Council to Jewish labour see Moshe Attias, *The Book of Documents of the National Council of Knesset Israel: 1918–1948*, Jerusalem, 1953, pp. 139, 178, 203, 204. Z. Sussman, *The Policy of the Histadrut with Regard to Wage Differentials: A Study of the Impact of Egalitarian Ideology and Arab Labour on Jewish Wages in Palestine*, PhD Dissertation, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1969, Chap. 3. D. Ben-Gurion, *The Renovated State of Israel*, Vol. 1, Am-Oved, Tel Aviv, 1969, pp. 41–6. Moshe Berslavsky, *The Labour Movement in Palestine*, Vol. II, Hakibbutz-Hameuchad, Tel Aviv, 1954, pp. 28–32. Zvi Rosenstein (Even-Shoshan), *The History of the Labour Movement in Palestine*, Am Oved, Tel Aviv, 1955, pp. 75–83, 147–54, 246–7. Esco, *op. cit.*, pp. 559–62.

¹³ The labour movement embraced several Zionist-socialist workers parties which co-operated within the *Histadruth* (The General Federation of Jewish Labour), which was established in 1920. The *Histadruth* functioned not only as a trade union but also as an economic entrepreneur which eventually established some of the biggest enterprises in Palestine. In addition to it the *Histadruth* provided comprehensive health and welfare services for its members. The biggest party in the 1920s was *Achdut Haavodab* (The United Labour Party). This party united a smaller party—*Hapoel Hatzair* (The Young Worker) in 1930 and established *Mapai* (Palestine Jewish Labour Party).

¹⁴ On the differences between the Jewish and Arab economies see for example: Nathan, Gass and Creamer, *op. cit.*, Chap. 12. Z. Sussman, *op. cit.*, Chap. 3. D. Horowitz, *The Development of the Palestine Economy*, Bialik Institution, Tel Aviv, 1954, pp. 9–12, 117–18, 165–76. Zeev Abramovitz and Itzhak Gelfat, *The Arab Economy in Palestine and the Mediterranean Countries*, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv, 1944, pp. 98 ff.

Employers, investors and consumers were called to sacrifice their economic expediency for the sake of a broader national interest which in many respects corresponds with the interests of the organized labour movement.

As a matter of fact, the need to exert political pressure in order to secure the employment of Jewish workers, many of whom were newcomers to the country, was one of the main causes for the development of organized political parties in the early stages of the *Yishuv's* development (at the beginning of the 20th century). It was not a coincidence that labour parties were the first to consolidate their organization and institutionalize their political activities. However, the activities of these parties were not confined to attempts to induce Jewish employers to employ Jewish labour. They also promoted, by means of national capital, the establishment of economic enterprises controlled by the labour movement and by the workers themselves.

This endeavour was carried out in two stages. During the 1920s, the labour movement concentrated on developing its organization and submitting the workers' demands to the central political institutions of the Jewish community and the Zionist movement. In the 1930s, on the other hand, the political orientation of the labour movement's leading party – *Mapai* – underwent a change which expressed itself in the struggle for the key positions in the executive bodies of *Knesset Israel* and the Jewish Agency. The political change was complemented by a shift in the ideological outlook of the majority of the labour movement – from 'class to nation'.¹⁵ The shift in the focus of the labour movement's activities from internal institution building to an effort to assume responsibility for the policy-making of the 'National Institutions' may be regarded as an expression of centripetal tendencies within the Jewish community.

However, this *centripetal* movement took place almost simultaneously with a *centrifugal* movement in the right wing of the *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement, which brought about the estrangement of the non-labour Revisionist Party from the national centre. This party eventually withdrew from the Zionist movement and set up the 'New Zionist Organization'.¹⁶ Centrifugal tendencies during the

¹⁵ This expression is taken from the title of D. Ben-Gurion's book. See D. Ben-Gurion, *From Class to Nation*, Tel Aviv, 1933.

¹⁶ The 'New Zionist Organization' is the splinter body established by Vladimir Jabotinsky in 1935 after the revisionists' dissent from the WZO. They aimed to become an alternative to the WZO, but failed to attain this objective. After the

1930s and 1940s were not confined to the revisionists. More moderate right-wing parties also strove to reduce dependency on the national centre though they did not go as far as withdrawal from the framework of the 'Organized *Yishuv*'.¹⁷ Under these circumstances the spheres of authority of the centre were flexible and potentially re-definable. Yet, on the whole, it can be said that centripetal tendencies were stronger than centrifugal ones during the 1930s and 1940s.

The success of the labour movement in its struggle for power during the 1930s and the 1940s may be attributed among other things to the future oriented and collectivist ideology of its elite.¹⁸ This orientation was embodied in the pioneering ideology that emphasized the harnessing of the individual to the needs of the collective and the readiness to postpone immediate gratification for the sake of realizing goals in the future. The pioneering sector considered itself a select group which was entitled not only to the esteem of all, but also to positions of leadership in the society. Accordingly, political militancy on the part of members of the labour movement was sanctioned and its mobilization capacity increased. Nevertheless, the future oriented ideology and the collectivist tendencies had disadvantages too. They gave rise to a tendency among the elite group towards splinter groups based on the various views held concerning the nature of the future desired. The splinter tendencies, which were not confined to the labour movement, accounted for the plurality of organized groups which developed their own institutional frameworks. These included, for example, the various *Kibbutz* and *Moshav* movements; the religious and revisionist independent labour organizations; and the three underground military organizations, the *Haganah*, the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and *Lochamei Heruth Israel* (The Stern Group).¹⁹

second world war they returned to the WZO and took part in the elections to its 1946 Congress.

¹⁷ The 'Organized *Yishuv*' was an expression used to define all the political groups which abided by the authority of the National Institutions. The 'Organized *Yishuv*' did not include non-Zionist groups, the extreme orthodox *Agudat-Israel* and the communists on the one hand and the revisionists dissenters from the organized Zionist movement on the other hand.

¹⁸ S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Israeli Society', *op. cit.*, pp. 7-58. Dan Horowitz, 'Between Pioneer Society and Normalization', *op. cit.* Israel Kolat, *Ideology and Reality in the Jewish Labour Movement in Palestine*, PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1964.

¹⁹ David Niv, *Battle for Freedom: The Irgun Zvai Leumi*, Vols. 1-3, Klosner Institute, Tel Aviv, 1967.

MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES

The process of this *Yishuv*'s transformation into a viable entity could not have been achieved by political participation alone. Mobilization of resources on a large scale was also required for this purpose.²⁰ This involved a continuous flow of monetary means to finance Zionist colonization and the activities of the organizational bodies promoting it. The inflow of private capital laid the foundation for the privately-owned economic sector, while the importation of national capital enabled the ideologically pioneering oriented groups to develop economic patterns based on self-labour. The inflow of capital was thus a necessary though insufficient condition for the growth and development of the Jewish community in Palestine. The variety of capital sources accounted for the fact that the Jewish economy in Palestine developed into a pluralistic economy in which there co-existed private, public and co-operative sectors each of which was subdivided into varied forms of economic organization. This pluralism also mitigated class conflict in the *Yishuv* society.

The reduction of class tension was thus made possible by the inflow of public capital which enabled the workers to increase their share of the national income without necessarily doing so at the expense of the middle class. Since the inflow of public capital was controlled by the central political institutions of the *Yishuv*, the labour leadership regarded the challenge of the main political rival, the revisionists, as a more acute threat to its position than that of its rivals in the economic sphere, the moderate bourgeois groups known as *Ezrachim*.²¹ In fact, many of the latter groups co-operated with the labour movement in the executive bodies of the Jewish Agency and

²⁰ For the analysis of the role of mobilization in economic and social development see K. W. Deutsch, 'Social Mobilization and Political Development', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LV, September 1961, pp. 493-514. S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Modernization and Conditions of Sustained Growth', *World Politics*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, July 1964, pp. 576-95. A. Etzioni, 'Mobilization as a Macro-Sociological Conception', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, September 1968, pp. 243-53. David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, The University of Chicago Press, 1969, Chaps. 10, 11. J. P. Nettl, *Political Mobilization*, Basic Books, 1967.

²¹ The term *Ezrachim* (civilians) is commonly used to refer (1) to groups outside the labour movement, usually to centrist and rightist parties and (2) to non-party (or movement) members. The origin of the term came from an attempt made in 1919-20 to establish a political organization of the right under the name of The Citizens Association. The term has a similar connotation as that of bourgeois in France although not identical with it.

Knesset Israel. The co-operation between the bulk of the organized labour movement and the moderate non-labour parties created a favourable climate for the evolution of a political system based on voluntary participation.

The voluntary nature of the *Yishuv*'s political organization led first to the formation of a coalitionist regime in the executive bodies of the *Yishuv* institutions. A coalescent political climate thus evolved, based on mutual tolerance and co-operation within the framework of the so-called 'Organized *Yishuv*'. This political climate stood in sharp contrast to the marked tendency towards intolerance which characterized the relationships between the parties of the organized labour movement and those groups which refused to accept either the consensus embodied in the policy of the National Institutions or the rules of procedure relating to the determination of this policy. This lack of tolerance was most apparent in the attitude of the labour movement towards the communists on the 'left' and the revisionists on the 'right'. It follows, therefore, that the tendency towards political tolerance in all matters relating to social and economic cleavages, did not apply to conflicts over the legitimization of the National Institutions' authority and the acceptance of their decisions as binding. It is noteworthy that the issues over which problems of authority and secession arose were generally not those relating to the distribution of resources, but rather to differences of opinion over the attainment of collective goals.

The multiplicity of interest groups, each of which demanded its share of resources allocated by the central institutions of the *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement, led to highly developed processes for the articulation of interests. Apart from demands for financial means, demands for immigration certificates, jobs and sites for settlements were prominent. The National Institutions played an important role in handling these interests and translating them into political decisions. They were able to accede to the majority of these claims because the importation of capital released them from the dilemma that every government faces in having to extract more and more resources from society in order to meet increasing demands.

A further factor which reduced the burden on the *Yishuv* was, paradoxically, the very lack of sovereignty of the National Institutions. The existence of the Mandatory government meant that the National Institutions were not responsible for those essential services which even a *laissez-faire* regime was obliged to provide. However, the limited scope of the Mandatory government's services could not

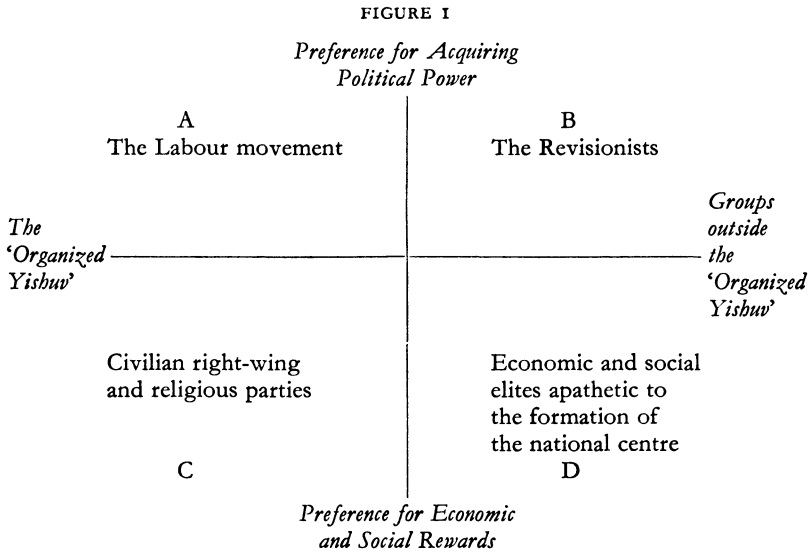
have satisfied the needs of a population with relatively high expectations, such as the Jewish population of Palestine. Thus the *Yishuv* found itself increasingly in need of means to finance its health, welfare and education services. In addition, the *Yishuv* had to allocate means for security as a result of the Arab reaction to Jewish settlement. A gap thus developed between the increasing demands of the *Yishuv* and the limited willingness on the part of the Mandatory government to accede to these demands. This gap widened when, besides the demands for services, further demands were presented, deriving from the national interests of the Jewish community as a consequence of the political conflict with the Arab majority.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The vulnerability of the authority of the central political institutions which originated in their lack of sovereignty, increased the importance of the qualifications of the labour elite which manned the key positions in these institutions. One of the characteristics of this elite was an inclination to prefer rewards of power to economic rewards, which gave it some advantage over other elite groups both in the *Yishuv* itself and in its immediate environment. Thus, for example, it was possible to allocate positions of high prestige but of limited power to representatives of the Zionist movement in the Diaspora. The power orientation also eased the relationships of the labour movement elite with the elites of the *Ezrachim* groups. The members of the latter groups tended to concentrate on economic rather than political activities.²² Thus, they in fact relinquished opportunities to translate their economic achievements into political power and contented themselves with a secondary role in the political leadership of the *Yishuv*.

A more extreme example of concentration on non-political activities was that of some economic and social elites which actually withdrew from active political participation in the formation of the national centre. In certain cases, such as that of the extreme orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, the withdrawal was total and permanent while in other cases, such as that of the traditional *Sephardic* notables, it was partial and temporary. The relative positions of the various elite groups with respect to the striving for priority on the one hand and

²² See Dan Giladi, 'Private Entrepreneurship, National Capital and the Political Consolidation of the Right', in S. N. Eisenstadt *et al.* (eds.), *The Social Structure of Israel*, Academ, Jerusalem, 1956, pp. 85-7.



the attitude to the individual system of the 'Organized Yishuv' on the other hand, is presented schematically in Figure 1.

The evolving political institutions of the Jewish community maintained a complex and ramified system of mutual relationships with the various groups within the *Yishuv* on the one hand and with the Mandatory government, the Arab majority and the Zionist movement in the Diaspora on the other. These relationships involved an exchange of resources which enabled the political centre of the *Yishuv* to gain power through the bargaining process associated with exchange relationships. In this context, the particularistic nature of power relationships in general and the existence of different exchange rates with each of the partners to the bargaining process both enabled the dominant elite to convert symbolic and material resources into resources of power and vice-versa.²³ Within the exchange system the

²³ For a theoretical discussion of exchange relationships and types of power see Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, John Wiley and Sons, 1966. S. N. Eisenstadt, *Essays on Comparative Institutions*, Part III, John Wiley and Sons, 1965. Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government*, The Free Press, 1966, Chap. 7. Talcott Parsons, 'On the concept of Power' in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.), *Class, Status and Power*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 2nd edn., pp. 240-65. R. L. Curry Jr. and L. L. Wade, *A Theory of Political Exchange: Economic Reasoning in Political Analysis*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliff, N.J., 1968. Peter Bachrach and Marton S. Baratz, 'Two Faces of Power', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LVI, No. 4, December 1962, pp. 947-52. Amitai

main effort was directed to the acquisition of power both in the form of autonomy in decision-making and control over inputs and outputs of material and symbolic resources.²⁴

The significant input by the Mandatory government into the political centre of the *Yishuv* was its recognition of the National Institutions as the authorized representatives of the *Yishuv* and of world Jewish interest in the National Home in Palestine. This recognition gave the National Institutions, first and foremost, control over the distribution of immigration certificates in accordance with the immigration quotas determined by the Mandatory government. This control implied the possibility of selecting those potential immigrants who suited the political and colonizing criteria which guided the policy of leadership. In exchange, the 'Organized *Yishuv*' remained loyal to the Mandatory government for many years, although its loyalty was at times conditional. The loyalty was terminated only when the Mandatory government imposed severe restrictions on the further development of the Jewish National Home.

The relationships of the central political institutions of the *Yishuv* with the Arab sector of the population were primarily of an economic nature. In these relationships the *Yishuv* converted current assets into fixed assets by exchanging money for land. The agent in these transactions was not the unstable centre of the Arab community, but elements in the Arab periphery which acted contrary to the declared policy of the Arab leadership. Economic relationships existed between the Arab and Jewish peripheries too and their scope varied with

Etzioni, *The Active Society*, The Free Press, 1968, pp. 313–81. Edward W. Lehman, 'Toward a Macro-Sociology of Power', *The American Sociological Review*, Vol. 34, No. 4, August 1969, pp. 453–64.

²⁴ The dominant elite was fully conscious of the manipulative value of the control of resources and its impact on the authority of the central National Institutions. This consciousness is illustrated in David Ben-Gurion's letter to his daughter and son of 7 September 1935. 'The World Zionist Organization is not a state, it has no real governmental authority, no power to coerce, no taxation, and no ability to impose membership on anyone. This is an organization of volunteers founded on discipline based on free will, rather than on coercion. This organization, however, has a considerable capital – two funds, banks, settlements etc. It has political rights as well: representation before the Mandatory Government and the League of Nations and the allocation of immigration certificates. The Zionist Organization speaks for the nation and mobilizes the masses. But if two parties will be ousted from the Executive they will be also removed from any position of real influence on the direction of the organization's activities. They will also be denied of any rewards that can be derived from the Executive.' David Ben-Gurion, *Letters to Paula*, Am Oved, Tel Aviv, 1968, p. 98.

political changes. In these exchanges, the Jewish economy made use of both Arab labour and produce. In this way, some of the imported Jewish capital found its way to the Arab economy and thus brought about a rise in the Arabs' standard of living.²⁵ The exchanges also led to tensions between the social, economic and political separatist tendencies which characterized the policies of the *Yishuv* leadership, and the instrumental use of cheap Arab labour and agricultural produce in the *Yishuv* periphery. Thus a conflict emerged between the approach of the dominant political elite and that of the groups which were not prepared to accept economic segregation.

The exchange relationships of the *Yishuv* with the Jewish Diaspora in general and with the Zionist movement in particular were characterized by an almost entirely one-way flow of both material and manpower resources from the Diaspora to Palestine. The outputs of the *Yishuv* to the Zionist movement consisted mainly of cultural and symbolic values. The institutions of the *Yishuv* derived power from their control of resources including manpower flowing into the country from the Diaspora. Since the quotas of immigrants²⁶ were limited, discrimination against dissenting political groups in this respect was one of the most effective sanctions exercised by the parties controlling the National Institutions. The dissenting groups were thus denied reinforcement from the ranks of their supporters in the Diaspora. The tendency towards the political manipulation of manpower resources was not confined to the question of the distribution of certificates, it was part of a more general phenomenon of manpower control by political groups which ensured a reservoir of manpower attached to them ideologically and organizationally. Centres for the ideological and vocational training of potential settlers abroad functioned as mechanisms for the political socialization of young people wanting to immigrate to Palestine. The fact that immigration was organized in groups meant that potential immigrants became attached to the political movements that organized them and later cared for their economic, social and cultural absorption in Palestine.

²⁵ The Jewish Agency for Palestine, *The Jewish Case Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. Statements and Memoranda, op. cit.*, pp. 351-9.

²⁶ The schedules of immigration certificates issued by the Mandatory government and allocated by the Jewish Agency were of several different categories: (a) persons of independent means; (b) persons of religious occupation, students and orphans whose main maintenance was assured; (c) people with prospect of employment in Palestine (The Labour Schedule); (d) dependents of permanent residents or immigrants belonging to the former categories.

FOCI OF CONFLICT

In spite of the power orientation of the elite which constituted the social bearer of the nation-building processes, it did not regard the accumulation of power as an end in itself. The self-image of this elite was rather that of pioneers who were laying the political and ideological foundations of an autonomous Jewish society in Palestine. Moreover, national aims were interwoven with social aims based on the various ideologies, each of which proposed a different model for the desired society. Under these circumstances, ideological programmes were turned into the bases of political organizations and became sources of conflict between groups with different ideological commitments. The formation of the national centre was therefore not only an institutional process, but also a value based process in which the accumulation of power was conceived as being subjected to the realization of collective goals.

The consolidation of the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine as a political system striving for autonomy, was thus a threefold process which involved three dimensions: (a) the institutionalization of a political centre with authority but without sovereignty; (b) the regulation of the exchange and distribution of resources; (c) the moulding of the value ideological character of the society.

Each of these three dimensions contained the seeds of conflict among the various political and social elite groups. Thus from the moment that one elite group, that of the labour movement, achieved a position of priority in the National Institutions, it was faced with the problem of preventing the disintegration of the political framework as a result of these conflicts.

The dominant elite was thus forced to create mechanisms for binding political decision-making and the resolution of political conflicts. The manner in which this challenge was met affected the diverse relationships of the dominant elite with other elites, both within and outside the framework of the 'Organized *Yishuv*'. The nature of these relationships of conflict and co-operation was determined by the multifaceted nature of the conflict element, its intensity and the amount of disagreement over the rules governing the resolution of conflicts within the system's framework.

The concept of the multifaceted nature of the conflict relates to the number of dimensions around which the conflict focused. The notion of intensity of conflict refers to the extent to which the subject of the conflict was a central issue, the degree of involvement of the parties in the conflict and the nature of the means used in the political

struggle or, as Dahrendorf put it, 'the energy expenditure and degree of involvement of conflicting parties'.²⁷ Disagreement over the rules for the resolution of conflict was reflected in the denial of the quasi-parliamentary authority of the National Institutions, and the refusal to accept their decisions as binding.

Data indicating a multifaceted and intensive conflict and a lack of agreement over the mechanism for its resolution reflect a maximal gap between the parties involved in the conflict and a minimal chance of that gap being bridged. This is exemplified in the varieties of relationships between the dominant elite associated with the *Mapai* party and other elite groups (see Table 1).

The data show that the dominant elite maintains a variety of political relationships expressing different levels of conflict with other elite groups, both within and outside the 'Organized *Yishuv*'. The fact that a parallel was found for every hypothetical combination of criteria is characteristic of the wide range of political conflicts and the complexity of the mutual relationships between the various political and social groups in the *Yishuv*.

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

The regular functioning of the *Yishuv's* political system was secured through the continued attempt to achieve the widest possible consensus within the pluralistic and coalescent political framework. The political centre was thus a coalitional system composed of sub-centres each of which maintained a high degree of autonomy in everything pertaining to its authority over its respective members. The central political institutions were obliged to concede several of their functions, mainly of a social and economic but sometimes also of a political nature, to these sub-centres (the most prominent of which was the *Histadruth*). The political parties themselves were, at one and the same time, both participants in the coalitional national centre and separate entities which tended to extend their sphere of activity on the sub-centre level. Thus, they engaged in providing economic, social and cultural services which went far beyond the function of mobilizing political power so as to influence decisions on the national level. In fulfilling quasi-governmental functions while participating in the coalitional system, the parties in a way became agencies of the national centre for the provision of public services mainly of the

²⁷ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1967, p. 211.

TABLE I

Relationships between Mapai and:	Multifacetedness of the conflict	Intensity of the conflict	Disagreement over rules ²⁸
Revisionists	+	+	+
Right wing, conservative and religious ²⁹	+	+	-
Liberal and religious centre ³⁰	+	-	-
Ethnic groups ³¹	-	-	-
'Assimilating' elites ³²	-	-	+
Communists	-	+	+
Extreme orthodox Jewry ³³	+	-	+
Zionist left wing in the <i>Histadrut</i> ³⁴	-	+	-

type that characterize the modern welfare state.³⁵ Moreover, the parties also played the role of the main arbitrators between the citizen and the national centre. Because of the lack of official channels for presenting claims against the centre, the indirect party-controlled channels were used for this purpose.

The adoption of democratic rules facilitated the settlement of conflicts through political compromises or, when this did not seem

²⁸ The use of (+) to note disagreement with the rules of the game is intended to adjust the third criterion to the first two criteria so that the three (+) will indicate the highest level of conflict.

²⁹ This category includes the right wing of the General Zionists, *Hamizrachi* and the Farmers Association.

³⁰ This category includes the left wing of the General Zionists, the *Hapoel Hamizrachi*, the *Alia Hadasa* (New Immigration Party) representing mainly new immigrants from Germany.

³¹ This category includes the Sephardic and Yemenite organizations.

³² This category includes some non-political notables who were socially involved with the British and Arab officials of the Mandatory government and demonstrated their reservation with regard to the activities of the so-called 'Organized *Yishuv*'.

³³ This category includes the *Agudat Israel* and other extreme orthodox elements especially in Jerusalem.

³⁴ This category includes *Hashomer Hatzair* and a small Zionist-Marxist party called *Poalei Zion Smol*, and since 1944 also the *Hatenua le-Achdut Avoda*, which split from *Mapai*.

³⁵ Benjamin Akzin, 'The Role of Parties in Israeli Democracy', in S. N. Eisenstadt, Rivkah Bar-Yosef and Chaim Adler (eds.), 'Integration and Development in Israel', *op. cit.*, pp. 13-18.