RELIGION AND NATION BUILDING:
TWO GENERATIONS OF ISRAELI EXPERIENCE[1]

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The establishment of the state of Israel in May, 1948 confronted the political leadership with security problems of the first order -- the very existence of the state and the lives of its citizens were threatened by invading Arab armies. However, even at the moments of greatest peril to its existence, and more forcefully within a year of its establishment, Israeli political leaders felt obliged to deal with the challenge of nation building.[2] The problems were political as well as ideological.

During the prestate period it was possible to allow population subgroups, organized into distinct political camps to develop their own network of symbols and parochial loyalties without hampering the basic unity of the Jewish population. The leadership of the various political camps interrelated through a network of quasi-governmental or secondary political institutions (the British Mandatory authority exercised ultimate political control), compromising on some disputed issues and principles and ignoring many others. Since many of the quasi-governmental institutions were built on the basis of voluntary support, and the Yishuv, the Jewish settlement in Palestine, lacked the ultimate power to enforce its decisions, compromise was necessary. Available resources, money and jobs were distributed by the political leadership according to a negotiated formula.

Each political camp received an allocation based roughly on its voting strength.

The creation of the state of Israel and the tripling of its population in three years led state leaders to feel that the country must be completely integrated; that the value-belief-symbol system separating the various camps must be abolished and replaced by a unified symbol system uniting the entire Jewish population in support of the state and its institutions.

In addition, the creation of a state made it necessary to adopt policies with respect to many of the issues on which the Yishuv had avoided decisions. The old system had been particularly appropriate to a voluntaristic society in which any group could opt out of the system -- as extreme religious circles and, to some extent, right wing circles had done. But a state cannot allow that option. While a sovereign state can and must impose its authority on all its citizens, it seeks to institutionalize its authority by creating broad popular consensus around its values and symbols rather than doing so by force. Finally, Israel's prime minister and preeminent leader David Ben Gurion, was convinced that Israelis, new immigrant in particular but veteran settlers as well, did not fully appreciate the implications of living as politically autonomous nation rather than a religious or religio-ethnic community under the authority of some other power. Without quite echoing the sentiment attributed to Cavour, "we have established an Italian

state now we must create an Italian nation," Ben Gurion and his closest followers also believed that a Jewish-Israeli nation was not quite fully formed -- at least not a nation to their liking.

The new massive immigration posed additional problems. The prestate settlers had been united by common economic, political and security problems they confronted. But the new immigrants did not share the same sense of cohesion which economic hardship, political struggle and threats to security had produced among the older settlers. Were the new immigrants to be socialized to the values and symbols of one subculture or one camp there was a danger that they immigrants might miss the sense of underlying unity that had characterized the Yishuv. This was particularly true of the large group of immigrants from Muslim countries, products of a traditional Jewish culture. Zionist-Socialism, the ideology and symbol system which had dominated the Yishuv, especially its political and cultural elite, held no meaning and certainly no attraction for these immigrants.

The danger in the cultivation of subcommunal symbols and loyalties that originated in the Yishuv period became apparent in the fierce battle over immigrants' education. Each camp sought to maximize the number of children enrolled in it schools. This led to a series of political crises and growing public discontent with the unrestrained competition between the different camps. Ben-Gurion, the major architect of statism, to be described below, was adept at exploiting this crisis. The result was the

creation of a unified educational system. That system, in turn, became a major vehicle for the transmission of statist symbols and values.

Statism affirmed the centrality of state interests and the centralization of power at the expense of nongovernmental groups and institutions. In terms of symbols and style, statism reflected the effort to transform the state and its institutions into the central foci of loyalty and identification. Statism gave rise to values and symbols that pointed to the state, legitimated its policies and mobilized the population to serve its goals. In its more extreme formulation statism cultivated an attitude of sanctity toward the state, affirming is as an ultimate value.

The civil religion of statism refers to the myths it cultivated and the symbols which it projected. The civil religion of statism functioned as a quasi-religion, a substitute for traditional religion. Statism represented the State of Israel as the expression of the national Jewish spirit, the realization of the yearning of the Jewish people for freedom and sovereignty in its own land, and the guarantor of national Jewish unity. The nation was to be formed around the value of the state which, in turn, was an instrument in the redemption of the entire Jewish people, both in Israel and in the diaspora.

Statism emphasized the educational task of the state in shaping the society and its national culture. The noted scholar-historian Ben-Zion Dinur (1894-1973) served as minister of

education from 1951-1955. In presenting the law establishing a national educational system to the Knesset, he affirmed that the goals of the state were "to educate its citizens to full and total identification of every individual with the State...to create in the heart of each and every person the sense of direct identification with the Land."[3]

The Israeli army was also assgned an educational role and service in the army (military service was compuslory), became a prime instrument for socializing recruits to the values of statism. In addition to safeguarding the country's security the army was given responsibility in the fields of education, culture, settlement, and immigrant absorption.[4] The purpose, in assigning these task to the army, beyond making use of available manpower, was to teach the soldiers to identify with the people and the state. Former army commander and later minister of Defense Moshe Dayan may have been describing a hope rather than a reality but his words certainly tell us something about the political elite's expectations:

> Care for the new immigrants had become not only a task of great importance, difficult though it was, but also a source of inspiration... to all the troops who took part. This was what Zionism and brotherhood were all about. Even the most hardened soldiers were moved as they watched women soldiers tending the immigrant children, washing them, feeding them, administering the

medicines that the army doctor had ordered, pacifying a

crying baby, soothing an aged grandmother.[5]

The question is: why did the political elite require a

substitute for traditional Judaism? Why rely on the quasi-

religion of statism to socialize the population rather than

traditional Judaism? The existence of an Arab predominantly

Muslim minority was certainly not a reason. As Shmuel Sandler

notes, Israeli Arabs were an acquiescent community during the

first two decades of Israel's existence posing no "communal

problem to the Israeli regime nor to the polity as a whole".[6] It

was the formation of a Jewish nation to which Israeli state

builders devoted their energies.

The vast majority of Jews in the new state were not

religiously observant. This alone introduced a measure of

alienation from the religious tradition whose minimal demand has

always been that the Jew live his life in conformity to religious

proscription. Indeed a significant segment of the Jewish

population was not only secular but even anti-religious. This was

especially true of important elements of the cultural and

political elite. In addition, if traditional religion was to

provide the basis of statism it would naturally enhance the

status of the religious elite, the rabbis, as the authoritative

interpreters of the religious tradition. Ben-Gurion was hardly

prepared for that. But deeper cultural strains which also

prevented traditional religion from assuming the role of a civil

religion.

     Zionism, after all, had emerged in opposition to the
traditional religious establishment and had triumphed despite
that establishment's bitter opposition. The whole tenor of
Zionism with its stress on activism and self-reliance rather than
reliance on God, its emphasis on the physical rather than the
spiritual, on the present rather than the past. its glorification
of armed might contrasted with the traditional spirit of
religious Judaism.

     Ben-Gurion was deeply committed to Judaism, as he was to the
Jewish people. But he perceived the positive aspects of the
tradition as having originated in the commonwealth period when
the Jews lived as a nation in their own land. The first temple of
first commonwealth period extended form about 1200 BCE to 586 BCE
and the second temple or second commonwealth period from 530 BCE
to 70 CE> The aspects of the tradition that derived from these
periods, according to Ben-Gurion, had preserved the Jewish people
during their exile.

     Ben-Gurion and other statists negated the cultural
significance of that part of the tradition which originated in
the exile. But it was this period in which the major portion of
the religious tradition originated. The statists insisted on
defining the Zionist enterprise as a direct successor to the
period of Jewish independence without any real relationship to
the intervening 2,000 years of Jewish exile.

The result of the exile, according to Ben-Gurion, had been to alienate the Jews from their own great cultural expression -- the Bible. To understand the Bible one had to identify with the spirit of Jewish statism which informed the Book of Books. Post biblical Judaism was apolitical, particularistic, prone to exaggerated spiritualism and withdrawal. Hence, it neither understood nor properly appreciated the Bible or the biblical period with their rich harmony of spiritual, material, moral, Jewish and universal values. Only the Jews of Israel who had returned to their land and led an independent life could truly appreciate the Bible.[7]

Ben-Gurion generally refrained from denigrating the rabbinical tradition, the product of the exilic period. However his silence with respect to that literature, coupled with his reverence of the Bible and the biblical period, indicated his attitude very clearly.

The effort to reformulate all Israeli culture in accordance with statist values required a certain ideological permissiveness,. But the statist claim to encompass all citizens within its purview still brought it into conflict with the subcommunities that sought to retain their cultural autonomy. This included the subcommunity of religiously observant Jews.

Extreme statists perceived traditional religion as an alternative symbol system that competed with the state for absolute loyalty and allegiance. There were those who argued that

"the life of a nation cannot be divided into secular and religious divisions; both cannot exist as separate authorities." The very existence of the rabbinate, for example, detracts from the state which "bears the myth and morality of Israel...with authority to teach the people and to judge them in all aspects of life".[8]

Traditional religion in this conception interfered with the absorption of the immigrants into Israeli culture and society. This was especially true of the masses of immigrants from Arab countries. Statists felt that these immigrants had to undergo a "cultural revolution." Their devotion to traditional Judaism was viewed as an impediment to their reeducation in the spirit of the new Israeli culture.

One of the motives of the program for a unified educational system in the immigrant camps was the statists' desire to prevent parents from enrolling their children in schools under the auspices of the religious camp. Were religious schools for immigrants to be established, statist argued, these children would not be assimilated in the national culture.

Nonetheless, as we already suggested, the civil religion drew heavily upon the symbols of the tradition, transforming or reinterpreting them to suit its needs. Statist spokesmen adopted biblical phrases and aphorisms to evoke a sense of the ceremonial, the festive and the sacred and thereby expressed their identification with the bible and the biblical period.

The transformation of biblical phrases to make them accord with statist values was striking. Generally, some sacred object of statism -- the nation, the land, the state or its institutions, especially the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) -- were substituted for the biblical reference to God. A huge banner carried by soldiers in a Haifa parade transformed the biblical phrase "Israel trust the Lord, He is your help and defender," to Israel trust the IDF, it is your help and defender." One newspaper published a photograph of four Israeli planes under the headline "The guardian of Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers," a biblical phrase in which the guardian refers to God.[9] A banner in an army base read: "In the beginning the IDF created the soldier, and the IDF created the nation."[10]

Statists also used traditional terms such as commandment or covenant, to express their loyalty and commitment to the state and its institutions. In an Independence Day pageant the players announced: "On Independence Day we assume the burden of the commandments of loyalty to our State."[11] The phrase burden of the commandment comes directly from the language of the rabbinical tradition. When Ben Gurion presented the first government to the Knesset he said that love for the State of Israel beats in the heart of every Jew, Zionist or non-Zionist, "except for the small group of violators of the covenant".[12]

The statists also reinterpreted biblical terms. For example, the word komemiut (literally: erect or upright) was redefined to

mean sovereign and independent; the War of Independence was called the war of komemiut. Kibbutz galuyot (literally: ingathering of the exiles), a phrase with Messianic significance, now served to refer to the contemporary immigration of Jews to Israel from all parts of the Diaspora.

Statists elevated the contemporary builders of Israel to almost equal status with the biblical heroes. Indeed, the parallel was often struck between biblical heroes of the first Jewish commonwealth and heroes of the newly established state. Hence, it is not surprising that Ben Gurion -- who fulfilled the central role in the creation of the state and the IDF and served as first prime minister and minister of defense -- thought of himself (and was considered by others) as the ideal hero-leader with talents and capacities equivalent to those of the first great leaders of the Jewish nation. This conception was strengthened by Ben Gurion's tendency to project himself as not only a statesman and soldier but also an educator and a man of the spirit -- in the image of the biblical hero.

Ben Gurion never spoke of himself in these terms, but his followers described him as the ideal leader and the successor to the great leaders of the biblical period, possessed of their qualities. Moshe Dayan, for example, compared him to Moses.[13]

There is evidence that in the early years of statehood Ben Gurion was turning into the object of a national cult. In welcoming him to Haifa, city officials called him "the prince of

the nation."[14] The secretary general of Mapai, in a controversy with the opposition declared, "You shall not take the name of Ben Gurion in vain"[15] In more extreme instances, particularly in the presence of new immigrants, adulation of Ben Gurion took on the overtones of messianic ceremony. Immigrants kissed the soles of his feet, touched his clothing, brought sick children forward so the he might heal them with his touch, and called him the messiah.[16] Ben Gurion's biographer related the following story about the leader's brief retirement in 1953. When the governmental secretary, Ze'ev Sharf, was asked why Ben Gurion retired to a small kibbutz in the Negev, Sharf responded, "The Messiah came, gathered the destitute of Israel, defeated all the nations around him, captured the land, built the temple, renewed the service of God -- and after this he has to sit as a member of the coalition?"[17]

According to Ben Gurion the four critical events in Jewish history were the exodus from Egypt, the assembly at Mt Sinai (where God gave the Torah, His commandments, to the Jews), the conquest of the Land of Israel by Joshua, and the establishment of the State of Israel.[18] The first three events are really stages in the transformation of the Jewish people into a sovereign nation in its own land. Hence, at least in one sense, the renewal of Jewish sovereignty through the establishment of state of Israel is equal to the combined importance of the first three events.[19] Furthermore, "with the establishment of the state

the vision of Jewish redemption acquired a program and a practical basis...therefore, the state became a force that united and integrated the Jewish people in the Diaspora, as nothing else has ever before integrated and united them."[20] Ben Gurion also attributed universal significance to the event, since a large portion of the world's population has a spiritual attachment to the Land of Israel. The creation of Israel pointed to new possibilities that would change the destiny of all mankind. [21]

In accordance with this notion past episodes in Jewish history were given special emphasis and new interpretation. Traditional religious holidays underwent reinterpretation in the statist mode. For example, the traditional holiday of Passover celebrating the Jewish exodus from Egypt ends only two weeks before Independence Day and this facilitate the association between the events the two holidays commemorate. Many references to Independence Day in the early years of statehood described Independence Day as "the day of days", a culmination of the process which began with the Passover celebration of the exodus from Egypt. Independence Day replaced Shavuot, the holiday which celebrates the giving of the Torah, a holiday which was traditionally linked to Passover. The traditional paradigm was exodus (physical freedom) followed by the giving of the Torah (spiritual freedom). The new paradigm became exodus (freedom from foreign oppression) followed by Independence Day (achieving national autonomy). The new paradigm was further strengthened by

the comparisons that were drawn between Ben Gurion and Joshua.

New holidays, Israel Independence Day and Memorial Day for the IDF Fallen were even more easily cast in the statist mold.[22] It would be a mistake to think that Ben Gurion and many of his followers espoused statism and reinterpreted the tradition in the manner they did simply as a means to some greater end. Ben Gurion and many of his followers were true believers in Israel's civil religion.

Elsewhere, Don-Yehiya and I have traced the decline of statism as a civil religion and the emergence, particularly following the Six Day War in 1967 of what we called the New Civil Religion.[23] The new civil religion, different in tone and nuance from the civil religion of statism, utilized the religious tradition in a more deliberate manner. Describing that civil religion is beyond the parameters of this paper. The point which i want to emphasize here is that Israeli civil religion, in any variety has declined in the last decade and its while its outline is still discernible it carries far less force and engenders far less commitment than it did in the past.

The Decline of Civil Religion

The explanation for the decline of civil religion in Israel, and the evidence of that decline, remains, at this stage largely impressionistic. Let me attempt some explanation for the cause of the decline and then provide some of the evidence for it.

Before turning to explanations for the decline of civil

religion, one possible explanation must be dismissed. Although Israeli civil religion borrowed heavily from the dominant traditional religion, thereby becoming irrelevant if not alien to the Arab minority, this has been of little concern to the vast majority of Israelis and their policy makers, at least until most recently.

One explanation for the decline of civil religion is the increased penetration of western consumer oriented individualistic values in Israel. In other words, the evocative power of the symbols rituals and myths, which emerged out of the Zionist movement and which called upon the Jewish citizenry to sacrifice their individual preferences and private needs for those of the civil or social order has been severely weakened. In most technologically advanced western democracies, civil religion is unable to resist the increased demands for greater and greater individual autonomy. Indeed, individual autonomy seems to be have become the most sacred value among many western elites. Hence civil religion is viewed with animosity by those elites. Its artificiality and lack of historical roots is easily exposed by an academy anxious to overturn any impediment to individual license. The enormous popularity, in academic circles, of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's volume of readings, The Invention of Tradition[24], the frequency with which it is quoted when it seems to me that it is quite irrelevant, is testimony to that. The literature which developed in its wake, in England in

particular, strikes me as being especially thin but scholarly

enthusiasm for this kind of civil religious debunking continues

without abate to the applause of rave reviews.[25]

One also wonders if civil religion isn't inexorably weakened

precisely because it does not rely on the notion of God. Adam

Seligman, in his important study on the emergence of the notion

of civil society[26] traces the concept to its religious origins.

He describes the central dilemma of contemporary democratic

society in much the same terms described here. In his terms, it

is "the squaring of justice and solidarity, of private interest

and public good"[27] As he points out, when associations, in our

case society, are built around the principle of interest they

cannot "mediate or mitigate interest-motivated action in the name

of some other or higher ethical unity".[28] Civil society was once

capable of doing so but only when

> the foundations of moral action were constructed in terms
>
> not only of the transcendental principle of Reason but of a
>
> transcendent morality as well...With the loss of these
>
> foundations in Reason and revelation, the idea of civil
>
> society itself becomes the problem rather than the solution
>
> of modern existence.[29]

But there are also reasons, peculiar to Israel, which help

account for the decline of civil religion. The sense of many

Israelis that the unfortunate War in Lebanon in the early 1980's

and the Palestinian intifada of the late 1980's were somehow

connected to Israeli hubris and excessive measures of chauvinism which the civil religion promoted, was certainly a contributing factor in its decline. Israelis have not only lost a sense of confidence in their government, they have lost a sense of confidence in their own society, and it is this loss of confidence that renders any expression of civil religion, at least among many of them as grotesque.

This is not true of many other Israelis, perhaps it isn't even true of most of them. But so many Israelis now feel this way, and they do constitute an important segment if not a majority of the cultural elite, that a belief in "society" with transcendent meaning and purpose is artificial.

The evidence for the decline of civil religion, in the absence of survey research data is admittedly partial and impressionistic.

The Israeli media has provided extensive publicity in the last few years to studies that question the stature, the heroism, and the motivation of the Israel's early heroes. Television dramas have been written in the same skeptical vein. They have occasioned some dissent but their publication in the press and their airing on public TV suggests that Israeli society is far less sensitive than it once was to debunking the mythical heroes of Israel's civil religion.[30]

A good example of the decline of Israeli civil religion is the recent play Hametz by the popular Israeli play writer Shmuel

Hasfari. The play, at least on the evening I saw it, was warmly received nor, to the best of my knowledge has it occasioned any condemnation in the media. It's theme is that Israeli society ought to forget its past, ignore its ostensible heroes, forget even the Holocaust and the six million who died, and live as a normal society with no special attachments to anything that is peculiarly Jewish.[31]

Israel's willingness to enter into a peace agreement with the Palestinians is attributable at least in part, to a recognition by the political and military elite that Israel has already been overtaken by the demand for individual autonomy, a demand that erodes if not shatters any ideological or symbolic system which provides a society with meaning. As the IDF Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak, commenting on the rise in the number of young Israelis who consider military service "inappropriate for them" noted: the problem is "a preference for individualism over the collective in an age of liberalism".[32]

This became very clear in the reaction, as recorded by television reporters, of Israeli soldiers to their departure from the Gaza strip. As Orit Shochat notes, in her survey of media coverage, a young officer is quoted as saying: "I want to get out already, and that's that". And she goes on to point out that what the soldiers want is "to go home, in the original meaning of the term. They want easier conditions". Perhaps at home, she goes on to note, they may even have a family car with a bumper sticker

protesting any surrender of territory.[33]

The decline not only of civil religion but of national commitment is well reflected in an article by Gideon Samet, prominent columnist for Israel's most influential daily newspaper, Ha'aretz. I quote from this article at length because it reflects what I consider to be a major if not a dominant motif in contemporary Israeli society. Samet writes as follows:

Praise to the Creator of the Universe [intended sarcastically]: It is possible that we are ridding ourselves of that old bother; clarifying our national identity. In the past, so many efforts were made to examine what it is, what happened to it, how it was formed, whether it exists at all, and if so, why isn't it visible...it now appears that just as this old question threatened to bore us to death, it has begun to be resolved.

When did this happen?...Symbolically it was Oslo. There one of the materials that cemented the old national identity dissolved....The right wing ideology is convinced that returning the state to roughly its previous dimensions is a catastrophe and confusion of identity. But the [political] right is not in the majority. Majority? it is a minority which is steadily contracting.

For some time now, the commentators on identity

put their finger on our [growing] normalization. They
noted the growing tendency to move from nationalist
slogans to simple individualism...[characterized by the
lust for life.. It is not the self-destructive
inclination of a declining nation, as the ideologists
of the right see it.

...Madonna and Big Mac are only the outer
periphery of a far reaching process whose basis is not
American influence but a growing tendency in all the
west, especially among young people. It is a mistake to
attribute this to the product of a foreign identity.

On the contrary, the new language is comprised of
new forms of cultural consumption and leisure activity
that have become supra-national. So it is with popular
music, movies, trips aborad, dress and even the style
of speech.

...Complaints against the destruction of myths is
a slogan of the knights of the old identity. They have
trouble with exposing the army to criticism. They have
a bad time with the new historians. They see the seeds
of destruction everywhere in the Madonnas and the
opening to the outside world.[34]

Other signs of the decline of the civil religion include
the transformation of civil religious celebrations into private
events. A good example is the decline of Independence Day as a

major holiday and the transfer of celebrations from massive events to family barbecues in public parks.[35]

Recent election campaigns including the 1994 Federation of Labor (Histadrut) elections is another example. Traditional party leaders were defeated in these elections and replaced by younger, more glamorous candidates whose election campaigns focused on the individual voter and on the fulfillment of the voter's needs rather than societal or collective needs.

It is not without irony that today, the sector most committed to the values of Israeli civil religion is the religious-Zionist public which has transformed traditional religion, and doesn't require civil religious symbols, ceremonials, or myths to internalize civil religious values. No one questions that religious-Zionists are to be found, in disproportionate numbers, fulfilling positions such as combat soldiers and officers in the army, where self-sacrifice is still recognized as a virtue.

It is no surprise, therefore, that despite the relatively high levels of traditional observance among Israeli Jews, there are increasing tensions between the more religiously traditional and less religiously traditional segments of the population. The values of adherence or deference to the Jewish tradition on the one hand and modernity, secularism and individual autonomy on the other were always present in Israeli society. Israel avoided a culture war because both the vast majority of Israelis affirmed

both these values. Confronted with the dual pressures of security needs and the values they engender on the one hand, and modern consumer oriented values on the other, most Israelis internalized both sets of values. The tensions existed in the hearts and minds of the vast majority of Israelis rather than separating one Israeli Jew from another. But the values of the tradition were already in retreat and should security threats be perceived as less ominous, the retreat is likely to accelerate.

ENDNOTES

1. The opening section of this paper draws upon Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, Civil Religion in Israel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

2. In addition to Liebman and Don-Yehiya see Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, Origins of the Israeli Polity (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1978) and by the same authors, Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).

3. Divrei Haknesset, [The official Knesset Record], 1953, p. 1661.

4. Ibid, 1951, p.1339.

5. Moshe Dayan, Story of My Life (Jerusalem: Steimatzky, 1976), p.129.

6. Shmuel Sandler, "Israeli Arabs and the Jewish State: The Activation of a Community in Suspended Animation," Middle Eastern Studies, 31 (October, 1995), p.942.

7. David Ben Gurion, Stars and Dust (Ramat Gan: Massada, in Hebrew, 1976), p.130.

8. Hilb, "Religion and State," B'terem, no.1 (January, 1951, in

Hebrew), p.11.

9. The distinguished Hebrew University philosopher, Shmuel Hugo
Bergman cited these examples in his caution against the dangers
of Statism. _Hapoel Hatzair_, 42 (in Hebrew), 1949.

10. _Davar_, December 5, 1949 (in Hebrew)

11. "Vision and Independence," _A Play for the Independence Day
Holiday_ (Jerusalem: Publications of the Jewish National Fund, in
Hebrew, 1952).

12. David Ben Gurion, _The Renewed State of Israel_ (Tel Aviv: Am
Oved, in Hebrew, 1969), p.371.

13. Moshe Dayan, _To Live with the Bible_ (Jerusalem: Edayim, in
Hebrew, 1978), pp.71, 76.

14. _Hatzofe_ (June 2, 1950 (in Hebrew.).

15. _Ibid._

16. _Ibid._, July 15, 1951.

17. Michael Bar-Zohar, _Ben Gurion: A Political Biography_, (Tel
Aviv: Am Oved, vol 2, in Hebrew, 1978), p.951

18. David Ben Gurion, _Vision and Way_ (Tel Aviv: Hotzaat Mapai,
2nd edition, in Hebrew, vol 4, 1953), p. 18.

19. Ben Gurion, _Stars and Dust_, p. 320.

20. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 92.

21. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 320

22. This has been tellingly portrayed in a recent book by Azaryahu Maoz, <u>State Cults: Celebrating Independence and Commemorating the Fallen in Israel 1948-1956</u> (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, in Hebrew, 1995).

23. In addition to Liebman and Don-Yehiya, <u>op.cit.</u> see, by the same authors, "The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional Culture and Contemporary Needs: Civil Religion in Israel,"<u>Comparative Politics</u>, 16 (Oct., 1983), 53-66 reprinted in Myron Aronoff (ed.), <u>Political Anthropology III: Religion and Politics</u>. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1984, pp. 47-62. and in revised form as "Religion et Politique en Israel," <u>Pardes</u> ll (1990).

24. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), <u>The Invention of Tradition</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

25. Some of the reasons for the enthusiasm of academia are to be found in Anthony Smith, "The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?" <u>Millennium: Journal of International Studies</u>, 20, no.3 (1991), pp. 353-368.

26. Adam Seligman, <u>The Idea of Civil Society</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

27. Ibid., p.196.

28. Ibid., pp.197-198.

29. Ibid., p.198.

30. For a summary of the debate see the cover story of the Jerusalem Report, "Israel's Heroes Under Attack," December 29, 1994. The lead article by Calev Ben-David, pp.13-19 is subtitled as follows:

> On stage and screen, in the media and history books, the myths and heroes of Israel and Zionism are being criticized, attacked and reevaluated. Is this the healthy historical revisionism of a changing society, or a growing cynicism that is undermining the country's ideological foundations? (p.13.)

31. For more on anti-religious steretypes which are typical of Israeli theatre see Dan Urian, "The Stereotype of theReligiious Jew in Israeli Theatre," Assaph C no. 10 (1994), pp.131-154.

32. The New York Times, (May 31, 1995), p.A10. The quote appears in a feature article by Clyde Haberman titled, "Israel's Army, Once Sacrosanct, Is Now Becoming Deglamourized" which adds evidence to support the thesis of the decline of Israeli civil religion. The army has, heretofore, been its central institution.

33. Orit Shochat, "A Withdrawal That is Too Happy," Ha'aretz (May

20, 1994), p.12B.

34. Gideon Samet, "The Nation Goes Up a Grade," Ha'aretz (July
28, 1995), p.1B

35. Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Festivals and Political Culture:
Independence-Day Celebrations." The Jerusalem Quarterly, no. 45.
(Winter 1988), pp.61-84.