

*Amy Gluska*

### **Israeli Cabinet Territorial Deliberations and Decisions during the Six Day War, June 1967**

‘The government resolves to take military action, which will free Israel from the military noose tightening around it.’ That was the phrasing of the Israeli government’s resolution in its session on June 4, 1967. The following morning, on June 5, the IDF launched a pre-emptive land and air strike against Egypt. On the same day – after the armies of Jordan, Syria and Iraq had joined the fighting and opened fire on Israeli targets – the IDF took action against them as well. The government’s decision to go to war was essentially preventative. Its sole purpose was to eliminate the severe threat that had developed for Israel during the three weeks that preceded the outbreak of war. The political echelon did not set forth any territorial objectives for the military prior to the war, not on the Egyptian front, nor on the Jordanian and Syrian fronts.

A review of the government’s deliberations during the six days of the war reveals an interesting picture: the government barely addressed the events on the main scene of battle, the Egyptian front. It settled for brief reports and made no decisions. The Jordanian front was the one that occupied most of the government’s attention from the first through the fourth day of the war, when the IDF completed its takeover of the entire West Bank. Naturally, the government’s primary deliberations and decisions focused on the battle for the ‘liberation’ of the Old City of Jerusalem, but there were also decisions that related to the IDF’s operations from the ‘mountain ridge’ to the Jordan River. The facts on the ground, however, were determined more by military actions and less by the government’s decisions.

The government’s most agonizing hesitations concerned the battle on the Syrian front. After the fighting

in the Sinai and the West Bank was effectively over, the government was faced with the choice of whether or not to instruct the IDF to conquer the Golan Heights. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan’s objection prevented a decision on the night of June 8th to conquer the Golan, but Dayan himself changed his mind, and on the following morning instructed the IDF – at his own accord and without government approval – to launch the attack. The last two days of the war, until the takeover of the Golan and the ceasefire, were the most tense and intense days for the Israeli cabinet.

The brief war, which changed Israeli and regional reality, was the result of circumstances that created in Israel a sense of ‘siege’ and a critical existential threat that compelled the Israeli government to act. At war’s end, Israel found itself controlling a territory three times its original size. During and after the war, but certainly not before it, there was an awakening of dormant aspirations to expand Israel’s borders, as well as national, historical, and religious sentiments, first and foremost with regard to the Old City of Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, but also with regard to the Golan Heights and parts of the Sinai Peninsula.

*Yechiam Weitz*

### **Main Changes in the Political Map of Israel, 1965–1967**

The article deals with the main changes in the Israeli political arena during the two years preceding the Six Day War. These changes took place in both the right and left wings of the political map. A major change that took place before the period under discussion was the establishment of the Liberal Party in 1961, on the eve of the elections to the Fifth Knesset. An important change in the period under discussion was the establishment of Gahal (the Herut-Liberal Bloc) >>>

in 1965, which became the main right-wing party and the alternative to the Mapai (Labor Party) regime. In that same year, an alignment of two left-wing parties was formed between Mapai and Ahdut-Ha'Avodav, the Ma'arach. Part of Mapai's members opposed the alignment, left Mapai, and established a new party – Rafi (The Israel Workers Party) under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion. In the elections for the Sixth Knesset, held in November 1965, the Ma'arach led by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol won a major victory, while Rafi was defeated. In the new Knesset began a process of rapprochement between Gahal and Rafi, which were the main opposition parties, and whose goal was to harm the government and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol.

The decline in the status of the government was a main condition for the changes that took place on the eve of the Six-Day War when Gahal's leaders and Moshe Dayan (as Minister of Defense) joined the government.

*Yair Paz*

### **Political and Symbolic Perspectives on Mount Scopus, 1948–1967**

At the close of the War of Independence, the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital became an unviable enclave on Mount Scopus. The university's administration sought an alternative location, while maintaining an attachment to the abandoned campus. This article examines the declared and practical considerations of both the government and the university in maintaining the link to Mount Scopus, in the context of the prevailing geopolitical conditions and new plans being formed in the western part of the city.

The questions addressed are: Was Mount Scopus intended to be used as an internationally valuable bargaining chip, or were there realistic plans for return to the site as soon as this became possible? What was the intent of the practical steps taken? What was discussed behind the scenes? Was the dramatic return of the university to Mount Scopus part of a thought out plan waiting for its time, or was it the result of euphoric rapture? This paper seeks the answers to these questions based on Hebrew University and Zionist archives, news items, interviews, and other research.

The return to Mount Scopus may serve to demonstrate the process by which an 'emergent symbol' is created and takes root in the national consciousness.

*Omri Shafer Raviv*

### **Public Discussion in Israel Regarding the Use of Force against the Civilian Population in the West Bank, 1965–1969**

The article examines public discussion in Israel regarding the use of force against Palestinians civilians in the West Bank following two major events: the renewal of the Palestinian armed struggle by the FATAH movement in January 1965 and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in June 1967. The public discussion in the years 1965–1966 was characterized by a broad public consensus regarding the legitimacy of military retaliatory raids which openly and blatantly targeted the civilian population in the West Bank. Yet, in the years 1967–1969, with the Palestinian population now under Israeli control, many Israelis began to publicly criticize this type of military practice. The article argues that the Israeli normalization policy in the occupied territories and the new possibility for a direct face to face encounter between Israelis and Palestinians created fissures in the strong perception Israelis held vis-à-vis Palestinians as 'the enemy'. After Israel established its control over the West Bank, formal state spokesmen, as well as journalists and publicists, began to observe Palestinian terrorists as a marginal and unrepresentative element in the Palestinian population. As a result, doubts were voiced in public discussion regarding the legitimacy of collective punishment as an instrument used against Palestinian civilians.

*Amir Goldstein*

### **Menachem Begin during the Six Day War and the Rebirth of the Israeli Right**

In the spring and summer of 1967, for the first time since the establishment of Israel, Menachem Begin and his party played a role in the decision-making process in key areas and participated in important state institutions. The article examines Begin's standpoint, involvement in, and influence on government decisions: going to war and the operations conducted >>>

at the various fronts, including the decision to occupy East Jerusalem. The second part analyzes his position in the decisions that the government took after the war and the extent of his influence over its policy 'on the seventh day'. The Right had limited influence both during the war and the decisions taken thereafter, but its presence within the Israeli establishment when events were played out is known to have had meaningful influence. If it seemed that Revisionist Zionism prior to the 'waiting period' before the war had reached the end of its historic path, then, in the wake of the war, hidden and silent elements in the Israeli Zionist consciousness rose to the surface and were consistent with the Right's views and the agenda they wished to promote. They put the Right on a course that eventually elevated its dominant status in Israel.

*Shira Wilkof and Alona Nitzan Shifan*

**'A Historical Opportunity': Landscape, Statism and Competition in the Creation of 'The Walls of Jerusalem National Park'**

At the end of July, 1967, a special government decision approved the creation of a national park on the newly acquired territory surrounding the walls of the Old City – 'The Walls of Jerusalem National Park'. This unprecedented speedy decision led to the establishment of the present-day 1100 square meter (270 acre) 'belt' national park. A longtime dream of the British Mandate, its creation raises fundamental questions concerning the transformation of a British green belt into an Israeli national park, the imagining and production of a national symbolic landscape as negotiated between the various actors involved in the formation of the park.

This article focuses on the historical moment of encounter between the political-national sphere, on the one hand, and architectural and planning pro-

fessional sphere, on the other, as a reciprocal process by which the landscape was imbued with specific national meaning. It sheds light on the fundamental contribution of the park to present-day urban dynamics and on the crucial role of disciplinary knowledge in producing an Israeli national symbolic landscape in this sensitive site. The article is based on analysis of diverse primary sources, archival materials, and interviews with key actors.

*Noam Kochavi*

**The Benefits of Adaptive Diplomacy: Israel, Consolidation of the Special Relationship, and the Conservative Turn in the American-Israeli Partnership, 1967–1973**

The period between the Six Day War and the October War saw Israel conducting a sensitive diplomacy vis-à-vis the leadership in Washington. Jerusalem also proved alert to key opportunities presented by socio-political trends then gathering pace in the United States. By so doing, Jerusalem contributed significantly to the consolidation of a bipartisan support base in its favor among the American populace. This article further argues that while the rapprochement between Israel and the American Right accelerated after Begin's ascendancy to power in 1977, the foundations for the process were laid in the preceding decade. The overwhelming victory of 1967, and the Israeli government's decision to hold on to the occupied territories, both had lasting effects on Israel's image in the United States. Israel lost the support of the New Left, but gained the backing of evangelicals who interpreted Israel's victory in millennial religious terms. The potential of the latter development was not lost on Golda Meir's government and Israeli diplomats in the United States; to their credit, they initiated a deliberate campaign to take full advantage of it.