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Journal of Israeli History
Politics, Society, Culture

ISSN: 1353-1042 (Print) 1744-0548 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fjih20

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To cite this article: Avi Bareli (2007) *Mamlakhtiyut*, Capitalism and Socialism during the 1950s in Israel, Journal of Israeli History, 26:2, 201-227, DOI: 10.1080/13531040701552132

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13531040701552132

Published online: 20 Sep 2007.

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The Journal of Israeli History
Vol. 26, No. 2, September 2007, pp. 201–227

Routledge
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Mamlakhtiyut, Capitalism and Socialism during the 1950s in Israel

Avi Bareli

The debate over mamlakhtiyut *(Zionist republicanism) in the early years of the State of Israel concerned the centrality of the state in the shaping of Israeli society. This article considers whether and to what extent this debate can be seen as a struggle over the possibilities of a "left-wing* mamlakhtiyut," *aimed at an egalitarian politics, society and economy, as opposed to a* "mamlakhtiyut," *based on structural stratification in the distribution of real political, social and economic power. It concludes that although in the short and medium term Israeli* mamlakhtiyut *was egalitarian in its socioeconomic policies, its political and educational policies fostered structural inequality in Israeli society.*

The process of the foundation of the Jewish democratic nation-state is a unique case in many ways, notably insofar as a social democratic party was the main political force during its decisive years. The involvement of various socialist parties in the development of democratic regimes in European nation-states cannot compare with that of MAPAI (acronym for the Workers' Party of *Eretz Yisrael*, the main party of the Zionist Labor Movement). This applies both to Mapai's formative role from 1933 to 1948 in laying the foundations for the future establishment of a democratic nation-state, as well as to its role in the construction of a democratic regime during the early years of statehood (1948–1953). In countries like France, Spain, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden or Germany, nation-states existed before the establishment of socialist parties, which subsequently attempted to shape them in their spirit and promote economic, social and political equality among their citizens. Although certain European socialist parties may have played a role in the establishment of a democratic regime in some existing European nation-states, they were not long-term ruling parties during those crucial years.[1] The uniqueness of the Israeli case, relative to other

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ISSN 1353-1042 (print)/ISSN 1744-0548 (online)/2007/020201-27
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DOI: 10.1080/13531040701552132

examples of the foundation of democratic nation-states, grants particular importance to the debates over *mamlakhtiyut* (Zionist republicanism) in the early period of independence.[2] Hence, an understanding of the Israeli case can provide important insights into the relation of socialist parties with the mechanisms of the modern state.

The debate over *mamlakhtiyut*, the multifaceted and multivocal debate over the shaping of the state during its early years and the centrality of the state in the shaping of Israeli society, took place mainly within the Zionist Labor Movement, although right-wing parties also took part. The fundamental question is whether this debate was an ethereal utopian, semantic discussion or whether it engaged with the status of the values of the Zionist Labor Party in shaping the political institutions of the new democratic nation-state. What concerns us here is whether and to what extent we may speak of a struggle over the possibilities of a "left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*" aimed at an egalitarian politics, society and economy, as opposed to a "right-wing *mamlakhtiyut*" that advocated a procedural and perhaps liberal democracy but was based on structural stratification in the division of real political, social and economic power.

This larger question may be broken down into sub-issues that will be discussed in this article: did the political parties of the Labor Movement engage in a discussion as to how and to what extent political power and influence on the new sovereign power would be transferred to the citizens? In other words, what was the desired measure of equality in the distribution of political power? Was there, in the Israeli case, a discussion of the conditions for the existence of a left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in the political realm as well, or was it restricted to questions of shaping the economy and society? And if such ideological discussion of the political structure of the new state did take place, that is, insofar as there was discussion of the political viability of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*, what was its actual effect? What was the relation between it and the discussion of the socioeconomic forms of *mamlakhtiyut* during the founding years of the state?

This discussion was of decisive import during the early years of Israel and undoubtedly influenced the internal political and socioeconomic form of the state. Even more important, however, were the issues omitted from these discussions, which attest to the limitations of the discourse. I will argue that while the socioeconomic foundations for a left-wing government were laid in the 1950s, its political infrastructure was inadequate. The failure to address political conditions and the lack of arrangements for stimulating political co-empowerment were important factors that led to the early demise of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in Israel. Anti-*mamlakhti* pseudo-socialist (in fact, sectorial) rhetoric obscured and weakened the political debate in the 1950s and prevented effective discussion of the appropriate political bases for a left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in Israel. The anti-*mamlakhti* rhetoric of the debate within the Labor Movement blurred the choice between left-wing and right-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in both the political and socioeconomic spheres. By diverting the discussion to the question of the centrality of the new state in the process of nation-building in the 1950s, i.e. *mamlakhtiyut* itself, the debate failed to address the various political and socioeconomic options for *mamlakhtiyut*.

This focus obscured the discussion that took place within the ranks of Mapai on left-wing or right-wing alternatives to the political and socioeconomic form of *mamlakhtiyut*—i.e. the alternatives to the structure of power sharing and the proper extent of cooperation and equality in *mamlakhtiyut*. The anti-*mamlakhti* rhetoric directed against Mapai reduced the effectiveness of the critical discussion provoked by opposition forces within Mapai over the desired extent of equality in the distribution of political power in the state, which was crucial for the establishment of a long-term left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*. In its broader context, the weakness of this discussion indicates the theoretical weakness of political discourse in the State of Israel and the Zionist movement preceding the establishment of the state. Despite their historical ambitions, the founders of the state and the Zionist leaders did not prepare for their decisive political actions by conducting fundamental theoretical and political discussions, as did, for example, the American founding fathers.

The discussion in this article will move from the debates on the social and economic aspects of Israeli *mamlakhtiyut* to those concerning its political aspects, focusing on social, economic and political equality (or inequality) within Israeli *mamlakhtiyut* during its early years. Although the socioeconomic analysis in sections three and four will, to some extent, stray from the limits of the political analysis of the debates on *mamlakhtiyut*, it is essential for understanding the crucial issue of this article: how did early forms of *mamlakhtiyut* affect the development of equality and inequality in Israel? This discussion may shed light on what was lost with the impoverishment of the debate over the political conditions of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in the early years of the state. Mapai's temporary success in limiting inequality in the early years of independence was part of an important historical opportunity missed by the Zionist Labor Movement.

1. The Three Demands of Israeli *Mamlakhtiyut*

Mamlakhtiyut was the conception guiding the leadership of the State of Israel in the 1950s, as it attempted to reform the distribution of resources and power between civil society and the sovereign power that rose out of what were then known as the "national institutions"—the semi-autonomous Zionist center that had developed in the pre-independence years around the Jewish Agency (led by Mapai since 1933) and the Va'ad ha-Le'umi (National Council) (led by Mapai since 1931). *Mamlakhtiyut* was thus a conception related to the transition from the semi-autonomous voluntaristic politics of the pre-independence years to the politics of sovereignty.[3] In the pre-independence years, the national institutions worked through secondary cultural and movement-based centers. The state leadership demanded that these secondary centers give up certain aspects of their mediatory activity between the state, which now replaced the "national institutions," and the members of the *Yishuv* (pre-state Jewish community), who now became citizens of the State of Israel.

This demand comprised three aspects. The first was the new nation's claim to the ultimate loyalty of its citizens—patriotism. The second was its claim to be the center

of decision-making in normative questions and in issues of appropriation of resources, based on a democratic process encompassing all citizens, which required that citizens obey norms, that is, the laws of democracy and the order they impose. The third was the demand that the relations between citizens and the state be direct, egalitarian and impersonal, and that basic services such as employment, housing, education and health should not be tied to sectorial affiliation or made conditional upon other relationships and acquaintances in civil society.[4] While this demand is always only partially implemented in any given society, in Israel it was of extreme importance.[5] It lent functional meaning to the term *mamlakhtiyut* in the 1950s. The demand for directness, equality and impersonality was, of course, connected to the development of the social functions of the state as practiced by most socialist parties, at the expense of the organizations of civil society.

These three claims, the patriotic, the normative-democratic and the functional, made up the core of the *mamlakhti* concept. The debate over *mamlakhtiyut* in the 1950s revolved around the various positions towards this republican aim at tighter sociopolitical integration. This is a democratic-national rather than merely a democratic-procedural concept, even if it does contain a procedural-legal element; the demand for ultimate loyalty is a clearly national demand, as is the demand that the state be the primary normative arbiter; the latter is, fundamentally, a demand for national unity around the sovereign center, based on democratic legitimacy.

Of course, the formation of civil consciousness, like the consciousness of integrationist *mamlakhtiyut*, is often fraught with tension. On the one hand, the state is made manifest through its sovereign institutions and bureaucratic organizations and becomes increasingly identified with the institutions of government. On the other hand, the state is considered a "common object" (*res publica*), a center of nationalism uniting all citizens, both the supporters and the opponents of the government. The state is thus both the government and the possession of all its citizens, demanding the loyalty of all. This tension was one of the main catalysts of the debates over *mamlakhtiyut*. Many of its opponents saw *mamlakhtiyut* as an illegitimate move of Mapai domination, a partisan appropriation of the *res publica* to serve party interests; the newness and lack of tradition-based legitimacy of the *res publica* and the sovereign power made this appropriation all the more contested.

This definition of *mamlakhtiyut* as a republican endeavor designed to achieve greater integration of social belonging through the realization of the three demands mentioned above is not the only possible one. There are other definitions, which may be suitable for other discussions and do not necessarily contradict the definition provided here.[6] A broader justification for the adequacy of this definition of *mamlakhtiyut* would require an extended discussion, beyond the scope of this article. Here, however, the test of the concept is its suitability to explaining Mapai *mamlakhtiyut* in the 1950s and its social and political perspectives.

Mapai *mamlakhtiyut* was the subject of intense political debates in the 1950s, which in general may be divided into four critiques: first, an anti-*mamlakhtiyut* critique launched by the main left-wing opposition party Mapam against Mapai; second,

the criticism within Mapai against the hierarchical political structure of *mamlakhtiyut*, which accepted *mamlakhtiyut* and left-wing democratic principles, while emphasizing political equality; third, criticism that Mapai was not *mamlakhti* enough in shaping Israeli politics and society; and fourth, criticism of the development of the public economic sector and the limitations placed on the private sector—that is, that the economic and social aspects of *mamlakhtiyut* were too leftist. The critique that Mapai was not *mamlakhti* enough in its policies and the critique of the leftist nature of *mamlakhtiyut* came from the right, from the General Zionists and the Herut Party, the two main parties that stood to the right of Mapai on socioeconomic issues.[7] For the purposes of this article we are concerned mainly with Mapam's anti-*mamlakhtiyut* critique, which will be discussed in the next section, and with the left-wing democratic pro-*mamlakhtiyut* critique within Mapai, which will be discussed in sections four and five.

2. The Equation "*Mamlakhtiyut* = Capitalism"

In the 1950s *mamlakhtiyut* became the prominent banner of David Ben-Gurion and his party, Mapai. The purpose of the State of Israel was, in Ben-Gurion's view, the political self-liberation of the Jews in their sovereign state. Thus, he saw it as crucial that they work as a united front, that is, as a single collective-national body, growing out of a varied civil society, which contained many legitimate disagreements but whose identity would develop around a center of political democratic authority. This was an important aim of Ben-Gurion's activities in the pre-independence period and in the first two decades of the state's existence. In the 1950s Mapai was seen as a central actor in the *mamlakhti* formation of the State of Israel. Only after the political conflict that erupted in 1960 with relation to the succession of Ben-Gurion,[8] and especially after Mapai had passed into the hands of leaders who were Ben-Gurion's political opponents, did *mamlakhtiyut* come to be identified with a rejection of the centrality of political parties in socioeconomic arrangements, especially of the centrality of Mapai.[9]

In 1948, several groups within the Zionist Labor Movement established a competing force, Mapam, a Zionist party with pro-Soviet leanings. Its main components were two communal settlement groups: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, led by Yitzhak Tabenkin, and the Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi movement, founded by veterans of the Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir youth movement, led by Meir Ya'ari and Ya'akov Hazan. Smaller urban groups joined the two movements. In the first general elections, Mapam became the second largest party after Mapai, and was stronger than the two main right-wing parties. The two political organizations of the Zionist Labor Movement thus made up the majority at the time of the establishment of the State of Israel, and remained a major force throughout the first decade of statehood.[10]

At the time, the State of Israel was a new state, birthed by a socialist movement which had an original vision of "constructive socialism" and great potential for mobilizing volunteers for social and national service (through pioneers, *halutzim*).

Mapai and Mapam thus had the opportunity and the wherewithal to shape the politics, society and economy of the new country based on the values and interests of the Zionist Labor Movement.

As we shall see, the *society and economy* were indeed shaped significantly, for good or bad, by the values of the Zionist Labor Movement and the shared interests of its social and political institutions, as well as by the interests of the communal settlement movements, in which Mapam played a prominent role. But, we shall ask, was Israeli *politics* shaped by the values of the Labor Movement? Was the construction and delegation of political power influenced by the movement's aims of partnership and equality? The ability of Mapai and Mapam to do so was, to a great extent, undermined by the conflicts between them, by Mapam's attacks on *mamlakhtiyut* in general, by the silencing of the proposals of an opposition faction within Mapai opposed to the dominant political shaping of *mamlakhtiyut*, and by the hierarchical bureaucratization of the majority party of the Labor Movement. The attacks by Mapam subverted any discussion of the political nature of *mamlakhtiyut*, i.e. of conditions necessary to create a measure of equality in the division of political power.

Mapam was pushed into (or positioned itself in) the opposition during the first years of statehood.[11] Mapai, along with smaller members of the coalition for whom the economy was not the main interest, laid down the basic principles for what we might term the "statehood phase" in the complex process of nation-building begun by the Zionist movement in the first decades of the twentieth century. This political situation led Mapam to severely criticize the path taken by Mapai in shaping the new state and to adopt a harshly negative rhetoric towards *mamlakhtiyut*.[12] Members of Mapam accused Mapai *mamlakhtiyut* of undermining the social achievements of the Zionist Labor Movement in the pre-state years and leading the new country to capitalist social structures. Thus the platform adopted by the second Mapam congress asserted that "the social reformists [Mapai] in Zionism, in abandoning the fundamental principles of the workers' movement, have undermined the independence of the working class, abandoned its positions and subverted its mission in the State of Israel and in the Zionist movement. [Mapai] has cut its links to international solidarity and violated its ties with the workers of the world." The same congress claimed that Mapai was "realizing the bulk of the plan of the bourgeoisie in the internal social realm."[13]

Mapam members presented themselves as attempting to protect the socialist voluntarist sector, which had developed under the British Mandate in the form of the settlement movement and the Histadrut (the general workers' union). The Histadrut was a central organization comprising political parties and settlement movements of the Zionist Labor Movement, as well as social, educational, cultural and urban services; professional trade unions; cooperative unions; and construction firms and industrial plants. Mapam leaders saw Ben-Gurion's *mamlakhtiyut* as an attack on the voluntarist socioeconomic sector, especially the values of equality, communality, and *halutziyut* (pioneering), which were its founding principles, in the attempt to replace them by new capitalist socioeconomic forms. Their trenchant criticism,

opposing socialist voluntarism to capitalist *mamlakhtiyut*, had much resonance in the Israeli political discourse of the 1950s, displacing the more substantial question as to what the proper political foundations were for socialist *mamlakhtiyut*, which was a focus of Mapai discussion during the early years of independence.[14]

Mapam's arguments against *mamlakhtiyut* were focused apparently—and only apparently—on its economic and social meanings: they were directed against the concentration of socioeconomic power in the hands of the state and the transfer of functions to government bureaucracy. This criticism is somewhat puzzling: if socialists tend to foster the development of the state, to work towards socioeconomic centralization and the regulation of the economy and the society through government bureaucracy, how did the left-wing Mapam (or perhaps it was less left-wing than normally presumed?) come to attack the socioeconomic manifestations of *mamlakhtiyut*?

I suggest that Mapam's stance wavered between its socialist positions and its organizational interests. While the former led it to support the socioeconomic manifestations of *mamlakhtiyut,* the settlement organizations that controlled the party and were fearful of Mapai-dominated government involvement in their affairs led Mapam to object to *mamlakhtiyut*. By contrast, the right-wing parties, the General Zionists and Herut, supported greater involvement of the state and its centralized control for a variety of reasons, in particular because they desired to restrict the economic and social role of the Histadrut and the settlement movements within the new society.[15] This, they believed, would prepare the ground for a market economy and the advancement of the economic groups that were associated with it. Thus they sought to establish a socioeconomically right-wing *mamlakhtiyut*, essentially different from Mapai's policies.[16]

While Mapai and the two right-wing parties shared the goal of strengthening the state, their aims were different: Mapai used the state in order to build a broad and strong public sector (governmental and Histadrut), while providing some support for the private sector and attempting to attract private investment from abroad. The right-wing parties, however, criticized the prominent expansion of the public sector. They demanded that the state focus solely on the construction of a strong and independent private sector, free from the competition of the financial, commercial and industrial projects of the Histadrut and free from the influence of its trade unions, while nurturing the social strata that would further develop the private sector. The right sought the almost exclusive transfer of capital, property and government franchises into private hands. Indeed, as we shall see, Mapam accused Mapai of realizing the plan of the right-wing parties in establishing a society and an economy based solely on capitalist foundations.

This accusation was at the center of Mapam's public campaign against the claim of the state, led by Mapai, to be the chief normative arbiter and against the state's "invasion" of areas of activity which, in pre-state years, had been in the hands of groups like the settlement movement, the Histadrut, political parties or other sectorial organizations. Although this campaign was merely "territorial," Mapam's political

rhetoric encompassed all debates over *mamlakhtiyut* under the oppositional categories of socialism versus capitalism. At the time, Mapam was characterized by pro-Stalinist tendencies, yet it described the dependence on the state, political centralization and the universalization of public services as actions encouraging capitalism. "Public destruction" was the title bestowed by Israel Galili, one of the main leaders of Mapam's Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, on the tendencies of *mamlakhtiyut*.[17] Ya'akov Hazan, Meir Ya'ari's comrade in the leadership of the Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi organization of the Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir movement, the largest of the branches of Mapam at the time, accused Mapai of abolishing the Labor Movement. From the speakers' podium at Mapam's second congress in 1951, he declared that "the true choice is between capitulation to the priests of the golden calf in Israel or the establishment of the hegemony of the independent workers' class; the true choice is between Jerusalem and Wall Street."[18]

Nevertheless, Mapam's members were well aware that in order to establish the new society on socialist principles or, at least, to reduce the severe inequality that characterized the first years of the State of Israel, centralized *mamlakhtiyut* was essential, and hence the emphasis on the government's role in planning, supervision and even entrepreneurship, as well as the tighter sociopolitical integration unmediated by secondary centers. Thus, in contradiction to its rhetoric, which depicted *mamlakhtiyut* as the realization of the social projects of the bourgeoisie, Mapam supported increased government planning and supervision of the economy, and even supported the establishment of a large governmental sector of industrial plants.[19] This position encouraged Meir Ya'ari, the leader of Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir in Mapam, to expect that the state would ensure the continued transfer of Jews to Israel, which at the time was called "the ingathering of exiles."[20] This was a task that no voluntary civil society could perform.

Mapam's position wavered between socialist *mamlakhtiyut* and sectorial anti-*mamlakhtiyut*. Its social and national view led it to support the centralization and universalization of social services, but the structural interests it represented led it to negate that very tendency. Sectorial insularity was liable to bring about social inequality and weaken national solidarity, but at that time Mapam was outside the centers of power and was not responsible for the extent of inequality or the lack of integration between the various parts of the new society. It could thus allow itself to focus on the organizational and political interests of the political elites that had established it in 1948. These elites had sectorial interests in freedom from governmental supervision, which led Mapam to negate the *mamlakhti* conception of proper reciprocal relations between the state and the various institutions of the Labor Movement, especially the Histadrut and the kibbutzim.

Thus, as noted, Mapam's criticism of *mamlakhtiyut* attributed to Mapai what we have characterized here as the position of the right. According to Mapam, Mapai's actual policies, like the plans of the General Zionists and Herut, only employed "big government' in order to found a market economy, construct a middle class and bourgeoisie and foster social inequality. This, however, was mere rhetoric designed

to protect Mapam against government encroachment as demonstrated by even a cursory glance at Mapai's main socioeconomic policies in the 1950s, which, in fact, Mapam supported, in contradiction to its own rhetoric. In the following two sections we shall examine several socioeconomic features of *mamlakhtiyut* in the early period of independence and show that, even if they demonstrate contradictory aims, we can hardly characterize *mamlakhtiyut* as the realization of a "bourgeois plan," as the Mapam congress called it. This discussion will prepare the ground for a consideration of the political aspect of *mamlakhtiyut* and the debate surrounding it in Israel's early years of independence.

3. Mapai's Left-wing *Mamlakhtiyut*: Short and Medium Range

Any discussion of Mapai's sociopolitical policies is complicated by a fundamental contradiction. Although the first 15 years of its rule were marked by a dramatic narrowing of social gaps, as a result of the policies of the government and the Histadrut, in this same period Mapai adopted hierarchical and segregationist models in politics and education which ensured that the historical moment of restricted inequality, achieved in the second half of the 1960s, would be short-lived; ever since, the tendency has reversed, resulting in a steady widening of socioeconomic gaps. In the space of this article I can draw only a very general picture of this phenomenon. The following discussion will therefore be limited to those aspects necessary for isolating some socioeconomic conditions that were conducive to left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*, and for evaluating the claim that, from a socioeconomic point of view, the *mamlakhtiyut* of the founding years of the state actually furthered the construction of capitalism and promoted the interests of the classes that would foster it.

In the first years after independence, when the number of Jews doubled as a result of the mass immigration of 1948–1952, severe inequality arose in all areas of social life. Hundreds of thousands lived in tents and in other crowded temporary dwellings, suffered from unemployment or worked in low-paying jobs and had poor access to basic social services.[21] In this period work was distributed in ways that placed the veteran Israelis at the top of the social pyramid and doomed the new immigrants to social inferiority. Jews from Muslim countries (Mizrahim), who made up half of the immigrants of those years, also suffered from a sense of foreignness with regard to the veteran Israelis, mostly of European origin, and thus encountered more social barriers. They also had relatively less education and vocational skills, larger families and more traditional social orientations.[22]

The hierarchical division of labor between immigrants and veterans, the proletarianization of the immigrants and the special difficulties of the Mizrahi immigrants, along with the embourgeoisement and upward mobility of the Ashkenazic veterans, who had greater economic opportunities in the given circumstances, were all the inevitable result of the Israeli government's decision to accept the immigration of entire Jewish communities and masses of displaced persons over the course of only three to four years. Moreover, the Arabs who remained within

Israel after 1949 were, for the most part, poor villagers, isolated from their national and cultural centers.[23] Hence, in the early 1950s it is evident that there was rampant inequality throughout Israeli society, even if we have no recorded statistics to bear this out. The claim that any particular government policy could have prevented the class- and ethnically determined division of labor that created this inequality in the 1950s seems out of touch with the social and political realities of that time.[24] Only a decision to restrict the mass influx of immigrants could have nipped that initial inequality in the bud.[25]

The more important question was, however, what was done from this social low point on, until the mid-1960s. How did the Mapai government deal with the severe social gaps engendered in the early 1950s? Economic indicators show that it succeeded in narrowing the gaps substantially. Fanny Ginor, relying on several studies, shows that in the late 1960s Israel was one of the most egalitarian societies with regard to distribution of income. In 1968/1969, the Gini coefficient measuring inequality in income in Israel was 0.327 (0 = complete equality, 1 = complete inequality). According to a study carried out by the World Bank on the extent of inequality in 81 countries, Israel was ranked fifth in equality, after Sweden, Taiwan, Japan and Great Britain. With regard to the lower 40 percent of the population in income, Israel ranked seventh among the 81. The status of the middle 40 percent in income was similar to that of Sweden. Among countries that underwent rapid development, Israel was more like Taiwan and Sri Lanka in its relatively high equality, as opposed to countries like Brazil, which underwent development similar to Taiwan's insofar as the GNP was concerned (in both cases, it was inferior to Israel's), but was typified by great inequality (0.621 Gini coefficient in 1972).[26] The relatively low inequality was reached not simply through development but through a particular development policy, which was relatively egalitarian.

Most important for our study is Israel's sharp transition from extreme inequality—which resulted from unique historical circumstances—to a far lesser degree of inequality in the mid-1960s, in comparison with both developed and developing countries. From being a society marked by extreme social gaps between residents of the transit camps and the tents, on the one hand, and veteran Israelis, on the other, by the mid-1960s Israel became one of the most egalitarian societies in the world.

This development was hardly self-evident. It was the result of the Mapai government's fiscal policy—the policies of supply, development, employment, taxation and wages—and, to a lesser extent, a result of its welfare programs.[27] Through a policy of austerity and through rationing of vital commodities, the Mapai government imposed egalitarian distribution of the limited supplies by requiring the veteran population to restrict its consumption. Mapai paid a high political price for this policy. Although its success was only limited, it prevented mass hunger and limited other dire social phenomena during the first years of immigrant absorption. Through a consistent policy of intense development and full employment (excepting short periods of unemployment), the Mapai government prevented the development of poverty among wide sectors of the population.[28] This policy remained in force until the economic

recession of 1966.[29] The policy of wage protection, fostered by Mapai from its positions in the government and the Histadrut, was an essential element in the drastic reduction of inequality in income. The crux of this policy was widespread enforcement of the principle of work organized through trade unions and the prevention of wage gaps among the salaried employees of the public sector through a policy of taxation and relatively uniform salaries. Their determination to prevent the development of severe wage stratification in the public sector even led the Mapai government in 1954–1956 to a heated head-on confrontation with the academic white-collar workforce in the public sector. Their representatives demanded differential salaries in response to the erosion of their salaries respective to those of clerks and workers, as a result of the taxation policy, inflation and the salary rankings implemented by the government and the Histadrut. The crisis peaked in a general strike announced by the unions of the academic white-collar workforce in the public sector in 1956, demanding greater stratification between their salary and those of other employees in the public sector. The strikers failed to achieve their aims, and Mapai's salary and taxation policies were ratified. Despite this failure, the strikers and other veteran Ashkenazic Israelis did eventually take advantage of the conditions of the immigrant absorption period to improve their socioeconomic status, including their salaries. Mapai's policies in those years, however, restrained them, thus limiting the inequalities caused through such exploitation.[30] This important case demonstrates Mapai's sociopolitical orientation in this period: relative economic equality and prevention of the development of severe social stratification. The Gini coefficient for 1968/1969 was a result of government policy for the short and medium term, and was enforced despite the opposition of elite groups which later became dominant in Israeli society.

This evidence may be sufficient to disprove Mapam's claim that in the early years of the state *mamlakhtiyut* was the realization of a "bourgeois plan." There are, however, additional facts that demonstrate the extent to which this claim was mere political rhetoric, divorced from all reality. Already in the early 1950s, at a time of severe shortages, the government implemented the first steps towards a welfare state, providing free elementary education to the entire population.[31] In the government and the Histadrut, not only did Mapai not accomplish bourgeois plans, but it even opposed them directly both through its dramatic policy of social equality and by developing the large productive sectors of the government and the Histadrut.[32] In this sense, it was the accusations of the General Zionists and Herut that were justified, rather than the opposing accusations of Mapam. Mapai developed not only the Histadrut's economic projects but also those of the moshavim and kibbutzim, which received subsidized government credit and deeds to large tracts of government land.[33] Financially, they were the "favored children" of the government. We may assume that it was their cooperative and communal nature that motivated Mapai to develop them, since at the time the majority of the kibbutz movement was in opposition to the government and identified with Mapam.

Mapam supported all these socioeconomic aspects of Ben-Gurion's *mamlakhtiyut*. It supported the egalitarian tendencies of the fiscal policy, as well as the policy

of developing the public sector and the cooperative and communal settlements. Thus, we may regard its criticism of *mamlakhtiyut*, i.e. that it was an imposition of capitalism on the State of Israel, as rhetoric that camouflaged its underlying purpose: to protect the political, financial and settlement institutions of Mapam from government encroachment. Mapam's anti-*mamlakhti* rhetoric purported to be directed towards a left-wing socioeconomic order, whereas its real purpose was to gain structural-political protection from Mapai rule, a territorial holding action against the state's encroachment on the settlement movement and the Histadrut, under the unfounded rallying cry "*mamlakhtiyut* = capitalism."

4. Mapai's Right-wing *Mamlakhtiyut*: Long-Term Effects

What was stated in the previous section in respect of the implications of the socioeconomic policies of Mapai applies to the short- and medium-range periods only. In the long range, Mapai's policies in the 1950s fostered structural inequality in Israeli society. This section will analyze two of the important tendencies in this policy in the context of the debate between Mapam and Mapai and within the ranks of Mapai on the politics and economics of *mamlakhtiyut*.

Mapai's socioeconomic policy was, as noted, characterized by a fundamental contradiction between the restraints on inequality in the short and medium term and the adoption of hierarchical and segregationist molds in the political and education systems. The bureaucratic patterns of Israeli politics in those years were based upon Mapai's transformation into an organization that mobilized the population to the goals of the government, explained government policy and acquired support in exchange for personal benefit. The heads of Mapai, led by Ben-Gurion, decided that it would be the center of a democratic-hierarchical politics—a politics based on periodic elections, free press and major elements of formal democracy, but which excluded the popular classes, especially the masses of new immigrants, from effective political influence. Almost the entire leadership of Mapai, headed by Ben-Gurion, adopted this mold of politics, based on Mapai's political machine and the strength of its leaders. They thereby rejected calls from the rank and file to turn the party into a base for a broadly inclusive politics, a mediatory institution through which its many citizen-members could influence the workings of the new political society.[34]

The heads of Mapai assigned it the role of mobilizing civil society through frameworks of power and dissemination of information, while preventing it from working in the opposite direction—as a conduit for bringing the influences of civil society to bear on the ruling powers. Mapai was designed to be a quasi-governmental force, assisting ministers in their connections with the public, rather than an organization that supervised the government or had substantial influence upon it. This decision was an important stage in the process of creating a democratic politics with a hierarchical or elitist structure in the State of Israel.

The decision in favor of political hierarchy helps explain why relative social equality was a short-lived phenomenon. One of the long-term results of these policies was that

the popular classes and Mizrahim, who profited from the successful implementation of Mapai's egalitarian socioeconomic position until the mid-1960s, lacked the political means to protect their relatively favored position and promote their interests in the distribution of state resources. They had no means of protecting themselves from the powerful Mapai political activists and leaders, who were at the top of the political ladder, or the relatively affluent Ashkenazic classes they belonged to. In later years, the established social classes could translate their political privileges, earned under Mapai rule, into socioeconomic benefits without interference. Hence, from the 1970s, we begin to see the emergence of socioeconomic inequality, based on the political inequality that characterized the political structures of the 1950s.

This process of hierarchical institutionalization, with its concomitant socioeconomic ramifications, met with widespread opposition from Mapai members in the early 1950s, but none of the Mapai leaders added their voices to the critique. Mapam also failed to address this issue, and its members did not join the opposition within Mapai. This is not surprising since the two branches of Mapam, Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad and Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi, and their urban branches were also fairly hierarchical bodies, which, at the time, were preoccupied with tightening discipline within their ranks.[35] The political and bureaucratic elites in Mapam were similar to those in Mapai in their view of the desirable political structure: hierarchy. Thus, not surprisingly, Mapam did not attack the hierarchical structure of *mamlakhti* politics or its long-term socioeconomic implications. Insofar as we can judge from its public behavior, it was indifferent towards these issues, and if we extrapolate from the interests of the Mapam elites, they apparently supported Mapai's policies in practice.

The hierarchical-bureaucratic institutionalization of Israeli politics was thus one of the factors that brought the term of relative economic equality in Israel to an end during the 1960s. From the 1980s on, we see a reversal of the historical tendencies of the early years and the development of what a recent parliamentary committee on inequality termed "a cruel trap of permanent and widening gaps" in Israeli society, which were fostered by the dominant parties in Israel from the 1980s.[36]

Mapai's educational policy from the mid-1950s had a similar influence. The policy of educational tracking (*haslalah*), implemented in secondary education by Education Minster Zalman Aranne, channeled the graduates of elementary schools into separate streams, leading either to matriculation exams or to other tracks that did not.[37] This contradicted the policy of socioeconomic equality practiced by Mapai during those years. The long-term effect of this policy was that many graduates of the Israeli education system lacked the capacity to compete in the work market of the 1970s, which lent increasing importance to secondary and higher education, a tendency that only increased in the 1980s and 1990s.[38] This same hierarchical tendency typified the structure of higher education in the 1950s and had a long-term effect on social stratification in Israel.[39] The long-term influence of settlement and housing policy requires further study.[40] To summarize: whereas in the short and medium terms Mapai successfully limited severe inequality, at least in the socioeconomic sphere, already in the 1950s it created conditions leading to long-term structural inequality.

The contradiction between the short- to medium-term versus long-term effects of Mapai's policies merits more extensive discussion.[41] Briefly, this contradiction resulted from the dual nature of Mapai in the 1950s (unlike in other periods), as both a workers' party and a bureaucratic structure whose members belonged to the middle classes and sought to advance their own interests, as long as they did not harm the short-term electoral interests of their party. Insofar as socioeconomic policy was concerned, Mapai's political elite tried to navigate their way between the interests of the social classes it represented, on the one hand, and the middle-class interests of the party leaders and activists, on the other. This gave rise to the gap between its egalitarian short- and medium-term socioeconomic policies and its long-term policies. Political pragmatism concealed fundamental contradictions.

The dual nature of Mapai—as both workers' party and bureaucratic elite—typified Mapam as well, thus impeding its criticism of Mapai's lack of egalitarianism in the distribution of political and educational opportunities. As in Mapai, Mapam's elite was also served by the policies privileging the political elites and the bureaucratic apparatus, even if they conflicted with its ideological identity. In any case, there was clearly no essential disagreement between Mapai and Mapam with respect to the economic and social aspects of *mamlakhtiyut*. Mapam supported the restraints on inequality in the short and medium terms, without criticizing the conditions that led to future structural inequality. This supports the conclusion of the previous section—that Mapam's claims that *mamlakhtiyut* was a means for shaping the economy and the society according to a capitalist model was merely a rhetorical cover for the true aim of the critique—to guard against the state's encroachment on the social organizations represented by Mapam. An examination of all Mapai's socioeconomic policies yields conflicting conclusions, as Mapai of the 1950s was not a uniform political body (as we shall explore further in the next section). For the moment, however, we may confidently state that its socioeconomic policy was certainly not "the realization of a bourgeois plan," either in the distribution of resources or in the distribution of socioeconomic power among the various sectors. One can hardly assume that Mapam members were unaware of this. Thus, whatever the degree to which Mapai's policies contributed towards the creation of long-term inequality in Israel, those policies were not the target of Mapam's criticism.

This complexity, which resulted from conflicting directions in the policies of Mapai and from the rhetorical vacillation of Mapam, should not obscure certain basic conclusions: Mapai employed state institutions towards various and even contradictory aims with regard to social equality during its years in power. But the source of the development of inequality in the early years of the state was not the mere fact of *mamlakhtiyut*—the centrality of state institutions in shaping the society and economy of the state—but, rather, the conflicting social interests that motivated both Mapai and Mapam. The anti-*mamlakhti* rhetoric of Mapam created a false picture, as if the choice were between a "lost socialism" of the pre-state years and so-called *mamlakhti* capitalism. In fact, the choice was between right-wing and left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*. Thus, the anti-*mamlakhti* sectorialism of Mapam obscured both the nature of the

choice and the need of the entire Zionist Labor Movement to clarify the socioeconomic and political form of *mamlakhtiyut*.

5. Left-wing *Mamlakhti* Politics: The Path Not Chosen

The choice between right-wing and left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* had, as we have seen, a socioeconomic dimension, which oscillated between left and right, as determined by the complexities of Mapai politics. Was there also a political dimension to the choice between left-wing and right-wing *mamlakhtiyut*? The relation between the distribution of socioeconomic power and the distribution of political power is clear: as we have seen, the choice of a hierarchical political constellation was an important source of the development of socioeconomic inequality in the long term. But in addition to its socioeconomic consequences, the measure of political freedom, or the nature of the distribution of political power, is also an independent criterion in the evaluation of Israeli *mamlakhtiyut* and its possible forms, whether right or left.

In the case of European socialist parties, although the institutions of the state were at the core of their efforts to limit social inequality, they failed to develop molds for limiting inequality in the distribution of political power among citizens. They administered "normal" representative democracies. But the Zionist Labor Movement and its parties, Mapai and Mapam, were at a historical juncture unique among socialist parties—they were the main political power at the time of the establishment of a state. Thus, they could implement their egalitarian ideology to shape the distribution of political power in the state.

Indeed, many Mapai members thought that from 1948 the shaping of democratic politics in the new state from the ground up was one of the major challenges facing their movement. The party press was replete with demands that the new Israeli democracy be more direct or broader, a democracy of a different mold than that prevalent in the Western world.[42] Thus, an article that appeared as early as April 1949 noted: "We have obtained power, rule and influence, and if these are not distributed over wide areas, and are not subject to the surveillance of a wide public, they will bring forth weeds and thistles and nourish forces of destruction and corruption."[43]

The imposition of the new sovereign authority on the civil society that developed in the pre-state years naturally provoked opposition: Mapam's criticism of *mamlakhtiyut* was one of its important manifestations. Most of the members of Mapai, however, were committed to the *mamlakhti* conception as defined at the beginning of this article. For this reason and, of course, because their party was the party in power, they supported the government's aim of imposing its control over civil society. Many of them, however, demanded that this control be subject to broad democratic surveillance, i.e. that *mamlakhtiyut* be left-wing not only by restraining socioeconomic inequality but also by promoting political equality and empowering the citizens. They supported their government leaders, headed by Ben-Gurion, but wanted them to be subject to greater supervision on the part of elected party institutions.

While approving of the political dimension of *mamlakhtiyut*, they demanded that it be based on as equal a distribution of power as possible.

A common demand among Mapai members focused on the democratization of their party in the hope that a ruling party that was democratic within itself would mold an egalitarian *mamlakhti* politics. This would be a party whose branches would grant influence to the rank and file and whose institutions would be chosen in honest periodic elections and effectively supervise the leaders in government and other centers of power, as well as the party machine, which had acquired substantial power in the early years of the state. Mapai would thus become a force supervising the ruling powers in the name of civil society, rather than merely a group operating within civil society in the name of the ruling government. Since Mapai was such a dominant factor in the shaping of Israeli politics in its early stages, they hoped that by making it a conduit through which prevailing desires of the public would percolate up (that is, by turning it into a vessel of participatory democracy), they would determine the nature of Israeli politics as a whole. Many of them supported increased representation in the new democracy by calling for district-wide elections and for conducting referenda among citizens, members of the Histadrut or party members on important and appropriate issues.

The Mapai leadership, led by Ben-Gurion, chose the opposite direction, that of the hierarchical institutionalization of the party and centralized democratic politics, which conflicted with the tradition of egalitarian participation that Mapai had inherited from its founding elites, those of the Second and Third *Aliyah* (wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine), which took shape during the first two decades of the twentieth century. But the critics of hierarchical institutionalization were not only inspired by the past, by pre-independence days; they also believed that a participatory democracy was essential for the success of the practical tasks of the time—the mass transfer of Jews to Israel ("the ingathering of exiles")—and for realizing the ideological hopes of left-wing Zionism through the politics of the new state. Among the many oppositional voices, there were two groups that voiced particularly trenchant criticism: the Ha-Me'orer (The Awakener) circle and the "Tze'irim" (Young) group. The former was made up of Mapai members who arrived in Israel from the Third *Aliyah* on and had influence on the professional urban intelligentsia, as well as in the Histadrut's daily newspaper, *Davar* (the main organ of Mapai at the time), the Histadrut health system (Kupat Holim), and the Tel Aviv branch of the party. The Tze'irim faction was a group of native-born veterans of the Israeli youth movements. These and other groups' criticism of the emerging hierarchical structure of the Israeli political system expressed the unrealized communalist hopes that had guided the left-wing vision of Zionism since its outset.

One of the main voices of participatory *mamlakhtiyut* was Yehiel Halpern, the leading figure on the editorial board of *Davar* and in the Ha-Me'orer circle. Halpern called for the institutionalization of participatory democracy in Israeli society, and for the process to commence with the reformation of Mapai in this spirit, by turning the rule of the party over to its members. He summarized this demand by means of the key

democratic-republican concept of the "ownership" of the state by the public. In an article published in *Davar* in January 1951, Halpern claimed that the large structural economic gap that was developing between "absorbers" and "absorbees" during the great wave of immigration, combined with the lack of experience of democratic rule and institutions on the part of "those leaving the exiles of Asia and Africa as well as many of the post-World War II immigrants from Europe," threatened the relation of Israeli citizens to their state. Without a sense of ownership, anchored in actual political structures, a sense of belonging was not possible. It was only in Israel that many of the immigrants first encountered a democratic form of government, but they would be indifferent to its values if "they do not see what use they can make of the democratic privileges and freedoms" in alleviating their suffering and fulfilling their basic needs. Halpern argued that the democratic government of Israel did not empower them with partnership in "actual ownership of the state and the party"; it did not enable them to become "masters of their destiny." Halpern also insisted that the immigrants should have possession or part-ownership, not only of the state but of the Labor Movement and its public assets as well.

Halpern's approach blatantly conflicted with that of the veteran Ashkenazim who sought to defend themselves against the "invasion of immigrants" by dominating the political organizations to which they belonged and of which Mapai, of course, was one of the most important. Halpern summarized his criticism as follows:

> If the social and economic inequality between the various parts of the *Yishuv* endures, if the inequality within the working class itself continues to grow, the risk is serious that in our country, too, a rule of despots will arise, supported by and enslaved to foreign capital. With multitudes of destitute and disenfranchised in an officially democratic Israel, the tendencies towards communism and fascism will inevitably flourish among them, with all of the resultant consequences for the fate of Zionism and the mission of the ingathering of the exiles.[44]

One of the prominent features of Halpern's criticism was his insistence on the interdependence of socialism and democracy, on both a logical-conceptual and an empirical-historical level. But Halpern is unique not only because he advanced the oft-repeated claim that socialism could not exist without democratic rule in state institutions but also because he argued—at a critical juncture in the history of the state—that socialism was impossible without a radical democratic approach to the political institutionalization of civil society, including its main organizations, especially the socialist party.

The argument within Mapai between hierarchical and participatory *mamlakhtiyut*, which took place during the first years of the state was, to a great extent, an argument over the political dimension of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*. Those who advocated participatory *mamlakhtiyut* demanded that their party restrain the political inequality that accompanied the increasing power of the political center and the strengthening of the government bureaucracy and Mapai's political machine. Their demand was based on the assumption, later to be proven correct, that there was a close relation between political and socioeconomic inequality. They suggested limiting political inequality

through elements of unmediated democracy, which would be integrated into the representative democratic system then developing in Israel. This was a radical left-wing version of the *mamlakhti* conception, rather than anti-*mamlakhti* anarchism. The members of Ha-Me'orer and the Tze'irim shared the notion that all manifestations of government—sovereign authority in the hands of a democratic government, state bureaucracies and party machineries—were essential tools of movements such as Socialist Zionism that sought change. Thus for them too, compliance with government decisions was a necessary element of political frameworks. They claimed, however, that without participation in decision-making, compliance becomes mere passivity. Their conception was clearly both radically democratic and *mamlakhti*.

Mapai did not follow this path. Although many of its members in various branches of the party demanded that it be adopted, none of the leaders supported the idea. The party press was replete with demands for radical democratization, but the two groups that attempted to formulate a political force based on such claims, Ha-Me'orer and the Tze'irim, were defeated after a short struggle with the party machine operated by the leadership—the Tze'irim prior to the 1951 elections, and the Ha-Me'orer circle shortly after the elections in 1952–1953. The discussion within Mapai on the political dimension of *mamlakhtiyut* was short-lived and ineffective. While the proposals to form new political power relations that would accord with the aims of Socialist Zionist liberation were very popular among the Mapai rank and file during the first years of the state, the party leadership impeded their realization.

In Mapam, on the other hand, there was no echo of the debate taking place in Mapai over the political dimension of *mamlakhtiyut*. The heads of Mapam and its members were indifferent to the proposals raised by the Mapai opposition. Mapam's attacks focused on the socioeconomic aspects of *mamlakhtiyut*, and, as we have seen, they were merely hollow rhetorical devices. As far as the political dimension of *mamlakhtiyut* was concerned, Mapam remained silent. Mapam thus missed a historical opportunity to participate in the discussion of the political dimension of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* in Israel.

The particular channels in which the discussion of *mamlakhtiyut* between right and left took place resulted in *mamlakhtiyut*'s being perceived as an intrinsically right-wing position. Thus, the unique conditions of the developing State of Israel notwithstanding, there was no effective discussion with a practical outcome with regard to the desired political nature of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*. Mapam ignored the question, and although such discussion did take place among the various factions within Mapai, it was marginal and Mapai's leadership had it rapidly silenced. In the end, politics in Israel was shaped in ways fundamentally similar to those of democratic European nation-states—with the same formal and informal patterns for the distribution of political power, the same structure of representative political institutions, and the same political culture, regardless of whether the ruling parties were socialist or non-socialist. In Israel too, the socialist government made an impact, whether for good or bad, on the patterns of distribution of social and economic power, but not political power.

Mapam's anti-*mamlakhti* polemic had a socialist image, but it was in fact motivated by sectorial rather than socialist aspirations; thus, to a great extent, this misleading image derailed the possibilities for the development of a meaningful political discourse that might shape a left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* by creating new templates for the distribution of political power. Within Mapai, there were some preliminary manifestations of such discourse, but it met with indifference on the part of the Mapam leadership. Furthermore, the development of such a discourse was impeded by Mapam's success in portraying *mamlakhtiyut* itself as problematic. Thus, the main axis of the discussion of *mamlakhtiyut* in the Zionist Labor Movement was not "right-wing vs. left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*," in the distribution of political or economic power. The question of hierarchical or participatory politics never became the main issue on the agenda. The short-lived opposition within Mapai in the early days of statehood did not succeed in persuading the Zionist Labor Movement to limit the political inequality prevalent in the early State of Israel. The long-term influence of this failure resulted in the establishment of structural political and socioeconomic inequality in Israeli society.

Summary

As a result of the positions of the Mapai leadership and of the entire Mapam movement during the first years of the state, the unique opportunity presented by the establishment of a state with dominant social democratic forces was wasted. The state that emerged was characterized instead by relatively hierarchical political systems and extremely limited public influence on the government. This failure was shared by Mapai and Mapam—i.e. the entire Zionist Labor Movement. It limited the period of relative success in the reduction of socioeconomic inequality to the short and medium range. Although it created communal and egalitarian social entities—the kibbutz, the moshav, the urban workers' economic sector and the social services operated through the Histadrut—at a key historical juncture the Zionist Labor Movement wound up fashioning a politically hierarchical form of *mamlakhtiyut*. Consequently, the relative socioeconomic equality it fostered did not last, as the people that benefited from it lacked the political means to defend it in later years.

Here we see an important source of Mapai's subsequent socioeconomic turn to the right, beginning in the mid-1960s (through the policy of planned unemployment, known as *ha-mitun* [the recession] in 1966), and exemplified in the policies of its heir, the Israeli Labor Party, which from the mid-1980s culminated in its becoming one of the leading forces supporting privatization. The dual nature of Mapai—as both workers' party and a party dominated by the political-bureaucratic elite of the middle class and identified with middle-class interests—was expressed through the conflict between short-term egalitarian tendencies and long-term social stratification. This conflict could not continue for long. It was finally "resolved" when the Labor Party became the prominent representative of Israeli social elites in its socioeconomic policies as well.

The discussion within Mapai on the political conditions for the existence of stable left-wing *mamlakhtiyut* remained embryonic and ineffective and died out completely within five years after the establishment of the state. It testifies as to what could have been but was not—a productive discourse on the foundations of the new state. This is surprising. The Zionist Labor Movement had been marked by great originality until that point. The situation was unique and provided enormous opportunities: a socialist movement founding a state. But, nonetheless, there was no serious reflexive thought on the process of state-formation. How are we to explain this weakness? Perhaps the answer can be found in what I perceive as the anti-theoretical nature of the Zionist Labor Movement. While it had many practical accomplishments, neither it nor the other streams of the Zionist movement produced preliminary theoretical discussions like those we find, for example, in *The Federalist*, preceding the foundation of the United States of America. At a key historical juncture, this was a grave defect.

Despite the unique circumstances of the Zionist Labor Movement, this failure illustrates the problematic relation of socialism to the institution of the state, an issue of general theoretical import. Under the rule of social democratic parties, European governments generally enlarged their state bureaucracies substantially. Thus, the socialists themselves intensified the problem of power vested in the state apparatus, the question of how the ever-growing bureaucratic state could be effectively controlled by the citizens. This question is essential to the socialist project of liberation: although the intensive use of bureaucratic mechanisms turned the state and its offshoots into major tools of the socialists and their followers, both in Europe and elsewhere, socialists have almost completely ignored this dimension.

Furthermore, the historical project of socialism was designed to empower the citizens. It was this aim that led socialists to develop many of the branches of the modern state. Nevertheless, socialism has not devoted any serious discussion to the question of how to maintain real influence of the citizens on state action. They certainly did not analyze this from the point of view of the socialist liberation project. While some attempts were made to ensure the equitable distribution of socioeconomic power, they failed to develop methods to narrow the gap in distribution of *political* power in the modern state. Hence, the mechanisms of government and representative politics in countries led by social democrats for extended periods of times are not substantially different from those in countries led by other democratic forces.

For this reason, the history of Mapai during the early years of statehood, as a party influenced by many streams of European socialism, is of particular interest. The attitude of socialists to the state is fundamentally ambivalent. On the one hand, they usually tend to develop the role of the state in social and economic arrangements through the welfare state, Keynesian management of the macro-economy, state and public ownership of means of production, and so forth. In other words, they tend towards "big government," towards the socioeconomic and administrative-bureaucratic aspect that we have identified as *mamlakhtiyut* in the Israeli context. On the other hand, the political tradition of European socialism grants considerable weight to the utopia of the abolition of governments, seeing government as a tool

of oppression. This tradition commonly assumes that there is an inherent contradiction between state compulsion and social freedom, and even a democratic government is merely, in the well-known phrase of the Communist Manifesto, a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie or of the dominant social forces. In fact, although the development of the state and government bureaucracy was of greater historical significance in the functioning and policy of socialist parties, the utopian socialist ambivalence with regard to the state also played a part. This is most evident in the actions of the Zionist Labor Movement during the first years of statehood and was also one of the causes of the lack of effective discussion of the political conditions of left-wing *mamlakhtiyut*.

An investigation of the tension between *mamlakhtiyut* and anti-*mamlakhtiyut* in the case of the socialist founders of the State of Israel can be extremely instructive for the more general relation between socialists and the state. Although Socialist Zionism was, in many ways, a unique phenomenon, many aspects that are present (although sometimes in latent form) in other socialist movements were more openly expressed in that movement simply because it was presented with a unique opportunity to realize its plans and build a new political society from the ground up. It can therefore serve as a touchstone for the understanding of the role of the state in socialism, and its failure can shed light, among other things, on the general disregard shown by socialists for the ways in which political power is distributed in the modern state.

Notes

[1] The German Social Democratic Party, which was the governing party at the time of the establishment of the Weimar democracy in 1918, is one such case. This party, however, remained in power for a very short time and faced powerful opposition from both left and right. See Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy*. The Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties also played a role in the establishment of the short-lived Russian democracy in 1917. See Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*.

[2] By *mamlakhtiyut* and its associated adjective *mamlakhti*, I refer to Zionist republicanism, which aimed at tighter social and political integration. David Ben-Gurion and his political colleagues supported this aim and, to a great extent, were guided by it. I will discuss the definition of *mamlakhtiyut* further in the first section of the article. I prefer the Hebrew word *mamlakhtiyut* to its common translation, "statism," in order to distinguish it from the French term *étatisme*.

[3] For the tendency to play down the significance of the categorical historical transition from voluntarism to sovereignty, see Shapiro, *Ha-demokratiyah be-Yisrael*, 119–44.

[4] This, of course, also applies to religious, gender or ethnic affiliation, though these elements are beyond the scope of this discussion. To some extent, this is also the definition of *mamlakhtiyut* given by Horowitz and Lissak in *Trouble in Utopia*, chaps. 2 and 5. See also Kedar, "Ben-Gurion's *Mamlakhtiyut*"; Yanai, "Ha-tfisah ha-mamlakhtit shel David Ben Gurion," 169–89; idem., "Musag ha-ezrahut," 494–504.

[5] This demand was only partially implemented in the relation of the State of Israel to its Arab citizens. See: Jamal, "Al dfusey kinun ha-i-shivyon ha-le'umi be-Yisrael," 145–82; Jerais, *Ha-aravim be-Yisrael*; Greitzer, "Ben-Gurion, Mapai ve-arviyei Yisrael," 151–68.

[6] For example, the definition of *mamlakhtiyut* as civil religion does not contradict the definition provided here, but places greater emphasis on the ceremonial as opposed to the functional aspect. See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel*, chap. 4. For another definition, closer to that proposed here, see the two articles of Yanai, n. 4 above. In *Zion and State*, Mitchell Cohen claims that the *mamlakhtiyut* of Ben-Gurion was a mobilizing concept that resonated with the Bible for many of its hearers.

[7] In elections to the First Knesset in 1949, Herut won 14 of the 120 seats, and the General Zionists 7. See *Divrei ha-knesset* (Knesset record), vol. 1 [1949], first session, booklets 1–17, sessions 1–49, pp. 3–4. In the elections to the Second Knesset, in 1951, the General Zionists won 20 seats and Herut won 8. *Divrei ha-knesset*, vol, 10, first session, booklets 1–17, sessions 1–46, pp. 3–4.

[8] The conflict devolved directly from the question as to whether Pinhas Lavon, in his capacity as defense minister, bore responsibility for a failed Israeli Security operation in Egypt in 1954; Lavon, a possible heir to Ben-Gurion as head of the party and the state, was forced to resign after this failure. In 1960, his demand for a reinvestigation of the responsibility for the failure set off a chain of struggles over Ben-Gurion's succession between groups within Mapai, leading to Ben-Gurion's expulsion from the party in 1964. Afterwards, one of the groups of disputants on this issue, including Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, also left Mapai and founded Rafi (Israel Workers List), with Ben-Gurion as its leader.

[9] In the first phase of *mamlakhtiyut*, in the 1950s, Mapai was the ruling establishment's main agent for recruiting administrative manpower and elites and representing interest groups in return for their support. In its later stages, beginning in the 1960s, *mamlakhtiyut* presented itself as (or perhaps was in fact) a position that sought an end to the party system that the Israeli government had inherited from the pre-state period. Rafi, the party of Ben-Gurion after leaving Mapai, was, in the end, the political body that adopted this version of *mamlakhtiyut*, which developed after the succession dispute of the early 1960s.

[10] Mapai had 46 seats in the first Knesset, and Mapam had 19 (*Divrei ha-knesset* 1: 3–4). Throughout the first decade, they made up, between them, approximately half of the seats in the Knesset.

[11] The two factions of Mapam, which later in 1954 split into two separate parties, only joined Mapai governments during the second half of the 1950s. By then, the political foundations of *mamlakhtiyut* had already been established, and Mapai, as senior partner, had already been shaped into a hierarchical party, while those opposing such arrangements were effectively silenced. On the failure of coalition negotiations between Mapai and Mapam in 1949, see Tzahor, "Mapai, Mapam," 378–99.

[12] For an analysis of the various forms of criticism of Mapai during the early years of independence, see Shavit, "Meshihiyut, utopiyah u-pesimiyut," 56–78.

[13] "With the adoption of a single united platform of principles guiding the organizational structure, the Mapam Congress comes to a close," *Al ha-Mishmar*, 4 June 1951, 1 (Hebrew). For examples of the claim that Mapai was weakening the Histadrut, see Ya'akov Yasur, "'Mo'atzot yitzur meshutafot', hitnakshut ba-igud ha-miktzo'i" ('Cooperative production councils,' an attack against the trade unions), ibid., 29 January 1950, 2; Pinhas Bendori, "Al mishmar atzma'utah ve-khlaliyutah shel ha-histadrut" (Guarding the independence and scope of the Histadrut), ibid., 8 September 1950, 2.

[14] For a more detailed analysis of Mapam's criticism see Bareli, *Mapai*, chap. 9.

[15] See, for example, Yohanan Bader, "Ha-emet al matzavo shel ha-mishtar ha-nokhehi" (The truth about the current government), *Herut*, 26 July 1951; L. Berger. "Ma tihiyeh ha-idiologiyah ha-kalkalit shel ha-memshalah ha-hadashah?" (What will the economic ideology of the new government be?), *Ha-Boker*, 31 August 1951; idem., "Karikaturah shel meshek le'umi" (A caricature of a national economy), ibid., 7 September 1951.

[16] See "Histadrut ha-tziyonim ha-klaliim—mifleget ha-merkaz: Ha-tokhnit shelanu, ekronot le-mishtar alternativi" (The Histadrut of General Zionists—the center party: Our program, principles for an alternative government), *Ha-Boker*, 27 July 1951; "Tnu'at ha-herut: Matza pe'ulot la-knesset ha-shniyah le-hakamat mishtar hadash be-Yisrael" (The Herut movement: The platform of actions for the second Knesset, for the establishment of a new government in Israel), 5. "Mediniyut kalkalit-hevratit" (Socioeconomic policy), paragraph 3, *Herut*, 6 July 1951.

[17] "We will be an active agent in the liberation of the nation, in a covenant with our brethren for world revolution: From the words of Yisrael Galili in the Second Congress of the United Workers Party (Mapam)," *Al ha-Mishmar*, 1 June 1951, 2 (Hebrew).

[18] *Al ha-Mishmar*, 31 May 1951, main headline, "The true choice: Jerusalem or Wall Street," 1, 4.

[19] Margalit summarized it as follows: "The leading and dominant force was to be the governmental sector and governmental capital" working through "a regime of comprehensive planning . . . ." Margalit, "Ha-idiologiyah ha-hevratit," 215, 217. See also the contemporary publications: Yosef Shatil, "Meshek Yisrael—le'an?" (Israel's economy—whither?), *Al-ha-Mishmar*, 20 January 1950, 4; H. Nahshon, "1948–1951 ba-mediniyut ha-kalkalit she Yisrael" (1948–1951 in Israel's economic policy), ibid., 11 May 1951, 3. See also the special issue of *Al Ha-mishmar* on the economy, 10 February 1950, especially articles by Yitzhak Ronkin and Moshe Sneh, 1, 2, 16.

[20] Ya'ari, *Kibbutz galuyot*, 62.

[21] Ginor, *Pe'arim hevratiim*, esp. 47–48; Lissak *Ha-aliyah ha-gedolah*, 95–120. See also Eisenstadt, Lissak, and Nahon, eds., *Edot be-Yisrael*; Ofer, ed., *Bein olim levatikim*; Swirsky, *Lo nekhshalim*.

[22] See Amir, "Hitpathut ramat ha-haskalah"; Lissak, *Ha-aliyah ha-gedolah*, 95–106.

[23] Beumel, "Mediniyut ha-aflayah," 409.

[24] Shlomo Swirsky has not provided convincing arguments to support his thesis that the ethnic division of labor between Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries and those from Europe was the result of government policy, rather than a necessary consequence of the circumstances. See Swirsky, *Lo nekhshalim*, 12–56, esp. 17–20 and 56; Swirsky and Bernstein, "Mi avad be-mah," 120–47.

[25] This was the demand made by many in the absorbing society at the time. See Hacohen, "Mediniyut ha-aliyah ba-asor ha-rishon la-medinah: Ha-nisyonot le-hagbalat ha-aliyah ve-goralam" (Immigration policy in the first decade of statehood: The attempts to restrict immigration and their outcome), in idem, ed., *Kibbutz galuyot*, 285–316. Cf. idem, *Ha-gar'in veha-reihayim*, and *Olim bi-se'arah*.

[26] Ginor, *Pe'arim hevratiim*, 154–57. Ginor relies, among other sources, on Jain, *Size Distribution of Incomes*, and Sawyer, "Income Distribution." In the comparison conducted by Sawyer among the 12 members of the OECD, we find that, according to the data of 1968/1969, Israel was in sixth place, ahead of Canada, Holland, Spain, the United States, West Germany, Italy and France, and behind Sweden, Norway, Australia, Japan and Great Britain. See also Geva and Habib, "Ma'arekhet ha-ha'avarot," 272–83.

[27] On state policy, see Gross, "Ha-mediniyut ha-kalkalit be-Yisrael," 325–41, and "Ha-mishtar ha-kalkali be-Yisrael," 342–51; Barkai, *Yemei bereshit*, 33–52; Halevi and Klinov-Malul, *Ha-hitpathut ha-kalkalit*, 4–6; Alexander, "Kalkalat ha-klitah," 79–93; Plessner, *The Political Economy*, 77–78.

[28] For various evaluations of the economic program of 1952, see Barkai, *Yemei bereshit*, 54–69; Alexander, "Kalkalat ha-klitah," 86; Gross, "Ha-mishtar ha-kalkali," 344–46; idem, "Ha-mediniyut ha-kalkalit."

[29] On the dramatic change in Mapai policy, beginning with the 1966 recession, see Shalev, "The Political Economy."

[30] See Bareli and Cohen, "Distributive Justice"; idem, "Middle Class." These articles are part of broader research being conducted on the confrontation between Mapai and the white-collar workforce. On the upward socioeconomic mobility of veterans in the context of mass immigration, see also Lissak, *Ha-aliyah ha-gedolah*, 95–106.
[31] In Mapai, there was a struggle on this issue. See Doron, *Ha-ma'avak*. Cf. idem, "Ma'anakei ha-ziknah," 300–26. See also Kanev, *Yitzhak Kanev*.
[32] Greenberg, "Ha-kalkalah ha-marhivah," 327–64.
[33] Bein, *Toldot ha-hityashvut*, 95–396; Tzur, *Ha-kibbutz ha-me'uhad*, 2:332–58, 3:9–45; Gvati, *100 shnot hityashvut*, vol. 2, part 3, 9–52.
[34] On opposition groups within Mapai and on Mapam's position on these issues, see my forthcoming book, *Mapai*, chaps. 3, 4, 8. The materials presented in this and the subsequent section summarize some of my conclusions in the book.
[35] See Beilin, *Banim be-tzel avotam*, 119–77.
[36] The Parliamentary Investigative Commission on the Subject of the Social Gaps in Israel, *Hitpathut ha-pe'arim ha-hevratiim be-Yisrael be-esrim ha-shanim ha-aharonot: Taktzir* (The development of social gaps in Israel over the last twenty years: A summary) (Jerusalem: Ha-Knesset, 2002).
[37] Swirsky, *Zra'im shel i-shivyon*; Yona and Saporta, *Ha-hinukh ha-kdam miktzo'i*, 68–104; Zameret, "Zalman Aranne," 295–326.
[38] Shwed and Shavit, "The Occupational and Economic Attainments."
[39] Cohen, "Ha-universitah." See also Shavit et al., "Ethnic Inequality."
[40] The difficulty being that the alternative—concentrations of poor neighborhoods near the large cities—also had negative social significance. See Picard, "Rakevet mi-Kazablanka," 581–614.
[41] I hope to develop this explanation in further studies. The discussion on these issues was provoked through stimulating and extremely helpful debates with Daniel Gutwein.
[42] Bareli, *Mapai*, chap. 7.
[43] Aharon Shechtman (Shamir), "Tnu'ah u-manganon" (Movement and machinery), *Be-Terem*, April 1949.
[44] Yehiel Halpern, "Mi-ketz shavu'a: Kibbutz galuyot ve-shivyon sotziali" (From the end of a week: The ingathering of exiles and social equality), *Davar*, 19 January 1951.

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