

The Multi-Party System of Israel; Some Aspects of Party Politics in the Parliament (Knesset)

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A prominent American political scientist began his primary study of political parties by asserting that modern democracy has been created by the political parties, the "makers of governments," and is unthinkable save in reference to them. To E. E. Schattschneider "the condition of the parties is the best possible evidence of the nature of any regime," and consequently "parties are not therefore merely appendages of modern government; they are in the center of it and play a determinative and creative role in it."¹

Whether Professor Schattschneider's thesis concerning this decisive and determinative role of parties in Western democracy is historically correct, or to be regarded as a gross oversimplification is not the subject of this study. For one example of Western democracy, however, the Schattschneider theme errs, if anything, on the side of understatement. It is accurate to say of the State of Israel that this small country, observing its fourteenth anniversary in 1962, was actually brought into existence by political parties which were organized and developed entities having systematic ideological programs and long rosters of card carrying and dedicated members, years, and in some cases, decades before the coming of statehood. Some of these parties can trace their

actual organizational as well as ideological beginnings back before the turn of the twentieth century. Every one of the political parties represented in the Fifth Knesset of Israel elected in August 1961, with the exception of two small Arab lists, has roots, and at least some organizational history which go back into the pre-state period.

The most obvious feature of political life in Israel is the multi-party character of the system. In the 1959 Knesset election twenty-four lists vied with one another for voter approval, with fourteen officially competing in August 1961. It is easy, however, to convey an erroneous impression from these figures. Many of these lists were no more than just that, and in the past there have been situations in which a "party" list has not even polled as many votes as there were signatures on the filing petitions. Some groups are put forward to help take votes away from some rival organization, and a number of the Jewish parties have established from time to time stooge Arab Affiliate parties, none of which has had any success other than those associated with Mapai. Nevertheless, eleven different lists obtained the necessary 1 per cent of the vote in the 1961 elections to secure one or more parliamentary mandates in Israel's system of election of all 120 Knesset members on a country-wide basis under proportional representation.² From even before the coming of statehood the system has exhibited characteristics that are still very much in evidence today. One major party, "Mapai," The Israel Labor Party, has dominated the scene, polling from 32.2 per cent to 38.2 per cent of the total votes cast in five national elections, and always holding the office of Prime Minister, and the ministries of Defense, Finance, and Foreign Affairs, with an absolute cabinet majority for itself up to the present. With the exception of the 1951 election in which the General Zionist Party (now only one part of the new Liberal Party created in the Spring of 1961) polled 18.9 per cent of the votes, no other party has ever gone above 13.7 per cent of the total tally. The political spectrum also includes the small, anti-Zionist Communist Party with its preponderantly Jewish leadership, and pro-Arab policies, two doctrinaire non-Communist, socialist parties, and the orthodox religious parties which are presently three in number. Two non-socialist secular parties, the

middle of the road Liberals and the nationalist Herut (which is an outgrowth of the Zionist Revisionist Movement and several underground, para-military organizations) complete the picture, except for the two small Mapai-affiliated Arab lists.

The multi-party system of Israel is characterized by a number of remarkable and distinctive features. Jewish parties in Palestine have often been primarily colonization and pioneering associations. The intense partisanship of Israeli Jewish politics requires the vigorous operation of a wide range of social and economic agencies and activities. Daily and foreign language newspapers, youth movements, housing projects, financial institutions, and convalescent homes comprise only a partial list of these activities. Cooperative and collective agricultural federations and movements are associated closely with or controlled by political parties. Indeed, the intense inter-party competition has forced even the non-socialist parties to engage in such activities. Every single Jewish party in Israel operates a whole set of economic and social enterprises.³ Most parties have overseas affiliates which developed as a part of the World Zionist movement; and these overseas groups have rendered varying amounts of financial and moral assistance to the groups in Israel, mainly for "productive, educational, or economic purposes."

Further, parties have stressed ideology and their own historical development within the framework of Zionism. Of great importance is the emphasis upon formal party membership, and the fact that a high proportion of Israeli citizens are heavily dependent upon a particular party for news and information, cultural activities, economic services, and even jobs.* In keeping with the unitary nature of the state, parties are very highly cen-

*The hold that Israeli parties have over their members and supporters is not to be viewed as an unmixed blessing. This characteristic of Israeli politics, including the ties with the overseas affiliates and such operations as the United Jewish Appeal, has been very bitterly denounced by a minor but vocal political organization called the "New Regime." People associated with this movement decry the existing political system as one that is destroying the moral and economic fiber of the country, refer to the political "feudalism" of the parties, and charge that "This people is being bribed by its government," with the only comparable historical example being the debauchery of the Ancient Romans by their rulers.

tralized concerning administrative affairs and decision making, including the selection of Knesset candidates by an internal process of committee decisions, without even referral to the respective party conventions, let alone to the voters in any primary election. Centralized authority and an emphasis upon party discipline and loyalty are stressed. It is not correct to assume, from this, however, that party bosses and managers preside over some uniformly monolithic structure. Recognizing the tendencies in varying degree toward oligarchic control in any system, competing internal factions or groupings are a standard feature of Israeli party life (they are actually institutionalized and formally recognized in the dominant labor wing of the National Religious Party), and with them can come some real freedom of choice and decision for rank and file members.

THE KNESSET IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

With the strong emphasis in Israel upon centralized political institutions, the focus of party life and attention clearly is upon the unicameral parliament, or Knesset, and the Cabinet over which it is supposed to exercise control. The nature and actual operations of politics within the framework of legislative action can be one of the most revealing aspects of the political system of any country. This is particularly the case in Israel, and the nature of party operations in the Knesset very well illustrates salient features of the party system in its strictly political attributes, including strengths and problem areas. It is with this in mind that this study turns to an examination of some aspects of party politics in the Knesset and notes a number of fundamental considerations concerning the position of the Knesset and Cabinet.

The responsibilities of the Knesset are comparable to those of other well developed democratic parliaments operating in conjunction with a cabinet. The Knesset makes the laws for the country, fixes the budget, raises taxes, oversees the operations of the Cabinet (not to the extent that it would like to concerning defense and foreign affairs), and supplies most of the Cabinet's personnel. It provides the only real forum of debate on national issues, important or otherwise. It elects the President of the State

and confirms the appointment of Supreme Court Justices. Under the Transition Law of 1949 as amended it has the power to dissolve itself. Meeting throughout the year except for a number of recess periods, it holds sessions on Mondays through Wednesdays in Jerusalem.

Organizationally the Knesset operates under a system of standing committees in which chairmanships are shared not only by representatives of parties in the coalition partnership, but by some members of the opposition groups, a practice which has contributed to a sense of stability and responsibility. The Speaker and the Deputy Speakers (the number has varied from session to session) are elected by the whole body. With one exception the Speaker has always been a member of Mapai. Procedures in enacting a bill involve three readings, and although almost all bills that survive the legislative mill are Cabinet sponsored, the legislative output for each year has been reasonably impressive. A considerable amount of time is spent in question periods, which assume the nature of debates.

Any citizen of the country who is at least twenty-one years of age and who, as of 1961, could put up a deposit of 5,000 Israeli pounds, can be a candidate for the Knesset. In actual practice most Knesset members have been established Zionist leaders, more often than not from the early waves of migration, and people who have worked up the ladder of party affairs over the decades.⁴ The 1959 Knesset elections seemed to indicate a change in this pattern, and a tendency toward a larger number of younger "M.K.'s," as well as an increase in the previously small number of Oriental Jews of the more recent migrations. This development, however, was more clearly tied in with specific events of 1959. Mapai in that year made a conscious effort to bring forward some new blood, and signs of unrest in the Oriental Jewish communities impelled many parties to add members of those groups to their electoral lists. In 1961 affairs returned to their more normal course, and political newcomers were decidedly few and far between on the established party lists for the seriously contested positions.

The nature of party organization and operations in the Knesset is strikingly similar for all the parties, with the exception of

the two Mapai-affiliated Arab lists.* All of the parliamentary parties function through caucuses which meet regularly, usually once a week. By American standards of party-legislative operations a very high degree of party discipline and control over the respective Knesset "factions" is stipulated under party regulations and formal lines of authority. The nature of this party discipline and control will be examined in more detail, but it should be indicated immediately that the actual flow of authority and decision-making in a party is, of course, heavily influenced by the experienced party stalwarts in the various Knesset groups. These people are skilled and experienced politicians, who devote most if not all of their time to politics and public life. Most of them are members of one or more of the key party committees which have authority under party constitutions or rules to hand down decisions to the respective Knesset factions. Furthermore, a few powerful party leaders can frequently determine or tip the course of action and policy, with the appropriate party committee finally "instructing" the Knesset faction concerning the line to be followed. Ben-Gurion's position in Mapai over the years has been a case in point. When he felt strongly on any individual issue he has had an excellent chance of making his views prevail. Furthermore, even when he has been defeated on issues within Mapai, he frequently still has had opportunities to paralyze the decision if he felt very strongly about the matter in question. Ben-Gurion's position within Mapai in previous years, and apart from predic-

*Arab political parties in Israel have characteristically lacked organizational structure and systematic activities. This may also be noted as a general tendency in the Arab countries of the Middle East (the Communists being the notable exception). Arab list representatives in the Knesset, however, find themselves spending a great deal of time seeing their constituents, who want them to secure favorable governmental action on individual petitions and requests. The author spent some time one afternoon following the 1961 election at the home of Ahmed Daher, an Arab landowner of Nazareth and head of the Progress and Development list. People were there to see him on tax disputes with the government, a special pass to see a Jordanian relative at the Mandelbaum Gate frontier post in Jerusalem, and sundry items. To Daher, every person turned away without satisfaction represented a vote lost. It may be observed that the only general Israeli parties which accept Arabs of the country as full-fledged members are the Communists and the left wing, neutralist Mapam.

tions concerning his future role in Israeli politics, has indeed been a powerful one. The other parties have not produced individual political leaders who have held anything like the commanding public position that Ben-Gurion has enjoyed. Although his has by no means been the only voice of authority in Mapai, it is doubtful whether any other Israeli political leader, except possibly Menachem Beigin of Herut, compares with him in the position and nature of his party leadership.*

PARTY DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATION IN THE KNESSET

It is not possible or desirable for the purpose of this study to deal with each party separately in detail concerning its operations in the Knesset. Examples are brought forward and developed, both as to types of parties and categories of situations or problems that arise concerning lines of authority, activities, and discipline.

The emphasis upon internal party discipline and control in the Knesset, with responsibilities running back to other party organs, is stressed by the parties of the left, with their great concern for ideological foundations as well as affiliated economic institutions and their functioning. Taking into consideration their economic and social bases, the internal discipline and cohesion to be noted within the Knesset groups of Mapam and Achdut Haavoda may partly be attributed to the actual community of interest within these two parties, rather than just to tight discipline exercised over the parliamentary factions by cen-

*Good "Maipainiks" would regard this as an odious comparison. The relations between Beigin, the former Commander of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, and Ben-Gurion are poor indeed. In the formation of coalition governments in previous Knessets, Ben-Gurion never failed to state that he was willing to enter into negotiations with any party in the Chamber except Herut and the Communists. Despite the comments of many observers over the years, it seems to this writer to be open to serious question whether Beigin's position in Herut measures up at all to the commanding image of dominance usually cited in a party which all too frequently has been dismissed as a "neo-fascist" group. Beigin's rhetorical flamboyance, his earlier career, and his posturing in the 1959 campaign have contributed to his image. It is to be doubted, however, whether his position of authority in Herut in recent years has been as great, in important respects, as that of Ben-Gurion in Mapai during the same period.

tral party institutions. These two parties were united originally under the banner of the United Workers Party (Mapam), from an uneasy merger in 1948, until Achdut Haavoda broke away in 1954.* Both Mapam and Achdut Haavoda have had very little turn-over from election to election concerning the personnel in their parliamentary delegations, in contrast to Mapai which, as indicated earlier, made some efforts at bringing in new candidates in the 1959 election.

With Mapam, as might be expected from a relatively homogeneous and certainly thoroughly doctrinaire party of the left, an extremely strong discipline is maintained over its Knesset members. While the parliamentary faction does have authority to go ahead on legislative issues and tactics that are not of primary importance, significant matters are sent to the Secretariat, a key party committee. At one time Mapam tried to establish the principle of requiring its Knesset members to sign a pledge to resign their seats if they should go against the party position. The Speaker of the Knesset, however, let it be known that this would not be allowed without his seeing the offending "M.K." personally and being convinced that the actual decision to resign represented a free choice on the part of the member. On one occasion the party attempted to implement this position, but the attempt failed because of the Speaker's opposition, and no other party has tried it since. Apart from this last issue, the position of the Achdut Haavoda Knesset group is substantially similar to that of Mapam concerning its operations, as well as its relationship to a

*Mapam is a doctrinaire Marxist party, which in the first half dozen years of statehood distinguished itself by a slavishly pro-Communist line. With the Prague treason trials of the early 1950s, which included the conviction of one of its own prominent members, Mordecai Oren, and the departure of a Communist faction, the party has opened its eyes to some extent. It advocates a policy of neutrality for Israel in the world power struggle and takes a conciliatory view toward the Arabs. Concerning Achdut Haavoda, it is hard to see any good reason for its continued existence as a separate party. Its perpetuation can be explained as a matter of historical tradition, the presence of a provincial minded kibbutzim federation which dominates the party, and just plain inertia. The party was closely associated with the Palmach, an elite corps military group during the War of Independence, an association which helps explain Achdut Haavoda's more "activist" position on security questions and its disagreement with Mapam on matters of Arab relations.

non-parliamentary party organ, called the "Centre," or Central Committee.

Mapai, the distinctive "major party" of Israeli politics, deserves special attention. Over the years it has held between forty and forty-seven seats, plus the votes of its small Arab satellite lists. As has been noted earlier, Mapai has dominated the political horizon, furnished the Prime Minister and many key Cabinet members in every Government in the country's short modern history, and has held an absolute majority in every Cabinet. As the "Israel Labor Party" Mapai has strong ideological and historical roots going back to the early migrations from Eastern Europe following the establishment of World Zionism. With a concern for the growth of the labor movement in the urban areas as well as colonization, and economic development of agricultural settlement movements, Mapai has maintained majority control of the powerful labor federation and system of economic enterprises, the Histadrut, a major source of its strength. It is the party which has furnished major leadership during the mandate period, through the difficult times leading to statehood, and afterwards. It is not possible in this study to examine further the nature of this keystone party of the Israeli political scene. It should be noted, however, that Mapai has increasingly moved in the direction of a mass popular party in which traditional positions on the role of labor and the kibbutzim (the collective agricultural settlements) have had to fit more and more into the requirements of the larger community and the continuing responsibilities of governing. Former Prime Minister Moshe Sharett has put it well concerning the practical role of Mapai. "We are a party of action. We are a synthesis between what we want and what we can do."⁵

The Mapai Knesset faction, as is the case with most other party groups, convenes regularly every week of the session. The Secretariat of the party, which includes all of the Mapai representatives in the Cabinet, has authority over the parliamentary group under party regulations, and may tell the latter what action is to be taken, although on some issues matters may be referred to the larger Central Committee for deliberation. As has been pointed out in an earlier generalization, this observation on lines of authority and control in any party can easily convey an

incomplete or even incorrect picture as to actual internal working relationships within the parties. As a matter of actual operations the Mapai Knesset faction does not have to go back to the Central Committee for decisions. The influence of Knesset membership and the practical experience of day-to-day parliamentary activities over a long time confer upon any Knesset group a significant advantage over most other party personnel, even when they are sitting in powerful party organs outside the legislature.

For other secular parties, patterns of organizational authority and of discipline within the Knesset and in relationship to party organs on the outside are not fundamentally different from the groups already discussed. The Liberals have been going through a shakedown period since the creation of the party in the spring of 1961 from the Progressives and the General Zionists.* The two parliamentary factions merged their forces under a dual chairmanship for the remainder of the Fourth Knesset's term, and combined other party organs on the basis of equality for the two main groups, plus additional representation for so-called "third force" elements which were expected to make an appearance in Liberal ranks to a greater extent than the August election results actually indicated. Liberal organization and operations are still on a transitional basis, with permanent arrangements to be established sometime in 1962. Herut shows a higher degree of internal cohesion than the Liberals. Although a few exceptions have been allowed Herut "M.K.s" on questions of conscience, a matter about which more will be said concerning the over-all situation in the Knesset later, on the very great majority of issues members are required to vote the party position. Herut's parliamentary situa-

*The General Zionists were a rather loosely organized free enterprise party, with a class orientation toward merchants, industrialists, citrus growers, shopkeepers, and some professional people, despite the presence of an organized labor section. From a high point of twenty-three representatives in the second Knesset the General Zionists declined steadily in strength to eight. At the present time they constitute less than half of the seventeen Knesset seats held by the Liberals. The former Progressives, with a strong background of professional and middle class people, along with a labor group, have occupied a position near the center of the political spectrum. Endowed with able leadership and a capacity for moderate and responsible political action, the party carried more weight in governmental affairs than its modest parliamentary representation would have indicated.

tion has been less complicated than most other parties in the Chamber, as Herut has never had to accommodate itself to coalition responsibilities in the Cabinet, and has been able to roll along in opposition to Ben-Gurion and company as freely as it sees fit, maintaining that it is the only party that cannot be "bought" by Mapai and turned into "slaves."

As to the religious parties in the Knesset, many similarities and some contrasts emerge when comparisons are made with the secular groups. The National Religious Party, which came into existence in 1956 with the formal merger of the Zionist religious parties, Mizrahi, and the stronger labor wing Hapoel Hamizrachi, is by far the most important of the orthodox parties in the Knesset. It is usually a coalition partner of Mapai, with its approach on religious issues being relatively more moderate than that of the two Agudat factions. Its pattern of Knesset operations is quite similar to other parties, with a regular weekly caucus meeting of the parliamentary faction. Decisions in caucus are taken by a majority vote, with the caucus being empowered to bind members. An individual "M.K." has the right to request that the party's Executive Committee review the decision, but if that body upholds the parliamentary faction, the member would then be expected to accept the verdict or resign his seat.* The Executive Committee and the parliamentary faction may meet jointly, and under party regulations the Executive Committee has the authority to take up and dispose of major political issues such as the matter of joining or leaving the Cabinet.

Concerning the practice of most Israeli parties in maintaining close fraternal ties with counterpart Zionist organizations overseas, it is interesting to note the influence of the World Hapoel Hamizrachi Organization of the National Religious Party on a particularly explosive political issue of a few years back. The matter in question was the so-called "Who is a Jew?" issue of 1958, which so thoroughly aroused Orthodox people. The Cabi-

*As an example of discipline, a leading "M.K.," Yitzhak Raphael, was removed from his seat on an important Knesset committee during the 1960-61 winter session because his personal preference for a new Chief Rabbi differed from that of the National Religious Party. The breach was only temporary, and Mr. Raphael was third on the party list for the 1961 election.

net had accepted the position of Minister of the Interior Israel Bar-Yehuda of Achdut Haavoda that anybody who declared in good faith that he or she was Jewish (or was so declared by the parents) should have such information recorded on his or her government identity card. This involved an important and controversial subject that in a significant sense is still really unresolved. To the Orthodox community Jewish status of children is conferred by the Jewish status of the mother, with the whole issue having far-reaching ramifications for the Orthodox in regard to their conception of the foundations of Judaism, including the unity of the Jewish "people." On June 24, 1958, the National Religious Party left the government over the Cabinet's decision, which would have allowed non-Jewish mothers to register their children as Jewish. News accounts indicated that the party decision was made by the Executive Committee and the Knesset faction. Actually on this issue of such extreme importance to the Orthodox community (the two other religious parties were not in the government) the National Religious Party made a special point of consulting the world federation to which it is affiliated, and the World Hapoel Hamizrachi recommended at the time that the Israeli party leave the Cabinet.

The most Orthodox parties of religious Jewry in the Knesset are Agudat Israel and Poalei Agudat Israel. The latter was created as the labor wing of Agudat Israel, and in its long run interest in agricultural pioneering, housing, and labor affairs, Poalei Agudat Israel consistently has gone beyond the parent body's almost exclusive concentration on the observation and enforcement of the Torah.* The loosening ties between the two groups finally sundered in the summer of 1960 when Benjamin Mintz of

*Militant and aggressive in its orthodoxy, Agudat Israel was devoid of any pioneering drive in its approach to settlement in Palestine. Before the coming of statehood its position could certainly be defined as either anti-Zionist, or at best non-Zionist. Since the 1960 breakup with Poalei Agudat, it has taken steps to form its own labor organization, with a somewhat greater interest in some other economic activities. Poalei Agudat's entrance into Ben-Gurion's government was regarded by the parent body as a completely reprehensible move, a form of "spiritual liquidation." During the 1961 campaign the infighting between the two Agudate parties was generally considered to have been the dirtiest in what was a rugged Israeli election by any standards. Poalei Agudat lost one of its three seats to its rival.

Poalei Agudat led his three-man Knesset faction into the government after secret negotiations with Ben-Gurion and Mapai in which other coalition partners were at first ignored and then finally told by the Prime Minister in the Chamber itself to mind their own business. Although previously appearing on joint electoral lists, even before the 1960 break, the two parliamentary factions were holding individual caucus meetings, although they did consult together regularly. On most matters of parliamentary policy both Agudat parties followed practices quite similar to other Knesset groups, taking into consideration the point that things can be decidedly informal in caucus meetings of only three members.

Both Agudat parties have had a unique situation concerning the question of responsibility to a final authority. Beyond a hierarchy of party committees has stood a prestigious body known as the Council of Sages. The Council of Sages has been the Agudat substitute for the Chief Rabbinate of Israel on important or long-range issues of religion or conduct. Numbering eighteen older rabbis who individually hold a commanding position among their people, selection is by co-optation. Poalei Agudat at first accepted the Council of Sages as the highest constituted authority, but around the period of the Second Knesset the position became one of denying that the party was absolutely bound by Council decisions, although it was willing to go along with such decisions in practice. It should be noted, however, it is not on every issue, or indeed on most issues that the Council of Sages has been consulted. At the time of the formulation of a joint Agudat electoral list for the 1959 campaign, Poalei Agudat, which had become somewhat weakened over the years, had to agree not only that the two groups should act as one party in the Knesset, but that Poalei Agudat would have to accept decisions of the Sages as binding. Concerning the question of the Agudat parties joining the government, the Council of Sages ruled that this could not be permitted in 1960, and consequently Poalei Agudat's decision to go ahead on its own and join Ben-Gurion and associates was a violation of both of its pre-election agreements. For Poalei Agudat the relationship with the Council of Sages has therefore been ruptured, and what the future will bring for the party is difficult to predict.

CONSCIENCE VOTES: THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AND HIS PARTY

The generalization that was made earlier in this study concerning Israeli parties operating in the Knesset under a very high degree of party discipline and control has been borne out by close examination. The impression should not be left, however, that, once the caucus group or some central party committee has spoken, individual "M.K.'s" have absolutely no choice but to go along. Although the members find their individual positions more narrowly circumscribed than is the case in many parliamentary assemblies in other countries, and certainly in comparison with American legislative practices, there is at least the possibility of independent action which can be entered upon and still be acceptable to the respective parties. This is the "conscience vote," a device for which all of the Zionist or Jewish parties have made some provision, however infrequently it may be invoked.

The conscience vote can arise when individual members feel particularly strongly on some matter under debate or vote, which the party itself may not take too seriously, or where the party recognizes that very strongly felt emotions are involved. Items involving relations with Germany understandably fall in the latter category. The question of Israel's accepting reparations from the Federal Republic of Germany cut across various party lines, and exceptions were made for a number of members, either to vote contrary to party positions or to abstain. The issue of the continuation of military government in the Arab districts of Israel is another matter on which parties have not maintained rigid discipline. These situations concerning conscience votes should not be overstressed, and the rank and file Knesset member finds that as a steady thing he has precious little freedom of choice or movement.*

*If things get bad enough, presumably he can leave the party. This is not, however, really a serious option in Israeli politics. Through the fourth Knesset there have been only three instances in which men have left their parties and stayed in the legislature, and these happened in the first years of statehood. One may recall the advice that Speaker Rayburn offered to newcomers to the U. S. House of Representatives: "If you want to get along, go along!"

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Within the limits offered for a presentation of this nature an attempt has been made to examine some aspects of the multi-party system of Israel within the framework of its general nature, but with specific emphasis upon organization, operations, and discipline within the national legislature. Such an analysis was intended to bring out some additional materials and examples which could give insights into other aspects of the parties. No attempt has been made to conduct a study of the extremely complex and detailed question of inter-party relations as exemplified in the process of constructing and maintaining a coalition cabinet.

The Israeli political party system is a tolerably accurate reflection of divisions in Israeli society. However, despite pronounced party differences of a secular, doctrinaire, religious, or historical nature, this observer feels that there is the presence of a basic unity that is strikingly absent in most of the countries of the Middle East. A further examination of the Zionist parties in the Knesset (including the Agudat parties within this circle, despite their earlier background) reveals important elements of underlying consensus and co-operation within the framework of Jewish history and the contemporary problem of survival in a hostile region. As Moshe Sharett put it for Mapai as a party of action, but as it can be applied to the larger political scene, "We are a synthesis between what we want and what we can do."

NOTES

1. E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942), p. 1
2. The election figures and percentages cited are from the following: "Results of the Elections to the Fourth Knesset and Local Authorities," *Statistical Bulletin of Israel, English Summary*, XI (January 1, 1960), pp. 55-65; *The Israel Digest of Press and Events in Israel and the Middle East*, IV No. 18 (September 1, 1961), p. 2.
3. Benjamin Akzin, "The Role of Parties in Israeli Democracy," *Journal of Politics*, XVII (November 1955), p. 515. This study is probably the best over-all discussion of the Israeli party system. Two more recent treatments of first rate importance are the following: Emanuel Gutmann, "Citizen Participation in Political Life: Israel," *International Social Science Journal* (UNESCO), XII (1960), pp. 53-62. Emanuel Gutmann, "Some Observations on Party Politics in Israel," *India Quarterly*, XVII (January-March, 1961).

Somewhat specialized, but well done are the following articles: Amitai Etzioni, "Alternative Ways to Democracy: The Example of Israel," *The Political Science Quarterly*, LXXIV (June, 1959). This article tends to concentrate on the role of Mapai in the system. Amitai Etzioni, "Agrarianism in Israel's Party System," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXIII (1957). The best treatment of the background and development of the socialist parties in Israel is Amos Perlmutter, *Ideology and Organization: The Politics of Socialist Parties in Israel, 1897-1957* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 1957).

4. For an interesting examination of this matter see the following: Milstein, Shraga "Time Begins to Tell—Israel Parliament's Changing Character," *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, IX (September 23, 1960), pp. 18-19.
5. *Interview* with Moshe Sharett, June 18, 1960.

This study represents part of a larger research project on the political party system of Israel that involved research trips to Israel in 1960 and 1961 as well as further interviews and investigation of Zionist materials in the United States. Over 100 formal interviews were obtained in the course of this work. Information secured from the following individuals in one or more interviews per person has been used specifically in this study. Some other members of the Knesset were interviewed, but are not included in this list.

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| S. Z. Abramov, Member of the Knesset, General Zionist and Liberal Parties | Jona Kesse, Member of the Knesset, Mapai, and former Secretary-General of the party |
| Itzhak Artzi, Secretary-General of the Progressive and Liberal Parties | Moshe Kol, Member of the Knesset, Progressive and Liberal Parties |
| Leah Ben Dor, parliamentary reporter for the <i>Jerusalem Post</i> | Moshe Krone, Secretary-General of the National Religious Party |
| Schlomo Israel Ben Meir, Deputy Minister of the Interior and Member of the Knesset, National Religious Party | Yeshayahu Leibowitz, associate professor of biochemistry, the Hebrew University and one of the founders of the New Regime movement |
| Naphtali Ben-Yehuda, Advocate, and national headquarters official of Achdut Haavoda | Eliezer Livneh, former Member of the Knesset, Mapai, and one of the founders of the New Regime movement |
| Ahmed Kamel Daher, Member of the Knesset, Progress and Development list | Eliahu Meridor, Member of the Knesset, Herut Movement |
| Abraham Drori, Member of the Knesset, Herut Movement | Benjamin Mintz, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and founder of Poalei Agudat Israel (deceased) |
| Schlomo Efrati, Secretary-General of Hakibbutz Hadati (kibbutz federation affiliated with the National Religious Party) | Menachem Poruch, Member of the Knesset and Political Secretary of Agudat Israel |
| Israel Gan-Zvi, Secretary-General of the World Organization of Hapoel Hamizrachi | Elimelech Rimalt, Member of the Knesset, General Zionist and Liberal Parties |
| Jona Hatsor, Chief Security Officer and Sergeant-at-Arms of the Knesset through summer, 1960 | Moshe Rosetti, Secretary-General of the Knesset |

Hanan Rubin, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, Mapam
Morris Scheer, Executive Vice President of Agudat Israel in America
Moshe Sharett, Member of the Knesset, Mapai, and former Prime Minister
Moshe Sneh, Member of the Knesset, Communist Party