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Aliya from ‘affluent countries’ and David Ben-Gurion’s descent from the political scene

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ABSTRACT

In May–June 1969, David Ben-Gurion set out on his last trip abroad. Ben-Gurion, eighty-two years old, was aware of his situation and knew what the ravages of time had done to his ability to function. Still, he felt physically fit enough for one last effort. Thus, he spent five weeks visiting Jewish communities on three continents – his longest stay outside Israel since the country had been founded. The worldview that undergirded the journey and lent them purpose and meaning within the whole of Ben-Gurion’s outlook on the Jewish and Israeli reality sheds multifaceted light on the leader in his dotage.

KEYWORDS David-Ben-Gurion; Israel; aliya; Jewish diaspora; American Jewry

In May–June 1969, David Ben-Gurion set out on his last trip abroad. At that time, he was still a Member of Knesset but no longer had a party; his comrades in Rafi joined in the establishment of the Labour Party in early 1968, leaving him on his own. A month and a half before his departure, Golda Meir had been chosen to succeed the deceased Levi Eshkol as Prime Minister, thus ending Ben-Gurion’s nine years of innumerable political struggles in the Labour Movement’s inner councils.¹ Ben-Gurion, eighty-two years old, was aware of his situation and knew what the ravages of time had done to his ability to function. Still, he felt physically fit enough for one last effort. Thus, he spent five weeks visiting Jewish communities on three continents – his longest stay outside Israel since the state had been founded. Two years previously, he had gone on a twenty-four-day sojourn across the United States, Canada, and Britain.² The worldview that undergirded these two journeys and lent them purpose and meaning within the whole of Ben-Gurion’s outlook on the Jewish and Israeli reality sheds multifaceted light on the leader in his dotage.

Central in this article is Ben-Gurion’s attitude towards *aliya* (Jewish immigration to Israel) from the ‘affluent countries’ (shorthand hereinafter as ‘Western aliya’) in the second half of the 1960s, in the context of the Israeli establishment’s

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efforts to expedite it. Below I investigate the circumstances that led to his last trips abroad, present the content of his meetings with Diaspora Jewish communities, and analyse the 1969 trip as the last meaningful historical episode in the career of the 'founding father.' Resonating in the background are Ben-Gurion's crumbling political status and the process of his final retirement from public life. The main question of political ideology that occupied him at this time was how to assure Israel's existence and long-term future; it holds our discussion together as would a crimson thread. Concurrently, the declared jewel in the crown of his activity in the latter half of the 1960s and the early 1970s was the writing of his memoirs.³

In 1948–68, twice as many Israelis emigrated to the West (188,000 souls) as Western Jews who made aliya (94,000).⁴ During the period discussed in this article – the second half of the 1960s – Israel greeted 16,470 immigrants from Europe and America in 1965 (among 30,736 immigrants all told), 9,080 in 1966 (out of 15,957), 5,480 in 1967 (of 14,469), 6,496 in 1968 (of 20,703), and 21,059 in 1969 (of 38,111). This brings Western aliya during these years to 58,585 souls, 49% of 119,976 immigrants all told. Leading the Western aliya inflow was the United States, from which 16,569 immigrants arrived in 1965–1971, followed by France (6,858), Argentina (6,164), Britain (5,201), South Africa (2,780), Germany (2,379), Brazil (1,964), Canada (1,928), Chile (1,468), and the Netherlands (1,117).⁵ Western aliya in these years owed its origins to country-specific internal and external processes; the dominant factors in the Israeli reality at this time – recession and the war – affected it only mildly.⁶

The basic approach that guided those proponents of Western aliya in the Israeli establishment was elucidated by Abraham Ziegel of Mapai, a high-up at the Jewish Agency for Israel who dealt with immigrant absorption. The thing that made Western aliya unique, Ziegel found, is that Westerners 'are able or willing to "make aliya" only if their housing and work are arranged in advance.' In the context at issue, he claimed, waving 'the magic word "equality"' for all immigrants is a hollow slogan. 'We hold that there is a material difference between immigrants who reach us from Jerba, Tunisia, and Marrakech, Morocco, who have no occupation and no technical knowledge, and potential immigrants from England, Holland, and South America, who still lead quiet and complacent lives and who may be dislodged from their current homes only if we create appropriate conditions for their integration up front.'⁷ One should not infer from this that policy on individual and non-mass aliya from the West lacked administrative selection barriers. Such barriers existed and were quantitatively fierce and aggressive. The director of the Jewish Agency Immigration Department, Shlomo Zalman Shragai, noted that among 8,000 who had signed up for aliya in the United States in 1965, only 2,000 actually came; the others were denied aliya visas for reasons of health, social problems, age (above fifty), employment and housing issues, relocation of businesses, and other matters.⁸

The majority of Western immigrants belonged to the middle class. Few were truly affluent; typically, they came with 10,000 USD–\$20,000 in their possession.

The academic schooling that they had acquired in their countries of origin allowed them to practice liberal or technical professions, tailored to roles in the new scientific-industrial era, and they fully knew the value of their potential specific contribution. In comparison with previous waves of aliya, their integration entailed a relatively large capital investment because they came from affluent Western societies. Their epitomic label boiled down to one word: 'quality.' The recurrent questions that troubled them and determined whether or not they would come were, 'What work will I do in Israel?' and 'Will I be allowed to bring new electrical appliances or used ones only?' These matters aside, the labyrinthine 'bureaucratic jungle' – Jewish Agency, governmental, and municipal – was perceived as a prime hurdle to their successful immigration. True to its convention towards each wave of aliya, Israeli society attributed a plethora of pejorative traits and stereotypes to the Western immigrants: pampered and capricious, finicky and competitive, fixated on themselves and their personal comfort – undergoing 'integration *de luxe*,' as was said in the argot of the time.⁹

Western aliya in the 1960s was perceived as a contrast to the 'distress aliya' of Israel's early days due to its ostensible nature as an 'aliya of choice.'¹⁰ Even if recently landed or merely about to arrive, these immigrants' self-awareness prompted them to behave as entitled to inclusion in modern Israeli society's formative elites. Their arrival, along with their being waited for, fomented a state of mind that sought to relax the elitist pioneering orientation and shift the emphasis to an elitism derived from a discourse of rights, benefits, and resource allocation that they were owed due to their willingness to settle in Israel.¹¹ The salient dimension of this aliya was sketched in bold lines by the head of the World Zionist Organization Youth and *Hechalutz* (pionner) Department, Mordechai Bar-On. At a conference of the Zionist General Council in July 1969, Bar-On defined the psychological difference between distress aliya and Western aliya: For the distress-immigrant, aliya is an irrevocable one-way path. Western immigrants, in contrast, know, somewhere in the back of their minds, that 'if it doesn't work, they can always go back to Daddy in Detroit.' Therefore, 'all Western aliya is essentially pilot aliya, an experiment in aliya.'¹²

'The tasks of this generation': more natality, more aliya

The concluding chapter in Ben-Gurion's Hebrew-language book *The Rebirth of the State of Israel*, documenting the annals of 'the First Israelite Republic' (published in mid-March 1969), carried the subtitle 'Toward the Future.' Here Ben-Gurion ruled, 'The security and existence of the State of Israel require two things: more natality and more aliya.'¹³ As one who for years had been preaching more and more Jewish procreation, Ben-Gurion surely cheered when told that four days after he set out in May 1969, Amalia Ben-Harush of Kiryat Ata, for whose family he had once helped to obtain a larger apartment, gave birth for the twenty-first time.¹⁴ A year

earlier, on the occasion of her previous childbirth, Ben-Gurion visited the home of Ben-Harush, who had immigrated to Israel from Casablanca, Morocco, in 1954, and on his way out congratulated her: 'May you be an example for women, if not for all of them then at least for a third or a fourth of them.'¹⁵ The 'example' he had in mind was at least six children per family. Otherwise, he warned, 'The Jewishness of the State of Israel will be at risk of extinction.'¹⁶

Ben-Gurion viewed the importance of Western aliya, our focal topic, exactly the same way. In his book, he estimated that 'as long as the gates of Russia are barred to Jews' exit, the *objective* possibility of mass immigration after Israel's twentieth year exists only from the affluent countries: Western Europe, North and South America, and South Africa, where more than 8,100,000 Jews make their homes.' The paucity of aliya from these countries to date, Ben-Gurion wrote, was occasioned, among other things, by the views of most Israel government ministers and World Zionist Organization (WZO) functionaries, who preferred to see these lands as sources of financial and political aid. Although he believed that aliya should be part of the government's purview, he admitted that his was a minority view. Lacking the motive of distress, he explained, Western Jews refrained from aliya even though 'in the past twenty years Israel has acquired additional allure whose reality and value should not be disparaged.' 'If the people and Government of Israel,' Ben-Gurion hypothesised, 'would treat immigrant integration as one of their main duties as citizens of the state and would pledge the full power of the state and full pioneering zeal' to the acceptance of Western immigrants, the flow might accelerate.¹⁷

In the 1960s, Ben-Gurion affirmed with growing emphasis what he considered the main issue to place on the public agenda: faster demographic growth. He made this evident in a lengthy series of written and oral statements and in his willingness, manifested in his trips in 1967 and 1969, to invest personally, irrespective of the attendant physical hardships, in infusing his worldview with redoubled momentum and importance. Ben-Gurion headed into the lands of affluence and fertility with no systematic plan, no skilled staff of aides, and no loyal coterie of political activists who would embrace his point of view and devote all their time to it. And apart from the baggage of the innumerable political squabbles that he had accrued, his age severely narrowed his field of action and imposed limits on the energy that he could pledge to the cause.

In the course of the 1960s, Ben-Gurion moved in two different circles as he stressed the relative weight of promoting natality and expediting Western aliya as vital to the assurance of Israel's future. The first circle concerned relations between the institutions of state and the WZO and Diaspora Jewry. The second, evolving after the 1967 war, focused on the state-and-security context and the annexation of some of the territory that had been conquered. In these matters, Ben-Gurion was an important articulator of the basic demographic dilemmas that troubled those in Israeli high places at this time, in the

background of which, from a certain stage onward, was the goal of extricating Israeli society from the crisis and the deepening malaise occasioned by the 1966 recession. Unlike the encourage of natality, to which Ben-Gurion devoted much rhetoric in the 1960s without offering any specific input in regard to it – his references to it appeared to be an almost anecdotal obsession – his active involvement in the aliya issue was years long.

In contrast to his earlier travels abroad, which he undertook in his official capacities with the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel or as a respected figure on the Israeli political scene, meetings with senior politicians in matters of state were of secondary importance in his travels in 1967 and 1969. His explicit main target audiences in the latter sojourns were youth, students, and young adults. In these encounters, Ben-Gurion intended to emphasise the importance of Hebrew education, identification with the State of Israel, and aliya.¹⁸ Since both trips were funded and organised by the United Jewish Appeal, obviously the destination countries chosen were the sort that UJA officials saw as potential fundraising targets; Ben-Gurion's presence there, they thought, might incentivise stronger efforts in that direction. One must, however, bear in mind that the choice of the specific destination countries indicates Ben-Gurion's choice of Western aliya – i.e. from the Americas, Western Europe, and South Africa – as a worthy calling for the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion chose to act without having been called to the flag or having been asked by anyone in an official capacity to promote a new lofty idea. His comportment fit into a prevalent trend in Zionist aliya policy at the time; it was also part of his basic belief in the necessity, from time to time, to set a new horizon for the fulfilment of Jewish aspirations in Israel.

Shortly before Ben-Gurion's 1967 trip and the day after

In early 1967, Eshkol wondered what was being done to implement the resolutions of the recent Zionist Congress (opened on 30 December 1964) concerning 'encouraging aliya by personal example' and promoting Western aliya. At this time, the Jewish Agency was under continual assault for the ostensible ineptitude of its staff and the disutility of its continued existence. At a meeting of the Zionist General Council in Jerusalem, Eshkol remarked, 'The aliya data show that most immigrants come specifically from those countries where it isn't the doings of the Zionist Movement that matter' but other factors, foremost 'the very existence of the State of Israel . . . Western aliya is minuscule,' Eshkol stated, 'both in terms of Israel's needs and possibilities and in the sense of the Jewish potential in these lands.' He noted the presence of some 400,000 Jewish students in the Western countries as a case in point and pointed out that even though the Congress had resolved to act to bring academically inclined youth to Israel for study,

only 2,000 of them had signed up for a time-limited stint of study in Israel.¹⁹ The proposal was not novel per se; as early as the first meeting of the Zionist General Council after the establishment of statehood, in May 1949, Ben-Gurion demanded that every Jewish college or university student come to Jerusalem for a year of academic study. (Furthermore, broadening his vision, he went on to propose that whenever Jews build a house in the Diaspora and furnish it, they import some of the furnishings from Israel.) Either way, the editors of *Davar* gave Prime Minister Eshkol their backing in the midst of the deep recession in January 1967, and chided: ‘The Diaspora has gone back to unparalleled complacency – as though the Holocaust hadn’t happened and the state hadn’t come into being.’²⁰

This echoed the way Eshkol characterised Israel at this time: ‘Now a dog-eat-dog spirit seems to have settled over us and we aren’t taking care of the third person who should be coming to us and we should be helping him to fit in.’²¹ In the context of our discussion, it was argued in the Rafi (Israel Labour List) weekly journal *Mabat Hadash* that, in contrast to Ben-Gurion’s incessant attacks on American Zionist leaders for insufficient action on aliya, ‘Levi Eshkol “dropped” this demand and opened a “policy of smiles” toward the Zionist Movement as well.’ Eshkol, the journal alleged derisively, hoped that by sweet-talking he could talk American Jewry into making aliya and settling in Israel. ‘But the result was the opposite: By this *easing* of tension, the Western Jews felt totally absolved of the duty of making aliya’ and were able to pay off the obligation by making donations. In the spirit of Rafi’s critical approach towards defence, the economy, electoral reform, and other matters, *Mabat Hadash* broached a one-and-only way of solving this problem, too: replace the state leadership with a new one that ‘would create in Israel the conditions for *mass absorption* of Jews from the affluent countries.’²² This somewhat predictable conclusion was expressed as part of the routine accusations against the Mapai leadership. However, it was augmented, as though digressively, by the expression of a hope that had far-reaching implications – one that simmers and waits for its redeeming moment – that the time for a mass Western aliya akin to the ‘mass aliya’ from the Islamic countries, which had followed the founding of the state, would come. Such a hope had been voiced in the context of aliya from Latin America, which had ‘leaped from hundreds into thousands’ in the first half of the 1960s and ‘had been received in Israel with cheering, [to wit:] look, Latin American Jewry is on the move; they’re coming, three quarters of a million Jews, all or most of them.’²³ Lurking behind these critical remarks stood Ben-Gurion’s impending visit to the American Jewish communities and protracted discussions in the Mapai institutions about aliya and Israel–Diaspora relations. Clumsily Ben-Gurion tried to link the declining aliya and the escalating emigration, in response to which, ostensibly, he was ‘[heading] to America to explain to the heads of Jewry there the vital need to populate

the Negev,' with his struggle, steadily sinking into oblivion, for 'truth and justice' – a cause that he bundled, to no avail, with the need 'to liberate the state from two ministers [Eshkol and Sapir] who have repudiated truth and justice' due to the Lavon Affair.²⁴

The Mapai Central Committee, which had begun to debate the aliya issue on 27 September 1966, convened amid the spirit of the opening sentence of Ben-Gurion's speech on the topic: 'A curse settles upon us when we start to talk about aliya from the affluent countries.' aliya from 'distress countries,' Eshkol declared, had run aground because 'there's no more distress'; the Jews in those lands who had not yet arrived were staying put 'because they don't think they're in distress.' The debates in the Mapai institutions about 'Israel and exile' were signed off in early February 1967 with a suite of guidelines that delineated the party's actions on the matter. Foremost among them was the demand that the Zionist pioneering youth movements abroad merge and that a joint Government and Jewish Agency authority be set up to deal with immigration and immigrant absorption. The new entities would be based on a statement of principle: 'It is the State of Israel's calling to carry out the task of ingathering the exiles and to serve as a source of inspiration for the Jews in dispersion and the sustenance of their Jewish identity.' The Mapai discussions took place in view of the seesaw of falling immigration and escalating emigration along with 'manifestations of weakening national and pioneering values in both Israel and the Diaspora,'²⁵ even as the economic recession that burst on the scene in 1966 was felt full bore, spreading gusts of melancholy in Israeli public life.

Between May 1 and 25 May 1967, Ben-Gurion visited Jewish communities up, down, and across the United States (Miami, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Boston) and in Toronto and London. After having proclaimed at a January 1967 conference of students of North African origin that 'Israel's main problem is how to attract Western Jews to immigrate,'²⁶ Ben-Gurion asserted on the eve of his departure that '*yerida* [Jewish emigration from Israel/decline] has always been with us. The disaster is the dearth of aliya.' There are two kinds of *yerida*, Ben-Gurion believed: leaving the country and neglecting natality. This reminds us that he had wanted a fourth child but that his wife, Paula, refused. Now, true to his long-held view, he demanded that the WZO Executive surrender the handling of aliya to the Government and pledge its full efforts to encouraging natality.²⁷

Ben-Gurion undertook his 1967 sojourn under UJA auspices and with two concrete objectives in mind: fundraising for the UJA, some of which would be allocated to the high school at Midreshet Sede Boqer, and urging young idealistic Jews to make aliya and, to the extent possible, settle in the Negev. The passionate reception that he received in the communities that he visited shows that they still considered him the most popular Jewish person on earth even though he held no official post. In his typical way, he did not spare his audiences from some acrid

observations. Interviewed on 'Meet the Press,' he described American Jewry as 'having a split personality: 90% American and only 10% Jewish.' Such a provocative quip sent momentary ripples through the thousands of Jewish youth, students, and dignitaries who repeatedly gathered along his itinerary to hear him out and see his facial features, but the value of his verbal challenges was negligible.²⁸

In his speeches, Ben-Gurion continually depicted the paucity of aliya among idealistic youth as a fateful problem for Israel's survival and for the strengthening of its relations with the Diaspora. The young people whom he met in America, he felt, were 'Jewish youth like those of the Second Aliya, full of idealistic spirit,' but were not making aliya because the Zionist Movement had spent the past thirty years not bothering to insist that they do so. He did not expect hundreds of thousands of American Jews to immigrate, he noted, but expressed the hope that tens of thousands could come. Reaching London towards the end of his trip as a guest of the Habonim youth movement, Ben-Gurion confessed that none of the thousands of young people who had packed the conferences where he spoke had promised to immigrate. On the fundraising side of things, in contrast, he had been more successful, even though he was not considered a high-profile fundraiser – in contrast to others who boasted of their excellence in this field, such as Chaim Weizmann, Golda Meir, and Pinchas Sapir. Ben-Gurion usually preferred to leave this aspect of his contacts with Diaspora Jewry in the shadows, but the Jewish Agency took pride in the more than 20 USD million that the UJA had raised during his travels, of which more than 1 USD million would be allocated to Midreshet Sede Boqer.²⁹

The mixing of money and aliya found optimal expression a speech that Ben-Gurion gave after landing back at Lod [today, Ben-Gurion] Airport: 'I met some fine Jewish youth. [...] Thus far, they were taught only to give money. They think that's enough. They don't know Hebrew. But [they] have deep Jewish passion. All that was demanded of the older generation was money. Thirty years – money, money (Paula: That's important too, isn't it?) Just money – it's negative. We need the best of the Jews.' The interjection of his erstwhile American-Jewish wife tellingly reflected the results of the trip.³⁰ In the speech that concluded his excursion, given at Midreshet Sede Boqer in early April, Ben-Gurion asserted that 'there's a good chance of getting more Western aliya.' For this purpose, he continued, 'emissaries of the appropriate level, who can find common language with educated Jewish youth, should be sent out.' Those who debated the matter in the Mapai institutions had reached the same conclusions. Ben-Gurion, however, clung to his view that the Government should deal directly with aliya, leaving the promotion of natality in Israel to the Jewish Agency.³¹

Several days later (9 April 1967), contrary to Ben-Gurion's stance, the Government, basing itself on the recommendations of a Natality Committee

that it had appointed under Roberto Bachi, resolved to establish a Center for Demographic Problems under the Office of the Prime Minister. The new auspice would be asked to act systematically for the creation of a pro-fertility atmosphere and conditions including the assurance of sundry economic dispensations and restraints on abortion, 'in consideration of its cruciality for the future of the Jewish people.'³² In ensuing years, the director of Tel Hashomer Hospital, Chaim Sheba, would call for the establishment of a government ministry for natality. The issue attained such a cross-boundary consensus in Israel's Jewish society that even *Ha'aretz*, in an editorial, would define 'encouraging fertility as a national imperative.'³³ By then, however, such things would be expressed from a totally different historical perspective in view of the Six-Day War.

Military victory creates a new target for fulfilment

The end of the fighting on 10 June 1967 saw Israel's national reality transformed in one stroke. Ben-Gurion had visited the newly liberated Western Wall a day earlier and termed the occasion the second-greatest day of his life, bested only by the day of his aliya.³⁴ The mind-boggling victory honed yearnings for a demographic revolution. In this spirit, Finance Minister Sapir and Aryeh Louis Pincus, Chairman of the World Zionist Organization Executive, hoped that the volunteering and financial support that world Jewry had given during the weeks of anticipation that preceded the war would be followed by 'a mass aliya expedition from the West.'³⁵

A politically different point of view, one that aimed at annexing the newly captured territories and not necessarily at peacemaking, had the declining leader of the Hakibbutz Hameuhad movement, Yitzhak Tabenkin. He proclaimed on June 13, three days after the fighting ended, the need 'to bring over two million Jews in order to secure the achievements of the battles and the stability of peace.'³⁶ Tabenkin was not alone in holding this view. Although some 'thought smaller' than he did, his approach was typical of immediate post-war realities. One who 'thought smaller' was his contemporary Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, wife of the late president Itzhak Ben-Zvi. She, like Tabenkin, believed that 'all the great problems of Israeli's new reality depend on us and on Diaspora Jewry . . . How can we absorb more than a million Arabs in Eretz Israel without absorbing a million Jews?' she wondered.³⁷ A month after the war, the Government and the WZO Executive hurriedly put out a manifesto for Diaspora Jewry (in a spirit that must have reminded old-timers of Yosef Vitkin's exhortation at the onset of the 'Second Aliya' in 1905), preaching return to Paelestine and participation in building it.³⁸

From Ben-Gurion's perspective, it was Western aliya, and not the newly gained territories, that should be the object of Israeli 'fulfilment Zionism' at the dawn of the 1970s. Concurrently, Ben-Gurion was the first Israeli leader –

though preceded by the Research Department of Army Intelligence³⁹ – who sobered up after the flush of victory and presented a detailed public programme that aimed to settle relations between Israel and the Arab states. He did this on the morning of 19 July 1967, as the Government of Israel completed a series of portentous discussions about the future of the newly captured territories.⁴⁰ In this matter, a material contrast seemed to exist between him and Tabenkin and other politicians on both the Right and the Left. In his public statements after the publication of his scheme, which has yet to receive the weight it deserves in academic research and Israeli politics alike, Ben-Gurion persistently related only to the Old City of Jerusalem and the Etzion Bloc area at first, and subsequently to the Golan Heights as well, as places that must remain under Israeli sovereignty (Initially he also mentioned Gaza and pointedly noted that the IDF should remain along the west bank of the Jordan River.)

Those who analyse the particulars of Ben-Gurion's stance and compare them with other political programmes and developments in the intervening decades cannot but reflect on the lucidity of his vision from the historical standpoint. This question, however, is too digressive for this article. For our purposes, thought should be given to the place of the Western aliya issue in shaping Ben-Gurion's views on the territories, since he saw future immigrants and not additional territory as the key to assuring Israel's existence. Without excessive self-modesty, he boasted in an interview in *Yediot Ahronot* that Goldmann had visited him at home on June 17 and admitted: 'Ben-Gurion, where the Zionist Movement is concerned, you were right. Not me. The Zionist Movement failed the test. It didn't keep up with the mighty awakening in the Jewish world and it is unlikely to gain the necessary and welcome utility from this awakening' – namely, large-scale aliya.⁴¹

Ben-Gurion first sketched his updated take on Israel's objectives in a speech before a group of visiting American Conservative rabbis on July 12. On this occasion, he advocated the rapid creation of a Jewish population in eastern Jerusalem (at least 20,000 families, some of whom, he clarified in a speech in the Knesset several weeks later, should be 'Jewish volunteers from the Diaspora') and aliya in the hundreds of thousands, doubling the country's Jewish population within ten to fifteen years. 'It can come only and primarily from America,' he specified, 'and I mean the American continent, the United States and Latin America too, not only from there but from England and France as well.'⁴² Thus he again singled out the Western countries and their Jewish populations as players of existential importance for Israel.

Ben-Gurion repeated the main points, in ritual of sorts that typified the contents of his speeches in his final years and attested to the chasm that had opened between him and decision-making processes, in an amazing occasion at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv. Speaking in succession at one session

on July 24 – as part of the seventieth convention of the Zionist Organization of America held in Israel – were Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin (head of Gahal), and Nahum Goldmann, the incumbent president of the WZO and the World Jewish Congress. The victory in 1967 had created an opportunity to bring together on one stage, civilly, the three representatives of the historical currents in Zionism. In our context, the edifying situation that unfolded at the edge of the convention affords a rare peek at the intriguing moment at which eternal glory changed owners due to the migration of the mantle of charisma from one leader to another.

As Ben-Gurion's oratory dragged on, the audience cut it off by bursting into applause, thereby signalling to him, without excessive delicacy, that he should wind things up. Just then, the triumphant Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, appeared at the entrance of the hall and was greeted with several minutes of uninterrupted rhythmic cheering.⁴³ At the end of that month, after concluding his address at the Knesset plenum about the cruciality of accelerated Jewish settlement in eastern Jerusalem – in his last programmatic speech there as a member of the house – Ben-Gurion met with Mapai secretary Golda Meir. In what he called 'the bitter conversation,' three hours long, the red line that separated them on the march towards the tripartite unification of Mapai, Ahdut ha-Avoda, and Rafi was clearly drawn. Namely: would the convention that would choose the new entity's leadership be held before the next Knesset elections two years onward (as Ben-Gurion demanded) or after them (as Meir proposed)?⁴⁴

Ben-Gurion spent the next six months waging an anguished, hopeless, and exhausting struggle against the imminent party unification. It is fascinating to see that during this time, overlapping his last fervent political confrontation in his decades of political life, and in his attempt to equip Rafi with an alternative agenda in order to preserve its independence and justify its autonomous existence, Ben-Gurion singled out Western aliya (and also, in a minor way, the future of natality) as a challenge to which it should pledge all its passion.⁴⁵ Writing in the Rafi journal in August 1967, Ben-Gurion dedicated this Western aliya to the Negev, northern Israel, and 'any territory that we retain as an outcome of the military victory.' He admitted, however, that he was not 'so naïve as to think that masses of American and West European Jews will all make aliya.' He assigned an abstract and somewhat simplistic sociological-psychological profile to the cross-section of Diaspora Jewry that should accept his appeal: 'a sizeable share that does not belong to the human majority that likes mostly to take and receive, but instead the idealistic minority that has a deep psychological need to give and create, not just for itself.' These Jews would get 'profound psychological satisfaction from joining the national, economic, and cultural revolution that's under way in Israel.' The numerical target that he envisioned would be the aliya of no fewer than 2% of American Jewry per year – around 160,000 people.⁴⁶ The hyperbolic numerical figure that he specified was meant not only to give those

doing the work a vision but also to taunt and isolate Prime Minister Eshkol,” who ‘thinks small,’ who two weeks earlier had proclaimed at the kick-off of the ‘World Economic Advisory Conference’ (which he had initiated) that Israel needed 40,000 immigrants annually ‘to be able to continue building a modern Jewish society.’⁴⁷

After revealing his stance of principle on the Israeli order of priorities in *Mabat Hadash*, Ben-Gurion turned to *Haaretz*, which disapproved of the unification of the Labour Movement, as the new platform for his writings. His articles in this newspaper of the liberal Right avoided mere political issues and focused mainly on aliya and natality. In a series titled ‘One Man’s Opinion about the Future of Israel,’ Ben-Gurion tried to connect the outcomes of the war with his long-held attitude towards aliya. ‘Stepping up aliya,’ he averred, ‘is the main task, the only one that can assure the fruits of our army’s amazing victory.’ Nor did he squander the opportunity to attack Eshkol for dithering in pursuit of the goal: ‘The government has a “head.” Has it also got a leader?’⁴⁸ Given the frothing polemics then under way between the Greater Israel movement – ‘which preaches the indivisibility of Eretz Israel with enthusiasm and with profound Jewish passion’ – and the Peace and Security movement – which sincerely and innocuously advocates peacemaking with the Arabs,” Ben-Gurion charted a course of his own through the political shoals. Both movements, he claimed, were disregarding ‘the main, vital, and definitive tasks’ of the current generation, which the war had made all the more pressing: more Western aliya and more babies. To promote the latter, in his judgement, generous financial assistance for low-income families would be necessary. It should be administered by ‘a Jewish economic institution that is concerned about the future of Jewry’ and should come with ‘educative information’ This would be served up by organisations of Hebrew women and ‘Jewish intellectuals,’ ‘whose duty [it would be] to explain to the woman of European origin, the Jewish woman native to Israel, and every Hebrew woman capable of heeding and understanding the needs of a unique people such as the People Israel, that having four children per family – and as many as possible in the first eight to ten years after the wedding – is her first duty to her people.’⁴⁹

True to his doctrine of ‘stateness,’ Ben-Gurion explained to his readers that the principle of equality of ‘religion, race, and sex,’ as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, precludes the government from dealing with energising Jewish fertility. Promoting aliya and not other immigration, he ruled casuistically, is unique to the Jewish state, but helping only large Jewish families clashes with ‘the essence, calling, and existence’ of Israel as a state grounded in total equality of rights for all its citizens. Therefore, the Government, he believed, had erred by declaring in October 1966 the encouragement of natality as one of its duties, just as it had been wrong in handing over ‘the first and cardinal calling in the proclamation of the State of Israel’ – ‘Jewish aliya and ingathering of exiles’ –

to an entity that is not ‘a governmental institution of the Jewish state,’ the World Zionist Organization.⁵⁰

Eshkol, in his typically ponderous and sarcastic manner, first wondered in an internal party forum whether ‘we are going to go among Jewish towns in the Diaspora and say: give money so that our women will have babies.’ In public, he would allow five months to pass until he could avenge himself of Ben-Gurion in an allusive and cutting way. Responding to Member of Knesset Eliezer Shostak of the Free Center party, who in the spirit of Ben-Gurion’s outlook doubted the correctness of continuing to have the Jewish Agency deal with aliya and the Government with natality, the Prime Minister suggested: ‘Maybe the two of us will go abroad together, or to any other place, and stick out our hands to Sarah-Devorah and ask her to give money so that Chana-Leah will have another kid.’⁵¹ By then, Ben-Gurion had dropped the matter. A week after his article on promoting natality was published in December 1967, the penny dropped in Rafi and its convention resolved to merge with Mapai and Ahdut ha-Avoda to form the Labour Party. Eight days after the new alignment came into being, on 21 January 1968, Paula Ben-Gurion died. Burdened by the double loss – of his political loyalists and of his wife – Ben-Gurion withdrew from participation in shaping Israeli political and public life.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister pushed ahead a motion, conceived by Arye Eliav, that would continue to leave aliya in the hands of the Jewish Agency and establish a government ministry to handle immigrant absorption. The Labour Party adopted it just as the 27th Zionist Congress was about to convene, on June 1968.⁵² The President of the WZO, Goldmann, was so doubtful about the resolution, to which the alternative aimed to deprive the Jewish Agency of responsibility and authority for its main area of activity, that he concluded his keynote speech at the Congress on June 9, expressing the hope that the ‘colossal historical moment of mass aliya from the Western countries and even from Soviet Russia has come.’⁵³ Ben-Gurion did not attend the Congress ‘for health reasons’ and settled for sending the following felicitation to Pincus: ‘For God’s sake, don’t make resolutions that will remain on paper only.’⁵⁴ Antipodally, both leaders of the new party held fast to their first political victory there, each in his own way. Eshkol announced at the Congress, ‘Talk about aliya has always had a general, principled meaning, in the sense of [the Biblical verse] “The more they tormented it, the more it multiplied and expanded.”’ This time, however, ‘concern for Israel’s strength [...] its possibilities, and risks is strongly related to the aliya problem.’ Finance Minister Sapir, out of character, waxed poetic in his speech at the Congress. The dilemma, he mused, concerns ‘With what will we enchant the diverse Jewish public, from the easy-going shop-keeper to the student who’s mounting the barricades right now [alluding to the ongoing “student uprising” in Western Europe and the United States] but

to whose heart Jewish nationhood does not always speak? With what shall we attract him to Israel?⁵⁵

As the Labour Party prominenti agonised about how to respond appropriately to the problem of the overdue Western aliya, Ben-Gurion offered his own vision. ‘Large-scale aliya,’ he contended in his last important speech before the Knesset plenum, marking Israel’s twentieth anniversary, ‘is conceivable only from the West: North and South America, Western Europe, and South Africa.’ If these countries had generated only ‘minuscule aliya’ thus far, he raged, ‘it’s our own fault’ and, primarily, the fault of the Government, which had been neglecting immigrant absorption since the dawn of independence. Still, he noted confidently, ‘Great and growing aliya is possible [here speaking in the spirit of the Hakibbutz Hameuhad movement’s outlook on the “great and growing kibbutz”] – if the finest of the Israeli intelligentsia brings to the great Jewish intelligentsia in America and Western Europe the great Jewish and pan-human luminance that emanates from our enterprise in this country.’⁵⁶ Again Eshkol did not concede defeat; as the Knesset plenum debated the establishment of a Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (which Yigal Allon was to head) in July 1968, he stated that ‘the Jews in the affluent countries do not expect us to tell them about vision only,’ as though ‘it’s only for lack of vision that these people aren’t coming – that’s the easy way out.’ Eshkol then flagellated Shimon Peres, who preened about his visits to Jewish communities in the US, Britain, Switzerland, and South Africa in the past year. In the main, however, he addressed his remarks to Ben-Gurion, who, as we recall, had gone on a tour a year earlier that attracted passels of headlines describing him as ‘the leader of the Jewish world’:

Those who teach us this [vision] thing have had frequent opportunities to go abroad recently. Did they influence or bring anyone apart from some professor or scientist who was needed for this or that project, whom we delivered straight to the project? [For the cognoscenti, this was a veiled reference to the nuclear reactor in Dimona.] Is it only with the help of the vision that they brought one more person or five more people to Israel? I doubt it.⁵⁷

If so, what should be done? Here Eshkol had no real answer. Peres had one of his own: ‘Let’s make Israel the central university of the entire Jewish people’ by establishing four or five universities that tens of thousands of Jewish students, some from the Diaspora and others from Israel, would attend. To prove his point, Peres invoked a Chinese proverb (‘If your vision extends one year, grow wheat. [...] If it extends 10,000 years, grow and develop men.’) Eshkol, however, brandished a saying of his own, a Ukrainian one: ‘Once everyone becomes an estate owner; you won’t be able to find a single swineherd.’ And the moral: ‘Let’s all be professors; what about work?’⁵⁸

For the time being, the national leadership had nothing to offer Western immigrants but better housing. The construction of this housing would have the

additional effect of helping the country climb out of its recession. Giving these immigrants high-quality housing, however, posed a two-edged dilemma: The American immigrant who is offered a three-room flat, Abraham Ziegel told the heads of the Labour Party, calls it 'slummy' and demands four rooms. Even if he settles for a three-room apartment, the thirty-two families that are sharing thirty-eight square metres with six kids will rebel. 'There's going to be a revolution in this country,' Ziegel predicted.⁵⁹

Preparing for the trip in 1969

After shedding his political attire almost for good and taking nearly a year off, Ben-Gurion plunged into the cause of Western aliya again. He did so in keeping with Eliahu Dobkin's harsh and mordant description peers who gripe continually about the 'affluent exile' being an address only for money and not for immigrants: 'More than 250 Yishuv [Israeli] leaders – ministers, Members of Knesset, generals in the IDF, mayors, scientists – who have been raiding Jewish centres around the world since the state was established, head out for fundraising matters, but you can count on the fingers of one hand the people of this stature who have visited the Diaspora for aliya, education, and youth activity.'⁶⁰

Ben-Gurion's visit to the Diaspora in the middle of 1969 was part of an orchestrated and far-reaching tendency in Israel establishment ranks to reap dividends in the coins of donations, image, and diplomacy from the way the world perceived the great victory of 1967. In early May 1969, for example, Ruth Dayan, wife of Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, completed an informational visit to the UK and Mexico, so highly praised that staffers at the Israel Embassy in the latter country said in amazement that 'Ruth Dayan did the work of seven ministers.'⁶¹ In a similar tenor, the Ben-Gurion loyalist Meir Bareli promised in *Davar* that 'the State of Israel is following with keen interest the first Israeli Prime Minister in his sojourn.'⁶² Back then, world public opinion commonly saw Israel as a young country immersed in the contemporary scene and exuding a spirit of success, hunger for development, and inspiration. The first post-war years were often portrayed in Israel and elsewhere as the zenith of the fulfilment of the Zionist vision.⁶³ Ben-Gurion's trip was meant to tie into the expectation and cultivation of hope for a wave of Western aliya after the 1967 war, an optimistic corollary of the Diaspora's sense of concern for and empathy with Israel on the eve of the war, the sweeping enthusiasm with which the Jewish world greeted its results, and the phenomenon of thousands of Western volunteers – Jews and non-Jews – who flowed into the country to get a close view and experience the magic of victorious Israel. Indeed, some 7,500 Jewish volunteers reached the country in the year following the war and around 2,800 of them stayed on in various settings in April 1968.⁶⁴

Ben-Gurion's tour of the Diaspora in 1969 was something of an attempt to intervene before total somnolence took over. It began at the initiative of Avraham Zivion, director of Midreshet Sede Boqer, who tried to persuade him to accept an invitation to visit four Latin American countries in the belief that the affection for him among Jews there would create fertile soil for fundraising for the Academy. In his diary, Ben-Gurion wrote in August 1967: 'I said I wouldn't be leaving Israel this year and I am utterly disinclined to visit Latin America as long as I cannot speak Spanish.'⁶⁵ For lack of choice, Zivion set out on his own for a round of visits to Argentinian Jewry in July 1968. Returning to Israel, he brought Ben-Gurion a 'poncho' (an alpaca fur scarf, as it turned out) – a gift from the Buenos Aires community – and an invitation to visit. Replying, Ben-Gurion did not reject the invite but explained that he was currently occupied with writing and would be willing to talk it over once he freed himself up. (As for the poncho, he reacted by blurting: 'I need it like a hole in the head.')⁶⁶

Ben-Gurion's trip in 1969, from May 7 to June 13, was sponsored by the United Jewish Appeal and was based on some thirty meetings in Jewish centres in six countries across three continents: South Africa, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, the UK, and Switzerland. Formally, the trip had no concrete political goals. Its official purpose was fundraising, an obvious thing in view of the identity of the organising institutional host, the UJA. This time, however, Midreshet Sede Boqer was not expressly defined as one of the intended recipients of the donations. True to form, Ben-Gurion pointedly sidelined his involvement in financial matters. Publicly, most of his time would be reserved for pronouncements on public matters and encounters with ideological and educational issues, foremost aliya and Israel's future. These causes had been on the Mapai agenda in the context of South American Jewry since August 1947, when Josef Karlenboim (Yosef Almogi), returning from a visit to Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, informed the members of his party bureau: 'Everything they have there cries out to us like a ripe fruit that's withering on the branch.'⁶⁷ Since then, the Labour Movement had been overexerting itself in treating these Jewish communities as focal points on its agenda of fostering pioneering in and immigration to Israel. On the eve of his departure, when asked whether such a long trip would not exhaust him, Ben-Gurion replied with his typical dry humour: 'I'll be travelling, not walking.'⁶⁸

South Africa first, then Brazil

Ben-Gurion landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, on May 7. Some 200 children from Jewish schools formed an honour guard that greeted him at the airport. The excitement and exaltation that gripped the Jewish communities that he visited would be mentioned over and over in the breathless

press reports that followed him around.⁶⁹ At a press conference the day after his arrival in Johannesburg, Ben-Gurion categorically denied accounts that appeared in the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* the previous day, to the effect that Israel had five or six nuclear bombs and was buying uranium in South Africa and Argentina – two of the countries that Ben-Gurion was about to visit on his current trip – to replace that formerly supplied by France. Reacting to the allegation, Ben-Gurion termed it ‘utter nonsense.’⁷⁰ On May 14, he went to Cape Town for a tête-à-tête with the Prime Minister of South Africa, John Forster. In the course of the meeting, when Forster explained ‘how good it is for the blacks in South Africa,’ Ben-Gurion reminded Forster that Moses had had a black wife. Presumably if not certainly, this reportage, originating with the Israel Consul General in Johannesburg, did not really capture the entire contents of their talk.⁷¹ More accurate was the observation by the consul, Yitzhak Unna, that should be attached to the beginning of every trip Ben-Gurion took, that for South African Jewry ‘it was an experience that will not be forgotten for many years. Most of the crowd welcomed the trip as a historical event and a farewell visit by the “Old Man” with the Jews of the Diaspora.’⁷² From this standpoint, there was definitely a disparity between what the visit produced and Ben-Gurion’s expectations and the demands that he expressed during it.

In a speech before Jewish schoolchildren in Cape Town on May 14 (Israel’s twenty-first Independence Day), Ben-Gurion said that without instilling the Hebrew language and culture in the young generation – with emphasis on familiarity with the Bible as a source that underscores the national dimension of said language and culture – one doubts that ‘the labour of building the country for ninety-nine years will pay off.’ He expressed his hope ‘that we will multiply by means of aliya and multiply in the way that people ordinarily multiply, by fertility.’ To his young listeners, he explained that their efforts in school ‘are only half the job, and we hope that you will complete this half-job and then, immediately and eagerly, set to the other half: to make aliya, to live in Israel, and to build there.’⁷³ For the Jewish schoolchildren, students, Zionist youth-movement counsellors, and thousands of Jews who attended his series of speeches in South Africa, the main thing was neither Israel’s nuclear ability nor the guest’s opinion about the future of the territories that had been conquered in the 1967 war. They did listen politely to his remarks about education, aliya, and their connection with the Land of the Bible, but what really mattered to them was the historical experience of the human encounter with the person whom the South African press crowned as ‘the lion from Israel,’ in an allusion to his mane of white hair and the audacious-leader image that the state’s ‘founding father’ projected.⁷⁴

Ben-Gurion landed in Brazil on May 18 and spent eight days there. The ‘modern prophet,’ as the newspapers that covered his visit called him, met

with the Governors of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo States and with the President of Brazil in the national capital, Brasilia. All of them showered him with affectations of honour. The Governor of São Paulo even proclaimed to his face: 'You're one of the giants of this century!' Ben-Gurion, affecting modesty, replied, 'Don't exaggerate.'⁷⁵ In his meetings with the Brazilian leaders, he repeatedly expressed astonishment over the failure of the South American countries to merge into a single continental state. 'You have the same religion,' he said, 'the same language [given the similarity of Portuguese to Spanish], and the same governing philosophy.' A united Latin America, he hypothesised, could become an influential world power much like the United States. Perhaps in a nod to his dignity, his hosts did not respond in kind by expressing wonder about why all the Semites had not united under one flag. At a press conference upon his arrival in Rio de Janeiro, Ben-Gurion related that as a Jew he was optimistic by nature; he believed the vision of the prophets would come to pass and Israel would be safe and secure one day. 'But I don't know when,' he added.⁷⁶

In the midst of the visit, three members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (one of them a Swede, prompting Ben-Gurion to ask in bemusement, 'Why a Swede?') were arrested in Copenhagen, Denmark, for planning to assassinate him during his stay in Rio de Janeiro. A short time earlier, the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Jumhuriyya* had reported that Ben-Gurion 'recruited mercenaries for Israel' in the course of his visits to the Jewish world. After the fact, the Israeli press interpreted this as a way to prepare the ground for justifying the assassination in world opinion. Responding to this in an editorial, the newspaper *Davar* noted that political murder was common fare in the Arab world and also, of course, in the United States, which had endured a series of notorious assassinations in the 1960s. Anyone who plotted to murder Ben-Gurion while the latter was in the middle of a cultural mission abroad and no longer had a role to play in political life, *Maariv* wrote in an editorial, intended to assail one of the greatest world leaders of his generation and the individual who symbolised the Jewish rebirth.⁷⁷

Ben-Gurion's speeches in Brazil were attended by some 30,000 Jews (out of a Jewish population of around 120,000). He spoke in Yiddish in his encounters with elders, and his remarks were translated into Portuguese for the few who did not know Yiddish. He spoke in Hebrew with teenagers and schoolchildren, and his remarks were translated into Portuguese for the majority, who did not understand Hebrew. He spoke in 'English to the goyim,' and his remarks were translated into Portuguese because hardly anyone knew English.⁷⁸ Tailoring his messages to his audience, the frugal socialist Ben-Gurion defined the population of Israel as 'an affluent community, its life not much different from life in Western Europe. You can get rich in Israel, the standard of living is rising, new social types are coming into being there.' To assure the country's long-term survival, Ben-Gurion

claimed in his speeches, it was necessary to instil respect for Israel among the nations of the world, and this could not be attained, in his judgement, if Israel were to become a corrupt Levantine state like the other countries of Asia apart from China and Japan. He expressed confidence that Israel would achieve international esteem if it were to become an economically developed country that encouraged cultural achievement in the spirit of the 'unique people' vision, if it looked out for the poor, and above all if it would not remain a 'little Jewish sect' but a community numbering at least half of world Jewry. It all depended on the Jews themselves – he hammered into the ears of his tens of thousands of listeners – and foremost on Western Jews' decision to make aliya. In his speeches, he repeatedly stressed the interlocking fate of Israel and the Diaspora, neither of which could possibly exist without the other. This entailed a heightened effort to prevent assimilation, and this could be accomplished by imparting Hebrew education and Hebrew language, including knowledge of the Bible in its original language, to the young generation.⁷⁹

From Brazil he went on to Uruguay, Argentina, and Britain, and the contents of his speeches in these countries were similar. Three days after he returned to Israel, a 'convention for social and immigrant-absorption needs in Israel' was opened in Jerusalem at the initiative of the Jewish Agency Executive and under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Israel. Ben-Gurion was not invited to speak there – an omission that attested more than anything else to his current status in the Israeli public scene. Instead, in late June he received 258 immigrants from South America, who had reached Haifa port aboard the *Theodor Herzl* ship.⁸⁰

Conclusion

On 18 May 1970, a year after his three-continent journey, Ben-Gurion resigned his seat in the Knesset, which he had held uninterrupted since the time the house was founded. The press accompanied his departure with a tone of fatigue mixed with the realisation that it may have come too late. The press also acknowledged something to Ben-Gurion's credit that rarely appears on the list of his historical virtues. By knowing how to employ debate in the Knesset plenum as an instrument of governance, he made a meaningful contribution to shaping the patterns of parliamentary governance in Israel.⁸¹ Contacts towards returning him to the bosom of his political home in the Labour Party (along with the return of Pinchas Lavon) and arranging his participation in the party's first elected convention in early April 1971 were unsuccessful. So were his struggles for Western aliya and the encouragement of natality; no one in the Israeli political landscape inherited his role in, and his attentiveness to, these causes.

The honour and appreciation that were bestowed on Ben-Gurion in the second half of the 1960s, especially in his two trips abroad in 1967 and 1969, did not mask the basic fear that beset him in his last days. He was not overly impressed by the military achievements and geographical conquests of the 1967 war. Instead, he adhered to his longstanding belief that Israel would survive only if the Jews wanted it to and if Israel would be a modern, flourishing country that projects its moral qualities inwardly and outwardly. For these purposes, the contribution of Western Jewry was urgently needed – not necessarily in funds but via aliya and active participation in the struggle to assure the country's image as a just society. In parallel, he sought the imparting of the Hebrew education and culture then coming into being in the state of the Jews to the Jewish communities that would remain in the Diaspora. It was his overall view that Israel's survival depended not only, and not necessarily, on the Jews already living there but also, and sometimes even more importantly, on those who had not yet chosen to fuse their personal fate with the general fate of the Jewish people and its historical territory in the Land of Israel.⁸²

In a speech before some 4,000 participants in a gathering at the Hebraica Club in Rio de Janeiro on 19 May 1969, Ben-Gurion said that the oneness of the Jewish people depended on the maintenance of intimate relations between the Diaspora communities and Israel. A sociologist had once asked him – so Ben-Gurion told his listeners – whether great scientists such as Albert Einstein, to give one example, would be willing to make aliya. Would they not prefer America, Britain, or France? Ben-Gurion, perhaps not having forgotten Einstein's refusal to serve as Israel's second president after the death of Chaim Weizmann in 1952, replied: "There are those who wish to receive and benefit, and there are those who want to create and give."⁸³ In actuality, Ben-Gurion had heard this formulation from the famous nuclear scientist Robert Oppenheimer in 1958 and, sharing the story with an audience of Conservative rabbis in 1967, he added: "Really, I knew it no less than he did but I wanted to hear it from him."⁸⁴

Notes

1. On Ben-Gurion last years see, Goldstein, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, 1191–325; Segev, *A State*; and Shilon, *His Later Years*.
2. Later, Ben-Gurion flew to Charles de Gaulle's funeral in Paris on November 1970, and to a short and fruitless flight to Belgium on February 1971. The target was to participate in the conference of the Jewish community representatives for the USSR Jews which took place in Brussels.
3. Tzahor, *Vision*, 235–57.
4. DellaPergola, "Some Reflections on Migration," 10.

5. *Immigration to Israel, 2007–2010*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem, 2012, 28, 32–7.
6. DellaPergola, Rebbun and Raicher, “The Six-Day War,” 18–25.
7. Abraham Ziegel to Ben-Gurion, January 7, 1963, Ben-Gurion Archives, Sede Boker (hereinafter: BGA), Correspondence Division.
8. Shlomo Zalman Shragai, “With the End of the Mass Migration and the beginning of the Individual Migration,” August 1966, The Moshe Sharett Labour Party Archives (hereinafter: LPA), 2-932-1966-408, 1–2.
9. See, for example, Haim Ya’ari. 1966. “How We Receive Immigrants from America,” *Davar*, January 28; Dov Goldstein. 1967. “Recession in Immigration: Ascension in Hopes,” *Maariv*, August 4.
10. *Davar* Editorial, 1966. “The Western Immigrants: Essential Connection Link,” *Davar*, March 21.
11. Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israel*, 366.
12. Zionist General Council meeting, June 30–7 July 1969, Jerusalem 1969, 104.
13. Ben-Gurion, *The Rebirth*, 885. On Ben-Gurion’s obsession regarding natality see, Rosenberg-Friedman, “David Ben-Gurion and the ‘Demographic Threat’,” 742–66.
14. “Amalya Ben-Harush Gave Birth for the 21st Time,” *Maariv*, May 12, 1969.
15. “The 20 Children of Ben-Harush Family Caused BG to Become Emotional,” *Davar*, August 15, 1968.
16. “Ben Gurion Calls to Encourage Families to have 6 Kids Each,” *Davar*, December 9, 1968.
17. Ben-Gurion, *The Rebirth*, 888–90.
18. “Ben-Gurion Went to USA,” *Davar*, March 2, 1967; and “Ben-Gurion Went to Meet with Jews from Three Continents,” *Maariv*, May 7, 1969.
19. Zionist General Council meeting, January 8–15, 1967, Jerusalem 1967, 10–1; “The 26 Zionist Congress Decisions,” The 26 Zionist Congress minutes, Jerusalem 1965, 648, 655.
20. *Davar* Editorial. 1967. “Diaspora and Israel in front the Zionist General Council,” *Davar*, January 6; Zionist General Council meeting, May 6, 1949, BGA, Speeches and Articles Division.
21. Knesset Plenary, July 5, 1966, *Divrei Haknesset*, Vol. 48 (1966), 2029.
22. “The Immigration Crisis is the Israeli Government Crisis as Well,” *Mabat Hadash*, January 11, 1967. Emphasis mine.
23. Moshe Kitron. 1966. “The Migration that is Kicked,” *Davar*, September 28.
24. David Ben-Gurion. 1967. “An Answer to Israel Cohen and Golda Meir,” *Ha-poel ha-Tzair*, February 14.
25. Mapay Central Committee, September 27, 1996, October 27, 1966, February 2, 1967, LPA; Mapay Diaspora Committee, November 30, 1996, December 18, 1966, February 2, 1967, *Ibid.*, 2-7-1966-86.
26. “Ben-Gurion: The Main Problem – Migration from Affluent Countries,” *Davar*, January 6, 1967.
27. “In America I Won’t Speak about Eshkol,” Rafael Bashan Interview with Ben-Gurion, *Maariv*, February 24, 1967; and “Ben-Gurion: The State of Israel need to take Direct Responsibility to Migration,” *Davar*, April 3, 1967.
28. Philip Ben, 1967. “Impression Welcome to Ben-Gurion upon Arriving to New York,” *Maariv*, March 2; “Ben-Gurion: The American Jews have Divided Personality,” *Maariv*, March 6, 1967; and Shlomo Shafir. 1967. “Ben-Gurion Travels in the USA,” *Davar*, March 24.

29. Ben-Gurion Speech at the American Conservative Rabbis Conference, July 12, 1967, BGA, Speeches and Articles Division; Hagai Eshed, "Ben-Gurion Arrived to London," *Davar*, March 23, 1967; and "Ben-Gurion is Back," *Davar*, March 26, 1967.
30. Micha Limor. 1967. "A Colourful Welcome to BG at Lod," *Maariv*, March 26.
31. "Ben-Gurion: The State of Israel need to take Direct Responsibility to Migration," *Davar*, April 3, 1967.
32. Government Meeting, April 9, 1967, Israel State Archives (hereinafter: ISA).
33. Dr. Haim Shibba. 1969. "The State Must Express her Gratitude to the Woman Giving Birth – with Substantial Reward," *Maariv*, January 24; and "Birth Encouragement – National Need," *Haaretz*, May 5, 1969.
34. Pinhas Yurman. 1967. "Ben-Gurion Near the Western Wall," *Davar*, June 9. See also Kabalo, "City with no Walls," 160–82.
35. "After Financial Enlistment there will be Mass Immigration from the West," *Davar*, June 20, 1967.
36. Tabenkin, "Real Peace," June 13, 1967, *The Lesson*, 8.
37. Davis (ed.), *Jewish Diaspora*, 69–70.
38. "A Call for Jews in the Diaspora to Immigrate and Participate in Building the Country," *Davar*, July 13, 1967.
39. See, Gazit, *At Key Points*, 154–5, 425–8.
40. David Ben-Gurion. 1967. "No Mediation but Direct Negotiations," *Davar*, June 19. The article was published also in *Maariv*, *Haaretz*, etc.; Government Meeting, June 18–19, 1967, ISA.
41. "Goldmann Said that I'm Right," *Yediot Ahronot*, June 23, 1967; June 17, 1967, BGA, BG diary.
42. Ben-Gurion Speech at the American Conservative Rabbis Conference, July 12, 1967, BGA, Speeches and Articles Division; Knesset Plenary, July 31, 1967, *Divrei Haknesset*, Vol. 49 (1967), 2775.
43. "Ben-Gurion: The Six Day War isn't the Last War," *Haaretz*, July 25, 1967.
44. August 1, 1967, BGA, BG diary; "Mapai Will Complete the Union Talks during this Week," *Davar*, August 2, 1967.
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