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Source: *Israel Studies*, Spring, 2004, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 125-148

Published by: Indiana University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30245747>

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## From “Both Banks of the Jordan” to the “Whole Land of Israel:” Ideological Change in Revisionist Zionism<sup>1</sup>

A CENTRAL IMPLICATION OF CONSTRUCTIVIST ONTOLOGIES of nationalism is that nationalist ideologies may not be static. This article explores this implication by tracing the shift in one aspect of Revisionist Zionist ideology: their conception of the appropriate borders of the Jewish nation-state.<sup>2</sup> It asks how the definition of the homeland as the area encompassed by “both banks of the Jordan,”<sup>3</sup> gave way to a situation where one is hard pressed to find Revisionist politicians laying claim to the Gilead, Bashan, Amman, or other parts of the East Bank of the Jordan. The emergence of the map-image identifying the Jewish homeland as the territory west of the Jordan within the Revisionist movement in the mid-1950s and its slow and uneven displacement of the original map-image, suggests that conventional accounts which rely on adaptation to a new reality, generational change, or elite manipulation need to be integrated into the battle for hegemony among nationalist movements in order to account for change.

The battle for hegemony takes place because each nationalist movement within a society believes that its vision of the nation and the nation-state is the *true* one.<sup>4</sup> As a result, nationalist movements fight for “a particular crystallization of the state’s physical, human, or cultural boundaries.”<sup>5</sup> The Revisionist Zionist movement was, and is, an active contender in the battle for hegemony within Zionism. From its very inception, its members perceived it not as another Zionist faction or even as a loyal opposition, but as the true Zionism, the authentic voice of the Jewish world and the carrier of the real interests of the Jewish nation.<sup>6</sup>

The battles between the Revisionist movement and the other Zionist movements to define the community, like battles for hegemony more

generally, are more than metaphorical and like real fights, it matters who wins and who loses; in this contest, losing is particularly significant. As Gramsci noted, the defenders of an ideology under attack “are not demoralized, nor do they abandon their positions, even among the ruins, nor do they lose faith in their own strength or their own future. *Of course, things do not remain exactly as they were . . .*”<sup>7</sup> The losers in a battle for hegemony (except for rare cases in which they are physically exterminated—e.g., the Mensheviks) face a choice of fading into irrelevance or attempting to re-enter the legitimate political spectrum. This was the situation in which the Revisionist movement found itself in the mid-1950s. In response, they embarked on a series of tactical changes that, perhaps unintentionally, contributed to a shift in the way they defined the appropriate territory of the Jewish homeland.<sup>8</sup>

#### WHEN DID THE CHANGE ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE?

A mainstay of Revisionist Zionist thought is the contention that they have consistently raised the banner of the “wholeness of Eretz Israel” (the Land of Israel).<sup>9</sup> Even their critics often assume that the territorial dimension of their ideology has been consistent.<sup>10</sup> However, the continuous use of the same rhetorical vessel—the “wholeness of the land”—masks the possibility that it may refer to different map-images over time. The timing of the emergence of the alternative map-images helps disentangle the factors that contributed to the formation and ultimate preeminence of the new map-image. The course of this shift can be divided into three periods. The first period (lasting until the mid-1950s) was characterized by the exclusive dominance of the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image. The second period, beginning in the mid-1950s and lasting until the early 1970s, was a liminal one in which both map-images uneasily coexisted. Since the mid-1970s the latter map-image has become dominant, if not exclusive.

#### THIS BEST PART OF PALESTINE

Initially, the only map-image of the appropriate territory of the Jewish state articulated within the Revisionist movement was that of “both banks of the Jordan.”<sup>11</sup> The most evocative rendition of this map image is Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky’s 1930 poem, “The Left Bank of the Jordan,” which described the Jordan as the “pillar,” “spine,” and “backbone,” of the land

of Israel, and whose chorus, “Two Banks the Jordan has, This is ours and that one as well,” became the quintessential Revisionist slogan.

At the 1925 founding Congress of the New Zionist Organization—the political organization of Revisionist Zionism—Jabotinsky declared that the purpose of the NZO was “the realization of *a state with a Jewish majority on both sides of the Jordan River*.”<sup>12</sup> He argued that the exclusion of Transjordan from the area of the future Jewish state was “both a historical and a practical injustice. Historically, the East Jordan Land was always part of Jewish Palestine: the Jews settled there even before the conquest of Western Palestine . . . In view of the great Jewish misery in Eastern Europe it is wrong . . . to withhold from Jewish colonization this best part of Palestine.”<sup>13</sup> Among Revisionists, the inclusion of Transjordan in the Land of Israel even became the very the standard of obviousness.<sup>14</sup>

The East Bank of the Jordan featured prominently as part of the Revisionist discourse (both emotive and instrumental) against partition in 1937.<sup>15</sup> Jabotinsky objected to the Peel partition plan in part because he believed it would institutionalize the split between Palestine and Transjordan! It would, he argued, provide the desolate (in his terms) East Bank of the Jordan with “the human and financial capital” of the Arabs of the West Bank of Palestine and turn it into a viable separate state.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Jabotinsky rejected David Ben-Gurion’s argument that a Jewish state within the proposed 1937 borders would be a stepping-stone for further expansion as an objectively impossible, but nonetheless dangerous thought, because “it is impossible to prevent this dream . . . no Jew . . . could really and truly give up Jerusalem, Hebron, and the Land of Gilead east of the Jordan River.”<sup>17</sup>

Even if one accepts the contention that Jabotinsky saw Transjordan in purely instrumental terms, the claim that the East Bank of the Jordan appropriately belonged to the Jews was taken seriously by Betar (The Revisionist Youth Movement) and featured prominently in their materials.<sup>18</sup> Transjordan remained a central and frequently discussed component of the area Betar considered appropriately part of the Jewish state throughout the 1940s. A telling example is a cartoon in a 1944 Betar camp journal, which depicted a Betarist with a hoe who complains, “Commander, I have no more strength to work.” The Commander replies “Do you want Transjordan? Then work!”<sup>19</sup> Betar even published a 1946 booklet dedicated to the “Jewish Left of the Jordan,” which “has been torn from our homeland like a limb from a living body, and given as a gift to Abdullah . . . Dew and rain [may fall] upon you cities and villages in Transjordan; it does not matter—ours you were, and ours you shall be.”<sup>20</sup>

Betar faithfully reflected the ideology of its parent organization, which continued to define the appropriate territory of the Jewish state as encompassing both banks of the Jordan throughout the UN debate over the future of Palestine. Like Jabotinsky's rejection of the Peel partition, their opposition to the UN resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish state was partly based on the realization that it implied giving up on Transjordan.<sup>21</sup> The Irgun Zvai Leumi (the military arm of the Revisionist movement) repeatedly declared that they would continue to fight for the "liberation of the whole of Palestine on both sides of the Jordan" even after the state is established.<sup>22</sup> While the *yishuv* was celebrating the day after the UN vote approving partition, the front page of one of the Revisionist newspapers was graced by three "obituary boxes" emphasizing the claim to Jerusalem and to Transjordan.<sup>23</sup>

Even the internal opposition within the Revisionist movement, those Revisionists who emphasized the more liberal and secular aspects of Jabotinsky's thought, claimed both sides of the Jordan.<sup>24</sup> There were a few voices expressing support for tactical (some even for sincere) acceptance of the UN partition plan,<sup>25</sup> but such pragmatic assessments of political reality were soundly rejected by Menachem Begin and the mainstream of the Revisionist Movement. On the eve of the declaration of the state of Israel, Begin declared that,

. . . it is an iron rule of life: That which comes between the people's state and the people's homeland must disappear. The state will cover the homeland. The homeland will be the state . . . It is not just *the city* that was stolen from us. We have in mind five-sixths of the territory of our homeland . . . We shall therefore proudly bear the vision of full salvation, the dream of the liberation under the Hebrew flag, the flag of freedom, the flag of peace and progress. The soldiers of Israel will yet hoist our banner on the Tower of David and our ploughs will yet plough the fields of the Gilead.<sup>26</sup>

The institutionalization of the Irgun as a political party within the new state did not bring about a change in their conception of the appropriate borders. Its symbol—a hand holding a rifle and bayonet on the background of a map of the 1919 British Mandate—was kept as the emblem of the "Herut Movement in Eretz Israel—based on the Irgun Zvai Leumi." The only change was the replacement of the slogan "Only Thus" with "Homeland and Freedom." (See Figure 1) Begin argued that the symbol should be maintained even as the movement transformed from an underground organization to a political party because everybody knows "that



Figure 1: Menachem Begin at a 1948 party meeting with Herut's emblem.  
The caption reads: “Homeland and Freedom”.  
*Courtesy of the Government Press Office*

‘the state of Israel’ is not *Eretz Israel*, and is not Israel’s *homeland*; and the goal is *the homeland* rather than a single strip of its territory—this has to be reminded day and night to every person in Israel until the eternal aspiration becomes a living reality.”<sup>27</sup>

Begin did not shy away from demarcating the area encompassed by the homeland: “The whole of Eretz Israel is our homeland. Our Homeland is the whole of Eretz Israel, yes on both banks of the Jordan; Amman and Shcem, and the Gilead no less than Shomron, the Bashan no less than the Sharon—all are parts of our homeland . . .”<sup>28</sup> He consistently included areas of the East Bank among the parts of the Land of Israel that ‘have not yet been liberated,’ listing them as part of the territory still occupied by the British.<sup>29</sup> Begin continually reminded his audiences that “[d]espite all of

our victories, victory is far way from us . . . The Wall of the Old City is not the border of Jerusalem; the Jordan is not the border of our country and the sea is not the border of our nation. There is a uniform tie between the new Jerusalem and the ancient, between the Gilead and Samaria, between the dispersed [nation of] Israel and the state of Israel.”<sup>30</sup>

Begin explicitly refused to recognize the legitimacy of Jordan because doing so would imply “the legal and explicit recognition of our nation to the tearing of Transjordan.”<sup>31</sup> Consistent with this stance, Begin rejected the very holding of negotiations with Abdullah, since that would leave the latter with “4/5 of our historic patrimony.” Rather than make peace, he believed Israeli policy should be directed “to remove this “kingdom” from the world . . .” Reiterating the claim that both banks of the Jordan “are two parts of our whole country,” he summarized the “entire problem in Eretz Israel” as “the question of whether or not Abdullah will be our neighbor a few tens of kilometers from Ramat-Gan, or whether Hebrew soldiers, eventually and with the help of God will stand in *our Amman*.”<sup>32</sup> Herut’s second (1951) and third (1954) national conventions repeated this rejection because “Jordan,” in their 1951 words, “extends on territory of our homeland.”<sup>33</sup> As late as May 1956, Begin still rejected the possibility of peace in part because, “the kingdom, that is called “Jordan” is not a “neighbor” of Israel, it is an occupied part of its country . . .”<sup>34</sup>

## THE SHIFT

While the invocation of the map image shown in Herut’s emblem continued into the 1960s and beyond (it persists in some corners even today) by the mid-1950s it began to share space with an increasingly pervasive definition of the homeland that extended only to the area west of the Jordan. The new map-image was introduced with two new elements of Revisionist ideology: 1) the increasingly consistent elision of the East Bank from Herut’s pronouncements; and 2) the rhetorical equation of “western Eretz Israel” with “Eretz Israel.”

An indication that the new map-image became significant within the Revisionist movement in the mid-1950s is given by the fact that, for the first time, Herut’s leaders were no longer able to take the original map-image of the appropriate territory for granted. In 1954, they felt that Herut’s “branches in the diaspora . . . [had to] be instructed to begin to speak and to explain the importance of the wholeness of the homeland.” This Central Committee meeting also provides one of the first instances



of the elision of the East Bank from the ‘banal’<sup>35</sup> language of Revisionist ideology. During the discussion, Begin argued that “*Five years have passed since Eretz Israel was divided,*” implying that the Land of Israel was divided in 1949 and not in 1922, and that, therefore, Transjordan was not a part of it. The state of Israel, he concluded, “*needs to be brought up to the Jordan.*”<sup>36</sup> Whereas the proclamations of the Revisionist movement had consistently listed the Bashan, the Gilead, and even Amman, along with Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza and Shcem as areas of the homeland that are yet to be liberated, starting in late 1955 Begin began to drop the areas east of the Jordan from otherwise nearly identical speeches.<sup>37</sup> By 1968, Begin even defined the “eternal patrimony of our ancestors” as “Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Judea, [and] Shcem” thus excluding the East Bank of the Jordan from the ancestral homeland.<sup>38</sup>

The de-emphasis of the borders of the 1919 British Mandate during the mid-1950s is also reflected in Herut’s election propaganda. While in 1949 and 1951 Herut’s emblem (see Figure 1) appeared on nearly everything it produced, it was much less in evidence in their propaganda for the 3<sup>rd</sup> (1955) Knesset elections. This de-emphasis even allowed Moshe Sharett to include Herut as part of the Israeli consensus about the “territorial wholeness of the state of Israel” in 1957. By 1959, the map image of both banks of the Jordan on a propaganda publication could only be found in an internal page of their platform. In 1961 even this map was dropped from an otherwise identical pamphlet. The minimization of Herut’s traditional conception of the appropriate borders is also visible in a 1965 pamphlet intended for first time voters, which, for the first time, contained no mention of borders or the even the idea of the wholeness of the land of Israel.<sup>39</sup>

Betar, too, reflected the de-emphasis of the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image. In 1956, Betar felt obligated to address the problem that some of its members “do not understand the meaning” of Jabotinsky’s song “The Left Bank of the Jordan.”<sup>40</sup> Unlike previous occasions, none of the decisions of the 1957 World Congress of Betar refer to Transjordan.<sup>41</sup> This apparent oversight was corrected in 1962 when the 9<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Betar “reaffirm[ed] and emphasize[d] that the reunification of Eretz Israel in its entirety as a Hebrew state is the primary mission of the nation in this generation.” This formulation mirrored the decision of Herut’s 1961 National Convention which, for the first time, replaced the specific demand for both banks of the Jordan with a general statement affirming the right of the nation of Israel to “its entire homeland.”<sup>42</sup> This apparent return to ideological normalcy, however, is deceptive. Its generality contrasts with the relative geographical specificity of “both banks of the



Jordan” and opened the door for the eventual elision of the East Bank of the Jordan from their map of the land of Israel.

One poignant example of this elision is contained in Herut’s frequent post-1967 statements that, “It cannot even be imagined that a single handful of the land of Eretz Israel will again be given to foreign rule.” Such proclamations blatantly ignored the fact that, at least according to the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image, there were parts of Eretz Israel that were still under ‘foreign rule.’ This rhetorical slight of hand was accomplished, in part, by speaking of “Eretz Israel” and “Western Eretz Israel” interchangeably, as if they referred to the same area.<sup>43</sup> This rhetorical shift allowed Begin to equate “Eretz Israel” with “the state of Israel” in his speech to the 1968 Herut Convention.<sup>44</sup> The change is striking when compared with Begin’s 1948 vow to equate the borders of the state of Israel and the Land of Israel, which explicitly included Transjordan (see above). By 1973 some were even arguing that the slogan of “*af sha’al*” (not a single step) “always referred to Judea and Samaria” and not to other territories.<sup>45</sup>

The equation of the “land of Israel” and the “western land of Israel,” and the coexistence of the two map images to which they corresponded, contributed to the mixed messages about what exactly constituted the land of Israel sent by Begin in the late 1960s. On the one hand, he listed the institution of the Israeli pound as the currency in “all of Eretz Israel” as one of Gahal’s main accomplishments, thereby implying that the state of Israel holds the entire land of Israel. On the other hand, he repeatedly noted that Israel’s army “liberated all of Western Eretz Israel,” and still referred to the “so-called ‘kingdom of Jordan.’” Begin could, on the same day, speak of the division of “western Eretz Israel” and simultaneously exclude the logically present eastern Eretz Israel from the divine patrimony.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, while the decisions of the 1968 Herut National Convention implied that there are still parts of the homeland that are not under Israeli control—possibly referring to Transjordan—the Convention tellingly proposed that citizenship be awarded to the “Arab residents of Eretz Israel” who request it and not to the Arab residents of “Western Eretz Israel.”<sup>47</sup>

### “THERE IS NO OTHER NATURAL BORDER”

The ambivalence towards the “both banks of the Jordan” definition of the homeland was reflected in the near even split between the delegates to Herut’s 1968 national convention who believed that only part of the homeland had been liberated and those who considered all of the homeland

liberated.<sup>48</sup> However, such mixed messages became increasingly rare as time went on.<sup>49</sup> By Herut’s 13<sup>th</sup> National Convention in 1977, the balance between those who maintained the claim to the East Bank and those who believed the land of Israel to be whole without it clearly tilted toward the latter.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, the resilience of the old map-image was evident in the claims to the East Bank that continued to be voiced within the Revisionist movement.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the most famous of these outlying claims to the East Bank was Begin’s 1982 comment that Israel would not invade Jordan even though he still believed the East Bank was part of the land of Israel.<sup>52</sup> Such isolated invocations notwithstanding, the waning of the “both banks” map-image was clearly evident—even to some of its adherents.<sup>53</sup> Its reduced salience is attested to by the fact that, on the isolated occasions when proposals were tabled to highlight the claim to the East Bank, they were handily defeated and occasionally even derided.<sup>54</sup> Begin himself, when faced with the direct question in a 1973 Herut Central Committee meeting of “What is the wholeness of the land over which there is a general agreement in the Likud?” rather than articulate the claim to both banks of the Jordan, replied with the vague, “The answer is that we are affirming our belief.”<sup>55</sup>

In contradiction to the “both banks” map-image, Revisionist spokesmen routinely framed the debate over the occupied territories as a choice between “Eretz Israel in its entirety or its division anew.”<sup>56</sup> The definition of “Eretz Israel” as ending at the Jordan was reinforced by the rhetorical situating of the unification of “Eretz Israel” in the past—implying that there are no more areas of the homeland that need to be joined to the state of Israel. For example, Begin argued that, “We liberated Eretz Israel” and that the Land of Israel “was divided in a war of aggression, and *was united in a war of self-defense.*”<sup>57</sup> The Revisionist movement also began to speak consistently of the need to guard and maintain the wholeness of Eretz Israel, the desire to “open all the areas of Eretz Israel for settlement,” and of the need to extend Israeli law to “all of Eretz Israel.”<sup>58</sup> These tasks make sense only if the East Bank of the Jordan is excluded from their conception of the appropriate borders of “Eretz Israel.” This was reinforced by the increasing replacement of the old emblem with a map-image which did not claim the East Bank on Revisionist materials. (For examples, see Figures 2 and 3)

Begin himself contributed to the discourse that assumed that the land of Israel was already whole in his 1981 rejection of a national unity government with the Labor Party because Yitzhak Rabin rejected the policy of the ‘whole land of Israel’—meaning, in Begin’s own words, “that there will be



Figure 2 (left): Betar pin released in 1967

Figure 3 (below): Letterhead of a Likud northern branch pamphlet 1976



no foreign rule or sovereignty *west of the Jordan*.”<sup>59</sup> Another telling example was his criticism of the Allon plan, which unlike his condemnation of the 1949 armistice with Transjordan, was not based on its recognition of foreign rule over the East Bank of the Jordan. While Begin still challenged Jordan’s right to the West Bank, unlike in 1950 he did not dispute its right to exist. Even the debate inside Herut centered around the question of a foreign presence in the West Bank rather than over Jordan’s illegitimacy or the claim that it too was part of the Land of Israel.<sup>60</sup> Begin also implied that they have no claim on the East Bank of the Jordan by declaring that the Revisionists abandoned their previously held “theory of stages.”<sup>61</sup>

Begin also attempted to extend the revised borders component of Revisionist ideology as including only the land west of the Jordan back in time. In 1973, Begin recalled their thinking (or what he now claimed was their thinking) in 1948: “We said, there is no choice but to win, and, perhaps, the source of all our problems is that *we did not liberate all of Eretz Israel as we could have . . .* but it is a fact that following this war *the British left Eretz Israel* and the state of Israel was formed . . . *We could have taken the entire land* but there is no denying that in this war the nation of Israel achieved a great deal.”<sup>62</sup> This statement effectively erases the East Bank from the area of the Land of Israel in two strokes. First, as shown above, in the 1950s Begin repeatedly argued that the British presence in Transjordan meant that they still occupied the land of Israel. Second, while many of Israel’s military leaders, notably Yigal Allon, believed that Israel could have conquered the entire West Bank, no one, other than the Revisionists, seriously believed that they could conquer Transjordan. In fact, Israel did whatever it could to avoid fighting the Jordanian Legion or to drag Great Britain, which protected Transjordan, into the war. Revising their statements to the effect that the British did leave or that they could have “taken the entire land” effectively excludes the East Bank from the land of Israel.<sup>63</sup> On another occasion, Begin even went so far as to call the logic of partition “stupid” because the natural wholeness of the post-1967 land was obvious. Both Yitzhak Shamir and Benjamin Netanyahu followed Begin in declaring that the Jordan River is the “natural boundary” of “Eretz Israel.” In fact, Shamir went so far as to claim that “*there is no other natural border*.”<sup>64</sup>

The debate within Herut over the Camp David Accords reinforces the contention that this was the dominant position within the Revisionist movement. David Levy, in presenting the government’s position to Herut, argued that they remained loyal to the movement’s ideal of the entire land of Israel—this despite Begin’s explicit call for a formal peace with Jordan—

and implied that the whole land of Israel stops at the Jordan: “Our position, the position of the Herut movement, does not need somebody’s declaration or the preaching of someone from outside this movement, and no one . . . will teach us what is Eretz Israel for this movement, what is loyalty to Judea and Samaria.” Nor does Levy include Transjordan in outlining what he considered to be the best possible borders of Israel: “We would all want, and without a doubt every citizen in Israel would want true peace with all our neighbors, and Sinai, Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and the Golan in our control . . .” While it is possible to argue that the difference between Levy’s map-image and the one suggested by the “both banks of the Jordan” is attributable to generational change, the same cannot be maintained for Esther Raziell-Naor, one of the founders of the Herut Movement, who called the Camp David Accords: “a treaty that gives us a chance for peace without dividing Eretz Israel.”<sup>65</sup> The widespread acceptance of this position within the Revisionist movement is indicated by the repetition of this statement in an election poster for the 10<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections.<sup>66</sup>

In 1988, the Likud English Division even published a pamphlet on “Judea and Samaria: Ten Thoughts” which included a section with the appropriate title of “Where is “Israel?”” In a sign of just how far the stock of the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image had fallen, it makes no reference, historical or otherwise, to the claim that the East Bank is appropriately part of the Land of Israel.<sup>67</sup> In 1991, none other than Binyamin Begin implied that the claim to the East Bank of the Jordan was all but gone from the Revisionist movement “even in the margins.”<sup>68</sup> This shift within the Revisionist movement culminated in the Likud’s endorsement of the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan. Instructively, *no one* from the Likud objected to the peace treaty because it ceded land that appropriately belonged to Israel to a foreign entity. Netanyahu and Shamir even concluded that there was no principled reason to oppose the treaty.<sup>69</sup>

## MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

Both the timing of the change in the conception of the appropriate borders of the Jewish state and the process of its replacement can be accounted for as the unintended consequences of Revisionist response to their internalization of having lost a battle for hegemony. Despite their confidence that most Israelis shared their conception of the nation-state, by the mid-1950s it was clear, even to them, that their vision had lost out to the one articulated by the Labor Zionist movement. As an indicator of how low they

had fallen, political analysts in the late 1950s and early 1960s believed that Herut’s appeal was capped at about 13% of the population.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps more telling, Mapai shifted its focus and began to consider the General Zionists, rather than the Revisionists, as its main competition. This was driven home by the non-materialization of the protest against the withdrawal from Sinai in 1956 and the realization that public sentiment was against their militant stance.<sup>71</sup>

In retrospect, the Revisionist movement faced a choice of fading into irrelevance or modifying their ideology in the hopes of eventually building a hegemonic alternative. At the time, however, Herut leaders tried to address their situation with a series of tactical changes. Thus, in the mid-1950s, Begin developed a program to increase Herut’s electoral support, which included backing the religious position on religion-state issues in order to attract religious voters, seeking a merger with the General Zionists in order to secure the appeal to the middle class, and setting up a faction within the Histadrut to enlist the support of new immigrants who disdained the socialists, but still wanted the Histadrut’s services. Accompanying these moves, however, was a perhaps tactical, perhaps self-conscious, muting of the claim to the East Bank of the Jordan.

Even if, as Shapiro argues, this plan was devoid of any ideological content, its consequences were ideologically significant to the extent that it blurred the desired map-image of the Jewish nation-state.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, one of the implications of the way in which the “both banks” map-image was replaced is that such tactical decisions may have ‘strategic’ consequences. Moreover, accounts which rely exclusively on the manipulation of ideology by elites to account for change, cannot satisfactorily account for why the Revisionists waited until the mid-1950s to begin shifting their conceptualization of the territory appropriately belonging to the nation, given the benefit that they are likely to have reaped had they joined the Zionist consensus earlier.<sup>73</sup> Nor do these hypotheses account for the unevenness and inconsistencies of the change. A decision to change the movement’s ideology is more likely to look like a sharp disjuncture than the two-step process of coexistence and replacement over time that we have seen.

Others have pointed to a difference in the rhetorical style between Begin and Jabotinsky to account for the onset of change.<sup>74</sup> This difference, while certainly significant, does not account for the fact that until the mid-1950s there was no question that Begin and Jabotinsky agreed on the appropriate borders of the Jewish nation-state. Unlike Jabotinsky’s consistency on this issue, Begin, at the very least, vacillated between the two map-images. Begin’s rhetorical style may be relevant, however, to the



extent that his preference for emotive expressions over detailed articulations introduced an element of ambiguity into Revisionist pronouncements, which perhaps unintentionally, opened the door for the elision of the Eastern Bank of the Jordan from Revisionist rhetoric.

This ambiguity allowed Herut to become increasingly integrated into the legitimate political spectrum.<sup>75</sup> The alternative map-image identifying the “whole land of Israel” as the area west of the Jordan, generated as the ideological “ante” for the seat at the table of legitimate politics, coexisted for a time with the original map-image of the appropriate territory of the nation-state. Which one would ultimately emerge as the map-image endorsed by the movement was not a foregone conclusion. The eventual supremacy of the map-image referring to the area west of the Jordan was accelerated by the results of the 1967 war, which provided cover for it, and was reinforced by the advent of a generation that took the existence and legitimacy of Jordan for granted. Both of these changes to the reality in which Herut functioned changed the playing field by making it less likely that the “both banks of the Jordan” ideology would continue to resonate within the movement. As the rewards for normalization grew, the willingness of Herut leaders to invoke the both banks of the Jordan map-image correspondingly declined and they re-interpreted “the wholeness of the land” to as referring only to the area west of the Jordan.

Without the role of the new map-image in the successful building of a counter-hegemonic alliance, which would eventually succeed in toppling Labor Zionism from power, there is little reason to assume that changes to the reality in which the Revisionists acted, no matter how significant, would have had any more impact on the map-image articulated by the movement than the Holocaust, the establishment of the state of Jordan, or the founding of the state of Israel; none of which directly triggered a change in the area the Revisionists considered appropriately part of the Jewish-state. The reason for this is that nationalist ideologies, to the extent that they are hegemonic within the movements that articulate them are not simply discarded when faced with contradictory evidence. They are beliefs that “have no corollary attached to them . . . stipulating the conditions under which they could be abandoned. [They are] part of the framework within which, and the lens through which, events are perceived and judgments made . . .”<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, as we have seen, the 1967 war occurred too late to trigger the change within the Revisionist movement.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the results of the war did have an important impact on the Revisionist Zionist conceptualization of the land appropriately belonging to the Jewish



nation-state, even if not the one usually ascribed to it. Rather than ‘awaken dormant expansionist dreams,’ the results of the war accelerated a process of *contraction* of the area claimed by Revisionist leaders. The expansion of the territory under Israeli control allowed Revisionist leaders to more effectively shift the meaning of “the whole land of Israel” from “both banks of the Jordan” to “western Eretz Israel,” by masking the change with the claim that the object of their heart’s desire had been achieved.

Similarly, while the formation of Gahal in 1965 greatly contributed to Herut’s legitimization, the beginning of the shift in Herut’s conception of the appropriate borders *preceded* this merger.<sup>78</sup> The formation of Gahal marks not the start of a transformation in the Revisionist definition of the appropriate borders of the Jewish state, but how far this transformation had gone. This is, counter-intuitively, highlighted by Begin’s insistence that each party be allowed to maintain their separate stance on this issue. This “compromise” reflected little more than the fact that by 1965 the differences between the Liberal and Revisionist conception of the appropriate territory were no longer important enough to delay the merger of the parties. Begin’s declarations that this formulation represented a concession by the Liberals provided the illusion of continuity and ideological steadfastness in the face of the contrast with his rejection of virtually the same alliance in 1955 because the General Zionists refused to accept the “both banks of the Jordan” ideology.<sup>79</sup> In this context, the fact that Herut’s 1965 electioneering propaganda did not reflect the ‘both banks of the Jordan’ map-image should be seen as a continuation of an earlier trend rather than a departure from previous practice.

## CONCLUSION

The implications of such a change in a nationalist movement’s definition of the territory appropriately belonging to the nation, extend beyond the somewhat esoteric example of the Revisionist movement and ‘both banks of the Jordan.’ The fact that a movement which, almost literally, tattooed itself with a particular map-image experienced ideological change in a moderating direction suggests that other nationalist movements, with equally strong ideological commitments, may also change. This exemplar of change, moreover, suggests that losing a battle for hegemony may be a more important trigger than adaptive pressures and helps account for the stability of nationalist ideologies in the face of myriad structural, demographic, and institutional changes. The mediating role of the battle for

hegemony also undermines conflict resolution strategies based solely on 'creating facts on the ground.' This exposes a conceptual weakness in the frequent claims that the mere persistence of Israel in the territories would eventually lead to its acceptance among the Palestinians, or that the mere establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories would lead to the automatic acceptance of Israel. Rather than changing objective conditions, successful conflict resolution strategies must be oriented primarily to the battle for hegemony within each society. Finally, paying attention to the battle for hegemony and the processes by which the nation is "re-imagined," crucially anchors constructivist treatments of nationalism back in the politics of the people whose imagination is at stake.

## NOTES

1. The research for this article was supported by a grant from the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley.

2. All nationalist ideologies, and those articulated by the various Zionist movements are no exception, must define the appropriate territorial borders of their desired nation-state. While abstract nations are not necessarily tied to any particular geographic location, the crux of nationalist ideology is the belief that the nation ought to be sovereign, and sovereignty is impossible without a geographic location in which it is to be exercised. This is one of the features which distinguish nationalism from cultural, religious, linguistic, and other social groupings. See Hans Kohn, "The Nature of Nationalism," *The American Political Science Review*, 33.6, 1939, 1001–21; Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London, 1971); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, 1983 (1991)); Ernst B. Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1997).

3. There were significant disagreements within the Revisionist movement about where the eastern border of "Eretz Israel" ought to be: the line drawn by Churchill satisfied most, but many claimed all the land up to the Euphrates. This paper does not review the internal debate over the appropriate eastern border of the "both banks of the Jordan" map-image, not because it is unimportant, but in order to focus the discussion on the change from the conceptualization of the appropriate borders of the Jewish nation-state as encompassing both banks of the Jordan (however far east this extended) to one encompassing only one bank of the Jordan. For the same reason, and for lack of space, the paper does not deal with the ways in which the Revisionist movement envisioned the northern and southern borders of the appropriate national territory.

4. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, 1993); Ian S. Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Ithaca, 1993); Hudson Meadwell, “The Politics of Nationalism in Quebec,” *World Politics*, 45.2, 1993, 203–41; Prasenjit Duara, “Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When,” in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigo Suny (eds) *Becoming National: A Reader* (Oxford, 1996); John A. Hall (ed) *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1998).

5. See p. 100 in Mark Beissinger, “How Nationalisms Spread: Eastern Europe Adrift and Tides and Cycles of Nationalist Contention,” *Social Research*, 63.1, 1996, 97–146.

6. Joseph B. Schechtman and Yehuda Benari, *History of the Revisionist Movement: Volume I, 1925–1930* (Tel-Aviv, 1970) [Hebrew]; Shmuel Katz, *Jabo-A Biography* (Tel-Aviv, 1993) [Hebrew]; Nurit Gertz, “The Few Against the Many,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, 30, 1984, 80–93; Menachem Begin, *Life View and National View (basic lines)* (Tel-Aviv, 1952). [Hebrew]

7. Antonio Gramsci (ed.) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York, 1971) 235 [my emphasis].

8. Those within the Revisionist movement who disagreed with this choice have become increasingly irrelevant to mainstream Israeli politics.

9. *The Jabotinsky Institute in Israel (JI)*, October 1968, H1/10/30; *JI*, May 26, 1968, P20/11/2; *JI*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; *JI*, January 1977, H1/13/13/19; *JI*, March 19, 1979, H1/2/34; Menachem Begin, “Ze’ev Jabotinsky,” *Herut HaMoledet*, August 5, 1948; *JI*, P20/10/18.

10. For example, Shlaim assumes that the Revisionists in 1948 defined Eretz Israel, or the entire land of Israel, as stopping at the Jordan. Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York, 1988) 304, 67. Others maintain that the Revisionists never abandoned the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image. Ilan Peleg, *Begin’s Foreign Policy, 1977–1983: Israel’s Move to the Right* (New York, 1987) 43; Yonathan Shapiro, *The Road to Power: Herut Party in Israel* (Albany, 1991) 110.

11. At the time, the inclusion of Transjordan within the Land of Israel was a position widely held by all Zionists.

12. Itzhak Galnoor, *The Partition of Palestine: Decision Crossroads in the Zionist Movement* (Albany, 1995) 66 [my emphasis]. For an earlier reference see *JI*, December 29, 1922, A1/4/47.

13. *JI*, 1926, A1/7/19; Katz, *Jabo*.

14. Lubotsky wanted the idea that Betar was the basis for the resurrection of a Hebrew army “to become a principle that is taken for granted by all (like ‘a Hebrew state on both sides of the Jordan’).” *JI*, 1936, B8C/9/2.

15. See for example, *Hayarden*, July 9, 1937; *Hayarden*, July 16, 1937; M.A. Perlmutter, “Grades at the margins of days,” *Hayarden*, July 23, 1937; Y. Klausner,

“Open Letter,” *Hamedina*, September (Rosh Hashana) 1937; *Jl*, 1937, B8C/8/12; *Jl*, July 1937, A1/4/37; Yaacov Shavit, *The Mythologies of the Zionist Right Wing* (Beit Berl, 1986) 224; Galnoor, *The Partition of Palestine*; Arye Naor, “The Security Argument in the Territorial Debate in Israel: Rhetoric and Policy,” *Israel Studies*, 4.2, 1999, 150–77.

16. Zeev Jabotinsky, “Jabotinsky on Partition,” *Hayarden*, August 6, 1937.

17. Katz, *Jabo*, 1001–2.

18. Responding to the Peel partition plan, Betar vowed to fight “a merciless war against the dismemberment of the body and soul of Zionism,” “for an eternity.” Territorially this translated to a fight “FOR THE HOLY CITY JERUSALEM AND ERETZ ISRAEL FROM DAN TO BEERSHEVA AND FROM THE GILEAD TO THE SEA . . .” *Jl*, July 4, 1937, B2/18.

19. *Jl*, B8C/9/5; *Jl*, B8C/9/1; Meir Ben-Horin, *The Land of Israel* (New York, 1941); Betar, *The Left of the Jordan: A one-time publication dedicated to the Jewish left of the Jordan* (Tel-Aviv, 1946) [Hebrew]; Esther Stein-Ashkenazi, *Betar in Eretz-Israel, 1925–1947* (Jerusalem, 1997) [Hebrew].

20. Betar, *The Left of the Jordan*, 2.

21. Central Committee of the Revisionist Zionist organization in EI, “Response to the UN vote of 29 November,” *Hamashkif*, December 1, 1947; Y. Bader, “The Last Week of the UN Commission,” *Hamashkif*, July 11, 1947; “Revisionist Memorandum that would have been submitted to UNSCOP,” *Hamashkif*, July 17, 1947; Editorial, “The negotiations over the pieces,” *Hamashkif*, November 14, 1947; Editorial, “If I forget thee Jerusalem!” *Hamashkif*, November 20, 1947; Y. Yerushalmi, “We have sinned against you, Jerusalem!” *Hamashkif*, November 21, 1947; See also the lead articles in *Hamashkif*, July 16, 1947; *Hamashkif*, July 9, 1947; and *Jl*, 30 June–3 July, 1949, H1/13/1/2.

22. For example, *Jl*, 1947, K8/1/8; Central Committee of the Revisionist Zionist organization in EI, “Response to the UN vote of 29 November,” *Hamashkif*, December 1, 1947. While this might have been merely a declarative position (e.g., Teddy Preuss, *Begin: His Regime* (Jerusalem, 1984), 132 at the very least, the British took the threat seriously enough to pressure Arab leaders not to support the Mufti’s declaration of a Palestinian government. See Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*, 298.

23. See *Hamashkif*, November 30, 1947. The “obituary notices” contained the following: “If I forget you Jerusalem, I will forget my right hand;” “To your seed I gave that land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates;” and “Two Banks the Jordan has, this one is ours that one as well.”

24. *Jl*, July 9, 1946, January 7, 1946, Kh4/1/15; *Jl*, December 3, 1947, Kh4/1/7; *Jl*, 1947, A4/13/3; *Jl*, October 9, 1946, Kh4/1/10.

25. Mordechai Katz, “The zohar in the partitioned state,” *Hamashkif*, December 19, 1947; Zeev Von-Weizel, “The Zionist Revisionist Movement on the eve of a new age in Zionism,” *Hamashkif*, November 25, 1947; Zeev Von-Weizel,

“happiness in agony,” *Hamashkif*, December 1, 1947; Zeev Von-Weizel, “After the happiness . . .” *Hamashkif*, December 5, 1947; Zeev Von-Weizel, “The great danger: Abdullah as our ally,” *Hamashkif*, May 13, 1948.

26. *Jl*, May 15, 1948, P20/11/1.

27. *Jl*, 1948, P20/12/15. The Herut materials from this period contain only a solitary reference to the need to change the map-image represented in the movement’s emblem. *Jl*, 1948, H1/1/1.

28. *Jl*, November 9, 1949, P20/11/7. For similar statements see “Who Gave You the Right?! Menachem Begin’s Knesset Speech during the debate on the ‘Annexation of the Triangle,’” *Herut*, May 5, 1950; Yosef Krost (ed) *The Fourth World Congress of Betar: Discussions and Decisions* (Tel-Aviv, 1950) 5; *Jl*, 1953, B3–15/1; Menachem Begin, “Sowed deceit, reaping hostility,” *Herut*, May 14, 1954; Menachem Begin, “The Victory of the Truth will not be Delayed: Address to the National conference of Betar,” *Herut*, April 12, 1955; Begin, *Life View and National View*, 38, 51; *Jl*, July 21, 1958, H2/9/2.

29. *Jl*, March 8, 1949, H2/9/1; *Jl*, 1949, H2/1/4; Begin, “The Victory of the Truth will not be Delayed;” Begin, *Life View and National View*, 43; *Jl*, 1958, H1/13/5/3. The Revisionists repeatedly declared that the task of the current generation is to return those parts of the homeland that have been torn from her—explicitly including Transjordan—to Hebrew sovereignty. For example, *Jl*, June 1948, H1/1/1; *Jl*, September 1948, P20/12/1; Betar, *Decisions of the 6th World Congress of Betar* (Tel-Aviv, 1953) 4.

30. Menachem Begin, “Speech of Menachem Begin before the masses of Jerusalem . . .” *Hamashkif*, August 6, 1948.

31. Begin, “Who Gave You the Right?!” Begin, “Sowed deceit, reaping hostility;” Begin, “The Victory of the Truth will not be Delayed.”

32. *Jl*, October 20, 1948, H1/11/1 [my emphasis]. See also *Jl*, August 19, 1948, P20/11/1.

33. *Jl*, 1951, H1/13/2; *Jl*, 1954, H1/13/3/1. In 1953, Betar still saw its role as preparing their members “to fulfill their historic role in the coming resumption of the war of liberation.” Betar, *Decisions of the 6th World Congress*.

34. Menachem Begin, “In the Congress and in the Knesset,” *Herut*, May 11, 1956. In 1958, Begin and his colleagues still called for the “chasing out of all foreign armies from the historic borders on both sides of the Jordan” in the Knesset Foreign Policy and Security Committee. Mordechai Bar-On, “Status quo before—or after? Commentary on Israel’s security policy 1949–1959,” *Iyunim Be’Tekumat Israel*, 5, 1995, 65–111. [Hebrew]

35. For the importance of everyday language in nationalist ideology, see Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London, 1995).

36. *Jl*, February 18, 1954, H1/2/4.

37. *Jl*, October 18, 1955, H2/9/2; *Jl*, June 18, 1956, H2/9/2; Menachem Begin, “The Right that Creates the Might,” *Maariv*, May 11, 1973.

38. *Jl*, 1968, H1/13/9/15. This was repeated in Gahal's 1969 platform. For Begin's earlier explicit definition of "our patrimony" as including the East Bank of the Jordan, see Begin, "Who Gave You the Right?!"

39. *Jl*, 1959, H1/14/4/3; *Jl*, 1961, H1/14/5/7; *Jl*, 1961, H1/14/5/4; *Jl*, 1965, H1/14/6/8; Moshe Sharett, "Israel and the Arab World - War and Peace: Reflections on the Years 1947-1957," *Ot*, 1(6) (1966) 5-10, 8. [Hebrew] Shapiro notes that the 1959 campaign was also the first one in which Herut did not put forth an operative plan for the conquest of the rest of the land of Israel. Shapiro, *The Road to Power*, 116.

40. *Jl*, 1956, B3-15/1.

41. The picture on the cover of the Report to the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Betar still portrayed the Land of Israel in the borders of the 1919 British Mandate, but the content of the report is strikingly different than its predecessors, emphasizing issues of religion and state rather than borders. In fact, the only mention of borders came in their rejection of the withdrawal from Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Betar, *Report to the 7th World Congress of Betar* (Tel-Aviv, 1957) 11.

42. Betar, *Decisions of the 9th World Congress of Betar* (Jerusalem, 1962) 5; *Jl*, 1961, H1/13/6/7.

43. For example, Begin, in 1975, stated that "Western Eretz Israel is not subject to partition. When in the US, I used the expression "The Land of Israel is unpartitionable." Eretz Israel is unpartitionable. . ." *Jl*, April 24, 1975, P20/11/4. For other examples, see *Jl*, February 1969, H1/10/30; Menachem Begin, *Maariv*, July 6, 1973; Menachem Begin, "The Partition as principle and insult," *Maariv*, July 20, 1973; Menachem Begin, "Our Right to Eretz Israel: Lecture at a Gahal Center meeting, November 20, 1968," *Hayom*, December 6, 1968; Menachem Begin, "The Future of Gahal," *Maariv*, July 16, 1971; *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; *Jl*, January 8, 1974, H1/2/24; Menachem Begin, "What is a State—and What is a Homeland?" *Maariv*, October 1, 1976.

44. *Jl*, 1968, H1/13/9/15.

45. See statements in *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; *Jl*, April 24, 1975, H1/2/26; *Jl*, December 2, 1976, H1/13/13/6.

46. *Jl*, August 30, 1967, H2/26. *Jl*, June 27, 1967, P20/11/2; *Jl*, October 23, 1967, P20/11/2; *Jl*, March 8, 1968, P20/21/1; Begin, "Our Right to Eretz Israel." A Herut pamphlet from 1968 mimics this ambivalence and illustrates the coexistence of the both map-images. The pamphlet, written by Yoram Aridor, places "Jordan" in quotation marks, implying that it is illegitimate (by comparison, 'Syria' is not placed in quotation marks) and simultaneously excludes it from "Eretz Israel" by calling for the "extension of Israeli law to all of Eretz Israel and the Golan Heights." *Jl*, October 1968, H1/10/30.

47. *Jl*, 1968, H1/13/9/7. This distinction also appears in *Jl*, 1977, H1/1/15; *Jl*, 1981, H3/7/3.

48. The tally was nine and eight, respectively. *Jl*, 1968, H1/13/9/16.

49. Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London, 1984).

50. At this convention, twelve clearly implied that Eretz Israel was already whole, while only five referred to Transjordan as appropriately part of the Jewish state. *Jl*, January 1977, H1/13/13/18, H1/13/13/19.

51. *Herut* in its last issue of December 31, 1965, still referred to “Jordan” in quotes. Prominent articulations of the “both banks of the Jordan” map-image include: Begin in *Jl*, April 23, 1970, P20/11/3; *Jl*, December 6, 1966, H2/9/6; “Report of a TV interview with Menachem Begin,” *Hayom*, January 8, 1969; and *Jl*, January 22, 1970, P20/12/4; Arye Ben-Eliezer in *Jl*, February 18, 1954, H1/2/4; Chaim Landau in *Jl*, H2/3/4; Geula Cohen, “Face to face with: Minister Menachem Begin: Why I am sitting in a National Unity Government,” *Maariv*, June 20 1969; *Jl*, January 14, 1973, H1/2/21/1; M. Eitan in *Jl*, October 28, 1982, H1/2/38; Bader, quoted in Peleg, *Begin’s Foreign Policy*, 134; *Jl*, January 9, 1986, H1/13/15/1/2; Aharon Papo in *Jl*, July 12, 1987, H1/2/43/1; Haim Misgav, *Talks with Yitzhak Shamir* (Tel-Aviv, 1997) 9. [Hebrew] The letterhead of the Israeli branch of Betar in 1982 still reflected the old map-image, as did some of the letters of congratulation. Betar World Leadership, *Report to the 14th World Congress of Betar* (Jerusalem, 1982).

52. Menachem Begin, “War of no Choice—or War of Choice,” *Maariv*, August 20 1982. Arye Naor’s comment that the second part of this statement generated great anger within *Herut* shows that, at least for some, the East Bank was still seen as part of the homeland. (personal communication, May 2002) This, however, begs the question of why Begin in 1982 believed that Israel is too weak “after the Holocaust” to conquer Transjordan, but apparently did not believe this in 1948—when it was much more plausible. Moreover, Begin’s attempt to cover his tracks notwithstanding, Israel’s inability to conquer its neighbor is a constant, not a variable, and thus cannot be used to account for change. Finally, even if Begin did not change his mind, the rest of the movement did—as is suggested by the increasing popularity of the “Jordan is the Palestinian state argument” (which Begin never used).

53. For example, Kotzer in *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; Shilanski in *Jl*, September 1972, H1/11/15.

54. For example *Jl*, September 1972, H1/11/15; *Jl*, 1979, H1/13/14/24.

55. *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2. At the same time, Begin and the Revisionist movement began to recognize Jordan, no longer qualifying its existence with quotation marks. For example, *Jl*, 1969, H1/16/3; Menachem Begin, “The Land, the Labor, and the Nation,” *Maariv*, April 27 1973; Begin, “To a Confrontation without Credibility;” *Jl*, September 29, 1974, P20/11/4; Chaim Landau, in *Jl*, January 8, 1974, H1/2/24; Menachem Begin, “Realistic Foundations for a National Policy,” *HaUma*, 42 (1974); *Jl*, August 11, 1982, P20/27/8.

56. Menachem Begin, “Eretz Israel is ours: That is justice and we will insist on it,” *Eretz Israel* (1973) 8–9, 9; Menachem Begin, “The Right is Whole, the Wholeness is the Right,” *Maariv*, October 24 1969; Menachem Begin, *Divrei Hakneset*, March 16, 1972; *Jl*, January 8, 1974, H1/2/24.



57. Menachem Begin, "Those who admit the main [point] of the enemy," *Maariv*, September 22 1972 [my emphasis]. On another occasion, Begin argued that "Were we to, God Forbid, divide Eretz Israel, any chance for peace would be destroyed." Menachem Begin, "The Nation and the People towards the second twenty five years," *Eretz Israel* (1973). For other examples, see *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; Menachem Begin, "With Mixed Feelings . . ." *Maariv*, January 8, 1971; Menachem Begin, "The right of the Jewish nation to Eretz Israel is not subject to appeal," *Eretz Israel* (1972) 7. See also Meridor in *Jl*, June 9, 1967, H2/2/10/2; *Jl*, November 28, 1974, P20/21/1. While Shamir was not entirely consistent, his claim to the East Bank of the Jordan—the few times he articulates it—is framed solely as a historical claim with little or no contemporary practical relevance. Shamir in Misgav, *Talks with Yitzhak Shamir*, 22, 156. That said, Shamir, at least on one occasion, stated that Eretz Israel is not entirely in Israel's hands. *Ibid.*, 70, 103. In his ideological treatise, Netanyahu, too, places the claim to the East Bank firmly in the past. Not only does his use of the past tense suggest that he considers this area no longer part of Israel, but the maps he provides use the label "Mandatory Eretz Israel" to designate only the area west of the Jordan! Binyamin Netanyahu, *Makom Tachat Hashemesh* (Tel-Aviv, 1995) 25. [Hebrew]

58. These statements are legion. For representative examples see *Jl*, December 1967, H1/11/13; *Jl*, October 1968, H1/10/30; *Jl*, February 9, 1970, P20/11/3; Begin in *Jl*, August 12, 1970, H2/2/12; Menachem Begin, "To a Confrontation without Credibility," *Maariv*, November 27 1970; Menachem Begin, "Worry and Consolation: following a meeting with Youth in Haifa," *Maariv*, December 11 1970; Menachem Begin, "Background Conversation—and the Background of the Conversation," *Eretz Israel*, April 1971; Begin, *Divrei Haknesset*, March 16, 1972; *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; *Jl*, August 21, 1973, H3/7/2; Menachem Begin, *Maariv*, August 30 1974; *Jl*, May 10, 1981, H3/7/4; *Jl*, 1981, H3/7/3; *Jl*, 1981, H3/7/4; Betar, *Report to the 14th World Congress*; Betar World Leadership, *Report to the 15th World Congress of Betar* (Maale Edumim, 1986); *Jl*, 1984, H1/14/11/9; *Jl*, December 5, 1985, H1/2/41/2; *Jl*, September 6, 1988, H1/14/12/2; *Jl*, April 24, 1988, H1/2/44; Shamir in Misgav, *Talks with Yitzhak Shamir*, 148.

59. *Jl*, November 19, 1981, H1/2/37. There are other examples of the explicit articulation of the new meaning of "Eretz Israel" for the Revisionists. For example, Dov Shilanski stated that, "When I speak of Eretz Israel I mean and include in it Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip." *Jl*, January 8, 1978, H1/2/32/1. Yosef Paz also excluded the East bank from the whole land of Israel: "There is a demographic problem in the Complete Land of Israel, as well as in the incomplete Land of Israel, *meaning without Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.*" *Jl*, January 9, 1986, H1/13/15/1/2.

60. *Jl*, August 3, 1970, H3/3/1. Menachem Begin, March 16, 1972, *Divrei HaKnesset*. *Jl*, March 15, 1972, H2/2/13. Again in 1978, Begin criticized the idea that Hussein has a right to Jerusalem, Judea or Samaria, but not its right to exist or its right to the East Bank of the Jordan River. *Jl*, January 8, 1978, H1/2/32/1.

61. Begin, “Our Right to Eretz Israel.”

62. *Jl*, March 21, 1973, H1/2/21/2; Also *Jl*, November 28, 1974, P20/21/1; *Jl*, January 1977, H1/13/13/19.

63. Shamir engages in a similar revision of Revisionist ideology by noting that Jabotinsky’s vision of Eretz Israel “recognized the importance of a strong Jewish state in defensible, *natural borders*, as the condition for the continued existence of the Jewish nation.” However, unlike Jabotinsky, Shamir places the “natural border” at the Jordan River rather in the “desert to the east.” Shamir in Misgav, *Talks with Yitzhak Shamir*, 66 [my emphasis].

64. Begin, “The Partition as principle and insult.” Netanyahu, *Makom Tachat Hashemesh*, 196; Misgav, *Talks with Yitzhak Shamir*, 100 [my emphasis]; *Jl*, January 8, 1978, H1/2/32/1.

65. *Jl*, March 19, 1979, H1/2/34 [my emphasis]. Even most of those who speak out against the Camp David Accords imply that the land of Israel is whole without the East Bank. *Idem.*; *Jl*, 1979, H1/13/14/24; *Jl*, 1979, H1/13/14/21.

66. *Jl*, 1981, H1/14/10/12.

67. *Jl*, 1988, H1/14/12/8.

68. Ze’ev Binyamin Begin, *Confrontations (Kavei Imut)* (Tel-Aviv, 1993) 126–7. [Hebrew]

69. Whatever reservations existed revolved around the unsettled issues of Jerusalem and the Palestinians. *Jl*, August 3, 1994, H2/2/25; Divrei HaKnesset, February 1, 1995; Divrei HaKnesset, October 25, 1994.

70. Their electoral performance had been shocking given their confidence of victory (12% in 1949, 7% in 1951, 13% in 1955) and calls were increasingly heard within the movement for the formation of alliances that could be a credible alternative to Mapai. *Jl*, February 27, 1955, H1/2/4. See also Yonathan Shapiro, *The Road to Power*, 123.

71. Shapiro, *The Road to Power*, 116.

72. *Ibid.*, 123–6.

73. Some who rely on this explanation point to changes in Begin’s electoral calculations in the early 1960s, while others argued that he realized no one else was willing to fight for the East Bank of the Jordan while part of the unity government between 1967 and 1970, or argued that he made a conscious decision to highlight consensual issues after 1977. See Preuss, *Begin*; Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 155; Peleg, *Begin’s Foreign Policy*, 95; Yehudit Auerbach and Hemda Ben-Yehuda, “Attitudes Towards an Existence Conflict: Begin and Dayan on the Palestinian Issue,” *International Interactions*, 13.4, 1987, 323–51, 338–43; Shapiro, *The Road to Power*.

74. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out. For general treatments of the rhetorical differences between Begin and Jabotinsky, see Gertz, “The Few Against the Many;” Shavit, *The Mythologies of the Zionist Right Wing*.

75. On the function and potential implications of ambiguity, see Ira Sharkansky, *Ambiguity, Coping, and Governance: Israeli Experiences in Politics, Religion and Policymaking* (London, 1999).

76. Lustick, Ian S. "Hegemony and the Riddle of Nationalism," in Leonard Binder (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics in the Middle East* (Gainesville, 1999) 339.

77. For examples of scholars who point to the 1967 war as the key cause of ideological change in the Revisionist movement, see Sasson Sofer, *Begin: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York, 1988) 115; see page 187 in Gad Barzilai, "A Jewish Democracy at War: Attitudes of Secular Jewish Political Parties in Israel toward the Question of War (1949–1988)" *Comparative Strategy*, 9, 1990, 179–94.

78. Alan Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (Berkeley, 1998) 90; Myron J. Aronoff, *Israeli Visions and Divisions: Cultural Change and Political Conflict* (New Brunswick, 1989) 25–6; Sofer, *Begin*, 86; Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy*, 39.

79. *Jl*, 1966, H1/13/8/3; *Jl*, P20/10/18. On December 18, 1955, Begin wrote to the President of the General Zionist Histadrut that a generally hawkish position is not the same as Herut's principled commitment to both banks of the Jordan. *Jl*, 1955–7, H1/8/37. Earlier attempts at this merger were also torpedoed by personal and organizational concerns. *Jl*, 1954, H1/13/3/1; Shapiro, *The Road to Power*, 128; *Jl*, May 8, 1958, H1/2/9.