



Politics of Memory: The Israeli Underground's Struggle for Inclusion in the National Pantheon and Military Commemoralization (Israeli History, Politics and Society)

Udi Lebel

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This book illustrates how a dominant political party, the Mapai, under the leadership of P.M. David Ben-Gurion, chose to 'hug,' honor and commemorate 'Her Fallen' and 'Her Bereaved Families,' whilst simultaneously ignoring the fallen that were identified with the rival political party, Herut, led by Menachem Begin. Designing legislation and cultural policy designated for Teaching the public that those who sacrificed themselves in the Israeli War of Independence – were Hagana Members, one of three Israeli undergrounds movements, associated with Mapai specific ideological viewpoint. By that - the Israeli state created political legitimacy and dominance for Mapai – which was framed as the only political party which were involved with the struggle for national independence. "Her" fighters, battles and casualties became part of the collective memory and national ethos. This project was implemented by refusing to acknowledge "the Other" casualties of the Ezel and Lehi underground movements which were ideological identified with Herut Party. The state excluded their bereaved families from the wider official military bereavement circle and forced them to experience "disfranchised grief", With no access to official commemoration or to rehabilitative support. It was only after the Likud's (ex-Herut) victory in the 1977 elections that enabled P.M. Menachem Begin to correct this "exile from national identity" and to initiate the inclusion of "His" fighters and casualties to the military cemeteries, to the history books and to the state commemorations, as recognizing their families as part of the National Military Bereavement circles entitled to Honors and support.

A thought provoking study about the dark side of the Israeli nation building era, *Politics of Memory* explores the politics of historiography, bereavement and military commemoration, and the confrontation over boundaries of national pantheon, examining the effects of these factors on Israeli national identity and politics.

With introductions by **Moshe Arens**, former Israeli Minister of Defense and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and by **Yehiel Kadishai**, P.M. Menachem Begin's chief of staff, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of Israeli history; military studies; memory and heritage studies; the study of loss and bereavement, and politics in general.

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