Definition: Ben-Gurion, David from Philip's Encyclopedia

Israeli statesman, prime minister (1948-53, 1955-63), b. Poland as David Grün. He settled in Palestine in 1906. In 1930 he became leader of the Mapai (Labour) Party, the socialist arm of the Zionist movement. After World War 2, he supported the use of violence to remove the British from Palestine and headed the campaign for an independent Jewish state. In 1948 he became Israel's first prime minister.

Summary Article: Ben-Gurion, David
from The Columbia Encyclopedia

(bên-gô’reŏn), 1886–1973, Israeli statesman, b. Płońsk, Poland, as David Grün. He settled in Palestine in 1906, but lived for periods of time in Istanbul, London, and New York. He was an active Zionist and during World War I helped to organize the Jewish Legion in support of the British. In the struggle to found an independent Jewish state in Palestine he followed a policy of cooperation with the British during World War II, but led the political struggle against them and authorized sabotage activities after the war. A founder and leader of the Labor (Mapai) party and an early leader of the Histadrut (the trade-union federation), he was the first (1948–53) prime minister of the newly created state of Israel. In 1955 he returned to the cabinet as defense minister under Moshe Sharett and later that year again became prime minister, reflecting a shift in Israeli policy toward confrontation with Israel's hostile Arab neighbors. Amid growing controversy he resigned in Feb., 1961, but was quickly returned to office. He again resigned in June, 1963. In retirement Ben-Gurion continued to be politically active, forming a splinter party from the dominant Labor party in 1965. A selection of his writings was published as Rebirth and Destiny of Israel (1954); he also wrote Israel: Years of Challenge (1965), Israel's Security (1960), The Jews in Their Land (1966), Memoirs (1970), Israel: A Personal History (1971), and My Talks with the Arabs (1973).


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