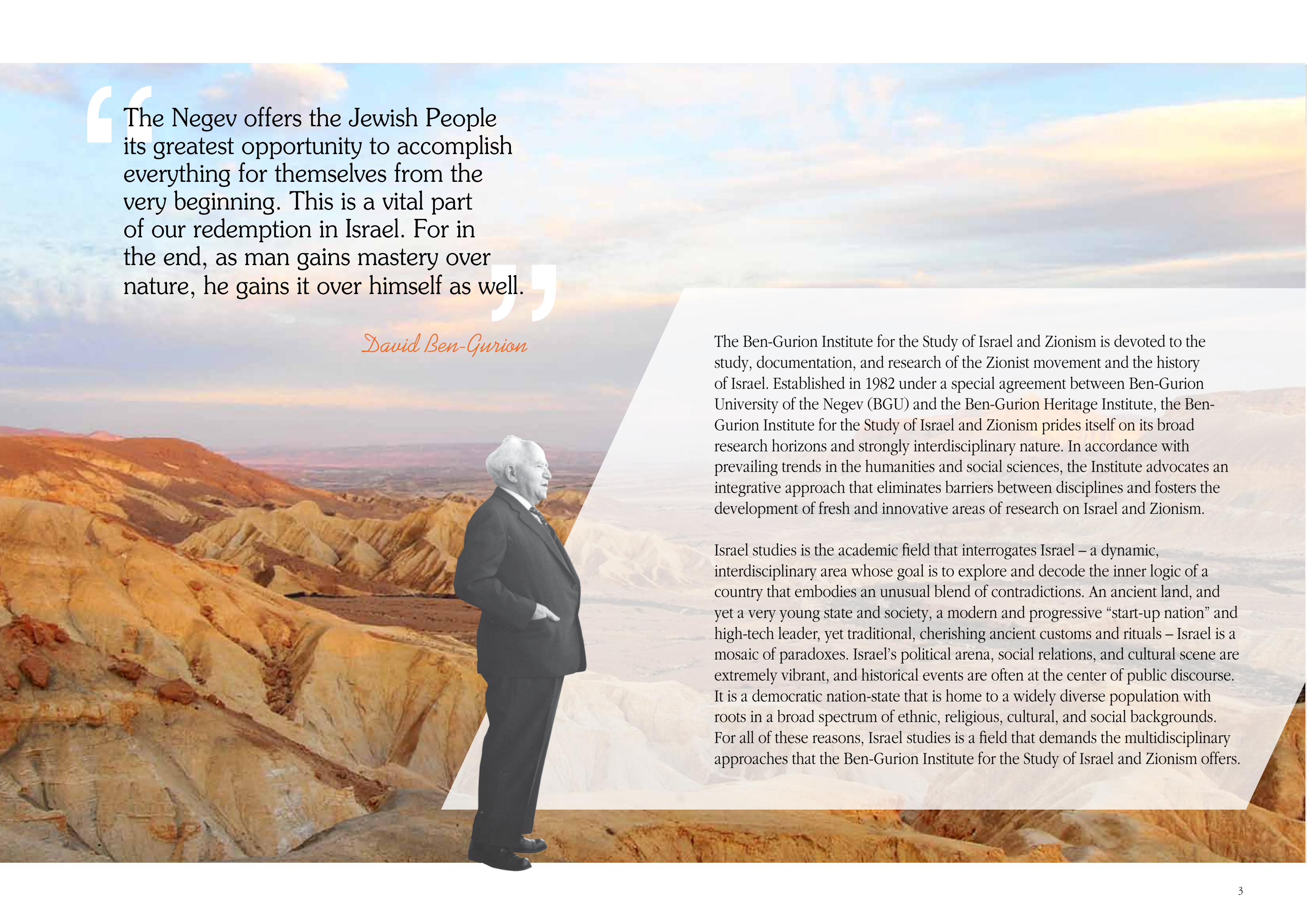




The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



“The Negev offers the Jewish People its greatest opportunity to accomplish everything for themselves from the very beginning. This is a vital part of our redemption in Israel. For in the end, as man gains mastery over nature, he gains it over himself as well.”

David Ben-Gurion

The Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism is devoted to the study, documentation, and research of the Zionist movement and the history of Israel. Established in 1982 under a special agreement between Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) and the Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism prides itself on its broad research horizons and strongly interdisciplinary nature. In accordance with prevailing trends in the humanities and social sciences, the Institute advocates an integrative approach that eliminates barriers between disciplines and fosters the development of fresh and innovative areas of research on Israel and Zionism.

Israel studies is the academic field that interrogates Israel – a dynamic, interdisciplinary area whose goal is to explore and decode the inner logic of a country that embodies an unusual blend of contradictions. An ancient land, and yet a very young state and society, a modern and progressive “start-up nation” and high-tech leader, yet traditional, cherishing ancient customs and rituals – Israel is a mosaic of paradoxes. Israel’s political arena, social relations, and cultural scene are extremely vibrant, and historical events are often at the center of public discourse. It is a democratic nation-state that is home to a widely diverse population with roots in a broad spectrum of ethnic, religious, cultural, and social backgrounds. For all of these reasons, Israel studies is a field that demands the multidisciplinary approaches that the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism offers.



Location

As befits such a singular and vibrant center of research activity, the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism is located in a very special venue, Ben-Gurion University's Sede Boqer campus, adjacent to the burial site of David Ben-Gurion and to his desert home at Kibbutz Sede Boqer.

Innovative, Interdisciplinary Research

The Institute is the academic home of expert scholars from a wide range of fields that embraces culture, humanities, and social sciences. Our research teams explore the processes, narratives, and ideologies that have made and continue to make Israel the country it is today. Researchers at the Institute examine the social, economic, political, cultural, and historical aspects of Israel's existence and address the multiple complexities of Israeli society, past, present, and future.

The studies conducted at the Institute are collaborative and encourage fruitful intellectual cross-fertilization among scholars from different disciplines. Our faculty members share a common domain, yet their perspectives, research topics, and worldviews are varied, encouraging innovation and enriching avenues of study.

Research at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute

What is Israeliness and what is the Jewishness of the Jews in Israel? Where do the philosophical, literary, and historical roots of Israeli secularism stem from? What is Zionism and what is post-Zionism? Is there any connection between these questions and the perception of history and historical research? These are some of the central questions that concern the Institute's researchers.

Studies currently underway at the Institute are breaking new ground on questions such as these and on Israel's political culture, issues concerning the intersections of sociology and history, the nature of Israel's relationship with the Diaspora and the Arab world, Israel and the Holocaust, and other core topics. Below is a small sampling of these studies.



Political Culture, Past and Present

A number of current studies on Israel's political culture are exploring the political culture of *Mapai*, the dominant party in the period of the *Yishuv* (the pre-State Jewish community) and during the first thirty years of Israel's statehood. Another is focusing on the role political movements such as *Gush Emunim* and Peace Now have played in shaping the public discourse in Israel.



Public Discourse in Israel

Studies of a sociological/historical nature are examining ways of shaping collective memory and public discourse in Israel through ceremonies, memorialization, scientific studies, and images of the Other. They are exploring, for example, the privileged status of archeology in the public discourse in Israel, the relationship between science and nationalism, the connection between research and faith, and the affinities between the past and the present.



Israel and the Jewish World: Movements, People, and Communities

With the creation of the State of Israel, changes occurred in the relationship between communities in the Jewish world and Israeli Jews. Current studies at the Institute are exploring *movements*, such as the Reform Movement in the United States and its affinities with the State of Israel; *people*, such as Abba Hillel Silver, his thought and political status in his community, and entire *communities*, such as the Jews of Iraq and Great Britain. Our researchers are interrogating the complex and intertwined nature of Israel/Jewish world relations, guided by such questions as: Does the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in Israel mean the end of the Zionist revolution? After the Holocaust and the establishment of the State, can Jews living outside Israel justify, in religious and ideological terms, living outside of the Jewish national home? What role does the State of Israel assign them, and what role do they wish to play?



Israel, the Zionist Movement, and the Arab World

The State of Israel was born into conflict, and has, since 1948, been swinging between periods of calm and periods of military confrontation, between participating in processes that work towards peace agreements and planning for war. These key issues are being studied extensively at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism. Some of the central questions being explored include: How was Israel's national security outlook formed? What was Ben-Gurion's impact on the relationship of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel with the Arab world? What role did the State of Israel play in the establishment and development of the Palestinian national movement? What attempts have been made in Israel to reach a peace settlement with the Arabs? In what ways did the Yom Kippur War influence Israeli society?





Society, Education, and Economy in Israel

In order to comprehend the Israel phenomenon, we must have a clear understanding of the history of Israeli society. A number of studies being conducted at the Institute are addressing the social and socioeconomic history of Israel both before and after the establishment of the State. These include studies on the history of education and civil society as well as a series of studies that address minority groups in Israel. Such studies assess the roles of different communities and social groups in the shaping of Israel and its democratic nature.

Israel's social history cannot be separated from questions of Israeli and Jewish identity. Thus, one of our current studies addresses the integration of Jews from Arab countries in Israel. This topic touches upon fundamental tensions that have accompanied Israel from its inception: those between the melting pot ideal and the more recent concept of multiculturalism, those stemming from internal rivalries between political and ideological camps, as well as those between socio-economic classes, religious and secular, different communities, generations, and genders. The story of immigrants and immigration serves as a prism for many of these issues and holds within it the story of the integration of Israeli society.



Israel and the Holocaust

Israel and the Holocaust is one of the central areas of research at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism. The study of topics in this field takes place across many disciplines, among them history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and theology. Researchers are examining what happened to the *Yishuv* and to other centers of the Zionist movement around the world upon learning of the events in Europe. Did Jews from the *Yishuv* in Eretz Israel come to the aid of the Jews of Europe? Our researchers are attempting to clarify whether the negative image of the members of the *Yishuv* as not having done anything to help save their brethren in Europe is justified or not. They are exploring the plans that the *Yishuv* initiated to aid and save the Jews of Europe, determining which of these plans were realized, what their place was in the overall agenda of the *Yishuv* and its leadership, what kind of intelligence system was available to the leadership in *Eretz Israel* in its efforts to save Jews from Europe, and more.

Master of Arts in Israel Studies

In June 2011, the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism inaugurated the International MA Program in Israel Studies. The program is aimed at students who wish to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of Israel and its development. With the highest concentration of Israel studies experts in the world, the Institute aims, through the International MA in Israel Studies, to share its unique insights into the Jewish People's renewal in its homeland. The program trains its students to be leaders in their own communities – equipped with a high level of knowledge and understanding of Israel's past and present, and poised to address the needs of the future.

For detailed information on courses, faculty, tuition, and other aspects of the program please visit our website at:

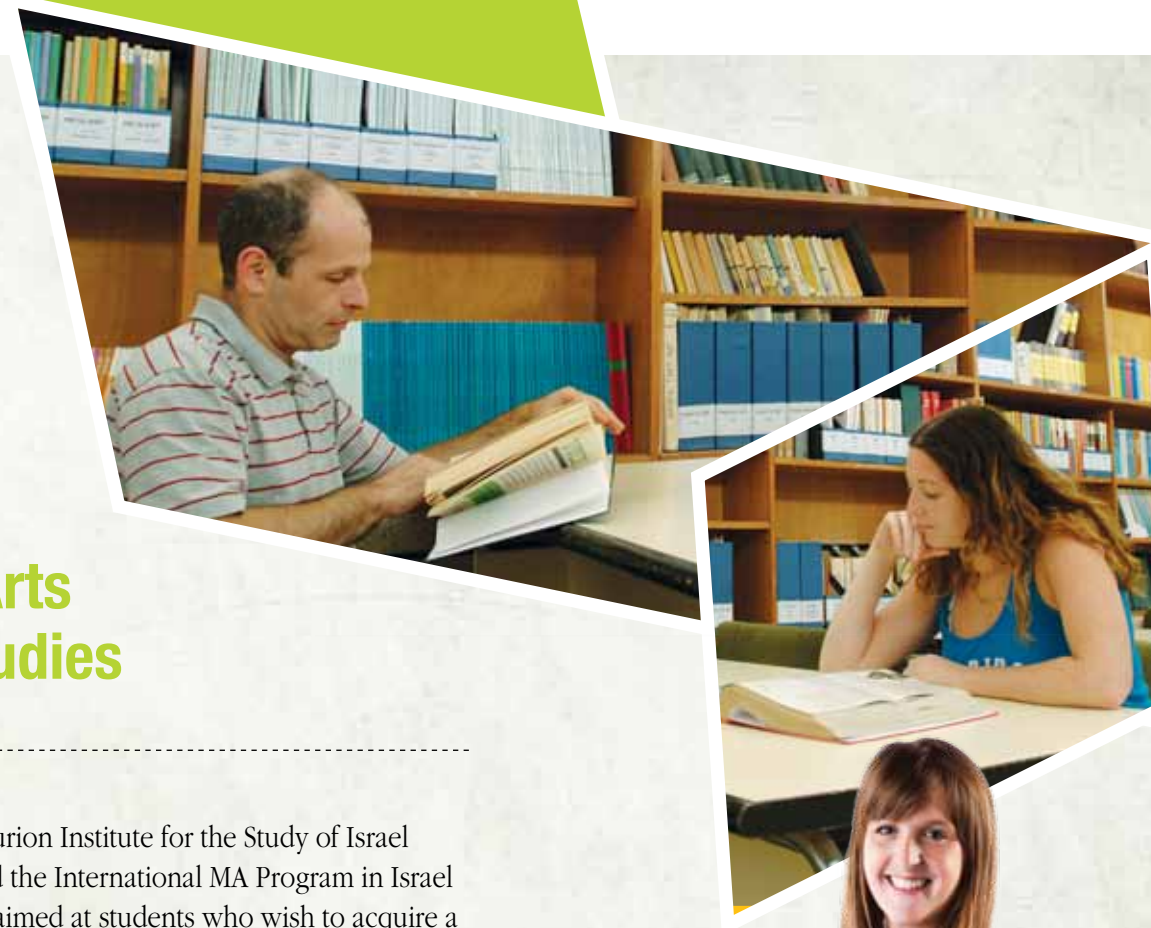
<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/ISIP>

or contact us at:

E-mail: israelstudies@bg.ac.il

Tel.: 972 8 6596936

Fax: 972 8 6596939



Specialized Infrastructure

The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism possesses a specialized study and research infrastructure. Its library and archives are rich in sources necessary for research of core issues in the field. Students in our study programs benefit from the Institute's archives and library, both of which contain a wealth of information and sources not found elsewhere in the world.

The Archive

The archive of the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism is one of the leading archives in the country and the southern branch of the Israel State Archives. It contains more than 3 million items that reflect the history of Israel from the early twentieth century until the present day. Among these are protocols of the main organizations of the *Yishuv* and the State, minutes of meetings, memoranda, letters, photographs, and other documents of the various institutions in which David Ben-Gurion, the Institute's namesake, one of the founders of the State, and its first prime minister, was active. In addition, the archive houses the personal documents of other prominent Zionist figures, such as Abba Hillel Silver and Hillel Kook, as well as a number of special collections. The archive has been a pioneer in digitalizing the documents in its possession. The entirety of David Ben-Gurion's diaries and thousands more documents are fully searchable online.

Ben-Gurion's diaries are undoubtedly the jewel in the crown of the archives. Ben-Gurion was a prolific writer who kept meticulous records, even copying statistics into his diaries. Their 20,000 pages, written over the course of nearly 70 years, contain invaluable research material that sheds light on the events surrounding the founding of the State and the social trends and minutiae of its development.

The Library

The Institute's library houses more than 40,000 titles on topics related to the history of Zionism and Israel and a special collection of 32,000 printed items, including articles on David Ben-Gurion and his own writings. The library also boasts a search capability that can provide an in-depth bibliography quickly and efficiently.

The Publishing House

As befits a leader in the field of Israel studies, the Ben-Gurion Research Institute conducts intensive publication activity that involves monographs and other books as well as two periodicals containing refereed research articles, one in Hebrew and the other in English. Both of these journals provide a prestigious forum for discussion on a broad range of issues representing the multidisciplinary approach to the study of Israel.

Books

Between twelve and fourteen books are published annually, providing in-depth insight into relevant research on Israel from every angle – its history, geography, culture, literature, poetry, politics, and more. Ten of the Institute's books have been reissued in second editions – an impressive achievement for any academic publisher. The Ben-Gurion Research Institute is the publisher of the nine-volume series of Ben-Gurion's memoirs (1936-1947). A new series that covers Ben-Gurion's years as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense as well as his last years on Kibbutz Sede Boqer (1948-1973) is currently being launched.

Journals

The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism publishes two peer-reviewed journals. The Hebrew language journal, *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* (Studies in Israeli and Modern Jewish Society), published annually for the past 20 years, provides a platform for the examination of Israeli history and society from a variety of perspectives. In addition to the annual volume, *Iyunim* publishes thematic volumes on topics such as Zionism, the economy, and controversial Zionist leaders. Future volumes will focus on gender, music, and secularism versus traditionalism in the modern age. Notably, this journal features on the syllabi of all Israel studies courses in the country.

The Institute's English-language journal, *Israel Studies*, has been published since 1996 and is the leading international journal on Israel studies. In use around the world, it offers access to cutting-edge research on Israel. *Israel Studies* has been co-sponsored by Brandeis University since 2006 and appears three times annually.

“We wish to establish a center for science, research, and learning which will also be a source of inspiration, a source of moral courage, a source of man’s faith in the noble mission, a creative mission, fertile, conquering, renewing...”

David Ben-Gurion



**The Ben-Gurion Research Institute
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POB 257 Sede Boqer Campus, 84990
Midreshet Ben-Gurion, ISRAEL
Phone 08-6596936, Fax 08-6596939
BGI@bgu.ac.il
<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/bgi>