

Volume 2

MAJOR KNESSET DEBATES,
1948-1981

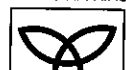
The Constituent Assembly –
First Knesset 1949-1951

Edited by
Netanel Lorch

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*For my grandchildren—Gilad, Ariel, Guy, Shani
and Dafna.*

May they grow up, and understand.



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FIRST KNESSET 1949–1951

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY—FIRST KNESSET

Opening Sitting

Introduction

On 8 November 1948—in the midst of war—the first census was carried out in the new state; the resultant number of eligible voters was 506,507. On 25 January 1949, after the cease-fire on the Egyptian front had come into effect, but well before the first Armistice Agreement—that with Egypt—was signed, nationwide elections took place for the Constituent Assembly, which subsequently converted itself into the First Knesset. “Provisionally” it was decided that the elections would be held under a strictly proportional system—inter alia, because that appeared simplest, and could be applied in minimum time, an important consideration in view of Israel’s ongoing struggle for recognition and for membership in the United Nations. About 87 percent of all eligible voters participated in the elections. Twelve out of the twenty-one lists which had been presented obtained the minimum of 1 percent of the valid votes, and thus were represented by at least one member in the Assembly. There were 120 members in the Assembly—a number adopted, after lengthy discussions—as a symbol of continuity in Jewish sovereign history in the Land of Israel: the Great Knesset, the representative assembly, established by Jews in their country after their return from exile in Babylonia at the end of the fifth century B.C.E., had also been composed of 120 members.

By far the largest number of mandates, 46, went to the Labor party headed by Ben-Gurion, followed by the United Workers party with 19, the United Religious Front with 16, the Herut movement headed by Me-nahem Begin, former Commander of the Irgun (IZL) with 14, the General Zionists with 7, and the Progressives with 5. Ben-Gurion could have commanded a comfortable majority of 65 by establishing a coalition with the United Workers party; however, this did not come about and the coalition which was ultimately presented for confirmation included the religious parties and the political center.

While negotiations for the formation of a coalition were still under way, the Constituent Assembly held its inaugural sitting on 14 February 1949, the 15th of Shevat—according to the Hebrew calendar the New Year for trees—which henceforward came to be celebrated also as the birthday of the Knesset. As a symbolic act, not lacking an element of defiance, the first sittings took place in Jerusalem—until very recently be-

sieged—whose political future was still a matter of international controversy.

Sitting 1 of the Constituent Assembly

14 February 1949 (15 Shevat 5709)
Jewish Agency Building, Jerusalem, 4 p.m.

The Ceremony

1. The President of the Provisional Council of State, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, enters the chamber and takes his seat.
2. The National Anthem (*Hatikva*).
3. Address by Dr. Chaim Weizmann.
4. The delegates swear allegiance.
5. Election of the Speaker.
6. Discussions.
7. Conclusion.
8. The National Anthem.

The Opening Address

President of the Provisional Council of State, Dr. Chaim Weizmann: It is with a sense of honor and awe that I rise to open the Constituent Assembly of the State of Israel, the first Jewish assembly of our day, in Jerusalem, the eternal city.

At this great moment in the history of our people, we give thanks and praise to the God of Israel, by whose grace we have been privileged to see redemption, after generations of suffering and misery.

This occasion is the outcome of the tremendous reawakening of our national consciousness during the last few decades. It began approximately seventy years ago, when the best among us, the unknown and nameless leaders of that generation, arose to fulfill the age-old dream of the return to Zion and the revival of national existence.

Their endeavours took two directions.

The first was spiritual arousal, the return to the ancient sources of our Jewish heritage, and the revival of the Hebrew language and its literature, focusing the widely-dispersed abilities of our nation on one aim. There were also activities in the spheres of education and the dissemination of information, the open proclamation of our historic right, and efforts to obtain the help and support of the leaders of the world. Two

major assemblies constituted milestones along this road: the Kattowitz Conference and the First Zionist Congress.

This path led to the creation of the World Zionist Organization, the workshop in which fulfillment was forged, and the establishment of the Jewish Agency, the supreme political institution and great settlement instrument of the Zionist movement, under whose roof we are gathered here this evening. In the words of the illustrious visionary of the Jewish state in our time, this was the Jewish state in the making. As we proceeded along this path we achieved the Balfour Declaration, the first external recognition of our right to a national revival in the land of our fathers.

The second direction was that of concrete action, and was taken by those who had grown weary of waiting for the strength of the Jews in the diaspora to increase and for others to grant them recognition. They sought to hasten matters, and they came to Palestine, attempting to bring redemption to their people by the labor of their hands, the sweat of their brow, and their very lifeblood. They were the first pioneers, the Bilu'im, and all those whose ideals led them to immigrate and lay the foundations of the country. They were followed by later generations of settlers, until this great entity was formed by those whose blood and sweat, heroism and sacrifice, established the State of Israel.

Those who took the second path also created organizational frameworks and institutions of self-rule: the settlements' and towns' committees, the assemblies of the new Jewish population, the Delegates' Assembly and the National Council (Va'ad Leumi), which also met in this building.

The two directions have united long since and, like the two arms of one person, have also strengthened one another. Then the great day came, nine months ago, 14 May 1948, 5 Iyar 5708, when we proclaimed our independence and the establishment of our state, and the unity of the two elements was complete.

At that time, when all about us was blood, fire and pillars of smoke, war with the Arabs around us and the legacy of chaos left us by the Mandatory authorities, we were unable to hold elections and establish the state on a permanent basis. A provisional ruling body was set up, comprising a legislature and an executive, deriving its authority from previous elections. The two former supreme institutions the Executive of the Jewish Agency and the National Council combined to form this provisional ruling body.

In ancient times this little country of ours bore the banner of spiritual revolt against the tyranny and violence which raged around us. The Jewish Law (Torah) and the vision of the Jewish prophets determined a new moral code in interpersonal relations and a new regime in society. The authority of the kings of Israel was limited by the Law and the religious traditions; and the prophets of Israel were not afraid to

speak out and rebuke kings and princes, defending the poor and the underprivileged, the stranger and the slave, the orphan and the widow.

The monarchy itself was not approved of by the nation's spiritual leaders. "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you," Gideon says to the people. The great prophet's warning of the dangers of tyranny ring in the nation's ears until the end of time.

This rebellion against the rule of one person in Israel derives from the noble belief that a free nation which accepts the rule of law and justice has no need of any constraint from above to enable it to conduct its life as a society. If the laws of modern nations are concerned mainly with limiting the powers of the monarch, this devolves from the ancient regime of the Jewish nation.

It has been the lot of our generation to renew the tradition of liberty which was severed by tyrants nineteen hundred years ago. I do not know why this generation in particular has the privilege of fulfilling the desires of all the previous ones which rotted in the gloom of the diaspora. It may be because of all the suffering and pain which have beset us the last seventy years, as one limb after another was severed from the body of our nation, until of late a third of our number was destroyed. No nation in the world has suffered as we have, but at last the vision of redemption has been fulfilled. It is our lot to bear the heavy burden of responsibility for filling the gap which has been created within the ranks of our people with the murder of the best of its sons, the bearers of its standard and the carriers of its culture.

Our nation once gave the entire world the spiritual message which became the foundation of human society. The world is watching and waiting now to see what path we choose for ourselves in arranging our lives, and what the character of our state will be. It is listening intently to hear whether a new message will go forth from Zion, and what this message will contain.

The birth pangs of a new message are by no means easy. The product of the creative spirit emerges only after considerable sweat and pain, hard work and suffering. Our nation's creative ability faces a new and rigorous test. The constitution which the Knesset has been asked to prepare for Israel is a major touchstone.

After having participated in the great spiritual struggles of mankind, after having dedicated ourselves and shed our blood for the liberation of other nations, we have won the right to strive for our own national self-expression, and to make our contribution to the spiritual treasury of the whole world as a free and equal nation.

Let us focus our efforts first of all on increasing our creative ability by encouraging science and research in the State of Israel. Science and research are the basis of progress throughout the world. We must utilize all our achievements in science and research in the diaspora for build-

ing our country. But despite the crucial importance of science, it alone will not save us. We must build a new bridge connecting science with the human spirit. "Where there is no vision, the people perish," and we have seen where scientific progress which is not accompanied by moral vision can lead: to the atom bomb which threatens to destroy the whole world.

All my life I have endeavoured to make science and research the basis of our national undertaking. But I also know that beyond science there are lofty values which hold the solution to the ills of mankind, the values of justice and honesty, peace and fraternity. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."

Today is a great day for us. Let it not be considered arrogance if I say that this is also a great day for the world. A message of hope and encouragement goes forth today from this House, and from this holy city, to all the oppressed and persecuted peoples of the world who are struggling for freedom and equality. There is a reward for a just war. If we, the pitifully diminished and woefully oppressed nation, have reached this point, there is hope for all those who wait for justice.

From this house and this holy city, at this great moment, we send fraternal greetings to all the scattered members of our nation wherever they might be. We extend our hand in peace to our neighbors, and in friendship to all the peace-loving nations. Our greetings and gratitude go out to all the great and small nations which have recognized Israel, and we give a warm welcome to the representatives of the foreign nations and the religious leaders who have honored this occasion with their presence.

Knesset Members, I congratulate you on your first meeting. Remember that the eyes of the whole Jewish world are upon you, and that the yearning and prayers of past generations accompany you. May we all be worthy of this great moment and this immense responsibility.

Before we start our labors, let us remember the leaders and teachers of the nation, the founders of the (Zionist) movement and the commanders of our enterprise, whose vision and deeds have brought us to this moment. We reverence in particular the leader of the movement, the creator of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl; his colleague, the defender of his people, Max Nordau; Nahum Sokolow; our teacher and preacher, Ahad Ha'am; the genius of our poetry and our national culture, Chaim Nachman Bialik; the reviver of our Hebrew language, Eliezer Ben Yehuda; the pillar of devotion to Zion, Menahem Ussishkin; the flower of American Jewry, Louis Brandeis; and the great benefactor, the father of Jewish settlement, Edmond de Rothschild.

We remember all our brethren in this country and in the Zionist movement who have passed on without witnessing this day with us. We stand to attention and honor the memories of our precious and beloved

children, those young heroes, who died so that the State of Israel might be established.

The First Knesset of the State of Israel is convened.

Transition Act

Introduction

Immediately after the festive opening, the elected members took their oath of allegiance. Joseph Sprinzak, who had held the same office in the Provisional State Council, was elected Speaker of the Constituent Assembly, and the House got down to its day to day tasks. One of the first concerns was to establish the legal basis for its work.

Sitting 4 of the Constituent Assembly

16 February 1949 (17 Shevat 5709)

Jewish Agency Building, Jerusalem, 4:38 p.m.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I hereby open the fourth sitting. We will now discuss one item, the Transition Act. I ask the chairman of the Constitution Committee to convey the Committee's conclusions.

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): Before I read out our proposal for the Transition Act, I would like to say a few words of explanation. This is still not the constitution on the basis of which we will have to conduct our parliamentary life. This is merely a Transition Act which will enable us to elect our executive institutions legally, as well as choose the President who will symbolize the state. We may inadvertently have omitted something from this Transition Act because of our lack of parliamentary-political experience. The brief but productive labors of our interim institutions and the Constitution Committee of the Provisional Council of State, of whose material we have made use, as well as the eighteen hours of the Committee of this House, were naturally unable to fill this gap. It seems to me, at any rate, that the bill which we submit to you comprises the main points which will enable this House, once the law is passed, to set to work on a continual, orderly and legal basis.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that several points have been raised by members of the Constituent Assembly on matters which seem to us to stray from the subject under discussion. For example, the Herut movement proposed annulling two laws: the Mandatory law, and the law that has already been passed by the State of Israel's institutions regarding the war against terrorism. Our discussions did not extend to the actual content of these proposals, but we decided that they are not relevant to the issue which our Committee can and should discuss. Neither the majority nor the minority opinion in the Committee on

these matters will be submitted to the Assembly. The House will have to discuss these subjects in the course of its work. We have also heard that the Minister of Justice has prepared proposals on these issues, and they will be submitted to the Committees which will be appointed for this purpose by the House.

I will continue, therefore, by reading the proposal:

Chapter One: The Knesset

1. The legislature of the State of Israel shall be called the "Knesset." The Constituent Assembly shall be called the "First Knesset." A delegate to the Constituent Assembly shall be called a "Member of Knesset."

(Addressing the Speaker) Would you prefer to vote on each section separately or should I first read out the entire bill?

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I suggest that we vote on each chapter.

I. Idelson (Chairman of the Constitution Committee): I regret to inform you that some matters were decided by a majority vote, and consequently dissenting opinions will be brought before the House for its decision.

2. (A) The legislative measures of the Knesset shall be called Acts.

(B) Every Act shall be signed by the Prime Minister and the Minister or Ministers responsible for the implementation of the Act.

(C) The President shall sign every Act, except for those Acts relating to his own powers.

(D) Every Act shall be published in the *State Gazette (Megillat Hamedinah)* within ten days of its passage in the Knesset.

Incidentally, the *State Gazette* is the new title for what was formerly called the *Official Gazette (Iton Rasmi)*.

...

The Minister of Religion, Rabbi I.L. Fishman: I would like to know what Section 2, sub-section C, "The President shall sign every Act, except for those Acts relating to his own powers," means.

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): It means that if the House decides today that the President has power in a specific sphere, he does not need to sign that resolution in order for it to become law; our decision and the other signatures are sufficient. His signature is required on the other acts, however.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now proceed to the dissenting opinions. The Procedure Committee has decided that the procedural code of the State Council (*Moetzet Hamedinah*) will remain in force for these sittings in Jerusalem, until the Committee has worked out a new procedural code and brought it before this House....According to this procedural code, the floor will be given to every dissenting opinion and then to

the chairman of the Committee, or one of its members. After that the vote will be taken and there will be no further debate.

The Foreign Minister, M. Shertok: I gather that there is some opposition to the idea that this Assembly should make decisions regarding the name of the permanent legislature of Israel, and that it is proposed that we should merely give the Constituent Assembly a name. I would like to say that if this is the case, I fail to understand why these people have agreed that the Constituent Assembly should be called the "First Knesset." Because by implication, the ensuing meetings of this body will also be called the "Knesset," so that the word "First" is unnecessary.

I disagree with the basic approach that we cannot decide now on matters which will govern our future. There is no dispute that this is indeed the Constituent Assembly, and its task is to lay down permanent procedures, until such time as we decide otherwise. It is pointless to recoil from taking these steps at the beginning of our work, and to do so would indicate a strange temerity to use the authority vested in us. If we have been charged with making decisions regarding permanent procedures, why should we not do so?...

I do not think that anyone has suggested that while this Knesset is sitting, and until a constitution is prepared, we should refrain from passing any acts, for to do so would be to condemn us to the paralysis of government and public administration. It would also be unreasonable to propose that while the First Knesset is sitting another body should sit and devote itself solely to passing laws, and we should concentrate only on drawing up the constitution....This is a Constituent Assembly, but it is also the legislature, and we need a name that will combine the two functions. We can combine historical precedent with the special task with which we have been charged, and call this assembly the First Knesset.

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now proceed to the proposal submitted by Knesset Member Warhaftig, to add subsection E to Section 2, stating: "Criminal laws will not be enacted to take effect at an earlier date than the one on which they were passed." In my view, this amendment could be accepted or rejected when Israel's constitution is debated. We will vote on it, in any case.

Those in favor of Knesset Member Warhaftig's amendment for the introduction of subsection E to Section 2, please raise their hands.

Those against the introduction of subsection E to Section 2, please raise their hands.

The proposal to add the amendment to Section 2 is defeated by 52 votes to 43.

The Minister of Justice, P. Rosenblitt: On behalf of the Provisional Cabinet, I would like to say that we oppose any retroactive enactment of criminal laws, and I refute the claim that criminal laws have been enacted retroactively. That is untrue. The Cabinet did not support the proposal to introduce this clause into the Law, because this clause has no legal validity. If we had a constitution, the Supreme Court could hand down a decision making a retroactive criminal law null and void because it contradicts the constitution. But the principle does not limit the authority of the Constituent Assembly to enact a criminal law retroactively. Consequently, there is no point in doing so.

This Cabinet (I cannot speak for the next one) opposes all retroactive legislation. During the coming weeks we may have to contend with the question of how to deal with people who are in Israel now and have committed atrocities against Jews abroad. Under existing law, these people cannot be brought before the courts without retroactive criminal legislation. We should, perhaps, refrain from doing this because of the importance and sanctity of this principle. Be that as it may, if we do find ourselves confronted with this question, this House will have to decide what course to take.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: What we have just heard concerns a debate which is yet to come. We will now vote on Section 2.

...

(Section 2 is adopted, with 10 abstentions.)

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now proceed to discuss Chapter 2: the President of the State.

I. Idelson (Chairman of the Constitution Committee): Chapter 2 deals with the President of the State.

Electing the President of the State

3.(A) The President of the State will be elected by the Knesset, by a secret ballot.

(B) The candidate who receives more than half the votes of all the Members of the Knesset is elected.

(C) If no candidate received this majority, the vote is taken again. If no candidate received this majority again, the vote is taken a third time, and so on.

At each additional ballot, the candidate who received the smallest number of votes drops out. The candidate who received more than half the votes of all the Members of Knesset at the third or subsequent ballot is elected.

With regard to Section 3 (C), I would like to point out that underlying these proposals is the view that the President should be elected by an ab-

solute majority, and not simply because other candidates received fewer votes.

The President's Oath of Allegiance

4. Within seven days after his election, the President shall sign the following declaration in the Knesset, or before the Speaker of the Knesset:

As President of the State, I (name), pledge my allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws.

The President's Term of Office

5. The President's term of office shall be concurrent with the term of office of the First Knesset, and shall continue up to three months after the inauguration of the new parliament.

With regard to Section 5, may I note that we wished to ensure that a situation would not suddenly arise in which there was no President, no Cabinet and no parliament.

The President's Duties

6. The President of the State shall sign treaties with foreign states which have been ratified by the Knesset, and will appoint the state's diplomatic representatives, at the recommendation of the relevant Minister. He will receive the diplomatic representatives of foreign states who have been accredited to Israel, and will approve the appointment of consular representatives of foreign states. He is also empowered to pardon criminals and commute their sentences.

The President's Signature

7. Every official document which is signed by the President of the State will also bear the signature of the Prime Minister, or any other Minister so authorized by the Cabinet.

M. Begin (Herut): Regarding the oath of allegiance of the President of the state, the party group which I have the honor of representing proposes the following amendment: "The President of the State pledges his allegiance to the people of Israel and their state."

I would like to give a brief justification for this proposal. In every state the subject of allegiance is the people. The state is merely a tool in the hands of the people, and consequently the first allegiance of anyone who represents the state is to the people who established it, and only afterwards to the state. Naturally, no distinction can be made between these two concepts. The connection between them is a qualitative one. But the phrase "I pledge my allegiance to the state" on its own is inadequate, and I therefore suggest that the words "to the people of Israel" be added to the version proposed by the majority in the Committee.

Secondly, a dissenting view was raised in the Committee. This was not mine, but I agreed with it, and since no one else has defended it, I take it upon myself to do so. I propose that we delete the phrase "and its laws" from the President's oath of allegiance, since repressive British laws are still in effect in the State of Israel, and it does not befit our state and our people that the President of the State should pledge allegiance to those laws, which constitute a blot on our people and our state.

The President's powers, as laid down in the Cabinet's proposal and in the bill brought before you today by the majority of the Committee, are extremely limited. They are limited even in comparison with the powers of the President in countries where the President is not the head of the executive, as in the United States. Even in those countries where the President is merely a figurehead he has far greater power than the President of the State of Israel. I do not know why the power of our President should be so limited, just as I do not yet know who will be proposed as a candidate for this office by the majority party. It may well be that it does not consider its candidate capable of doing more than this proposal permits. But at this moment we are discussing the institution of the President, the state's highest office, and consequently the power it carries should not be connected with any particular individual. Today or tomorrow this President will be elected. After a while, another one will take his place. And while our deliberations concern only the Transition Act at present, i.e., not the constitution itself, which may take a long time, we should lay healthy foundations for the government of the state.

Consequently, we propose that the President of the state be empowered to hold up an essential law passed by the Constituent Assembly, or the First Knesset, as it will be called, but only once. This is an extremely important issue. Most countries have two Houses. This is a tried and tested political and social development, and is by no means fortuitous. The political wisdom of countries which are experienced in government has led them to establish two legislative Houses, sometimes adding even another legislative authority in the person of the Head of State. The underlying assumption is that even elected representatives of the people can err on occasion, despite discussions and debates, and that consequently they should be given the possibility of debating issues yet again. We do not have a second House. For the moment we have only one. (A. Fishman: Do you want two Houses? From the floor: Three!) For the moment we do not yet have a law to determine the number of legislative Houses Israel will have. How many Houses do I want? I will reply to that in the Constitution Committee, when the question is brought up for discussion. At present I maintain that the Constituent Assembly constitutes our one and only House, and there is no other body which can review our decisions or laws.

It would, therefore, be politically advisable to give the House an additional period of time in which to debate laws, even after they have been passed. That is why we propose that the President be given the right to delay laws passed by this House. This is not the right of veto, as it exists, albeit only in theory, in the enemy country, England, for example. Nor is it the right of veto which exists in America, where the President can reject a law twice even after it has been passed by both Houses, and only after the Houses have given the law a third reading does it come into effect, after being signed by the President. What we are talking about here is a one-time delay, and if the House decides to pass the same law a second time, the President will sign it and it will take effect.

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): I must first of all express my deep regret at the fact that Mr. Begin has seen fit, even before we have begun to elect the first President of our state, to cast aspersions on the candidate who will be proposed and possibly even elected (applause). That is no way to talk, in my view.

And now, to get to the point. The proposal is that the words "the people of Israel" be added to the oath of allegiance. There appears to be some considerable confusion here with regard to concepts. We are talking about the President of the State. In this state there are Arabs as well as Jews. However, to our sorrow, only a very small fraction of the Jewish people lives in Israel at present. The entire Jewish nation did not elect us nor, through us, the President whom we will have to choose. Although Mr. Begin tried to explain to the Committee that it can be said that we have a country, and the people who live in this country are the people of the State of Israel, I do not think that there is any basis for this "territorial" approach. Here, too, there is considerable confusion regarding concepts, which did not exist among us previously. We are talking about something which is as dear to all of us as it is to Mr. Begin. His proposal derives from a total failure to grasp the concepts which are obvious to, and accepted by, all of us. There is no need for this addition. Even now the people of Israel have institutions, and those Presidents who will swear allegiance will do so to the entire people of Israel.

The second proposal is to delete the words "and its laws." I must say that the reasons given here were not given in the Committee, though this does not automatically disqualify them. But they are incorrect. I believe that a declaration was issued to the effect that all the laws of the Mandatory authorities which negate the building-up of the State of Israel in any way are null and void. When we talk about swearing allegiance to our laws, even before we have completed the difficult task of ridding ourselves of the legacy of laws which has been left to us, this in no way means that anyone of us owes allegiance to the Mandatory laws. The reference is to our laws alone! But I think that some confusion about concepts has set in here too. The term "and its laws" refers to the laws we

pass, and I am sure that any President who will be elected will take that phrase in our proposal for granted.

As regards the President's powers, this law contains no explicit clause indicating that these are all his powers. This is also something which cannot be completed overnight, and which the Constitution Committee will have to discuss. We have formulated those matters which, if deferred, will hold up our work. We are unable to tell the representatives of foreign states to whom they should submit their accreditation; we cannot formally accept all the recognition which has suddenly been accorded to us, and so on. These aspects, and only these, have been settled for the moment, and it is our intention to discuss them again at a later date. As regards Mr. Begin's implied suggestion that there should be two Houses, we have taken care in all our proposals to ensure that the role of the President is not a legislative one. He is the symbol of our state.

I propose that for the moment we accept the powers of the President as they are set out in the Transition Act, since this is essential for our work at present, and that we refrain from dealing with additional issues.

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: ...Mr. Begin proposes that the President's oath of allegiance should read: "I swear allegiance, as President of the state, to the people of Israel and their state."...Those in favor, please raise their hands.

...

The Vote

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| In favor of Mr. Begin's amendment | 16 |
| Against | 71 |

(The amendment was not adopted.)

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now proceed to the third Chapter, the Cabinet.

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): Chapter Three: The Cabinet.

The Resignation of the Provisional Cabinet

8. The Provisional Cabinet shall submit its resignation to the President of the State immediately after he has been chosen, but will continue its functions until a new Cabinet is formed.

The Task of Forming a Cabinet

9. After consulting the representatives of the party groups in the Knesset, the President of the State shall give one of the members the task of forming the Cabinet.

The Composition of the Cabinet

10. The Cabinet shall consist of the Prime Minister and several Ministers from among the Knesset members.

The Establishment of the Cabinet

11. (A) Once it has been formed, the Cabinet shall be presented to the Knesset, and shall be established after it has obtained its confidence.

(B) Within seven days of the vote of confidence, the Prime Minister and the other Ministers shall read and sign the following declaration in the Knesset:

I, (name), as a member of the Cabinet, do swear allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws, and undertake to uphold the decisions of the Knesset.

(C) The Cabinet is collectively responsible for its actions to the Knesset, will report to it about them, and will continue in office as long as it enjoys the confidence of the Knesset.

(D) A cabinet which has received a vote of no-confidence from the Knesset or which has decided to resign, shall immediately submit its resignation to the President of the State, but shall continue its functions until a new Cabinet has been established, in accordance with this Act.

...

The Foreign Minister, M. Shertok: (Proposing an amendment to Section 10): The original version submitted by the Cabinet—and I hope I am not mistaken in this—did not contain the words "from among the Knesset Members." (The Minister of Justice, P. Rosenblitt: It did, but there were other words too.) The version submitted by the Cabinet read: "The Cabinet shall consist of the Prime Minister and several representatives, from among the members of the Knesset or from outside the Knesset." The Committee's alteration consists of omitting the words "or from outside the Knesset." This is clearly a matter of principle. At first glance, it seems reasonable that only people who have been elected to the Knesset, that is, who have passed the test of gaining public confidence through being elected, have the right to be in the Cabinet. And no one else has this right. But I would like to ask those Knesset Members who uphold this view to reconsider. I hope that they will agree that this restriction is unnecessary, and that, on the contrary, it may even limit the Cabinet's ability to function. The original proposal does not harm the fundamen-

tal principle of the Cabinet's responsibility to the parliament, i.e., the Knesset, in any way.

This principle is not as widely and generally accepted in all democratic countries as many members appear to assume. I do not wish to present the example of Helvetia (Switzerland), where no one who has been elected may be a Minister, and all the Ministers must be drawn from outside the parliament. That may be said to be an exceptional state of affairs, but we should be aware of the fact that there is a country where democracy has reached a certain peak, and that that is its policy. (From the floor: And what about America?) The regime is fundamentally different in America. What prevails there is, in effect, the rule of one person who is not dependent on the Parliament. In a country like England, however, which till today is the classic model of Cabinet responsibility to the Parliament, where the Cabinet cannot continue for a single moment if it loses the confidence of the majority there, this principle does not obtain. The law does not insist that a member of the Cabinet be elected. There is that tradition, it is true, but this is not binding with regard to all Cabinet members. A Cabinet member cannot appear before the Parliament and participate in its deliberations if he is not a member of the House. But the Prime Minister may invite someone who is not a member of the House to take part on an equal footing in the Cabinet, and any party may nominate someone who has not been elected to participate in the Cabinet. Not only is there a greater population there to choose from, because of the existence of a second House (which is, in fact, an anachronism, and most of its members have no responsibility to an electorate, since no Cabinet is responsible to the Upper House, but this neither adds to nor detracts from my point), but, simply, people are included in the Cabinet who have not been elected at all.

In recent years, because of the increase in the number and range of tasks, it has often happened that people from outside Parliament have been called upon to hold important posts in the Cabinet. England also has another well-known solution for the lack of suitable candidates, in the system of by-elections. Thus, the opportunity which arises when a Member of Parliament resigns or dies can be used to elect someone else, who cannot only be a member of the Cabinet (for that he does not need a seat in Parliament), but may also appear in Parliament and participate in its debates.

What is the situation here? First of all, we do not have regional elections, but rather a system of party lists and proportional representation, so that by-elections do not occur. The composition of the Knesset, as well as of the Cabinet, is predetermined by the lists of candidates, and if there are changes, or one of us makes way for someone else, people whose names are already on the list will automatically take their place, and nothing can change this sequence. When we form a Cabinet we must concern ourselves solely with ensuring that the members of the

Cabinet are elected. We must also ensure that they are suitable for their specific tasks, although without harming the basis principle of the responsibility of the entire Cabinet to parliament. We may find ourselves confronted with a situation in which a new task arises, and for which a special Ministry should be set up, but there is no one in the Knesset who is fitted to accept this responsibility, while outside it there is.

Moreover, the population of our country is not static; it is constantly growing as a result of immigration, bringing new forces and abilities into our ranks. By adhering to this restriction we would be barring the way to new talents which may reach our shores, and which would be suitable for certain tasks within the Cabinet.

I would like to emphasize once again that nothing I have said detracts in any way from the principle of collective responsibility to parliament. It alone, namely, the people's elected representatives, is entitled to determine whether this Cabinet shall take office or not. The existence of the Cabinet depends solely on the parliament. And if this principle is properly protected, I do not see why we must deny ourselves the services of people and talents which fate may bring to us.

M. Begin (Herut): I will explain our dissension from the majority opinion in the Committee. But I would like first of all to express my reservations regarding the remarks made by the Chairman who, I must admit, conducted the Committee in an even-handed and sagacious manner. He did not, however, have the right to rebuke me for something I said in the plenum; only the Speaker has that privilege. I will not enter into an argument with him as to whether I may or may not cast aspersions. With regard to our reservations about the Committee's decisions, I propose that the Transition Act state specifically how many members the Cabinet should comprise. Our reasons for doing so are based on past experience and on the need for efficiency in the functioning of the Cabinet. Past experience has shown that several Ministries were established in our state which do not really belong in a free country, or which do not make the work of the Cabinet more efficient. Thus, a Ministry of Police was established and a Minister of Police appointed. No free country has a Ministry of Police. No Ministry of Education was established, on the other hand, and every self-respecting state has a Ministry of Education. Similarly, other Ministries were established which should really be Departments within a wide Ministry.

Secondly (and this is no secret), certain Ministries were established not because they were needed but in order to satisfy the demands of that strange creature, the party key. When a Cabinet of this kind is established, namely, a Cabinet that is not based on the optimal utilization of resources but rather on incidental considerations, then it can be described by the term used by the Provisional Prime Minister to describe an Israeli Cabinet—albeit an unparliamentary term—"a fraud." If I quote this expression, it is the responsibility of the person who used it.

We propose, therefore, that a certain number of Ministers be decided on. There is a need for a Foreign Ministry, as there is for a Ministry of the Interior, and it is the latter which should deal with the affairs of the police. A Ministry of Finance is required, as are Ministries of Justice, Education and Labor, and a large Ministry of Economic Affairs—something which has been adopted by many countries in recent years, since economic matters have become very complex. It is for this reason, rather than despite this situation, that it has been generally considered necessary to have one overall Ministry for all economic affairs, so that the state may be built up.

Consequently, we propose that the Transition Act should state explicitly that the Cabinet should consist of eight Ministries, namely: Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense, Treasury, Justice, Education, Labor and Economic Affairs. I do not propose including the names of the Ministries in the Act. I have explained the substance of the matter simply in order to make it clear why we propose this number and no other. Naturally, if it becomes necessary to establish another Ministry, there will be no difficulty as regards the Act we are about to pass, provided that Ministry is really required. If, for example, it is decided to set up a Ministry of Absorption, confronting a problem which is unique to our country, a special law can be passed. The Transition Act does not preclude this, since it is merely a Transition Act, and then that Ministry will be established. But a restriction is required; Ministries should not be established so that Ministers may be appointed to them in accordance with a party key, but because they are needed for the machinery of government. Obviously there is also a budgetary problem, and this should not be treated lightly, as it is important in and of itself. It can also be claimed that Departments which deal with other matters also involve budgetary expense, but there can be no comparison between the expenditure required in order to set up an entire Ministry and that of a Department. For the benefit of the state, the efficiency of the Cabinet's labor and the good of the Israeli taxpayer, we propose our amendment to Section No. 10. (S. Mikunis: I think there is an urgent need to establish a Ministry immediately—The Ministry to Combat Demagoguery.)

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): Colleagues, with regard to the number of Ministries, I would like to bring before you an example from the deliberations of the Committee. In the Committee Mr. Begin suggested that there should be seven Ministries. One of the Committee members asked: "Don't we need a Minister of Justice?" Then he said, "Yes—eight." It seems to me that this minor oversight regarding the Ministry of Justice indicates how thoroughly Mr. Begin has gone into the subject. Mr. Begin also proposes that since we might need another Ministry tomorrow, we will have to pass another law then. It appears to me that matters should be organized differently. When the Prime Minister presents all the Ministries to this House, announcing a

specific number of Ministries, and if it transpires that his suggestions are not appropriate for the work of the Cabinet, Mr. Begin or another member of this House will get up and make a practical proposal regarding a practical matter. We do not want to change this Act every other day. We want to formulate it so that within its limitations we will be able to add, develop and act, making matters easier for the work of the House, and the Act should be phrased in such a way that these strange interventions will not be necessary every now and again.

As regards expenditure, in my view, reducing the number of Ministries so that the Cabinet will not be responsible for all the aspects of their work may lead to even greater expenditure.

I propose leaving that Section as it was originally formulated. When the need arises, instead of promulgating a new law we can discuss how many Ministers are required for the various tasks, and what needs to be changed. This Act leaves those options open.

I would like to make some remarks concerning the proposal defended by Mr. Shertok. The question is a serious one, and I do not want to say that either proposal is perfect. Both of them involve difficulties. I believe that Mr. Shertok's proposal contains far greater difficulties and dangers than the one accepted by the majority of the Committee. All kinds of evidence can be brought from various countries, leading us to conclude that there are various possibilities, and that not everyone adopts the same policy. We must consider those aspects which are unique to us, and not what is customary in well-established, organized and veteran democracies. We must learn from what has occurred in countries where a parliamentary regime has only recently been established. In recently-established parliamentary regimes the proposal that Ministers should also be drawn from the ranks of those people who are not members of parliament is a dangerous one. Although we have not decided how many years the First Knesset should serve, it is obvious to me that it will not last for very long. If I thought that it would continue for many years I would have said that it is necessary to find a way of enabling new immigrants and recent arrivals to take part in it. But we are, after all, talking about something of limited duration, and logic teaches us that the immigrants must study in Israel, acquire Hebrew, and learn how to work in our country, at the initial stages of their life here. And learning how to work does not necessarily mean being a Minister. By bringing people into the Cabinet who are not members of the House we expose ourselves to danger. We should also learn something from the organization of the Jewish population in Palestine (the Yishuv), and remember that when we tried to build our democracy without compulsion from external sources, some people said: I do not wish to stand for election, I have my power, and you cannot manage without me.

There is here the danger that, with time, there will be a tendency to have honorary members. In the Zionist Executive we began supplementing the elected members with honorary members. We began with one great person, two or three great persons, and then there was a veritable epidemic. I would like to warn all of you of this danger. It exists in each party group which can be subject to pressure exerted by aggressive persons or people who had considerable merit in the past. That is why it is vital that anyone who can help us in our work should be placed at the head of the list of each party, so that he knows that he will have to pass the test of elections. I am prepared even to add that all this is being laid down merely as a Transition Act. In another twenty or thirty years, our experience may enable us to supplement it with practices which are proven to have succeeded in other countries.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now vote on the proposed amendments to Section 10.

One amendment states: Ministers may be chosen from among the Members of the Knesset or from outside the Knesset.

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 49 |
| Those against | 39 |

(The amendment is adopted.)

Mr. Begin's amendment proposes to limit the number of Ministers to eight.

...

(The amendment is not adopted.)

We will now vote on Section 10.

...

The Vote

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Those in favor of Section 10 | 49 |
| Those against | 9 |
| Abstentions | 28 |

(Section 10 is adopted.)

...

The Chairman, I. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Nir has an amendment to propose regarding subsection C of Section 11.

N. Nir-Rafalkes (Mapam): Subsection C of Section 11 determines the mutual relations between the Cabinet and the Knesset, stating that the Cabinet can function only if it has the confidence of the Knesset. ...Here we read that "The Cabinet is collectively responsible for its actions to the Knesset." What is the result of this responsibility? A vote of no-confidence. This means that whenever the Cabinet has taken action of some kind, the House will have only one means at its disposal, a vote of no-confidence. In this way we may find ourselves in a situation similar to the one in France, where the Cabinet changes every week....

Consequently, we propose amending this subsection in accordance with the regulations governing the relations between the Cabinet and the Provisional Council of State, which state that "The Cabinet will operate in accordance with lines of policy determined by the Provisional Council of State (in our case—the Knesset), will implement its decisions, report to it on its activities and be responsible to it for its activities."

This clause was inserted deliberately. At the time there was a fierce debate about it in the Constitution Committee of the Provisional Council of State. The majority of the Constitution Committee accepted the provision that it is the House which determines the Cabinet's policy and actions, and not vice versa....

It is true that during the brief period of nine months in which the Provisional Council of State has functioned, the Cabinet has presented it with a *fait accompli* on more than one occasion, despite the existence of that clause. One can only surmise what the situation would have been had that clause not been inserted in the Provisional Constitution. If this clause is retained, at least we will have grounds on which to challenge the Cabinet. If it is not, we enable the Cabinet to do as it pleases, without having to consult this House.

We are told, in reply to this contention, that the Cabinet is the executive body, and this House is the legislative body. That is to say, we do not make decisions, we pass laws. I do not know where it says that we are not entitled to make decisions, and that the executive body is. This Act states that it must decide in order to act. I think that according to logic, the legislature makes decisions and the Cabinet implements them.

I do not want someone to reply in the name of the Committee, and give examples from other countries. To be quite frank, the world is a big place, and there is always something that can be used as an example from one constitution or another. And, naturally, someone who knows what the practice is in one particular country says, that's how it is in every country. Instead of using that kind of reasoning, let's try to find out

what's good for the Jews, and examine matters as to whether they benefit us or not, rather than taking examples from other countries.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: Mr. Grabowski will reply on behalf of the Committee.

M. Grabowski (Mapai): In proposing this amendment, Knesset Member Nir has failed to take one basic fact into consideration. The Provisional Cabinet, in accordance with the constitution of the Provisional Council of State, was not responsible to the Provisional Council of State to such an extent that the latter was empowered to dissolve it, and the Provisional Cabinet was in fact elected by two constitutional institutions, the plenum of the National Council and the Zionist Executive. The Provisional Council of State was elected by these two institutions, and neither body could dissolve the other, even if the Provisional Council of State expressed no confidence in the Provisional Cabinet. Now there is a fundamental difference. This is an elected assembly, and the Cabinet will be elected and not provisional; it will be responsible to the Knesset, and as soon as it is formed it will have to present itself to the Knesset and obtain its confidence; furthermore, the Knesset can express no-confidence in it whenever it pleases. This means that the Cabinet which will be formed this time will be responsible for all its activities to this House, so that it is superfluous to stress that the Cabinet must act according to predetermined policy lines.

...
Mr. Nir's proposal could, however, limit the Cabinet's ability to act. A situation in which the House interferes daily in the implementation or preparation of matters which have not yet been finalized is untenable. In determining day-to-day, practical policy the Cabinet has supremacy over the House. The Cabinet is responsible for these activities, and if it reports to the House on them the House can express no-confidence in the Cabinet, criticize its activities, or determine other matters. There is no need to introduce this clause, which may impair the Cabinet's efficiency.

...
The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now vote on Mr. Nir's amendment to Section 11.

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 33 |
| Those against | 56 |

(The amendment is not adopted.)

We will now vote on Section 11.

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 70 |
| Those against | 14 |

(Section 11 is adopted.)

...

M. Begin (Herut): Before I begin, since our amendment regarding the composition of the Cabinet was rejected, and there is no limit to the number of Ministries, I suggest that Mr. Mikunis head the Ministry he proposed establishing.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Begin, you told the Chairman of the Constitution Committee before that it was not his place to instruct you as to how to behave. After hearing the remarks of the Chairman of the Committee, I found that there was no need for me to add mine, since I felt that I, and the entire House, agreed with what he had said regarding seemingly behavior in this House. We did not enter into an argument then, and I would ask you to refrain from doing so now, so that the level of this debate may be maintained.

M. Begin (Herut): Honored Chairman, distinguished House, I propose that a special clause be inserted in the Transition Act regarding the seat of the Constituent Assembly, or the Knesset, and the Cabinet. There are precedents from many countries where, at a time of crisis, the institutions of government have been forced to leave their permanent site and move elsewhere. This occurred in France in both world wars, in the U.S.S.R. in the recent world war, and in other countries too. Nevertheless, every constitution states explicitly, or custom has decreed, where the seat of government should be.

I have the honor of submitting this proposal, and will not be fobbed off with the excuse that this is neither the time or the place to decide on the permanent seat of our government. This cannot be set aside because of formal reasons. I would like to remind you that at a different time and place a certain proposal was also set aside. That proposal was submitted by the man whose name was not considered fit to rank with the founders of the State of Israel by the person who opened the Constituent Assembly. I refer to Ze'ev Jabotinsky. And I allude to the proposal which stated that Zionism aspires to establish a state in Palestine. And I speak of the decision whereby the Seventeenth Zionist Congress set that proposal aside. But even though the majority of delegates to the Seventeenth Zionist Congress set that proposal aside, the State of Israel arose, through the

blood of those fighters who raised the standard of rebellion against the British oppressor.

And so, I can say only this: even if the majority decides, because of formal considerations, to set this proposal aside, in the name of historical experience, and the price we have paid with our heart's blood, we may, can and must declare: even if you set this aside, history will override your decision, and Jerusalem will be the capital of Israel and our state. Our proposal is, therefore, that the seat of the Constituent Assembly and the Cabinet shall be the capital, Jerusalem.

The Foreign Minister, M. Shertok: We will not put our devotion to Jerusalem to the test through speeches here. This devotion has been proven with the blood of members of all the political parties. Nor will we compete regarding who holds the unique sanctity of Jerusalem in Jewish history and the life of our people and the State of Israel the highest. This uniqueness is a fact which has been engraved on the hearts of all of us in blood and fire. We would be well-advised to refrain from embarking on a reckoning of the accounts of the past, for if we do so, we will be here for a very long time indeed.

Those who voted, on a different occasion, to set aside the proposal that the establishment of the State of Israel should be the declared aim of Zionist activity are the people who established the state, when the time came. Those who vote tonight that the proposal to decide now whether Jerusalem should be the capital of Israel should be removed from the agenda, are the people who will guarantee Jerusalem's rightful position in the State of Israel.

What we are discussing now is the Transition Act of the state, and I emphasize the words, "Transition Act." We cannot allow this debate to be used to make fateful and far-reaching decisions regarding our practical policy. The Provisional Cabinet has adopted a specific approach regarding Jerusalem. It has acted. It has also prevented those actions which, it feels, would undermine the fundamental institutions which it has established. We have not yet formed our first permanent Cabinet. I suggest that this assembly refrain from making practical decisions on this serious matter before the Cabinet has been formed, allowing the new Cabinet to take those steps which it shall deem appropriate in order to fulfill the desires of all of us.

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: ...The Constitution Committee was not instructed to discuss the matters which have been raised here, and the issue being debated at present is the Transition Act.

...

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): I think that I would be faithful to the conclusions of the Committee if I rephrase what I have heard more clearly. Since the question is not one with which the Transi-

tion Act is intended to deal, it is proposed that we refrain from discussing it. It should, instead, be referred to the Constitution Committee, which will discuss all the relevant issues, including this one.

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: From what we have heard, we can agree to do that. I propose that we vote on this proposal.

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 85 |
| Those against | 14 |

The suggestion (to refer the discussion to the Constitution Committee) is adopted.

We will now vote on Section Three, in its entirety.

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 89 |
| Those against | 0 |

(The Section is adopted.)

I. Idelson (Chairman, Constitution Committee): I hope the members of this House will not be disappointed to hear that there are no reservations regarding the Fourth Chapter. Chapter Four: Further Provisions.

12. The Cabinet will have all the authority granted by law to the Provisional Cabinet.

13. Everything which is required by law to be published in the *Official Gazette* will henceforth be published in the *State Gazette*; wherever the law specifies "*Official Gazette*" will henceforth be "*State Gazette*."

14. Section 1(C) and (D), 2(B) and (C), 7(A), clause two, and 7(B) of the law and Administration Ordinance, 1948, are annulled.

15. This Act takes effect from the day it is passed in the Knesset.

I ask the Chairman, once this law is passed, to ensure that the date of its passage is noted in the record.

...

(This was not passed, and the official publication remained the "*Official Gazette*.")

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now vote on (Section 4) of the Transition Act.

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 77 |
| Those against | 0 |
| Abstentions | 11 |

(The Transition Act is adopted.)

Inauguration of the President of the State of Israel

Sitting 6 of the First Knesset

17 February 1949 (18 Shevat 5709)
Jewish Agency Building, Jerusalem, 12:12 p.m.

1. The Knesset Members and the guests take their seats at 11:30 a.m.
2. The Prime Minister and the other Ministers take their seats at 11:45 a.m.
3. The President-Elect arrives at the Jewish Agency Building at 12 noon.
4. As the President-Elect enters the chamber the *shofar* is blown and the audience rises.
5. The President-Elect takes his seat.
6. The audience sits down.
7. The Speaker of the First Knesset requests the President of the Supreme Court to read the text of the oath of allegiance.
8. The President of the Supreme Court rises, together with the audience. The President of the Supreme Court reads out the oath of allegiance.
9. The President-Elect rises and takes the oath.
10. The Speaker of the First Knesset cries out: "Long live the President!" The President's standard is raised above the building.
11. The President sits down, followed by the audience.
12. The President gives his address.
13. The Speaker of the First Knesset closes the meeting.
14. The National Anthem.
15. The audience remains standing until the President has left the building.

The Inauguration of the President

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: Chaim, the son of Ozer and Rachel Weizmann, please raise your right hand while I read out to you the text of your oath of allegiance as President of the State of Israel.

As President of the State of Israel, I, Chaim, the son of Ozer and Rachel Weizmann, pledge my allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws.

Raising his right hand, the President of the State of Israel, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, declares:

As President of the state, I pledge my allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: Long live the President! (Long applause and cheers.)

Rabbi A.H. Zwebner: Blessed be our Father in heaven, who has imparted of his wisdom to those that fear Him. (The audience responds, Amen!)

The President of the State, Dr. Chaim Weizmann: Knesset of Israel! Members! Guests! First of all, permit me to express my regret at the fact that the Prime Minister is not among us now. In your name, in mine and in Mrs. Weizmann's we wish him a speedy and full recovery. (The audience responds, Amen!)

I thank you for the great honor that you have bestowed upon me by appointing me first President of the State of Israel. With all my heart and might I will endeavor to fulfill this great mission for the benefit of our people and all the citizens of Israel, and in order to exalt our state. The task which has been given to me is an illustrious one. But I am mere flesh and blood, and am liable to err; should this be so, I beg you not to regard this as deliberate.

At this sublime moment in my life, and in the lives of all of us, I extend warm greetings to all the citizens of Israel and to the Jewish people throughout the world. I know that everything that is done and not done in this country will cast shade or light on all our people. It is with the awareness of this heavy responsibility that I undertake to fulfill my role as President of Israel. (Lengthy and enthusiastic applause. The audience rises.)

Conclusion

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I hereby conclude our meetings in Jerusalem. "Restore our judges as at the first, and our counsellors as at the beginning."

The aspiration of many generations, which did not cease despite expulsions, torture, burning, or autodafe, has at long last been fulfilled.

The first sitting of the First Knesset marked the end of the provisional stage. During our first few sittings we assembled the elected rep-

resentatives of Israel in order to establish and stabilize the State of Israel's existence and independence, to fortify its route and preserve its security, and to gather all our exiles into our Land.

At this sitting of the First Knesset the President has been appointed. At the forthcoming meetings the State of Israel's permanent Cabinet will be chosen. We have taken our first step towards building our life. May we be enabled to fulfill the desire to redeem Israel, and may Israel be saved in our day. (Enthusiastic applause. The Knesset Members and the audience sing the National Anthem.)

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: The sitting is ended. We will meet again at the forthcoming sittings of the First Knesset.

Formation of the Cabinet

Introduction

Six weeks after the elections negotiations for the formation of a Cabinet and a coalition were completed. The Knesset convened, in its provisional quarters in a former cinema, in Tel Aviv near the seashore, to vote on the composition of the Cabinet, numbering 12 members from four coalition partners: Labor (7 Ministers representing 46 MKs), Religious Front (3 Ministers representing 16 MKs), Progressives (1 Minister representing 5 MKs), Sephardic list (1 Minister representing 4 MKs). Several portfolios were left open in the hope that an additional party or parties would join the coalition in due course.

Sitting 7 of the First Knesset

8 March 1949 (7 Adar 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 4:08 p.m.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I give the floor to the Provisional Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We stand before you today in awe and trembling at the immense difficulties facing the State of Israel and its Cabinet today: security, the ingathering of the exiles, and the formation of a progressive and sovereign nation.

We may well be leaving our "heroic" period behind, the period of military and political victories, when the history of the Jews and Palestine was changed and our days were renewed as of old, and entering a period of "minor issues," involving the gray, everyday and prolonged concern with building up our national organization and economy. These activities embody no drama and glory, involving, rather, hard work and persistent drudgery; our efforts must be to house and absorb immigrants, to make barren ground fertile, to establish factories and workshops and expand them, to establish systems of transportation on land, sea and air, to maintain and improve education, health and insurance services and to raise funds on a scale heretofore unknown, for these purposes.

But anyone who thinks that these "minor issues" are less important than the "heroic deeds" is gravely mistaken. The economic and organizational testing we confront is no less significant than the battles we have just fought, and in some respects even harder.

We established our state within the turmoil of the war. By vicious attacks, our enemies tried not only to deprive us of our right to independence and sovereignty, but also of our very existence in our homeland. We emerged from that bloody trial with peace and honor, although it is still not quite clear if our battles are finally over. We are ready to fight, and if we are attacked again, we will defend ourselves again, although we will spare no effort to establish an honorable and secure peace with our neighbors. But we must not delude ourselves; even when peace comes we will not be able to rest on our laurels. Our historical task will only begin then. The establishment of the State of Israel is only the first stage in the fulfillment of our historical vision.

Many generations have suffered, been tortured and have given their lives for their faith. This faith will not fail us, and the vision of the end of days will surely come. The ingathering of the exiles is a precondition for the fulfillment of that vision, with all its great humane content. And the prime objective of the State of Israel today is the ingathering of the exiles. During the first nine months of our independence, and while we were still fighting for our existence, more than one hundred and fifty thousand immigrants, almost four times the number of Jews who returned to Israel from Babylon, entered our gates. And this is just the beginning. Everything that is humanly possible will be done to enable this flow of immigrants to continue. But immigration is not merely transferring Jews from the diaspora to Israel. The pangs of immigration begin here, in Israel, and we must not ignore the tremendous difficulties involved. We must remember that these immigrants are not entering a country which is firmly established and economically sound, but one which is very young, which was founded amidst chaos and war and international conflicts, and whose sparse population must absorb a number of immigrants larger than itself within a short space of time.

Nothing like this has ever happened in our history. During the short period that has elapsed since we proclaimed our independence, immigration has amounted to almost one quarter of the Jewish population that was here beforehand. If this were to happen in America, it would mean that thirty million immigrants were entering the country each year. The housing needs alone of immigration on this scale are virtually beyond all human capability, and this by itself demands a huge effort.

I will not go into security needs in detail here; suffice it to say that our basic needs involve education, health, social security and the maintenance of a decent and civilized standard of living, while combating the rising cost of living and endeavoring to cultivate the desert. Mutual assistance, making demands on ourselves before making demands on others, and preferring the general good will be expected of us daily in our private and public lives. The effort will have to be made by everyone, without exception. I believe that our people can respond to the

needs of the situation; the public is, I am convinced, far better than is reflected in the press and in our political parties. But even if the whole nation responds, we will not come through this fateful testing time unless the state directs all its efforts to tackling the three weighty tasks confronting it, utilizing our manpower, the economy and the economic resources at its disposal.

The Mandatory rule was negative and static. Its task was to prevent lawbreaking and to preserve the economic and social situation of the country.

The rule of the Jewish state must be positive and dynamic, taking the initiative in every economic, social and cultural sphere. It must set up productive enterprises, encourage greater productivity, take steps to reduce the cost of living and raise the standard of living, improve equipment and methods of work in agriculture, industry, construction and other branches of the economy, control imports and prices and do its utmost to attract Jewish and international capital for productive investments, aiding in the rapid and efficient development of Israel's economic potential, expanding its ability to absorb and raising its population's standard of living.

All this requires an economy which is planned and adapted to our security needs, the absorption of mass immigration, the development of the country and making our nation a progressive and independent one.

I have not mentioned the field of foreign policy, because the Cabinet will continue along the lines taken by the Provisional Cabinet, and which have already benefited our young state considerably.

When I addressed the nation over the radio after the elections I was speaking not on behalf of the Provisional Cabinet but on behalf of the 160,000 voters who placed their confidence in my colleagues and myself. I declared in the name of my colleagues that "together with adhering faithfully to pioneering values and the Zionist Socialist vision which we have cultivated ever since our movement came into existence, we have endeavored, and shall continue to endeavor, on engaging and mobilizing all our constructive and creative forces, in order to cooperate in furthering our aid." When the President asked me to form a Cabinet, on Shevat 25 (Feb. 24), I immediately turned to all those parties which I feel can be considered to be among the constructive forces, from Mapam to the General Zionists, and including the Sephardic party, in order to establish a coalition Cabinet. All the parties agreed to enter the coalition, but to my great regret Mapam and the General Zionists made demands which, in my view, are not in accord with forming a coalition and do not reflect the will of the voters, as expressed in the elections. All the proposals I made to Mapam were rejected by them, and for the moment a limited coalition has been set up, comprising the Sephardic party, the Progressive party, the Religious Front and Mapai. The Sephardic party has one member in this Cabinet, the Progressive party

has one, the Religious Front has three and Mapai has seven. All these parties have agreed to the four points I made in my post-election address, and the Cabinet consists of the following twelve members:

David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense; Dov Joseph, Minister of Rationing and Supplies; Rabbi Isaac Meir Levin, Minister of Welfare; Mrs. Golda Myerson, Minister of Labor and Insurance; Rabbi Judah Leib Hacoheh Fishman, Minister of Religion; Eliezer Kaplan, Minister of Finance; David Remez, Minister of Transport; Pinchas Rosenblitt, Minister of Justice; Behor Shitrit, Minister of Police; Zalman Shazar, Minister of Education and Culture; Moshe Shapira, Minister of the Interior and Immigration; Moshe Sharett, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Within the next few weeks or days I will inform you who will take the responsibility for the portfolios of Trade and Industry, Health, Agriculture and Minorities. For the moment the entire Cabinet is responsible for them.

These are the guidelines of the Cabinet's policy which the Knesset is expected to discuss, decide and approve. There are ten chapters.

Chapter One: Collective Responsibility

The Cabinet is established on the basis of the collective responsibility of all its members and the parties participating in it. This collective responsibility applies to the program agreed on by the coalition and the decisions of the Cabinet. This responsibility does not prevent Members of the Knesset from discussing any proposal freely or criticizing the Cabinet if it deviates from the guidelines determined for it by the Knesset or the coalition.

Chapter Two: Freedom, Equality and Democracy

The law which will constitute the basis of the democratic, republican regime of the State of Israel will ensure completely equal rights and obligations for all its citizens, regardless of religion, race or nationality; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; there will be complete equality for women, as regards their rights and obligations in the life of the state, society and the economy, and before the law; there will be freedom to establish labor unions and freedom of expression, both orally and in writing, subject to the limitations required in order to preserve the security, freedom and independence of the state, and to maintain the rights of the individual. For all state institutions, municipalities and other elected authorities there will be general and equal suffrage, regardless of sex, religion, race and nationality and without any financial restrictions. The state will supply the public religious requirements of its citizens, but will prevent religious coercion. The Jewish Sabbath and festivals will be the official

holidays of the State of Israel; non-Jews will be entitled to holidays on their own sabbaths and festivals.

Chapter Three: Foreign Policy

Israel's foreign policy will be based on the following features:

A. Adhering to the founding principles of the United Nations Charter and friendship with all peace-loving nations, especially the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

B. Striving to attain an Arab-Jewish alliance (economic, social, cultural and political cooperation with the neighboring countries) within the framework of the United Nations, but this alliance will not be directed against any member of the U.N.

C. Supporting every step that strengthens peace, guarantees human rights and the equality of the nations of the world, and supplements the U.N.'s authority and strength.

D. Guaranteeing the right of all Jews to leave their countries of residence and settle in their historic homeland.

E. Efficiently preserving the State of Israel's complete independence and sovereignty.

Chapter Four: Defense

The designated age-groups will be mobilized according to the methods which will be determined by law.

Chapter Five: Immigration

A. The ingathering of the exiles.

B. Directing immigrants to rural and agricultural settlements in all their forms, setting up training farms and instructing immigrants, under the guidance of experienced farmers, to establish new settlements.

C. Providing the immigrants with vocational training, and developing trades and cooperation among them.

D. Helping immigrants to merge in all aspects of our economic life.

E. Endeavoring to provide housing for the immigrants.

F. Teaching the immigrants Hebrew and enabling them to join in the cultural, economic and social life of the state.

Chapter Six: The Development Plan

The Cabinet will prepare a four-year development and absorption plan aimed at doubling the Jewish population of Israel through mass immigration and the intensive development of the country. This will be based on a planned economy whose objectives are:

A. The rapid and balanced population of sparsely-populated areas of the state, and preventing large concentrations of inhabitants in the cities.

B. Developing Jerusalem by concentrating cultural, national and governmental institutions there, devoting certain occupations to Jerusalem, transferring some industries there, and establishing a network of villages and settlements around it and in the areas connecting it with the Plain and the Coastal Strip. Special efforts will be made to encourage the economic development of Safed and Tiberias.

C. Establishing irrigation networks in the valleys and the Negev, afforesting the mountains, draining the swamps, improving the soil and developing agriculture throughout the country.

D. Nationalizing water sources, natural resources, barren areas and the services on which the security of the state is dependent. No expropriation or confiscation will be undertaken without appropriate compensation.

E. Making the development of neglected areas compulsory, either by bringing them under the jurisdiction of the state's development authority or by imposing special taxes.

F. Encouraging private capital and private and cooperative initiative in towns and rural areas, making special concessions for productive capital investments which help the fast and efficient development of the country's resources and economic possibilities, and facilitating the transfer of Jewish capital from the diaspora.

G. Developing employment in the towns and the country, and expanding all forms of labor settlement and cooperation, while preserving the freedom of the individual to choose his way of life.

H. Endeavoring to improve telephone, telegraph and radio communications, and to develop transport by land, sea and air, both within Israel and between Israel and the rest of the world.

I. Systematically fighting the rising cost of living, while maintaining a decent standard of living for the laboring classes, by the following methods:

1. Efficiently controlling imports and the prices of imported goods, as well as the production costs and prices of locally-produced goods, whether in industry or in agriculture, and the costs of transportation and services.

2. Reducing exaggeratedly high profits and brokers' fees.

3. Rigorously controlling the use of foreign currency, and encouraging the importation of means of production which can increase our productivity in industry and agriculture and reduce production costs; giving precedence to the importation of essential foodstuffs, fuels, building materials, equipment and machinery which will facilitate the development of the economy.

4. Introducing a period of austerity for the transition period by rigorously rationing food, clothing and other basic requisites and imposing serious penalties for speculation, particularly in apartments, as

well as for raising prices inordinately and dealing on the black market.

5. Rationalizing production and improving equipment so as to increase productivity and improve products while at the same time reducing prices, organizing marketing, providing full vocational training for workers, increasing productivity through improving working conditions and professional expertise, reducing the price of credit, increasing our economic self-dependence and expanding production for export.

J. Rehabilitating, and expanding citrus cultivation, improving work methods in this branch and aiding in its marketing throughout the world.

K. Making extensive use of scientific and technical advances to benefit our national economy as well as general and vocational education, and to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements.

L. Providing reductions and exemptions from taxes to encourage private and cooperative investment in agriculture, construction, industry and shipping, particularly in areas which are underpopulated and undercultivated.

M. Imposing progressive income taxes, luxury taxes, inheritance taxes and amelioration of taxes on property, in order to ensure that everyone shares equally in the costs of the defense of the state and the provision of services.

N. Determining customs procedures and trade agreements which will serve to encourage industry and agriculture in the state.

O. Gradually and continually improving the standard of living, level of education and conditions of work and health of the entire population, irrespective of nationality, ethnic group or sex.

P. Eliminating illiteracy, overcrowding and sickness in underprivileged areas.

Q. Removing the barriers between ethnic groups in the life of society and the state.

R. Introducing popular, progressive and comprehensive insurance for all citizens against sickness, old age or being widowed or crippled.

S. Increasing construction in order to fulfill the housing needs of the immigrants and eradicate the underprivileged neighborhoods.

T. Endeavoring to increase the birthrate, and providing special reductions and grants for large families.

U. Encouraging Jewish and general tourism, expanding hotels, establishing efficient agencies for promulgating information throughout the world about Israel, its antiquities, its beauty spots and its economic possibilities.

Chapter Seven: Education

We will establish a special Ministry of Education and Culture to provide general education for all our children, to ensure a decent level

of education for every adult in Israel, to teach Hebrew to all the immigrants, to translate the great literature of the world into Hebrew, to encourage literature, science and art, to promote pure and applied research in all the natural sciences and the cultural and social blending of all ethnic groups, to bring to Israel the leading figures in science, religious and secular scholarship, Jewish literature and art from all over the world, to disseminate information about the Middle East and the Arab peoples among Jews, and to guarantee education in Arabic for all the Arab citizens of the state, while teaching them Hebrew.

Free education will be provided for all boys and girls up to the age which will be determined by law. School attendance will be compulsory for all children, agricultural and vocational training will be expanded and the younger generation will be educated for a life of work. Gifted children will be given scholarships to enable them to continue their studies at intermediate and high schools. A compulsory minimum will be determined for all schools of all the recognized autonomous streams of education, as well as for all other schools. In Jewish schools this minimum will include: Hebrew language, Jewish and general history, the geography of Israel and the world, Bible studies and Jewish literature, sciences, the study of agriculture, handicrafts or vocational training, physical education, love of the homeland, pioneering values and loyalty to the state. In Arab schools there will be appropriate changes in the compulsory minimum.

The Cabinet will encourage the pioneering youth movements to undertake the tasks of agricultural settlement and the conquest of labor in all their pioneering forms.

Chapter Eight: The Rehabilitation of Servicemen

Demobilized soldiers will be guaranteed the right by law to return to their previous places of employment, if they had a permanent place of employment prior to their mobilization. Demobilized servicemen will be given first priority in employment; those who entered the forces without having an occupation will be given the opportunity to learn one; demobilized servicemen will be granted special conditions for agricultural settlement of any kind, and will receive credit for housing and to enable themselves to find their feet economically; they will be aided in continuing their studies if they had to stop studying on joining the forces; priority will be given to war invalids in finding work and in the provision of financial support.

The state will undertake to support the families of wage-earners who fell in the war or lost the ability to work because of it.

Chapter Nine: Labor Laws

The state will guarantee the freedom to form labor unions and will develop the overall professional organization of the workers in the state;

it will determine a minimum wage in certain occupations; it will encourage the principle of collective bargaining, will ensure the freedom to strike and will operate a network of prior mediation to avoid labor disputes; it will establish, by progressive stages, a network of institutions of social insurance and mutual aid against unemployment, accidents, disability, old age, being widowed or being orphaned; it will introduce legislation to protect the welfare of factory employees, to guarantee sanitary and hygienic conditions at work, and holidays; the rights of Arab workers will be equal to those of Jewish workers, while constructive action will be taken to raise their standards of living, organization, education and culture gradually, bringing them to the same level as Jewish workers.

Working youngsters will be provided with vocational training and evening classes so that their cultural education can be increased.

The employment of women in branches which are injurious to their health will be prohibited by law, paid maternity leave, with the right to return to their place of work, will be ensured, night work for mothers will be banned, the employment of youngsters between the ages of 15 and 18 will be controlled and the employment of children under the age of 14 will be forbidden. Men and women working in the same jobs will be guaranteed equal pay.

Day care centers and education institutions will be established for the children of mothers working outside the house.

A uniform labor exchange will distribute employment to all those seeking it, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality or party affiliation, in accordance with the appropriate law.

Chapter Ten: Civil Servants

The Cabinet deems it necessary to appoint civil servants on the basis of examinations administered by an independent committee.

Colleagues! We know that it is easier to formulate a wonderful plan of action than to implement it, and we are aware of the difficulties of implementing it. Realists may say that the program cannot work. The attempt to maintain three mutually-contradictory aspects simultaneously—security, mass immigration and a decent standard of living—is undoubtedly unusual and somewhat audacious. Can we bear this threefold burden, we, the Cabinet, the Knesset and the nation?

The reply is: we have no choice. This is unavoidable. We must ensure our security even after formal peace is attained, because our very existence depends on it. We must hasten and increase the flow of immigration to the utmost limit, because the ingathering of the exiles is the purpose of our existence and a precondition for it.

If the State of Israel had been established in 1937 and immigration and security were in our hands European Jewry would not have been

destroyed. In the wonderful, messianic revival which has been taking place before our very eyes for the last seventy years, we can see that at its center is the individual—creating, building, working, defending and fighting. This also applies to the State of Israel. It is not the rifles, cannon and fighter planes which saved Israel—our enemies had them too—but the Jewish individual, who held the rifle and fired the cannon and flew the plane. It was not the hoe and the plough and the machinery which established our agricultural settlements, but the creative, pioneering individual who held the hoe and the plough, used them to make the desert bloom, and also built factories and schools; and who inculcated the younger generation and the nation with the vision of heroism, faith and loyalty, love of the homeland and the nation, and the pursuit of justice, liberty and equality.

The individual's ability, spirit and vision, his creative and fighting capacity, are the fabric underpinning all our activities. In our state man will control the economy, and not vice versa. It is our duty to build a state, a society, an economy and a culture which will be worthy of the individual in Israel, the individual who has done so much for us, and is still prepared to do more, for our prophets' vision of the end of days is no mere figure of speech for him.

If you ask whether we have a tried and tested way, and material resources, to overcome all the immense difficulties of the three tasks which the State of Israel must tackle, I will have to answer that we do not. The job is not going to be easy, not for us, not for you, Knesset Members, and not for the voters. We may even fail on more than one occasion, but this will not deter us from attempting to fulfill the mission with which we have been charged. For we rely first of all on the wellspring of creativity and love embodied in the Jewish nation, wherever it may be. If this wellspring was largely blocked for many years, the establishment of the State of Israel, its desperate fight for survival and the tremendous task it is undertaking today, have served to roll the stone away from the mouth of the spring. A great love for, and loyalty to, the State of Israel beats now in the heart of the entire Jewish nation, wherever it may be, in all its religious streams, among Zionists and non-Zionists—except for a handful of traitors—and there is a true desire to aid in its defense and construction. If we succeed in making the immense forces which are embedded within the diaspora work on behalf of the immigration and construction undertakings which confront us, we will not be disappointed.

We also rely on the pioneering and creative spirit which beats in the hearts of our youngsters, in Israel and in the diaspora, and which is capable of moving mountains and making the desert blossom.

The pioneering period has not ended with the establishment of the state. On the contrary, henceforth it will swell and grow as it has never done before. For there is now an anvil to the pioneering hammer, the de-

served hills of Galilee and the desolate Negev plains, the destroyed environs of Jerusalem and the sea shores cry out to all those who are bold and brave: come and cultivate us!

The third thing which will work wonders is the power of science and technology, which we will harness for our endeavors. Our generation is witnessing what is, perhaps, the greatest revolution in the life of mankind, the revolution whereby man is able to control the mightiest natural forces, the power of the atom, to conquer the air and to discover the secrets of the universe. We are vastly inferior to many nations in strength, wealth, numbers and materials, but we are inferior to no one in the world in our intellectual and moral power; that is the great and only legacy bequeathed to us by Jewish history, with its wealth of suffering, sorrow and spiritual heroism.

Like the foremost countries of the world, we must bring pure and applied scientific research to its peak, not as the sphere of a select few but as the heritage of everyone, those who build and farm, those who work in industry or go down to the sea in ships, those who engage in education and health, as well as the economy and culture we will establish here. Everything that is done, whether materially or spiritually, to strengthen our security and expand our economy, to educate our children and absorb immigrants, will be based on the latest developments of pure and applied science and on the most advanced techniques, so that the end-product of our labors, our productivity and efficiency, will not fall below those of the most advanced countries in the world.

That is how we see our mission. We will attempt to fulfill it faithfully and to the best of our abilities.

Debate on Formation of the Cabinet and its Program

Sitting 8 of the First Knesset

8 March 1949 (7 Adar 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 8:10 p.m.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I hereby open the eighth sitting of the First Knesset. Before giving the floor to MK M. Ya'ari, I would like to ask each party group to inform me in advance how much time it allocates to each of the speakers addressing the House in its name. I would like to ask the speakers themselves to note that a signal will be given to them two minutes before their allotted time is up.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): On behalf of Mapam I have the honor of disclosing our opinion of the Cabinet and its program, as presented to us by the Prime Minister.

We must choose the first permanent Cabinet of our country and approve its program. This Cabinet must undertake the immense burden of doubling the Jewish population of the state during its term of office, and of providing this increase in numbers with a firm basis of employment throughout the country. It will also have to ensure the safety of our borders and establish enduring peace and cooperation between us and the large numbers of Arabs living in the state and around it. Its task will also be to guarantee our independence at a time when interventionist alliances are being established against the U.S.S.R. and the peace-loving Socialist countries, and the representatives of these alliances are knocking at our gates and plotting to draw us into their net. By means of the Knesset's legislative activity, this Cabinet will be charged with the task of molding a regime of democratic freedom whilst we are surrounded by the governments of feudal rulers and imperialist vassals. It will have to establish a regime of social progress while we are subject to ever-increasing pressure from world reactionary forces and "Marshalization" plans for the countries of the Near East, ours included. We will be obliged to forge our independence while the harrassment by the Western powers continues, threatening the borders and sovereignty of our country, and while the invading forces still have their fangs at our throats.

Is it conceivable, then, that under conditions such as these we will be able to undertake this huge task without using our last drops of energy, faith and the ability to act?

This is the fateful issue with which our party was confronted and which we presented to the voters in the elections to the Knesset. In the

election campaign we reiterated time and time again that the State of Israel was established by the efforts of pioneers and defenders, and it has no existence without them. The state is not a magic wand and cannot achieve its objective by itself; it must continue expanding the pioneering movement in order to settle the wastelands, absorb immigration, educate the nation and defend the country.

Mapam embarked on this campaign in order to achieve its rightful place in molding the character of the state, and to aid the fighters and builders who support it. We knew what great chances and grave dangers await us in the years ahead. We have calculated the number of immigrants arriving in this country after the war, and this has increased since the proclamation of independence. 200,000 Jews have immigrated. And while there are still one million Jews in Europe alone, the pioneering reserves are almost exhausted, and we face the danger of the disintegration of the Zionist Organization in the diaspora, as well as the possibility that the hundreds of thousands of people who are streaming to Israel will be concentrated in the coastal towns. We knew that in order to direct the stream a supreme effort would be demanded from the constructive, fighting forces organized within the independent parties of the Histadrut. For it is imperative at this time that our state be governed by an alliance of the hands, hearts and minds of those within the pioneering workers' parties, establishing a regime of democratic freedom and socialist progress, together with the other forces of construction and progress within the State of Israel.

We had hoped for an alliance of this kind, despite the differences between the two major parties within the Histadrut. And despite Mapai's indifferent attitude to us, we have always cultivated the solidarity of the workers, remembering that it has brought us to where we stand today. An alliance of this kind would provide us with powers of creation and absorption far greater than those which can be attained by any American loan, even if it were larger than the one that has been obtained. By virtue of that human investment embodied in the alliance of the democratic socialist parties, building a socialist economy, society and culture, we have come as far as we have, despite the siege, blockade and denigration imposed upon us by world reactionary forces.

We knew that we had only one alternative: either the state would be led by the two major labor parties, mobilizing for a planned effort, together with the other progressive forces, all the physical, spiritual and intellectual powers embedded in the masses, in order to advance from the ingathering of the exiles to the elimination of ethnic differences, a working nation and a socialist economy; or the state would be governed by a reformist-clerical coalition, bending to the pressure of reaction from within and the economic and political dictates of outside forces, turning its back on that redeeming alliance of hands, hearts and minds. If that happens, no fancy plans will be able to work the miracle

of taking a mixture of people and turning them into a working nation which is master of its own fate and future. Instead of eradicating fascism from the towns and turning them into sites of socialist labor, we may yet see the development of ethnic repression and socialist bitterness in neighborhoods inhabited by new immigrants, as has already occurred on the outskirts of some towns.

As we attained political independence, we decided to do our utmost so that the independent parties within the Histadrut would form a Cabinet guided by socialism and democratic freedom. The two largest parties within the State of Israel and the Histadrut emerged from these elections with great achievements. But neither one of them attained all it wanted. Neither could claim victory, although the two of them together could. The laboring masses and the forces of progress were the true victors. And when the great opportunity came, we proposed that we join Mapai in a united front based on an agreed program and joint responsibility for internal and external policy.

In the election campaign Mapai advocated the ingathering of the exiles and the realization of socialism, independence from both East and West, and the abolition of the ownership of labor. As a socialist party we had no difficulty in agreeing to those points. We had only two requests:

A. That we should agree how to apply these slogans through a detailed program of legislation, government and implementation during this Knesset's term;

B. That we should agree who would be responsible for the implementation of this program, and what would be the composition and character of the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister-designate gave us a withering answer in public. He revealed that there is only one guarantee of the ingathering of the exiles and the fulfillment of socialism in our country—his party. During negotiations he went even further; he rejected the idea of the joint responsibility of the two independent parties within the Histadrut and the existence of their majority in the Knesset. He claimed that the people had rejected the foreign and defense policy of Mapam, preferring that of 80 percent of the Knesset Members, the religious parties, the General Zionists, the Sephardim, the Yemenites, the Progressives, everyone except us. In his view there was no need for an agreed economic and social program, this had been embodied in the Mapai platform for the Histadrut Conference.

After the largest minority party had rejected our foreign and defense policy, it invited us to join the Cabinet and share collective responsibility for a program which would be dictated by it and for all the laws which it and its allies would impose upon us. We were invited to join the Cabinet after all the tasks involving responsibility for internal and external policy had been divided up among Mapai and its allies on the right.

The Prime Minister-designate made an unconvincing attempt to adhere to the principle of the freedom of the press and of Knesset Members to express criticism, but in actual fact he invited us to share collective responsibility for the predetermined program of a coalition whose content and composition had been agreed on beforehand by Mapai and the civilian parties. This leads us to the conclusion that if those people who have been charged with forming a Cabinet are still able, even in their intoxication with their imagined victory, to credit us with having some vestiges of intelligence and self-respect, they obviously made their insulting offer in the knowledge that we would reject it vehemently. And if those who are drunk with their imagined victory believed that we would accept those insulting conditions, we can only conclude that they have reached a state of arrogance which gives rise to concern.

...
Already today voices can be heard in the public and in the press claiming that the refusal to include us in the formation of foreign policy indicates that true non-dependence will not be sought. We are in no hurry to judge on this fateful issue, but we are entitled to be worried by what was supposed to be an attitude of equal friendship to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. If one friend supports us politically and practically, without seeking any benefit for itself, while the other supports us by imposing an embargo, advising us to retreat from Rafah and sending its military observers to visit our airfields, are we not entitled to suspect that this is no unequivocal friendship? The party which is responsible for forming the Cabinet undoubtedly realizes that if the bourgeois parties are prepared to take responsibility for foreign policy, while we are not, this indicates that that policy will be of a certain nature. Does this not mean that reactionary public opinion, both at home and abroad, can take the full credit for this?

This also applies to internal policy. If someone declares that they intend to fulfill socialism and conduct a regime based on social progress and democratic freedom, and then prevents the second largest socialist party in the Histadrut and the state from being a partner in this policy, preferring the candidate of the Religious Front to take charge of internal policy and immigration, that would seem to say it all.

If freedom and democracy involve imposing the laws of the *Shulhan Aruh* (religious precepts) on all the citizens of the state, both religious and secular, how can we expect democratic freedom and social progress from this Cabinet?

Moreover, on the road to socialism there are several stages which are not easily reached, and which serve to indicate whether socialism is the true aim or merely a slogan. Some of these are prosaic, but very important, and you may seek an answer to them in vain. Before we abolish the rule of the ownership of labor and do away with classes, we must

overcome the problem of inflation, which threatens primarily the standard of living of the toiling masses and the underprivileged. The financial burden must first of all be shifted from the shoulders of the poor to those of war-profiteers, importers and manufacturers, who benefit from speculation. Till now no mention has been made of this problem. What we have witnessed, however, is a continual retreat in response to pressure from the capitalists. Once again we hear rumors of a wage freeze as the panacea for combating inflation. We have opposed the tendency to reduce inflation by harming the wages and standard of living of the worker, both in the Cabinet and in the Histadrut, and we shall continue to do so even when we are no longer in the Cabinet.

They declare, for example, that natural resources will be nationalized, but this does not apply to the Dead Sea, oil and other rights of international finance. Does this not lead one to conclude that we have been rejected as partners in the formulation of internal policy because we mean it when we speak of nationalizing the various branches of the economy and shifting the financial burden from the workers to the wealthy, so that socialism may be achieved in our time?

The conclusion that the Cabinet presented to us here is the outcome of the rejection of its own beliefs and its natural ally. It has broken faith with those who, with their bodies and without appropriate arms, together with the units of the Palmach and the Israel Defense Forces which were commanded by our members, stopped the advance of the Egyptian forces on Tel Aviv, at Negba and Yad Mordechai, at Revivim and Nirim; just as they halted the advance of the Iraqi and Transjordanian invaders on Haifa at Mishmar HaEmek and Gesher, again with their bodies and without adequate arms; and just as they served as a living wall against the Syrians at Manara, Dan and Kfar Szold. This Cabinet has betrayed those who played such a decisive part in breaking the siege of Jerusalem and liberating Galilee and the Negev. This Cabinet has broken its alliance with the commanders of the ghetto revolts and the ships bringing illegal immigrants to our shores and the forces who put down the "Altalena" rebellion. This Cabinet has abandoned the course supported by most of the population in agricultural settlements; it has broken faith with the tens of thousands of fighters and workers in the workshops and in military outposts.

We accuse the party which is responsible for establishing this Cabinet of missing the historic opportunity of introducing a progressive Cabinet in which socialist Zionists constitute the majority.

The Provisional Prime Minister, who stands before you today, asked the voters to give his party a clear majority; then he asked the voters to do the same in the elections to the Histadrut. Despite the undisputed merits of those who had headed the Provisional Cabinet, the voters did not grant them their wish. The workers and the progressive forces did not agree to make Mapai the sole ruler of this country. Although Ma-

pai emerged from the elections as the largest party, it is still a minority party. Mapam emerged as the second largest party, but also a minority one. We share a common fate....The workers and progressive forces in Israel did not want to leave Mapai alone to face the right, and granted the majority to the two independent socialist parties together, and to neither of them on its own. Dozens of years of hard work mingled with blood have brought us to this joint responsibility. Despite the serious differences between us, we have proclaimed our readiness to fulfill the solidarity of the workers to the utmost in order to tackle the great national task which confronts us. We thought that after failing several times to achieve the monopoly it desired, Mapai would realize that an alliance with us was unavoidable. Unfortunately this was not the case.

...
The composition of the Cabinet has made it evident that it has abandoned "an original and unique Jewish socialism." Can socialism be achieved by a coalition which resembles those found in France and Italy, based on reform and clericalism, and constituting a source of concern for the laboring and progressive forces in the country and outside it, just as it constitutes a source of joy for the forces of reaction in Israel and abroad?

Mapai has managed to attain the dominant role, but it is subject to the whims of its coalition partners. Its principle partner from the Religious Front enters this coalition Cabinet with a full sense of his worth. He has declared in his newspaper that he intends to be an independent balancing force in this Cabinet. In a coalition of 73 Knesset Members, which does not enjoy the support of most of the labor delegates, he can "hold up every law." The ruling party will be unable to rule for even one day without the consent of its allies. Those people who refused to create labor rule within a progressive Cabinet with us at this fateful time, as we are about to make a superhuman effort, as we await the arrival of hundreds of thousands of penniless immigrants, as we contemplate the task of rehabilitating tens of thousands of ex-servicemen, as the danger of inflation and the impoverishment of the working masses hangs over us, those people who dared to break faith at this time will not easily break free of the yoke of a reformist-clerical coalition. Behind those partners is the pressure of bourgeoisie reactionaries, who remain for the moment outside the coalition. And behind that is the pressure of world reactionaries.

In order to achieve extra privileges, our home-grown reactionary forces have embarked on a war of nerves, threatening the country and the workers with a strike by the industrialists, who are ready to obey their call. Tomorrow we may learn of the revival of the historic alliance between the forces of bourgeois and fascist reaction. That is why the religious partner has something and someone to rely on. He will try and constitute the balancing force between reformism and bourgeois

reaction, if not more than this. We have not forgotten the part played by the religious Ministers at the time of the Altalena rebellion.

...
Knowing that this is a time when the huge undertaking of saving our people and ensuring our independence is still before us, we were prepared to do everything in order to exchange freely-chosen opposition to an agreed-upon joint responsibility. But they have decided to go ahead without us. That is without a doubt a blow, indicating a lack of national responsibility. But our hands are clean.

...
We bear a heavy and complex burden. The role of the opposition will not suffice for us. We will continue to do everything in order to continue to build, to save and to defend. While continuing to attack this regime, we will do everything to prevent fascist demagoguery from widening the gap between us.

And when all is said and done, we do not forget that what has happened to us is the lot of every revolutionary force. Our task was to dig a tunnel through the black rock of reality, believing that we would eventually emerge into the light. That is what the forces of revolution and liberation have done everywhere....And if one day the people who have broken faith with us realize that they cannot manage without us, and seek to give the great opportunity to the forces of labor and progress in Israel, sharing the responsibility with us and enabling a socialist-Zionist cabinet to be formed, undertaking the great task of gathering-in the exiles and fulfilling socialism, we will be ready to share the burden with them. But we will not support this coalition between reformism and the civilian and religious right, and we will fight it relentlessly.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): On behalf of the Hapoel Hamizrachi segment within the Religious Front, I have the honor of explaining why we have agreed to join the coalition Cabinet led by Mr. Ben-Gurion, supporting the four-year plan and assuring our full support in its implementation.

The next four years will be one of the most crucial periods in the history of our nation. The establishment and prosperity of Israel will be decided during that time. The objectives of doubling the population, absorbing immigrants, encouraging economic and political development, as expressed in the Cabinet's program, are so immense that only by a supreme effort on the part of the entire population, and with the aid of the diaspora and almighty God, will we be able to attain them.

The dangers which may befall us are very great, as are the tasks we face....The risks this great program involve oblige us to close ranks and unite all the constructive and creative forces within the state. That is why from the very outset of the discussions we favored as wide a coalition as possible, so that the whole nation could share in the responsibility and the implementation. We supported the view that even those

who denigrated our opinions and have attacked us at every opportunity should share in the coalition.

I would like to say a few words here about that party which, for some unknown reason, has seen fit to imply that there is some kind of conflict between Ein Harod and Tirat Zvi, expressing its surprise at the fact that we have been permitted to participate in molding the state. I do not see in what way we are less labor than they are. Our labor and pioneering past is pure. Despite all the difficulties caused us by Meir Ya'ari and his colleagues, we set up blocs and settlements from Dan to Beersheba, and lost many precious lives in our War of Independence....I remember Mr. Ya'ari's moving addresses to the Zionist Executive and in the Committee, asking why his party should not be allowed to enter the coalition with the Revisionists. We were asked then to sacrifice our seat in the Jewish Agency so that Mr. Ya'ari could join the coalition with the Revisionists. I do not understand, therefore, why it is all right for Ya'ari to sit with the Revisionists in a coalition, while we have to be condemned as reactionaries. And even if he repeats such words as "reaction," "right," etc. a million times he will not frighten us. The movement of the religious Jewish worker, which started from very small beginnings, has always managed to fulfill the missions it has been asked to undertake, and has been a true representative of the workers.

I would like to note two points from the program: A. The socialist objectives. We support the socialist objectives outlined in the program, because we regard the State of Israel as a labor state. The immigrants streaming to Israel are penniless, and only by planned Cabinet action will they be able to be absorbed. That makes us a labor state, and that is why we will give our full support to the socialist points of the program. B. Internal policy. I think that the time has come to think about molding the character of our state. That is a task of paramount importance at this time. The spiritual independence of our state is no less important than its political and military independence. Experience and history have taught us that every political undertaking is preceded by a spiritual one. We regard our principal role in the Cabinet and the state as that of molding the spiritual image of the State of Israel. Ours is not a new state but one which is being renewed. We will try to maintain our links with the past, and study the religious laws pertaining to government.

We are confronting a series of new problems, the problems of religion and statehood, which are extremely serious both for us and for those people who are not religious. We must seek solutions for these problems. For hundreds of years we lived in exile, and our problems were those of a minority living among a non-Jewish majority. Now we are confronted with these questions in a situation where the majority is Jewish. That is why the problems are so difficult and why we must struggle to solve them. The Cabinet's program contains hints at possible solutions. We note with gratification that it indicates that the Cabinet is prepared to

supply the religious needs of the population, and also that the sanctity of the Sabbath and the festivals will be preserved. But I would like to hear a positive answer from the Prime Minister-elect regarding the laws of matrimony, which are the very fabric of Jewish family life.

I would also like to ask about the dietary laws (*kashrut*), a matter which could serve to unite the whole Jewish people with the State of Israel. I hope to receive a positive answer on that point too.

Finally, I would like to say, quite frankly and with a sense of awe, that we are about to embark upon our first permanent Cabinet. We will attempt to do our best and give of our best, together with our partners, hoping that these will still increase, so that we may establish the State of Israel in the spirit of our great sages and the prophetic vision, which we tend to repeat in speeches but which has now, for the first time, become reality.

M. Begin (Herut): Mister Speaker, distinguished House, the Herut party group, founded by the Irgun Zvai Leumi, has imposed upon me the task of clarifying its attitude to the Cabinet that has been presented by Mr. Ben-Gurion, and to the policies which have been delineated by him.

The fact that this Cabinet comprises representatives from four party groups, representing a small majority in the Knesset and an even smaller majority among the voters of Zion, does not prevent us from examining the foundations upon which this Cabinet is based, as regards both its composition and its policy.

With regard to the composition of the Cabinet, we welcome the establishment of a special Ministry of Education, something which we have been demanding ever since the foundations of our independence were laid. But for some reason the Cabinet's program makes no mention of a very serious problem connected with the education of the young generation. How will Israel's children be educated? Will their education be abandoned to political parties? Will education be divided and divisive, or united and uniting? Will it be wrested away from the grip of the political parties and handed over to the jurisdiction of the state, which is the body that should really educate Israel's children in the spirit of love for their nation, love of the homeland and love of freedom. Will this be in the light of the eternal values of the Jewish Law and in a spirit of tolerance for the views of others, which is the real criterion of our free and sovereign edifice?

Whereas we welcome the establishment of a special Ministry of Education and Culture, we denigrate the legacy left to this Cabinet by the previous one, namely, the special Ministry of Police which, because of the special political conditions of our country, serves no purpose. No one will go so far as to think that the candidate for the Minister of Police, the representative of a party group whose members are of Sephardic origin, will exert any genuine influence on police matters, which are controlled by someone belonging to the ruling party. On the other hand, the

fact that a Ministry of Police exists constitutes a stain on the state's record, because special Ministries of Police have existed heretofore only in autocratic or totalitarian states. By the nature of things, this Department belongs to the Ministry of the Interior. The fact that it has been removed from the Ministry of the Interior reflects a basic aspect of the composition of this Cabinet, like the attitude which guided the establishment of the Provisional Cabinet, namely, that Ministries are established not because of their value to the state but in order to guarantee support for the ruling party.

The same applies to other special Ministries, such as Rationing and Supply, and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, which has become devoid of content after the establishment of the new Ministry, whose importance is, of course, unquestioned. This is also the case with the Ministry of Cooperation, which should be part of the Ministry for Economic Affairs, and which, during the Mandatory rule, was dealt with by a minor official.

I must also speak out on the subject of a Ministry of Religion. We regard our sacred Jewish heritage as an eternal source from which our nation has derived inspiration throughout the years of exile and oppression. For that reason we favor restoring the eternal values of the Jewish Law to the life of our nation, since they embody both justice and honesty. But this Ministry also belongs naturally to either the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Education, and its establishment does not constitute an expression of genuine respect for the values of the eternal Jewish tradition.

The Ministry was also set up in accordance with the policy of buying the support of certain elements, so that they would join the coalition Cabinet, which is ruled, in effect, by only one party. The very fact that four Ministries have been left without Ministers for an undefined period of time, and the responsibility for them has been left to the entire Cabinet, namely, they are nobody's responsibility, proves how inadequate is the policy of establishing Ministries so that Ministers can be appointed rather than appointing the most able Ministers to the most appropriate Ministries.

With regard to the Cabinet's policy, my first point concerns foreign policy, the problem which the Prime Minister designate did not wish to dwell on at length, unfortunately, stating merely that the new Cabinet will continue the policy of the Provisional one. We were also told, in this program, that we may be approaching a period of peace in our country, and that the days of heroism will be replaced by a period of "minor issues." I am not sure that this is the correct definition, even if what we heard about peace is correct. In the sphere of construction we face an immense task, not minor issues. There is no longer any possibility, or need, of continuing with the system which Herzl defined as the "infiltration method." The task of construction today is a huge undertaking,

requiring an extremely rapid pace, and is, in fact, more like a war venture. The main point is, however, that it is an illusion to say that we are entering a period of peace. Our official foreign policy, whether knowingly or not, ignores the fact that even when military battles are not being fought in the north or south, we are in a state of permanent war. We are maintaining an army, and shall continue to do so, which is beyond our economic capabilities. The artificial, winding borders, which contain no guarantee for the development of the economy, the absorption of immigrants, and above all, basic security, impose a state of permanent war upon us by virtue of the fact that invading armies are situated across them. It is typical that Government circles are used to explaining the fact that there is a war to the nation—even when there is no fighting at the front—when the issue under discussion is taxation, the war loan or totalitarian emergency laws, but it is a fact that the main point of foreign policy in a nation which is in this state of war should be to end the war by victory and give the people true peace. Consequently, it is no longer enough to adhere to general principles and make fine speeches about maintaining the principles of the U.N., about friendship for all the nations of the world, or about striving for a Jewish-Arab alliance, while our country is still at war. Our foreign policy must give clear and simple answers to the question of how it intends to give our people victory over our enemies, who attack us daily, even causing us casualties daily, and how it intends to give it true peace, enabling it to implement the historic task of the return to Zion and the ingathering of the exiles, the absorption of millions of immigrants, and the task of making our country a good home for the entire Jewish people. And if the new Cabinet intends to continue with the policy of the Provisional one we can be sure that it will not bring us victory or true peace, because the basis of that policy is the Partition Plan, even if the Cabinet's attitude to its details has changed in the light of reality.

I must bring it to the notice of the Knesset that our foreign policy deliberately ignores the fact that the plan to carve up our homeland, as decided by the U.N., has been annulled both in theory and in practice. The plan was based on three elements: A. the establishment of an Arab state in the eastern part of the Arab section of our historic homeland, B. specific borders, and C. the internationalization of Jerusalem. With the Knesset's permission, I will analyse these elements, starting with international rule for Jerusalem.

At the time, our Government circles supported that idea, there is no denying that fact. But the international rule of Jerusalem does not only mean abandoning Jerusalem to Christian rule, under whatever name, but because of the international conditions, the international rule of Jerusalem is no longer a possibility, particularly since the Security Council of the U.N. has decided to delay the debate on this issue for an undefined period of time. This decision is not fortuitous, it was made

after the U.S.S.R., which boycotted the U.N. for two years of its existence, entered the Security Council in order to receive or demand a share in the international rule of Jerusalem.

Because of the change that has occurred, and it has occurred because of the blood of all Israel, regardless of political affiliation or social class—and no one would dare to make distinctions between one kind of Jewish blood and another when it is shed for the sanctity of eternal Jerusalem—because of this, part of Jerusalem is in our hands and part is still in the hands of the enemy. Consequently, the official policy of our Cabinet is to aim for the establishment of international rule in the Old City of Jerusalem, claiming—though for the moment not very convincingly—that modern Jerusalem should be under Israeli rule. It is incumbent upon us to issue a severe warning against the idea that the Old City of Jerusalem should be under international rule. Those countries which are interested in the internationalization of Jerusalem are prepared to exploit its sanctity in order to advance their own interests. And if we give way a little, handing over part of Jerusalem to international rule because of its sanctity for certain nations or religions, we will be opening the way for those countries to use the excuse of Jerusalem's sanctity in order to further their own, prosaic ends. And the issue of the sanctity of a site can be extended and used to obtain control over other parts of Jerusalem and Israel by international elements, thereby restricting our sovereignty.

At this moment a committee appointed by the U.N. and entitled the Conciliation Commission is sitting in Jerusalem, discussing the future of the city and taking evidence from both sides, supposedly, including that arch-murderer, the Mufti, on the one side, and Jews, on the other. We must warn those who mold our foreign policy of the results of their declared orientation towards the U.N., since they may be invited to appear before that Conciliation Commission. We must understand that there has been a basic change since those days when various commissions of inquiry came to our country and we had to appear before them as one of the "witnesses" and debate our right to our homeland. The State of Israel exists, there is no longer any need to appear before foreign elements, whoever they may be, and certainly not before a Conciliation Commission which summons before it a man whose hands are stained not only with our blood here in our homeland but also with that of our brethren in the diaspora. The Conciliation Commission should be boycotted, and should be told in no uncertain terms that the independent Jewish state will conduct its own negotiations on its international affairs and its relations with other countries, as is appropriate to an independent, sovereign state. Our analyses have proven that the international rule of Jerusalem is not only tantamount to abandoning our capital to foreign rule, but is also incompatible with international reality.

The program on which the Partition Plan, amongst other things, was based has been annulled.

The second basic issue is the border of the country, which was determined in the Partition Plan of November 29. No one disputes the fact that those borders do not exist in reality, they were cancelled when Jaffa became ours as the result of the assault of the soldiers of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, when Acre was conquered by the soldiers of the Haganah, when Galilee was liberated and when we were victorious on the Central Front, the Negev and elsewhere. The borders determined by the U.N. on November 29 are no more.

As regards the third element—establishing an Arab state in the Western part of Israel—that is not realistic either. It has not been and will not be set up. There is no factor in the political reality of the region that can establish it—unless the members of Mapam decide to do so.

Thus, we see that political reality has completely altered the three elements upon which the Partition Plan was based. In effect, what exists now in the eastern part of the western Land of Israel, as it exists in eastern Transjordan, is indirect British rule, just as there was direct British rule over all the western Land of Israel until the British were driven out as a result of our War of Independence against them. It is no mere chance that most of the western part of the Land of Israel which is not under British rule is governed by the Hashemites of Iraq and Transjordan, namely, that Arab fist which is in effect directed by the British Foreign Minister. And neither our state nor our people will have peace until we liberate that part of our homeland from the foreign invader. Still today blood is being shed in what are supposedly the outlying sections of the Partition state, and will continue to be shed. The main point is that we will be unable to direct tens of thousands of our number to the task of construction mentioned by the Prime Minister if our country is not completely cleansed of invading armies. That is the prime task of our foreign policy, and as long as no answer has been given to the problem of purifying our country of indirect British rule the Cabinet should not try and delude the nation, claiming that we are embarking upon a period of peace. That is a very grave delusion which may lead to emotional servitude, and perhaps eventually political servitude too, to that factor which continues to hamper our independence and tries to impose its will on our people by means of its mercenaries.

Our official foreign policy is going in the direction of freezing the artificial borders that have been imposed upon us. The talks being held today with the Kingdom of Jordan, that is, with Britain's most loyal servant in the Middle East, can have only one result: the establishment of British bases facing Petah Tikva and modern Jerusalem. The Armistice Agreement talks with Egypt in Rhodes have also led to the abandoning of segments of our homeland by our army, segments which were liberated by the blood of the best of our sons, and these have been

handed over for control, but in fact for rule, by foreign elements, in contradiction to the assurance given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at a press conference in Jerusalem that no parts of the Negev would be demilitarized as a result of the Armistice Agreement with Egypt. In this connection we condemn the fact that the Knesset was not consulted about the conduct of the Armistice talks, neither with Egypt nor with the other Arab countries. Those agreements are not mechanical cease-fire agreements, but political agreements of the first rank, giving indirect permission for invading forces to remain in the western section of the Land of Israel. The representatives of the people are entitled to demand that the Cabinet consult them before it signs such agreements, and before it undertakes similar agreements in the future.

Against the background of these talks with the Arab countries, we cannot ignore the situation of hundreds of thousands of our brethren who are living in Arab countries today. It must be said quite clearly that their lives are in danger, and we must act quickly in order to save them. May I remind the Knesset that there is a U.N. resolution concerning genocide, which was passed on 9 December 1948, whose first paragraph states: "Genocide shall be defined as the killing of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, harming them bodily, deliberately creating living conditions which may cause the death of the group or part of it." These things have already happened in various Arab countries; our brethren are in mortal danger, and our Cabinet must act, and quickly, in order to save them. On the basis of this resolution we should demand that the U.N. send a special international commission of enquiry to examine the situation of our brethren in Arab countries and guarantee their right to immigrate to their homeland. We approve of the section in the Cabinet's program which deals with assuring the right of all members of our nation in the diaspora to come to Israel, and just as we must not disregard the fact that our co-religionists in Arab lands are in fact in a ghetto, we also express our regret at the fact that certain European countries are closing their borders and preventing our brethren from reaching their homeland. In both cases we must ensure that they are allowed to leave and come to Israel immediately. This should be a precondition for any peace talks or interim agreements held with the aggressive Arab governments, and let no one tell us that this does not fit international law or practice. The fact that the aggressors opened their talks with us with the demand that we deal with the problems of the civilian population, gives us the right to start our talks by demanding that the problem of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who face annihilation should be dealt with

get. Even if certain conditions prevent the nation from redeeming its homeland in its entirety through the War of Independence, it must educate everyone to remember that part of the homeland has been lost. That is what every nation which lost part of its territory in a war of independence, whether because of the pressure of the enemy or because of fatal mistakes it made, has done. That is what France did when it lost Alsace-Lorraine; that is what Italy did when it lost its capital at one time; that is what the Czech nation did, never ceasing to demand the unification of its land under Wenceslas; that is what little Lithuania did with regard to Vilna; that is what Hungary did; that is what the U.S.S.R. did regarding Bessarabia and Western Ukraine; that is what all the nations did who lost part of their homeland at a certain stage in their history. But we educate our children to think that restoring us our homeland on both sides of the Jordan is merely immoral aggression and imperialist expansionism. An end must be put to this educational policy, and the Minister of Education must be instructed to ensure that if a child asks his teacher "Where is the Jewish homeland?" the answer will not be to point to the complex, winding zig-zag which the enemy's forces have imposed upon us for the moment, but rather to give an answer which is appropriate for a generation that has fought for its revival: the homeland is the entire entity, and it will be restored to the Jewish nation in due course.

As regards internal policy, we must point out the discrepancies between theoretical pronouncements and reality. We naturally welcome the declaration regarding assuring civil liberty. But civil and human liberty does not accord with the existence of laws which are the legacy of a period of suppression, and which have been described by the Attorney-General of our Cabinet as being unparalleled even in Nazi Germany, adding that they lead us back to the dark days of the Middle Ages. Civil liberty cannot tolerate the very existence of laws which deny basic human rights and turn our country into a police state. We will consequently demand the annulment of the original British Emergency Laws, and the unoriginal Israeli ones, which blot the record of our state and contradict the declaration about human freedom. The same applies to the rights and powers of the Knesset. It is not enough to declare that a free, republican, democratic regime exists. A regime of this kind is based, first of all, on the perception of the state's authorities, and it is characteristic that the ruling party has insisted that the Cabinet should be given the power, in accordance with the Transition Act, to determine that it may undertake far-reaching political actions and only afterwards report on them to the Knesset.

In our internal policy there is still discrimination, despite the declaration, which we welcome warmly, and whose implementation we await. There is favoritism, and more than that. There are large segments within the nation against which a *numerus clausus*, or even a *numerus nullus*, is employed in government, military, civil and diplomatic services. We, who have been elected by 50,000 voters in Israel, do not demand that 12 percent of the governmental, military, civil and diplomatic services be handed over to us. A key of this kind is fundamentally flawed, but we will not sit by and watch while such a large part of the nation suffers from discrimination and is not properly represented in the higher ranks of the military, in the civil service and in the diplomatic corps, particularly when that part of the nation has sacrificed its sons so that our independent Jewish state may be born, and many hundreds of them have become invalids, while this Cabinet does nothing to help them.

With regard to economic policy, general principles are not enough. The Prime Minister outlined an economic policy today which has been described by his colleagues as a "Supermarket," in the heat of the elections, when referring to a rival party.

The fact of the matter is that it is impossible to absorb many millions of people if the existing foreign policy continues, thereby preventing us from developing economically. As long as the ruling party, which represents us in the Cabinet, owns monopolistic enterprises, it is not only a political party but the representative of huge economic trusts. As long as this situation prevails all talk of increasing productive capital investments is meaningless. There are facts to prove this, primarily the fact that the delegation from South America left Israel with a decision not to invest or build here, in contrast to its tendency before arriving here. The reason for this change of heart was the fact that because a political party represents clear economic interests there would be competition with other undertakings.

The Cabinet must prevent economic shocks. Naturally, the right of the worker to strike in order to guarantee his working conditions must be recognized, although it is difficult to understand what the right to strike means in conditions of absorption and economic development. The Cabinet should set up official mediation machinery so that labor disputes which could harm the nation's productivity may be avoided in advance. The problem of the worker is not one of a nominal wage. Obviously, wages should not be reduced at a time of inflation and rising prices. The problem is that of a realistic wage, and that cannot be ensured until there is a stream of new factories, which can be established only by productive investments and primarily through private enterprise. There is room for private enterprise in Israel, and also for investment by Jews abroad, and there is no need for the international capital which the Prime Minister mentioned. Investments coming

from Jews will not force us to become slaves, while foreign capital will probably be accompanied by conditions which will limit our freedom.

As regards rising prices and the cost of living, the tax-free minimum income should be raised, since the living conditions on which the table of progressive income tax was based have changed, both for the workers in agriculture and for the working intelligentsia. Conditions should be improved in both the towns and the country. There should be no discrimination between different forms of settlement; every form of settlement, whether collective or private, is a blessing to our people, and we should support it.

Consequently, because of the Cabinet's policy in the fields of foreign, internal and economic affairs, and because of our experience with it during the term of the Provisional Cabinet—although there were slight differences in personnel—we cannot place our confidence in the Cabinet proposed by Mr. Ben-Gurion. We will be in opposition to this Cabinet, and we will judge it according to its actions. We will praise the good things it does and unhesitatingly condemn the bad things. It goes without saying that we will participate in the great, historic task of the return to Zion and the absorption of the masses of immigrants. We will share in every constructive undertaking designed to bring here as large a number as possible of our brethren who thirst for freedom and independence, and to absorb them both spiritually and materially. We will take part in the pioneering settlement of the outlying regions and in defending the freedom of the nation and the state. No one can prevent us from participating in the great deeds which need to be done, now that the main stage of attaining our independence has been reached. No one here is entitled to judge who is a constructive force in the Jewish nation and who is not. This judgment will be made by the people and by history, and the people have chosen us to be their representatives because they know that we have built with our blood and our tears. Our people will ignore that arrogant attitude which claims that there are sections within us whose character is not constructive. Our people, who chose us to represent them, are undoubtedly better not only than they seem in the Prime Minister's speech. It is history which will judge us, and will undoubtedly disregard the verdict of an unqualified judge. History will, on the other hand, recognize that scattered throughout the length and breadth of this country are 500 graves containing the remains of those who laid the foundations of that movement on whose behalf I have the honor of addressing the Knesset and the nation. They established a great edifice, the greatest of our generation, the edifice of the revolt against the oppressor, which resulted in the end of British rule and led the way to Jewish independence.

...

H. Ferder (Progressive): Mr. Speaker, distinguished House, the Progressive party will support the new Cabinet and vote for it. We have ad-

mired, and continue to admire, the Prime Minister's attempt to establish a broad coalition, and I hope that this important objective can be achieved even today. I appeal particularly to a certain party, not Mapam, to consider carefully whether it would not be better for its own future and for that of our young state to join this coalition.

The reasons for our decision to join were as follows: a. We are still in the middle of war, perhaps just at the end of war, or so we hope, and by some inner law of Zionist history parties and movements have not succeeded if they were not prepared to accept responsibility at the critical moment. I think that what is crucial is not the number of Ministers in the Cabinet but its objective basis, and we are very pleased to hear that the Prime Minister has accepted many of the requests we made as a condition for joining the coalition. We are convinced that in the Cabinet we will be able to represent just interests, such as those of private agriculture and industry, far better than if we were to remain outside it.

What are the main points of our stand? I would like to try and say a few words about the central theme of the Prime Minister's speech. I would like to assume for the moment that we are approaching the stabilization of the external political situation. Mr. Ben-Gurion was right in saying that we now have to tackle a new and very dangerous front, the economic one. We are talking about our economic independence, and we gladly accept the additional definition that this is possible only on the basis of a standard of living which is appropriate to the various strata within our society.

The period of the Provisional Cabinet was successful, and we often saw its courage, its ability to make decisions and its dynamic force. We hope that the Cabinet will tackle economic problems with the same courage and dynamism, even if the decisions are complex and painful. We have the greatest admiration for the great creative power of the left, but at this moment what has to be done is to understand the situation and act.

I must point out that our trade balance is completely negative. We all view this with concern. We must, however, import a great deal. Imports can be restricted only to a certain extent. We have an army, and we must ensure that it receives the supplies it needs. It is possible to speak of austerity, and we support it, but the population must be fed. Apart from that we must build, and all building materials must be imported. We must also earn as a nation from the export of our produce, and that is one of our basic desires.

Our first answer to this is that we must increase our ability to produce; without that there can be no success or progress. This is possible only if there is real planning on a national scale. There is no hope for either collective or private enterprises if we do not ensure that there is planning on a national scale. But within this framework of planning, there is room for freedom of action and private initiative. When we talk

about increasing our ability to produce, this refers to both agriculture and industry. We must ensure that agriculture's relative share is no smaller than it has been till now. We must ensure that the people who have independent means—and there are plenty of those—will receive their rightful place within our budding economy.

There can be no mass immigration without industry, and there can be no industry without export. We deeply regret the tension which reigns in that sphere.

It is true that the stability of wages is an important factor, but it is not the only one. It is far more important to see that productivity is increased, by both workers and industrialists, and to ensure that our industry is rationalized. We are convinced that by rationalization we will reach a position where wages will not be the deciding factor. All industrialists should export some of their products. A similar system exists in other countries and it has succeeded. There must also be aid from the Government, and we demand it. This system is one of the bases of our economy.

I regret the fact that we are not a wealthy nation. We must ensure that expenses are cut in every sphere, and even the most important and most precious Ministries must be controlled. We demand that a law be passed establishing a Cabinet institution of control, and we believe that this will enable us to make considerable progress.

We also ask the Cabinet to pass a law to encourage investments at the earliest possible opportunity; the flow of investment from abroad is a precondition for the rapid improvement of our negative balance of payments. We must attract investments to our country; there are Jews who are prepared to make this contribution today, and we must do everything to further this development. A law of this kind is essential. Interest must be paid in foreign currency. There must be tax benefits. We are glad that the Prime Minister has stated that the new Cabinet is prepared to encourage investments of this nature and protect the interests of the investors.

A precondition for this program is the war against rising prices. We will not be able to build up the country if we have to pay double the prices paid abroad for everything. We will not be able to export if we are unable to restrain this dangerous development. We are in favor of control, but control is necessary in other areas, not only in that of food. We support the austerity measures, but they can only be a precondition for making our economy completely healthy. The main question is, how to ensure that we will have more income than we do at present.

May I be allowed to say a few more words about an issue which is so important and so close to our hearts—immigration. It is true that mass immigration involves both great opportunities and grave hazards, and what develops is our responsibility. Here it is not enough to speak of grand plans, the immigrants require a realistic program. They are not

prepared to wait any longer. For example, in order to house the immigrants and build one hundred thousand units, capital of 80 million pounds is required over a period of three years. It is obvious that a sum of this magnitude can be raised only through a large, overall plan. It can be raised only if all the forces—the state and the national institutions—are involved, and if rapid and appropriate action is taken. This cannot be left to chance, but must be planned. It is obvious that if we want to implement a plan of this kind the machinery of government must be expanded significantly. These plans can be executed only if we have the appropriate officials, who have suitable qualifications and are on a high standard. This is a crucial point for our young state. We are very glad to note that there has been great progress in this area, but one aspect must be corrected: officials must be independent of the political parties. We demand the depoliticization of the civil service, and we are pleased that in his speech today the Prime Minister expressed a similar sentiment.

Finally, may I add that we are all concerned by the latest development in Jerusalem. All the members of this House are prepared to make a special effort for the sake of Jerusalem, and we must do it. I think that the delay is not so much because of disagreement over the plan; there are memoranda, and it is more or less clear what has to be done. It is possible to transfer institutions, expand industry to a certain extent, and develop and build. The main question is—how? The question is so crucial that we must ask the Cabinet to consider establishing a special Ministry for dealing with all the matters concerning Jerusalem. We demand that in the forthcoming budget special allocations should be made for Jerusalem, because anyone familiar with developments in this country realizes that at the moment it is possible to begin the new development which is so important for Jerusalem only with public, national funds.

In concluding, may I repeat our contention that it is the economic front which is of prime importance. Will the Cabinet have the courage and dynamism tomorrow and the day after to undertake large-scale projects in this area? The basis must be to increase production, thereby expanding the entire economy, and to plan on a national scale. The demand must be to give priority to planning of this kind as regards immigration.

And since we have found that an important part of these demands have been included in the Prime Minister's speech, we are prepared to support the new Cabinet.

...

J. Sapir (General Zionists): Recognizing the importance of the fact that for the first time we are debating the composition and program of our nation's independent, elected Cabinet after a long period of exile, I would like to address the Knesset....

My party and the broad middle class population it represents have no need of history for protection. From the foundation of Petah Tikva to

the industrial and agricultural enterprises being established throughout the country at this very time, from the institution of the basis of our independent rule in our first settlements to the Israeli and human cultural values created in the schools of the general education stream and in the various cultural establishments, throughout the history of these times, when hundreds of thousands sacrificed themselves for our independence and our nation, our public has never ceased to be a major partner in the work of construction, through political and military struggles, in its own way, its guiding principle being that national interests take precedence over those of the individual and the class. Our party, as a party of the center, does not seek to represent large capital (which also finds its way to the undertakings of Hashomer Hatzair), but the masses whose Zionist concepts and national aspirations in their homeland are not bound to a pattern of social life which restricts and enslaves the individual. It is based on encouraging private enterprise and freedom of action within the framework of the national interests.

Throughout the history of the Haganah, and even before it came into being, our members were always in the front line. Without compulsion or pressure, out of enthusiasm, our supporters also provided most of the equipment which enabled us to ensure the security of our population and conduct the struggle against the foreign ruler. It is beneath our dignity to debate declarations regarding a supposed monopoly on blood that has been shed and sacrifices which have been made. Even today the sector of private initiative in our national economy constituted almost half the mixed agricultural economy, 80 percent of the orchards, 90 percent of industry and commerce and the overwhelming majority of construction and other economic branches. I will not demean myself and stand here like a merchant, counting all the immense achievements this public has gained for the nation, Zionism and the state.

That is the public which we represent in this House. Moreover, although we have not been authorized to do so, we may speak on behalf of the eighty thousand voters from the civilian population who, in the special circumstances of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, voted for Mapai, and primarily for the man who stood at its head and whose character attracted their votes at this period. In the present situation and in view of the tasks ahead of us we do not uphold rule by one party, however large. Nor do we uphold the rule of two parties, though they may represent the workers, even with the agreement of Mapam—whose argument with Mapai last night from this podium was tantamount to a family quarrel in which others have no part just as, according to Mapam, other people have virtually no share in the state itself.

I would not stoop to talk of the ruling party's high-handed attitude to our public and our party, as the representative of Mapam did in speaking of their partner in the rule of the Histadrut. Our destiny and the great tasks we have fulfilled in the past, in all kinds of circumstances

and at various times, alongside the dominant bodies of Zionism and within them, and the task we may fulfill in the future, whether in the coalition or in the constructive opposition, is sufficient guarantee of the honorable place we occupy today within Israeli reality, albeit not in Government.

Although we regret the fact that we are not part of Mr. Ben-Gurion's Cabinet, we do not complain about the resultant discrimination against our interests. But without the genuine representation of the wide middle class population, without the party whose very essence is that of large sections of the population within the state and among the immigrants, this Cabinet will not be complete nor will it be capable of fulfilling the tremendous task which fate has imposed upon it at this decisive period for our country and our people.

We do not ignore the difficulties facing us all in the near future. The economic crisis is already almost upon us, and we are ready and willing to share the burdens that will have to be imposed on us all. But the Cabinet does not seem to be prepared for it, and the program it has proposed is pitifully inadequate for the purpose, as regards both its content and its implementation.

...The Cabinet's declaration of equality and democracy seems to be contradicted by certain features in our regime, whether they are based on the Mandatory laws or are still at the discretion of one governmental body or another. We cannot accept being deprived of the most basic elements of human rights and the freedom of the individual...

All of us, by our very existence, are ready to do what we can for the ingathering of the exiles. But even this task is trampled underfoot by crude competition for adherents among the political parties. Is this the fulfillment of our age-old dream of the return to Zion? What does the Cabinet's program contain to ensure that the immigration of Jews to Israel does not become degraded to a matter of favoritism and dependence on parties? The lack of clarity on this subject indicates that the existing situation will continue. And the existing situation is repugnant to us.

...In the Prime Minister's speech there is a very clear tendency to stress the government's aid to agriculture, and in particular to cooperative and collective settlements. With all our respect for these kinds of settlement, we do not agree that the Cabinet's program should, by limiting direct aid, artificially block the development of private agriculture.

We regard private enterprise and the possibility of developing it as one of the foremost national requirements; and the state needs it at least as much as it needs the state....Our participation in the Provisional Government for nine months showed us how much truth there is in declarations about the encouragement of private enterprise. In every economic branch there was hostility towards it and attempts to hamper its development....

The Cabinet's plan touched only very lightly on the subject of social and medical insurance. Despite the fine words about comprehensive popular insurance, without any clarification or explication of how these services will be transferred to the government, the proposed program merely ensures that the government will serve as a treasurer, handing out allowances to all existing and future party mechanisms, instead of providing a full, state-run social service. As a result, we will perpetuate the situation whereby parties attempt to gain control over the individual and encourage proselytizing, which is sometimes even protected by law. We shall fight for every social advance aimed at raising the standard of living and providing public services to the population by state mechanisms, without allowing any intrusion by party or class.

We wholeheartedly support any program whose objective is to ease the lot of our ex-servicemen as they return to civilian life. But in these areas too we have learned from the past how much actual implementation makes a mockery of the so-called equality between demobilized soldiers.

In the sphere of employment the Cabinet intends to continue the current, distorted system. There will not be an orderly employment exchange based on objective criteria, but work will be given to the unemployed by representatives of the parties, turning everything awry, without public supervision and without consideration of the general good.

The period ahead of us is not one for strikes. It is not the interests of any class but those of the state which require compulsory mediation and government institutions which will attempt to avoid labor disputes.

We support any program whose object is to assure the worker's standard of living, conditions of employment and health. We know that the national interest, in the present circumstances, obliges private capital—the employer—to make great sacrifices in comparison with the other countries in order to maintain the worker's standard of living. It would, however, be a mistake from a national and utilitarian point of view to think that it is possible to maintain that standard of living solely at the expense of the rightful profits of capital. This tendency is often legitimized by the views of the ruling party in the Cabinet and the ruling parties in the Histadrut.

The program mentions encouraging the unionization of the workers, or in other words, the Histadrut. The question is whether the Histadrut is a union or not. If it were, we would be prepared to support it; but if it is not, it is an entire state, a state within a state. And as regards the final sentence in the program, namely, that civil servants should be appointed on the basis of examinations, we ask—what will be the fate of all the senior and junior officials who were appointed because of their political affiliation? In view of our experience, is there any guarantee that the machinery of state will not be a bastion of party influence over the actual implementation of the laws and activities of the state?

That is the program the Cabinet is offering us. Behind a surface of fine phrases and noble sentiments, such as can be found in almost any party's platform, is a lack of clarity about the foundations of our regime. In these circumstances, the composition of the Cabinet and the amount of influence exerted in it by each party is of crucial significance.

We are not in the opposition for its own sake of the thing but because of the responsibility we bear to the state, the nation and the public we represent. Our public is large in numbers, elevated in quality and has made a great contribution to the building of our homeland. We must fulfill the task this public has asked us to undertake in this House. We must share in the work of building and creating, of fulfilling national obligations and of sharing in the burden of sacrifices, but this does not oblige us, in these circumstances, to accept the responsibility of government in a regime which starts with fine words but may well end, heaven forbid, in disaster!

...

S. Mikunis (Maki-Communists): We are about to establish our permanent, sovereign tools, ridding ourselves of what is temporary in the life of our state. This is another stage in our battle for national independence, which has been through several stages in the last few years, until the turning-point of 29 November 1947 and the events which ensued.

This is one of the stages, because this process is not yet complete, and our struggle for national independence, which has been conducted valiantly by the entire nation, confronting both enemies and obstacles, has not yet reached a safe haven.

...If we are discussing the proposed composition and political program of our first permanent Cabinet, this has been made possible by the tremendous effort of the nation, which foiled the plots of the imperialist rulers of Britain and the U.S.A.: it has also been made possible by the efforts of our great and loyal friends, the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democratic Republics, which fought alongside us constantly and consistently in the international arena, because they are the allies of peace and independence for nations.

We must not forget what Britain and America have done, and continue to do, to us: that they have sent armies against us from the Arab countries, armed and supplied by them; that in March 1948 America revoked its agreement to the resolution of November 29; that it has tried to impose a Trusteeship rule upon us, and has imposed an embargo on arms and equipment at the darkest time for our population, and the Anglo-American imperialists have attempted to wrest the Negev away from Israel, to obtain control for themselves over the ports of Haifa and Lydda, to govern Jerusalem through the ploy of "internationalization," interfere in our internal affairs and dominate our economy.

...Mr. Ben-Gurion has proposed a Cabinet whose composition distorts the will of the working class. The labor parties obtained an absolute majority in the elections, and this obligates them to establish a democratic Cabinet based primarily on that majority. Instead, however, Mr. Ben-Gurion has shifted the center of gravity to the right, creating a partnership with the bourgeois parties.

...The Cabinet proposed by Mr. Ben-Gurion is very typical of those to be found in areas under the influence of American imperialism, such as France and Italy, for example. This composition does not guarantee that the Cabinet will be able to implement a democratic plan. The record of the Provisional Cabinet, where Mapai and the bourgeois parties were also the majority, sheds additional light on the new Ben-Gurion Cabinet.

...

I have two questions to ask regarding the Ben-Gurion Cabinet: why must we continue with this "innovation," the Ministry of Police, when it has no right to exist, and when all over the world it is incorporated within the Ministry of the Interior? Why is it necessary to maintain a Ministry of Religion, when most of Israel's voters indicated their preference for a secular state? We support freedom of conscience and of religious belief, but this does not mean that the rule of religion may be imposed upon Israel!

...As regards the program, allow me to say that after our experiences, and those of other nations, flowery phrases about "freedom, equality and democracy" will not convince anyone. We have heard declarations of this kind from Ministers of the Provisional Cabinet. Who prevented them from implementing these principles in daily life? Why was actual reality the opposite of what they proclaimed? "state security" or "national emergency" were the excuses given, and the phrase "while preserving national security" also appears in the proposed program. This means that there will be strict political censorship, emergency laws which restrict the individual's basic rights, severe discrimination against the Arab minority and persecution of the progressive forces within it.

Is it mere chance that the program makes no mention of annulling the tax system left by the Mandate, which was based primarily on indirect taxes? If it is really intended that great economic plans should be implemented and the burden on the worker relieved, why does the program contain nothing about taxing property? Why is there merely an empty phrase about progressive income tax, without anything being said about who will be paying most of it? The income tax introduced by the Provisional Cabinet is imposed mainly on the workers and the low income groups. One gets the impression that the Cabinet intends to continue with the tradition of the past in our country, whereby the wealthy prepare the budget and the workers pay it.

...The problem confronting us is to increase the state's economic independence for the sake of the toiling masses and the absorption of immigrants; this requires the provision of work for all, government-initiated housing and the establishment of a national bank to aid the existing agricultural settlements and those that will be set up in the future. What is also required are economic and trade ties with foreign countries on a basis of equality and the preservation of our independence, and the abandonment of loans involving enslaving economic and political conditions, along the lines of the Marshall Plan.

As regards peace, which is so essential for us, we are interested in a stable peace. The question is—how does one achieve it? It was not by chance that Mr. Ben-Gurion mentioned “the formal peace” at the end of his speech, involving the deployment of large military forces. This is, in fact, the policy of Ben-Gurion's Cabinet today, and it foils the possibility of a lasting peace because it is not based on the complete victory of our army and the defeat of our enemies; because it does not utilize to the full the possibilities of this situation; because it succumbs to the pressure of the representatives of imperialist Britain and America and is prepared to make compromises, so that the security of the state is constantly in danger; because instead of conducting an active policy of encouraging the democratic Arab elements, who are struggling to establish an independent Arab state, which will be friendly towards Israel, in part of the Land of Israel, our Cabinet has agreed in effect to the annexation of parts of the Land of Israel by the invading Arab countries, and is aiding in the establishment of Israel by servile lackeys and the servants of the British and American imperialists.

Finally, Ben-Gurion's plan for our foreign policy. This entire chapter, with its five sections, is full of basic discrepancies. It mentions “...friendship with all the peace-loving nations, and particularly the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.” Anyone can see that there's something wrong here. The principle of friendship with peace-loving countries is very true, because it is the supreme national interest of the Jewish people and our state, and, in fact, of all the nations of the world. But when the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. are lumped together as peace-loving countries, something is fishy.

America, which has fostered repression and militarism throughout the world...is, according to Ben-Gurion, a “peace-loving” nation, therefore we should be friends with it. And this America is placed in the same category as the U.S.S.R., that bastion of peace ever since it came into existence 31 years ago, the country of socialism and the brotherhood

foreign policy. No, Mr. Ben-Gurion! That foreign policy will not preserve or maintain our independence! That policy will lead our Cabinet to take orders from Washington, open our policy to intervention in its economic and internal affairs and create conditions for imperialist bases in the Land of Israel and “free zones” at Haifa port, Lydda airfield and elsewhere. This is tantamount to accepting a policy of dollar imperialism, which is alien to us and which you wish to describe as “neutral.”

...The Israeli Communist party cannot support the Ben-Gurion Cabinet; it will not acquiesce in the neglect of its allies on the left, and it will condemn the policy of the proposed coalition, which panders to the interests of property-owners and superintendents in London and Washington, endangering the achievements of the nation's war and its aspirations for a life of freedom and economic welfare in our state.

We shall mobilize ourselves and all the forces of the nation to defend Israel's independence and sovereignty, so that we may attain a democratic regime which will benefit the toiling masses, so that there may be economic planning and the creation of conditions for the absorption of immigrants, so that a policy of friendship with the lovers of peace and independence throughout the world may be maintained and so that Israel may become free and happy, a true home for the working folk who are building and creating the state.

...

B. Idelson (Mapai): We have reached the great day when we, the elected representatives of the people, are discussing our actions in the near future. It is possible that many nations could not have imagined that in these times this is how one begins to build a state, and on foundations which guarantee complete equality and justice. But this is no surprise, for our nation, which has suffered for so many generations, has aspired to amend its life, to be free, building its life and restoring to itself the values which were taken away from it, standing alongside the other nations of the world, molding its future with its own spiritual and physical forces, and moving towards a better and brighter future.

And these things oblige us to examine ourselves closely, and to study the program we have delineated for ourselves with the utmost seriousness.

...

One of the signs of a progressive country is the condition of its population, of its women, working women, working mothers and, of course, children. I believe that the members of the Cabinet will advance the cause of freedom and equality, as they declare in their program. The

in the state, in our constructive society and in the economy. This should be seen first and foremost in employment, with all the difficulties a working woman and mother experiences. Equality before the law means that women must have equal rights in deciding issues that affect the population. They must have the sacred right to defend themselves even in rabbinical courts, as well as to influence their own fate and that of their children. We demand these things because by virtue of our being mothers we need them.

Working women have played a major role in building the country. We have built and created, defended our country and joined the ranks of the forces, starting with the first women members of Hashomer, as well as of the Haganah and now the IDF....We demand that there be a continuation of this in the future. All we want is to ensure that our contribution helps our country to be truly democratic, with laws based on honesty and justice. The foremost task our country faces now is the absorption of immigrants, and this must be done not only by material aid but also by accepting them into our society, our organizations, our families and our homes. Our country's laws must encourage all our inhabitants to help in this.

...It is our aim to organize social work programs in which those who need help are active participants and the voluntary work of women is utilized to the full. We hope that the experience we have acquired over the years will serve as the basis for our active participation in every sphere where our help is needed. We regard the needs of children as being of paramount importance. We hope that the Cabinet will take up the cudgel in the fight against poverty and deprivation in our country. We are not prepared to accept the neglect that exists in various neighborhoods. We want reforms which will raise the standard of living, remove children from the dangers of neglect and ensure a living wage to workers....

We hope that the national insurance scheme mentioned in the Cabinet's program will serve the interests of the workers, providing solutions to many of the problems which the world has not yet solved, and primarily to that of the working mother. We must not ignore the problem of women in poor neighborhoods, whose standards must be raised and whose standing within the family and society must be improved. We must not ignore the problem of Arab women, whose standard of living is particularly low. It is important that the state finds a solution to the problem of the enslaved Arab woman, and raises her standard of living to equal ours, restoring to her what has been taken away from her for so many years, so that we may find a common language with one another.

We also represent the economic side of women's rights at work, for decent working conditions and wages, enabling them to continue working. We applaud the Cabinet's intention to introduce rationing and en-

sure that supplies are maintained, because we working women and mothers are well aware of the importance of this issue....We are prepared to take heavy burdens upon ourselves so that the Cabinet's program may be implemented, and so that we may share in the construction of our state.

M. Erem (Mapam): Members of the Knesset, the Prime Minister has given us a program for the Cabinet which promises everything to everyone: to the workers and the employers, to the farmers and the fruit-growers, to cooperative initiative and private initiative, to the religious sector and to those who believe in freedom of conscience, etc....Most of the Cabinet program was phrased with enchanting simplicity: The Cabinet will ensure; the Cabinet will encourage; etc. But how will this be done, when the two major bodies which should be engaged in the implementation of these ideas are Mapai and the right? No clear answer is given in the program because the Cabinet is *unable* to give a clear answer. The alliance between Mapai and the right, and the removal of Mapam from its position within the government, means that the socialist path has in effect been abandoned.

...What good are the most detailed programs when the first permanent Cabinet of the State of Israel is based on deepening the rift among the workers, preferring to ally itself with the right?...It has been claimed here that our views on foreign policy are not in accord with those of Mapai....How can there be any comparison between a country [the U.S.S.R.—ed.] which supported us and accorded us our first international recognition, and provided us with physical aid when we were under attack, and one [the U.S.A.—ed.] which constantly harrassed us, tried to foil the U.N. resolution, refused to give us arms or aid, saved our enemy from defeat, supported the Bernadotte Plan and is now burdening us by means of a Conciliation Commission, a rotten peace and unhelpful alliances?

We did not propose quarreling with the U.S.A., merely that, while maintaining our friendship with it, we should beware of the kiss of death. What is wrong with our admonition not to be drawn into a Marshall Plan, which could restrict us politically, destroy an honest friendship, and paralyze Israel's industrial development, as it does in several countries, so that American products may be marketed?

We did not cause Mapai to ally itself with the right rather than with the party of the workers, whose objective is to achieve socialism. If Mapai will agree to having an equal partner in the coalition, rather than yea-sayers, and will agree to work out the details of internal and foreign policy, it only has to say so. As long as *this* coalition Cabinet prevails, we will oppose it and refuse to regard it as an expression of the nation's wishes and aspirations.

Rabbi K. Kahane (United Religious Front): ...In one of his first speeches at the time of the establishment of our state, the Provisional Prime Minister, who regarded himself as the representative of the entire nation, declared that we could rely upon nobody other than ourselves and God. Although this combination of our own strength and Almighty God was somewhat offensive to us, we were content that the Prime Minister understood that, as the representative of the entire nation, he had to rely on that power in which the nation had trusted throughout its existence. We regret the fact that today, in presenting Israel's first permanent Cabinet after the Lord has delivered us from our enemies, no mention was made of the aid without which we would not have reached this point. For our creativity, our pioneering endeavors, science and research, all devolve from the Almighty. We are glad that the Prime Minister stated that it is not the gun and the plough, the cannon and the tractor, which have brought us to where we stand today. But there was too much faith in our own strength and physical might in his address to the Knesset.

One basic element was missing from the Prime Minister's address, even though it had been discussed in the negotiations prior to the formation of the Cabinet. Our presence in the Cabinet is possible only if the law of marriage and divorce in the State of Israel are the rabbinic law. I hope that no section of the population will be prepared to split the Jewish nation by passing a law which differs from this....

The Sabbath and the Jewish festivals were mentioned as being days of rest. We demand that the law that was passed on this subject be implemented. We will not tolerate a situation in which there is a law saying that the Sabbath is the day of rest, and at the same time a civil servant is fired because she will not work on the Sabbath. We will not tolerate a situation in which there is a law saying that army kitchens shall maintain the Jewish dietary laws, but many army kitchens do not do so. And no one is tried for breaking the law. We demand not merely equality before the law, but equality between laws.

We regret the fact that there are different streams of education. We would be glad if there were only one, but circumstances dictate otherwise, unfortunately. The minimum plan which the Prime Minister has outlined for the various streams is open to many interpretations. We would not like to see a cultural struggle developing in Israel on this subject. On no account will we give up our religious institutions of education. That education maintained our contact with the Land of Israel over countless generations. It preserved Jewish values, and it also, in recent times, gave us the defenders of Jerusalem and the other towns. It

sacrifices they have made for the state and the nation. When we manned the barricades together, and fought alongside one another, was anyone asked what party they belonged to or what their ideology was? We were all equal when it came to the defense of our country.

To return to education, we regret the fact that in speaking of the values which must be inculcated in the younger generation, the Prime Minister did not mention the eternal values of Judaism. He mentioned human culture, science and the Middle East, as well as research, but he did not mention our Holy Law. These declarations by Israel's first permanent Cabinet sadden us.

We religious workers have been neglected, and even discriminated against. Religious pioneers have settled the most far-flung points, we have participated in the struggle to bring immigrants to our shores and absorb them and we have shared in the defense of our land just as have the secular pioneers. Within the working class there should be no discrimination between workers. Our rights are the same as those of others. We demand equal representation in committees and organizations which represent the workers. We demand equal representation in the civil service and in the diplomatic ranks.

To conclude, we will support the Cabinet that has been presented to us, hoping that it will implement the minimum it promises in its program. We hope that it will succeed in its task, and may God bless us all.

T. Toubi (Maki-Communists): Honored Members of the Knesset! We are now facing a new situation in Israel—the establishment of a permanent ruling body which will be responsible to the Constituent Assembly. There is no doubt that the creation of this situation marks a new stage in the history of the war against imperialism, and on behalf of freedom and democracy in this part of the Middle East.

The establishment of the State of Israel, and its ability to withstand imperialist plots and intervention, was made possible by the resistance of the masses in Israel and their battle for independence and freedom, and also by the many-sided support that they received from democratic forces in the world, led by the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democratic Republics.

The attempts by the imperialists to thwart the U.N. resolution of 29 November 1947 regarding the establishment of two independent states—one Arab and one Jewish—in Palestine, and the military attacks by the imperialists through their agents, the reactionary Arab rulers, with the object of preventing the establishment of the State of Israel, were also directed against the interests of the Arab masses in Palestine and the

Led by the democratic forces and the communist parties, a strong, organized element opposing the interventionist war in Palestine surfaced in these countries. This movement also favored genuine cooperation between the Jewish and Arab peoples in Palestine and the establishment of their two states.

In the conquered part of Palestine, our comrades distributed tens of thousands of leaflets against the war and organized demonstrations against the invading armies. Moreover, when Galilee was conquered by Kaukji, and in the areas under the control of the Egyptians, the Arab communists organized the active resistance of the peasants against these forces.

In their opposition to the war of aggression against Israel, in their war to establish an independent, democratic Arab state alongside the State of Israel, and in their battle for cooperation between the two nations, the democratic Arab forces were subjected to organized repression and terror from Arab reaction. Thousands of Arab democrats were thrown into jails and concentration camps in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Transjordan, and a large number of Arab communists living in Palestine are still in prison today because of their opposition to the aggressive armies. Dozens of those who demonstrated against the interventionist war were slain in Baghdad by a barrage of bullets fired by the gendarmerie. Only one month ago Nuri Said, that mass murderer, hung the Secretary-General of the Iraqi Communist party, Yosef Salman, and three other communist leaders, both Jews and Arabs.

And although imperialism has temporarily succeeded in depriving the Arab masses of Palestine of their freedom and independence, and has brought a disaster on the Arab nation which is virtually unparalleled in history, it has nevertheless not succeeded in destroying the State of Israel, and that is a victory for all the forces of freedom and democracy in the Middle East.

...The promises made by the Provisional Prime Minister regarding the Arabs living within...the State of Israel, namely, that they will have the same rights as all other citizens of the state has, in the past, led those masses who have suffered so much from imperialism and its agents to hope that an end had come to their suffering and that a better future awaited them. To my regret, however, this has not been fulfilled....

The Arab masses are gradually coming to realize that a hostile policy is being adopted by reactionary forces in Israel, and it is even more regrettable that these forces are growing. The Arab masses are suffering from a policy of racial discrimination and national repression

from the military governor, which is difficult to get and requires giving a deposit of 200 Israeli pounds. All the Arabs of Acre are forced to live in the Old City and are not permitted to leave it. Even the Arabs of Haifa, which is not included in the area under military rule, are unable to live wherever they wish or move freely about the city....

Unemployment threatens the entire economic fabric of the Arabs.... 6,000 refugees are living in Nazareth in terrible conditions, while their villages are only 3 miles away....Thousands of prisoners are being held by the IDF, although most of them have never acted against Israel. Many of them are being held in P.O.W. camps, and it is strange that many of them are well-known communists who fought against Kaukji's forces in Galilee.

What is even more surprising is that several Arab communist leaders and labor union leaders, who were released from Egyptian jails after having been captured in the Negev while resisting the Egyptian invasion, remain in Israeli camps....I will be the first person to demand that those who served Arab reaction should be punished, but it is unfair and illogical to keep these innocent people in concentration camps.

The forced evacuation of Arab villages has also been carried out by the Israeli authorities. Only a few weeks ago 700 people who had taken refuge in the village of Yasif during the war were taken to the Iraqi front in trucks and forced to cross the lines to Abdullah....

The democratic Arab organizations, whose object is to reduce the suffering of the masses, have encountered the stubborn resistance of the various government departments....The Arab Workers' Congress, for example, which is a labor union that seeks to defend the rights of the masses, has been discriminated against. Arab workers who belong to this union are dismissed every day. This contradicts the Cabinet's declared policy of "giving work to those who seek it, regardless of ethnic group, or national or political affiliation."

On the other hand, we find that government departments do cooperate with reactionary Arab elements who are known to have collaborated with imperialism and its agents, the Mufti and Abdullah, in the past. These people, who head many village and town councils, and represent Arab feudalism and reaction, are accepted by the Israeli authorities, while the true friends of the Jewish people are sent to prison.

The ownership of their lands and homes has been withdrawn from many Arabs living in Israel....And when we communists oppose this policy, which is against the interests of the Arab population, we also defend the interests of the Jewish working masses. With the passage of time

repression in Israel....I propose, therefore, that a special parliamentary commission be set up to study the situation and take positive steps to change it.

It is really regrettable that the Cabinet's program makes no mention of these difficult conditions among the Arab masses, or of the possibility of changing them. These conditions were created by forces which controlled the Provisional Cabinet, and which have even greater control of the Cabinet which has been presented to us here. Consequently, we see no reason to put our confidence in the new Cabinet.

There are additional reasons, however, for our opposition to the proposed Cabinet. It has agreed to the annexation of areas which were to be included in the independent Arab state in Palestine by Abdullah and Farouk, the agents of British and American imperialism. It also enables pressure to be exerted on Israel, both politically and militarily, by agreeing to the establishment of Anglo-American bases in these areas along its borders.

By abandoning the idea of establishing an independent Arab state in the other part of Palestine, reaction in the Middle East is strengthened and the Jewish nation in Israel is deprived of a friendly nation as a neighbor. To say that there are no democratic Arab forces capable of establishing this state is to serve Anglo-American imperialism. These forces exist and function among the Arab masses, and the imperialists feel their influence. The recent elections to the Constituent Assembly proved how strong these forces are, despite the terror and intimidation exerted on the Arab masses by reactionaries who do not represent the true interests of the Arab people.

...Another problem which was not mentioned in the Cabinet's program, and this is another reason for our inability to support it, is that of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, who were uprooted from their homes by the war. The interests of the State of Israel, and of Arab-Jewish cooperation in the Middle East, demand that this problem be solved. The refugees, who love peace and freedom, must be allowed to return to their country.

The foreign policy of the proposed Cabinet does not satisfy us. It contained no assurance that such imperialistic programs as the "Middle Eastern Bloc" and the "Eastern Bloc" would be boycotted by the Cabinet. To ignore these programs is against Israel's interests and independence. The establishment of these blocs in this part of the world constitutes a serious threat to the State of Israel and its security. Its true interest is to undermine blocs of this kind, which are directed against world peace and freedom.

All this prevents us from supporting the proposed Cabinet. Our struggle, as communists, for the interests of the Jewish and Arab masses will increase, and we will do our part in the Knesset to defend the interests of the masses. We will faithfully defend Israel's indepen-

dence and freedom, as well as its internal democracy and equality. We will work to turn Israel into a firm base of peace and freedom in the Middle East.

(Hebrew translated from the Arabic)

R. Cohen (Wizo): Speaker of the Knesset and Knesset Members! We have listened carefully to what has been said by the Prime Minister, each one of us seeking an answer to the questions which most occupy their party faction. As the representative of Wizo and the Women's Equal Rights Organization, permit me to deal first and foremost with the issue of women's equality.

It was with great satisfaction that I heard the Prime Minister's clear declaration of full equality for women, as regards their rights and obligations within the state, society and the economy, and under the law.

I might have been satisfied with that declaration had I not heard the representatives of the religious bloc mention the laws of personal status (marriage and divorce)...Throughout the years promises have been made to us to the effect that changes would be made in these laws, but very little has been achieved to date, and what little has been achieved has been the outcome of the incessant struggle of the women's organizations.

Now that the laws of the state have been established on the basis of progress, we cannot accept legal discrimination against women, who constitute half the population. How can we accept laws which restrict women in their relations with their husbands, their children and society as a whole? Can women be obliged to obtain a release from their dead husband's brother? Must they be unable to marry if abandoned by their husbands? How can the law declare that women are unfit to serve as witnesses? The abolition of these laws is a matter not only for women, but it is the test of a progressive society....

As the representative of the Women's Organization, I welcome the Prime Minister's statement that education, health and social work services are included in the Cabinet's program....Our country will continue to require the aid of the voluntary forces from the organizations which have worked for many years in these spheres.

...Special attention should be paid to finding methods of education which are appropriate for the needs of the varied mass immigration; these methods should eliminate the existing differences between the various levels of development of the children coming from such disparate backgrounds.

...The question of the cost of living is one which concerns us deeply. If we do not gain control over the cost of living and the supply of essential foodstuffs, we will not be able to absorb immigration, provide services or build the state. A life of austerity lowering the standard of living, and ensuring that profits and wages are stable, will lead to the stability of prices. The housewives are the first victims of the present situa-

tion. They are the state's principal consumer, they have first-hand experience of the difficulty of balancing the daily budget—and they have still not been brought into the various economic committees.

Finally, we have listened to the opinions of many representatives, some who support the Cabinet and some who do not. From what they have said I have learned that nobody is perfect, and the effort to achieve cooperation must come from all sides. The concern for the future of our people obliges us all to make sacrifices, as we did when the enemy was at our gates. Only a full and honest coalition will hasten the time when we can live a life of peace and construction in our state.

I support the Cabinet and the program it has proposed; but I must admit that I would raise my hand more willingly if the Cabinet were based on a wider coalition of the forces of construction.

Z. Gluska (Yemenites): Mr. Speaker, very distinguished Knesset Members! I am the representative of a small party faction which has chosen me to be its Knesset Member, but this party faction, or, to be more precise, ethnic group, is of great importance within the Jewish people and Israel. The Jews of Yemen have known much trouble and suffering, and they have been heard by the elected representatives of our state. This has been achieved by democracy which, if implemented correctly, will be a guiding light for the nation and society.

As those who have sent me desire, I hereby express my support for the proposed Cabinet, even though the coalition is still limited. It would be preferable were the first elected Cabinet to comprise a wider coalition, but from the first arguments uttered from this honored floor it transpires that there were reasons for making the coalition a small one. It is regrettable that during the negotiations to form the Cabinet no one considered including the representative of Yemenite Jewry. The fact that their votes were spread widely is no reason to belittle the value, importance and liveliness of this Jewish community, and it should have been honored by listening to the views of its representative. My view is, as I have said, that efforts should be made to reach a wider coalition, although it is regrettable that the candidates to be included in this coalition, such as Mapam, think that they have the monopoly on progress, labor and political understanding. Moreover, they label those who are faithful to Jewish Law and tradition—who still constitute the majority of the Jewish people throughout the world—as “reaction,” adding the term “clericalism,” which has a derogatory connotation, and frightens those who did receive a sound religious education. We must not forget that the term “clericalism” is a double-edged sword, because by this trenchant opposition to the Jewish tradition they are in danger of developing a “secular clericalism,” if one may use the term. If only because of this attitude, the coalition should exclude them. Nationalism and religion in Judaism are one and the same thing. The Jewish nation is the body

which creates and builds, and the spirit that guides it is that of the prophets, the sages, the Law and tradition.

The Yemenite community, which has adhered to Jewish Law and tradition, is wounded by such expressions as “reaction,” “clericalism,” etc., and asks those Knesset Members who are hostile towards religion to show consideration for the feelings of the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora. The representatives of the distinguished party factions in this House are used to dividing up between themselves the monopoly on demands and actions of various kinds. They take progress and political orientation as being theirs alone; one party regards the issue of the Greater Land of Israel as being their domain, and another takes the same attitude towards religion. These attitudes are, in my humble opinion, the result of Zionist Congresses and party disputes. This House must undergo a fundamental change in the way it views matters and rise above political parties and personal differences.

Yemenite Jewry has no monopoly, nor does it intend to seek one. This group needs aid from everyone. But what can it do when the people with the monopoly leave it on the sidelines, even though it also has the right to benefit from their powers?

The responsibility of Israel's Cabinet is, indeed, a great one now, particularly towards a united but impoverished group which lacks people in positions of power within the state....The state bears a heavy responsibility towards the various ethnic groups, and particularly towards the Jews of Yemen....All the parts of the program outlined for us here by the Prime Minister require a tremendous effort, both as regards faith in the vision and in their implementation. Some of the sections are new for us as a sovereign nation which is also responsible for citizens from other nations. Divine providence has given us a chance to prove our desire to fulfill general human ideals and be leaders among the nations, as our prophets have foretold. Other sections are not new for us, for we have become acquainted with them through our Zionist work prior to the establishment of the state. As regards these sections and the proposed program, I can say quite clearly that if the practice of the party key is not abolished, I doubt whether there will be any change in the current state of affairs, which is subject to severe and justified criticism.

It is not enough, for example, to write about the ingathering of the exiles. It has to be fulfilled, immediately and thoroughly, but we must check what place in the diaspora is the most dangerous, and eliminate that exile first of all. For example, the issue of the Yemenite exile has already been mentioned several times, even by the Prime Minister himself, but no real steps have been taken to do anything about it. Obviously, empty declarations lead to counter-declarations by “interested parties,” who also do nothing to change the situation, while meanwhile these Jews are rotting and suffering. Naturally, declarations, anxiety, concern and so on do not enable people to prepare packages and send

them to Yemen so that they may feed the people there. Thus, if the ingathering of the exiles is the slogan, promises should be kept and people should refrain from making vague declarations which can do more harm than good. The Jews of Yemen are more persecuted than Jews anywhere else, and our government should give their rescue top priority. For the last 27 years we have not ceased demanding that the Jews of Yemen be brought here; is the time still not ripe? The same applies to the absorption of the immigrants, providing them with housing, employment, vocational training, etc. All this can be done democratically only if the government machinery in charge of it receives explicit instructions and also political, public education to refrain from extremist political tendencies, which are liable to drive any clerk crazy.

I know that many clerks are unable to conceal their fear of the party. They are in a state of constant inner war between the demand for democratic justice for all and the party's insistence on first examining the individual's membership card. It is a national requirement that we emerge from this plague of party favoritism. It is well-known that these phenomena arouse public distrust, and what is most painful is that this may lead to disappointment among the Jewish masses.

Yemenite Jewry is the first group to experience this kind of suffering, it is the victim. Yemenite Jewry does its duty faithfully, and does not receive the minimum which it deserves. This is not a metaphor, this is the plain truth. Many Yemenite Jews joined the army, and many were killed, but capable Yemenite Jews are not incorporated into the training corps or given desk jobs unless a lot of pressure is applied. I do not wish to detract from the rights of others, neither in the area of the IDF nor in any other area, but I wish to emphasize the fact that other people are rewarded for their deeds. This is not the case with the Yemenites. They seem to have been intended from the outset to be exploited. This situation is doubtless well known to the Ministry of Defense and the IDF.

You are all well aware of the fact, gentlemen, that the Yemenites do not have an extensive leadership of dozens of people who can penetrate into all the offices of the various institutions of government or can put the case of every Yemenite soldier before the institutions of rehabilitation, settlement, etc. Consequently, it is essential that the machinery of government operates in such a way that Yemenite soldiers or civilians will not have to go from pillar to post in order to settle their affairs.

In conclusion, I would like to note that we welcome the points of the program which refer to development, labor and education, but it is time which will teach us what change has occurred on the unemployment scene, and particularly as regards the development of Jerusalem and the matter of land and nationalization.

We are very concerned about education; we welcome free compulsory education and the concern for vocational and agricultural train-

ing. They are healthy foundations. What is worrying, however, is who will decide what character this education is to have. This question is a complex one and involves great responsibility. With this I end my speech. Once again, I express my confidence in the proposed Cabinet, believing and trusting that the basic policy lines will be implemented with the cooperation of all the party factions in the Knesset, whether they are members of the coalition or not. We are still on the way, we will work together with honor, loyalty and love for one another, may God be praised.

...

I. Idelson (Mapam): There have been radical changes in the conditions of our work in this country. We are no longer subject to the restraints imposed on us by imperialist rulers, and instead of a voluntary organization we have a state which can organize its own life and provide solutions to our problems. Nevertheless, I want to remind everyone that it is not in this House alone that history will be made. The laws we pass here and the people who choose to work for us can make our task easier or more difficult. We will still be divided not only into government and opposition. The main work will be done in the towns and villages. The farmers and workers who have labored till now will continue to do so. There the opposition is part of the labor force. That is how it has always been, and how it will continue....

It has been said here, correctly, that what we do or do not do will affect events for many years to come. That is why we say that the State of Israel will become the homeland of millions of Jews only if it is the home of farmers, laborers and working people. For that reason, we proposed to the other large party in the Histadrut—since the citizens of Israel had not given either of us a clear majority—that we try and work out a program for the Cabinet together, which we would then submit to the other likely candidates for the coalition. Even from within the ruling party Knesset Members have had to ask for points in the Cabinet's program to be clarified....We did not want meaningless generalizations but a clear, open program on the basis of which Israel could grow and develop as a country of working people. Had that been the case, then possibly the representative of the religious party, Mr. Warhaftig, would not have asked about the laws governing personal status. Rabbi Levin informed us from this podium that a commitment had been given, but it seems that his faith in the Prime Minister is such that he wanted to be sure that it went on the record.

But those who have joined the coalition just now are not so very concerned to be fully acquainted with all the points of the Cabinet's program. Although the religious front appear here as one unified body, it in fact consists of four different factions. Whenever they disagree with one another Mapai will be able to control the Cabinet's decisions, but whenever they agree with one another they will be able to overrule Ma-

pai in the Cabinet. It is because the workers do not constitute a majority within the Cabinet that the points of the program are worded so vaguely.

The man who is Prime Minister-elect is known not only as someone who has a great deal of initiative and the ability to implement plans, but also as someone who will always take up the cudgels on behalf of his party, is an expert at party maneuvering, has a first-rate command of Hebrew and can phrase matters in such a way that they are devoid of all meaning. This is what has been done with regard to our foreign policy and the question of defense. Don't forget, the Prime Minister-elect is also the Minister of Defense. This ambiguity is evident in the section on internal policy too....

One of our severest tests will be our treatment of the Arabs, but this is not mentioned in the Cabinet's program. Clear statements have been made about some small details, but not about what we are to do about the Arabs living within our borders. This will be a test of our political and moral—and possibly even our military—strength, and should be addressed seriously.

...We thought we could live together [with Mapai—ed.]. I know that there are still some among you who feel uneasy, although, regrettably, they will soon get used to the situation. We will not, however, because we never thought that a revolutionary movement should act *only* in this House. This House can help, it can also hinder, and unfortunately we have seen that the latter has occurred. But a revolutionary movement operates primarily in the field, in the workshop, amongst youngsters and soldiers, in a life of construction. There we are not the opposition, and there we continue to work and build.

...
E. Eliashar (Sephardim): Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Knesset! When the Provisional Cabinet decided to conclude its brief period of office, complemented by the IDF's courageous deeds, and to step down in favor of a democratically-elected government, we saw this as a sure step towards stabilizing the government of the state, working to strengthen it, gathering in the far-flung members of the Jewish people and absorbing them as free men in their homeland.

As the descendants of people who came to this country hundreds of years ago, out of spiritual-religious motives and a love for the promised land, without any prior preparation or the aid of absorbing agencies, we have been privileged, together with the other representatives in the Knesset, to participate in this House, which faces an onerous task. It must build Israeli society on the basis of justice and morality, freedom and equality for all, its gates must always be open for any Jew who wishes to shake from his feet the dust of the diaspora, and there must be no discrimination between one citizen and another.

The Sephardic party faction in the Knesset is not a political party. We represent wide sections of the population, from the poor to the

wealthy. We have joined to form one party faction, despite the great difficulties in finding common ground on certain subjects, because of the growing need to find a solution to the problem known as the Sephardim or the Jews from Moslem countries. We do not support ethnic divisions. Quite the contrary, we aspire towards the unity of all the nation. But the problems of the Sephardic communities weigh heavily upon us and constitute a danger for the whole country....

As Jews, Zionists and nationalists, we have joined together to find a solution to these problems....Even today, our share in fulfilling obligations is no smaller than that of the other party factions in this House. Our sons and daughters shed their blood in the same way as the rest of the population; together with the other parties, we sweated to make the earth fertile and to defend its borders. We regard ourselves as having equal rights and obligations with everyone else in the country. Throughout our history, ever since the destruction of the Temple, we have participated in the life of the country, and have never forgotten it....The embers of that memory have not dwindled among the Sephardic communities, even though they have not received adequate Zionist education. Our public suffers from several natural, complex problems. In every sphere of daily life in Israel, in education, training, immigration and absorption, the economy and agriculture, we encounter the same problems. A particularly severe problem is that of rescuing our brethren whose lives are in danger in Moslem countries.

We do not blame any person, political party or section of the public....In education the neglect of underprivileged children is rampant. Thousands of children do not attend school, and are in danger of deteriorating morally....We have not found that public bodies have been willing to accept responsibility for this problem. We therefore welcome the Prime Minister's announcement that he and his Cabinet intend to eliminate illiteracy in Israel. We will not rest until this problem, which is not the concern of one ethnic group but of the whole nation, is resolved.

Another problem affecting Jews from Moslem countries is poverty....We hope that the Cabinet will act in order to overcome this, putting an end to overcrowding and sickness in the poor neighborhoods. We also demand that the issue of bringing the Jews from Moslem countries to Israel be tackled forthwith, because this is a matter of life and death. When Bevin was in control he forbade the immigration of the 25,000 Jews of Tripoli to this country, despite the pogroms and murders to which they were subjected. These Jews are devoted and loyal, and they all desire to come here. Now that it is possible to bring them, we must do so as quickly as we can, before the Arab rulers there change their minds.

During the course of many generations of life in different countries barriers have arisen which we must remove, as the Prime Minister has pointed out. But deeply-rooted traditions should not be lightly dismis-

sed. These problems must be tackled in a spirit of goodwill. These people should be given training, education and culture, increasing their capacity to work in the field and on the factory floor, so that they will learn that their sense of being discriminated against is unfounded. Only complete equality...can achieve our goal—the unity of the nation.

I will not dwell on the suffering of the immigrants from Moslem countries, and North Africa in particular, here....Things do not seem to be well-organized, and our inability to provide for the special needs of these immigrants creates problems which may, God forbid, rebound against us. We have lost six million of our brethren, and those who live in People's Democratic Republics are not permitted to leave. There can be no doubt that we must give first priority to those who have survived the Holocaust. After we have brought them here we will be able to give our full attention to the reserves which remain, so that our state may grow and we will be able to absorb our brethren from Moslem countries. Our numbers are few. We are still surrounded by enemy forces waiting for the right moment to renew their attacks. We are grateful to the Prime Minister for reminding us that we are still a long way away from peace, and must not become complacent....

The rules of freedom, equality and democracy outlined in the Cabinet's program ensure that our country will have a democratic, republican government, in which all citizens will have equal rights and obligations. We, who have suffered wherever we dwelt in the diaspora, will respect and appreciate the laws of freedom and equality in our state.

We support the foundations on which Israel's foreign policy is based: sovereignty and independence in the fullest sense of the words. We are, and always have been, a peace-loving nation, and we must be careful as we take our first steps. We will constantly endeavor to establish ties of understanding and friendship with all the countries which help us in our struggle for independence. We will strive to achieve a Jewish-Arab alliance on the basis of their recognition of the State of Israel. Equality and mutual respect are the principles we have always upheld. Most of the Arabs are quarrelsome and devious, and it will take a long time until they are at peace with one another and until our neighbors accept the fact that we are free men like everyone else. We must do our utmost to defend our state and its sovereignty.

...We will always regard Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel, and we demand that the Cabinet act in order to develop and expand our holy city, which has always been a symbol and has served as the focal point of the Jewish nation's aspirations throughout its exile. It is our view that Zionism came into being the day the Jewish people was exiled from its land and swore its undying devotion to the capital of Zion, as we have said throughout the generations: for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest. At the Knesset sitting in Jerusalem it was decided that a special sitting would be held to discuss the problem of Jerusalem. We demand

that this sitting be held soon, and we insist that when the time comes Jerusalem shall be the capital of Israel.

And if the Prime Minister has mentioned the civil service, may I be allowed to say to him and to the Members of the Knesset that our people have been discriminated against in this sphere. There are hardly any civil servants who come from Arab countries. This is not merely an economic issue. We want to have a share in this area of our state's life too. We request that a civil service training school be set up, so that people from all ethnic groups may be prepared for work in this area.

Although our party faction is a small one in the Knesset, together with the other Sephardim of the two main parties in this House we represent an entire tribe of Israel which is rich in both quality and quantity. We have decided not to be in opposition and to cooperate within the Cabinet coalition. By doing so we put our trust in the parties which have taken upon themselves the responsibility of implementing the joint program, affecting every part of our lives and based on ideals which will benefit us all. We nonetheless adhere to the concept of freedom of debate on every issue, as well as the right to criticize the Cabinet if it strays from the lines demarked for it by the Knesset or the coalition....

We give our thanks to the Provisional Prime Minister, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, to his colleagues and to the IDF, whose sagacity, vision, courage, decisiveness and heroism have steered the ship of Israel through stormy seas and the hostility of our enemies, in both the military and the political arenas, and have brought us thus far. May the new Cabinet lead our young state to a safe haven, for the benefit of the country and its inhabitants, amen.

...

U.Z. Greenberg (Herut): Distinguished House, I would like to be able to regard this House as the supreme legislature of the nation. Yesterday, regrettably, there were times when it seemed that we were attending an executive meeting of the Histadrut, witnessing arguments between Ma-pai and Mapam that belonged to the days of the Mandate. Expressions spoken in anger did not help to increase the honor of this House, unfortunately. Especially since the dispute will soon be reconciled. Let us hope that statehood will put an end to these squabbles. Let us also hope that the slogan of "the brotherhood of nations" will also include the brotherhood of colleagues, at least within the Histadrut.

I would not like to have to draw the conclusion that those who have been chosen to rule have remained as they were in the past, non-rulers, men of the sword and politics and titles. I would not like to think that those who govern regard the state as merely an extended version of the Yishuv.

I seek the honor of this House and the people who rule, because I have extolled the virtues of governing Israel in all my poems. Politeness in addressing a political adversary is one of the attributes of rulers. While

we sit and discuss formal issues and questions of the moment—which are important in themselves—things are being done by the representatives of the Cabinet which go beyond the matters of the moment, and which will affect us for generations to come. These things concern the ground, the very body, of our homeland. This is not an issue of “one more hectare” (dunam), but of the extent of our country, of entire regions which in the long run concerns the building of our country, and without which we must depend on the charity of the world powers. This nation and this House are being presented with a *fait accompli*, with agreements whose contents were not made known to them and, I believe, without having received the power of attorney of this House to sign agreements with foreign governments which openly declared themselves to be our enemies. The same applies to discussions about agreements with foreign governments on economic matters and subjects concerning our territorial interests. These kinds of things should not be glossed over any longer, and this applies to all the party factions. I have no doubts about the good intentions of the government's representatives at the discussions, but I oppose their methods and their approach, the continuation of the method current during the time of the Mandate, the days of the Yishuv, and of “one more hectare”—secrecy and the dismissal of criticism.

Our army has had to fight for almost a year and a half. The expense has been immense. Precious forces have been wasted. Forgive me for saying so, but we have witnessed war-like episodes leading to the shedding of precious blood, while the military morale of our Jewish youngsters is at a high point, followed by the politics of self-restraint, truces, retreats and negotiations with intermediaries, which lowers this morale. This is the nature of things for every army in similar situations.

The Jewish nation is great in the world; it is educated and cultured and has proved itself in every sphere. But the nation which has attained its own state and defeated superior enemy forces, in the final event stands like a beggar at the door before the Beduin tribe from Transjordan, accepting insults from Beduin “colonels,” allowing its blood to be spilled and wasting its strength in truces, self-restraint and retreat, so that there does not appear to be any way out of this unfortunate situation. This conception is in contradiction to all logical considerations. It is as if we were dealing with hypnosis, from which it is difficult to free ourselves, as if we were accustomed to having shots fired at Tel Aviv from Salameh. Indeed, there is a continuation of the view and mood of Mandatory times, of “one more hectare.”

We have failed to rise to this moment, and primarily the leadership has not grown, not because of a lack of goodwill but because of the habits of the past. I said that the leadership has not grown, because the nation gave its sons and daughters unconditionally, with love, so that the na-

tion and the land might be redeemed. These sons have done more than was in their capacity to do. Although they were not educated towards military conquests, we could today, without exaggeration, had we been prepared in time, be in Transjordan, on the slopes of Lebanon, and on the approaches to the Nile. Instead of a groundless armistice, we could have obtained peace terms which were more favorable for us in every way. For that is the peace we pray for so fervently. If we had made full use of the opportunities which came our way and of our military successes we could have become a major civilizing force in this dark and desolate corner of the world.

The negotiations at Rhodes and the various stages of the U.N. mediation, which cannot be regarded as constructive negotiations leading to true peace, have become an unbearable trial, embodying a great deal of Jewish tragi-comedy.

A miracle happened: one day Israel's rulers departed, and it was objectively easy to take it. A great miracle occurred for an unfortunate nation. There were wonderful youngsters who were ready to do anything. But the miracle was wasted because of truces, the Rhodes agreement, etc. We could be masters of the country on both banks of the Jordan, free to undertake the building-up of the country on a large scale. Our behavior is the outcome of an inferiority complex. What does the physical concept of Transjordan mean? There is no Transjordanian people, there are desert tribes and an impoverished, hired king. And instead of disclosing this theatrical farce to the world, we are the foremost among those who wish to strengthen the view that a Transjordanian nation exists; we obscure the truth which is the exact opposite of this.

This is not a matter of pure sentiment and feelings. Every educated man knows that the economic conditions of existence are based on geographic circumstances and the country's borders. The Jewish population of Israel is not a territorial unit, neither geopolitically nor as regards the possibility of existing. This population cannot be static, it must be dynamic, necessarily bursting out of its restraints. That is why there is no point in all the proposals for plans within the existing borders. However correct the plans are from a theoretical point of view, they do not fit reality. Maintaining an army that is constantly at the ready in order to fulfill the prophecy: “By thy sword shall you live,” because of our disastrous borders is a practical impossibility. And as for those people who think the opposite, it is no wonder that they write in their papers about “marauders infiltrating,” clinging to the terms of self-restraint while snipers fire from the Hassan Beck mosque, because this is no mere case of robbery but a specific, planned act of harassment by a military foe who is near Tel Aviv, the seat of Parliament. This unfortunate view is as dangerous now as it was at the time of the Mandate for the fighting, bleeding nation as well as for our economy, which we seek to

nurture and develop, expand and strengthen. The aspiration for a "corridor" via Sheikh Jarrah to Mount Scopus, and a "network" of "U.N.-demilitarized lines" in the southern Negev leading to Beer-Tuviah, do not indicate a correct view of economic matters. Will the Cabinet come before the nation and its representatives in this House in order to receive its agreement or authorization for Mr. Bunch's far-reaching plans, to take into account the Beduin king's "great acuity," or to ask the advice of the representatives of the nation about a plan which could change political reality and expand our possibilities? Our first and most basic interest is Jerusalem above all. The solution to all the problems is there.

In speeches which have been made here Jerusalem has been referred to as an enclave. Well! Various suggestions have been made which are quite touching in their constructive mercy about taking care of Jerusalem, that storm-tossed ship. If the word Jerusalem is pronounced today it refers to those streets which lie beyond the walls of the true Jerusalem. That area has been given the name "New Jerusalem." I must point out, with your kind permission, that the correct term which should be used henceforth in this august institution is: the Jerusalem of the nation, which lies within the walls and contains the Temple Mount. What lies beyond the walls is the extension of Jerusalem. If we separate this whole area from the Jerusalem that lies inside the walls, it is worth as much as Motza, Kiryat Anavim and Ein Karem. These places also require budgets and encouragement and expansion, since they are part of our Land of Israel.

All the benefits and favors, enterprises and institutions which the Prime Minister and his distinguished colleagues have promised to transfer to "New Jerusalem," are all well and good; this is the same as encouraging Safed and Tiberias, which has also been promised by the Prime Minister in his address. And I believe that the Prime Minister has no favorites in this respect.

But the Prime Minister made no mention of the true Jerusalem, which is not only ancient and historic but also geographical and geopolitical. This "storm-tossed ship" was not mentioned in his speech, not even the fact that it has been given up. Because it is known that it has been given up. And the Knesset should be told why we should give up our true capital. Why is this necessary, what is the irresistible force that has caused this situation, forcing us to hand over Jerusalem? Who has more right to Jerusalem? The Members of the Knesset have the right to know who has directed our arms away from the walls of the city?

What force is it to which we are surrendering? I know that for many years non-believers placed obstacles in the path of those who loved Jerusalem and wished to adhere to it as regards political thought and yearning (there is such a thing!). We, and particularly the non-believers among us, declared: Jerusalem is sacred to three religions. Leaders

said this in all seriousness and teachers taught this to our youngsters. That saying is untrue! We saw and heard with what wicked facility sacred Jerusalem was handed over by Christianity to the Beduin. We also once held another mistaken view: that there was a sea of Gentiles around Jerusalem. This was also proven to be false, and reality revealed empty areas between the capital and its natural outlet, via Tel Aviv-Jaffa, to the sea. Tel Aviv and Jaffa are in the Jerusalem region, not in the Mandate's Lydda region. And despite the criterion on the ground, Jerusalem is a Mediterranean capital.

What is Abdullah's strength and right that we, the elected representatives of the people, must bow our heads before him and give him our capital? Or what is the hidden power which directs matters against us, forcing us to surrender our capital? Did we not drive the British out of our land by virtue of Jewish freedom fighters? What dangers threaten us if we decide not to give up our capital?

I say to you, surrendering Jerusalem involves far greater dangers than refusing to hand it over to foreigners.

The Cabinet is unintentionally bringing us towards a whirlpool of unavoidable bloodshed. It will be impossible to exist in a Jerusalem which starts at Zion Square and the Mandelbaum house. That's all there is to it. The haste and lack of responsibility (which is called careful thought) in this readiness to give Jerusalem up will make trouble for our young state and impede us as we take our first steps, undermining our very foundations. Another important question is what this will do to education....

I do not know if I am permitted to say that the Prime Minister should have told us who is to blame for the destruction of the true Jerusalem. Why was it not conquered? Whose fault is it that there were insufficient arms? Who gave the order not to capture it? The political leaders or the military ones? We have the right to know the reason for this disaster, the factors which caused it and the names of those who are responsible to us and to the generations to come. Who is to blame for the loss of Jerusalem?

As an elected body, this Cabinet is the first in Israel, but its method of government is not new. The Prime Minister uses the well-known method of hushing things up—possibly with regret in his heart and carrying on regardless. That is why I tell you from this podium and you know that things I have predicted have come true—that hushing up the surrender of the true Jerusalem is not to our benefit. This silence does not remain quiet—it shouts out at the top of its voice! It is impossible to remain silent and carry on regardless, even if everyone in this House keeps quiet and nobody raises his voice. The surrender of Jerusalem will be a pit at our feet into which all the real, or supposedly "realistic" programs and all the funds of the national loans will fall. No money or illusions will be able to conceal this gaping hole. The historic processes

which, in the course of generations, overcame external and spiritual obstacles, the blackening of our character and the distortion of concepts, bringing us to this point after a bloody revolt, lead the Jewish revolution to its destiny. Falsifying Jerusalem's name and transferring one or two institutions to Rehavia in "New Jerusalem" will not be sufficient to delay the process or change the destiny.

If the Cabinet does not undertake to lead the people directly to the final objective, namely, Jerusalem, the few grains of sand it will have to throw in people's eyes so that "New Jerusalem" will be accepted will not be enough to conceal the cavern that gapes at our feet, and at the feet of the young state at the beginning of its life, for whose welfare we pray and for whose establishment we have paid with the blood of our children.

The surrender of Jerusalem may lead us, heaven forbid, to a whirlpool of bloodshed and disasters, undermining all the foundations of the state's existence. One does not have to be a prophet to know that, every Jew feels the heavy cloud which hangs over this deed. That novel phrase, "New Jerusalem," which has been affixed to the state, is merely a cosmetic change. Even if the entire press and all of us here agree and applaud the annexation of New Jerusalem, that will not alter the substance of the unfortunate, historic act of the surrender; for true Jerusalem is only that which lies within the walls. The historical processes, which are nourished by deep sources, will not be changed by the celebrations in Tel Aviv regarding the upper area. The fear of the "final objective," which might lead to "complications," is the same as the fear of going in up to the hilt in the matter of Jerusalem.

We were a majority in the Land of Israel before the British left, and we are a majority even now in Jordan, on both banks of the river. There is a fear of stating this openly. We must be clear on this matter: by giving up ancient Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel we surrender an unequalled geo-political advantage, enabling the British to continue ruling the entire Land of Israel. The rule is that whoever rules Paris also rules Bordeaux; and whoever rules Jerusalem also rules Tel Aviv, not vice versa. If I am asked—do you have the monopoly on Jerusalem? I will answer yes! My colleagues and I now have the monopoly on all matters of state: the final objective is the Jewish state, war against the British oppressor and also a fight to the death for Jerusalem.

Sometimes a nation is in difficulties because of a military defeat or internal trouble leading to crises, and then the nation is obliged to make sacrifices, including territorial ones. These sacrifices always concern outlying areas, but no nation has ever, either willingly or unwillingly (through negotiations), surrendered its capital. How did we even consider discussing surrendering the Old City of Jerusalem? There has never been a single moment in our nation's history when we said we would surrender it. This is the fault of modern Samaria in the Sharon region, as in days of yore. Since the incident of the golden calf there has

not been a moment in which all the Jews were as united as on that night of dancing in Tel Aviv around the news of the dismemberment of our country and the surrender of Jerusalem. How did we not say to the representative of the French nation here: as a member of a nation that has experienced suffering, can you really suggest that we give up not only our Alsace-Lorraine within the borders of Israel but also our Paris? How did we fail to speak in those terms to the representative of Belgium? And how do we speak thus even with the Appeasement Commission, which treats us as a pedantic teacher does his young pupils? Jerusalem is ours. Those Gentiles know full well what Jerusalem is; in the eyes of the world Jerusalem is Jewish even if we did not rule it and were not the masters of its fate. Why did we allow this concept to be distorted against our own best interests, and why do we continue to do so?

We listen attentively when the subject of the holy places and the possibility of their being desecrated in any way by anyone of us is mentioned. But we do not say a word about what has been done to us in holy Jerusalem, in the most sacred place in all Israel. The world has the impression that whatever bad has been done in Israel has been done primarily by the Jews, that there are no holy places in Israel for the Jews, that we are mere invaders, that we are not the heirs of David and the prophets and that this was not the site of our kingdom.

We well remember one unfortunate Congress ("The Congress of Tears"), when our great leader, Herzl, who was the embodiment of Jerusalem and a true heir of David, raised the question of Uganda as a "refuge for the night," and how the foundations shook, how hearts trembled and how the delegates arose and swore: If I forget thee, O Jerusalem...when the entire issue of the Land of Israel was but a distant dream. That was Herzl's crime, although he cast a giant shadow still for many years after his death. And now the day has come when we are the majority in Jerusalem and Israel, when we have a state and a fine army and we could have taken back Jerusalem with the Temple Mount and all that is sacred within the walls, for ourselves and our descendants, in one stroke, with heroism. Our youngsters were willing and able to do it. But we did not take Jerusalem back, we even surrendered it, taking into consideration the fact that it contained sites that were sacred to others. We displayed "deep understanding," almost religiously exaggerated in its extent, for the fact that some sites were sacred to others, to foreigners, who claim that Jerusalem is theirs alone, and that we have no share in it. In this we are a disinterested party, almost anti-religious regarding ourselves. Count Bernadotte, a Christian, dared to suggest that we hand our holy Jerusalem over to Abdullah, thereby revealing what the true Christian feeling was for the city. Abdullah, that "wise ruler," understood that there is no such thing as a Transjordanian nation but whoever rules Jerusalem has the true preemi-

nence in the Arab world, because a Palestinian Jerusalem means more than Damascus, which is populated by Arabs.

Why do we not say, when the sanctity of Jerusalem is being discussed, that Mount Zion, the City of David and the site of David's grave are holy to us? Why should we abandon Mount Zion for "the square of the Zion Cinema," like advocates of Uganda without Jerusalem? Why should we have a state without Jerusalem? Our grieving hearts, not our intellects, should lead us to say: our forces may descend from Mount Zion tomorrow, because of "demilitarization" or an "agreement," and then, when the last Jewish soldier has left Mount Zion we will descend with the entire Jewish state to the coastal plain, one retreat leading to another, and to an everlasting catastrophe.

Because Jewish Jerusalem saves the coastal plain, the honor of the state and our lives. But Abdullah's Jerusalem within the walls (and there is no other Jerusalem) will rule our country in international terms. If Abdullah rules in Jerusalem, then Arab Palestine exists, and all we have is a temporary autonomous Jewish ghetto. And any harm—even the slightest—we do to Abdullah will not be directed against the Arab Legion but against a sovereign state.

In what way are we morally inferior when it comes to preserving the holy places in Jerusalem? In what way are we culturally subordinate, in terms of our civilization, to the Beduin of Transjordan, that he should rule Jerusalem and be charged with the knightly task of guarding all the holy places, even those of the Christians?

The problem of Jerusalem symbolizes the political conception of things in this country; if we surrender Jerusalem we may also give up the southern Negev. If we forego sacred Jerusalem and Hebron we also abandon the entire Etzion Bloc. And if there are holy sites in Jerusalem which we regard ourselves unfit to place under the control of our government, like any other sovereign country, there will be no end to this sort of thing. Lake Tiberias by Degania and the River Jordan are sacred; there is no spot in this "Palestine" which is not. Because of this, our country consists of sites which are not under our control. And we function in between these islands. What form do we think our sovereign state will take? It is time the world knew that the Land of Israel is no longer the "consular territory" that it was in the time of Abdul Hamid. And that with the conclusion of the British Mandate the entire area of the Land of Israel came under the rule of the liberated Israeli nation. If we have cemeteries and synagogues in foreign countries that does not mean that we demand extra-territorial rule over them there.

There is a legend that Jeremiah found some covered fingers set-

God before darkness comes and before your feet stumble on the mountains?"

I am not a prophet, but I have spoken the truth to Jerusalem and its inhabitants; and like that prophet who saw sorrows and said: "Did I not warn you?" I say—for half my life I have worked for this Jerusalem. Most of it has been said in the pioneering press of the Land of Israel. This is not new. Remember that Jerusalem is our chief problem, and contains all the solutions. Without it there is no redemption, our building is incomplete and there is no true freedom for our people. And in saying this I am not speaking only for myself, but for history and tradition.

For the historical genius of the nation, Jerusalem is everything. It is all the Land of Israel in one. This is also common sense, and plain cruel logic—the product of a political viewpoint—in a historical perspective. Any other viewpoint leads us to the abyss and servitude once more.

That is why I request that we make haste and convene a special sitting to discuss Jerusalem, that all the Members of this House may sit together in brotherly love and look on this matter with favor, so that we may be as united regarding Jerusalem as we were on the night of dancing around the golden calf of partition.

...

The Prime Minister's Reply

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset, I would first like to express my deep satisfaction—and I think we all share that feeling—at the way the members of the Knesset conducted the debate during these three days, and at the patience and mutual respect displayed by everyone.

This is an exceptional event, the like of which has never yet occurred in our history. For the first time the representatives of two nations, the Jewish and the Arab peoples, met here. At the Knesset sitting in Jerusalem we heard one of the Arab delegates, Amin Jarjoura, and here we heard MK Tewfik Toubi. Whether we agree with everything they said or not, we are proud that this is the manner in which we communicate.

I am sure that this is just the beginning, and that this meeting between the two nations will lead to others, so that we may work together in mutual understanding and respect, for the independence and fertilization of our country, for the advancement of the Jewish people.

the past, and so that it may once again illuminate the entire world and strengthen peace everywhere.

This is an exceptional event on an internal level too. For the first time the entire spectrum of Jewish public life is meeting here, representatives of every political party and stream who are as remote from one another as east is from west on the issues of religion, policy, social views, everything. They all sat—as I am sure they will continue to do in the future—in mutual respect, listening to one another, examining the content of the addresses and debating patiently with one another, whether they were in agreement or not. Many challenging things have been said here, but all the Knesset Members, without exception, on every side, evinced something which I hope will become a permanent fixture in the Knesset—patience and mutual respect in discussion.

This is not a Congress, which meets every two years and must cover all the issues in the world in a general debate. This is just the beginning of the sittings of the Knesset, which will be permanent, will meet frequently, and where it will be possible to discuss and clarify thousands of things which may or may not have been touched on here. Consequently, I do not consider myself obliged—and I hope the Members of the Knesset will not be displeased by this—to mention in this speech all the issues which the Members have raised. These are still early days. I am not side-stepping issues or slighting what has been said here. This sitting of the Knesset is devoted to one thing only—the composition of the Cabinet and the nature of its program, and to show our confidence, or lack of it, in these two matters....

Regarding what MK Tewfik Toubi said, I am pleased to note his support for Israel's struggle for independence, which is something quite unusual in our modern history here. I am also glad to note that he is concerned about the state's independence, perhaps even more than the members of the Cabinet, because one of his reasons for not placing his confidence in the Cabinet is his fear that they will not be sufficiently devoted to this independence and may surrender it for a mess of imperialist pottage.

I am always glad to hear that someone is at least as concerned as I am about something, especially if I have cause to believe that his concern is sincere. I cannot agree with his statement, however, that only reactionary Arab rulers impeded the establishment of the state. Those rulers received aid from Tewfik Toubi's party for a long time (I don't know if he himself was in the party then or not, I am speaking of the party in whose name he addressed this House), and also when they waged a war of terrorism against us in 1936 and 1937. To their credit I will add that it was not only his Arab colleagues in the party but also the Jewish ones who sanctioned the campaign of terror against us, even very recently....But when a committee appointed by the U.N. came here—sent not only by the imperialist countries but also by the U.S.S.R.

and comprising representatives from People's Democratic Republics too—and the Mufti boycotted it, Tewfik Toubi's party gave in and boycotted it too. This was not very helpful in finding a peaceful solution by the nations of the world, including the U.S.S.R., or in establishing two states in the Land of Israel.

MK Tewfik Toubi claims that the Cabinet's program does not contain anything about ameliorating the difficult conditions of the Arab population of Israel. That is not true. First, they have completely equal rights and obligations in everything—work, salaries and suffrage as well as all other social and political rights—and second, we aspire to raise the Arabs' standard of living to equal our own. This is not something that can be done overnight, but we intend to act constructively and gradually until it is achieved.

Tewfik Toubi also criticized the Cabinet's agreement to the annexation of the Arab part of the country by Farouk and Abdullah. There is no such agreement, as the Cabinet for whom you are being asked to vote today has not yet discussed this, and the Provisional Cabinet made no such decision. Mr. Toubi also complained that we have given up the idea of establishing an independent Arab state in the other half of our country. This, too, is unfounded. It is true that we did not undertake to establish an Arab Government, nor have we any intention of doing so, because we will not take it upon ourselves to set up a government of Tewfik Toubi's party, just as we would not agree to such a government in the Jewish state. Do not unto others what you would not have done to yourself.

MK Toubi does not agree to the existing Government of the State of Israel, and so we do not want to impose one like this on them. We would certainly not impose the Mufti's government on them, and altogether we do not agree with the anti-democratic idea that one nation should impose a government on another. We would not agree to the idea of Arabs from Nablus—even if they were from MK Toubi's party, from Mapam, the Sephardim or any other party—imposing a government on us. We will establish our government ourselves! If there is to be a government there—and I am not expressing my opinion on this now—it must be the work of the Arabs who live there. Because we believe in self-determination. We, at any rate, will fight for our own self-determination. And we recognize this right for others, when they have the right to a state.

I must also correct MK Toubi's mistaken view that we are within the Middle Eastern Bloc. We are in favor of a Jewish-Arab alliance, and I would like to know if MK Toubi is too. I'm afraid that the story about the Cabinet's alliance with the Middle Eastern Bloc originates with Mr. Toubi's Jewish colleagues. I would like to advise him not to listen to information about us from his colleagues, the Jewish communists. (S. Mikunis, M. Wilner: What's this? Incitement against the communists? Is this part of the loan? Of the hundred million dollars?) Don't

throw away the compliment you received in my opening remarks. (Mikunis: We don't want your compliments or your incitement.)

I heard the declarations made by MKs Friedman-Yellin and Menachem Begin to the effect that they do not want to join the coalition. I am glad to note that on this point, at least, we are in agreement. We don't want you either. (Laughter in the chamber.)

I have been asked (by MK Friedman-Yellin) what the distinction is between destructive and constructive forces. I regret to say that I cannot answer that question. Not because I have no answer or I do not take the question seriously. This is a very serious question and deserves to be discussed here, and may well be. But at the last meeting of the Constituent Assembly I proposed that amnesty be granted by the Cabinet, and this was passed unanimously, and I cannot morally discuss here issues which are affected by the amnesty. I do not want to raise questions about what happened in the past. We said what we had to at the time....

We heard a great deal about Jerusalem from the members of a party which calls itself "Herut founded by the Irgun Zvai Leumi." Unfortunately, for reasons beyond my control, I could not hear the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg's speech. I hope he will not be angry with me if I say that I prefer him as a poet than as a Knesset Member for Herut. But I heard the speech given by the leader of the party, Menachem Begin. I would like to tell him...that I, and many of us here, have heard the identical speech at almost every Congress from the Zionist, Meir Grossman. After hearing it I really cannot understand why the party split. Their speakers may be more knowledgeable than Grossman on the subject of Zionism, but the content of their discourse and their argumentation is no different, and this seems to be a case of *plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose*.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between us, not only on the matter of Jerusalem, but in everything. We don't put much faith in declarations and declamations, not even in great and sacred, historical and vital things like borders and the capital and the eternal city, etc. if they are not connected with some kind of day-to-day commitment involving hard work, and leading to the fulfillment of declamations. I know a little of what you did in Jerusalem before the IDF put an end to your armed dissension. I don't want to go too deeply into the past here either. But I must say that what you did then did not help to liberate Jerusalem. And we are not unaware of the fact, just as the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg is not, that we have not yet fulfilled the historic vision of the Jewish nation. We also realize that it is not so easy to fulfill it. And the little that has been achieved was the result of the hard work, sweat, blood and tears of seventy years.

I am not a prophet, and I cannot say how many years it will take until the vision is fully realized. But we are not of the view that flowery declamations will achieve this. And when our goal has not been at-

tained we are careful in what we say, and do not demand it of others, while expecting to be rewarded as if it were our achievement. I believe that something was done for Jerusalem when you were outside it. Something was done in the "Nachshon" campaign, which possibly constituted a turning-point in the liberation of the city, saving it from starvation and surrender. I know who was there, but I didn't see you there. I know of battles at Latrun, after the invasion, without which I do not know if Jerusalem would have been able to withstand incessant bombardment. And very much blood was shed there, by volunteers from abroad (Mahal) and our own soldiers. That was for Jerusalem. I know who was there and who was not. And I know something very prosaic—so that a historic or non-historic, eternal or non-eternal, place can serve as a country's capital, there has to be access to it. But there was no access, and access is not achieved by declamations, not even by good or bad poems, but, simply, a road has to be built, not merely with sweat, but with blood too. And it was built. I saw the fighters whose blood was shed for that road, and I saw the workers who brought food on their shoulders down that road, which is called "Burma." I know who was there, and who was not.

We think that economic, political and settlement conditions must be prepared for a capital, even if it is not eternal, but especially if it is. An economic and military effort is required, and it is being made. I don't know when it will be finished, but when it is the Jewish people will know. That is why we did not give our program in great detail; not because Jerusalem is less important to us than it is to poets and speech-makers, but because we take this subject seriously. And I sincerely hope we manage to achieve the little we intend to. Whether it is our capital or not, Jerusalem is part of the State of Israel. As far as we are concerned there is no difference between the status of Jerusalem and that of any other part of our state. We do not mind if it does not have international recognition. Other parts of the State of Israel do not have it either. We will make an effort to obtain it, though I do not know if we will be successful or not. We need help from above, as my colleague, Rabbi Levin, says. But I doubt whether these declamations help us in that.

We also heard that we surrendered and abandoned positions which our forces gained at a high price: Auja-Hafir and Rafah. I cannot discuss that subject now, because the Cabinet for which you will be asked to vote has not yet dealt with it. It was dealt with by the Provisional Cabinet, and I am proud to have participated in it and to have shared responsibility in that issue. What we did there was decided on unanimously, with the exception of one member, and all the members of the Cabinet were present. The time will come when this matter will be revealed to the Knesset, but some things cannot yet be made public. All I can say is that if the Provisional Cabinet had done nothing else except this, which

someone called "Brest-Litovsk," it will have secured its position in Jewish history, because of its political and ethical value.

...I have been asked about the equality of women as regards rights and duties....I know, for example, that in Jewish religious law women do not have to put on phylacteries, and our program does not intend to oblige them to do so. Rabbinical-religious matters do not concern us here. The equality of rights and obligations which we mentioned, and on which we will shortly be tabling a motion, will require every man and woman, and every Jewish, Moslem and Christian court, to recognize that women are equal in everything, in rights and obligations, in matters of inheritance and alimony, before the law, and in every way. There must be no legal discrimination between the sexes. I have been asked about matters of personal status, which do not concern women only, I think. This Cabinet is not prepared to introduce a law concerning civil marriage and divorce, because at this time it could cause a rift within the Jewish nation. We feel that we must give preference to issues which are of greater importance, such as immigration, housing and settlement, leaving that serious dispute for another time....On behalf of the party to which I belong, I would like to say that we would adopt this stand even if the religious parties were in the opposition, because we do not think that this is the right time to solve these problems.

...
I have been asked about the dietary laws (*kashrut*). Our answer is in our program. There is to be no compulsion. The practice we have adopted in the army will apply to the state, and for the same reasons....Wherever the state sets up a kitchen, it will observe the dietary laws, so that every Jew may eat there. Anyone who will not eat kosher food on principle, will not be forced to do so.

I have also been asked about the streams in education and the schools. I believe that our program gives our policy in detail, and I hope that anyone who can read will do so, for I'm sure that everyone in this House can read, just as anyone who wants to can obscure and confuse issues. In this instance I do not agree with those whom I represent, so we will continue to have different streams in education, with one small change, all schools without exception...will be required to teach a minimal amount of certain subjects, as outlined in our program. I have always opposed the streams and continue to do so, but I am pleased that we have managed to introduce this minimum, because it ensures that at least there will be some basic, common ground.

Rabbi Kahane has complained of the fact that I failed to mention our

I heard what MKs Mikunis, Preminger, Ya'ari and Friedma Yellin said, and all of them said virtually the same things, except on one subject. This led me to wonder why they do not all form one party. Since I know these people not only from their speeches in the Knesset but know the reason why. I know them from their deeds outside the Knesset and I know why one side has no interest whatsoever in being in the coalition and the other has.

This brings me to my main point: the composition, character and program of the Cabinet. When I spoke prior to the elections, as well as in my broadcast on behalf of my colleagues afterwards, I said that we wanted to establish a Cabinet which will gather together all the constructive forces, from Mapam to the General Zionists; I did not encounter any opposition to this principle in any of these parties. Some were more ardent, some less enthusiastic, but there was no out-and-out opposition to the idea. If those two parties have remained outside the coalition, no one in the world is sorrier about it than I am. In this matter I was given a difficult task by the President, and perhaps even more so by the elections results. I know that I have failed, perhaps because I lack the necessary ability, but I wanted to establish a broad coalition. I did, however, make myself one condition...I did not want to betray the wishes of the voters or to harm the vital interests of the state. I particularly regret the fact that the party which is close to me, with which we have worked in harness outside the Knesset, is not in the coalition. I also regret the fact that four of my colleagues, the representatives of two parties, who worked alongside me in the Provisional Cabinet, are not in the new Cabinet. Although the Provisional Cabinet functioned for only nine months, and nine months are very little in the history of a nation as old as ours, I think that in our history there never were nine months like those. People who worked together then cannot part from one another lightly, whether for political reasons or for personal ones. In the Provisional Cabinet we had differences of opinion, sometimes very serious ones, but we were partners and that is why it is difficult to go our separate ways, especially those two who have worked with me for so many years in the movement and the Histadrut, and with whom I will continue to work until my dying day.

Let me explain briefly why things did not work out as I had hoped they would....The General Zionists made three demands which, as a public servant, I could not accept. They abandoned one of them as soon as I flatly rejected it, but they would not abandon the other two. First of all, they wanted the Cabinet's program to contain a clause rejecting the implementation of socialism, since it opposes the fulfillment of Zionism. I did not agree with that. The second demand was that the

tion can be annulled by a two-thirds majority, but not that it can be approved. I do not wish to analyze the reasons for this demand...but I told them that I could not accede to it. Their third, and, I think, main, demand was that they should have two Cabinet posts. I asked them how many posts they thought there would be altogether. "Twelve or fifteen," they replied. "If you want two for yourselves, how many do you give to Mapam?" I asked. "Three," they said. Sapir gave the reasons for this here in the Knesset, though he did not tell me that at the time. He maintained that they "do not represent (only) 22,000 voters, but also some of those who voted for Mapai and Ben-Gurion." I said to him: Even if your reasons were justified, I know Mapai and Mapam, and they won't accept that demand. You represent 22,000 voters, and you want Mapam, which represents 64,000 voters, to get only half as much again as you. That is acceptable neither to Mapam nor to my party, and without those two parties I do not see any possibility of forming a coalition. If we go according to the proportions received by the parties the Cabinet will have to have at least 25 members,—2 General Zionists, 5 or 5 1/2 Mapam, 14 Mapai, at least 4 Religious Front and 1 Sephardi (Serlin: One doesn't form a coalition on the basis of a party key), nor according to the key you propose (S. Persitz: the proposal goes according to importance). But we differ in attributing importance. And I didn't accept that condition, because everyone is equal at the polls. I know that there are differences between people...but on election day everyone has only one vote...

We have heard it said here that our platform does not satisfy the General Zionists, who are concerned about private capital and initiative. I repeat here what I said then, and I am glad to be able to say this in this forum: we will encourage private property and initiative. I don't need to be reminded of the importance of Petah Tikva by MK Sapir. Neither of us were there (when it was founded) and at labor assemblies I also speak about the strikes and tell them that if we have pioneers and workers, and they have rights, it all pales beside the initiative and courage of the people from Jerusalem and Hungary who founded Petah Tikva. To this day I cannot grasp how those people, the Stampfer and Raab families, could establish a Jewish village when there was no Zionist movement or Jewish settlement movement, or anything. The encouragement of private capital and initiative is our concern as Zionists, and MK Sapir may be surprised to hear this, as may several MKs, but it is also our concern as socialists who want to build up a large-scale industrial enterprise in this country, for the sake of the workers. For I believe that our nation will be one of workers, and for this end private capital and initiative must be encouraged.

Our main task today, and for many years to come, however, is the ingathering of the exiles. And this is not anybody's monopoly. It is as much ours as it is yours, MK Sapir, and we will take care of it faithfully and to the best of our undoubtedly limited capabilities. And something

has already been done by us in this sphere. But if someone tries to arouse mistrust in us, I am not sure that he will succeed. The first loan for the Zionist Organization was not obtained by financiers from your circle but by the workers. A member of the British Cabinet, the former Governor-General of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, who was appointed chairman of the Finance Committee, reached the conclusion that the Zionist Organization would not be given a loan, whereupon a representative of the Histadrut went to London and obtained a loan. And Mapam did not oppose this or have any suspicions about it.

MK Sapir also fears that immigration will become emigration as a result of dependence and servitude to parties and their mechanisms. Well, because of those fears, we have become what we have become. That is the vision of our socialist society, that immigrants will not be dependent on or enslaved by anyone. I am glad that you share our concern, but on this question you can trust us a little, though we would prefer it if you were by our side.

...Certain MKs have asked why our program does not deal with high schools and universities, and why we did not say anything about other subjects. There are a million and one important issues which we have not mentioned. We addressed those which seemed to us to constitute the necessary minimum and to be the most crucial. We may have put in too little or too much...We want to implement what there is in our program. I hope that we succeed, and the Jewish people will be fortunate even if the little that the program contains will be implemented within these four years. I am not absolutely convinced that it will be implemented in full, as I said at the beginning of my speech. If that little—doubling our population, establishing irrigation projects, fortifying Jerusalem, introducing legislation regarding labor and women's rights, providing general education for Jewish and Arab children and protecting the rights of working mothers, as well as fighting the rising cost of living, etc., etc.—is achieved, I humbly submit that that is sufficient for the workers of the country and the Jewish people in general. The heading of the program was "Guidelines," and there was no call for MKs to say that it contained either too much or too little.

Someone said that the Defense Section is unclear. Of course it is, and rightly so. MK Idelson said that this is so that the Minister of Defense can do as he pleases, adding: "as he did when he dissolved Palmah headquarters without consulting anyone." My question is: was anyone asked when Palmah headquarters was established within the IDF? I don't recall that the Cabinet, the Provisional Council of State, the Ministry of Defense or even the Histadrut were consulted; consequently I see no cause for complaining that something which was established without anyone in authority being consulted, was dissolved. Nobody in the IDF was asked about it, I did not have the authority to do so, and I do not know who established it. (A. Zisling: Haganah high command

established it with the approval of the Zionist Organization.) I hope you receive the floor in the Cabinet to speak about that; I will speak according to the notes I have made. The IDF did not authorize those two institutions, because they did not exist within it.

But that section is deliberately vague for reasons which should be clear to all the Members of this House, since I am not interested in conveying information to the enemy. There is, however, another restriction: "as will be determined by law," and only the Knesset can make the laws; the relevant details will be revealed to the Knesset when the time comes. I want to assure this House that this section was kept brief not because we do not know what to do; at any rate, your humble servant has a plan, which he has submitted to the Cabinet, and everything will fall into place in due course.

I have explained why, unfortunately, the General Zionists are not in the coalition. Now I will dwell briefly on a subject which I find as regrettable as anyone else here, the fact that Mapam is not in the coalition. In both instances we had discussions on general issues. My impression is that what caused things to break down was the question of Cabinet posts. Our last meeting, from which the Mapam representatives emerged with the decision not to join the coalition, focused solely on that subject, although in the course of it we did touch on other matters, some of which I will mention here because they are vital. (Y. Ben-Aharon: Why don't you attend to the Prime Minister's honor?) Leave that concern to me.

MK Ya'ari's contentions overlapped somewhat with MK Sapir's. He also does not speak solely on behalf of the 64,000 voters who elected him, but also on behalf of the 162,000 voters who elected us. He was not given a mandate to do this. If they didn't vote for Mapam, it's not because that party didn't want them. I can testify that Mapam made a concerted effort—not without either talent or financial expenditure—to woo those voters, but they would not respond. They had the choice of voting for Mapam, but they did not. So I would like to ask MK Ya'ari not to speak in their name. I very much wanted his 64,000 voters to vote for me and my colleagues, but they didn't, and I don't have the right to speak in their name. We live in a country where there are free elections, and not under a regime—which may be ideal—where there is only one party. Our voters are given the freedom to choose for whom they will vote. Only a certain number—no more, no less—voted for you; you may speak on their behalf, but kindly allow us to speak on behalf of those who voted for us. And even if you don't allow us to, we will.

We do not put forward people as candidates and say: vote for these people and give them *carte blanche*. We propose a way, and say: choose that way, and if you vote for us, we will take it together. That is how we speak on behalf of our voters. And we will not budge from that path even if we remain on our own. (I. Idelson: Why did you invite us? To take

your way?) I will only answer questions that have been asked previously, not those that are raised now. MK Ya'ari has said that both parties—Mapam and Mapai—have in fact failed. (M. Ya'ari: They were not fully successful.) I regret the fact that Mapai wasn't fully successful, and I think that it causes great harm to the state. Mapai thinks that a state needs a stable majority, especially this state, which is like a storm-tossed boat, and needs someone to steer its course wisely and well. We failed in that. Ya'ari attaches himself to our failure. I don't know where they've failed, since they weren't looking for a majority. (M. Ya'ari: We wanted more votes.) And he draws political and sociological conclusions from this, saying: because we've both failed, we're both in distress, and he speaks in their name and makes demands on us, and wants us to commit ourselves on behalf of everybody. That is why I say, we don't merely put forward candidates, but a way, and we did not invent this way just before the elections, nor do we forget it the next day. This is the path we have been taking for the past 45 years. We took it in those nine historic months, and we will continue to take it. We do not think that we have failed in our path; quite the contrary, we think that that path has been of great benefit to the workers and the nation alike, and we will not abandon it. I do not accept MK Ya'ari's theory that because we have failed and they have failed we should adopt the middle way: you abandon half of your program, we'll abandon half of ours and we'll meet in the middle. No. We can't do that. And I doubt whether you can either. Ya'ari's second mistake was to think our failure is comparable with theirs.

MK Ya'ari tells my colleagues and myself that we are not Marxists or scientific socialists, whereas he is, and can therefore analyze everything from a scientific-socialist point of view. I'm surprised that he seems to have forgotten his scientific Marxism. He did not attempt to analyze what happened here. It is true that we failed, but not everywhere. According to his terminology, the population of the country is divided into two groups: workers and bourgeois. And we did not fail among the workers. We received the majority we had asked them to give us. They realized that this is the way, and gave us the mandate. We didn't ask for, nor did we dream of getting, one hundred percent. We asked for a stable majority. We know that in its present condition the country can't be one hundred percent in agreement; it would be disastrous and artificial if this were to happen. But we asked for a majority, and the workers of Israel gave it to us. We did not fail among the workers. We failed among the bourgeoisie. They didn't give us their majority. Their votes, which we thought they should give to us, went to Mapam—at least the 16,000 outside the Histadrut, which is the difference between the votes Mapam received in the Knesset and the Histadrut elections. They gave their votes, unnecessarily in my view, to the Herut list. And many of them gave theirs unnecessarily to the United Reli-

gious Front and other lists. But that is their will. We did not fail, therefore, among the workers. But you failed with both of them—the workers and the bourgeoisie. You received small amounts of votes from both groups. If you adopt the attitude that it is the workers who determine things, they also determined things as far as you are concerned. The majority of the working public gave us their vote, and we will be faithful to that path and that majority.

We have been told that this Cabinet is a coalition with clericalists. That may be a sin, but if it is, I confess to it. We have committed that sin, and have no intention of renouncing it. That sin is not newly ours, and I don't know why it has only just been discovered. We have been sitting in this clerical-right wing-reformist coalition for fifteen years in the Zionist Executive. It would be difficult to say that this coalition has not done anything, that we have not done anything, during the last fifteen years. Something has been done, and it is a blessing to the entire Jewish people, as well as to the Jewish worker. This clerical-reformist-right wing coalition has done a great deal for immigration, settlement, and education as well as for the establishment of the Jewish state. And the Jewish worker was not hindered thereby, but helped. And as a result of that coalition, during the last fifteen years the Jewish worker has become a leading force in the state. Consequently, if I am accused of the terrible crime of being in a "clerical coalition," I am not unduly alarmed.

One thing I don't understand. I believe we sat in that clerical-right wing coalition together with Mapam in the Provisional Cabinet. That clericalism, those same three representatives of Jewish clericalism, Rabbi Fishman, Rabbi Lewin and Moshe Shapira, sat with Mapam in the Provisional Cabinet, although then we also had the bourgeois right, which is not here any longer. Mapam has no reason to regret it, and it can forever be proud of its part in that Provisional Cabinet of the clerical-right wing coalition....They could claim that this coalition is good provided it has a majority of workers or socialists. But the Provisional Cabinet did not have a majority of this kind! There is a majority of workers only now, in this Cabinet...(I count the Mizrahi party as workers), so that even though we were a minority, they were still prepared to be in the Provisional Cabinet....So what is all this fuss about?

But they sat in a clerical-right wing coalition not only in the Provisional Cabinet. I fought against Revisionism no less than anyone in Mapam, and the Revisionists quite rightly won't forgive me for that. I didn't even use the word "Fascist" against them, though they took it for themselves; a column in one of their papers was called "From a Fascist's Notebook," and was written by one of the chief staffers of their paper *Herut*. I don't need that bogey; for me the word Revisionist is sufficient to fight against—and I have. So much so that once, the only time in my life, I even went abroad to conduct the election campaign for the

(Zionist) Congress. That was at a time when reaction was on the rise in the world, and there was a danger that the Revisionists would conquer the Zionist Organization. So I went to Poland and Latvia and Lithuania to conduct the campaign against them. And then there was a change: instead of 20,000 votes, our movement received 110,000 votes. That was when, I think, the power of Revisionism within the Zionist movement was broken.

I was also responsible for averting the danger to the State of Israel presented by the Altalena. (A. Ben-Eliezer: A very grave responsibility!) A responsibility of which I'm proud! (A. Zisling: Someone put you up to it!) I'll get to that too, Member of the Knesset and the Provisional Cabinet Zisling, who put whom up to it. I also had a share in putting an end to the armed insurrection in Jerusalem. And the person who tried to prevent this was not a clericalist but in fact the most rabid anti-clericalist in the Provisional Cabinet, someone who fought clericalism far more than the members of Mapai did, because they have other, more important, things to deal with; and despite him, that battle was fought, by that clerical-right wing coalition. And it was also approved by the Provisional Council of State, with three dissenting votes, even though there was no labor majority there. Three Cabinet Members threatened to resign, and did so, but this did not deter us, and we did the job. So it is not so easy, comrades, to frighten me with these bogeys.

We had problems not only with those whom you call clericalists. When we decided in the Executive of the Jewish Agency to fight against the IZL, the main person who tried to prevent this was Moshe Sneh, a member of your party faction (who was then a member of the Zionist Executive)...But this did not deter us.

What are you trying to frighten me with, you who sit in a clerical-fascist coalition in the Zionist Executive, which doesn't have a socialist majority? I have always opposed a coalition with the Revisionists. (Shouts from Mapam: Apart from the agreement with the Revisionists!) That was for the good of the workers. But you sit in a fascist-clerical coalition (H. Rubin: Because of you! You wouldn't have us without the Revisionists!)—that's the difference between us. You won't force me to do something against my will. So don't threaten us or intimidate us! (Moshe Sneh: You sent me the cable not to harm the IZL!)—That's another thing I can't go into here; if there'll be a need for it one day, I will. (G. Meyer: Moshe Sneh, Don't threaten us with publication! Moshe Sneh: Don't stress that point too much.) It's not so easy to frighten me. So, don't condemn us for cooperating with the clerical right wing. I say this not because I need your approval, things that you don't approve of may be acceptable to me, and this has happened in the past. We'll come back to them later on in the discussion. You didn't approve of the Jewish state either, and that didn't frighten me. But it's strange that you sit in a clerical-fascist coalition and raise this outcry. No one will believe that

this is the reason, and rightly so. We sat in that coalition for fifteen years, and no one dominated us or changed us...and that is a fact.

We have been told that this Cabinet will fail. This may be true. I'm afraid that it will fail, not because of its composition but because the task we have set ourselves is superhuman. We have been asked why we did not prepare a joint program with Mapam. Because we have one with our voters. We are committed to our election platform. Ya'ari claimed that first we made a program with the clericalists, and only then went to Mapam. That's not true!...Our program was published before the elections, and was accessible to everyone. Of course we wanted to sit with all our partners....And if there were no common ground, we would not be together. Naturally, there isn't full agreement on everything, and we have to make compromises. (Shouts from the Mapam benches.) We sometimes compromise too much with you, perhaps....We have known one another for fifty years in the Zionist movement. There were "revolutionaries" among us who regarded each session of the Zionist Congress as a betrayal of the proletariat, because the JNF and the Congress are tools of the bourgeoisie. I'm glad that we do not bear that remark any more. Everyone has shifted to the right, if that was the left. But we will not abandon our principles, and if need be, we will establish a government without you.

And finally, they brought out the big guns and said: "you are reformists and we are revolutionaries."...I don't know why MK Ya'ari has to go as far as Italy and frighten me with Saragat, whom I've never heard of. But I do know who we are, and what we fought for, and why....

When it comes to names, you can call us anything you like. A rose by any name....Call us reformists, if you think it accurately represents what we have achieved in this country in the last forty years—the conquest of labor, the establishment of the army in the War of Independence, etc.—then I'm proud to be a reformist. If all the labor movements in the world were like us, the world would be a better place.

We don't think that ours is the only approach. We know that others achieved things before we arrived on the scene. It may have been little, but it required far greater spiritual strength than the large-scale achievements we have chalked up. Because they started from scratch. We are not unaware of what the farmers did, and what people like Sheinkin, Bezalel Yaffe, Ussishkin, the builders of Tel Aviv, the founders of private industry, and someone like Rutenberg, etc. did. I will not mention them all. And I say this, MK Sapir, not only here but I also said it at workers' meetings before the elections to the Histadrut. Because I wanted them to know that we are not the only ones who have built the country, both in the past and now! We need the aid of the entire Jewish nation, including private capital, and I bless every Jew who builds a factory here. But there is a danger of speculation in houses and rents, and the government must intervene....We are not the only ones

here, but we are not ashamed of what we have achieved as builders and fighters, and if that definition isn't enough for MKs Ya'ari and Idelson, let them call themselves revolutionaries—I have no need of that epithet. Though I would like to know, for example, what revolution MKs Hazan and Idelson have achieved in this country?...There is only one way in which they differ from us; they applaud one of the Great Powers, which has certainly had some fine achievements, and we do not....What I would like to know is in what way the Mapai workers and pioneers are inferior to those of Mapam? (Shouts: No one said that! Shame!)...What makes you think you have the monopoly on building the country?

I know that there are many things you fought for and we did not. You fought for a bi-national state and we did not. That is your revolution, which you have abandoned. For years you fought for international trusteeship, ruled by America, the U.S.S.R. and England, and we did not; and you abandoned that idea too. So what is your revolution? You fought to establish an Arab state alongside ours, and we did not....We want to work with you at least as much as you do with us, remaining faithful to our mandate, and you say: "You have to fail!" We may fail, but why do we have to? Because you are not with us? We don't want to do anything without you, but in fact we already have. I know every man jack of you, and I know that we fought for Jewish labor without you; that wasn't your fault, because you weren't here yet then; we established Hashomer without you; we set up the first communal settlement here without you; the first cooperative without you; the Jewish Battalion in the First World War without you; the labor union without you; and we fought to establish the state without you. I would have liked to do those things together, but if it wasn't possible, we did them on our own. It was hard, but that's no reason to fail!

We work with everyone as an equal. People who have worked with us know this, and I have worked in a great many places, with a great many people, in low and high positions, and always as equals. But if someone gets too big for his boots, we'll put him in his place! So don't try to belittle us by taking all kinds of titles for yourselves. I don't really know how what you have done differs from what we have done....And don't tell us—it doesn't matter what we do here, what matters is what is done in the workshop and the field. You're talking to people who have worked in the workshop and the field no less than you. But this place, which people have hoped for for years, is important too, and you quite rightly invested a lot of effort in getting into this House. You say that you developed solidarity among the workers. I don't know about that. And I didn't see it in Ya'ari's speech. Is that how one develops the solidarity of the workers? Is that how one speaks to the representatives of tens of thousands of soldiers who fought in the Negev, Jerusalem and in Galilee? Is that how one speaks to the representatives of 30 percent of the

factory workers? Of course, not all the work is done here. But so that fields can be ploughed, factories operated, schools kept open and battles won, we need independence, and it is concentrated here, in this sovereign body of the State of Israel.

I hope that in future, after the Cabinet has received your confidence, or not, as the case may be, discussions will focus on the matter in hand, on the program, and not on vague concepts. Instead of throwing unfounded accusations around, you should tell us what your program is and what is wrong with ours in each particular area, and not try to frighten us! Neither with epithets nor with failure! We haven't yet been alarmed by our opponents, neither from within nor from without, neither Bevin nor the invading armies, not even the boycott of Jewish labor by Tewfik Toubi's party, so why should MK Ya'ari try to intimidate us and blacken our name? (Shouts: Not true!)

We had two arguments which were to the point, namely, about foreign policy and the army. I did not say much about foreign policy, as I said that we would continue with the mixture as before. But in the debate I was accused of having glossed over it, so I will answer that Ya'ari said that if our foreign policy is neutral—and he supports neutrality—then “our participation is the only guarantee of that policy.” It's a surprise to me to hear that your foreign policy is neutral. That doesn't appear in your platform or your articles or your speeches. You are in favor of condemning and declaring war—a cold war of course—on one side, and heaping unjustified praise on the other....That's not what we call neutrality. No one is stopping anyone from identifying with whomever they want, but the question is, what is the foreign policy of the State of Israel? It is not...for us to decide what the regime of any other country should be, just as we don't want anyone to make that decision for us. We will be grateful to whoever helps us, whether it is by speeches, arms or money. Every country has its own reasons for whatever policy it adopts. That is our policy. And foreign policy is very necessary for us at this time....If we make enemies of one side or another, we are lost. It doesn't matter if you call it neutrality. We rejected your foreign policy, and the nation decided to do so too. That is where we stand, and we will not budge....

The other argument was about a united army. I would not insist on it if I thought we would not need it in the future. We don't want to argue about the past...but our long-term security is a crucial issue for the State of Israel. If there is war, we need an army. It could be ten years until there is a war, but six months or one month of war is enough if we are not prepared. And then we will be lost. The state can be defended only if the entire nation knows it is a full partner in our defense, and if the army is of the people and is under one authority alone, the Cabinet. I think that it undermines the army if a campaign is conducted to discredit it, and if all the victories and successes are attributed to only one unit. I am ap-

prehensive about our security because of that....No one unit has a monopoly on heroism, all of them shed their blood for our cause....

We will not abandon those two principles—foreign policy and the army—even if it means that someone, even ourselves, has to be outside the Cabinet. That is for the Knesset to decide today. And if the Cabinet is approved today, it will have to make an effort to ensure that those who are not included in it, whether because of posts or other reasons, have some role to play. If that succeeds, it will be to the benefit of all of us, not because otherwise the Cabinet will fail, but because then our forces will be greater.

Allow me to say a few personal words. Anyone who has lived in this country has gone through difficult times, but I have never experienced a period as hard as the 14th of May. Not because I didn't know whether we should proclaim our independence or not—I didn't have the slightest doubt about that. But it was obvious to me that this would lead to war, and that in order to conduct a war and defend ourselves we had to have a state. I explained that at the Executive Committee meeting in April. For me that day—which was a day of rejoicing in Tel Aviv, and in the whole country, and throughout the world—was also one of great anxiety. Because I knew that we were facing the greatest danger in our history: invasion by foreign armies. And while everyone was celebrating the news of the establishment of our state, I went with a heavy heart to meet our military leaders and we heard the dreaded news of the invasion—from the south, the east and the north. I expected enemy aircraft to appear in our skies at any moment, and I knew that we had nothing to defend ourselves with. I stand before you today with as much awe and trembling as I did then. We all want the ingathering of the exiles, but I don't know if everyone of us realizes how much sacrifice will be demanded of him in order to achieve this. We all want the Negev to be ours, and one day we will be able to recount the deeds of valor which led to its being in our hands, but it will not be ours, not even with the U.N.'s approval, if we can't settle hundreds of thousands of people there. And anyone who supports us in the U.N. or anywhere else, but does not give us the Jews we require in order to settle the Negev, unwittingly completes Bevin's task. I know that this is not his intention, but it is a fact that by declarations alone the Negev will never be ours, and that we must fill it with people.

For several years I have been troubled by the question that has bothered me since the time of Hitler; one which the Zionist movement has never known before—whence will we take the people we need for the fulfillment of Zionism? That was our first problem, which is now being solved. We are bringing our brethren here, as we have always dreamed we would. But now there is another problem: we have to house them, settle them and imbue them with the ethic of work and the love of the land. That cannot be done by thousands of kiosks or stores. That is my great-

est fear. It is no empty phrase to say "there's no choice." It's true the Jewish people doesn't have any choice, because who will accept responsibility for the 70-80,000 Jews of Egypt, 70,000 Jews of Aden, 100,000 Jews of Persia and other countries? Who will guarantee that they'll still be alive in another 20 years?...This is not a "business," where one can weigh profit and loss; this is the saving of the nation's life. Immediately! Does one calculate profit and loss in war?...We made a supreme effort, and raised the money! The question of immigration is no less important than the war. I'm not sure that the war won't break out again suddenly, that is the way of wars, regardless of who is the Cabinet....We have to be able to mobilize the public, utilize every last resource we have, and raise funds abroad, in order to build homes for the hundreds of thousands of immigrants. We need all the help we can get from the Jewish people, and from non-Jews too. And that can't be obtained if we quarrel amongst ourselves and are ungrateful. We also need a little humility. We can't allow ourselves to fight against the world, what we can do is to create an exemplary life, which will be a light unto the nations.

...I am not a soldier or an economist or a scientist, but I think that the man who heads the Cabinet must be able to get the nation to work for the task which history has given us....There is only one way, and I know that the majority in this House seeks the same end as I do. That is why we can have a wide coalition, even if there are differences between us, for at this time it is vital that we stand together. Over and above all, we need proud, independent Jews who are self-reliant and willing to work. We will put our modest power to work to achieve this aim, and we ask you to approve our program and express your confidence in this Cabinet.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: I give the floor to MK Grabowski.

M. Grabowski (Mapai): I propose that the Knesset accepts the following proposal: The Knesset has readily heard the program of the Cabinet formed by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, and expresses its confidence in this Cabinet.

...
(The vote is taken, on the basis of a roll-call vote.)

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: By 73 votes to 45, the First Knesset of the Jewish people has expressed its confidence in the Cabinet formed by David Ben-Gurion, and has approved its program. (Lengthy applause.)

American Credit Loan

Sitting 7 of the First Knesset

8 March 1949 (7 Adar 5709)

Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 4:08 p.m.

The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of bringing before the Knesset a proposal to authorize the Minister of Finance or his representative to sign agreements with the Export-Import Bank of Washington, an institution of the United States, for credit amounting to a sum no greater than one hundred million dollars, and to sign promissory notes in connection with this credit.

I had the privilege of bringing before the Council of State the information about the decision of the Export-Import Bank of Washington to grant the State of Israel credit of one hundred million dollars for development and economic progress. I used that opportunity to thank the people and institutions which had helped us receive that credit, on behalf of the Cabinet.

The Provisional Cabinet charged me with going to the U.S. in order to conclude the negotiations and make the necessary agreements for the implementation of the loan. I have the honor of informing the Knesset officially that the first agreement, to the amount of thirty-five million dollars for the development of agriculture and settlement, has been signed. An agreement has been drawn up in principle regarding the distribution of the remaining sixty-five million dollars to the major branches of the economy: twenty million dollars to industry; twenty-five million dollars to construction; and twenty million dollars to developing transportation and traffic. We have submitted detailed plans for approximately twenty million dollars in addition to the sum devoted to agriculture—for activities in industry, transportation and construction, and these loans have been agreed upon. We will have to submit detailed plans to the bank regarding the remaining forty million dollars.

I propose that the Knesset appoint a limited committee which can discuss the details of the program, and so I will simply make a few general remarks.

The credit of one hundred million dollars is being given for the implementation of development plans in various economic fields. According to the regulations of the Export-Import Bank, we are obliged to spend that money in the U.S.A. for purchasing items, materials and machinery, and we may also use it to cover the costs of transportation from the U.S.A. to Israel.

Thus, this loan can finance only part of the expenditure on the development plans. In our discussions with the Bank we submitted all the plans we wish to implement through the loan, as follows: the 35 million dollars for agriculture will require a development and settlement plan of 90-100 million dollars. Consequently, 35 million dollars represent only one-third of the amount we will have to raise.

The main aims of the section on agriculture are: to establish 6,500 new farming units and to implement seven regional irrigation projects enabling these farms to be set up, to be followed by additional settlement; to rehabilitate citriculture, both by mechanization and by expanding irrigation; to reinforce existing mixed farming to some extent.

In the sphere of industry we suggested to the Bank, and reached an agreement, that the loans which do not exceed a certain amount will be given in Israel through our banks, on their responsibility and on the responsibility of the Cabinet. If there are proposals concerning the expansion of industry or the establishment of new plants which require large loans, we will have to submit these proposals for the approval of the Export-Import Bank, in accordance with standard practice.

In the area of transportation and traffic, our intention is first of all to improve government services: the telephone and telegraph services, both within the country and to countries abroad; as well as improving the ports, and sea and air transport. A certain amount, which I hope will be approved within the next few weeks, will be devoted to improving motor and public transport in Israel.

In the sphere of construction, the intention is to build apartment blocks, to purchase equipment for public works, and to construct public buildings connected with expanding the Jewish population and increasing immigration.

This loan will be given to the Cabinet, which will then have to transfer the loans to the various branches, borrowers, at its responsibility.

The Cabinet will be responsible not only for repaying the money of the loan, but also for the implementation of the comprehensive development programs, as I have tried to outline them here.

The Cabinet shall be empowered to establish a special institution or institutions for dealing with these loans, or to use existing financial institutions, or those belonging to the Jewish population or settlement authorities, or to give these loans directly through government institutions, in each sphere of the economy. The appropriate Ministry will be responsible for approving the programs and supervizing their implementation. The overall supervision will be the task of the Treasury.

In order to implement this loan and maintain the link between us and the Bank, we will have to establish a supply institution or committee in the U.S.A. to which we will convey all the proposals which we approve here. But the tasks of that institution will be primarily those of the supervision and coordination of orders. Only to a limited extent, inas-

much as this is connected with the Cabinet's orders, will the supply institution be one in the accepted sense of the word. The other borrowers will be free—under Government supervision—to organize purchases as they wish, and in the way they find appropriate.

The loan will be given for a period of approximately fifteen years. For the first three years after the contracts are signed we will only have to pay the interest. After that, in the following years, we will have to pay both the interest and the amortization of the capital. The interest is at the rate of three and a half percent.

The contract we are signing is a standard one, both in its sections and in its aims, like loan contracts the Bank signs with other countries. I think that we can note that if changes have been made in the contract with us, this has been done out of a belief in our state and in its ability to implement the development plans, as we have submitted them. In this sense, there are changes which are to our benefit.

The clarifications were conducted officially only with the Bank's administration and its senior employees, but several representatives of the U.S. Department of State participated in some of the meetings. In them we dealt very extensively with our economic plans, but we discussed only the economic activity of our Government, our taxation, customs and currency control policy, and the extent to which these could influence our ability to make payments, our trade balance and the balance of payments.

In these discussions we clarified the matter together with the Bank from several viewpoints, focusing on our proposals in the light of their economic effect on development and the absorption of immigrants, and whether this would increase or reduce foreign currency income. As you have seen, the plans which were submitted embrace all the major economic branches as well as various areas throughout the country.

We wish to discuss the loans we are considering giving institutions and individuals from these viewpoints, and primarily from that of economic efficiency.

In my opinion, this loan is of the utmost importance because it enables us to embark on a series of development programs in various spheres, and without it this would be vastly more difficult. I must repeat once more, however, that in order to implement the plans we will have to raise additional funds, sometimes double or even treble as much again. We will have to raise extremely large sums, of many millions of pounds, in order to cover the costs of the labor and the materials in Israel, as well as to order additional materials from abroad. This loan of one hundred million dollars can nevertheless serve as a point of support and departure for starting our schemes for agriculture, new settlements, industry and construction, in both town and country.

I also regard this loan as an expression of faith in the state's economic capacity and stability. In this respect I regard the loan as the start

of the mobilization of both Government and private means in the diaspora. This loan is a demonstration of faith, and it will help us greatly in the huge task of raising enormous amounts which faces us. When we make our calculations we realize that it is necessary to raise vast amounts in order to develop the country and absorb immigrants.

I propose that the Knesset approve the order authorizing the Ministry of Finance to act in the matter of the loan. As soon as the Knesset approves this loan and authorizes its representatives to act, we can start using the money of the loan to order the goods, implements and machinery we need for agriculture, industry and other areas.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: In accordance with the request expressed by the Standing Committee that the factions and delegates be enabled to study the material submitted by the Provisional Prime Minister, so that an orderly debate may be held, we will interrupt the sitting until 8 p.m.

The sitting concluded at 5:25 p.m.

Sitting 13 of the First Knesset

17 March 1949 (16 Adar 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 4:00 p.m.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will proceed to the agenda for this sitting: the loan from the American Export-Import Bank. At the Knesset sitting an ad hoc committee for dealing with this matter was appointed, and brought its proposals before the Knesset. According to the procedures which will be adopted, a bill will be brought before the Knesset and a general debate will be held on it. After the debate the bill will be brought before a committee, and the Knesset will then discuss the committee's conclusions. This time, however, there will be no general debate. The matter went straight to the committee, although it is possible that we will hold a preliminary debate, if the Knesset so desires. That is its right. I assume, however, that most of the members of the Knesset have expressed their opinion in the committee. Some of them expressed their reservations, or opposed it. I will ask the plenum whether to discuss the matter. (I. Idelson: I request that all the Knesset Members be given the text, or texts, of the two contracts which the Minister of Finance has already signed on behalf of the Government of Israel, so that we may discuss something which has already been signed, not only in general but also in practical terms.) A special committee was chosen to check the contracts. I don't know if all the contracts have to be brought before the plenum. That's something new. I'll ask the plenum if it demands a debate. (The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: Before the report?) It can be after the report. Who supports the demand for a debate? (The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: I propose that we hear the report first, and then hold

the debate.) I accept Mr. Kaplan's suggestion. I give the floor to the speaker on behalf of the Loan Committee, MK P. Naftali.

P. Naftali (Chairman, American Loan Committee): Distinguished Knesset Members! On behalf of the special committee I propose that the Knesset approve the American Credit bill before us. This proposal was passed by the committee by a large majority, with one vote against and four abstentions.

The committee heard additional details from the Minister of Finance, beyond his address to the Knesset, regarding the programs connected with the American credit of one hundred million dollars. It heard the full version of the first agreement concerning credit of 35 million dollars for agriculture. Naturally, the agreement reflects the interests of both the lender and the borrower. The Minister of Finance told us that it is not customary to publicize the full texts of agreements made with the Bank. During the discussion it was stressed, however, that this credit is not linked to any political conditions. The second agreement is for credit of six million dollars for purchasing means of transportation, and it is ready for signing in Washington.

The committee regards the receipt of this credit from the Export-Import Bank of Washington, the official bank of America, as an important and favorable first step for the State of Israel in the area of the receipt of international aid. The committee recognizes the importance of this credit as one of the means required for fulfilling the important task ahead of us in the development of the Israeli economy and the large-scale absorption of immigration.

The bill which awaits your approval today will facilitate the receipt of credit by the State of Israel. It was not within the scope of this committee to discuss ways of implementation, the distribution of credit and the determination of conditions. These questions will be discussed by one of the Knesset's permanent committees. The committee regards the contents of the bill which it is presenting for your approval today as being the successful outcome of negotiations begun by the Provisional Cabinet, with the approval of all its participants. Committee members Repetor and Ben-Eliezer have the right to express their reservations. Committee member Mikunis will explain his opposition to the proposal.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: The question has been raised whether the contracts will be brought before the plenum for debate. I think that the Minister of Finance should answer that.

The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: It is not the question of approving a contract which is on the agenda but of passing a law. The only contract in my possession was brought before the committee and read out to it paragraph by paragraph, and all the members of the committee heard it. The other contracts are along the same lines. Since the contract will only be part of the law, and because it is not customary—and the com-

mittee agreed to this—to bring contracts between a bank and the Government which are not up for approval before this House, I do not think that the contracts should be brought before the House.

I. Idelson (Mapam): I want to explain why the entire contract should be submitted to us.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: You have received an answer: contracts of this kind are not brought before the House; we are ignoring that question.

I. Idelson (Mapam): I am making my proposal to the House, not to the Minister of Finance, and I want to explain to the House why the contract should and must be brought before the House.

The matter appears simple. The Minister of Finance has laid a bill before us which speaks about granting approval, *carte blanche*, albeit within the bounds of a specific sum, in connection with certain negotiations with a particular bank. All these are things which are fulfilled practically at a later stage through signed formulae. We know, moreover, that a contract has already been signed concerning one of the sections of this amount, at least 35 million, and, I think, another six million. I assume also that any general discussion which cannot rely on clear knowledge of the details and under which conditions the loan is given, does not enable us to answer the general question.

It has been said that there are no political conditions. If there are no special political conditions, why can't the contracts be published? Is it forbidden to publish commercial conditions? And if the contract really does contain something which indicates that there are quite difficult political conditions, it is essential that all the members of this House know about it. If it is desired that things should be kept secret—and I see no reason for this—I will propose having a closed sitting of the House, so that each representative will be fully apprized of all the details of the matter before voting, and will not act merely on the basis of the general routine given by the Minister of Finance and the representative of the committee.

Consequently, I propose that we decide to request that every member of the House be given a copy of the text, so that we can read it in detail and know exactly if there are conditions, and what they are, whether they are commercial or political, and what they are.

The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: I have explained that more than twenty Knesset Members know the details. It was for that purpose that the committee was formed, and they could, and did, hear each and every paragraph, and discussed them at length. In the general debate they will explain what they have to explain. All the party factions participated in the Committee, even one which has only one representative.

...
The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: You have heard the Minister of Finance's statement. We will vote on Mr. Idelson's proposal. (The vote is taken.) Mr. Idelson's proposal is rejected by a large majority. We will now proceed to the reservations. I give the floor to MK Repetor.

B. Repetor (Mapam): I hereby submit Mapam's proposals as an amendment to the Foreign Credit bill proposed by the majority in the committee:

1. The Government of Israel shall be authorized to conduct negotiations on behalf of the State of Israel with banks in America and other countries to receive a loan for development purposes, without conditions which are politically or economically oppressive.

2. Each and every contract proposed for the loan shall be brought before the Knesset in full detail, for debate and approval before it is signed.

3. a. The Minister of Finance shall be authorized to sign the loan contracts on behalf of the State of Israel after they have been approved by the Knesset, as well as the documents and promissory notes connected with the loans.

b. The Minister of Finance shall be authorized to sign these documents himself, or through representatives abroad, who are appointed by him in writing under his hand.

4. The Minister of Finance shall be responsible for the implementation of this law.

I would now like to give our reasons for this proposal:

When the Minister of Finance announced the possibility of our receiving the American loan in the amount of one hundred million dollars, and informed us of the decision of the Export-Import Bank, which implements the loan, to grant for the moment only the sum of 35 million dollars we asked the Minister of Finance, the Finance Committee of the Provisional Council of State and the President of the State to hold a debate in the Provisional Council of State on the loan and the circumstances and conditions connected with it. This proposal was rejected and the negotiations were conducted by the Minister of Finance without the decisions of the Provisional Council of State, and I also doubt whether the Provisional Cabinet discussed the question of the loan in all its details.

We are in favor of the foreign loans in principle, and regard them as an additional vehicle for raising money from the Jewish population of the country and the Jewish nation abroad for funding the great tasks we must undertake at this time of the ingathering of the exiles, the dimensions of which are dependent on undertakings in settlement, agriculture, industry and construction, in development and in work on a large scale.

Our approval in principle cannot, however, cause us to forget our serious fears about accepting the loan from the Export-Import Bank, which is an agent of the Government of the United States, and implements its policy. We remember when the loan was first promised to us and how it disappeared in defined political circumstances, and the chance of fulfilling it was lost. We cannot ignore the fact that the loan is being given in sections, through advances, and on known dates. The political reasons for the allocation of the loan by the U.S. increase our fears for our economic independence and our awareness of tendencies to oppress our undertaking and our state.

We have suggested in the past that a general debate be held on the loan in order to clarify to what extent the proposal of the Export-Import Bank contains political, economic and financial conditions which embody the danger of economic dependence and political servitude. We also wanted to establish a precedent preventing the signing of an international contract, even if it is a financial one, solely on the basis of the power of attorney, thereby obliging the Cabinet to bring the proposed contract before the parliamentary forum, which could accept or reject it. We also proposed this in the concrete instance of the loan when our representatives were in the Cabinet. We were not satisfied with an interrupted and inadequate debate because we feared the heavy burden of any loan, no matter how easy its terms and because we do not think it is enough to give the Minister of Finance the power of attorney if the contracts do not adequately guarantee our economic and financial independence.

The Minister of Finance's address to the Knesset and his explanations to the Loan Committee have not allayed our fears that this loan has political strings attached to it. Who knows what it really contains apart from what is in its formal sections?

I regard Section 12 concerning the loan for agriculture, which has already been signed, with great trepidation. The fact that a section of this nature is also accepted by other countries makes matters harder, not easier. Section 12 determines, in effect, that the State of Israel will, at the bank's request, have to provide it will full information about our economic affairs every three months, and this will also apply to every department or agency of the United States Government. Section 12 concerns the level of internal prices, the index of salaries and our national budget, the money supply, commercial interest rates, the income from Government stocks, foreign currency exchange rates, regulations controlling imports and exchanges, the gold and foreign currency reserves maintained by the Government and individuals, the existing and estimated future situation of the balance of payments, the state of our international investments and the status of our foreign debts. Section 12 also stresses that it will be possible to examine other aspects of Israel's economy in connection with its ability to defray its debts should the Bank

make a reasonable request. Section 12 also emphasizes the fact that the information and data will be given in as detailed a form as possible and not on the basis of estimates. Can we really treat this section with equanimity? We think that Section 12 justifies our apprehensions concerning the intentions of those who are granting the loan, as well as the Cabinet's desire or ability to discern their true nature.

If the State of Israel conducts negotiations for a loan in conditions such as these, it is certainly justified that the highest institution of the land should have its say, since it has grave implications for the development of new economic and industrial enterprises and the growth of our undertaking. What is currently happening in other countries reveals how foreign interests repress their independence in the spheres of industry, construction and other economic branches, sometimes implementing their own plans under the guise of generosity. We want the entire Knesset to discuss each case, approve the details and grant the power of attorney. We are convinced that our amendment reflects the State of Israel's need for economic and financial independence, and I hereby propose that it be brought before the Knesset.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Knesset, we regard the loan—as we do any financial effort undertaken for the development of the state—in a positive way, and we will support every financial effort of this kind made by the Cabinet or by the entire nation. What is regrettable of course is the fact that in connection with the loan the Treasury, both in the Knesset and in the committee, mentioned the financial pressure, the urgency of the situation and the need to reach an immediate decision. This is not a question of a specific loan, it is a matter of principle. The Knesset must not merely be presented with the fact that the contract has been signed; it must be given the opportunity of holding a general debate beforehand. The Knesset should express its opinion, as is necessary in any case, and particularly when the issue is so serious and vital. In this instance there is another reason: the loan under discussion should be regarded as a budget which the Cabinet is bringing before the Knesset. It would be unthinkable to present the Knesset with a budget without enabling it to discuss how and in what way it will be spent, and to which channels the Cabinet's money will be directed. In this matter we were presented with a *fait accompli*, which is regrettable and should be discussed. Although the American bank requires that the entire sum be approved and clear-cut plans submitted by the Cabinet, the money—in this case one hundred million dollars—cannot be distributed in the way that has been proposed here...without any control of any kind....Consequently, when the Finance Minister proposed that the Credit Loan be approved, the representatives of the Herut party faction in the Standing Committee demanded that a special committee be set up to deal not only with the contract and its conditions, but also to ensure that the way the loan is distributed should be discussed in

an extensive debate in the Knesset plenum, or at least in the appropriate Knesset Committee. To our great regret only a committee charged solely with approving the loan was formed. It is naturally difficult to vote for or against Israel's first loan, just as it is difficult to vote for or against any budget, without knowing on what and how it is to be spent, and without knowing who will be responsible for it, who will spend the money. That is why we raised the question in that special committee and asked for an assurance from the Minister of Finance as well as from the committee on which we were sitting that together with the approval of the Credit Law, the Knesset would also decide to set up a Finance Committee. This would be the permanent Finance Committee of the Knesset, or a special committee whose task it would be to discuss in what way this loan would be implemented.

We were assured by the Minister of Finance, and the entire committee agreed to this, that this committee would be established, and that this would be done at this sitting.

Naturally there are other questions about the loan. The facts are very strange. For example, the first contract, for 35 million dollars for agriculture—35 million dollars which the Cabinet has signed for—will one day be handed over to an institution which is neither national nor governmental, since the Provisional Cabinet decided once that it is not the Cabinet which deals with settlement affairs, but the Jewish Agency. The question has therefore been asked what guarantee there is that the Jewish Agency, which has received a mandate from the Cabinet of Israel to deal with settlement, will discharge its task without discriminating against any Israeli citizen who wants to settle on the land and make it fertile? What guarantee is there that the same old questions of (party) key and color won't arise there? What guarantee is there that the Agency won't say: we settle only people who are in the Zionist Organization, for example, or who are represented in the Jewish Agency? And if this is the situation as regards the loan, which was taken in the name of the Government of Israel, or by it in the name of all its citizens, certain persons or bodies may find themselves facing discrimination in the sphere of settlement.

It is also regrettable that despite the Minister of Finance's promise that a special committee would be set up to discuss the spending of the loan money, we see...that delegations are already in the U.S., dealing with purchasing material and implementing the objectives for which the loan was supposedly taken. We know, for example, of a Jewish Agency delegation which is buying equipment for agriculture, as well as...one for citriculture and...one for transportation. On the other hand, we are told that we are appointing a committee which will deal with the expenditure of the money. That is why it is essential that this committee be appointed—still today by the Knesset, and that all the arrangements made to date by the Provisional Cabinet about implement-

ing the loan should be discussed anew by the Knesset's Finance Committee.

Among the explanations the Minister of Finance gave us in the committee there were some other things which worried us. For example, in the sphere of industry loans will be granted to existing plants, but what about the hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of plants which are to be set up in Israel by the manpower of the new immigrants and other forces?...And how and in what way will the money be distributed to the economic sectors in Israel? It cannot be denied that there is a tradition of giving rights and benefits to certain groups, and placing obstacles in the way of others.

What guarantee is there that this money will be divided first of all within the collective sector in an appropriate fashion, and secondly that it will be shared between this sector and private initiative? Both...these sectors are essential for the establishment of the regime and our economic development here in Israel. And what about the sector...which has devoted itself solely to achieving national independence...the people who gave years of their lives to...the concentration camps and the prisons...without whom our existence today would be questionable...and who want to ensure that they participate in full in what some of you call "constructive undertakings"....

The question remains, who if not this House will guarantee (M. Wilner: Truman will guarantee!) that the loan taken in the name of Israel and its population will not be transferred to the various sectors, and that every economic body in Israel will be entitled to benefit from it while at the same time contributing to our economic progress? That is why I propose, in view of the Minister of Finance's assurance about establishing a committee, that this Knesset sitting should decide immediately to set up a committee to discuss the way in which the loan is to be spent. I also propose that the bill be amended to state that the Minister of Finance is empowered to sign any contract connected with the loan if it has been approved by the Knesset committee authorized to discuss it.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, I must protest the anti-democratic way in which matters were brought before this House in a completed form. I must protest the fact that as regards the loan of one hundred million dollars, which the tax-payers will have to pay for many years, at the rate of millions of dollars per year, the matter is brought before the Knesset for its approval without any prior debate as to the loan itself and its details. I don't think that this is correct procedure, or that this can help to rally public support in Israel and...obtain its approval. This kind of procedure only makes people give their support because of the necessity of bearing the national burden.

We know that our country faces immense tasks in the sphere of economic development in order to absorb massive immigration, to further settlement, to populate the Negev and to develop industry extensively.

We know that these things require the mobilization of a great deal of capital, and that this has to be found among capitalists in Israel as well as among the Jewish people abroad, who have demonstrated their generosity in the past few years and who deserve the gratitude of us all. It also has to be achieved through standard economic and commercial ties with all the countries of the world with which we have and will have ties.

The loan is one of the ways by which development and absorption plans can be implemented. The question is only what should the loan be and which loan can further these programs, rather than the reverse. A loan of this kind must be linked to a specific interest rate, and must be able to be spent on the borrowers' needs and in accordance with their interests.

The proposed loan...does not fall into the category of regular commercial loans, with a regular commercial interest rate. In the contract...there are sections and subsections whose aim is to enslave the economy of our country, and facilitate America's political intervention in our state. Thus, in discussing this loan we must take its true character and content into account. The supposedly dry sections of this loan indicate that this is no regular loan, and that we are not free to do what we want with it or act in accordance with our interests.

The American loan which is offered us can barely be called a loan; it is credit for fifteen years. We don't get money in our hand! We get merchandise and materials. (From the floor: Isn't that money?) I know that it's money, but it's not a loan, it's credit given by the American Export-Import Bank, which is a state bank, not for the first time or to the first country, to finance American exports and expand American markets throughout the world, not in order to provide us with the freedom of action we require.

...We must transport these goods only in American ships and insure them with American companies...This loan binds us to the high prices of American goods, preventing us from making cheaper and better purchases in other countries...

This loan is in effect a one-sided commercial agreement...We receive American exports without America receiving ours. Our "payment" will come in the form of dollars, which we will have to repay at the rate of ten million dollars a year for twelve years, after the first three years in which we will only pay the interest. This loan is really an American concession in Israel. Through this loan America receives a concession for which we, not America, pay with the compound interest of economic and political bondage.

The content of this loan is not appropriate for us, and was apparently determined neither by us nor by the American Government, but by the bank giving the loan. The development plan is not suitable for our need to develop the absorption of immigration. We know from the experience of the last twenty years that however important settlement and agricul-

ture are, it is industrial development which enabled and enables large numbers of immigrants to be absorbed. We also know that only 20 percent of this loan is to be devoted to industrial development. The American Export-Import Bank, which is a state bank, is not interested in the industrial development of our country. Like the economic policies of the Mandate, the American bank is also interested in monoculture; it wants a backward, agricultural country. It is no coincidence that 10 million of the first 35 million dollars for agriculture are devoted to citriculture. Without casting aspersions on citriculture, I would like to point out that the British government also encouraged this branch in our country, because it is associated with low wages and because a country of orchards and agriculture provides a market for exports from the imperialist metropolis.

This loan increases the parasitism of the capitalist economy in Israel. This loan is being used as a substitute to finding other, democratic ways, which would benefit the nation. This loan is used, even though it is known that some of the materials we will receive from America, and pay for with precious dollars, could be manufactured here, giving employment to thousands of people. Not all the pipes have to be made of steel. Large areas can be irrigated using concrete pipes, which could be made here...We know that building plans require the approval of the bank, and there is a danger that it will propose prefabricated buildings, whereas we could employ thousands of people in the preparation of bricks...and the expansion of our construction industry.

Apart from all this, there are other conditions in the loan contract. The bank can approve or reject plans (because detailed plans have to be submitted to it for every little thing) in the area of construction and industry, which accounts for forty million of the one hundred million dollars of the loan. We have reason to fear that when we submit plans for industrial development which do not accord with American export interests, the bank will not approve them...

This isn't everything. The Americans are demanding not only the detailed plans of the branches of industry which we want to develop—agriculture, construction, transportation and manufacturing—but also plans regarding all those economic branches whose development is connected with the hundred million. They want to see all our plans for developing our country, claiming, of course, that they want to examine their efficiency and the ability of the institutions concerned to do their job and repay the loan. We know that this is just for official purposes. They simply want to know our entire development plan, the entire network of our economic tools. They are entitled to examine and check plans and demand that we submit regular and detailed reports...every three months.

Naturally, there will also be delegations from the bank; an official delegation of the Truman government, observers, technicians and ad-

visers will poke their noses wherever they want to be involved. We should also note that in this way...Messers. Harriman and Hoffman, the U.S. representatives in Western Europe under the Marshall Plan, became the economic dictators of those countries.

There are other bad sections in this loan contract. We are asked to give extensive reports in the area of our country's economic and financial endeavor; it can also be assumed, in accordance with the experience of other countries, that we will also be required to expose all our internal affairs to that state bank. The question of foreign currency has already been mentioned here. We will have to give a report on our foreign trade, our gold reserves, salaries, price levels, our national and public budget, our international investments and debts, in brief, everything. They want to take Israel over completely. In more simple terms, this is a loan of political servitude, a loan which contradicts the sovereign nature of our state, a loan which aims at maintaining Israel in a condition of economic inferiority, a loan which involves American intervention in our entire economic and financial network. And in even simpler terms, American economic and financial espionage in Israel....

The immediate effect of this loan—I don't want to make any predictions about the future—was to banish the left from the Cabinet. People may console themselves by saying that it was Ben-Gurion's stubbornness, or personality, but no! It is connected with the American loan. The Americans don't want Mapam in the Cabinet of Israel (laughter in the chamber). The fact that the Cabinet has swung to the right, that the center of gravity of the coalition has shifted rightwards, is the initial influence of the American loan. Ben-Gurion's declaration that the U.S.S.R. helped us only with speeches is also the effect of the American loan, as is the passage in the Cabinet's program concerning a so-called Jewish-Arab alliance, which constitutes a "Middle East Bloc."

That is why this loan is politically damaging and endangers the sovereignty of the state. It involves distancing ourselves from friends and harnessing ourselves to the Anglo-Saxon wagon.

The practical value of this loan is lightweight in comparison with our large expenses and needs, as well as with the amounts we receive from the Jewish people in the world. For the last year a great deal of fuss had been made about this miracle which has happened to us and the American government's friendship towards us. All this fuss is needed to conceal the enslaving nature of the loan.

We are not at the end of the earth, we are at its navel, and it is still worth our while to note what has occurred in other, larger, richer, stronger nations in the wake of similar loans, classical, typical loans, as recently as 1948, when eight Western European countries demanded that American exports to their countries be reduced by ten percent. That is, the representatives of Marshall governments, confronted with the

destruction of their countries' economies, asked that American imports be reduced. We see there a rise in the cost of living, a decline in the standard of living, mass unemployment—four times as large as in 1947 in France last year—the restriction of national branches of the economy and political intervention. That is the result in Italy, France and other countries. The crises there deepen and expand with every new American loan.

It must be made clear that this loan is one detail of an overall American plan, supposedly intended to help backward areas of the Middle East. It is one detail of a plan designed to impose American capitalism in the Middle East. This loan is the first serious step towards the inclusion of the State of Israel in the network of the American colonies.

We will agree to any loan and any economic and commercial ties with any country on the basis of equality and mutual respect for sovereignty. Independence and freedom are the most precious things in the world. We think that a concerted effort must be made to mobilize means within the country and among the Jewish people for development and for the absorption of large scale immigration. In order to preserve our independence, to encourage development and immigration, to protect the interests of the working class and the masses in Israel, and for Israel's peace, security and future, we oppose the American bondage loan.

...

M. Sneh (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, when the Knesset debates began the Speaker announced...that every bill would have three readings. If that is the case, what an infirm creature this one is. The first reading was cancelled, the second took place in committee and the third one will not take place. The Knesset is being asked to decide without being able to clarify the pros and cons. I gather that the Cabinet's majority in the Knesset is assured, but I do not think that it is correct parliamentary procedure to use this majority to cut free debate short, at least in those subjects and areas which are accepted throughout the world and are self-evident.

That is why I am requesting that the second reading be conducted now...so that a minimum of parliamentary behavior may be observed.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): I have the impression that two problems are being confused here. One is the debate on the reservations. These were expressed in the committee....The other is the general debate. This would be inappropriate now, because a general debate has already been held...and because this is not in accordance with our procedural regulations. No decision has as yet been made about the need for three readings....Consequently, we should limit ourselves merely to discussing the reservations.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: After having heard the arguments for and against a general debate, we will vote on it.

(The vote is taken; it is decided to hold a general debate.)

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: In accordance with the procedural regulations, I declare that the debate shall be for one and a half hours. Each speaker will have nine minutes.

Z. Yehuda (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, there is no doubt that the proposal laid before us is deficient on two points. First, the loan is late. Anyone who knows the situation in Israel, who bears in his heart responsibility for the tens of thousands of immigrants arriving each month, and who is charged with providing them with work, a home, and a grip on life on the one hand, and on the other sees to what extent our economic capacity today enables us to undertake the responsibility for these immigrants, cannot but agree with me that the great disadvantage of this loan is that it is late.

The second disadvantage of the loan is that it is small. Anyone who has recently travelled from the north to the south of Israel, after the success of our army, has seen what danger confronts us in that the vast areas which we conquered with the blood of our sons, instead of benefiting the inhabitants of the country, remain desolate and in need of willing hands, which are there but we are unable to give them ploughs or tractors. We are unable to bring water there for irrigation so that these tracts may blossom, so that there is no alternative but to agree with me that the loan is too little and too late.

Three kinds of complaints have been voiced here:

a. From MK Berl Repetor, who criticizes section 12. Anyone who takes things seriously, and genuinely reads what is written there, can understand nothing other than that even if that section did not exist in the contract we would act in accordance with a wide system of publication, since ours is a democratic country. Not a democracy along the lines advocated by MK Mikunis, but in the form to which we are accustomed; it is inconceivable that in our country there will not be statistical publications and economic reports issued by the government, and anyone who wants to find out anything can do so—as we do today—by reading in any daily or evening newspaper about our currency circulation what we intend to do and what we are doing. We do not as yet have an official source of information, which will undoubtedly be established in the near future, and we sometimes receive imprecise information. If there was a statistical service under the Mandate, there will certainly be one under our own rule, and then...everyone will know exactly what we are doing here, what paths of development we are taking and what our situation is. We have no interest in concealing this, because whatever we do we wish to do openly.

What section 12 says is simply that whatever we do should be to our benefit.

The Herut representative, MK Ben-Eliezer, does not complain about the sections themselves, but is terrified that "this state" will find ways of discriminating against his brave voters who were so busy fighting for Israel's freedom that they did not have enough time to donate to the JNF or lift a finger for the redemption of the land. The only thing he is worried about is that they will be badly treated. Member of the Knesset Ben-Eliezer, to the best of my knowledge neither you nor the members of your party faction have yet been given any cause to doubt us. Wherever an IZL settlement group appeared the Jewish Agency, which builds the country still today, and the JNF, made sure that it would receive the necessary land and funds, both in Kfar Temkin and in Mishmar Hayarden (there were also negotiations regarding a third place). Would that you also had bodies which desired to be constructive. We would give them every possible assistance, as we have done till now with every settlement organization that has appeared. To our regret, these were very few and far between in your ranks.

MK Mikunis is full of fears about the fact that we are supposedly being sold to Anglo-American imperialism. This is a one-sided loan. That is certainly true. Does he want us to give America a loan too, so that everything will be balanced? I would also like to reach a stage where we could give loans to other countries. We have not reached that point, regrettably. This is a one-sided loan because we need a loan and because no other country is offering us one. If you, MK Mikunis, can bring us offers no worse than this one I think that the State of Israel would agree to accept them....For, as we have said, this loan can't supply all our needs, not even a large proportion of them...in order to build up the country and ingather our exiles.

Is there a grain of truth in what MK Mikunis said about our receiving materials which delay Israel's development? Did not MK Mikunis sit on that committee which heard details about the way this money was to be used from the Minister of Finance? Has he not heard about the development of the seven regions, the water areas, at various corners of the country? Where will we channel that water—to America? What land will we redeem with it—the land of America or the land of Israel?

I. Rokeah (General Zionists): Distinguished Knesset Members, we are not really ready for an extensive and exhaustive discussion of this important issue. I am sorry that the Minister of Finance enabled us to receive the details of the loan only through the members of the committee. Those members of the Knesset who are not in the committee could not obtain the details from the committee members until the last moment. I would advise the Minister of Finance, out of experience and friendship, that in future he should send—even in a shortened version—the agreement to the Knesset Members, apart from the secret sections, so that they

can study them and know what it is they are talking about when it comes to the debate. I don't see anything wrong with elected representatives of the public knowing the form, program and financial details of the contract before the public does.

There is no doubt that every loan involves a certain amount of bondage. Those institutions which have received loans know that a loan limits their freedom of action to a limited degree. I hope, and I rely on the Ministry of Finance, that there is no political bondage in the loan contract with the American Export-Import Bank.

I have several requests regarding the economic aspect. First of all, I would like to state that I and my colleagues and the public we represent approve of this loan. I regret the fact that the credit has not been given as cash. I also regret the fact that funds were granted only to profitable undertakings, i.e., to self-supporting enterprises. But what about the many needs of the schools, the need to build hospitals and large undertakings, which are not profitable but are no less essential than others? I cannot imagine that just at this time of massive immigration only profitable enterprises can be built, without dealing immediately and in a parallel way with kindergartens, schools, hospitals and clinics, which it is the state's or the local authority's task to provide. I do not think that the securities of the state or the local authorities are any less valid than those of some profitable private enterprise. If this is possible, I would suggest that this amendment be appended to those sums which we have not yet received. I would also like to see us having a freer hand with regard to using the loan money, so that we should not be restricted by such detailed analyses according to the lender's wishes. I would also like to know if the loan could be repaid in Israel pounds. I know that there have been cases like this regarding American loans....In 1923 Tel Aviv received an American loan, and today we are receiving a second such loan. It was a huge sum in those days: seventy-five thousand pounds. And Israel repaid it in Israeli currency, not American. I attach great economic and political importance to this. I also propose that with regard to new and old enterprises the Government's regular commercial channels be used as far as possible, rather than seeking other ways whereby to purchase the goods and transport them here.

I regret to say that this bill is too brief for one hundred million dollars...and I would propose inserting several paragraphs. I have prepared loan bills in my time and I propose inserting amendments which would determine the interest we would be required to pay and the number of years within which we would have to repay the debt, rather than doing this haphazardly. We should know how much to pay, at what interest and over how many years. I would also propose that general details be given and the objectives of the loan be included in the bill. This is common practice in the world, and it is also better that the Knesset should know approximately for what purposes the money will be used.

Finally, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, in my name and in those of my colleagues, to issue an official pronouncement to the effect that the distribution of the loan money will be brought before this House for approval of all its details before it is implemented.

M. Sneh (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, Mapam's approach to the subject under discussion is not an easy one. No one disputes that we need money, a great deal of money, to finance the development of the country. Our party is too much involved in agriculture and industry, transportation and construction, to be ignorant of the need and the pressure of time. We are too much a partner in immigration and the training and organization of the immigrants to be unaware of the link between the state's financial situation and its ability to absorb immigrants. And if we are unable to give the necessary authorization, it is not because we ignore the needs but despite the fact that we have made a very careful account of them.

Why? Because the rub lies in the nature of this loan, its background, the terms on which it was granted and its conditions.

The first guideline of the new Cabinet's foreign policy is friendship with the two Great Powers. The Prime Minister has also said that the foreign policy of the new Cabinet follows the course set by the previous one. But for a year or more Israel and the U.S. have been discussing the loan, ever since President Weizmann visited President Truman. There have been ups and downs, promises, retractions and rumors, and every day the papers asked: What will be the fate of this loan? And all this time, for over a year, we have never been told that the Cabinet of Israel asked the other Great Power, the U.S.S.R., which it also wants as a friend, according to the first paragraph of the foreign policy guideline, about an economic plan for development, construction and expansion, or about aid, albeit not in dollars, but on the basis of the aid which that Great Power customarily extends to its true allies. We have not heard about any effort, any journey, any contact, any publicity. Where is the bruited balance? Where is the careful neutrality which the Cabinet proclaimed?

Moreover, for over a year the State Department—the owner of the Export-Import Bank—gave not a positive answer but a negative one. When was the positive answer given? One day before the elections in Israel. Is this a coincidence? I have in my hand a copy of *Ha'aretz*, not an anti-American paper, of 21 January 1949, the day the first loan was approved. It says: "The granting of the loan prior to the general elections in Israel came as no surprise. Political circles had been waiting for this move to be made at the right moment, in order to influence the electorate in Israel and dispel its suspicions of the 'West.'" (Shouts from the chamber.) That noise merely proves that I am right.

Knesset members, this loan contains sections which undermine its practical value. It has already been said here that we are not receiving a

loan, we are not being given cash. We must buy American products only in America, and we will have to pay higher prices there for certain items than we would have had to elsewhere. This is a loan which supports American exports. It is an explicit condition that we use only American means of transportation, which undoubtedly makes the goods we will receive more expensive.

This loan, this credit, will be given for three years....To the best of my knowledge, we haven't been given priority regarding those materials for which there is a long queue of customers in America. Three years could pass and our turn to receive the item we required would not come, and we would have to accept something we didn't need, something which was surplus in America, something which was worthwhile for American exports, not something which was essential for Israeli imports.

This contract contains a section permitting private firms to buy what they want on the American market. Past experience has taught us that government import licenses are not a means of regulating and controlling imports. We know that import licenses are not enough to restrain importers' profits. We know what a great difference there is between the cost of purchasing things abroad and their prices here in Israel. It reaches the dimensions of criminal speculation. Why should there be a section favoring speculative importers in the contract between us and America?

This contract contains a section prohibiting the export of items we receive according to it to other countries. This is directed against someone, against the countries of Eastern Europe, but first and foremost against us, because it prevents us from trading with Eastern European countries in the goods we received from America for our money.

The main point, however, is the economic intervention, not the open information in the papers, as comrade Zvi Yehuda tried to describe it so innocently. Before we receive any credit we will have to submit all the most exact details, not only about the sphere we are asking money for, but also about the link between it and the other parts of the plan, which are funded by other sources. But that is not the end of it. We will have to submit a report on the connection between the program we are requesting funds for and the entire Israeli economy.

...

One does not usually give foreign countries studies, detailed economic maps, etc. The contract stipulates that the representatives of the State of Israel will have to consult the representatives of the Export-Import Bank, who will be entitled to come here and advise us. And...if we don't take their advice the Export-Import Bank is entitled to stop the loan. Thus, there are three things: supervision, economic guidance of our Cabinet from the outside, and sanctions, or punishment. This method will be employed every three years, until the credit is finished.

And those three years will be years of crucial political decisions in which America is interested and will participate, as regards both the borders of Israel and our international status.

We should be aware of who the lender is—the bank of the State Department. That body wishes to interfere in politics, in economics and in all our internal policy—wages, the index, our control over imports and exchange rates, our general situation, our balance of payments, our chances. We will have to provide not only information about all these things but also documents and evidence. We should be aware of who the lender is—the government of the United States. Small countries know how these things are done....The first stage is aid, the second is servitude, the third is a bloc and base, and this leads to the final stage: world war. Larger and stronger countries than ours have been caught in that net. We face the same danger as other countries which threw off the direct yoke of British imperialism only to fall into the net of the indirect rule of American imperialism. Our state is on the brink of that danger, we are still on the edge of the first stage. That is why I want to issue a warning: let us not take the first step towards servitude. I have listed the stages so that we may know what awaits us, and I have listed the dangers (as far as this limited debate allows) to caution the Knesset not against the debt which all credit involves, but against the plots of the American money-lender, which are embedded within the disguised sections of the loan.

And when the borrower is our Cabinet, which denies that any dangers exist or that the U.S. has any ulterior motive, viewing U.S. policy towards us through rose-colored glasses...when this Cabinet is one which has a distinct political and social composition, and which deliberately extracts the left from within it, we can neither give it our confidence nor empower it to accept this loan.

I. Cohen (Progressives): ...The opposition was ready for its first attack, and this law certainly provides it with an opportunity to declaim its reasons for opposing everything it possibly can. I admit that this loan has been grasped too hastily (in Yiddish), and I think we should have discussed the first external loan in a slightly different atmosphere. Some of our number and our friends abroad are to be congratulated on this loan. But we don't have time for this. So let us at least settle some scores. Had they wanted, someone could have submitted us a bill for the promises of friendship we scattered around so generously the last few years towards the U.S., and especially towards its President, whether Truman or his predecessor. If we had made that calculation, we would have heard a very interesting story about all kinds of traitors and plotters, about servitude and knives in the back, etc. All this would have been against the background of urgent and vital economic aid for the State of Israel and, I might add, against the background of what happened in Eilat!

I don't suggest that we should thank anyone. But why should we be so suspicious?...And why are we so casual about tractors and pipes and engines, without which we would be unable to put any of our plans into practice?...MK Mikunis suggested that we should raise money from the Jews of the diaspora instead of taking the loan. I'd like MK Mikunis to list those countries which still allow funds to be raised for the Zionist movement, and I don't propose sending him to raise the money. (S. Mikunis: In all countries! In Russia too!)

I would like to ask my friend MK Sneh if he thinks that our Cabinet should have made its demands of Russia public, asking it to give us a loan or any other economic aid, without some kind of hint from Russia that it would give a positive response to the request? Would it have added honor and strength to our concern if we had made it public that we had asked for one form or another of aid and our request had been turned down?

I would also like to ask MK Sneh if he thinks that the other aid that we received from the people's democracies of the East during the attacks prevents us from being friendly with America? And if not, why should our receipt of tractors and engines from the U.S. prevent us from being friendly with the U.S.S.R.? And if it is true that there are certain drawbacks, and I'm sure there are, if they were removed—would you agree to the loan?

My last question is, simply, that since you knew about the American loan even before the elections, and you were prepared to join the Cabinet under certain conditions, did you suggest turning down the hundred million dollars?...My friend M. Sneh has foreseen all kinds of dangers which, to his and our delight, have not come to pass. He foresaw that the Negev would be cut off, that Eilat would be separated from the rest of the country, that the U.S. and Britain would form an alliance to gain control of us and enslave us, and enclose us in a "Morrison Plan." To what extent did those dangers come to pass? I do not ignore the dangers confronting us...but in a time of peace the only real danger is that there will...be no continuation to the loan, and as Sneh well knows, our economic situation is very bad.

I shall vote for the loan! And I think that, together with voting on the loan, the Knesset should authorize President Weizmann, the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet to continue finding economic aid for us in any form, without enslaving conditions, as is appropriate to this capitalist world, so that we may fulfill our dream of doubling our population in the next four years!

A. Almaliah (Sephardim): Distinguished Knesset, I was a member of the Loan Committee. I read all the conditions which were proposed to the Minister of Finance and I did not find the bogey which Knesset members who have criticized the Cabinet for taking the loan have found. They used abstract concepts—political servitude, economic bondage, but

did not explain what they involve. The opponents of the loan may be expressing the secret wishes of their heart. I would like to ask them what bank would give a loan, no matter how small, without ascertaining whether the borrower could repay it...? In all the conditions proposed by the bank giving the loan to the State of Israel I did not see any interference in its internal affairs, any economic bondage or even any political servitude.

...Do the details the Minister of Finance has given us about the loan constitute bondage to the lender? The colleagues who spoke about that here do not know all the details of the conditions. The members of the Loan Committee know that the loan is being given at 3 1/2 percent interest over 15 years. The critics have objected to the fact that we will have to buy things from America and not from other countries. Don't we need tractors, cars, ploughs, etc.? What is wrong if America is the country that can provide us with them? Does the fact that all these goods will be shipped here in American vessels involve economic bondage? America is giving us the loan, and with conditions from which we will not lose at all.

All those people who criticized the Cabinet because of the loan did not say what we should do without it. They did not make any alternative proposal. I would have understood if they had said—that imperialist government, in their usual style, is no good, and we should not accept a loan from it. But they have not found any other government to offer us better terms. MK Mikunis suggested raising funds abroad. We know how much can be obtained that way, and we know the tremendous amount of work involved. Have our emissaries ever raised one hundred million dollars, as the U.S. is offering us now on fairly easy terms?

I do not see any political or economic bondage in any of these terms. We have been asked why we do not know what the conditions are. What we are debating here is whether to approve the loan, not what to spend the money on. I imagine the Knesset will have occasion to debate the expenditure of the money at a later date, whether it is to go for agriculture, industry, transportation, etc. There will be time enough to go into all the details. That is why we support the loan proposal submitted to us by the Minister of Finance.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): Distinguished Knesset, it is obvious that one does not take a loan happily or because one is well-off, "And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow." When we establish our kingdom we will try, naturally, not to require loans. Of course, any loan involves certain limitations, requiring...a certain amount of servitude and the maintenance of certain conditions.

We will not be revealing anything new if we say that the serious situation regarding the absorption of immigrants obliges us to take loans from whoever will give them to us. In the Provisional Council we heard

on several occasions about the problem of absorbing immigrants, and we also know what the papers wrote, including those affiliated with Mapai. There were hints in the papers that immigration should be restricted. Even in *Al Hamishmar* (Mapam) I have read an article full of allusions to "selection," "reduction," and "slowing down the pace" of immigration. I am not talking about *Ha'aretz* (Independent), which called quite openly for the slowing down of immigration. (Ben Aharon: In which paper did you read that?) The article is with my things, I'm prepared to show it to you.

We are confronted with an immense task, and one of the objectives of the Cabinet's program as read out here was to double the population in the next four years. How does one absorb so many immigrants? How will we do it if we don't have the wherewithal? It should be emphasized that receiving a loan for absorbing immigrants is no less important than one for rifles and tanks. Berl Repetor's proposal is, if you'll forgive me, one which involves evasiveness. He proposes that we pass a law saying that any loan we take from the U.S. or other countries should be brought before this House for approval or rejection, but cannot be accepted without its approval. This is a very important constitutional problem—that we should not accept a loan without the Knesset's approval. We do not have a constitution yet, but we are acting as if we had, and the Cabinet may not accept a loan without the Knesset's approval. But is that the issue being debated here tonight? Tonight the concrete question of a certain loan is being debated. One can propose accepting it or rejecting it, or accepting it under certain conditions, but one cannot table a bill which says that when the right time comes the Cabinet must submit the agreement to this House. The Cabinet has already submitted the contract, you saw it in the Committee—what do you propose? Should we approve it or not? (From the floor: No!) Don't avoid replying. I understand the very difficult position of Mapam, since it wants the money but doesn't want the loan. I know that it is very interested in construction and would really like the money—then it should have the courage to approve it! It's impossible to evade answering.

Another thing. It has been proposed that when the U.S.A. and other countries offer us a loan, we should take it. Why should we wait until the U.S.A. offers us a loan? What will we do when there are no offers?

I will vote in favor of accepting any loan offered us under comparable conditions to those of this present one—even from the U.S.A. By all means—just let it be offered.

During this year Mapam was in the Cabinet. Why didn't they make sure that we also applied to other countries for loans? They bear the responsibility for these negotiations just as much as we do, and as much as the other parties which have been in the Cabinet till now....And if they thought that we should have applied to the other Power for a loan...why didn't they say as much in the Provisional Council? Is that

the way to do things? To conduct negotiations for a year with the U.S.A. and then...to say that we should postpone the debate?

The answer to this question was given by MK Sneh at the end of his address. He is against the loan because he has no confidence in the "borrower." As long as they were in the Cabinet the loan was all right. Now that they are not, it is not. Whether this is connected with the capacity of the borrower is another question.

MK Ben-Eliezer says that he supports the loan, but he is not confident about the way the money will be spent. He is afraid of discrimination. In this regard I think we heard the Minister of Finance's announcement that the Cabinet would control the loan. But MK Ben-Eliezer wants a special Knesset committee to supervise the implementation. One can either accept or reject this, but I don't think a special committee is required. There is the Finance Committee and the Economic Affairs Committee, and we will decide which one of them is to supervise the implementation of the loan. We, at any rate, will help anyone who thinks that he has been discriminated against, hoping to overcome that feeling. But that is not a precondition for accepting the loan. Once we have the money we can see to it that it is distributed fairly....

MK Mikunis has claimed that there will not be parity in allocating the loan to agriculture and industry. I think that agriculture should favor channelling the loan to industry. The industrialists will doubtless explain why this is so. But I think that the period of pioneering has not yet ended, and that exists primarily in agriculture. We must do all we can to build up agriculture....We cannot afford to lag behind in this, in contrast to other spheres. That is why we oppose the proposal that the Cabinet change the amounts to be channelled to agriculture and industry.

...

M. Wilner (Maki): No one says that we won't accept pipes, no one says that we won't accept other items, but that is no reason to refrain from discussing the American loan before we approve it or not. It is no coincidence that the full details of the loan have not been brought before the Knesset for debate. If the contract contains conditions which require us to obtain the approval of the American Export-Import Bank before we establish any factory in Israel costing more than one hundred thousand dollars—thirty thousand pounds, not such a large sum if one thinks about large-scale economic development—doesn't that indicate something? We will accept pipes, but we'll lose far more than that. We will lose the possibility of planning our economy independently and freely, and of ensuring the employment of Israel's workers, so that demobilized soldiers and immigrants may be absorbed.

Every three months we will have to submit a detailed report to the American bank. Is this only to convey information?...We will be under pressure during the following three months in a variety of areas which are not necessarily connected with the agreement. They will al-

ways be able to accept or reject our three-monthly reports. And those reports cover every area of our lives. It doesn't matter if everything appears in the papers. What does matter is that the American bank will have to give its opinion on the wages paid in our factories! (From the floor: That's not true.) If it's not true, don't be afraid to bring all the details of the loan for discussion by this House. Why do you talk about something which the Knesset members cannot read? (From the floor: Your colleagues read it.)...I maintain that the facts are as I described them. That is what the contract says explicitly. (From the floor: Was the contract between Russia and Romania published?) Those contracts were even published in the press, not only in the parliaments. What an American banker may know, the Knesset of the State of Israel may know. The latter has far greater authority than the American banks or government!

We know that an extensive economic program encompasses all parts of the economy, and there is no need here to seek clashes between agriculture and industry. We are in favor of developing all the branches, both agriculture and industry, but the American government, of which the bank is merely an extension, has only one objective in every country to which it gives loans, and this also applies to the loan it is granting Israel. The objective is that both politically and economically, the economy of the borrowing country should be gripped in a vise of control, supervision and American superiority in all those important spheres which concern the economy of Israel, or of any other country "benefiting" from those loans.

We are told that this loan is not within the sphere of the Marshall Plan. That is true. This loan is not within the framework of the economic plan of enslaving the countries of Western Europe known as the "Marshall Plan." It is known, however, and all the international economic elements have been discussing this for a year and a half, that besides the Marshall Plan, which is directed primarily at Western Europe and at the preparations for war there, America has another plan, which is the counterpart of the first one...This is the American Middle East plan, and this loan to Israel is merely one of the steps towards its implementation. The eventual aim is the enslavement of the State of Israel, as part of the plan to enslave the Middle East and to prepare a new war in this part of the world.

And so, when people come and ask—why not? Let's take a loan from another country, we're ready to take a similar loan on equivalent terms from any country, I ask—why this pretense? Just as people once went to Bevin, now they go to Truman: the President of Israel, the Foreign Minister, all kinds of delegations from both sides. It is no coincidence, just as it was no coincidence that there were so many trips to London, despite the many disappointments....

We know from the experience of other countries...that economic alliances can be made with the peoples' democracies and with the U.S.S.R. on the basis of the free exchange of imports and exports, on the basis of economic aid, without enslaving our economy and without political bondage, neither as regards the Negev nor as regards other issues.

I claim that it is possible, by raising capital locally, by recruiting funds among world Jewry, by maintaining economic ties on a free basis with Eastern Europe, by nationalizing foreign concessions in Israel, to develop the country and ensure employment for its workers, the absorption of immigrants and the incorporation of demobilized soldiers.

...

The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: Members of the Knesset, some of you have tried to create the impression that disaster threatens us if we accept the loan of one hundred million dollars from America. Allow me to say, in view of our situation in Israel, as someone who participated in these negotiations, and as someone who for sixteen years has been part of fund-raising efforts, that I am proud to have been able to participate in bringing this loan to fruition. I ask all the Knesset members who are prepared to discuss the matter seriously to adopt the same attitude as I have, namely, not one of suspicion and *a priori* rejection of the people who negotiated with Israel's representatives, as several Knesset members have.

In the Provisional Council of State I announced on behalf of the Cabinet that I am grateful to those people for their loyal help to us in the negotiations, and I am prepared to repeat it.

I am asked why I did not agree to open the entire contract to public debate. There are several reasons for this. It is true that the Export-Import Bank is a state bank, but it is also a commercial bank. This contract has not been, and will not be, brought before the Congress for approval. The loans which have been mentioned in the debate, such as the one within the framework of the Marshall Plan and the English loan, are loans given by the American government and brought before Congress for discussion. If the Congress were to discuss our loan, I would bring it before the Knesset for debate. But our loan has been given by a commercial bank, and we have been asked to treat it as one treats commercial banks.

I have also had the honor of making agreements with banks in other countries, when I was in the Provisional Cabinet, but I did not publish those agreements, and no one in the Cabinet asked me to do so. Those were short-term contracts with more stringent conditions, and I doubt very much whether the institutions we are currently negotiating with—both in the East and in the West—regarding credit for goods, would allow us to publish the details of the negotiations, especially before they were concluded.

We have to discuss the matter seriously. In order to prove that there is no secret section I brought the contract and read it out to the whole committee. Officially it had twenty members, though in fact I think there were 23 or 24 participants. No faction or member of this House can claim that we did not read the contract out to them or their representatives. We also reported everything that happened in the negotiations. What is the point of having committees appointed by the Knesset if people afterwards claim that it is not enough and ask the same question that was asked in the committee: are there secret sections? Mr. Rokeach, there are no secret sections or additional secret agreements in the contract. There is no more in it than is written and what your and other people's representatives have seen!...

There is talk now of parliamentary committees, but I would like to remind those present that there is another committee which represents the Knesset, and that is the Cabinet. I do not accept the view that the Cabinet should be supervised and controlled because it might be disloyal. Those who are in the opposition, and who invariably wish to enlarge and aggrandize the opposition, are entitled to make this claim. This House—and this House means the majority, because it is the majority which decides—must respect the Cabinet, which does represent it loyally. I have no intention of answering those who suspect this Cabinet of intending to begin with this contract and conclude with bases and war. It is beneath my dignity to enter that argument here. Each and every one of you will be given the opportunity to discuss political matters as they arise.

An argument broke out concerning Section 12, and it was interpreted in various ways. If I remember correctly, apart from MK Mikunis, who would oppose the contract on principle even if it were as pure as driven snow, because he regards any contract with America as servitude to that country, all the other members of the committee argued—if they did so—only about this section. In order to explain matters and avoid slander, I will read out the whole section.

Section 12: General information regarding the economy of Israel. As long as any of the bonds issued as evidence of the sums of the loan given as credit will be pending and undischarged, Israel must, at the bank's request, at any time and from time to time, but not more often than once in three months, provide the said bank or any agency or department of the United States Government appointed by it, with information and data about the level of internal prices, the index of wages, the national public budget, the money supply, commercial interest rates, income from Government bonds and foreign currency exchange rates, control regulations on imports and exchanges, the reserves of gold and foreign currency in private and Government hands, the current and predicted state of the balance of payments, the condition of long-term international investments,

the state of external debts and also other economic tests regarding the State of Israel's ability to defray its debt to the said bank, whenever it is asked to do so in a reasonable manner, and all this information and data will be provided as far as is possible in a detailed manner and not merely by estimates.

I would like to add a few remarks about the negotiations. We are talking about the national public budget, and as I said during the negotiations, we have another budget—the war budget. I did not give them any figures when I said that, because I am not authorized to do so, since for reasons of security we do not publish figures concerning the war budget, and because we do not publish them in Israel we cannot give them to anyone else either. They were satisfied with my statement, and accordingly did not ask for figures concerning the Government's internal debts either. Anyone who reads Section 12 carefully will see that it reflects a great interest in Israel's economy and its ability to repay the loan, but there is no basis for the contention that it reflects a desire to spy. All this information is freely available. As for those members who rushed to defend democracy, claiming that we were undermining it, I hope that the time will soon come when we can publish all this information on a monthly basis in the official statistical bulletin.

That is the Section about which there were discussions in the Committee.... We were also accused of having undertaken to submit reports of all the economic plans and the plants we are preparing in Israel. I am also prepared to read out that Section in order to prove that we undertook to give them only the plans of developments and plants concrete with the loan and whose implementation depends on the loan money. That is all. It is true that the plans connected with the loan are based only partially on the loan money, and the way in which all the money invested in the plan, including the money which is not obtained through this agreement, will be spent will be noted in the reports.

We must clarify the situation for ourselves. We can accept this loan or reject it. Loans in America can be divided into two categories: the sort that one country gives to another, and which require congressional approval from time to time, as in the case of the loan given to England. I will not go into the details here and now of how and why these loans are given.... The other kind is the one given by the Export-Import Bank, which is also a governmental institution, according to a basic decision made by an interministerial committee. This bank was founded in America to fulfill certain functions, and has certain regulations anchored in the bank's constitution and the law of the land. It is called the Export-Import Bank because its function is to encourage U.S. imports and exports. It gives commercial credit, and it does not—and cannot—consider giving cash credit to another country. I regret this as much as Mr. Rokeach does. It can grant credit for the purchase of materials in the U.S., provided they are needed to implement an agreed program.

We may approve or reject these methods, but this bank does not give credit under different conditions.

I have tried to compare this contract with contracts made with other countries, to the best of my ability. Allow me to say that certain conditions in contracts signed with well-established countries are more stringent than some of those in the contract with us. Not everyone received credit at 3 1/2 percent. The contract with us is one of the best the bank ever made with a client.

We are not obliged to take this loan. From what certain members said one might think that we have to take the loan, and have to buy the goods offered us. That is not true. It is strange, but precisely those MKs who are so apprehensive about accepting the loan and fear its enslaving influence, expressed their alarm at the possibility that we might not receive the full amount of the loan, and that the U.S. would cancel part of it. It is not an obligatory loan. We do not have to use all the money. We have the same right as the U.S. Government to stop the credit at any time, apart from those commitments we have already accepted and begun, and this means not only receiving money but also signing contracts with factories or other suppliers. We can also say at any moment: enough, we don't want any more! They do not oblige us—in contrast to what was said here in the debate—to buy certain items from them, pipes, prefabricated houses, or anything else. We don't have to buy anything we don't want. Within the boundaries of the development plans which we have proposed and detailed, we are free to choose any manufacturer or supplier anywhere in America from whom to buy things. They do not recommend any firm, lest they be considered to be putting pressure on us. We will purchase only those things which we think we need, and whose price is competitive.

It is true that they are not prepared to give us money to use freely for any construction project we want, but they did not dictate any program to us. They are entitled not to approve a program, and then we cannot use the loan money to implement it. That is the right of someone who grants credit, but no mention was made, neither openly nor by a hint, about intervention of any kind in establishing undertakings in any economic sphere which was not funded by the loan.

The matter of pipes was mentioned. Pipes were represented here as constituting a major issue, as if there were some national danger involved. I don't understand what all the fuss is about. Not a day goes by without MKs who are connected with agriculture saying to me: Get us pipes! Pipes are hard to find in America, and they are not keen on selling them. From the loan we can even obtain funds to set up a factory for pipes, if we prove that this is necessary and viable.

It is true that they do not agree to our receiving credit to purchase materials and machines for our programs which we then sell abroad. MK Sneh regarded this as restricting our economic freedom and harm-

ing our trade. I think this demand by the bank is right and fair, because they can sell American goods abroad without us. Can one honestly say that that is servitude?

I repeat that the contract contains no clause, commitment or assurance which involves any economic or political enslavement. Naturally, the bank can exercise its right—as I explained before—to stop giving us money. Some MKs have said that this involves political and economic pressure. I will be sorry if something like that happens to us, but this contention cannot be raised by MKs who are fighting the loan on principle.

Criticism has been levelled against the three-year time limit on using the loan money. This is for our benefit, however. It does not mean that we have to wait three years. We have the right to receive the loan for three years, implementing the programs we are discussing during that period.

If we consider the possibility, first, of obtaining the materials soon in the U.S.—and as it happens as regards pipes that won't be easy—and, second, of implementing our own plans quickly; if we consider our opportunity to use the credit not in 36 months but in 10, or even 6, as soon as we inform America that we have passed the law—and the Minister of Justice will have to do this, because under Israeli law the Minister of Justice has the right to sign these contracts—from that moment we have the right to order all the materials we need to implement our plans! If we see these possibilities, we must ask: what has happened to us? What is this fear of receiving aid from America? And what is the fear of signing this contract with America, is it a fear of drawing conclusions? That Ben-Gurion may get a shock, or the Cabinet be disloyal, or this whole House be alarmed? We have been told here that we are endangering our borders and giving up Jerusalem, otherwise they won't give us the rest of the loan. They suspect us of being prepared to surrender Jerusalem in order to receive the hundred million dollars! What has happened to us? Have we stopped believing in ourselves after all we have gone through this past year and the previous years!

People have proposed inserting additions and restrictions into the law. My friend Mr. Repetor said: I am in favor of accepting the loan, and I propose that a law be passed authorizing the Treasury to conduct negotiations with countries of the East and the West. But the Treasury must bring every contract before this House for debate and authorization...and only then will it be valid. I would like to ask, first of all, if we really need a law to authorize the Treasury to conduct negotiations to receive money? Is that not what the Treasury is supposed to do? A law of this kind would not add anything. But Mr. Repetor wants us to discuss every contract before the Minister of Finance signs it, or perhaps before we even begin negotiations. Knesset Members, in my opinion we must start getting used to the way countries are governed. Many members re-

garded it as an insult to their dignity that the Cabinet conducted negotiations about the contract without a prior debate in this House. I say "the Cabinet," because each Minister acts on behalf of the Cabinet, and would not bring something for this House to approve without its having been approved previously by the Cabinet. We must examine what is the best course for us, and what the practice is in other countries. Do we really think we can conduct international negotiations without having the right to conclude them because the Knesset, or one of its committees, has to discuss each clause first, and possibly alter them? In what other parliament have you seen this procedure regarding international negotiations?...The elementary procedure is that every Cabinet must submit international contracts for ratification, but it represents the House...it must accept full responsibility for concluding the negotiations in the best interests of its country, and it is the parliament's right to accept or reject them. And it has happened that a country's parliament has rejected contracts which its Cabinet has signed. We all remember how the American Congress rejected a treaty which Wilson had signed, but he had signed it! That is the Cabinet's elementary right. And I will try to examine the matter in practical terms.

I had the privilege of signing the first contract, although the credit is not mine, it belongs to the people who worked for months on the matter, and whose harvest I gathered in. But I signed the first contract on behalf of Israel. I informed the members of the Loan Committee that all the other contracts would be similar to the first one, with minimal changes....I asked our representative to come to Israel, and he replied that he could not, because he had not yet signed the contract for another 5 million dollars for telecommunications, and perhaps another 5 million dollars for industry. How can one successfully conclude negotiations in this way? We are dealing with a bank, not a parliament. This bank gives the loan in fragments, and it wants to examine the plan bit by bit. I have been told that I should not have signed the loan, but should have submitted it for approval, then returned to the U.S. to negotiate the changes, but not conclude the second and third contracts. Is that a way to conduct negotiations? Is that what one calls the authority of the Israeli Knesset? No! It is an attempt to hamper the Cabinet, so that it cannot act effectively! There is someone who wants to increase this opposition, and talks about "stages," warning us that all this will lead to bases, and eventually to war!

There are other Knesset Members, however, and they constitute the majority, who chose this Cabinet and believe in it, and reject all these fears and suspicions. I hope that not only those who voted for the Cabinet in this House will be prepared to enable the Cabinet to raise the capital required to develop the country.

From Mikunis and Wilner I learned that we must raise money from the Jewish people. There are members of this House who have been

doing just that for thirty years. We have grown old doing this work. When I went to America in connection with the loan I also took upon myself the not so pleasant task of fund-raising through the Joint. We agreed that the Foreign Minister should take the rather unusual step of leaving earlier than planned, because that week the Joint Conference was being held, so that he could join the fund-raising effort. Do we need to be taught here about asking our people in the West and the East for help? On the contrary, wherever we are permitted to act we do, and I wish we would be allowed to operate in certain countries, even bringing funds out in the form of goods!

My friend Sneh asked me how we can declare our friendship for all countries but conduct negotiations for funds only with America. To date we have signed two commercial contracts, one with Holland and the other with Hungary. We recently sent a trade delegation to Czechoslovakia and Poland, and I pray that we will be able to sign contracts and get some money there. We are prepared to accept the money as goods. Soviet Russia was not ashamed to take loans from England in the form of goods and machines, and I think it is conducting negotiations with "imperialist" England on those lines right now. It also received a loan in the form of goods from Sweden. Other Eastern European countries are also prepared to do the same. Why should only they be allowed to do that?

I would like to return to the question of mobilizing funds, which is the main point as I see it. I hope that this is the first loan we receive. In order to supply our essential needs in 1949 we require—the Cabinet and the Jewish Agency—at least 500 million dollars. This is just for the barest necessities for war and immigration. In order to raise these huge sums we must use every channel, and I propose that this House accept the bill we propose wholeheartedly, without fears and without suspicions.

I would also like to add that as regards the way the money is to be spent, some of the members who participated in the debate asked us to ensure that there would be no discrimination. That does not belong to the issue under review. The question of accepting the money has been confused with that of spending it. All I am asking for now is the right to accept the money. It is true that in order to receive the money we have fixed a certain framework: 35 million for agriculture, 25 for construction, 20 for industry and 20 for transportation. It is also true that we have submitted a series of detailed plans, otherwise we would not be eligible for the loan. But even after that, there is still a great deal to decide, and I informed the committee...that I will happily submit all future contracts to them, so that they can see that they conform with the first one, and also that I am ready to have the implementation of the loan—within the framework determined by the contract—discussed by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Rokeach, you want to use the loan money to improve services. I would also like to receive 100 million dollars for the country to use as it sees fit. But this bank does not, and does not want to give us the money. What you said in jest or in criticism about the bank only allowing us loans for economic projects which will themselves defray the loan, and that the needs of certain services are more pressing, is incorrect. This procedure is determined in the Bank's constitution. It agrees to give loans only to economically viable undertakings which can ensure that the loan will be paid by increasing their income.

All the members who have complaints about the way the money is to be spent will have every chance of voicing them. If the Knesset is not choosing a Finance Committee today, that is not the Cabinet's fault. The Cabinet very much wanted this Committee to be appointed today. The current budget ends on March 31, and we must discuss a new one before then. I am more interested than anyone else in having a Finance Committee appointed soon. We are not the ones who have removed this from the agenda. If the Knesset is prepared to appoint committees, and especially a Finance Committee, we will be very glad. The Finance Committee will have to discuss financial and budgetary matters. I am prepared to bring the implementation before this Committee, but that is not on the agenda. What is on the agenda is accepting the loan from the U.S. If there are other possibilities—and I hope there will be—I will ask for additional authorization. The question to be discussed just now is very simple: the Export-Import Bank, which is the state bank of the U.S....to give us loans under the conditions I have imparted to you, for a period of 15 years at 3 1/2 percent interest. The members of this House have heard the program and the conditions, and on behalf of the Cabinet I ask you to approve the law authorizing the Treasury to accept the money and sign the contracts and promissory notes, and also to approve my signature on the contract which has been signed, without having to authorize every contract or every section of the contract. You must answer yes or no. The other matters will be discussed in due course.

I will conclude as I began. To the best of my knowledge this loan will neither burden or enslave us, but will enable us to begin the urgent work of developing our country, at this hour of our need. This House must decide whether to pass this law.

...

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We will now vote on the Cabinet's proposal, as submitted by the chairman of the Loan Committee.

(The vote is taken.)

By 85 votes to 3, with 19 abstentions, the First Knesset has passed the American Credit Law; may it be regarded by us all as a good omen and auspicious beginning to Israel's negotiations.

The American Credit Law, 5709—1949

1. The Minister of Finance is hereby authorized to accept on behalf of the State of Israel from the Export-Import Bank of Washington, an agency of the U.S.A., a credit of one hundred million dollars (currency of the U.S.A.).

2. (a) The Minister of Finance is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the State of Israel agreements with the Export-Import Bank of Washington in connection with the said credit and promissory notes of the State of Israel to be evidence of such credit.

(b) The Minister of Finance may execute such documents either himself or through representatives abroad appointed by him in writing under his hand.

3. The authority conferred by the preceding two sections shall be retroactive as from the 17 Shevat 5709 (16 February 1949).

4. The Minister of Finance is charged with the implementation of this Law.

State Comptroller Law

Sitting 14 of the First Knesset

21 March 1949 (20 Adar 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 2:10 p.m.

The Minister of Finance, E. Kaplan: Knesset Members, I have the honor of bringing the State Comptroller Law before the House. It is the Cabinet's wish that with the establishment of our parliamentary regime we should speedily appoint a supervisory institution, as a tool whereby the parliament may supervise the way the state is run. I might add that the Ministry of Finance is particularly anxious that it should be established soon, since we regard it as an important aid in government and administration for both the parliament and the cabinet.

This institution takes on different forms in different countries. In some it takes the form of a court, and also sits in judgment. That is the case in France. In some it has the form of a Ministry...as is the case in the U.S.S.R. We propose basing our institution on the British model, where it is in the hands of a reliable person, the Controller and Auditor General. The Provisional Cabinet and its Finance Committee, and especially the Ministries of Justice and Finance...have devoted a great deal of time and effort to discussing this bill. The bill I lay before you today has been accepted in principle by the Finance Committee of the Provisional Cabinet....

Perhaps I ought to add that in the discussions we compared our bill with the legislation of many countries—Britain, Czechoslovakia, Weimar Germany, Poland, France and also the U.S.S.R.

Before I read the bill and explain its sections, I would like to make it clear that we do not think that the Comptroller should have the right to give orders, or to plan the Cabinet's actions or economic activity. It is not for him to determine the budget or to do the job of the Cabinet treasurer or auditor. His task is to supervise the administration of the state.

That is why we propose that the first section of the law should be:

"1. a. There shall be appointed a State Comptroller (in this Law referred to as: 'the Comptroller') to supervise the state finances and their management, economic enterprises of the state and the property of the state, and to carry out the other functions assigned to the Comptroller by this Law.

b. The Comptroller shall head the Comptroller's Office."

We are combining several definitions taken from the laws of various European countries.

"2. In carrying out his functions, the Comptroller shall be responsible only to the Knesset and shall not be dependent upon the Government."

We would like to emphasize two points here: the Comptroller's special status, and the fact that he is responsible only to the parliament. This clause can be found in the Czechoslovakian and British laws, and is stressed in the German law. In several other countries the Comptroller is subject to the President, and his status is like that of a Minister.

"3. The Comptroller shall act in cooperation with the Finance Committee of the Knesset (in this Law referred to as 'the Committee') and shall report to it on his activities."

Because the plenum of the legislature cannot discuss professional matters and details, all the countries have a special committee to deal with this. In England it is the "Public Account Committee," in whose meetings the Comptroller, as well as a representative of the Treasury and of the Ministry in question, always participates. The committee may summon witnesses. In the U.S. it is the "Committee of Expenditure in the Executive Department." In Czechoslovakia there is a parliamentary committee for control and savings. The parallel committees fulfill a variety of functions. For example, during five months of 1944 this committee held more than twenty sessions, obtained answers to over 5,000 questions and also heard witnesses. The minutes of these meetings are published from time to time, as the parliament instructs.

"4. The Comptroller shall be appointed by the President of the state upon the recommendation of the Committee. He shall hold office for four years. His salary shall be determined by the Committee."

Several countries act differently on this matter. In Britain the Comptroller is appointed by the king, in Poland and Czechoslovakia by the President at the recommendation of the Government and in France by the President at the recommendation of the Minister of Finance....Only in Russia does the parliament, which appoints all the Ministers, choose the Comptroller too.

We propose that the Comptroller should be appointed by the President at the recommendation of the Knesset Finance Committee.

There are also different practices as regards the Comptroller's term of office. In most countries the Comptroller is appointed for life, although in Russia he is appointed for seven years....We propose, after discussing the matter at length, that the term of office not be so long, paralleling the term of the Knesset, i.e., four years.

"5. Prohibition of activities. During his term of office, the Comptroller may not—

a. be a member of the Knesset or of one of its committees or of a local authority;

- b. hold any other office or engage, either directly or indirectly, in any business or profession, except for literature, science or art."

All countries forbid the Comptroller to be a member of parliament or to be employed elsewhere. In Poland he may engage in literature or science, and we have accepted that approach, regarding these functions as unlikely to prevent him fulfilling his duties.

"6. Termination of office. The Comptroller's tenure of office terminates—

- a. upon expiration of his term of office;
- b. upon his resignation;
- c. if the Knesset, by a two-thirds majority of the members voting, decides to remove him from office."

In Britain the king may dismiss the Comptroller if both houses of parliament have decided to do so. In Germany the Comptroller, like a judge, is subject only to disciplinary law. In Czechoslovakia he is bound by the law concerning the responsibility of all the members of parliament. He also has the status of a Minister there, as I said before.

"7. Supervised body.

- a. The financial and economic activities and the accounts of the following bodies (in this law referred to as 'supervised bodies') shall be subject to the supervision of the Comptroller:
 - (i) every Government office;
 - (ii) every enterprise or institution of the state;
 - (iii) every person or body holding or managing property of the state;
 - (iv) a local authority, enterprise, institution, fund or other body assisted by the Government by way of grant, guarantee or the like, or in the management of which the Government has a share, and which the Minister of Finance has directed shall be subject to the supervision of the Comptroller;
 - (v) a local authority, enterprise, institution, fund or other body or person which shall be subject to the supervision of the Comptroller by virtue of law, a decision of the Knesset or an agreement between it or him and the Government.
- b. At the suggestion of a Minister associated with the supervised body and with the Committee's approval, the Comptroller shall determine a special or limited way of supervision for that body or for one or another of its activities.
- c. The Government may decide as regards a certain section of the budget of a certain Ministry or institution that the written approval of the Minister concerned or of the manager of the institution concerned, with the signature of the Minister of

Finance attesting that the sum allocated was used for that purpose, shall serve as sufficient evidence, freeing the Comptroller of the examination specified in Section 8."

We assume that a body could reach an agreement with the Government that it wishes to place itself under the Comptroller's supervision. This section is based primarily on the Czech law.

Clause (iv) of this Section enables bodies not under the control of the state to be placed under the Comptroller's supervision, and at the direction of the Minister of Finance; it also allows the supervision to be done in an exceptional way by a trust fund, as is the case in several countries.

"8. Functions of Comptroller. In fulfilling his office the Comptroller shall examine—

- a. whether every expenditure has been incurred within the limits of the legal appropriation for the purpose for which it is assigned, and in accordance with the directions of the Minister of Finance applicable to such expenditure;
- b. whether the income has been received in accordance with law;
- c. whether there are sufficient vouchers in respect of all expenditure and income;
- d. whether every act within the scope of his supervision has been done in accordance with law and by the person authorized to do it;
- e. whether the moneys, economic enterprises and the property of the state have been managed efficiently and economically;
- f. whether the keeping of accounts, the drawing-up of balance-sheets, the checking of the cash-in-hand and the stock, and the voucher system are efficient;
- g. whether the method of keeping moneys and safeguarding property is satisfactory."

In line with various constitutions, we have greatly expanded the scope of the supervision, both as regards the legality of income and expenditure, as regards frugality and efficiency and as regards the manner of keeping accounts, maintaining moneys and safeguarding property. The check must be thorough and authorized by law, to safeguard the interest of the state and the taxpayer....

"9. Modes of supervision.

- a. A supervised body shall, within such time as the Comptroller may prescribe, but not later than three months after the expiration of its financial year, submit a report on its income and expenditure during that year and a balance-sheet showing its assets and liabilities as at the end of that year, together with any document which the Comptroller may require

for the verification of the report and the balance-sheet. A copy of the report and the balance-sheet shall be sent to the Minister of Finance.

- b. The Comptroller shall, whenever he thinks fit or is requested to do so by the Minister of Finance, examine the accounts and documents, the cash-in-hand and the stock of a supervised body at the office of the supervised body or wherever the stock may be, after having informed the Minister concerned of this."

Subsection a. refers to the regular examination of accounts and stock. Subsection b. refers to spot checks, but in the spirit of what I said before, that we regard the Comptroller as an institution which helps the Government, not one which acts as a policeman. Spot checks are possible, and even beneficial...but the Minister concerned must be informed in advance. Most of the laws state this explicitly.

"10. Results of check.

- a. Where a check reveals that a supervised body has dealt with money or property otherwise than in accordance with the law, or has not adhered to the principles of economy and efficiency, the Comptroller may require an explanation of the supervised body and propose a mode of rectifying the defect and a time for compliance with his demands.
- b. The Comptroller may apply to the supervised body through the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Finance and the Minister concerned may, if they wish, make observations about the matter under examination and clarify it first with the Comptroller.
- c. If the supervised body fails to comply with any of the Comptroller's demands, the Comptroller shall make appropriate observations in his Annual Report or refer the matter to the Committee."

The method of demanding the rectification of defects is similar in all the laws. The first application is to the person in charge of the office concerned. As in several countries, we propose that the Ministry of Finance be involved already at this stage. In order to avoid delays, as would be the case if the subject could only be dealt with through the Comptroller's Report, the Comptroller may inform the office concerned of his findings, and they can thus be dealt with immediately.

"11. Comptroller's reports.

- a. Upon completion of the examination of the annual account of the supervised bodies, but not later than six months after the expiration of the financial year, the Comptroller shall furnish the Committee with a Report for the Knesset.
- b. In such Report, the Comptroller shall—

- (i) specify every defect which has not been satisfactorily explained or rectified;
- (ii) specify every instance of a violation of the law or the principles of economy and efficiency;
- (iii) make recommendations for the rectification and prevention of defects.

- c. The Comptroller shall forward a copy of the Report for the consideration of the Minister of Finance, who shall make his observations thereon within two months from the date of receiving such Report.
- d. The Comptroller's Report shall be brought before the Committee together with the decisions and the observations of the Minister of Finance, not later than nine months after the end of the financial year concerned.
- e. The chairman of the Committee shall bring the Report, together with the Committee's decisions, before the Knesset."

The Comptroller's Report is the principal tool by which he fulfills his duty. The date it is to be submitted is the last date fixed for using the money in the budget....

"12. Statement of opinion. The Comptroller shall, if requested to do so by the Knesset or the Government, prepare a statement of opinion as to any matter within the scope of his functions."

The object of this Section is so that we can occasionally ask the Comptroller to deal with a specific topic...upon which he will give his opinion or provide the information....

"13. The Comptroller's Office.

- a. The Comptroller may carry out his functions through his staff.
- b. The staff of the Comptroller's office shall be subject to the same regulations as regards employment, rank and tasks as are in effect in the state.
- c. The Comptroller shall submit the accounts of his office to the Committee for examination and approval."

I think that this Section is clear....Since the Comptroller cannot examine himself, this task has been given to the Committee.

In concluding, I would like to add that the limitations on the Comptroller in Section 7, subsections b. and c. refer to the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs....The English law, which requires a very careful examination of expenditure, also permits the Comptroller to waive the right to examine certain accounts and to rely on the accounts of the various budget directors. We have added that if this applies to an entire office, the agreement of the Finance Committee is also required. We have also introduced the idea that if there are secret expenditures, they should be countersigned by two Ministers, and not by one alone....The Cabinet asks this House to approve this law as soon as pos-

sible to enable parliamentary control to function and so that this House may supervise all the income and expenditure of the economy of the country.

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: In accordance with the request of the chairman of the Standing Committee to meet this evening, I limit each speaker to ten minutes.

Rabbi Dr. M. Nurock (Religious Front): Distinguished House, on the basis of parliamentary experience I propose that Section 4 be changed to read: The Comptroller shall be chosen in secret elections by an absolute majority in the Knesset from among the candidates proposed by the Knesset factions. Each faction may propose a candidate. His term of office shall be four years, and his salary shall be determined by the Committee.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): ...I would like to propose a few changes in the bill before us. As regards Section 7, clauses a. and b., although we accepted the Finance Minister's explanations of...the need for certain limitations in the extent of the Comptroller's authority in some Ministries, I think that a more precise definition of these limitations should be found...

In Section 8, clause d., I propose that the words "within the scope of his supervision" be removed. In a supervisory body it is not so simple to distinguish a matter of accounts from one which may exceed this sphere, and any restriction may limit the Comptroller's action.

In Section 10, clauses a. and b., the phrase "The Comptroller may apply to the supervised body through the Minister of Finance" may be misleading...and I think that the two sub-sections should be separated to prevent any misunderstanding.

The time limit by which the Comptroller should submit his Report...should be reduced...Section 12 says that the Comptroller must report on every subject he reviews if he is asked to do so by the Knesset or the Cabinet. I think the phrase "or by the Committee" should be added.

In Section 13 a clear distinction should be made between employees of this office and those in any other branch of the Civil Service. These employees should be especially responsible and should be appointed only with the Comptroller's consent.

J. Lamm (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, I commend the Cabinet's decision to appoint an institution to control its financial administration...I think, however, that the supervision should extend to all the institutions which use public funds, and that the definition in Section 7 is too narrow. I don't think that the special permission of a Minister should be required for the Comptroller to be able to do his work...The law should also enable the Comptroller to demand to see other documents, in addition to reports and accounts. He should also be authorized

to question witnesses...There should also be sanctions if a body does not comply with the Comptroller's recommendations...The law should contain special provision for appointing a deputy should the Comptroller be ill and unable to fulfill his duties.

I. Idelson (Mapam): ...I think that instead of limiting the Comptroller's term to four years, regardless of how long the Knesset's term is, the Comptroller's appointment should end four months after the next Knesset is elected...According to Section 5 b. the Comptroller may not hold any other office, though he may engage in literary, scientific or artistic work. I propose that manual labor on his own farm be added to this list.

Section 7, subsection 4 combines several topics which should be separated. If one hundred pounds is given by the Government to the Histadrut, that gives the former the right to investigate the latter, and this topic is grouped together with local authorities...The categories should be separated more clearly, so that only the Government allocation of bodies receiving some of their funding from the Government may be investigated. The banks should also be mentioned in this context insofar as they operate as Government banks.

...Section 8 should include more specific details about how and why employees should be selected for jobs, and how their salaries and allowances should be determined...In Section 10 I think the Comptroller's authority to request a legal investigation should be added...I think that the Comptroller's Report should be submitted to the Knesset within four or five months, and not to the Committee within nine months. Perhaps wherever the law reads "Knesset" the words "or the Committee" should be added...The Minister of Finance has told us that in the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs there are secret funds whose expenditure may not be known by the public...But if the Comptroller is a person whose confidentiality can be trusted, is it not for the benefit of these Ministries that their books also be opened to examination? If this is not added to the bill, it will remain just a meaningless piece of paper.

I. Harari (Progressives): ...I commend the fact that this bill makes the Comptroller independent of the Cabinet, and makes him ultimately responsible to the Knesset...The task of the Comptroller is essentially one that protects the citizen within the state...And the Comptroller is particularly important for the minority in this House...It is for that reason that I disagree with MK Idelson's remark that the Comptroller should be appointed only for a limited period of time...The Comptroller should be even more independent than the bill indicates. He should be as independent as a Supreme Court Justice, whose replacement is not connected with elections held every now and again...In Section 5, which lists the positions the Comptroller may not hold, the position of Minister should be added...Finally, I would like to welcome Section 8 e., which states

that the Comptroller should not only check accounts but should also make recommendations regarding efficiency and economy. Every state, ours included, should act according to the adage: Look after the pence and the pounds will look after themselves.

E.M. Genihowski (Religious Front): ...I would also like to join those who congratulated the Minister of Finance for bringing this bill before us soon after we began our work, in pursuance of the verse: "that ye shall be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel." I must say that the quote from German and other laws grated on my ears, and it would have been better not to mention German law in this House and other places, particularly when there are adequate bases for this in our own Jewish law, which laid down the principles of supervision thousands of years ago.

...Regarding Section 5 b., where the Comptroller is permitted to deal with literature, science and art, I would also add "religious study." I don't know why this was left out. I suggest that in Section 7 a., a clause be added to ensure that the Comptroller checks stocks as well as accounts....He should also submit a report every six months instead of every nine months, as the bill proposes.

A. Recanati (Herut): Distinguished Knesset, it is not my intention to propose various changes and additions to the bill before us today. I shall do that when a full-scale debate is held....In general terms, however, I would like to point out some rather saddening aspects of the bill, which reflect the Government's continual tendency to minimize the value of bodies intended to protect the interests of the people, and to concentrate very important tasks in the hands of a person or group of persons who support the ruling party.

For example, the bill proposes that the exclusive authority to examine the country's accounts should be given to one person. However capable he may be, he...will be unable to fulfill the task alone and unaided, and will anyway probably be appointed from among the party faithful by a majority in the Finance Committee. In my view, it would be preferable to establish an institution for this purpose, comprising people with legal and economic skills who are not involved in party matters. In that way the objectivity of its members will be assured....

...The bill also contains too many loopholes, and if the Government is entitled to exempt "certain Ministries" from the Comptroller's examination, what guarantee do we have that it will not use that clause wrongfully? The examples I have given reflect the Government's aspiration to supervise every aspect of life in the state, without enabling the people and their representatives to supervise matters in any way.

Finally, I ask the Ministry of Finance whether Section 7, clause 4 also refers to the Jewish Agency, in whose administration the Govern-

ment, including the Minister of Finance himself, participates, and whether it will be subject to the Comptroller's activities?

S. Mikunis (Maki): Gentlemen, permit me to make a few remarks about the bill before us. As regards Section 4, I think that the Comptroller should be appointed by the Knesset, with applicants being reviewed by an appropriate committee....This Knesset has been elected in order to draw up a constitution, and this will not require four years. Consequently I do not think it necessary for the Comptroller to be appointed for four years....I also think that a regular majority of the Knesset, rather than a two-thirds majority, is sufficient to dismiss the State Comptroller from his post, as Section 6 (iii) proposes. Section 7 (iv) reflects an unhealthy tendency to limit the powers of the local authorities. Although the Government may have the right to examine the way money it channels to the local authorities is spent, this does not entitle it to supervise all their activities. The same applies to the other bodies mentioned in this Section, and altogether the wording of this Section is too vague and all-inclusive for the Knesset to be able to pass it.

I think that Section 5, clause c, should not enable one Minister to decide, together with the Comptroller, which departments should be examined and which should not, in the Ministries of Defense or Foreign Affairs....I think that the Finance Committee which will work in conjunction with the Comptroller should be authorized by the Knesset to ascertain whether funds given to these Ministries by the Government should be examined or not.

Section 10 stipulates that the Comptroller should exercise his functions via the Minister of Finance, but I maintain that this constitutes an unnecessary limitation of the Comptroller. He should be able to approach any body directly. His jurisdiction is not sufficiently clearly defined in this bill, and is too much tied to the Finance and Economic Committee. I also think that the Finance Committee's jurisdiction should be more clearly defined, since it is obviously going to be one of the Knesset's most important committees....

A. Almaliah (Sephardim): Distinguished Knesset, I would also like to join the group congratulating the Minister of Finance for his initiative in establishing a supervisory institution. If our Ministries know that they will be accountable for their deeds, they will be more careful in discharging their duties....I would like to know if the period of four years for the Comptroller's term of office was determined because of any connection with the Knesset. The Comptroller's function is a national one, and need not be linked with the Knesset's term....

I also think that the examining authority need not restrict itself only to financial matters, and it would be good if he could recommend ways of streamlining our bureaucracy....Our clerks seem to think that the public is there to serve them, and not the other way round. And the public

is full of complaints on this subject. I think that Section 7 a. does not make it sufficiently clear whether a local authority is also a municipal authority, and I think this should be specified in the law....It would be a good idea if the Comptroller's jurisdiction were to extend to bodies which are not purely governmental....A good many public institutions would undoubtedly benefit from examination by the Comptroller and acting on any recommendations he might make....

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: We have ended the discussion....This is a preliminary discussion before the bill is passed on to the appropriate committee. The Minister of Finance will reply after the committee has submitted its report.

Armistice Agreements with the Arab Countries

Introduction

On 24 February 1949, ten days after the First Knesset was convened for its opening sitting in Jerusalem, Israel signed its first Armistice Agreement, with Egypt, on the island of Rhodes. Its preamble stated that it should constitute a step towards peace. It determined armistice lines which, except in the Gaza Strip, were to coincide with the international boundary of the former Mandatory Territory of Palestine and Egypt, provided for demilitarized areas and areas where only limited military forces were permitted, and established a Mixed Armistice Commission, headed by a U.N. military representative, to supervise implementation and decide on mutual complaints. The Egyptian Brigade surrounded in the Faluja Pocket was to be permitted to return to Egypt. About two weeks later, on March 10, Israeli troops reached the southern tip of the Negev at Eilat, an area allocated to the Jewish state under the Partition Resolution. On 23 March 1949, a second General armistice agreement was signed, this time with Lebanon. Here, too, the armistice line was to coincide with the previous international boundary. Although Syrian troops had operated during the war from Lebanese territory, it was decided to separate the two, and the IDF evacuated the Lebanese villages captured in the course of the fighting at the end of October without insisting on the reciprocal withdrawal of Syrian troops from the Mishmar Hayarden salient. The Agreement with Transjordan (now the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)—far more complicated because of the nature of the armistice line, and its political implications—was signed on 3 April. On the following day Ben-Gurion presented all three Agreements to the Knesset for debate.

Sitting 20 of the First Knesset

4 April 1949 (5 Nissan 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a short statement to the Knesset about the agreement signed last night in Rhodes, as well as about those which preceded it and those which may follow it. As you know, to date we have signed agreements...with Egypt...Lebanon...and Transjordan in response to the Security Coun-

cil's resolution of 16 November asking the sides to sign Armistice Agreements instead of a ceasefire, as a step towards peace.

The Provisional Government agreed to this, as did Egypt in principle, though in practice it refused, justifying this by pointing to Israel's refusal to...withdraw its troops from the Negev and return to its position of October 12.... We then informed the U.N. observers that we reserved the right to act in order to protect our territory and to bring peace nearer...and the ensuing battle in the Negev brought the Egyptians to the negotiating table....

The agreement determines...nothing in political or territorial terms, being solely military...and replacing the ceasefire agreement with one of greater validity. The area where the fighting took place is divided into two, and in half of it each side may maintain only defensive forces.... Thus, Israel may maintain assault forces in the eastern half of the border, and the Negev is divided into western and eastern parts between the Egyptian and Transjordanian borders. In the east there is no limitation on the quantity, equipment or movement of our forces, while in the west, on the Egyptian border, we may keep only defensive forces, as laid down in the agreement.

This agreement served as a model for those which followed it. I will only add in connection with the Egyptian agreement...that we see two positive aspects in it. One is that it constitutes a political and moral achievement: two neighboring countries, between which there are no real historic disputes, were able for the first time to sit down as equals and find their way to an agreement, albeit not yet a political one, but at least one that ends the armed struggle. We attach particular importance to this because Egypt is the largest Arab country, and undoubtedly the most independent among them.

The second positive aspect, which I was unable to mention at the time, having to wait until the last agreement with Transjordan had been signed, was that the agreement with Egypt concerns the total cessation of all hostilities, the withdrawal of all Egyptian forces to the border—apart from certain defensive forces on the Rafah-Gaza axis—and Egypt's agreement that we may maintain all the forces we require in the eastern part of the Negev. This affords greater freedom of movement to our army, which was deployed throughout most of our Negev but whose mobility was restricted to a considerable extent. Anyone who remembers the map of the Negev knows that it is a triangle which narrows towards its southern tip, at the Red Sea, and the rest of Israel's Negev is not only on the sea, which is totally controlled by hostile countries—Egypt, Transjordan and Saudi Arabia—but the entry to the Red Sea is in England's hands, and entry into the tip of this triangle by Jewish forces could mean entering a death trap....

The agreement with Egypt accorded our forces far greater freedom of movement, and this helped us to fortify the positions we controlled

and to expel all the foreign forces there without a war, since they quite rightly found themselves unsafe there and withdrew of their own accord. They realized that not only does Israel's army have the right to move freely there, but that it also knows how to use its rights effectively.

This constituted a reverse example of what had happened previously in the Negev. Formerly there had been two instances in which military action paved the way for a political achievement. This time...the agreement signed in Rhodes gave us an extremely important military and settlement achievement.

After the agreement with Egypt, which to some extent allayed the fears of the other Arab countries of negotiating with us—if the largest and most independent country could do so, the smaller ones could follow suit—the agreements with Lebanon and, yesterday, Transjordan, were achieved.

This agreement, like those with Egypt and Lebanon, is purely military. It does not determine anything political or territorial for the moment. It merely fixes a certain line, extending from Eilat to the southern end of Lake Tiberias, from there via the Gilboa and Samaria mountain ridges to the mountain ridges of Judea and thence to Jerusalem, on either side of which the military forces of both sides can move under certain conditions. These negotiations were perhaps the hardest of those we have conducted to date, even though they were limited solely to military matters. The problem is that this embodies all the problems of Jerusalem, and not only of the city itself but of the road leading to it. The second problem is the Negev.

Transjordan, which is far less independent than Egypt (from the floor: Not Transjordan—the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan), as well as England, to which it is subservient to some extent, demanded important sections of the Negev.

The third problem is the Triangle. As you know, till now there were Iraqi forces in the Triangle. Iraq...refuses to accept the Security Council resolution and will not conduct armistice talks with Israel. The Iraqi foreign minister recently informed the U.N. representative, Ralph Bunche, that Iraq has authorized Transjordan to conduct negotiations on its behalf, and that it will withdraw from the positions it has occupied in the Triangle.

The problem in the Negev was overcome by Transjordan's agreement that the armistice line between our countries will be the international border which existed under the Mandate, along the Arava and down to Eilat, crossing the Dead Sea in the middle, and reaching Ein Gedi.

Regarding the problems surrounding Jerusalem, it was agreed that for the moment we would discuss the determining of the border only on the basis of the current situation, and that special negotiations would be held by the two sides alone—without the mediation of the U.N.—about all

the complex issues, including both the military ones and the political-territorial ones of free access to Mount Scopus, the Mount of Olives and the Latrun road.

The subject of the Triangle was eased primarily by the fact that Iraq informed Dr. Bunche that Jordan could act on its behalf, and that it was prepared to withdraw....As you know, in the last few hours before the final ceasefire in July, the Iraqis seized positions within Israel, at an intersection of our settlements. The situation there was extremely bad, and was less safe than anywhere in Israel. I would like to give credit to the other side, which realized that the border could not remain as it was, and in return for our concession in the Hebron region in the south, gave up an area in the center, from Kfar Kassem near Bakka and Jaljulya in the north, to the Wadi Ara road and Gilboa ridges in the south. Thus, the border of the Armistice Agreement is not the one which existed between the Iraqis and us till now, being five kilometers to the east in the center, apart from two points: at Kalkilya and Tulkarm, which constitute a bulge, as it were. The same applies along Wadi Ara, which passes into our military control, without determining finally what its political and territorial fate will be. The same applies to our border in the Jezreel Valley, which shifts to the south between it and the Jordan Valley, on the other side of the Gilboa ridges. As far as the railway line from Lod to Haifa is concerned, apart from the two points at Kalkilya and Tulkarm...it is entirely under our military control...The entire Wadi Ara road is also in our hands, and the border will pass to the south of Wadi Ara so that the journey to the Jezreel Valley and Afula will be shorter, as it was in times of peace.

We have also made a concession, which is military, since nothing territorial has yet been fixed, in the Hebron region. Transjordan's military border near Hebron, where there will be free passage, will be slightly more to the west than it was before.

I would like the Knesset to be aware of the fact that...these Armistice Agreements are not yet peace...nor are we even near to making peace with the Arab countries. Neither have we determined stability and security for all the areas covered by the agreements, particularly in and around Jerusalem...regarding which negotiations will still be held between us and Transjordan, without the participation of the U.N. Negotiations will also still be held about assuring free access to Mount Scopus, enabling work to continue at the Hebrew University and Hadasah and renewing the railway connecting Tel Aviv-Jaffa with Jerusalem and Haifa....

Nevertheless, we think that the effort was worthwhile. It is an important step towards peace and stability, and when we use the term peace we are not referring to something dictated to one side by the other. We want peace with the Arab countries which is based on trust and common interests. We think that every step which brings peace nearer liberates

the Arab countries from bondage to foreign empires and increases their independence. We think that it is in Israel's interest that the neighboring countries should be as independent as possible...since this will facilitate internal social and economic progress....

In this sense we regard these agreements as an important step towards peace, and towards reinforcing Israel's position in a large part of the world which till now was in the thrall of the anti-Jewish propaganda of the British Foreign Ministry, which represented us as the enemy of the Asian, and particularly the Moslem, nations. If the first breach has been made in the attitude of a great Moslem country towards the State of Israel and Turkey has accorded us its recognition, there is no doubt that these agreements played a part. They were not the sole reason, however, because Turkey had no interest in standing aloof from Israel, quite the contrary.

...Finally, I would like to thank the U.N. Mediator, Dr. Bunche, who assisted greatly in bringing these three agreements to a successful conclusion. Our representatives did not always agree with him, and maybe those of the other side did not either. But we always knew that we were dealing with a man who had no other objective than to bring peace to this part of the world. He fulfilled this task with great skill and success, and on behalf of the Cabinet I would like to thank him.

M. Begin (Herut): Distinguished Speaker and House, before this sitting began I submitted the following proposal in writing to the Speaker, which I now have the honor of reading out to the House: We ask the Knesset to place on its agenda forthwith a debate expressing no confidence in Mr. Ben-Gurion's Cabinet, in view of the fact that it has signed an enslaving agreement with Britain's vassal, with the ruler of a country which calls itself—and to our great shame this name appears on an official document signed by the Government of Israel—"The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," which exists on both sides of the Jordan, with the tacit assent of the Government of Israel. By doing this, the Government of Israel has handed a huge portion of the western part of our homeland to that monarch, abandoning it not to him but to his British masters, since the Government of Israel knew that that kingdom...has an agreement with Britain whereby the latter may maintain whatever military forces it deems necessary in the territory of the former.

That agreement means that the British may return to the western part of the Land of Israel and establish their military bases there. The significance of this agreement is political, not military. It means that, in effect, we have enslaved our state today to Bevin, after fighting a war of independence against the enslaver.

The Prime Minister himself apparently felt that this agreement was very different from those signed with Egypt and Lebanon. That is why he found it necessary to make an announcement to the Knesset which

hardly explained anything, because we had read all the details in the papers. Yet he nevertheless stressed that an agreement had been signed with a country which is less independent than the other Arab countries. I do not know if slavery can be more or less independent. The Prime Minister is trying to mislead the Knesset and the nation, claiming that a step has been made towards peace. A step has been made towards slavery! The blood that has been shed has been betrayed! We demand a free homeland and true independence! The step the Government has taken leads us into bondage. This agreement is very different from the previous ones. It is a more serious step towards slavery. The time has come for the Knesset to express its lack of confidence in the Government which is leading the nation towards bondage to the enemy.

...

Y. Riftin (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, the armistice agreements signed by Israel with the neighboring Arab countries contain no clause stating when the peace conference will be held, although a general trend towards peace is mentioned....Was not the Government of Israel prepared, after an extended period of a de facto armistice and U.N.-imposed ceasefires, to embark independently on negotiations for a stable peace? I assume that the Government of Israel was prepared to do this, but apparently the other side was not. The behavior of some of the Arab governments with which armistice agreements have been signed is interesting. In an international forum, in the institutions of the U.N., at international conferences, they conduct an extensive diplomatic war against us, as if as far as they are concerned the Armistice Agreement is not a step towards peace.

The question is whether we should suspect that they still intend to continue the war against Israel. The question is whether those forces which decide matters in the Arab capitals are still playing a diplomatic game which indicates that they do not genuinely want peace. Because these are the countries which in one way or another are pushing the world towards a new war, and have perhaps not given up the idea of reviving the war here. I would like to draw the Knesset's attention to the fact that these agreements make no mention of...peace between those countries and Israel...and even contain a formal recognition on Israel's part of countries which invaded Israel as being a party to resolving the problem of the Land of Israel.

This is written in all the Armistice Agreements, and it is not merely a formal issue....The invading armies will remain in the Land of Israel....The strip of land which will remain in Egypt's hands is undoubtedly of no value for it, but it constitutes a threat to the Land of Israel, a threat of invasion, a threat of the establishment of foreign bases. More than constituting an Egyptian threat it is an American-British threat....

Gentlemen, I am sure that not only the Jewish population of the country, but the Jewish nation and the world Zionist movement have not abandoned the chance of attaining the entire Land of Israel, and regard a possible treaty between Israel and a democratic, independent Arab country as a chance of restoring the integrity of the country. But the democratic Arab countries which are our true allies, the forces of socialist revolt, those who are in prisons today and tomorrow will rule Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Transjordan, are as interested as we are in preserving the chance of restoring the integrity of the Land of Israel, and consequently are not interested in annexing part of the Land of Israel to those prison-states whose political independence is a fiction and with which we have signed agreements.

Distinguished Knesset, the Government was not empowered to make such a crucial decision without holding a democratic debate and obtaining the Knesset's assent. None of us ignores the partial value of the territorial improvements regarding border settlements and transportation, but it is not the partial consideration which counts. I conclude by calling on the Knesset not to regard this debate as enabling it, by the formal decision based on the coalition's raised hands, to continue as before. We demand a penetrating discussion. These Armistice Agreements with Abdullah cannot be binding on the Knesset, the Jewish people, the State of Israel or the democratic forces of Israel and of the entire Middle East.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): Distinguished Knesset, regarding the Cabinet's authority to conduct negotiations and sign this agreement, this matter was discussed several times in the Provisional Council of State and in its Foreign Affairs Committee. It was Mapam which proposed that the agreement should not be signed until the Council of State had determined its rules and principles. That proposal was rejected...several times....Thus, as long as no change has been made, the Cabinet is authorized to conduct the negotiations and sign this agreement.

What in fact is new in these negotiations? I can understand Herut's opposition, but it is a little difficult to understand Mapam's. This agreement actually goes towards Partition...which was accepted by Mapam...although not willingly....It was also accepted by us, the Executive of the Jewish Agency, the Zionist Executive, and all those bodies in which Mapam participated, and they did not vote against it....The only thing that is new in this agreement is that they claimed in the Council of State, in the Foreign Affairs Committee, that they accepted Partition, and that one had to accept it, but that they wanted an independent Arab state, not the Transjordanian government, to have a share in it. Our reply to this in the Foreign Affairs Committee was that we wanted the same thing, but none of us wanted to shed blood in order to establish an Arab state by force in a so-called Arab part of the Land of Is-

rael. If we have to shed blood, then let us act on Mr. Begin's suggestion and do so in order to obtain control of the Triangle.

That is why I cannot accept Mr. Riftin's contention that we agree to this partition but fight to ensure that this king rather than that one rules there. The Mapam representative acknowledged that there are some territorial improvements...because this...is merely a ceasefire...and does not determine anything in principle...Incidentally, in addition to the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," the Agreement also mentions the "State of Israel," so that there is reciprocity. They received our recognition of their name, and we received the enemy's recognition of the state's existence. That is why I do not regard this agreement as being a danger, or a deviation from the Cabinet's authority.

On the other hand, I do regard this Armistice Agreement as fixing the ceasefire which existed till now on a more permanent basis. I also believe that this debate should be a far-reaching one, dealing with our relations with the government of Transjordan and the entire subject of our foreign relations. That is why I propose that...the entire topic be transferred to the Foreign Affairs Committee for a far-reaching discussion. Matters of this kind cannot be conducted on the basis of a casual discussion, nor can they be debated in an open session. I propose that we accept the Cabinet's position forthwith, and ask the Speaker to maintain contact with the Cabinet so that the Knesset can hold a far-reaching discussion of these political problems.

...
Y. Harari (Progressive Party): It is to be regretted that such an important and grave problem was not brought before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and instead there is a debate in the Knesset, where the things that are said, by both sides, are not always useful for our political situation. The considerations connected with signing this agreement are national, political and military. As regards the national considerations, in his heart of hearts every Knesset Member has not only never given up the Triangle, neither has he abandoned a single inch of land of Transjordan to our east. What we are discussing is not what is in our hearts but what are the practical considerations of a realistic Zionist policy, and how to achieve them. The Herut faction in the Knesset claims the credit for driving the British occupier out of the country. Its internal political balance is decidedly negative; on the external level I am prepared to recognize its share in repelling the British conqueror to some extent, but we would never have attained the State of Israel if the responsible majority in Israel had not given its political support to establishing a Jewish state in part of the Land of Israel. If we had continued to maintain that we were prepared to accept a Jewish state only in the entire Land of Israel, there would have been no State of Israel. The binding resolutions of the Zionist movement, declaring that we were prepared to accept a viable state in part of the Land of Israel, are

what have brought us the State of Israel today in a large and important part of the Land of Israel.

As for the political considerations, some people think that we should...aspire to the establishment of an Arab state in those parts of the Land of Israel which are not ours. I do not agree with this. I would be glad if the entire Land of Israel were in our hands. But if we have to choose between establishing an independent Arab state in part of the Land of Israel or diminishing the other parts of the Land of Israel and dividing them up between the Arab countries, I choose the latter...for Zionist and political reasons. This is not the place to expand on this subject. I think it is also for the benefit of the Arabs living in part of the Land of Israel. And if I sign an agreement with a country which is a fiction, a desert, it is precisely because it is a fiction and a desert. I prefer that it should rule the Triangle, and not some other country, which is neither fiction nor desert....We are told that we brought the British into the Triangle. Firstly, it has already been said here that in modern warfare it is doubtful whether it makes any difference if the aerodromes are at el-Salt or in the Triangle.

But what guarantee do those Knesset Members have that if a different state had been established in the Triangle the British or some other foreign power would not have gained control over it? We are told that we have signed an agreement with a slave, a puppet, but what state would have arisen in the Triangle instead of it? Og, King of Bashan? Is it better, for the sake of improved relations with the countries around us, to have eight Arab countries, or can we manage with seven? I maintain that the fewer hostile Arab countries there are, the safer we are.

It has been claimed that the British are gaining control of the Triangle, and that from now on, according to this agreement, British cannon will be 15 miles from Tel Aviv. At this very moment they are 15 miles away from those people who close their minds and turn their backs to the sea. But they are there, and at any moment the British cannon out at sea can be much nearer than 15 miles. So why mislead the public...and claim that the British cannon are only 15 miles from Tel Aviv when those selfsame cannon, plus warships...can at any moment be half a mile away from Tel Aviv? Is this a reason not to sign the agreement? If we were being asked to sign a peace treaty stating that that part of the Land of Israel belongs to Transjordan and that Israel has waived all rights to it forever I would oppose it. But what has been brought before us is an armistice agreement, fixing permanent ceasefire lines. I don't know for how long. I'm not a great believer in agreements; they exist as long as it suits the parties involved, and apparently it suited that ruler, that vassal, as he has been called here, to sign an agreement with us, while that agreement enables us to build up the country. The Armistice Agreement with Lebanon and the Transjordanian ruler contains something else which we have completely forgot-

ten. Where is Western Galilee? Has any country recognized that it belongs to us? We conquered it, we will not give it up! Two Arab countries which could lay claim to Western Galilee on the basis of international resolutions abandoned borders based on these resolutions regarding Western Galilee, and no foreign power can tell us...that we still owe something to the Arab countries. As regards the area around Jerusalem and in the Negev up to Eilat, I don't know whether the border in the Negev was determined with Bevin's agreement or not; in both areas the Transjordanian ruler accepted the border, and no foreign power may intervene against it.

We achieved this because the Arab countries themselves came and fixed different borders. (From the floor: These are Armistice Agreements.) Correct, these are only Armistice Agreements, leaving Western Galilee in our hands so that we may settle, build and develop it, and so that we may build fortified settlements there which cannot be conquered and taken from us. Consequently, I propose that the Knesset express its confidence in the Government.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): Distinguished Knesset, we are now discussing matters of foreign policy...without having precise and thorough information, and consequently it is difficult to adopt a position and an opinion, particularly in matters which should be considered very carefully, such as the one on the agenda today. For this reason it is greatly to be regretted—and I would like to register my protest at this—that the draft agreement was not brought before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Knesset before it was signed. Had this been done we would have been able to obtain precise and detailed information not only about the conditions of the agreement but also about all the factors which led the Cabinet to sign it. At times like these we should be careful not only concerning the Opposition factions but also as regards the procedure of the House, and this situation should not recur. In particular, matters as crucial as our foreign policy regarding the neighboring countries, which may determine our fate, should be discussed carefully. Care should be taken to avoid a situation in which these matters are brought before us through parliamentary questions.

To the extent that it is possible to discuss the actual subject on an informed basis and with the appropriate gravity, it should be said that if we regard all the Armistice Agreements signed to date as aspiring towards stability for a certain period of time in which we can build up the country and absorb immigrants, this agreement is part of that political approach. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the agreement with the Transjordanian or Hashemite or Abdullah's government is completely different from the other ones. As far as our national and political future is concerned, it is extremely important that in that part of the country where an Arab state should be established according to the U.N. resolution, an independent Arab country should arise.

In my view an independent Arab state would have been far better for us in several respects than the annexation of that part by Transjordan. Even if we do not want to assume that the Armistice Agreement does not determine certain political facts, we cannot ignore the fact that since the agreement accepts Transjordan's existence within the Triangle...this constitutes our recognition of it. The Prime Minister...did not make it sufficiently clear as to what the fundamental motives were which led the Cabinet to agree to those conditions at this time.

The question is whether as regards certain lacunae and dangers...it was necessary to alter the status quo...which afforded some extent of military calm....Since the defense and practical value...of the border adjustments in our central area can be questioned, I would like to ask whether the railway line from Rosh Ha'ayin to Hadera is useful to us when foreign forces are a few hundred yards from the border and the road. If we regard that as an achievement...it is not, because we will be able to use that line only when the other side permits it....

The achievement regarding...Wadi Ara is slightly different, since the slight adjustment of the border enables traffic to reach the Jezreel Valley. But here, too, the moment the other side wishes to disrupt this, no large military forces will be needed....Thus, the gains in both instances where the borders were adjusted constitute political, military and organizational but not practical achievements....

Consequently, it is doubtful whether, despite our basic considerations in...recognizing a foreign country within our borders, this does not constitute waiving all possibility of establishing an independent Arab country in that area. And anyone who thinks that an independent Arab country is...better for us than the annexation of that area by a foreign country...will regard this as abandoning positions which we believed in the past were better for us. I suppose that some people think otherwise, but anyone who thought that an independent Arab country would be better for us cannot but regard the existence of the Transjordanian force as a failure....

I am not ignoring the fact that there may be arguments for and against the agreement...leading us to conclude that, insofar as we regard political stability in the region as a cornerstone of our policy, this agreement continues that trend. From our own point of view, we should attach great importance to creating stability for our young country at the present time, in the current political conditions, so that we may undertake the work of construction which is needed so badly. Thus, we must weigh the positive and negative aspects very carefully. We are not ignoring the negative aspects of the Armistice Agreement, but taking into account the need for stability in the region, we are not opposing it. We do not disregard the dangers it embodies, as regards both our internal and external policy guidelines. Consequently, we will not express our lack

of confidence in the Government, but in view of the ideas I have outlined, neither will we express our confidence in it.

E. Levenstein (Mapai): ...I will go straight to the point. What is it that we all want? It is overcoming Partition and its disadvantages...which separate the area of the State of Israel from that of the national home. In moral terms we are all committed to two documents—the decision of the Zionist movement known as the “Biltmore Program,” and the Weizmann-Feisal agreement made at Aqaba. There can be no long-term, peaceful existence between Arabs and Jews unless it is based on the agreement Chaim Weizmann signed with Emir Feisal thirty years ago, and there is no basis for the State of Israel without the decision passed by a large majority of the Zionist Organization. Everything else is merely a different way of attaining the objective which we all desire.

The question is, what are the ways?...The true content of the political and military campaign conducted during the last few months can be divided into two categories. First, the combination of operations and agreements. That was the way we operated vis-à-vis Egypt...Lebanon and...Transjordan. Anyone who has been reading the newspapers will be able to remember examples. There is no agreement without operations, and there are no fruitful operations which do not need to end in an agreement. This method has brought us many successes....The second category is negotiations with each Arab country separately, not with all of them together. That is what we did with Egypt, Lebanon and Transjordan, and that is what we also intend to do with Syria. We have also achieved a great deal in this way.

...What have we achieved in this way beyond the borders of November 29? Those borders are not sacred. No political resolution of the U.N. has been implemented. We have become the sole implementors of the U.N. resolution, and so we are obliged to interpret it....In addition to the borders of November 29 we attained Upper Western Galilee, the Western Negev, the extensive area between the Coastal Plain and Jerusalem, and the Southern Coastal Plain, apart from the Gaza-Rafah “tongue.” I am convinced that the Egyptians do not intend to retain this “tongue,” and it will come into our hands in due course. We recently attained the passes from Samaria to the Jezreel Valley. I am surprised that MK Sapir, who appreciates strategic and military matters, attaches so little importance to the Wadi Ara pass, for which powers and countries have fought, from the kings of Egypt to General Allenby. And we attained it by peaceful means.

We received all this beyond the borders of the “original” Partition. Some members of the Opposition and the semi-Opposition have said here that the armistice lines constitute a political fact. There is some truth in that. But it is not a final political fact...the matter is not yet concluded, the nature of the Jewish state has not yet been molded. But what have we achieved in political terms through these negotiations?

We obtained an indication from the invading force which achieved the most in territorial terms that it has given up the borders of 29 November 1947, at least as far as the armistice is concerned. Is this not worth something for those who wish to overthrow the Partition Plan? They say that Britain is behind King Abdullah. Does not this make it more difficult for those of our enemies who supported the “original” Partition Plan to defend those borders?

Certain Knesset Members have said here that the negotiations with Transjordan are invalid because that country is a satellite and a reactionary, “feudal” kingdom. I would call it “patriarchal,” rather than “feudal.” But if we accept the rule that negotiations may only be conducted with “progressive” countries...we will reach very strange conclusions. Is Ibn-Saud more progressive than Abdullah? Is the current Syrian government more progressive, or more stable, or less dependent, than Abdullah's? Will we refuse to negotiate with Syria this week for that reason? If we accept the doctrine that we must not negotiate with “satellites,” with whom may we negotiate?...I read...that Iraq is a satellite of Great Britain, and that Persia is a satellite of both Britain and America. Being a double satellite is doubtless no better than being a regular one. If we go that way we won't be able to negotiate with anyone except Moscow and Washington.

...The question is not whether we achieved all we wanted through these negotiations. We did not. Nor is it whether we achieved the minimum necessary for the State of Israel's existence. We have not attained that yet either. The question is quite different: would it have been possible, compared with the method of combining operations with negotiations, to achieve more by negotiations alone? And did we attain something important? I think that we reached not inconsiderable achievements, even in comparison with what other nations, ourselves included, have achieved in war. If you look at the map you will realize this.

The question is not whether the war has ended. I do not know if it has. We all, like MK Sapir, want peace in order to build. I do not know if peace is guaranteed. But there is no doubt that what we achieved through these negotiations is important as regards all future developments. Now we will be stronger and better able to face whatever the future holds.

M. Wilner (Maki): Today we are discussing what may be the most crucial issue of Israel's foreign policy. Those who spoke on behalf of the Government did its work, which was easy. I think that, with perhaps the exception of one Opposition faction, the rest want peace and an end to the bloodshed between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

The problem is really—how does one guarantee peace? How can one ensure that there will not be another war in six months' time? Therefore, the problem is: does the agreement with Abdullah bring a stable

peace between Israel and its neighbors nearer or not? That is the issue, and do not make your task easier by turning it on its head.

As far as peace and stability in the Middle East are concerned, this agreement is a step backwards....This agreement reinforces, extends and establishes the positions of the principal warmonger in the Middle East—British and American imperialism. This agreement enhances the ability of British and American imperialism to prepare a war against Israel and other peace-loving countries.

This agreement accords the recognition of the Israel Government (and there is a difference if the British army is in Nablus with or without our political recognition of this fact in an international document) to Abdullah, as Bevin's appointed ruler over part of the Land of Israel. That is what we have achieved. This is an international political fact which the Government of Israel created with its own hands.

Gentlemen, in my view it is demagoguery to ask what difference does it make if the British are not in the Land of Israel, because they are anyway nearby, in Transjordan. Is there really no difference? This cynical statement wounds our sense of national honor! If this is the case, why should the colonial peoples, the enslaved nations, fight for their freedom? Anyone can say cynically—whatever happens, an imperialist army will remain nearby; I can't liberate the whole world. Colleagues, this is demagoguery, because every nation in its land must fight to free itself of the foreign ruler, for its own independence and for peace.

The agreement with Abdullah is a political one because it recognizes the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," which name was given for political reasons in order to demonstrate the rule of Abdullah-Bevin on the western side of the Jordan. The cabinet is ignoring the issue and demonstrating its unwillingness to admit the fact that the government of Israel has made a political agreement with Britain or what is known as Transjordan.

As I said before, an attempt is being made to convince the nation and the Knesset that this thing was advisable as a step towards peace. In my opinion this is peace in the Chamberlain style. Chamberlain used similar arguments—what does it matter, another piece of land, whatever happens, Hitler exists, whatever happens, we cannot change things; a little bit of Czechoslovakia here, a small piece of Europe there—what difference does it make?

Will this bring peace? No, distinguished Knesset Members! We must not—even to the smallest possible extent—aid and abet the heirs of Hitler and Mussolini who are preparing another world war. If it is of no importance, why is Bevin fighting for all that area? It would seem to be very important to him as regards his plans against the State of Israel and world peace.

The cabinet has also turned the problem of the independent Arab state in the other part of the Land of Israel upside down. No one has said that Jewish soldiers—to put matters starkly—should shed their blood so that the Arabs can have a state....The real problem is that the Arabs are fighting with ever-increasing power for their state in the other part of the Land of Israel. The State of Israel—and this is our gravest fault—has done everything it could during the past year to foil the efforts of those Arab forces fighting for an independent Arab state. The problem was not and is not that blood has to be shed for someone else; the problem is that the government of Israel has disturbed, repressed and created a situation in which freedom fighters opposing the Arab invaders had to risk their lives twice in crossing the border: once on the Israeli side and once on the side of the invader, the enemy. It is an unprecedented absurdity, that a government disturbs and represses, rather than aiding, those forces fighting alongside it against the invaders!

We should have assisted the democratic Arab forces. A democratic and friendly independent Arab state would be our best safety cordon...and, in accordance with the current agreements with Abdullah-Bevin, we will have to be in a state of constant readiness for war, and we can expect Israel to be in constant and direct danger.

The government recoiled from cooperating with democratic Arab forces. The Prime Minister informed us a week ago in this forum that he in fact opposed the establishment of the independent Arab state because he does not want Tewfik Toubi's friends to rule the other part of the Land of Israel. I know that other statements have been made, but that one is very important because it reveals the motives underlying the bourgeois Jewish policy, and of the government which represents its interests. The object of this policy is to prevent the establishment of strong, progressive forces in the Middle East, and particularly in the vicinity of the State of Israel. Instead of aiding the progressive forces the government cooperated with and encouraged feudal, fascist and anti-Israel forces. There are friendly relations with Victor Hyat—Franco's fascist agent—as well as with people like Bishop Hakim, while the forces of freedom are repressed and kept in prison camps till this day! That is the government's policy! A policy according to which President Weizmann goes to Washington without consulting the Knesset...according to which our Foreign Minister is in Washington...according to which an enslaving loan is taken from America...according to which the orientation is towards Anglo-American imperialism...endangering Israel's independence! This policy was recently expressed, amongst other things, by the fact that members of the coalition factions who are members of the World Jewish Congress in Israel, voted against the participation of this Congress in the World Peace Conference—where the best of mankind will be assembled—due to be held in Paris. The true intentions underlying these agreements with Abdullah are Israel's ap-

proval of the expansion of British and American imperialism in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, although this is not on the agenda, and the Knesset is concerned with practical matters, I am glad that we have had this debate, because it would have been held anyway, had we discussed the loan or any other law. It would have been held in the press and at meetings, and if everyone speaks out as he pleases there, at least here all the nation hears every side of the issue, all the arguments and claims....

As regards the agreement...I have already said that it does not guarantee peace. And if someone asks me if there will be war in another six months I won't say that there won't, because that is not dependent on Israel. Whether we were glad about the U.N. resolution or not, we did not make war on it. Others did. The question is whether this agreement strengthens them and advances war, or strengthens us and keeps war at bay, to the extent that it has any influence at all. There may be war, although I do not accept the contention that all the states except for two or three are puppets. It is obvious that there is no absolute independence in this world, not even for the Great Powers; because there is mutual dependence. Naturally, small states and small nations are more dependent than others. But even poor, wild, desert nations desire a certain amount of independence. The things I have heard here about the Arabs remind me of what I heard said about the Jews, because, after all, who are they and what are they? Even when we were not a state we were something, we had a certain strength, we were not a puppet. But there are not only puppet states, there are also puppet parties, and I heard the voices of puppets too much here. Because if another country is a puppet, what business is it of mine?...But in the State of Israel there are parties which are puppets. Many of the contentions raised here are not those of Israeli parties, but of puppets, which do not interest us. They might interest someone, or the puppets might think they interest someone, but not the State of Israel. Let's take, for example...the war against imperialism. It is not Israel's concern to fight against imperialism. Its concern is to fight for its independence and strength, but it is not going to fight for or against imperialism. If some of those here want to fight, good luck to them. Though I rather doubt it, because the great fighters who have appeared this year went to America rather than the U.S.S.R. I fear that this is because they are more attached to America and American imperialism, but this is not Israel's concern.

I am concerned about the freedom of nations. The task of this government is to see to our state and our independence, to our growth, to our Jewish and Arab citizens, to Jewish immigration and absorption and to the development of the country. So that we may live here respectably, and so that the state may be the homeland of the nation that dwells in it. We believe...that we can influence the situation in the world, but it is

better for us, for a small nation, which is struggling to survive, to be modest. Those who fight imperialism would do well to consider the work that needs to be done here. I am very sorry about this debate concerning the agreement with Egypt, Transjordan and Lebanon. Some people try to censure the State of Israel in foreign forums, whether in the press or at assemblies, and we cannot do anything about it. But why does this have to be done here? The tiny state of Israel is making immense efforts—which may not be successful—but it is doing all it can to be friends with all the large and small nations of the world. It does not scrutinize them closely. And anyone who accuses the State of Israel of supporting a certain side does not speak the truth and does not serve the State of Israel by doing so, nor do I know who they serve.

We also signed these agreements in order to...uphold the principles of the U.N., which is one of the major aspects of this government's policy. This is not the sole criterion, although it is also in Israel's interests. Because we are convinced that whatever is good for the U.N. is good for us....Although if the worst should happen and the U.N. seeks to impose upon us something which is not in our favor, we will not obey....We want peace in the world, and the U.N. is one of the bastions of peace, although perhaps not the strongest....

I heard something strange from MK Sapir, namely, that Wadi Ara is not important, because it continues to the border, from where it is possible to fire. Nowhere on this earth is there a place from which it is impossible to fire....Mr. Sapir also tells us that he does not want to give up an independent Arab state. This agreement says nothing about an independent Arab state, but I would like to explain that I tried to do this in the debate on the cabinet's program, on behalf of this government. It is not our task to mold an independent Arab state. We think that this is something for the Arabs themselves to do. We think that if the land belongs to the Arabs, they should do what they want with it. (M. Wilner: The government shouldn't hinder this.) We are living in a regime where one person may speak against another. But why does MK Wilner have to say things which do not accord with the truth, claiming that I said here that we do not want an Arab state in Nablus because Tewfik Toubi will rule it? Why put words in my mouth? (M. Wilner: there are minutes.) I know. Of course there are. Why should one fear Toubi's rule in a country which doesn't exist? There are Arab countries—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria—and I don't see Toubi ruling them. So why put words I didn't say into my mouth? I said that it is not our concern to set him to rule an Arab country, just as we do not make him our ruler here, "Don't do to others as you would not have them do to you." (A. Ben Eliezer: This isn't an Arab country, it's part of the Land of Israel.)

And now to the main point, which is not an international orientation. I know that for some people here, perhaps not so many, the only

thing in their lives is their international orientation, and they fight for or against a given side. They claim that we want war with the Arab countries surrounding us, and with the Arabs which really exist, not with those who are in someone's imagination. It could be that in Wilner's or Ben Aharon's imagination there are other Arabs, but we are not interested in imaginary Arabs, just as we are not interested in imaginary Jews. The only thing that interests us is reality. And as I have already said, we did not want this war. We did not declare war upon hearing the U.N. resolution. Not us. When we were attacked, we fought back. And when one fights, one crushes the enemy.

But our role and desire in the Arab world was not Dir Yassin. Our task was not to destroy the Arab nation....We will do our best to destroy those who fight us, but the aim of our war was not to destroy the Arab countries....

Well, people tell us that we should have fought until—and this is where the coalition and the opposition part ways. Herut says: until the Jewish state exists on both sides of the Jordan; while Sapir says, if I understand him correctly: until we establish an independent Arab state; while Ben Aharon says: until we attain the entire Land of Israel.

I'll start from the last one: a Jewish state or the entire Land of Israel. What does the latter mean? Both sides of the Jordan or this side of the Jordan? The part that is still being negotiated, or not? A Jewish state without (the events of) Dir Yassin can exist only by the dictatorship of the minority. (From the Mapam benches: With or without Galilee?) I'll come to that in a minute....A Jewish state, in the existing situation, even only in the western part of the Land of Israel, without Dir Yassin (events), is incompatible with democracy, because the number of Arabs in the western part of the Land of Israel is greater than the number of Jews. And Dir Yassin is not our program! Although acts of that kind were not their sole prerogative, we condemned that kind of thing!...Talking about the entire Land of Israel, if it is not merely an empty phrase, if the meaning behind the words is understood, and not in the distant future but now, can mean only one thing—there was once someone in that faction who had the courage to say it—it means an international mandate for the Land of Israel. If all the Land of Israel is a Jewish state, and we did not want that it should be an Arab state, we will be told that if they are in the majority, it is an Arab state, and then only an international mandate or trusteeship or some such device is possible. We did not want that. That was what the argument between us was about all the years. And we thought that the time had come for some of you who opposed it to realize their mistake. So if you are reviving that argument, do it openly! Have the courage to say what you want. Do you want there to be a democratic State of Israel throughout the Land of Israel in 1949, or do you want a Jewish state throughout the Land of Israel and

that we should drive the Arabs out, or do you want democracy within that state? How can that be a Jewish state?

We want a Jewish state, even if not in the whole country. Who is "we"? The Zionist movement and the vast majority of the Jewish population, as well as most of the pioneering movement and the soldiers and those who shed their blood! They fought for it!

The question of the Triangle and Hebron has arisen....Let us say, as has been claimed here, that from a military viewpoint we could have conquered it....But one must look ahead before one does things. If there is a war, and there may be a war, despite this recognition, and if there is, we will not only be on the defensive...what will happen? The Mandatory authorities told us that in this area there are 500,000...or 800,000 Arabs. So it is obvious that in the entire western part of the Land of Israel there would be slightly more Arabs than Jews. And let's assume that we could conquer all the western part of the Land of Israel by military means, and I'm also sure we could. What would happen then? We'd form one state. But that state would want to be democratic, there would be general elections—and we'd be in a minority. (From the floor: There are Jews in the world.) Yes, but meanwhile the majority would pass a law preventing Jews from coming here, as it has done in other countries.

So, when the choice was between the whole of the country without a Jewish state or a Jewish state without the whole of the country, we chose the latter. (From the Mapam benches: Why did you demand a Jewish state in the entire Land of Israel?) We demanded a Jewish state in the entire Land of Israel, and it would have been possible if the Mandatory authorities had kept their word and allowed a million Jews to come here, and that could have been done within two years. We don't want to take the initiative of waging war on the Arabs. I want that to be clear, and I want you to say clearly if you want us to take that initiative or not? I won't even make things difficult for you by reminding you that you claimed to uphold the brotherhood of mankind. There are many things one upholds which one later abandons. But kindly clarify the matter for yourselves first: do you want us to take the initiative of waging war on the Arabs? This government has said no. And it continues to say no. If we are forced to, we will fight, and this government has shown that it can fight.

This is the issue of the Triangle, of Hebron and, if anyone wants to go on, of Transjordan. We do not accept your program. We were not elected on the basis of that program, nor did we believe in it....We think that the establishment of the state, albeit not in the entire Land of Israel, was the greatest event in Jewish history, without mentioning previous eras, about which we are ignorant. This increased Israel's importance and enabled Jews to be saved, to immigrate to Israel, build their independence and fulfill the vision of redemption, more than any of the sin-

cerest prayers uttered throughout the generations. The sincere prayers were undoubtedly a factor, more than all your declamations. But the greatest undertaking of our time is the establishment of the Jewish state. And it could only have been established in this way. (From the floor: Only in this way! Hear, hear!)

As for the future, we always preferred deeds to empty phrases. I don't know if these agreements will bring a stable peace between us and the Arabs, because it also depends on the other side. We want it, and this is a step towards it. We do not regard the Arabs as being inferior to us because they are different from us. We rejected that approach when the world regarded us as being inferior because we were different. The Arabs are entitled to be different from us. I believe in the forces of progress in the world, and Arab progress will come from within and not from outside....We want peace with this Arab world both because we want peace and because it is vital for us.

We want the country to be filled with Jews, but not at the expense of the Arabs who dwell among us. Those Arabs who live in our midst are citizens with equal rights to the Jews. But we established the state—and I want the three Arab representatives here to be aware of this—not only for its current inhabitants. And immigration is not achieved solely by declamations....Enabling Jews to immigrate to Israel is one of the fundamental purposes for which this state exists. Immigrating to Israel does not mean that one takes a trip from the concentration camps of Germany to Tel Aviv or Haifa, but that one puts down roots here. And that is not achieved by fine declarations about the other side of the Jordan.

We think that peace, even if only for six months, is better than no peace for six months. Because that will enable us to bring more Jews here. We fear for our safety. We also know that even if one signs a peace treaty war can still break out. But we regard our security as being bound up with increasing the Jewish population of this state. And that requires a stable regime, even if it is only temporary. The sole criterion for us for this agreement and others is not how it will affect other countries (we are not their puppets), it is our task to look after our own interests. We are not so short-sighted. A Jew cannot help thinking about the whole world, that is his nature, his tradition. But there is no one in the world who will look after us....The countries of the world can manage without us, even if all the Jews are wiped off the face of the earth. There will be the "forces of yesterday" and the "forces of today," but there will be no Jewish nation. So we must look after ourselves. We measure and will continue to measure every political step by only one yardstick: if it enhances the state's ability to survive and absorb immigrants, strengthens its security, aids in enhancing the standard of living of its inhabitants and brings it nearer to fulfilling the historical vision of the Jewish nation.

Don't these agreements do just that? We don't have to recognize Transjordan. People played that silly game with us, refusing to recognize us when we already existed....We don't care if people recognize us or not. When I was asked in the summer: "What price are you prepared to pay to be accepted into the U.N.?" I replied: "The membership fee. No more." Because we are interested in existing. If something exists and it has life, it is recognized. And so, if we recognize Transjordan or not, it exists. MK Begin has made fun of it...but the reality exists.

Transjordan has soldiers, and they were here. They are in Latrun and Jerusalem and they tried to cut off the road to Eilat. That is reality. I don't say that this reality will endure forever, but that is reality. We had to fight them, and some of our boys were killed. In some cases we incurred losses but won, and in others we incurred losses and lost against this force. And there are other forces. They don't need our recognition. They didn't ask it of us, nor did we give it.

There are two ways open to us: either we fight them and they destroy us, or we destroy them. We say: we don't want to fight them if they don't fight us. So we made a military agreement which says: you mustn't move beyond this point, and for our part we promise not to move beyond that point. But there has been a change in the borders. Beforehand the border was more to the west, towards the sea, and further north of the Jezreel Valley. Now that border has shifted further east of Tulkarm, and further south of Wadi Ara.

What happened? Do you want to make an impression on people? Do you really think the public is so naive?...Is it so bad that we established something without bloodshed for once?

If bloodshed is an ideal then a tragedy really has happened. But if the objective can be achieved without bloodshed, we are content. We are glad we reached Eilat without shedding blood, thanks to the agreement, and we are proud of it! (A. Ben Aharon: Without shedding blood!) Yes, we reached Eilat without shedding blood; trust me, I know at least as much as you and your colleagues in these matters! (From the Mapam benches: It's quite ridiculous to say that we reached Eilat without shedding blood!) Please don't interrupt me! I didn't interrupt you! There is freedom of speech here!

It was our objective to reach Eilat. We reached Eilat by peaceful means, through an agreement with Egypt, and we reinforced our positions there through it. There is no such thing as getting things safely and easily. We were in Eilat once and were forced to leave it. We were in the entire country once and were driven out of it. But today we are safer and better entrenched in Eilat than we were before the agreement was signed, and we are to be congratulated for it.

As to the matter of the railway line, which Mr. Sapir dismisses so lightly for some reason, I don't know if the railway will remain there, but in my opinion it is preferable for a railway which is not being used to

be within the sphere where our army operates and not in that of another army. That's the difference. I don't think that Transjordan wanted it, but I think that what is good for us is also good for the other side. Others might disagree with me, but we don't think that what is good for us must be bad for the Arabs and vice versa. There is someone in the world who wants us to be constantly at odds with the Arabs. But we will try to minimize this tendency as far as we can.

The sole criterion for all these agreements is are they preferable to not having an agreement, not whether they are better than miracles. If a miracle occurs and the Messiah comes—and those who believe are convinced that this will happen—there will be peace in the world...but we have to save the Jewish people by natural means until this miracle happens. And as far as natural means go, these three agreements have advanced our interests, established our position, increased immigration possibilities and the chances for life, peace and friendship with the Arabs. Nothing is guaranteed, nor will it be, even if the entire Land of Israel is in our hands. But this step has brought us forward, and that is the only criterion. We don't accept any other criterion of puppet-parties. We are also convinced that if it is good for us, it is good for the world, because we are a new nation and have no pretensions to ruling the world. What is essential for us is peace...and that the the differences between countries do not lead to war. We believe that it is possible for two regimes to live in peace. But that criterion is enough for us, and in this respect we have defended the interests of the Jewish nation, of this country, of the U.N. and of all the parties to the U.N.

The Knesset shall say whether it regards this as furthering our interests, though not the final redemption or the ultimate aim. This government and this Knesset have not undertaken to achieve that. They undertook only a partial role for a period of no more than four years, during which time full redemption cannot be achieved...The Knesset must decide whether...the agreements we have signed with the Arab countries are really a step towards what we want to achieve, as we presented in our election program, and as most of the population and, I'm sure, most of the world approved.

D.Z. Pinkas (Religious Front): I would like to suggest, as a point of order...that the House decide whether...to accept Mr. Begin's proposal...or transfer the matter to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. Naturally, a no-confidence motion cannot be transferred to the Committee....

(The House votes in favor of transferring the matter to the Committee, rather than accepting Mr. Begin's motion of no confidence.)

Armistice Agreement with Syria

Introduction

Negotiations with Syria concerning an armistice agreement were long and drawn-out. It was vital for Israel to attain the withdrawal of Syrian troops from territory captured by Syria, above all the Mishmar Hayarden salient, but there was no obvious diplomatic or political lever at hand. It was only after several months of negotiations, patiently chaired by Dr. Ralph Bunche, that an agreement was achieved. Some of its formulations—concerning U.N. responsibilities and the return to normal life—were deliberately vague. At the time they seemed the only possible solution, but gave rise to serious controversies and incidents in years to come.

The Israel-Syria General Armistice Agreement was discussed by the Knesset on the day it was signed.

Sitting 58 of the First Knesset

20 July 1949 (23 Tammuz 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv, 4:15 p.m.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Distinguished Knesset, the armistice agreement between Israel and Syria was signed an hour ago. The cabinet thought that the Knesset would be interested in hearing a brief explanation of its content and character as soon as it was signed. This agreement concludes the armistice negotiations between Israel and all the Arab countries which sent their armies against us, invaded the country and attacked the State of Israel. This activity, which ended today, continued for six months and one week. The armistice negotiations with Egypt began at Rhodes on 13 January, and the agreement with Syria regarding the northern border of our country was signed today, 20 July.

This period of six months is divided into two parts which are unequal as regards both the time involved and the results attained. The first three segments of this affair—the negotiations and agreements with Egypt, Transjordan and Lebanon—took two months and ten days altogether. The fourth and final segment—the negotiations with Syria—took three and a half months, during which time we held more than 20 meetings, some of them after long intervals. This fact alone should indicate how difficult this matter was....The main problem derived from the military and geopolitical background against which the negotiations with Syria were held. The Syrian army was the only

invading force which conquered and retained a large part of the area which we regard as part of Israel today. The area is not large in terms of territory but is of some considerable strategic and economic importance. In geopolitical terms it is a strip of territory—albeit not continuous—which extends not only along the northern border which has always been particularly sensitive, but also along the watershed in the northeastern corner of Israel.

The history of the formation of the border in that part of the country is a long and complex one. After the country was conquered from the Ottoman Empire by the Allies in the final stages of the First World War, there was a debate between France and England regarding the line dividing the two mandates there. At that stage neither France nor Britain received all they wanted, the principle being that the entire area of the water, together with a strip of land to the east of it, was to be included within the British Mandate. This principle was not maintained when the British government decided in 1922, with the approval of the League of Nations, to detach the eastern part of Palestine and make it a separate Arab state...and the border was fixed in the middle of the water-line separating the two countries, namely, in the middle of the River Jordan and the Dead Sea.

The northern border was not fixed in accordance with that principle. The entire Jordan River bed and the lake area around Lake Tiberias, with their eastern banks and the strip beyond it, were included within Palestine, and the border between it and Syria in that part of the country, along the Jordan and the lakes, did not touch the river banks and those lakes anywhere, but was some way away from them, though parallel to them.

At the start of the negotiations between us and Syria we found ourselves in sharp disagreement. The main aim of the other side was to hold on to the positions it had conquered in that part of the country. I want to remind you that not only had they conquered the strip to the east of the water-line, reaching the Jordan River, and even Lake Tiberias in some spots, but they had also managed to cross the Jordan and establish themselves to the west of the water-line. Their principle objective was to hold on to these achievements, although during the negotiations they showed some readiness to compromise, being prepared to withdraw from the areas they had conquered on the western side of the Jordan on condition they maintained a strip to the east of it. This would mean that the armistice line would not be identical with the border, and that the strip between the border and the water-line would remain in their hands.

Although, as in every armistice agreement we have signed to date, the armistice line would be declared not to determine the future border...in this case we did not think that this would provide any guarantee as long as the other side actually retained a strip which was so essential

for us, thereby creating facts which could have long-term results. Thus, our main aim in these negotiations was to get the other side out of the area it had conquered....

This was our precondition for the armistice agreement with Syria. We repeated this constantly, so that there should be no doubt as to our position, both among the Syrians and among the U.N. institutions...who had undertaken to mediate between us and under whose auspices the negotiations were conducted. In order to understand the particular difficulty of this agreement I should point out that...when we started negotiating with Lebanon our forces were on Lebanese soil and had occupied a considerable area within the Lebanese border, while Lebanon had gained a corner of our territory. The principle which was laid down during the negotiations was...that each side would vacate the other's territory which had been conquered during the fighting. We presented this principle as governing the agreement between us and Syria. One of the responses we received was that we had conquered the Lebanese territory after the ceasefire. We claimed that we had been justified in starting to fight again at that stage, but that that had been the formal situation, while the Syrians had conquered the area they wanted to retain before the ceasefire.

An additional problem associated with these negotiations was due to certain international influences, which tried to support this claim of the new regime in Syria, justifying its position and its refusal to leave the area east of the Jordan. They tried to present Syria's agreement to withdraw from Mishmar Hayarden and other areas west of the Jordan as a far-reaching concession which should satisfy us, claiming that it was unfair of us to demand more.

As a result of this deadlock between the Syrian and Israeli attitudes the negotiations reached a virtual standstill...until the U.N. mediator, Dr. Bunche, proposed a solution, realizing that we would be unable to sign an agreement unless the Syrians withdrew from our land....Consequently, he insisted that the Syrian army leave the area it had conquered west of the border, and made no distinction between the border and the water-line. His compromise plan focused on his demand that the Syrians abandon the water-line and move across the border. His demands of us were that once the Syrian army had withdrawn from this area our army would not advance into it, and it should remain demilitarized. In other words, in those areas where the ceasefire lines between us and Syria which were fixed during the fighting are identified as the international border, the international border is the armistice line. While in those areas where the international border is not identical with or does not coincide with the ceasefire line there is a demilitarized zone between the international border and the ceasefire line, i.e., the Syrian army must leave it and the Israeli army may not enter it.

He also asked us to include two areas which were not controlled by the Syrian army in the demilitarized zone. These were Ein Gev, east of Lake Tiberias, and the far smaller area of Dardara, east of the Meï Merom Lake. He saw fit to insist on this condition simply in order to compensate the Syrian army and government for the concession he had wrested from them....

He also determined that in the...demilitarized zone civilian life should continue normally...and that people who had been forced to leave their homes upon the entry of the Syrian army could now return to them. This means that farming can be renewed in these areas...and all the former security arrangements in force there are to be restored, with the police replacing the army.

...The basis of this proposal is the complete withdrawal by the invading army from this part of the country, not as the result of a battle but solely as the result of negotiations and international considerations....The other side was doubtless aware of other possible solutions to the problem, namely, the use of force on our part....At any rate, we hope that they withdrew not because they were beaten but because they accepted the principle of international compromise. We hope that they withdrew because their long-term intention is to have stable and peaceful relations with Israel...on the basis of the previous border.

I will add in explanation that when we accepted the U.N. resolution of 16 November 1948...whose main section was passed unanimously by the Security Council...and we agreed to enter upon armistice negotiations with each of the countries which had invaded our land and fought against us, it could be assumed that the agreements which would be hammered out would stabilize existing positions. Although we demanded the withdrawal of the invading armies, the general spirit of the Security Council Resolution was directed towards stabilizing the existing situation. And in this armistice agreement with Syria we managed to change this basis. The agreement does not stabilize the existing situation but changes it fundamentally, although not to the extent we had hoped. Because our army does not enter the area from which the Syrian army is withdrawing, and even has to leave an area the Syrians never conquered. We found it necessary to agree under protest to this principle of the demilitarization of Ein Gev and Dardara...on the assumption that we would be able to maintain a police force there which would be able to preserve security and embody Israel's rule of these areas. We regarded this as the price we had to pay for the basic achievement of the agreement—the withdrawal of the invading army.

This withdrawal will not occur overnight; it will take place in stages, continuing over 12 weeks....This is because of the Syrian army's undertaking to destroy the permanent fortifications it had built in this strip. To the best of my knowledge, our forces had not built fortifications in their section....The fact that it will take so long to disman-

tle all these fortifications indicates how extensive they were and how much money had been invested in them. Throughout that area we inflicted serious losses on the Syrian army, which had invested a great deal in terms of human life and finances in order to hold onto and fortify the places they had conquered. In view of these facts, Syria's concession and its contribution to the armistice is admirable, and we hope it will also contribute to peace.

The renewal of civilian life...means replacing the army with the police....In the demilitarized zone there are four centers of Jewish settlement: east of Tzemah, around Ein Gev, in and around Mishmar Hayarden and at Dardara. The renewal of civilian life also involves reviving the land link between Ein Gev and Dardara....Throughout this period Ein Gev was cut off from the land to the north and the south, its only contact with Israel being by sea....The agreement also enables us to return to Mishmar Hayarden, when the time comes to withdraw from this area. This veteran settlement, which suffered for many years from malaria and attacks from its neighbors, and whose inhabitants were forced to abandon the site in the last war, some of them being taken captive, has been occupied by the enemy for the last 13 months. It will now be restored to Israel and the Jewish people, and these and other prisoners will be released.

On the other hand, just as Jewish inhabitants may return to their homes, the agreement also enables Arabs who fled to the eastern side because of the fighting to come back. This affects fourteen Arab points of settlement, encompassing a fairly small population. The agreement stipulates that there will be a local Arab police force, not Syrian police. There is a precedent for this arrangement in the villages of the Triangle which passed into our hands following the armistice with Transjordan....

At the final stages of the negotiations the Syrian delegation tried to raise difficulties...demanding the return of the refugees from Tzemah, and this was even supported at some stage by the U.N. Our position was that as long as we are not discussing a peace treaty there is no cause to discuss the return of the refugees. Incidentally, when we signed the agreement we proposed to Syria what we had proposed to other neighboring countries, namely, that there should be a border station for the reuniting of families, on the basis of the principle that the wives and children of inhabitants who had remained in Israel should be restored to them. But we did not agree to the general return of refugees to Tzemah. Another demand raised by the Syrians, and supported by the U.N., concerned the civil rights of Syrian subjects with the State of Israel, whereby Syrians who had had the right to work land across the border and fish in our waters during the Mandate could continue to do so. After a discussion the Syrians abandoned this demand.

...The agreement with Syria naturally contains all the elements found in the other agreements, one of them being the reduction of the military forces on both sides of the armistice lines and the demilitarized zones, and placing only defensive forces in these areas. This is intended to minimize any possibility of a clash occurring between the forces, and to protect the inhabitants of the areas from attacks by the opposing army....

At the conclusion of this chapter...I would like to thank the U.N. representatives on behalf of the government. They did not spare themselves...and made every effort to bring these difficult negotiations to a successful conclusion. First and foremost we thank Dr. Ralph Bunche, as well as his aides....I would also like to praise the patience and fortitude displayed by the members of the Israeli delegation, as well as...the remarkable coordination between the military representatives and those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With the signing of the armistice agreement between us and Syria the armistice arrangements under which we live today are completed, though we do not know how long they will continue until peace finally comes. I would like to take this opportunity of saying in public that in my view the armistice agreements can be regarded as crucial achievements of the IDF, on a par with the victories on the battlefield. Moreover, without the armistice agreements our military triumphs and the changes we made in the map of Israel would always depend on the changing balance of forces of both sides. By means of the armistice agreements the facts created by force of arms have become permanent arrangements, upheld by mutual agreements and with the international imprimatur of the U.N. I do not need to repeat that we did not achieve everything we wanted or deserved through these agreements, but I do not know of any negotiations and agreement which ended with 100 percent satisfaction on one side, without taking note of the standpoint of the other side. For what we achieved through these agreements, particularly the one with Syria, we had to pay a price. These agreements have to be discussed in general, not taking each one individually, balancing the positive against the negative and examining which side tips the scales. It is the cabinet's view that the advantages of the armistice agreement with Syria offset the disadvantages, and I propose that the Knesset evaluate it similarly.

Sitting 62 of the First Knesset

1 August 1949 (6 Av 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Distinguished Knesset, the debate on the Armistice Agreement with Syria has been postponed twice, and meanwhile there has been a certain development in the course of the talks at Lausanne, as they reach the second stage. This development, which makes it necessary to make a statement to the Knesset...concerns the Arab refugees.

The Knesset is well aware of the Government's basic stand on the refugee problem, namely, that the solution lies primarily not in returning them to Israel but in settling them in other countries. There has been no change in this basic attitude. The Government has announced on several occasions, however, that within the framework of a comprehensive peace it would be ready to make its contribution to settling the refugees by taking a certain number of them back. Israel's permanent representative at the U.N. made this announcement at the meeting of the Assembly's parallel political committee on 5 May 1949. It was affirmed in the statements made by the head of Israel's delegation to the Conciliation Commission at Lausanne in May and June. It was reiterated in the Foreign Minister's address to the Knesset on 15 June. There has been no change in this position either.

With the revival of the Lausanne Conference the Government decided to take a step forward, in accordance with its position. It reached the conclusion that, should the appropriate background be created, it would be prepared henceforth to define its future contribution to resolving the refugee problem as part of the overall peace settlement between the Arab nations and Israel, and as part of a comprehensive plan to attain the eventual solution of the refugee problem. Accordingly, the Israeli delegation at Lausanne was instructed to inform the Conciliation Commission that if the Arab delegations were prepared to embark on peace negotiations our delegation would be ready to discuss the refugee problem first and, at a later stage, if regarded as part of comprehensive peace negotiations, to define Israel's contribution to solving the problem by resettling the refugees, on the explicit condition that this would be contingent on the attainment of peace and would constitute part of the overall solution of the refugee problem.

Israel's contribution, which would be defined as such, would include those refugees who have already returned and have been resettled in Israel and who number approximately twenty-five thousand persons. The defined contribution would also include the thousands who will

have presumably returned to Israel meanwhile, within the framework of the reunification of Arab families, which was interrupted by the war.

With this statement, the delegation was instructed to stress once again that the State of Israel does not regard itself as being responsible for the refugee problem in any way. The State of Israel places full responsibility for this problem and for the terrible hardships it involves on those who rejected the U.N. resolution for resolving the Palestine problem and sought to negate it by force of arms, whether by rebellion within the country in order to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or by invasion from the outside, in order to nip it in the bud. However, although it is not responsible for the problem, the State of Israel cannot be insensitive to the suffering and distress caused by it. It is very interested in solving the problem and regards it as its humanitarian duty to do its best to help.

The dimensions of Israel's aid cannot be determined by the extent of the problem, but must be based solely on the state's capacity, in relation to its security and economic considerations. Bitter experience has taught us that the return of any number of refugees involves serious dangers. We are also aware of the fact that any new settlement involving Arab refugees will create serious economic difficulties. Nevertheless, the Government feels that the state should take the risk and accept the difficulty, if this opens the path to negotiations, and if the implementation of the contribution is contingent upon the establishment of a stable peace and the participation of the Arab countries in the complete solution of the refugee problem. For our precondition is that if peace is not attained, if the Arab countries do not undertake to absorb most of the refugees, if an overall solution to the problem is not found, Israel's contribution will not be binding. It is proposed as a link in a chain, it does not exist on its own....That is Israel's position at Lausanne, and we are waiting to hear the response of the Arabs.

...
I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): ...I think the Government is expecting too much of the Knesset by asking it to understand its thinking and policy...regarding the refugee problem. It is not very long since chauvinistic slogans echoed through the country on this very issue, and anyone who tried to tell the Government, and especially the majority party, Mapai, not to mention the right-wing parties, that the issue of five or six hundred thousand Arab refugees who had left the country would not simply disappear, and that the state would have to find a political...solution to the problem, was attacked incessantly...and dismissed as an opponent of national interests. Certain persons, such as the poet Greenberg, used the term "fifth column."...But even the members of the Government, especially during the elections, thought that for internal purposes they could make use of this problem to benefit from the nationalist mood which swept away sections of the public, and mocked every

idea...which aspired to a constructive solution. We have discovered that this unpopular view was the only serious political approach. Our grief and sorrow...for the Government today derives from the fact that it finds it so difficult to learn from Jews and Zionist Jewish socialist parties, and is so quick to learn from the pressure of foreign powers....

We demanded that the return of the refugees should be part of our overall policy....But if we implement it today it will be the Western Powers which will be regarded as saviors by the Arab world....The Government is constantly increasing the number of Arabs in Israel. Within a few months their number rose from 70,000 to 170,000...and tens of thousands were added to them without any connection with peace or with the negotiations at Lausanne. After that we heard about the Government's new decision. We heard about the number not in the Knesset or the Israeli press but from American press agencies, to which we are grateful for the information about our Government's decisions....It is obvious that this mysterious number about which we read in the papers...will represent a minimum on which further extortion will be based. We are still negotiating about the Gaza Strip. This demand was raised in the past—in my view quite rightly—by Israel's representatives, who demanded that the Strip be attached to the State of Israel. This also involves considerable numbers of refugees, and now we see where a course without courage, political vision...or political realism leads us. The course the Government took ignored the country's basic needs, namely, building a bridge to the democratic Arab world....There is a price we have paid for our independence, and it also includes the price of responsibility for the situation and property of its citizens, even when they belong to another nation....

It is evident that the Armistice Agreement with Syria is the worst of the various armistice agreements. Even the Foreign Minister hinted at this in his address here. If one looks at the agreement and compares it with those which preceded it—which we also criticized at the time—one will see how much worse it is....In this matter, as in many other political acts which are of crucial importance, we are presented with a fait accompli....I say this, knowing it will appear in the record, because I wish to lodge my protest....

...This agreement gives unprecedented authority to the Chairman of the Armistice Commission, who is a representative of the U.N....He may determine who may return to the demilitarized zones and when...what is to be the structure of the police force there and how it may act...which permanent fortifications are to be destroyed...and what kind of rule will be in effect there....The agreements with Transjordan and Egypt stated explicitly what the nature of the civil rule in the demilitarized zones such as the Triangle should be....This time the issue is left open, but it is...left to the Chairman of the Commission to decide which police forces should be permitted in both the Jewish and the Arab

areas. What is unclear is what will happen in the areas in between. Who will take care of them? The Chairman will decide who is to return....There are also rumors that he can freeze settlement in that area...and can therefore prevent the Jewish population from growing....In brief, the U.N. representative is the deciding civil authority regarding the demilitarized zone.

The entire northern and eastern border with Syria is open and undefended. Henceforth we will have to defend the border area within Israeli territory. Anyone can see that neither the Jewish nor the Arab police forces in the...settlements will be able to prevent infiltration and attacks by gangs within the demilitarized zone....

What is most grave, however, are the territorial concessions. In return for the liberation and return of the inhabitants to Mishmar Hayarden and for opening a land route which is still doubtful as regards our security, we handed over Israeli land which was in our possession and turned it into a demilitarized zone, I am referring to Ein Gev and Dardara. In places to the east of Tzemah we have been told which points may be used as bases by our army, because they are outside the demilitarized zone. In the Tzemah region the army is permitted at only three points: the Tzemah police station, Sha'ar Hagolan and Massada. The agreement makes no mention of restricting the Syrian army in its territory to similar points.

...The Foreign Minister said that certain international forces were interested in reinforcing the new regime in Syria. But did Israel stand to gain from this...? Two weeks before the agreement was signed the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister repeated their promise that Ein Gev and Dardara would not be demilitarized. Today all we can do is express our sorrow and anger at what the Government has done. From this podium I would like to congratulate those two settlements, which stood firm under attack, fought heroically and recorded a glorious page in the annals of the defense of Israel's labor settlements. Despite the bitter disappointment the Government's action has caused them...I am sure that they will put their trust in the constructive and redeeming power of the Jewish pioneer, and will continue to build and develop their farms and the surrounding areas, despite the fact that they are demilitarized.

I would like to remind the Government of its particular obligation to help those settlements, which have sacrificed so much, to rehabilitate themselves rapidly, so that they can cope with the special and serious situation in which the Government has placed them. I propose that the Knesset express its regret at the fact that the Government signed an agreement such as the one before us without consulting the Knesset's Foreign Affairs Committee fairly and appropriately.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): ...In his address, the Foreign Minister repeatedly mentioned the military situation which, he claimed, constitut-

ed the basis or background for the Armistice Agreement with Syria....I would like to know why he stressed our inability to dislodge the Syrians from the points they had occupied in Israel....I would like to know why this has to be emphasized in explaining the importance of a political armistice agreement. It seems to me that every statement made by the Government in this connection contains something which says that this Armistice Agreement differs from the previous ones, and the demilitarization here is not like the demilitarization elsewhere. The agreement with Egypt concerned areas where there was and is no Jewish settlement. Here we are dealing with Jewish areas, and the Foreign Minister stressed the importance of this, afterwards correcting himself and referring to the relative importance of this area. But in this area there are Jewish settlements, and we wish to establish more...and especially to rehabilitate...Mishmar Hayarden, which guarded this pass for many years.

The question is...can our settlements in this demilitarized zone be defended, since according to the agreement our army is not allowed to guard them, and only police forces, about whose control we are not so sure, will be permitted there? In view of the precise and explicit phrasing of the Armistice Agreement, I maintain—not on the basis of the first impression we received from the information given us—that administrative and police matters will suffer the same fate as the area which was transferred to us in the Triangle....

...It has been stated explicitly that the Armistice Commission will have the supreme authority to determine matters. This means that it will not be the Government of Israel which decides how many policemen may be there, or who and how many people may return; nor will it determine in what way this will assure the rehabilitation of the existing settlements and those which we must quickly establish in that area. One can regard the Armistice Agreement as a preliminary stage towards peace, and one can assume that it is better to make some kind of concession if this brings permanent peace. But there is a suspicion that these conditions are serving as an undesirable basis for a permanent peace agreement, at least in that area.

It is possible to find other defects, which will be revealed once this Armistice Agreement is implemented...though it is difficult to foresee what will happen in another two weeks or months....But the Armistice Agreement takes on greater significance when we see it within the larger framework of...our relations with the neighboring countries, and the refugee problem, which was mentioned by the Foreign Minister, and whose details, whether correct or not, were made known to us by the press.

...When the negotiations began at Lausanne...the tremendous pressure which was exerted by the U.S. was rejected by all the parties in this House....But now...as an opening gambit, we make a proposal,

whether mentioning a figure or not, and the question is, what did we achieve by that...? The sequence of events—the Armistice Agreement, the affair of Gaza-Rafah, and now the announcement of our readiness to make a contribution, whether mentioning a specific number or not—indicate that we are very eager to reach a quick solution to the problem. Even if we make all kinds of conditions, they might push us down the slope of concessions, causing us to give up more than we are prepared to today.

I believe that our Government was hasty in its proposal. We know how to withstand pressure....None of us, including the Government, has ignored the gravity of the return of the refugees...which, in addition to the existing number of Arab citizens in the State of Israel, in the conditions under which they will return...could considerably undermine what little internal stability we have achieved in the last few months. The social, political, administrative, cultural and security situation will become extremely complicated....

This is not a problem of progress, but one of survival, which we have to consider very carefully, weighing up the common interests of all the citizens of this state and its future. We have always declared that we are not responsible for the refugee situation. It is, therefore, a grave mistake, in my view, to take the initiative in this affair. I fear that we will not attain that important goal of foreign policy—the approval of the world. I fear that we will achieve the opposite—increased demands on us....

Thus, the conclusion is that the Government has made a very serious mistake at this stage....I demand that the Knesset ensure that this does not recur in the future, and that such issues be debated before they are decided, either by the plenum or by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

Rabbi M. Nurock (Religious Front): First of all, I regard it as my duty to note that debating foreign policy at this moment, when our representatives are discussing and arguing with various countries in several places, cannot be of any help in solving the grave problems of our young state, and may even cause harm. A detailed discussion should take place in the Foreign Affairs Committee, not in the plenum....We must take into consideration the great difficulties the Government has to overcome, and the weighty responsibility imposed upon us. The members of Mizrahi support the Government in this historic struggle.

It is our duty, however, to express our doubts and apprehensions regarding various steps taken in the sphere of foreign policy, of which we were informed only post factum. Thus, all we can say is that, to our regret, in the negotiations with Syria and the other Arab countries regarding the armistice, refugees, borders and our holy city, Jerusalem, we have not always witnessed a firm will and a steadfast attitude. Those who waged the bloody war in this country must bear the responsibility

for the refugees. They must take the blame for the trouble and suffering they have caused their brethren. We have already gone beyond the uttermost limit in concessions, on both the security and economic levels, by permitting the entry of relatives.

Out of philanthropic motives we have done more than all the other countries and nations did when a third of our people were murdered, and when those who remained sought refuge. There is no cause to discuss restoring property, because the war damage they caused us outweighs it all. We are burdened with the effort to absorb Jewish refugees. We say: so far and no further!

We have no cause to fear the pressure of outside bodies. There is no legal or moral basis for the Powers to impose their will upon us by force. We have learned through many instances, including that of Palestine, that the U.N. has no power other than that of words....We ask: what sanctions did the U.N. employ against those who infringed the November resolution? Everyone knows that the U.N. has only ethical, ornamental strength, and nothing more than that....

The November resolution is not binding upon us in any way. Its basis has been stripped from it because the other countries did not implement what they were supposed to....If we agree to compromises, if we are influenced by threats, our overt and covert enemies will increase their onslaught and demand even more concessions. If we had given in to threats there would be no state, and may God strengthen our hearts to withstand this unprecedented and historic trial.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, Ever since the establishment of our state, and ever since Anglo-American imperialism, through its mercenaries, the reactionary Arab rulers, imposed war on us, the debate about war and peace has not ceased in the Provisional Council of State, the Knesset and the public. The debate centers on the question: what should be the guidelines and principles upon which Israel's policy is based in order to assure the state's independence and sovereignty?

At various opportunities we have made our position clear, namely, that the guiding principle of Israel's policy should be our state's national interest, requiring us to be independent of imperialist foreign powers, and to rely on the strength of our people and our friends abroad....

As we know, the Jewish people did not want war, and even when we were fighting to defend ourselves we desired peace. We approve every step which brings us nearer to permanent peace, secure borders and good relations with the nations around us, because this is in our interests, the interests of construction, economic development and social progress. The question is, however, does this agreement, with its apparent and concealed conditions, and everything around it, bring us nearer the goal of peace and security, for which the nation yearns...?

The answer is that this agreement and the Foreign Ministry's policy of the last few weeks merely emphasize the feeling prevalent among the public, namely that the...Government is succumbing increasingly to the pressure of American imperialism, thereby endangering the sovereignty and security of our state.

The House will recall that the Foreign Minister announced in the Knesset that the negotiations with Syria were more complicated and difficult than with any other Arab country. The Foreign Minister also tried to convince us that...this was due to the "military and geopolitical background" to the negotiations with Syria. To the best of our knowledge, Syria did not shine in battle...and cannot be compared with Egypt or Transjordan, for example. The real problem derived from a decisive fact which the Foreign Minister was forced to reveal in part, employing evasive language.

At the end of the list of problems associated with this agreement he mentioned..."an additional difficulty...due to certain international influences, which sought to support the new regime in Syria."...In plain words, American intervention on behalf of the Truman-protected dictatorship of Colonel Hosni Zaim in Syria tipped the scales!...Not only has the Government agreed to American control of an additional area on the border between Syria and Israel, it has also conceded sovereign Israeli territory—Ein Gev and Dardara—to American supervision.

...That section in the agreement which has been discussed in the press recently, namely, that if peace is not attained within a year the Syrian army is entitled to return to the demilitarized zone, embodies great dangers. It is known who is preventing a permanent peace settlement between Israel and the Arab countries—those American "friends."...The agreement with Syria and the talks at Lausanne make it evident to everyone that the Foreign Minister and the entire Cabinet are increasingly dependent on their masters in Washington, and are evincing weakness in the face of the pressure and maneuvering of the U.S. representatives.

In these circumstances the agreement with Syria does not bring us nearer a permanent peace, because it does not reflect an agreement between two independent sides....I would like to stress my party group's rejection of the opposition to the Armistice Agreement with Syria which was expressed here by certain Opposition speakers to whom peace is alien and who regard war as an ideal for Israel. Although we oppose "peace at any price," we regard any attempt to renew the war as extremely damaging to our interests....

We believe that the time has also come to make peace with the Arabs who are citizens of our state. There is no political, military or economic point in continuing the military rule of the Arab areas. We hold that military rule harms good relations and cooperation between all the citizens of Israel, and if we hear frequent statements from members of the

Government about their desire for peace and friendship with the neighboring Arab countries, this policy...should begin at home....Jewish-Arab relations within Israel should be based first of all on democratic foundations.

...The problem of the refugees is one of the most delicate since the establishment of the state, and it will be recalled that anyone who raised the issue of bringing them back...was regarded as a traitor to Israel's national interests. We continue to support the rights of the peace-loving Arab refugees, who did not participate in the war against us, to return to Israel, to their houses and their homeland. It is not their fault that they are at present in the neighboring countries, it is the fault of British and American imperialism, of Arab feudal reaction and of thirty years of repressive British rule in this country. We maintain...that this is a question not merely of doing justice to the Arabs, but also of defending Israel's security and future in the Middle East. We must not let British and American imperialism exploit the refugee problem, and use the refugees themselves as an aggressive force against Israel; we must not let them make use of this problem for the purpose of constant incitement against Jews and Israel in Arab countries.

...We are all aware of the fact that things have changed over time. Even others have begun to understand that the refugee problem is not so simple, and cannot be "resolved" by declaring that "not one refugee will return," or by frightening people with talk of a "fifth column."...The Government is giving in to the pressure to allow refugees back, and we ask why, even in this delicate issue, the Government allowed the initiative to be taken by American imperialism?...The Government...has given in to American pressure, and has given additional weapons against us to Arab reaction, and from all this we have achieved nothing, neither politically, nationally nor as regards Jewish-Arab relations.

We contend that it is the right of the peace-loving Arab refugees to return to Israel. This is in Israel's true interests. It is in the interests of all of us to deprive the Americans of any basis which helps them entrench themselves in Israel and the Middle East, because all America's maneuvers are directed towards one aim—establishing itself in the Middle East and turning it into a base for making war on the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democratic Republics. Our policy must prevent this possibility and these destructive, war-like plans.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): Distinguished Knesset..."The return of the refugees without peace with the neighboring countries would be suicide for Israel; it would be tantamount to stabbing ourselves! No other country in our position would consider doing this."...This was said by the Foreign Minister in this House one and a half months ago. What stirring words, what a grave warning! The state was on the verge of being destroyed if we did what America was demanding of us, if we allowed a fifth column in! How seriously this man spoke, nearly convincing part

of this House. And now this same man, the man who conducted the Jewish Agency's dilettantist policy, comes and tells us today that we should agree to let the refugees back, if that is part of the peace agreement, of course....Where is the guarantee that this will in fact be part of a peace agreement?...Do you expect us to take you seriously? Do you expect the world to take us seriously? What has happened? After generations of dreaming, a nation has fought a war of independence, made immense sacrifices and succeeded in attaining part of its homeland, wherein Israeli citizens may live with a modicum of security....Why has American public opinion, which favored our enterprise...suddenly turned against us on this issue? It is because our leaders continue to tread the path they took for dozens of years in the Jewish Agency as regards their political activities in America—internal intrigues and dissension among Jews, without any desire to educate the Jewish and non-Jewish masses in America to continue supporting our struggle for independence.

...And so, in discussing the refugee problem, we must ask, assuming...that we aspire to peace, where will the refugees return to? To Jaffa, Lod, Ramle...? And with whose money, sir, will we resettle them? With the money of the nation which faces the danger that the gates will be closed to its brethren, to the thousands still in camps in Europe and Israel?...Neither the Government nor the Knesset can decide on the refugee question. There is a nation which lives in this country, and every family in this country has made a sacrifice, has lost one of its members at the hands of those Arabs who fled and those Arabs who invaded. We must ask the members of this House if they want those Arabs back. Are they prepared to make more sacrifices, shed more blood, lose more sons, because of Mr. Sharett's mistakes? Let us ask the people!...There should be a referendum. Our population numbers no more than a million people. It is not difficult...We must ask the nation...if it is prepared to create a situation which, as the Foreign Minister said on 15 June, could destroy the state. Because bringing the Arabs back is like bringing in a fifth column....

We realize that there is a problem of refugees who left their homes. But where are those people today? Most of them are still in the Land of Israel, in the Old City of Jerusalem, in Ramallah and the Triangle, in all those areas which are part of our homeland, which the nation has not given up, and which even the Government has not given up.

The answer to the refugee question can be clear and simple: the withdrawal of the invading armies, which have no place here; the return of those areas which are not yet under Israel's control, together with the Arabs, who will be assured of every right, as are the Arabs living in the State of Israel today. None of us disregards the refugee problem. But we have been through a war, invading armies attacked us. Are we demanding compensation...? Why does the Foreign Minister not raise

this issue in America?...At the time, the President mentioned the figure of one hundred thousand refugees in the U.S., and no mention was made of the precondition of peace. And as usual, the Government Denial Office denied this. We know that the refugee problem did not begin today....When the Zionist enterprise began...we declared that there was room for all the peoples of the region within the Greater Land of Israel....

Finally, in view of the political and...practical pressure exerted by certain powers on Israel to allow the Arabs back unconditionally...and in view of the negotiations being conducted in Lausanne on this issue, I propose that the Knesset instruct the Cabinet not to undertake to bring the refugees back as long as the nation has not expressed its view...through a referendum.

...

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Distinguished Knesset, the Opposition is to be congratulated for having demanded the debate on the occasion of the signing of the Armistice Agreement with Syria. This may be a good moment to clarify our foreign policy....This marks the end of a chapter, though we have not yet attained our goal as regards our relations with our neighbors, our international standing and many other important issues. Nevertheless, signing agreements with all the neighboring Arab countries is an important historical point, which should be appreciated....I am not one of those pessimists who dismiss Knesset debates since it is known in advance what the Opposition will say on every issue, what the Coalition will reply, and how both sides will vote, and that in this House neither side can influence the other. Even if this is true, these debates are educational, because I am sure the nation listens to them and studies them, and it is a good thing for the nation to hear both criticism and information regarding how we have reached our present position. We must all leave it to the nation to decide.

It is not always possible to prove the benefits of something at the time action is taken, and especially not in the field of politics. Any system, whether military or political, contains negative as well as positive elements. It is necessary to pay a price for everything, and sometimes the price comes a little or a lot before the achievement, just as plowing and sowing come before reaping. Someone who sees only the price can claim that it is pure loss, or that it is too high, because nothing is given gratis in history. And the greater the goal, the higher the price.

Someone might calculate what the war—for something which should be ours without having to make sacrifices, our existence and our independence—has cost us, and this could shock us to our very foundations. And as one of those who know this calculation well, I am constantly shocked. I am one of the few people in the country who, even at times of great victories and conquests...did not have one day of joy. Not when the U.N. resolution aroused general admiration, not when the nation

rejoiced at the declaration of our state and not when everyone celebrated our military victories, because I knew well what they cost, and I could not distract myself for one moment from the high price we had to pay. I always saw before me those who had paid the price with their blood. I did not know each one of them, but I knew many. Some of them I will never see again, because they gave everything. But many who are still with us gave no less, and those are first and foremost the fathers and mothers whose children fell in the war. I know that in their heart of hearts they know that it was worthwhile. And if we could ask the boys and girls who fell, I know what their answer would be. But that does not reduce our grief and sorrow; on the contrary, the more loyal and courageous those youngsters were, the greater is the loss. I am not even mentioning the great losses in property. And if one only sees that side of the war, the cost was undoubtedly great. But every one of us will admit that this is a misleading and one-sided calculation, harming above all those whose sacrifice was greatest.

This applies to every campaign. There can be a genuine appraisal only if both the advantages and the disadvantages, the loss and the profit, are weighed in the balance.

I do not blame the Opposition for not doing this. It does not regard this as its obligation. Our Opposition sees it as its task to describe the Government's activities in gloomy terms, whatever the truth may be....And anyone who looks for the black side of things will easily find what he seeks. Our history, including the most recent chapter, is far from being a bed of roses. The question is only if this way of looking at things is correct, and if these descriptions fit the truth.

I cannot prove whether the latest step on this path—the agreement with Syria—will be beneficial, and when. I am no prophet, and in the sphere of prophecy it is difficult to compete with the Opposition. It is possible, however...to check predictions made in the past by the Opposition....The broadsides fired at the Government by the Opposition have been heard with greater ferocity and vehemence on previous occasions. We heard about submission, abandonment of our independence, succumbing to American pressure, wasting our military conquests...etc. not only when we signed the agreement with Syria, but also when we signed the agreements with Egypt and Transjordan, as well as following our response to the U.N. resolution....

We should clarify which of the Opposition's predictions have come true, and whether the actions of the Government, the settlement institutions and the Zionist movement, which later comprised the Government, really have led to decline, submission and bondage in the last two years, or to revival, fortification and progress.

...It has been claimed here by the Opposition that the army conquered and was victorious, while the Government wasted the conquests and surrendered. This separation between the army and the Govern-

ment doubtless reflects the desires of totalitarian parties, which would like the army to be an independent body....There was someone in this country who tried to establish an "army" of that nature, but the Israel Defense Force is not a "national" military organization. The IDF is the military arm of the state, and is subject to the Government of Israel....Everything the army does and has done...is on the Government's instructions....In a democratic country—and I believe that the State of Israel will always be democratic—it is not the army which decides but the people and the people's elected representatives....I have at least as much admiration for the army and its achievements as Mr. Ben-Eliezer and his colleagues...but the army never acts of its own accord....

...There is something else which we should clarify for ourselves...and that is, that we have been engaged—and still are—in a unique and complex battle, which is unlike any other anywhere else in the world, and no comparison with the wars of independence fought by other nations is appropriate. Our problems and needs, and our struggle, should be seen in their uniqueness, in their special circumstances, in their unprecedented historical and geographical constellations, and this is the line which distinguishes us and our approach from the Opposition....I know...that there are varied views within the Opposition...both within and between the various parties...but what distinguishes us from them is that we do not regard our national struggle as a copy of any other one....We must seek our own way to independence, within the complex historical circumstances in which we find ourselves....We reject any attempt made by either the left or the right to transfer here the wars fought by other countries, whether in the West or the East, in India or Ireland. If anything has been done till now, it is not because people were bound by theories borrowed from the outside, but because they took their own course and acted according to the conditions and needs of Jewish history. And although we have come quite some way, our struggle has not yet ended, and difficult tests still lie ahead of us.

Our struggle with the Arabs these past two years is only one chapter in our long drawn-out historical struggle with tremendous world forces. For hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years forces in the world have not accepted our existence, and still do not....This applies to Jews all over the world, at every period in history, up to and including the present time....I do not know one country in the world where Jews are really free to live as they please, whether the law of the land restricts them or not. In some countries Jews are not allowed to identify with our redeeming enterprise and liberating struggle, although their Jewish souls struggle within them as ours do within us....I am not particularly impressed when I hear speakers from the fighting "revolutionary" parties in the Knesset heaping fire and brimstone on certain governments

for not helping us enough, or for hindering us, because I know that those doughty speakers say nothing when other governments harm our enterprise. I am not prepared to criticize our revolutionaries' colleagues in certain countries for not daring to fight against their government, which prevents them from coming to Israel and suppresses their Jewish and Zionist existence, because I know what their situation is....The Jews in the diaspora do not control the forces around them, and they are unable to do as they want as Jews....Our struggle, which inevitably relies on the help of the Jewish people in the world...cannot ignore that...reality.

The fate of this country is also very different from that of other countries. It has a unique history, and almost every nation in the world...has some kind of link with it; our country stands at the center of a complex of contradictions and conflicts on a worldwide scale. First of all, the tragic contradiction between us and the Arabs. No world event embodied so much good for the Arabs as the return of the Jews to their homeland. By its very nature, the Zionist enterprise is a force for progress and liberation not only in its own land but in all the neighboring countries, and a flourishing, strong and independent State of Israel could, more than any external factor, help the political independence, economic prosperity and social and cultural advance of the Arab peoples. We are not alien invaders here, we are sons returning to their homeland. We were here before the Arabs and before all the other nations...which entered this country at one time or another. But the Arabs regard our return with fear and hatred, as do certain Asian countries. The countries of the East, which were enslaved by Europe for hundreds of years, regard us as the European rulers' agents of bondage and exploitation. We are supposed to be the agents of the repressors and the exploiters, of Europe, which drove us out of its midst and almost destroyed us utterly. The Arab nations have also accepted this view, which is a tragic and ominous distortion, and which we should not dismiss lightly.

I have always believed, and still do, that the dispute between us and the Arabs is a passing one, being based on a misunderstanding rather than on an historical conflict of interests. But this temporary conflict will not be resolved solely by force. The Arab leaders erred in thinking that they would be able to destroy us and thereby solve the "Jewish problem" in Palestine, just as Hitler did in Europe. We will not repeat the Arab mistake by thinking that we can solve the "Arab problem" by arms. The question of our relations with the Arabs is not restricted to the Arabs of the Land of Israel, we are up against the Arab nations, which number tens of millions and occupy the southwestern section of the Middle East and the entire northern coast of Africa from the eastern Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean. (J. Gil: Is this the encouragement the Prime Minister gives the nation?) Yes, the best encouragement is

telling the truth and revealing the situation as it is. The people who were aware of this were not deterred from fighting the Arabs, and did not desist until they had won.

For many years we tried to overcome our problems in the world and among the Arabs by information and political activities; we reaped not inconsiderable benefits from this, and we have nothing to be ashamed of or to regret on this score. But as the moment for deciding the fate of the country approached, once the Second World War had ended, it was evident that a political campaign alone would not decide the matter. That was clear even during our great political victories, when a majority of the U.N. Commission recommended establishing a Jewish state, and also afterwards, when the U.N. Assembly itself decided by a majority of 35 against 11 or 13 in favor of a Jewish state, with both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in this majority.

As the House knows, the Arabs declared war, morally on the U.N. and physically on us. And once again we knew that we could not rely on any foreign power....We knew that no country would send its army here to defend us, not even to defend the decisions of the U.N....If we have reached this point, if we exist and are independent, and the State of Israel has been established...it is the IDF which has achieved this....Nevertheless, we know that it is not only by military force that matters are decided, just as we knew before that it is not only by the decision of the U.N. and political victories that matters are determined.

...And although one act has ended, the struggle is not over, and the disputation about us continues, with some people questioning what has been done. We must continue to stand firm...in order to hold on to what we have redeemed...We must acquire friends and understanding and support...both in the East and in the West....I know of no nation in the world which has identified with our existence and our aspirations, or regarded...our struggle as its own. That is not surprising. Thus, we must depend primarily on ourselves, without dismissing the moral and political aid extended by other nations and all mankind....

I envy the ease with which part of the Opposition here fights against "American imperialism." We cannot relinquish America's aid and goodwill, just as we cannot abandon that of the U.S.S.R. And if the Opposition thinks that we have no need of American aid, is it prepared to abandon five million American Jews?

I must admit that I cannot imagine the implementation of our historic vision without the help and participation of those five million. Will we make it easier for American Zionism if we make America our enemy? We can do it easily, if we constantly declare that we oppose America and that America tyrannizes us, as some of the Opposition speakers have done. I am not quite sure if in doing this they have the support of their entire party. Should the loan of one hundred million dollars from the American government to Israel be accepted or rejected?

This is not a hypothetical question but a very real one, which was asked in this House, and an important Opposition party...did not have the courage to vote against it or the honesty to vote for it. Do immigration and settlement need this loan or not? And if there is a counter-consideration which rises above the needs of immigration and settlement, why did it not decide the issue?

By making America our enemy—and there is nothing easier—we will lose not only the political and material aid we need, we may also lose the help of the Jews of America. They are not cowards, and they oppose their government when necessary, as free and equal citizens, but I know Jews who are no less brave and yet do not dare oppose their governments, even though those governments do things against us which America is very far from doing. I do not know if the bombastic speeches and articles against America hurt American imperialism, but there is no doubt that they hurt the interests of the State of Israel, and they certainly do not aid the bitter struggle in which we are engaged.

...Israel's policy...must be one of information and persuasion rather than accusation, incitement and aggression. We must not regard anyone...as an implacable enemy...or think that if someone is already our enemy we have nothing more to lose. I know of no other nation whose historical struggle has been as protracted and hard as that of the Jews. Only if we are aware of all the difficulties and dangers will we be able to stand firm. And in order to do this, we must shorten the front as far as possible, reduce our enemies if we can, isolate the...most dangerous of those who hate us, increase the aid from our friends and persuade those who are neutral to support us. That is what we have done, both militarily and politically.

When the attacks by the Mufti's and Kaukji's gangs began, while the British were still ruling the country, we refrained from entering into any conflict with the British army. It was not easy, we needed tremendous moral strength to do it, but we knew that it was essential, so we did. Not only did we avoid clashing with the British army, during the first six months, from the end of November until the invasion by the Arab armies, we tried to reduce the points of conflict to a minimum, so that we could concentrate our forces on the most dangerous point. We also adopted this tack after the invasion as far as we could, having no interest in strengthening the artificial Arab coalition organized by an external Power. Our war and its results owe a great deal to the disintegration of this coalition, which from the outset served only the interests of a foreign Power, and was not directed towards reinforcing Arab independence or benefiting the Arab peoples.

The Arab governments are responsible for this invasion, which was launched in opposition to the U.N. resolution and in contravention of all international law. None of those governments had received a mandate from its people to wage war on Israel. Not all those nations were ea-

ger to fight, and we were not interested in creating the impression among them that the State of Israel was a danger to their independence or territorial integrity, quite the contrary.

We knew, however, that political measures alone would not overcome the grave dangers confronting us....The enemy was blatantly infringing the orders of the U.N. observers, who showed no desire or ability to amend the situation, and we had to make use of our army...leading to the demolition of the Bernadotte plan and the fundamental alteration of the situation in the country. The army was not used lightly or hastily, nor because we did not consider the opinions of others, and certainly not because we belittled the U.N. and world public opinion....But in all our military activities we were not distracted from the final objective of the war—fortifying the independence of our state and establishing peace with the Arab world.

Before the state was founded, before the beginning of the war, and even before the U.N. resolution of November 29, we decided that there were three main planks to our political plan, and upon them our entire future rested: security, a Jewish state and a Jewish-Arab alliance....And just as neither the state nor the army were built in one day...peace between us and the Arabs will not come suddenly, but we must work for it....We still aspire towards peace...with all the Arab nations...and the Armistice Agreements with Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria...are the first step towards it, despite the gloomy predictions in the Opposition press....

First, as regards territory, the U.N. resolution of November 29 granted the State of Israel 14,920,000 dunams. Only one-third of this area was genuinely in our hands. In the entire southern area, comprising almost ten million dunams, we barely had a hold of any kind....Now the state consists of over twenty million dunams, all of which area we control. In theory the state has grown by only five million dunams, but in practice it has grown by fifteen million dunams. About five million dunams were conquered by the army in the battles in the Jerusalem corridor, Western and Central Galilee, Southern Judea and the Northern Negev. These conquests expanded our borders beyond what the U.N. had allotted us. About five hundred thousand dunams were added by peaceful means, in the Armistice Agreements with Transjordan and Syria. About nine million dunams came under our control and we managed to retain them without battles and bloodshed because of the Armistice Agreement with Egypt, namely, the line from Ein Gedi to Eilat and the entire land of Edom. In the western part of the Land of Israel only about seven million dunams remain outside the state, most of it retained by Transjordan and some by Egypt. The Opposition's fears that the Negev would be abandoned and the army's conquests wasted have been proven unfounded. Precisely the opposite hap-

pened, the army's conquests were reinforced and expanded through the Armistice Agreements.

The U.N. has not yet recognized our expanded borders, and we must not delude ourselves that the battle is over. The countries which recognized our state, and this comprises most of the countries in the world, have not recognized our new borders either. But, lo and behold, the first countries to recognize our state's new borders were the Arabs. That is a fact, albeit a surprising one....Egypt has signed a document recognizing our southern and western border, from the northern Negev to Eilat; Transjordan has signed a document recognizing our eastern border as far as the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers; Syria has signed regarding the eastern border on the other side of Lake Tiberias, and from the Jordan river to Dan; Lebanon has signed regarding the northern border from Metulla to Rosh Hanikra.

I will not go into the pointless argument regarding who gave in to whom. I will admit quite openly and simply that we gave in too. Not because of pressure and bondage, but because of our desire to reach an agreement, as a step towards a stable peace. We gained immensely, on both a political and a territorial level, from all these documents, precisely because we knew when to give in. Every time we gave in...we expanded our borders and strengthened our position....

I never made the statements attributed to me by I. Ben Aharon to the effect that we would never agree to the demilitarization of certain points on the border with Syria. What I did say was that either the Syrians would withdraw across the border of their own free will or we would drive them back, and we are glad that the former took place rather than the latter....

The expansion of our territory, a step towards peace with the Arab countries and the strengthening of our position vis-à-vis the U.N. are the results of the Armistice Agreements...We would not have attained these achievements had we not been able to give in. No nation can do just as it pleases....Small nations depend on large ones, and vice versa....

Not all our enemies have accepted us, and bitter struggles still await us. We may yet have to face unjust demands or attacks in crucial matters. If necessary, we will stand firm, though we do not desire war....Our past history and present and future needs...as well as moral precepts...require us to adopt a policy of peace and rapprochement....

Our efforts to attain peace will be fruitful only if we maintain our military strength...while simultaneously seizing every opportunity to strengthen peace in our region and in the world....I do not regret the long months of negotiations with Syria. We could undoubtedly have attained Mishmar Hayarden without any negotiations and in a far shorter time, and we had to display a great deal of self-restraint in order to endure these long and tiring discussions. But it was worth making

this effort because of the moral and political victory of gaining Mishmar Hayarden without the use of force. This also raised Israel's prestige in the world without arousing feelings of hostility and revenge in our neighbors—and this is no mere trifle.

That is the course we have taken till now and the one we will continue to take. The State of Israel is faithful to its historical destiny, it has no other way.

...

(There was an interval of one hour as a result of continuous interruptions.)

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): ...I thank the Speaker for allowing me to read my proposal out again, which is as follows: "In view of the political...and practical pressure exerted by certain Powers on Israel to allow the Arabs back unconditionally...and in view of the negotiations in Lausanne on this issue, the Knesset instructs the Cabinet not to undertake to bring the refugees back as long as the nation has not expressed its opinion through a referendum."

(MK Ben-Eliezer's proposal was defeated by 41 votes to 10 and the debate was adjourned without a further vote.)

Special Sitting to Mark the Reinterment of Theodor Herzl's Remains

Introduction

Since its inception, the Knesset has served as the focus of ceremonial occasions of national relevance. Outstanding among these was the transfer, with the consent of the U.S. Military Government of Austria, of the remains of Dr. Theodor Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, from the Jewish cemetery in Vienna, and their reinterment in Jerusalem, at the site henceforward known as Mount Herzl.

Sitting 69 of the First Knesset

16 August 1949 (21 Menahem Av 5709)
Knesset Building, Tel Aviv

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We have interrupted the regular work of the Knesset to hold a special sitting...to mark the...day upon which the remains of Theodor Herzl are brought from the diaspora for reinterment in our own land. In honor of this occasion the President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, has issued the following statement:

"Because of my health I am obliged to remain abroad while Herzl's remains are being brought to their final resting place in the hills of Jerusalem.

"The soil of our homeland is receiving to its bosom the visionary whose dream of a state has become reality. Theodor Herzl set us on the path which led to the fulfillment of the desires of generations. He alone had the right to lead us to our state. I regard the reinterment of his remains as the conclusion of a crucial stage in the history of the Jewish people, and a milestone on the way to the future.

"On this day let everyone in Israel remember Herzl's phrase, 'If you will it (it is no dream).' The people did will it. We must continue willing and working, until the state is a home for all those who have survived.

"Happy is the generation which has been able to fulfill its leader's dream and implement his vision."

In another few hours Theodor Herzl will pass here on his way to Jerusalem, the city of our hopes. He will come to us, to this House, in the coffin in which he has lain for 45 years in Vienna, the city where he revealed himself to the nation. He will come in his coffin, but we will wel-

come him as if he were alive, as he indeed is in our hearts, our hopes...our self-sacrifice and our labors.

We, the elected representatives of the nation, will welcome the creator of the Zionist Organization as the prophet of our state, as the person who rekindled the nation's collective desire to reestablish the "old idea," as he termed it in his book, *The Jewish State*.

Theodor Herzl left us in the prime of his life, but his life's work has not ended, it has rather been expanded and increased, becoming the anthem of the new life awakening in our ancient land.

Herzl concluded his last speech at the Sixth Zionist Congress with the age-old vow—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning." Tomorrow Jerusalem's soil will receive Herzl. Above its hills Jerusalem will reply to that vow—"I will surely remember you, beloved son, comforter of the people; I will surely remember you as long as the Jewish nation endures, as long as I, Jerusalem, am the eternal capital of the Jewish people."

Herzl will rest in Herzl's Tomb, on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, and there the nation will erect a Jewish memorial, serving as the focus of every Jewish heart and all future hopes. Herzl's spirit will hover above the memorial, in his transient physical splendor and his eternal moral beauty, inspiring everything that happens in Israel. It will influence the youngsters, to whom he addressed the words: "We need you; prepare your bodies as well as your minds. You must be strong and upright, you must learn diligently and enthusiastically; we will need your strength and your knowledge." It will influence the processes of immigration which, as he wrote: "involve many strong and deep emotional shocks." And it will influence the life of the state, which must develop as he commanded the Jewish people: "Build the State of Israel in such a way that the stranger in your midst shall be satisfied."

The demand to uphold his injunctions to the nation shall flow from Herzl's tomb, and the new life throughout Israel shall blossom around it, being, in his words, "as pure as the Jewish flag," which will line the route leading to his final resting place.

With the immigration of large numbers of our people we have brought Herzl to our country and our state. In the name of the state, of all our scattered nation, and the millions who were murdered by the forces of evil and hoped to reach us but were unable to, we join the prophet of Israel's freedom to the band of prophets who have made Israel immortal. Long live Herzl! In every Jewish heart!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: With the fulfillment of the vision of the state, the nation transfers the remains of its visionary from the diaspora to its eternal capital.

In Jewish history only two people—both of them the sons of Jacob—have had their remains reinterred in Israel by the liberated nation. A gap of three thousand and three hundred years separates this day from

the exodus from Egypt, when the remains of Joseph the son of Jacob were carried with the nation.

Joseph was the first Jew to be obliged to leave his country. He rose to a position of eminence in the land of his exile, saving Egypt from famine, but he did not forget his father's house and the land of his birth, and before he died he made his brothers swear, saying: "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." "And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years....And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him....And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought."

The death of the great leader, the greatest Jewish leader and prophet, Moses, stands as a unique event. The son of Amram was not privileged to enter the promised land or to be buried in it. After forty years of journeying through the wilderness, at the end of his days, "Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, at the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab—but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

For forty-five years the remains of the great visionary of our day were buried in the foreign land where Herzl formulated his vision of the Jewish state, where he forged the instruments for its establishment and where he died, at the early age of forty-four, his loving heart broken.

"I do not know when I will die," he wrote in 1898, six years before his death, "but Zionism will not die. Since Basle the Jewish nation once again has representatives, and the Jewish state will arise in the homeland."

His prophecy was fulfilled. When Herzl wrote his book, *The Jewish State*, in 1895, he thought he heard the flutter of wings above his head. He was not mistaken. They were the wings of the spirit of Israel, which did not abandon him even after his death, for though the mortal Herzl died...the visionary and creator remains forever, since providence intended him to be immortalized in Jewish history.

"I am not submitting any new idea," Herzl wrote in 1896. "On the contrary, it is an old-new idea, and therein lies its strength. It is as old as the nation, which never ceased to cultivate it, even in its darkest hours: namely, the re-establishment of the Jewish state." That is Herzl's greatness; an old idea was kindled in his breast, and by the strength of his belief, the charm of his personality and his immense ef-

forts it became a new, living, dynamic idea, arousing the hearts of others, breathing hope into their minds, impelling the masses to act, enabling the nation to stand erect, organizing and uniting it and turning it into a political power, and an international element. The idea has become reality.

"Although I am neither a prophet nor a visionary," Herzl added then, "I admit that in my heart I cultivate the desire and hope that one day the Jewish nation will be fired by a wonderful enthusiasm."

That desire was attained, and with our own eyes we have seen the Jewish nation "fired by a wonderful enthusiasm"...leading to the revival of our independence and the war to attain it.

Herzl was a stranger to the Jewish nation for most of his life....But more than any of those who were steeped in Jewish culture, he looked deeply into the innermost soul of the nation, for he had a penetrating eye. His heart was big enough to sense the suffering and desires of his nation, as no one else had felt it in his day, and a great belief suffused his mind, a belief in liberation through suffering and in the eternal genius of the nation. His burning belief infected the nation, becoming a creative and revolutionary force, and the State of Israel came into existence.

Happy are we that we are able to transfer the remains of the visionary of the state to the redeemed land of Israel, bringing them to our eternal capital for burial. Beside the tombs of kings and prophets Herzl's tomb shall arise, housing his mortal remains.

But Herzl is immortal, his memorial is the State of Israel, which will continue to be built with love.

As we bring Herzl's remains to Jerusalem the funeral cortege will be one of victory, not mourning—the victory of the vision which has become reality.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The Knesset Members will assemble in this building at 15:30 in order to meet Herzl's coffin.

We will greet it by singing the national anthem.

(The sitting closed with the national anthem at 12:25.)

Prime Minister's Statement Concerning Jerusalem and the Holy Places

Introduction

The Jewish Agency for Palestine had accepted the U.N. Partition Plan of November 1947, even though it called for the establishment of a *corpus separatum* in Jerusalem and its immediate environs, realizing that the only realistic alternative at the time would have been the failure to decide on the establishment of a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. The failure of the U.N. in the implementation of its own resolution, the Arab invasion of all parts of Palestine, including Jerusalem, Count Bernadotte's proposal of June 1947 to incorporate the whole of Jerusalem in an Arab state—the latter when Israel was compelled to fight for its creation and survival—all these effected a fundamental change in the situation and Israel's position. When the U.N. General Assembly debated the issue of the internationalization of Jerusalem once more, the Knesset debated the subject in rare unanimity.

Sitting 96 of the First Knesset

5 December 1949 (14 Kislev 5710)
Tel Aviv, Knesset Building

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: As you know, the U.N. is currently discussing the issue of Jerusalem and the holy places. The State of Israel is a member of the U.N., not because of political convenience but because of its traditional, deep-seated commitment to the vision of world peace and the brotherhood of nations, as preached by our prophets and accepted by the U.N.

This membership obliges us, from the podium of Israel's First Knesset, to tell all the nations assembled at the U.N. and all those who love peace and justice in the world what has been in Israel's heart since it became a united nation under King David three thousand years ago as regards Jerusalem its holy city and as regards its attitude to the places which are holy to the other religions.

When we proclaimed the establishment of the renewed State of Israel, on 14 May 1948, we declared that, "The State of Israel will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. It will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions. It will be loyal to the principles of the United Nations Charter." Accordingly, our delegation to the U.N. announced that Israel would honor all the exist-

ing rights regarding the holy places and sacred buildings in Jerusalem, assure freedom of worship and free access...to all the holy sites under its control, recognizing the rights of pilgrims of all religions and nations to visit their holy places and assuring freedom of movement for clergymen. We agreed to allow effective U.N. supervision of the holy places and the existing rights.

At the same time we see fit to state that Jewish Jerusalem is an organic, inseparable part of the State of Israel, just as it is an integral part of Jewish history and belief....Jerusalem is the heart of the State of Israel. We are proud of the fact that Jerusalem is also sacred to other religions, and will gladly provide access to their holy places and enable them to worship as and where they please, cooperating with the U.N. to guarantee this.

We cannot imagine, however, that the U.N. would attempt to sever Jerusalem from the State of Israel or harm Israel's sovereignty in its eternal capital.

Twice in the history of our nation were we driven out of Jerusalem, only after being defeated in bitter wars by the larger, stronger forces of Babylon and Rome. Our links with Jerusalem today are no less deep than in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus Flavius, and when Jerusalem was attacked after the fourteenth of May 1948, our valiant youngsters risked their lives for our sacred capital no less than our forefathers did in the time of the First and Second Temples.

...A nation which, for two thousand and five hundred years, has faithfully adhered to the vow made by the first exiles by the waters of Babylon not to forget Jerusalem, will never agree to be separated from Jerusalem. Jewish Jerusalem will never accept alien rule after thousands of its youngsters liberated their historic homeland for the third time, redeeming Jerusalem from destruction and vandalism.

We do not judge the U.N., which did nothing when nations which were members of the U.N. declared war on its resolution of 29 November 1947, trying to prevent the establishment of Israel by force, to annihilate the Jewish population in the Holy Land and destroy Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jewish people.

Had we not been able to withstand the aggressors who rebelled against the U.N., Jewish Jerusalem would have been wiped off the face of the earth, the Jewish population would have been eradicated and the State of Israel would not have arisen. Thus, we are no longer morally bound by the U.N. resolution of November 29, since the U.N. was unable to implement it....

The attempt to sever Jewish Jerusalem from the State of Israel will not advance the cause of peace in the Middle East or in Jerusalem itself. Israelis will give their lives to hold on to Jerusalem, just as the British would for London, the Russians for Moscow and the Americans for Washington.

This is the first time in this country's history that the state controlling Jerusalem willingly accepts the principle of the international supervision of the holy places. It is no coincidence that it is being done by the nation which made Jerusalem an internationally sacred center and by the first government elected by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

We hope that the religions which honor Jerusalem's sanctity and the nations which share our belief in the principles of peace and justice will honor Israel's rights in Jerusalem, just as Israel honors those of all the religions in its sacred capital and sovereign state.

Debate on the Prime Minister's Statement

J. Riftin (Mapam): Two dangers threaten Jerusalem today, that of being sundered from the State of Israel through the pretext of internationalization under the U.N., and that of partition by granting a legal-political status to the Transjordanian army which invaded part of Jerusalem. The State of Israel must fight both those dangers.

In the past Israel accepted the plan to internationalize Jerusalem in principle within an overall plan for the economic unification of the State of Israel with an independent Arab country, as a framework within which the integrity of the Land of Israel would be maintained. But despite Israel's readiness to implement this plan, and despite the support of the democratic opposition among the Arab population, this plan was rejected, infringed and undermined by the invasion of the Arab armies and by the actions of imperialist powers.

In these circumstances there is no legal or moral basis for the demand to internationalize Jerusalem. I hope that the forces of progress in the world will support Israel in its fight to stop this being used as an excuse. Israel must equally fight against the attempt to accept the present military situation—which was recognized temporarily through the Armistice Agreement—in which the invading, British-sent, Transjordanian army becomes a basic factor in a political solution for Jerusalem. The partition of Jerusalem threatens the integrity and peace of the Land of Israel and of Jerusalem itself.

Israel must reject this nefarious plan and...must ask the U.N. to accept the only solution which will preserve the peace of Jerusalem and Palestine, which honors the Jewish heroes who fought for Jerusalem through siege and hunger, which rewards the IDF and the Palmach, who defended the road to Jerusalem, and which...guarantees freedom of access to the holy places there.

The U.N. must...decide to give a fundamental reply to one of the thorniest questions of our country and agree to annex undivided Jerusalem to the State of Israel. But whatever the U.N. decides, the Jewish population of Israel...will be united in its decision and its readiness

to act, and no resolution to sever Jerusalem from the State of Israel will ever be implemented.

M. Begin (Herut): Distinguished Speaker, knowing that our proposal to restore the status of the City of David as our capital will be discussed at a joint meeting of the Constitution Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee next Wednesday and will then be brought before the plenum of the Knesset, on behalf of the Herut party group founded by the IZL, I have the honor of announcing that any attempt to impose alien rule on Jerusalem will be smashed on the rock of the resistance of the entire nation.

The youth of Jerusalem, and of all Israel, which has drawn its renewed strength from the eternal sources of the liberators of the homeland and the rebels of Judea, which raised the banner of freedom against the British oppressors, penetrating their strongholds and wreaking havoc among them, which did not recoil from attacking forces far vaster than its own when more than one hundred thousand well-armed soldiers and policemen sought to maintain alien rule over our homeland, and which succeeded in overcoming the oppressors and driving them out of part of the homeland and from Jewish Jerusalem, will thwart any attempt, no matter by whom, to make Jerusalem subservient to foreigners once again.

The Political Subcommittee, which is parallel to the U.N. Assembly, passed a resolution reiterating the U.N. decision of 27 November 1947 to sever Jerusalem from the body of Israel. The official pre-state institutions, regrettably, accepted this, and we are happy to hear from the Prime Minister today that that resolution is no longer valid. We believe that this statement also applies to the Partition Plan. Foreign powers will not determine the borders of our state. The nation that dwells in Zion will decide what the extent of Israel's sovereignty shall be.

...Whatever the outcome of the debate in the U.N., we must decide to put an end to the artificial situation in which we await the decision of other nations regarding the fate of Jerusalem. On the contrary, the representatives of other countries must be told quite clearly that the Jewish nation has made its decision concerning Jerusalem. Our own hesitancy has allowed the present situation to arise. The acknowledgement of the existence of "Jewish Jerusalem," implying that some other Jerusalem exists, has enabled other nations to conclude that some parts of the nation are prepared to relinquish certain sections of the city....

This must be stopped....The world must be told that Jerusalem is ours, all of it—the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, Jerusalem inside and outside the walls—and that it is our capital, both in practice and in theory. This is a decision which the Knesset must make.

We no longer have pre-state institutions which must meet at times of danger and pass resolutions protesting the decisions made by foreign nations. We are a state, a sovereign state, and Jerusalem is ours. Jus-

tice, history, emotions and faith favor undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We no longer meet in order to protest. We will decide and implement our decision....We must make it clear to the world that all of Jerusalem is our capital.

A.H. Sha'ag (Zwebner) (Religious Front): The representatives of religious Jewry wish to make the following statement:

Jerusalem, the site of the kings and the Temple, is the eternal capital of the Jewish people, to whom this country was promised by virtue of the nation's valor.

The Law of the God of Israel bears witness to this covenant between the nation and its capital.

Celestial and earthly Jerusalem have always formed the focal point of our nation's essence. The oath of loyalty to the holy city, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning," which our exiled forefathers swore by the waters of Babylon, has always been our general and individual motto.

This oath, the deepest expression of the nation's yearning for its land, brought us back to Zion.

Because of our adherence to Jerusalem our sons and daughters sacrificed themselves for it. We fought seven nations, defeated them, with the help of God, and established the State of Israel.

The city of the kings and the prophets, the very breath of our life, was and will be the capital of Israel.

We are jealous for Jerusalem and Zion with a great jealousy.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): For us, Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is an established fact. The attempt made recently...to sever its heart and head from the body of the state has met and will meet with the united resistance of the nation in Zion and the diaspora.

On various occasions our party has declared its uncompromising stand on Jerusalem. We maintain that Jerusalem is not merely a political object or a territorial concept, it is the symbol of the nation and the state....Neither the nation nor the state can exist without it, with all its significance for the nation's past, present and future. Any attack on Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is an attack on our national existence.

Ever since we have been a nation Jerusalem has been on our lips, in our hearts and prayers, in the desires of the entire nation, daily and hourly, the summit of the nation's aspirations and yearnings. Millions of oppressed, persecuted members of our nation dreamed of our return to Jerusalem throughout our long and miserable dispersion.

Generations of our children were brought up on the concept of Jerusalem as the banner of our nation; for it we shed our blood unhesitatingly.

Our right to Jerusalem is not a partial matter. Just as the name of Jerusalem cannot be changed, our relationship to undivided Jerusalem cannot be altered.

Our party has never made its stand on foreign policy contingent on special relations with one country or another, and anyway the particular concentration of forces seeking to undermine our right to Jerusalem and Israel is not a cause for surprise, disappointment or concern. Whatever the forces which oppose us, they will find us united, without a crack in our ranks, both old and young, man, woman and child, from Dan to Eilat. We will stand together and defend our capital and our holy city, being deterred by nothing.

Let this united front, which is reflected in the First Knesset today, serve as a warning to anyone who seeks to prevent us from fulfilling our age-old aspiration, whether by resolutions or by force.

I. Cohen (Progressives): During the first few weeks of the Provisional Council of state my colleagues charged me with the task of proposing that Jerusalem be decided on as the site of Israel's sovereignty. There is no need to proclaim Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel—both nation and state—just as it is unnecessary to proclaim that the Land of Israel is the land of the Jewish people. Its name reflects this.

Jerusalem is what it is in the minds of the nations solely because of the Jewish people. The sanctity of Jerusalem derives from the depths of Jewish history; it will not be controlled by depriving the Jews of their sovereignty over it....We respect the fact that Jerusalem is sacred for others too, and we look forward to the day when the world will also regard it as the city of peace...but there is no reason to expect that the one hundred thousand Jews of Jerusalem will voluntarily divest themselves of their independence and agree to let their city become the arena of international conflicts, intrigues and plots between mutually-hostile forces. There is no basis for the...assumption that any Jew in Jerusalem will agree to serve under the supposedly international rule of foreigners.

There are holy places in Jerusalem. They are holy because of the Jews who lived there. The nations regard one grave in Jerusalem as being holy, while the Jews have thousands of holy graves there, and no international rule—if such a concept exists—can guarantee to preserve our sacred graves. If Jerusalem is the center of the world, only the Jewish nation can guard it.

A. Almaliyah (Sephardim): The inhabitants of Jerusalem made their views clear to the U.N. yesterday. Anyone who did not see the terrible but glorious sight yesterday has never seen glory. Tens of thousands of Jerusalemites, young and old, men and women, schoolchildren and adults, all ascended the high hill where the great visionary is buried

and, raising their hands, swore the traditional oath, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning."

The U.N. heard what Jerusalem had to say yesterday, and we will repeat it today. The residents of Jerusalem, who have known siege, hunger, thirst, suffering and bombardment from all sides, when the commanders of foreign armies controlled the city, know what their fate would be if this eternal city were placed under foreign rule. The residents of Jerusalem have never accepted this, and never will.

When the Conciliation Commission came to Jerusalem I had the opportunity of talking to two of its members and telling them: If you are able to walk freely about Jerusalem today, if we could come to you today, it is only because of the blood of our sons and daughters, which was spilled like water in order to liberate all these places when you abandoned us to hostile hands. Your dream of making Jerusalem an international city is wrong, and will not become reality!

That is why we reiterate today: till now Jerusalem has been the spiritual capital of Israel; henceforth it will be the eternal and political capital of the State of Israel!

Let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths if we do not remember thee, O Jerusalem!

M. Wilner (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, in the cruel and crucial battle fought by the Jews of Jerusalem, facing the criminal onslaught of the Arab armies led by British officers and partly equipped with American arms, the Jewish population of Israel and Jerusalem stood united, and won.

In the most critical days of the battle for Jerusalem, for the welfare of its Jewish citizens, when many of the best of our youth fell, we received precious and very important aid from the U.S.S.R. and the popular democracies. Through the combined efforts of our courageous youth and the IDF, and the significant aid proffered by our natural and unquestioned allies, we were victorious in the battle for Jerusalem and for the State of Israel.

We are all anxious today as we confront the schemes being prepared for Jerusalem and the attempt to turn Jerusalem into a base for imperialism, in accordance with its aggressive designs in the Middle East, and its plans to prepare a new world war. We have rejected all these plans. At first there was the American scheme to make all Palestine a "trusteeship" in April-May 1948, when the U.S. summoned a special meeting of the U.N. in order to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel; then there was the wicked Bernadotte Plan to hand Jerusalem over to Abdullah's British Transjordan.

Once again, by the combined efforts of the Jewish population in Israel, with the weighty support in the U.N. of our faithful friends—the U.S.S.R. and the popular democracies—we repelled the American "trusteeship" plan and the scheme to hand Jerusalem to Abdullah.

But the enemies of Israel's independence, the enemies of the Jews of Jerusalem, did not give up. The memory of the many sacrifices, of the hunger and suffering of Jerusalem, does not interest them, just as these things do not interest them in connection with other countries and nations. They did everything, and are still doing everything, to prepare another military round, in addition to the economic and political pressure against Israel and Jerusalem. Throughout this period we demanded—and continue to demand—that the Knesset refuse to accord explicit or implicit recognition to the rule of Abdullah, i.e., Britain, in the rest of Israel and of Jerusalem. This is in the interests of peace, of Israel's independence and of the security of the Jews of Jerusalem.

In order to clarify the situation it should be stressed that during the debate on Jerusalem the Soviet delegation to the U.N. directed all its criticism against Abdullah's rule in Jerusalem and Palestine against the policy of Britain and the U.S.A. and against the criminal plan of the Conciliation Commission, which would have harmed both Jews and Arabs. The Soviet government (only those who wish to distort its statements refuse to acknowledge this) has always sought the peace, security and independence of Israel and the rest of Palestine, as well as the welfare of all the Jews of Jerusalem....

I would like to remind you that when the Knesset met in Jerusalem it was the American representative who demonstratively declined to participate, while the Soviet delegation attended it. When certain Ministries were moved to Jerusalem the U.S.S.R. did not protest, though the American-led Conciliation Commission did.

Anyone who wishes to see things as they really are, who is truly interested in Israel's independence, sovereignty and integrity and who honestly seeks the welfare and freedom of Jerusalem and the Jews who live there, must see that the practical significance of the Soviet proposal was to establish the rule of the inhabitants of Jerusalem over the city, under the temporary supervision of the Trusteeship Council. All the attempts to distort this approach, and to identify the attitude of the imperialists in the U.N. with that of the U.S.S.R...serves the interests of neither the Jews of Jerusalem, the independence of Israel nor peace in general.

The Soviet proposal is not directed against Israel or the Jews of Jerusalem; it is in the interests of both Jews and Arabs. It is directed against Abdullah and the British army in the rest of the country and of Jerusalem. The U.S.S.R. rightly regards the armies of Transjordan and Britain as a continual threat to the peace of Israel, Jerusalem and the entire Middle East. That is why the imperialist plans to impose foreign rule on Jerusalem must not be confused with the Soviet plan for the independent rule of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, under the official supervision of a Trusteeship Council. Even those who do not agree with the Soviet peace plan, which is identical with the basic interests of the State

of Israel, must not distort the U.S.S.R.'s position. (From the floor: Do you agree to this plan?) I have seen how people connected with British imperialism interrupt the enemies of imperialism in other parliaments!

The negotiations being conducted with Abdullah by Israel's representatives concerning the partition of Jerusalem, thereby recognizing British-Transjordanian rule over part of Palestine, and the policy of suppressing the democratic Arab forces which are fighting to establish their independent state and drive the invaders and the British army out of the rest of Palestine, complicate the situation and enable the American "Conciliation" Commission to propose plans to obtain control of Jerusalem and undermine Israel's sovereignty.

The obvious conclusion is, therefore, that Israel should see the issue in its entirety, regarding it as our main task to implement a policy which will foil the schemes to annex the rest of Jerusalem to Transjordan and Britain and will help to establish an independent Arab state in the rest of Palestine. This policy alone will bolster the security of the Jews of Jerusalem and remove the British cannon which threaten the city.

That is the problem. We must fight the Government's policy, which is based on the possibility of making an alliance with Abdullah and British and American imperialism....We must fight the plans of the Conciliation Commission and of imperialist control over Jerusalem. We must fight for a solution which will prevent a "second round" and will bring peace between a free Israel and an independent, peace-loving democratic Arab state in the rest of Palestine....The two countries will decide in the final event whether Jerusalem is to be divided between them or governed jointly, for the mutual benefit, prosperity, peace and welfare of the two countries.

Only a far-seeing plan will lead to the removal of the invading and British armies from the gates of Jerusalem and all of Israel; only a plan of this kind is in the interests of peace in Israel, the freedom of the country, the security of the Jews of Jerusalem and their connection with the State of Israel.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, I would like to refresh your memories with two points:

A. At the time of the commotion over our acceptance into the U.N., our representative, Mr. Abba Eban, was summoned before the U.N.'s "ad hoc" political committee and asked, amongst other things, about Israel's attitude to Jerusalem.

At the conclusion of Mr. Abba Eban's reply, he made the following statement: "The incorporation of Jewish Jerusalem within the State of Israel was a natural historic process resulting from the circumstances of the war, a power vacuum created by the ending of the Mandate and the refusal of the U.N. to accept direct administrative responsibility for

Jerusalem. The incorporation of Jewish Jerusalem within the State of Israel cannot be combined with the international rule of Jerusalem. The Government of Israel recommends that international rule be created solely to supervise and protect the holy sites."

On the basis of these explanations, which satisfied the committee, it decided on 9 May 1949 to recommend that the State of Israel be accepted into the U.N., and this resolution was adopted by the U.N. Assembly on May 11.

B. During that session of the U.N. Assembly, Israel's Foreign Minister addressed its Policy Committee on the subject of Jerusalem, concluding by proposing the following resolution:

The General Assembly, referring to its previous resolutions expressing its concern over Jerusalem because of the holy sites there, notes that Israel's Proclamation of Independence of 15 May 1948 guarantees to protect the holy places of all the religions which aspire to maintain existing rights, particularly those which were in effect until 14 May 1948, and consequently resolves:

- a. To authorize the Secretary-General to sign an agreement with the Government of Israel in the name of the U.N. regarding the protection and supervision of the holy places in Jerusalem.
- b. To ask the Secretary-General to give the fifth session of the U.N. Assembly a progress report regarding the signing and implementation of this arrangement.

That is all.

Although the U.N.'s original resolution regarding the internationalization of Jerusalem was adopted only two years ago, we have gone a long way away from it since then; and meanwhile a different decision has been made, one that has been engraved on the hearts of the Jews of Jerusalem and of the entire State of Israel.

That decision was made during days and nights of siege, hunger, thirst, death, sorrow and heroism, when Jerusalem, its inhabitants and its holy sites were abandoned.

Those who were charged with the fate of Jerusalem abandoned it. History cannot abide a vacuum, and the vacuum of Jerusalem was filled. Jerusalem as an organic part of the State of Israel underwent a baptism by fire, concluding with the victory of the Jews of Jerusalem, aided morally, militarily, politically, economically and administratively by the State of Israel. That fact cannot be altered.

The internationalization of Jerusalem, for whatever reason, means, simply, abandoning the Jews of Jerusalem to the danger of destruction, as occurred after the "demilitarization" of Jerusalem during the British Mandate. It means cutting Jerusalem off from the process of the ingathering of the exiles. It means depriving the inhabitants of Jerusalem of their independence and their right to self-government as an

integral part of the State of Israel. It means introducing foreign rule into the heart of the State of Israel, with all that this implies. We demand to be left alone.

The U.N. Assembly cannot pass this unjust and impracticable resolution. The fate of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, of the State of Israel and of the U.N.'s honor impel us to identify totally with the statement made in the Knesset today by the Prime Minister.

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): In making this statement I am the representative of a public which is small in numbers but has considerable specific weight. I speak in the name of soldiers who are alive today and of many who did not survive, and on behalf of soldiers who raised the banner to free the homeland several years ago. For them Jerusalem was not merely a holy symbol, but a sacred objective in the endeavor to substitute Jewish for alien rule.

For them Jerusalem was a principal objective of the war and also a testing point. Dozens of my colleagues spent many years in prisons in Jerusalem, in the Russian Compound. There they appeared before the courts of the foreign ruler, asking them: "Who are you to judge us here, in Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish homeland?" For their independence they were sentenced to many years in prison. But they went to jail joyfully, knowing that even by doing so they were undermining the oppressor's rule.

In the solitary confinement cells in Jerusalem my colleagues wore the red garb of those who had been condemned to death, and Moshe Barazani, together with Feinstein, a member of the IZL, tore their hearts out on the eve of their execution, not wanting to fall at the hands of foreigners.

My colleagues fought on the walls of Jerusalem in the summer months of 1948; there they shed their blood, and they were buried in Jerusalem's soil.

...Consequently, there is no power in the world which can deprive the Jewish nation of Jerusalem, which was conquered by fire and blood. It will not be abandoned at the arbitrariness of those who raise their alien hands to vote, no matter who they be. The shame of foreign oppression will not return to Jerusalem! Foreigners will not order those who dwell in Jerusalem to deny the blood that was shed for the city's freedom!

If the sanctity of graves is a political reason there are thousands of fresh graves which are more sacred to us than anything else, and they command us to fight for our capital. Every soldier will defend Jerusalem, and if additional sacrifices are required Jewish youngsters will willingly shed their blood.

Let the foreigners who are discussing the fate of Jerusalem take note of our call: Remove your hands from our capital! Jerusalem will be Jewish forever, and its government will be only Jewish!

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Members, we have heard the Prime Minister's statement and those of all the parties, all of whom spoke clearly on the question of Jerusalem.

Despite the differing views, I declare that the entire Knesset is united in stating that Jerusalem is an inseparable part of the State of Israel and cannot be placed under foreign rule of any kind. This is the view of the First Knesset of the State of Israel.

(The members rise and sing the national anthem.)

Transferring the Knesset and the Cabinet to Jerusalem

Introduction

As had been anticipated, the U.N. General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, adopted a resolution calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem. In a mood of defiance, the Knesset approved the Government's proposal to transfer the Knesset and the Cabinet to Jerusalem.

Sitting 96 of the First Knesset

13 December 1949 (22 Kislev 5710)
Tel Aviv, Knesset Building

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: ...I beg the Knesset Members' indulgence for the slight disorder which has affected this sitting. We are all aware of the reasons for this. This disorder is intended to set several matters in order. Although it is our task to be precise, both in content and in form, there are certain exceptions to this rule. I give the floor to Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, a week ago I made a statement here on behalf of the Cabinet regarding Jerusalem. Our statement is still in effect; no change has been or will be made in our attitude.

As you know, the U.N. Assembly has meanwhile decided, by a large majority, to place Jerusalem under international rule as a separate body. This resolution cannot be implemented, if only because of the firm opposition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It is to be hoped that the U.N. will correct the mistake the majority has made this time and will refrain from trying to impose government on Jerusalem.

We respect the desire of countries interested in freedom of worship and free access to the holy places, and which seek to assure existing rights in this respect in Jerusalem. Our undertaking to preserve these rights is still in effect, and we will adhere to it gladly, although we cannot support the enforced division of Jerusalem, which unjustifiably discriminates against the natural, historical right of the Jewish nation.

Ever since the Provisional Government was established our concern for the peace, security and economic welfare of Jerusalem was foremost among our activities. During the war, when Jerusalem was besieged, the Cabinet was obliged to sit temporarily in Tel Aviv. But Is-

rael had and has only one capital—eternal Jerusalem. Thus it was three thousand years ago, and thus it will be—we believe—forever.

As soon as the fighting ended we began transferring Ministries to Jerusalem and making the arrangements necessary for a capital city—proper roads, technical and economic arrangements....When the First Knesset convened in Jerusalem on 14 February 1949...the necessary arrangements to enable it to function normally in the capital did not yet exist, and we had to hold the Knesset sittings temporarily in Tel Aviv. Now that the necessary arrangements have nearly been completed in Jerusalem there is no longer any reason why the Knesset should not move there, and we propose that you decide to do so.

Naturally, this does not alter any of the previous arrangements concerning the holy sites, which will be fully respected by the Government of Israel, or concerning its agreement for their effective supervision by the U.N., as this Government has stated at the U.N.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We have heard the Prime Minister's statement. The party factions may make announcements of no more than ten minutes.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, I expressed my reservations in the Committee and asked to be permitted to propose a debate in the Knesset.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We propose that if factions wish to say something in connection with this statement they may do so. The debate on foreign policy will be held soon, however, as will be determined by the Knesset or the Cabinet, or by both of them, but not by this statement.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will return to the agenda.

M. Begin (Herut): Who is returning to the agenda? Is the Cabinet's proposal sufficient to return to the agenda?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will vote, then, on MK Joseph Sapir's proposal that we hold a debate.

Y. Bader (Herut): Oh, you religious people! Is this the way you show your concern for Jerusalem?

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): It would be better if Jerusalem were ours, even if we did not talk about it!

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Members, kindly do not speak while the vote is being taken.

The Vote

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Those in favor of MK Sapir's proposal | 27 |
| Those against | 59 |

(The proposal is not adopted.)

Y. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): At one of the gravest moments for Israeli policy, we regard it as our duty and privilege to support the Government in its actions and policies designed to assure Israel's sovereignty over undivided Jerusalem, repelling the attempt to detach Jerusalem from the body of the nation and the renewed state.

This is a grim day in the Jewish nation's struggle for its homeland. We could have expected that the great sacrifice, the heroism and the young blood which was shed like water in Jerusalem and its environs would prove to the world once again that the connection going back two thousand years between the Jewish people and the capital, Jerusalem, is unchanged. We could have expected that the fact that the residents of Jerusalem and of the entire state stood as a living wall when the whole world and all the institutions of the U.N. abandoned Jerusalem, and that the Jewish people saved Jerusalem from destruction not only for itself but for all mankind would be noted....But if we are obliged to carry on by political means what we started with our bodies and our souls, we will not be deterred! We will support every effort by the Government to repel internationalization and any other similar plan....

At the same time, we regard it as our duty to stress certain points and draw the attention of the Knesset and the Cabinet to certain issues. First of all, we must demand...that the present division of Jerusalem and the fact that invading forces are in part of it, and particularly the ancient, historical part, will not be recognized by us. To the best of our knowledge, the battle against internationalization, against severing Jerusalem from the body of the nation, cannot take place without a battle against the division of Jerusalem, demanding the return of the entire city to the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

We...call on the Government of Israel to refuse to cooperate with any U.N. institution or body involved in the plan to internationalize Jerusalem....It is not by declarations or administrative acts alone that our objective will be implemented but by establishing large development projects in Jerusalem forthwith, thereby increasing its population and establishing its status in an appropriate way....

We would be happy if we could absolve the Government of Israel and its foreign policy of all responsibility for the grave event which occurred at Lake Success...but this is not the case. Above all, we must call on the entire population, not only the Government, because this is a testing time for us, and warn it not to be led to think that in the battle which

awaits us our protagonist is the U.N. It is not our task to glorify the bitter fate of our current isolation in the world. We do not come to heap our wrath on the nations and exult in enmity. Israel shall not dwell alone, and it is not by xenophobia or racism that we shall advance our cause or strengthen the state....Even in times of dispute with established foes, and especially with friends who stood beside us at the establishment of the state and the War of Independence, Israel was not alone. That is why we will summon up all our strength in order to break this circle, deepen friendship and undermine this unity against us. An Israel which seeks progress, peace and construction...will not remain friendless. Our striving for peace while standing firm on the issue of our rights in our homeland will bring our pioneering youth to the fore from within, and they in turn will win us friends on the international front. The enlightened world will yet rejoice with us in the national undertaking we are deciding on today, namely, incorporating Jerusalem within the State of Israel and establishing it as our political center and capital.

M. Begin (Herut): Distinguished Speaker, the Prime Minister announced that the full debate on his government's foreign policy would be held soon; but this statement concerning its inadequate and doomed policy, and the associated vote, does not solve the problem. The Government's statement requires an immediate and full debate. This statement contains an extremely grave clause, which in effect annuls the only positive step this Government—albeit at a fatally late stage—was about to take, namely, transferring the principal institutions of government to Jerusalem.

The Government statement avers that we will accept what it calls "effective U.N. supervision" of the holy places in Jerusalem and Israel. If we translate that fancy phrase into the language of political reality it means that although the Government will meet in Jerusalem, and the Knesset will hold its debates there, they will both sit under the shadow of a foreign ruler whom we have invited to Jerusalem and all Israel of our own free will.

Because of the Government's policy we are now involved in the most serious crisis we have known, and one which was not necessary. The list of mistakes made by the official leadership, under its various names and throughout its protracted existence, regarding Jerusalem, is extremely long in comparison with the mistakes it has made regarding our political life. Its original sin was to grant official recognition to the severing of Jerusalem from the body of the state, when foreign rule of Jerusalem was incorporated in a statement issued by the U.N. and in the ensuing resolution.

A week ago the Prime Minister told us that the U.N. resolution of 29 November 1947 is no longer valid. That was some consolation...but we have no control over the resolutions of the U.N., and although that body is not accustomed to implementing its resolutions it does renew them. If

the Prime Minister adhered to the truth he would have had to announce that our agreement to foreign rule in Jerusalem was no longer valid; but he did not do so, and this could constitute what the classicists call "the hand of Nemesis."

Thus the delegates from Australia, the U.S.S.R. and other countries told our representatives at the U.N.: You agreed to international rule in Jerusalem! Was not Jerusalem sacred to you two years ago, were there not one hundred thousand Jews there then, and did they not have the right to self-determination then?

You could say: if the U.N. decided to establish international rule, it should have implemented it; since it did not, the resolution is invalid. This reasoning convinces us but not the world, which says, simply: we did not manage to implement our resolution in 1947, let us try and do so in 1949.

That is your original sin, and now we are all paying for it, because you officially and openly relinquished Jerusalem as our capital, as an inseparable part of Jewish sovereign land.

You also sinned against the nation's holy of holies, the Old City of Jerusalem. Within the limitations of the statement I am permitted to make I cannot furnish the documents—which are in my possession—proving that we could have...liberated the Old City....

But this is not all. It has been declared here that Jerusalem is the capital, while on the other hand the Government identifies completely with the statement made by our delegation at the U.N. But what was that statement? After the impressive speech of the Lebanese representative, Mr. Sharett rose and spoke on your behalf, on our behalf, quoting what had been said by Abdullah, by the mayor of Nablus and by the mayor of Bethlehem, namely, that anyone who harmed the areas they controlled would suffer. Then Malik from Lebanon said: "As a Christian I demand that you internationalize Jerusalem, because there is a grave danger that Jerusalem will be divided up for the first time in its history. And that is what that man, Mr. Sharett, aims at doing." And no one protested that.

When I speak to you of these things, Knesset Members, I speak as a Jew to his brethren. This is not a party or factional issue. Open your hearts! Do not stop up your ears! This is what our delegate to the U.N. said: "I have received an urgent cable from my government saying that King Abdullah participated demonstratively in morning prayers at the Al-Aksa mosque, generally known as the Mosque of Omar, in the Old City. His personal priest said: You have heard many rumors about internationalization. Do not be afraid, trust the king, who has declared that he will cut off the hand of anyone who tries to deprive us of one inch of our land. We will not let foreign forces play with the fate of the city!"

No one but the Foreign Minister of Israel said these things in front of the representatives of the nations. Is it any wonder that all your talk

of the sanctity of Jerusalem is not heard by the nations? How did we become completely isolated? You did not leave anyone any choice....The only alternative you left was for the high priest, Sir Alexander Cadogan, to rise and bless the accord about to be made between you and King Abdullah and his personal priest.

Do not stop up your ears! This is one of the gravest moments in our history. It is not a matter for a show of hands, whether there is a debate or not....They have abandoned the nation's holy of holies and ask us to keep quiet and wait until the agreement is signed, so that the Old City may continue to be controlled by Abdullah and his terrible minions.

Your third sin against Jerusalem was that you missed every opportunity to determine it as the capital of Israel. At the previous sitting of the Knesset we demanded that it be laid down in our Transition Act ...that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. There was uproar in the plenum. You did not dare remove the proposal from the agenda and decided to transfer it to the Constitution Committee. Nine months have passed since then. At almost every Knesset sitting we asked you to decide about Jerusalem. What were you afraid of? What were you waiting for? You foiled every attempt to do so. The members of the religious faction helped us, as did those of the Sephardic faction....But you said: We do not want to enter into conflict with the U.N. And what is the result? There is conflict. You decided to proclaim the sanctity of Jerusalem after it had been decided that Jerusalem was not ours. You brought our nation into the gravest conflict with the representatives of the entire world.

...We will support the proposal that the Knesset and the Cabinet should move to Jerusalem. It is too little too late, but we will support the proposal which we demanded should be implemented many months ago. The whole nation should know, however, that if we find ourselves in an impasse, if we are isolated on every side, if all our allies have betrayed us, if all that is left for us is to try and move to Jerusalem after a serious resolution has been passed, all this is the fault of this Government's feeble and disabling policy.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, a week ago, from this podium, we declared our intention of not being deterred by any resolution to sever us from Jerusalem, and that any attempt to prevent us proclaiming Jerusalem as our capital would meet with the continuous and stubborn resistance of the entire nation.

The U.N. decision to internationalize Jerusalem obliges us to take our stand in practice as well as in theory, in order to stem this undesirable development, and we must proclaim Jerusalem to be our capital immediately. We maintain that transferring the Cabinet and the Knesset to Jerusalem without any legislative act cannot, in the present circumstances, satisfy the needs aroused by the U.N. resolution, and provide an appropriate answer to it.

Since it has been decided not to discuss the Government's foreign policy or the issue of Jerusalem here today, we will not speak at length about the severe damage which has been inflicted on our foreign policy and political position. A crucial link in the chain of our political achievements...has been severed. Since we are discussing the statement about Jerusalem we are circumspect in our use of language, but when the full debate on the matter is held we will not hesitate to point out all the mistakes made by the present Government.

We consider it necessary to state today that despite the decision to transfer the proposals to proclaim Jerusalem our capital to the Constitution Committee, our proposal, namely, that "The capital of Israel is Jerusalem," should be incorporated as the first clause of the constitution, simultaneously with the Government's statement. We think that the demonstrative value of the Government's statement...will not be complete without that legislative act....We are not ignoring the gravity of the situation created by the U.N. resolution or the possibility that we may have to defend our capital by force, mobilizing all our physical and emotional strength, but we know that the entire nation will stand with us, willing to pay the price....

Regrettably, I must say that the Government's statement cannot conceal the fact that it is greatly overdue and arrives at a time when political tension is higher than in the past. That is why we regard it as of particular importance that the Government statement be supplemented by an immediate constitutional decision regarding Jerusalem the capital. The particular concentration of powers against us on this issue requires us to be constantly on our guard....

I would like to note that our agreement to the Government's practical decisions cannot be interpreted as acceptance of certain facts or of foreign rule over part of Jerusalem. We support any plan to define Jerusalem as our capital and aid its development and expansion.

We advocate an information campaign to gain world opinion, and counteract the lack of understanding about us in the U.N. and the world. We believe that the Almighty will not fail Israel, and that the will of the nation throughout its dispersions, as well as of the entire nation that dwells in Zion, will serve as a firm guarantee for the fulfillment of the aspirations of generations that all Jerusalem shall be ours, in our hands, under our sovereignty and our one and only capital.

M. Wilner (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, it is regrettable that there is no general debate on Jerusalem and the Government's foreign policy today, because that would enable the Knesset to reveal to the nation all the reasons for Israel's complex and grave political situation in every sphere: foreign policy, the issue of Jerusalem and economic policy.

Many of our sons shed their blood for Jerusalem. In a recent sitting the Prime Minister reported how many soldiers fell in the battles fought by the IDF for Israel and Jerusalem, letting it be known that many of

those who rant and rave about Jerusalem did not make the greatest sacrifice on the battlefield.

One factor, however, was not mentioned at all among all those which contributed to our victory...namely, the extensive and valuable aid granted by the camp led by the U.S.S.R. That is an historical fact and the lesson taught by contemporary events. Even at that difficult time, when we forged the road to Jerusalem with our bodies and defended the city with the help of the U.S.S.R. and the people's democracies, those who analyzed the forces in the U.N. correctly knew that they did not favor our cause, that they contained imperialists who sent their armies against us as well as progressive forces which had always helped the Jewish nation.

J. Serlin (General Zionists): Which raised their hands against Jerusalem.

M. Wilner (Maki): Which helped, have helped and will help defend the independence of the State of Israel, assuring the welfare of the Jews of Jerusalem.

...How can a just solution to the problem of Jerusalem be attained? By supporting every action, both internal and international...which will remove Abdullah's British cannon from Jerusalem and its environs....It is also evident that any solution of the problem of Jerusalem must take into account the age-old link between the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

The U.N. resolution, as supported by the progressive forces there, is not directed against Israel. Its objective is to remove Abdullah's British army from Palestine. We must adopt a far-seeing policy, preventing any political act which in effect recognizes Abdullah's, i.e., Britain's, rule over the Old City and the rest of Palestine, for as long as that situation holds the security of Jerusalem and of all Israel will never be guaranteed....

The U.N. resolution, if it is not distorted, proposes a temporary arrangement until such time as the self-government by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with a democratically-elected legislature, as outlined in the resolutions of 29 November 1948...can arise....

Before I read my party's proposal I would like to mention the fact that for some reason certain Government circles...saw fit to negotiate with Bernadotte even after he published his initial proposals to hand Jerusalem over to Abdullah-Bevin....The Jewish population and the inhabitants of Jerusalem foiled Bernadotte's plan....We should remember that well because now that the issue of Jerusalem has been removed from the exclusively Anglo-American framework, those self-same circles are attempting to turn the problem on its head and conceal the main issue from the people, namely, that negotiations are being conducted with Abdullah, that the betrayal of Jerusalem is being prepared...and

that Israel is ready to recognize alien rule in the rest of Palestine...thereby embroiling our state and the Jews of Jerusalem as well as those of Israel in a political situation which not only does not guarantee peace but will constitute a constant source of instability and insecurity....

A. Bahir (Mapai): I want to know whether you favor transferring the Knesset to Jerusalem?

M. Wilner (Maki): We participated in the Knesset sitting in Jerusalem, as did the representatives of the democratic countries. The representatives of the countries you depend on boycotted it.

In conclusion, I would like to submit my party's proposal regarding Jerusalem:

1. The Knesset will ensure that any solution of the problem of Jerusalem will take into account the living, historical tie between the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

2. The Knesset declares that Israel does not recognize the rule of King Abdullah, the British agent, in the Old City of Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine.

...Israel will support any step taken by the U.N. designed to remove the British-Transjordanian army from Jerusalem and Palestine, as the best way of assuring peace and security, independence and liberty, and friendship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and the Middle East.

The Knesset expresses its full support for the war waged by the Arab masses in the rest of Palestine to drive out the invaders—(From the floor: How many of them are there?) Despite your policy, there are a great many of them; it seems that you are too preoccupied with Abdullah to notice them—and establish an independent, democratic, peace-loving Arab state which is friendly to Israel.

3. ...The U.N. decision to establish independent rule by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, under the temporary supervision of a Trusteeship Council, leading to the eventual solution of the problem of Jerusalem through the wishes of its denizens...is in fact intended to remove the British-Transjordanian invaders who are threatening the welfare of the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem and to foil the attempts to make the rest of Palestine a base for imperialist aggression....

...We think that this far-seeing approach will ensure the link with Jerusalem, the peace of its Jewish inhabitants, the removal of the imperialist invaders and Jewish-Arab friendship in Palestine and the Middle East, for without the friendship of nations there is no peace or independence, neither for Israel nor for its neighbors.

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): Distinguished Knesset, this is not the time to criticize the Government's past policy regarding Jerusalem. The resolution adopted in the U.N. did not materialize from thin air. It is the

outcome of a long series of errors on the part of the Government...based on hesitancy and political cowardice.

The Government's decision rectifies the situation to some extent. But we cannot ignore the fact that Jerusalem is still divided and the Old City under alien rule. There can be no peace for Jerusalem through an agreement with the ruler of Amman whose cannon have bombarded our capital and whose British-commanded legionnaires aim their weapons at us.

...The greatness of this hour will be tested by our actions. It is a mistake to think that the varied front seeking to separate Jerusalem from us will crumble as soon as our decision is made known. We will undoubtedly be subjected to increasing pressure, intimidation, and perhaps even sanctions. We will emerge victorious...if we stand firm and united against alien rule in Jerusalem....But any hesitancy, concession or retreat on the part of the Government...will split the nation and undermine its authority to speak for the people....

Thousands of years of Jewish history watch us as the Knesset and the Government are transferred to Jerusalem. May we be worthy of the great tradition of Jewish freedom which Jerusalem symbolizes.... There is no withdrawal from Jerusalem. Jerusalem cannot be divided or placed under total or partial alien rule....Generations of our people fought for this. Let us arise and go to Jerusalem; we will be ready to fight unhesitatingly.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The form and contents of the statements made here by the representatives of the Herut, General Zionists, Maki and Fighters parties are regrettable, though hardly surprising....I am sure, however, that everyone appreciated what the Mapam representative said, even though they did not necessarily agree with it. His words reflected the conscience not only of his party but also of many who are not represented in this Government, and make up for the things said by the speakers who followed him, and which are best forgotten.

We decided not to hold a political debate now...and I must not reply to the things which were said here and should not have been expressed at this time. The circumstances and the distinction of the event which we are discussing oblige me to pass over most of them in silence. I will note solely that we have witnessed a general concern for the fate of Jerusalem, its links with the State of Israel and our future in Israel's eternal capital. This concern will reach the ears of the entire nation and the whole world.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset members, the House has heard the Prime Minister's statement and those of the factions. Despite the various approaches, it is evident that the Knesset is virtually united in supporting what the Prime Minister has said, and I hereby announce that

after Hannuka (the Feast of Lights) the Knesset sittings will be reconvened in Jerusalem (applause)....
(There was no vote.)

Annexation of the West Bank by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Introduction

In December 1948, at a conference which took place in Jericho, a group of hand-picked leaders of Palestinian Arabs resolved to ask King Abdullah of Transjordan to incorporate the Arab parts of Palestine into his kingdom. The General Armistice Agreement of 3 April 1949 constituted de facto recognition of that incorporation; however, it was specifically designed as a military agreement which did not prejudice the political positions of the contracting parties.

On 25 April 1949 the king officially changed the name of his kingdom, henceforth to be known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Almost one year later, having secured the support of Great Britain (albeit qualified—Great Britain did not recognize the incorporation of East Jerusalem, maintaining that it ought to be part of a *corpus separatum*, an international enclave), King Abdullah went one step further. On 24 April 1950 the Jordan House of Deputies and House of Notables, in a joint session, adopted a resolution declaring “complete unity between the two sides of the Jordan and their union in one state...at whose head reigns King Abdullah Ibn al Hussain, on a basis of constitutional representative government and equality of the rights and duties of all citizens.”

Almost a week later the Knesset devoted a sitting to a debate of the subject.

Sitting 135 of the First Knesset

3 May 1950 (16 Iyar 5710)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, I would like to draw your attention to the strange and unprecedented way in which this debate has been called. Despite the various differences of opinion, I think that there is no one here among us who does not regard this issue as being of the utmost political significance, both internally and externally. The Government refuses to open the debate with a statement, and this goes against precedent...We, the Opposition parties, are opening the debate because we do not wish to delay the matter further, and I presume that...the Government will make a closing statement, when we will be unable to make any remarks.

...The king of the country which calls itself "Jordania" has announced that he has annexed part of Palestine to his country. Furthermore, the British Empire has announced that its armed forces are returning to Palestine. The State of Israel has not reacted to this. Is the Knesset entitled not to react either?...We cannot discuss the events of our lives without stressing their international background, particularly in our immediate vicinity....

I would like to remind you that when one wants to gain control of a large area one does not start with the main, principal enemy. One prepares the ground by taking action against the weaker forces. This is what Hitler did when he started his scheme to destroy the entire free world....First he attacked the Jews and the socialists, and the world kept quiet, thinking that the threat was not directed at it.

The preparations for the third world war are being made in the same way. Although the intention is to rule the world and attack the U.S.S.R., the forces in our immediate neighborhood are being prepared first. Those forces tried to attack us recently, and were defeated. Someone still doubts the military capacity and potential of those forces, that is why they are being prepared for a future war by fighting against us.

Before and during this annexation and Britain's announcement of its return to Palestine we also heard about other activities. I presume that there is no one here in this House who does not know about this. All the weapons which have been and will be given to Abdullah and to others are intended to be used in the third world war, but meanwhile can be directed against us....Is it not obvious that the announcement of the annexation was also a way of preparing Britain's return to Palestine? That is also part of the grand design.

There was a great debate among us about partition, and the Foreign Minister reminds us from time to time that that discussion has been settled. But I want to warn you that this is not the case....Some bodies did not recognize even what we were given for the State of Israel then. This does not apply only to the so-called independent Arab countries, it also applies to those who support and arm them....The war against us has not ended. The cold war continues, interspersed from time to time with fighting and the danger of the outbreak of war.

...Our party has always said that peace was necessary for Israel, in order to build and develop the country....We wanted peace with the Arab people, and thought that we should conduct a dynamic policy towards it, seeking those elements within it which could be true allies in the search for peace, which both nations need.

A. Almaliah (Sephardim): Who speaks for them?

I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): I'm talking about what you and I—as well as they—need....But our Government adopted a different line: it did not seek someone who "did not exist," as the Foreign Minister has said sev-

eral times, but "what there was." We are currently surrounded by reactionary, feudal governments—the sworn enemies of our country—which you recognize as the representatives of the peoples around us. But even while adhering to that policy, which was the worst mistake the Government made in this period...within those Arab countries there are varying degrees of dependence on world imperialist forces. Our Government's policy, however, was always to court the country which was gripped most securely by the vise of British imperialism....

The Prime Minister has praised the wisdom of the Transjordanian ruler. He has not praised our political wisdom, and quite rightly....Our words and actions encouraged the annexation of the West Bank and the return of the British army.

...The treaty between Britain and Abdullah gives the former the right to bring its army back not only in time of war but also if either side thinks it is threatened in any way. Need I remind you that not long ago, when the British Empire wanted to send a large military force to this part of the world, it announced that it was doing so...at the request of Abdullah, who feared that his country was threatened?...

We propose that the House resolve...not to recognize the annexation and forbid negotiations with Abdullah until it is annulled....

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have informed us on various occasions that we belong to the U.N. not only because of the practical convenience of the thing but also because we believe in the U.N.'s role in preserving world peace. If this is true, we propose that you decide to submit an official complaint to the U.N. about the annexation and the announcement of the British Empire's return to Palestine, which negate every international decision and threaten world peace....

I know that all our complaints and appeals have been to no avail in the past, and will be in the future too. I know that our cause will be furthered primarily by increasing our own strength, expanding our population and establishing a regime in Israel which will enable us to utilize every ounce of public power and create the kind of relations with the Arabs of Palestine which will cause them to influence and attract other Arabs too....I know that in the future, too, the creation of "faits accomplis" will have greater weight than anything else. But while increasing our strength in order to achieve this, we must instruct our Government to refuse to recognize the annexation or continue the secret negotiations until it is annulled, and to complain to the U.N. about those who wish to threaten our region with violence and war.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Mr. Speaker, I have asked for the floor now not in order to address the issue, but solely to clarify the parliamentary status of the debate, which has been described as strange and unprecedented.

It is strange to condemn an institution as young as this Knesset for departing from precedent....I would like to point out that as far as other

parliaments are concerned it is quite customary that when the Opposition demands a debate on a specific topic its leaders open the debate, and the Government steps in only when it sees fit to do so. This Government subscribes to that view, and will continue to do so in the future....

If, however, it is claimed, as MK Bar-Yehuda has done, that the Government has not reacted and has said nothing about the recent event, I must point out that this is not so....The Government Spokesman issued the following statement, in the Government's name: "The decision to annex the Arab areas west of the River Jordan to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a unilateral step to which Israel is not a party in any way. We are connected with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan through the Armistice Agreement, which we will uphold rigorously. This agreement does not include any final political settlement, however, and no such settlement is possible without negotiations and a peace treaty between the sides. It must be evident, therefore, that the question of the status of the Arab areas west of the River Jordan remains open as far as we are concerned." A few days later, when the associated British announcement was made, the Government stated: "With regard to the annexation of the Arab areas west of the River Jordan by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Government has already announced that it regards the status of these areas as being open. The Government notes the fact that the British government does not intend to establish military bases in the areas west of the River Jordan during peacetime. The content of the treaty between Britain and Transjordan regarding these areas is surprising, and the Government of Israel maintains its reservations about the status of these areas." At present the Government has nothing to add to these statements. It is interested in hearing the views of the Opposition and of the House, reserving the right to react to what is said at any stage of the debate.

M. Begin (Herut): Distinguished Speaker, we accuse Mr. Sharett and the Government...of having given Abdullah and the Bevin government...the green light to go ahead and turn an act of conquest and plunder into a recognized political act. Last year the first agreement with the British protectorate in the eastern part of the Land of Israel, called "the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" by the conquerors and our Government, was submitted to us. We warned the Government then that by signing that agreement it was granting threefold recognition to the enemy: first—recognizing the separation of the eastern part of Transjordan; second—openly recognizing the annexation of parts of the western Land of Israel by the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan"; third—implicitly recognizing the validity of the enslaving treaty which Britain ordered its vassal Abdullah to sign, enabling it to establish military bases in the territory he had conquered.

The Government took no heed of our warning, assuring the nation that the agreement was merely a first step and would eventually be fol-

lowed by a peace agreement....It must be admitted that since then the Government has done its best, or its worst, to obtain a peace agreement with King Abdullah, and its failure is not its fault....We ask what benefit would we derive from an agreement of this kind?...Our institutions tried in the past to win Abdullah's heart by offering him a bribe...but for more than fifty years this has not succeeded....The Cabinet Secretary has revealed...that prior to the invasion by the Arab armies Mrs. Golda Meyerson (Meir), disguised as an Arab woman, was sent on a dangerous...mission to Transjordan. I must congratulate the lady on her courage and her expertise in conspiracy, but the fact is that she did not succeed. (From the floor: How do you know?) Jerusalem is the proof.

When the invasion began Mr. Ben-Gurion made a supreme effort to guarantee King Abdullah's friendship, praising him in public and saying: "I believe in the peaceable intentions of the wise ruler who seeks the welfare of his people and his country."...But it was to no avail. As ordered by Glubb Pasha and Clayton, Abdullah sent his Legion against us, destroying the Etzion Bloc, attacking Jerusalem...and attempting to join up with the other Arab armies on the coastal plain, thereby destroying our national endeavor and enabling Bevin to..."rescue" those of us who remained and enclose us in a ghetto.

...Today Abdullah has no more than 15,000 soldiers, albeit well-trained and armed, and no reserves....Even now the IDF could defeat them in a head-on clash, so the possibility of a war on that front represents no threat to us....But Abdullah may become stronger in the future...and may try once again to destroy us. Would a slip of paper called a peace treaty stop him?...Recent experience indicates that it would not....

Because of our past experience, the present situation and future possibilities, we are all amazed by this headlong pursuit of a peace treaty with a vassal state which controls part of our homeland....Even if this peace treaty were to bring us some benefit, this would not justify our signing it....

...But the peace treaty accords official recognition by us to the severing of Transjordan. The eastern part of it was taken away from us at the famous Cairo Conference of 1922, in which Churchill, who was Colonial Secretary, Herbert Samuel, Viceroy of India, and Intelligence Officer Lawrence, participated. Since then a great deal of water has flowed in our Jordan River. Despite my searches, I have not found any document issued by a Jewish or Zionist body recognizing the severing of Transjordan from our homeland. That area was recognized as being part of our territory by more than forty nations, as well as by you, when Britain agreed to it. We ask: does a nation exist by the charity of others?

Until 1937 Mr. Ben-Gurion opposed the establishment of a Jewish state, maintaining that it involved our ruling another nation. In 1937...Lord Peel, Copeland and two other British Gentiles said that

Palestine should be partitioned and a Jewish state established in the smaller part. From then on Ben-Gurion was an ardent supporter of a Jewish state....When Britain changed its mind about the Jewish homeland on both banks of the Jordan...when one old desert king was driven out by another, and one of his sons had to be compensated and another base built, and the control of Transjordan with its 250,000 Beduin and Circassians was handed over to a foreign ruler who had no connection with them, our institutions were prepared to accept that too....Our entire future depends on the territorial integrity of our historic homeland...and you are prepared to legitimize the annexation of part of it, of Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem and Shechem, by a British-controlled, foreign ruler.

...The mutual defense clause in the British-Transjordanian friendship treaty of 15 March 1948...means that if the King of England is at war in Hong Kong or Malaya he will ask King Abdullah to come and rescue him....And vice versa....That is what your recognition of Britain's right to establish bases in the western part of the Land of Israel means....

Why are you so eager to sign a peace treaty with Abdullah?...Are you afraid of him and his 15,000 soldiers?...Or is one of the ministers, who promised the people "peace" in the election campaign, eager to keep his word? Do not worry, it would not be the first time you failed to keep an election promise. In the past you asked us what right we had to act as we did in order to drive out the British oppressor, and we answered "we were chosen."...It was at a time when our people were being slaughtered in Europe, and the oppressor closed our gates and would not allow Jews in....Revolutions do not take place after orderly resolutions have been passed. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was written after the Bastille was stormed; the American Declaration of Independence was drawn up after the Boston Tea Party. A revolution always erupts from the depths.

But today we will ask you that question. You have acknowledged the legitimacy of handing over Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the Cave of Machpela, Rachel's Tomb, Hebron, Bethlehem, Shechem, Gilead and Bashan to a foreigner, an enemy, an oppressor. Who gave you this right? You were elected to conduct the affairs of the country. The nation may reelect you or not....But when were you authorized to hand over sites which have been historically hallowed for 120 generations, and for which the blood of millions has been shed?...

I would like to ask the religious Ministers and Knesset Members if they have read the unfortunate memorandum which Mr. Sharett submitted to the Conciliation Commission stating that Israel had no claim to the areas under the control (not the illegal conquest, heaven forbid) of any Arab country. We were told that not even the Government's statement on Independence Day was submitted for your ap-

proval. I assume that you were unaware of this document too. But does that mean that you should grant it your approval now?...You must choose between the eternity of our attachment to the Land of Israel and your temporary membership in a coalition government....

That is the situation in which the Government has placed us. And then it is surprised that we are isolated....Does it think that the world is blind? That it fails to see that we are willing to accept the annexation of four-fifths of our homeland by Abdullah...and the reestablishment of British bases?...You are going towards bondage...and further isolation....

You should read the article in the *Times* agreeing with the "de jure" recognition of Israel, but warning that "Israel's territorial ambitions" should not be tolerated. You will yet be asked to abandon not only what you have relinquished but the territory we hold....Mr. Sharett, you have received a letter from the State Department demanding that compensation be paid for the areas we liberated and which were not included in Israel as defined by the U.N. resolution of November 29. You replied that there is no one to give compensation to since there are only invading armies in Palestine. Now there is someone to give it to....You have recognized the annexation....That kingdom has been recognized by Britain and America, and other countries will follow; then the demands will start, whether for Haifa, the southern Negev or other areas.

I would like to announce, on behalf of my party, that I do not think that this problem can be resolved anymore by a show of hands. I wish to state that...we do not accept the Israel Government's recognition of what has happened in the eastern and western parts of Transjordan. In civilized countries what one government decides is generally binding on others....But this signature is not binding upon us, it is the signature of this Government alone....The entire Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people, and we will not recognize the right of Abdullah or Britain to govern one inch of our homeland.

Joseph Sapir (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, despite the unconvincing statement made by the Foreign Minister...I wish to express our regret at the fact that he has not given this House any report on the events prior to and following the annexation....

The Government should have told us about what was happening at its own initiative, not as a result of the Opposition's intervention. Any public debate of our foreign policy is of necessity limited....Because of the limited information conveyed to the Opposition parties...we can only base ourselves on certain inferences.

We have been confronted with the fact that the remaining part of our country, the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem, now constitute part of another country, on both banks of the Jordan. We have always preferred—and still do so today—the establishment of an independent Arab state in the rest of our country to its annexation by one of the neigh-

boring countries...but the fact of the matter is that the initiative is no longer ours to take....Are we to understand that both before and after the annexation the Foreign Ministry agreed to it?...We maintain that the Government is ignoring the Knesset on this subject. Do we have to constantly point to the grave mistake the Foreign Ministry made before the U.N. decision to internationalize Jerusalem?...We are forced to conclude once again that it has erred in its evaluation of the political forces operating in the area....

As you know, negotiations were held with a Transjordanian representative some time ago, but ended as the result of pressure exerted on the other side by the other Arab countries. Today we find ourselves in a vacuum...the sole salient fact being the annexation. There may be differences of opinion regarding how justified it is for us to relinquish one area or another on the border with Transjordan. But on one painful point—the Old City of Jerusalem—there are no differences of opinion. Here the pain is acute. Here our public stands firm. It is difficult, nay, impossible, to pass lightly over the fact that the Old City of Jerusalem is...part of another country. What does the Government have to say about this split in the nation's soul?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: What is your position?

J. Sapir (General Zionists): I'm coming to that. The Government's announcement of its refusal to recognize the annexation, being accompanied by no other reaction, indicates that it is merely a formality.

...Mapam's approach to our foreign policy is a direct function of its attitude to the regime inside the country...as well as deriving from its identification with the regimes of Eastern Europe....Some people might say that our orientation should consequently be to the West, but my party does not determine its views on foreign policy in accordance with its aspirations in the sphere of domestic policy. It bases them, rather, on overall national considerations of the good of the entire country....Thus, we do not think that the time has come for Israel to make a hasty decision on the great issue of identifying with one side or another. I would like to point out that most of our nation is to be found in the western democracies, and any identification with the East severs us from the rest of our people....

Our relations with Transjordan are undoubtedly affected by our relations with Britain, and vice versa. In principle, we have no basis for opposing the renewal of relations with Britain, despite its anti-Zionist attitude in the last years of its rule here, following the White Paper of 1939, and its stubborn and consistent application by the Labor government. But if we assume that the Government's policy of establishing contact and agreement with one of the Arab countries, as a start towards attaining a series of peace treaties with the other Arab countries and possibly with Britain too...is wise, and if we try to ignore the security

problem...we still have to ask ourselves: what has the Government gained...by tacitly assenting to the annexation? In our view it has gained nothing.

In effect, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has fulfilled for itself our dream of "both banks of the Jordan."...The Government has no guarantee that the negotiations with the neighboring country will ever end...in genuine peace. Does the Government put such great trust in the goodwill of our neighbor that it can allow itself to make it such a generous advance payment...? The Government has relinquished what little bargaining power it had for nothing.

We oppose the annexation and demand that our country act against it in the U.N. (that is our reply, Mr. Ben-Gurion)....The annexation of part of our country and the Old City of Jerusalem puts an end for an undefined period of time to the possibility of reaching an understanding with the Arabs who live in this part of our country and of stabilizing our borders at least along the Jordan Valley....In the history of our nation we will unfortunately have to record the Government's position on the annexation as one of the moments causing the gravest concern for the future.

M. Wilner (Maki): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the subject of today's debate is a crucial one as regards the long-term solution of the problem of Palestine....The British Government initiated the annexation, and in recent months the American government has joined it in recognizing the annexation of the other half of Palestine by the British-Jordanian kingdom. These facts merely illustrate once again how the British and American governments...trample...on the independence of nations in accordance with imperialist agreements regarding the division of areas of influence, in preparation for a third world war, and how lightly those empires disregard the rights of nations to independence and self-determination, as they do those of the Palestinian Arabs in this case....

The results of the annexation are grave for both Israel's security and peace in the Middle East....The British army is now supposedly legally deployed along our borders, within Jerusalem, near Petah Tikva, and elsewhere in the country. The annexation will increase British intervention in Israel's internal affairs...and make Israel more susceptible to British and American pressure. Today, as in the past, an independent, democratic, peace-loving Arab country in the other part of Palestine...is in the interests not only of the Arab people, but also...of Israel.

...It should be clear that...peace in the Middle East will not be attained through a policy which in effect encourages invasion by foreign armies...and encourages...cooperation with feudalism and everything that is rotten in the Middle East....We favor peace treaties with the Arab countries even if those governments do not, to our regret, represent the

true interests of the people. The question is, however, under what conditions will peace be made.

...Because we oppose war and aggression, we dissociate ourselves completely...from the statement...made by the Herut representative.... But...a peace treaty with Transjordan based on recognizing its annexation of the rest of the country...would be like the peace obtained at Munich in 1938...when an attempt was made to secure peace by acceding to the aggressor's supposedly final demand....Events have proved that this does not bring peace, and only hastens war....

The Government said that it regards the annexation issue as being open, but...in its statement we read that it is a unilateral step. This means that the Government agrees to the annexation if it is made within the framework of a bilateral agreement....Moreover, the Government has done everything it could to encourage annexation. Over the last two years it has worked against the establishment of an independent Arab state, acting systematically and actively...and thereby hastening the next round of bloodshed in the Middle East and aiding the grand designs of England and America.

We propose: a. that the Knesset resolve not to recognize the annexation of the Arab areas of Palestine to the Abdullah-Bevin kingdom; b. that the Knesset charge the Government with requesting that the U.N. Security Council take steps against the annexation; and c. that the Knesset express its support for and approbation of the struggle of the Arab masses in the other part of Palestine to establish their independent state and drive out the Transjordanian and British invaders.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, in the two major debates we have had on political issues...the entire Opposition...announced that it opposed the Armistice Agreement with Transjordan. There have recently been three debates in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, in which the Foreign Minister participated, regarding a possible peace treaty with Transjordan.

...The Knesset has in the past given its approval to the line adopted by the Government and the Foreign Ministry, namely, of aiming for peace with all the Arab countries, including Transjordan....The renewed negotiations with Transjordan did not involve any recognition of the annexation or the British-Transjordanian treaty on our part. Quite the contrary, the Government's foreign policy till now has brought us peace and is a precondition for the widescale ingathering of the exiles....This issue cannot be discussed without clarifying the Opposition's position, as well as the Government's. But in this debate I speak only in my own name.

Four possibilities were open to us in our relations with Transjordan: the status quo on the basis of the Armistice Agreement; establishing an independent Arab state in the eastern part of western Palestine; a war of conquest on our part; annexation.

Personally, I would prefer the status quo in our relations with Transjordan on the basis of the borders determined in the Armistice Agreement—if the situation were stable. But it began to waver, not only because of Transjordan's annexation of territory and not only because of the various tendencies of certain powers, but also because of the influence of Egypt, the Mufti and the entire Arab League. Their objective was clearly to establish an independent Arab state within the borders delineated by the U.N. in November 1947. This was accelerated to some extent by the decision to internationalize Jerusalem.

In those circumstances our foreign policy could not be one of inaction, and hence our endeavor to attain a peace treaty with Transjordan. Two Opposition parties in the Knesset deplore the failure to establish an independent Arab state, namely, Mapam and Maki. The latter quite openly advocates the establishment of such a state on the basis of the borders set out by the U.N. in November 1947.

M. Wilner (Maki): I didn't say that!

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): I have read it, and I advise you, MK Wilner, to beware of committing yourself to anything.

Mapam favors the establishment of an independent Arab state on the basis of the borders set out in the Armistice Agreement, while demanding that the whole of Jerusalem be within Israel. Both parties pin their hopes on the progressive forces in the Triangle and beyond it, justifying their stand by maintaining that the annexation will increase the British threat against the U.S.S.R. and Israel.

...In the political debate held in the Knesset a year ago I said that the choice that confronted us was between an independent Arab state and annexation, both of them having points in their favor and neither of them being very attractive. I also said that there was no reason for us to rush into a decision. The political situation has changed meanwhile, and a decision has been imposed upon us, tending towards the establishment of an independent Arab state.

I completely and absolutely oppose the establishment of such a state because...it would not be economically viable...and would be able to survive only as a parasite of Israel. It would have no socio-political basis, and would almost certainly be controlled by the Mufti. Those who talk about the progressive forces are referring to the Arab communists, whom I regard as the enemies of Israel.

Tewfik Toubi (Maki): On what basis? The facts prove otherwise.

Z. Abrahamowitz (Mapai): If an independent Arab state were to be established now we would be facing the front of the Arab League and its pressure in the U.N. to push us back to the borders of November 1947, against which we would have fought....But even a purely political dispute would have caused a rift between us and the U.N. If an Arab state were estab-

lished I believe that this would temporarily strengthen the Arab League, which is generally regarded as being anti-Soviet and anti-Israel. The U.S.S.R.'s retreat from the demand to internationalize Jerusalem may be partly due to the fact that it has realized this.

But we must take the longer view. We are interested in the stability of the Middle East...At the moment Iraq wants to take over Syria, Syria wants to take over Lebanon, Transjordan wants to take over Syria, and Egypt apparently wants to take them all over...If another "independent" Arab state were to arise and wish to take over Israel, and all the Arab countries wanted to take the new state over, would that add to peace and stability in the Middle East?

Distinguished Knesset, if the status quo no longer exists, if we must oppose a new Arab state, only the third possibility—war—remains....In Tel Aviv, where he spoke with less restraint than here, MK Begin referred not only to the Triangle but also to the Bashan and Amman. His concern for security is shared by all the Opposition parties when it comes to the application of the British-Transjordanian treaty to the annexed territory. We are all anxious, and have been for some time, because that treaty has existed for some time...But I claim that there is something new in it now, namely, that it strengthens the tendency for British military participation in the annexed area, and also that England has announced that the treaty will be held in abeyance during peacetime.

M. Begin (Herut): Do you believe that assurance?

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): I cannot guarantee that any assurance will be kept, the debate is not about who trusts England more or less, however, but about how we should act in the circumstances.

Mr. Begin said what he did relying on historical reasons, which I do not accept. During the course of the history of the Jewish people in Israel the borders have changed...We do not have to achieve in two years what the Jewish nation was unable to do for two thousand.

M. Begin (Herut): Do we have to give it up?

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): Two and a half years ago the public in Israel and the Zionist Organization held different views about partition. Some people opposed an Arab state on principle, some wanted a Jewish state...in all western Palestine, and some wanted a Jewish state on both banks of the Jordan. But the World Zionist Organization...decided, taking the historical circumstances into account, to accept a Jewish state in western Palestine. The Government of Israel and the IDF also decided, expanding Israel's borders through conquest...What representative body has authorized you to speak about your political borders, Mr. Begin...?

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): They shouldn't be blocked!

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): In his speech in Tel Aviv Mr. Begin also made use of sentimental reasons, claiming "Rachel weeps for her sons," and mentioning Rachel's Tomb. I draw your attention to the thousands of graves of the nation's best sons who fell in Israel's war and the mothers who weep for them. Who wants a war of expansion? The workers? The landlords? Mothers and fathers? The youngsters? The IDF? On no account!

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): You are mocking the IDF.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): A war of expansion now would also endanger our national existence. You should say quite clearly: "We oppose x and y, and propose war." And if you do not say that to us in the Knesset, how can you appear in Israel's public squares and incite the nation to war?

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): There we said that we don't want war.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): There you said: "The Hashemite kingdom shall be destroyed by the sword."

Y. Bader (Herut): You'll have war when they want it.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): We do not ignore the fact that the annexation was a unilateral step...that the British-Transjordanian treaty has been extended to the annexed territory and that Britain's statement contains reservations about Israel's borders. All that is worrying. Those points are included in the Government's statement. The Knesset must authorize the Government to deal with the situation on the basis of two clear elements: rejection of the alternative of an independent Arab state, and adherence to the aspiration for peace.

Y. Harari (Progressives): Every now and again, when this debate is held in the Knesset, one gets the impression that there are ardent patriots on one side and stubborn defeatists on the other. This debate has been conducted, in my view, for the last thirteen years, since 1937, when Zionist policy was obliged to decide whether to agree to an independent Jewish state in part of Palestine.

MK Begin has told us of the qualms of conscience he and his friends experienced when they did what they did. I can say that my conscience bothered me...when I decided in favor of partition....It is far easier to address meetings, or even this Knesset, about Israel's historic borders than to explain to the nation that we should set our sights lower and accept imperfect borders....

I doubt whether it has often happened...that a political plan has been as successful...as that of those who advocated partition. We would never have achieved the decision of November 29 had we not agreed, unwillingly but perceptively, to a Jewish state in part of Palestine. None of the facts and operations by which MK Begin and his associates think they

brought about the state would have helped had it not been for the official Zionist plan, authorized by the Zionist Congress.

M. Begin (Herut): The last Congress rejected that plan utterly. It forbade you to go to London.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: It did not reject it, that is not true!

Y. Harari (Progressives): We all want a great many things, but one has to know how and when to accept facts, and not to miss opportunities. The fact that Israel agreed to the partition borders does not mean that Rachel's Tomb has ceased to be a national monument for us, the Cave of Machpelah will always be the site where our forefathers are buried, Jericho will still be the town whose walls fell at the sound of the trumpets and the historical borders in the Bible will never change. But this did not prevent us agreeing to the possible borders at the appropriate moment. Did we fight less for the areas which were not within the partition borders of 29 November 1947? Did we not do everything possible at the right moment, in the war, to conquer them?

H. Landau (Herut): Of course you didn't.

Y. Harari (Progressives): Only you did!

H. Landau (Herut): The Gentiles stopped and our Government surrendered.

Y. Harari (Progressives): One also has to know when to stop during a ceasefire.

Y. Bader (Herut): One also has to know when not to stop.

Y. Harari (Progressives): Correct, and that's what we did, at the right moments. Are our borders today those we fixed of our own free will, or are they the outcome of various conditions and circumstances, both military and political, as well as of political resolutions passed in an international forum?

Those areas are not in our possession as the result of circumstances which were beyond our control. One does not choose one's enemies, or even the regimes in hostile countries, nor does one sign armistice agreements with allies...We cannot prevent Lebanon giving bases to America if the Christians there prevail over the Moslems. We could not prevent any Arab country giving bases to the devil himself unless we conquered those areas. If that's what you want, then say so in the Knesset. Only MK Yellin-Mor has consistently demanded that we fight for those areas...

The complaint Mapam proposes we submit to the Security Council is not clear to me either. The Hashemite kingdom of Jordan is not a member of the U.N....Should we complain against England for making an agreement with the Hashemite kingdom; for recognizing us "de jure";

or because it has announced that it will not establish bases in peacetime?...And whence this sudden, exaggerated trust in the decisions of the Security Council?

Because time is pressing...I will merely add...that the U.S.S.R.'s announcement is surprising. I never know when to take what the Maki MKs say seriously and when they are merely following the dictates of opportunism. Out of compassion for dumb animals I will drop the subject. But I would like to ask Mapam, which has often said that any contact with the government of Transjordan makes the U.S.S.R. our enemy—

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): We never said that....That's not true.

Y. Harari (Progressives): You have said it not only from this podium but also in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. You...are always asking why we should negotiate with a vassal of England and of imperialism and thereby arouse the enmity of the U.S.S.R.

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): I repeat that that is untrue.

Y. Harari (Progressives): Those things are in the record, in black on white, and can be found there. I would like to recommend that this Knesset resolve that Israel and its Government should continue with its foreign policy of attempting to protect our interests...without being concerned with what impression this makes on either East or West. Only by being consistent will we gain the support of both East and West and become a strong state which is generally respected.

J. Burg (Religious Front): Distinguished Knesset...these debates make it easy for the Opposition to bring the imponderables before the House and neglect the "ponderables," namely, those things which can be calculated...while bandying about slogans and unfounded historical accusations....It is easy for MK Wilner to speak in accordance with the instructions he has received for this month...and send Israel's representatives to talk to the progressive Arab state which does not exist and which we have no intention of establishing, as MK Bar-Yehuda proposes.

...In terms of economic and social development, we are in a backwater...because the civilizing effect of social development has passed it by. In geopolitical terms, however...we are at one of the most central points in the world. If the third world war casts a shadow, it certainly falls on this country...and that being so, we must do our utmost to prevent further conflict in our time...and attempt to gain the approval of Britain, the U.S. and, eventually, the U.S.S.R....

As a believing Jew, I must confess that I cannot grasp the great sacrifice of six million Jews which our nation lost in the war. I find some small consolation in the fact that this tiny corner is left to us, and we can build it...I think that the task of our generation is to build, and re-

frain from doing anything—as long as there is no provocation—which could impede this task.

I very much regret the fact that we are obliged to discuss annexation here rather than the agreed basis for a political settlement in the region, at least as regards our closest neighbor. But if the Arab world that opposes us is divided, and if some understanding can be reached, even if only temporary, with part of that Arab world, it should be done. Because it is our duty to preserve every drop of Jewish blood that remains.

The previous speaker said that a decision in principle was made in the past about partition, not only in the Knesset but even before the establishment of the state, and without it neither the Knesset nor the state would have come into existence....Consequently, I maintain, we may have to take a course which is not pleasant for us....We have also heard MK Begin talk about the religious parties, and I do not know whether he was praising or condemning us. He claimed that we have abandoned the concept of the Divine promise. We have not relinquished the view that God will keep His promise.

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): To what do you adhere meanwhile?

J. Burg (Religious Front): We adhere to the commandments which you wish to neglect.

E. Preminger (Mapam): And force others to adhere to them!

J. Burg (Religious Front): ...There is really no point answering such remarks. Our scriptures tell us what will happen to the generation before the Messiah. They mention suffering—which we have undergone in large quantities....They mention poverty—towards which our Minister of Finance is helping us. They also state that we must build *in* Israel. We must live according to moral precepts—which we are trying to do. That is why I disagree with the argument that we have abandoned the concept of the Divine promise. He who attempts to live in accordance with God's holy law will, I hope, deserve to see the Divine promise fulfilled.

...The Jews who still believe in God and His promises continued to believe in all of Jerusalem, Rachel's Tomb, Hebron and the whole country when they were in the...diaspora, and still do so today, living in those parts of Israel which are ours.

...I think that the Government's representative spoke clearly. The annexation is a unilateral act...to which we do not agree. I think it is harmful if the Opposition in this House pretends that we did agree to it.

E. Preminger (Mapam): Do you want bilateral annexation?

J. Burg (Religious Front): I oppose barren argumentativeness!...Jewish history did not begin yesterday and does not end today. The history of Israel depends not on unilateral declarations, but on Divine decrees.

I think that it is our task, in our situation, to find the path which is not always readily apparent but leads from the Divine intention to the exigencies of the moment. I think that the entire House should take care in posing questions and in weakening the position of the Government on an issue which is vital for us.

...

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The genuine excitement expressed here regarding the annexation is worthy of attention....It is shared by the general population, and I hope that those involved will take it into account. The State of Israel cannot be indifferent to the fate of an area with whose history it is so closely bound up and whose regime and military status is likely to have so direct an influence on its security. The Government has declared...that as far as it is concerned the issue remains open, because without our assent and cooperation, which have not yet been given, no regime can regard itself as being stable and sure there. We seek stability, security and peace, both for ourselves and for the entire region, but these will be attained only through cooperating with us.

...Not all the excitement expressed here can be regarded as genuine, however. When MK Begin deliberately distorts the Government's position, representing it as having agreed to the annexation, he ignores the fact that he is thereby destroying the building which he is supposedly seeking to erect. But he does not really want to build anything; all he seeks is to destroy the Government's standing, and he has failed in that too....He has merely reiterated his bombastic and empty phrases about both banks of the Jordan, the Bashan and the Golan Heights.

M. Begin (Herut): There was a time when the Jewish state was a bombastic phrase too, as far as you were concerned.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: In fact, if one listens to him...he has made his own words meaningless. His contention is that we decided matters long ago...by signing an Armistice Agreement with Jordan. If that is the case, what is the point of this very much overdue debate? It has already been said that this policy, which led to our signing armistice agreements with all the neighboring Arab countries...has gained the support of the entire nation. In accordance with his party's tradition of distorting facts, MK Begin also twisted what I said in the election campaign which preceded the establishment of this Knesset. I never took it upon myself...to guarantee the voters peace, but I said...that if my party were elected to office we would aspire towards peace....I do not know what MK Begin promised in that election campaign. I must confess that I did not interest myself in his speeches. But whether he called for war or merely negated peace, the election results indicated something. The party which I have the honor of representing and which is a partner in the Government has 48 representatives in the Knesset, being 3.5 as

many as Mr. Begin's party. This policy is no mere party matter, it is agreed by all the participants in the Government....There are historical reasons for the fact that this alliance of parties received the majority of votes in the elections...and is united in adhering to a certain policy.

This policy led to the establishment of the state, and sustains it still today, despite the immense difficulties. If we have been asked from this podium: "Who authorized you?" Our reply is: The nation! First and foremost, the Jewish nation, which approved the path its representatives had taken in attaining a Jewish state in our time, if not in the whole country then at least in part of it, in as large a part as possible, and as quickly as possible....

MK Begin was guilty of another distortion when he said that the last Zionist Congress forbade us to agree to partition. Quite the contrary. An attempt was made by parties and persons to pass such a resolution, but it failed....The Zionist Executive agreed by a large majority to a policy of compromise in order to attain...international assent to the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine. The entire nation endorsed this policy...and worked together to achieve it....The gates of heaven opened and the moment came when we could attain what generations had dreamt of and died for. The entire nation endorsed our achievement unconditionally, celebrating our great victory of 29 November 1947...both those who had supported our policy and those who had opposed it....

...And what would have happened if...the Arab country which was supposed to be established in the rest of Palestine, linked to Israel by economic ties, had been created...and had then allied itself with one of the neighboring Arab states...or with one of the Powers, against Israel's will? We are confronted by a problem of that kind today, but our position is far better, since we have control of 80 percent of our territory, the ports of Haifa and Jaffa, roads, railways and Lod airport, and our sovereignty is no longer threatened by the economic alliance with the Arab country...although 20 percent of our territory has been annexed by the neighboring Arab country....

We have said that we are ready to make peace with all our neighbors, preferring separate negotiations with each one of them, and that we accept the armistice lines as a basis for peace and a final territorial settlement. We adhere to this policy, always having been ready to consider mutual border adjustments.

MK Begin has asked why we are so hasty in our pursuit of peace, and with Transjordan of all countries. I do not know whether peace with Transjordan will be first, or whether there will be peace at all, or when. We are not competing in prophecy. Our task is to determine policy, i.e., not to guess what will be but to assess what we should do, and what will happen tomorrow and the day after....What I do know is that we are surrounded by enemies today, and that we can bear this situation, and have

no need to break out of it at all costs....If we are attacked we will be able to fight back, and our successes in the second round of fighting may even be greater than they were in the first....But our prime concern is to avoid a confrontation of that kind. We are interested in peace and stability, for we have historic tasks to fulfill and we must invest all our efforts in them....Even if peace is attained tomorrow...we will continue to be on our guard, but we will know that there has been a change. If we can only breach the ring of enemies around us we must do so.

Why do you mock the armistice agreements as mere pieces of paper?...Do those signatures have any value or not?

Y. Bader (Herut): Abdullah's signature has no value.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: You don't know what you're talking about. And that is not the only subject on which you talk nonsense....Anyone who says such things is undermining the...security of Israel.

M. Begin (Herut): They're threatening another round despite the signatures...as is the Chief of Staff....

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Am I proposing that we disband the army? We must make every effort to breach the wall surrounding us, but that does not mean that we should disarm ourselves. If this were all pointless would there be such a fuss in the Arab camp about whether to make peace with Israel or not, separately or together?

MK Begin took a sentence out of its context in a Foreign Ministry memorandum, and accused us of relinquishing all territorial claims on Transjordan. We have said that we accept the armistice lines as a basis for a settlement and do not demand territory, but if MK Begin tries to represent this as our abandonment of our rights to our holy places, this is nonsense. We have never abandoned them, and we have said as much, and no side doubts that we adhere to our claim to our share and our rights in the Old City of Jerusalem. If MK Begin wishes to go out into the streets with the demand for the Temple Mount, he is welcome to do so. Many people are strolling through the streets this afternoon, and he can harangue them to his heart's content. I suggest that my colleagues and the other members of the House rely on the man in the street.

Mr. Sapir claimed that the Foreign Ministry failed once again to foresee what would happen.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): I only said that it had erred in assessing the forces involved.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Well, you said that it had failed to foresee what would happen by erring in its assessment of the forces involved. He said that we failed to envisage the internationalization of

Jerusalem, and now we have failed again, and this is a surprise. I don't know if it is a surprise.

E. Razieli-Na'or (Herut): That means that it was agreed in advance.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: I'm coming to that. I said that we had announced our readiness to reach an agreement on the basis of the armistice lines. I also said that as long as there is no agreement the question is open...and the other side must be aware of that....

MK Sapir recommends that we conduct an information campaign on this matter at the U.N. He has presumably thought about what he said and his proposal is undoubtedly based on a perceptive assessment of future developments. MK Bar-Yehuda accused us of...having brought the British Empire back...and MK Begin correctly pointed out that the British-Jordanian treaty includes a clause whereby each side can invite the other into its territory....The treaty was signed on 15 March 1948, namely, two years and two months ago, and we have been living under that threat all this time....The neighboring country could have invited the British forces into its territory, but it did not....We have been informed that it has no intention of doing so. But its right still exists....The British government also issued a statement to the effect that it would not hasten to place troops here....

I do not see why some people have seen fit to treat this matter as if the end of the world were approaching....We are certainly not happy about it....Despite the assurances we have received on the subject from the British government, it requires us to be on our guard, as does that government's policy about the supply of arms to certain Middle Eastern countries and its attitude to...separate peace agreements. Some of our recent contacts with the British government have been of a positive nature. This is the case with the agreement to settle outstanding economic differences...and the "de jure" recognition of Israel....We have drawn the attention of our public and the world to aspects of policy which cause us concern...and which we regard as being detrimental to peace and stability in the Middle East, and to say that we acquiesced willingly is a stupid distortion....

Our policy remains what it was, namely, to do what we can to breach the wall surrounding us and to set the Middle East on a path of peace rather than war. There is no guarantee that this will be attained, nor will we attempt to guess when this will come about. Till then we will have to remain fully on our guard. All our enemies and opponents should be aware of this, but it must be evident what our policy is. We must decide what our aim is and go towards it with open eyes.

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): Distinguished Knesset, Those who oppose Abdullah's act of plunder on the basis of the principle of the integrity of the homeland...can be accused by those who acquiesce in it of making a great deal of fuss over...a lost cause.

I admit that there is some logic in that, but I would like to make it clear here...that a new generation is growing up in Israel for which the River Jordan is not the eastern border of the homeland, and for which Abdullah's temporary conquests are meaningless....That generation foresees a future homeland in its expanded, natural borders. There, and there alone, will the millions of scattered Jews be gathered together and enabled to flourish spiritually and materially, culturally and economically. Any fact which opposes this view will not last long.

Thus, this debate is not about whether Abdullah, who was expelled from the Arabian desert by Ibn-Saud, is entitled to rule over more or less of our homeland. There is no place for a debate of that kind on historical grounds or on principle. All Abdullah's territory, on both the east and the west banks of the Jordan, is plundered.

The debate is, essentially, only about the attitude of the Government of Israel to Abdullah's rule...and its refusal to work for the liberation of the homeland....The annexation did not come as a surprise. Everyone knew that Abdullah wanted it...including Israel's leaders, who were suffering from their customary myopia. The function of any foreign policy is to prevent neighbors from expanding territorially...and threatening one's own country.

It could, therefore, have been supposed that the Government of Israel, being aware of Abdullah's intentions, would have issued a warning, or warnings, saying that any attempt at annexation would be regarded as a hostile act....But our Foreign Ministry did nothing!...And it is obvious that Abdullah knew that no reaction would be forthcoming from Israel....

The inaction of our leaders at this time is comparable to that of those who went to Munich....The only possible explanation must lie in the ongoing love affair between the erstwhile, British-protected Emir and the Jewish Agency, even though the adoration of the latter does not seem to be reciprocated....There can be no other reason for the incessant pursuit of Abdullah, since it is known that peace with him of necessity involves foregoing peace with our other neighbors, with whom peace is more valuable, as well as abandoning our claim to most of our homeland....His entire kingdom has been obtained by plunder....

The Foreign Ministry has tried to auction off "peace with Israel," but there are no buyers....I doubt whether those who fell so that the state might be established wanted their blood to be sold thus....

...The Foreign Ministry's response was a shameful one...and constitutes acceptance of daylight robbery...as well as tacit legitimization of the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan"...determining as its price negotiations and a peace treaty....The religious parties appear to have subscribed to this too....

The haste to make peace with Abdullah seems to have caused the Government to take leave of its senses...but peace of this kind brings us

ever nearer to disaster....Abdullah has said that he intends to use Israel as a means of getting to Damascus....There is no truth in the rumor that Israel's assent to the situation is merely temporary, and that those areas will eventually be redeemed. The Britain-Abdullah treaty enables British military bases to be established there, and they will crush any attempt to liberate our lost territory. Our experience of the past must teach us that Britain's assurance not to establish bases there in peacetime will be abandoned at the appropriate moment....But what is more significant is the implication that bases will be established there in wartime.

...The danger cannot be exaggerated. Our country is at a focal point for British imperialism, constituting a strategic area for delaying the advance of the Soviet army in case of war. Britain would be interested in making it a front then...and the entire country would become a battlefield....Accepting the annexation is a big step in that direction. In these circumstances there can be no alternative for the Government than to tell the Minister of Defense to instruct the General Staff to complete the interrupted War of Independence.

I know that this resolution will not be passed here today, but the situation will oblige us to follow that path eventually, whatever the composition of the government. I pray that it will not be too late.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I will allow resolutions to be submitted.

J. Kusoy (Mapai): I submit the following resolution: "The Knesset notes the Government's statement regarding the annexation, with its attendant reservations."

H. Rubin (Mapam): On behalf of the Mapam faction I submit the following resolution:

A. The Knesset regards the annexation of the territories on the West Bank as detrimental to:

1. The historical aspiration of the Jewish people to restore the integrity of the country.
2. The right of the Arab population in that part of the country annexed by Transjordan to political independence within the framework of economic unity with Israel.
3. The terms of the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Transjordan. It also constitutes a threat to Israel's security and independence by extending the application of the British-Transjordanian treaty to the West Bank.

B. The Knesset declares that the State of Israel will not recognize or accept the annexation, and asks the Government to submit a complaint to the Security Council:

1. Against the illegal act of annexation.

2. Against the arbitrary extension of the British-Transjordanian treaty to part of Palestine.

C. The Knesset approves the Government's refusal to resume the negotiations for a peace treaty with Transjordan if the annexation is not annulled.

J. Meridor (Herut): Distinguished Knesset, the faction to which I have the honor of belonging does not think that the subject of this evening's debate, the so-called annexation of part of our homeland by Abdullah, is one on which a vote should be taken. We will not participate in the voting, therefore.

On behalf of the Herut Movement founded by the IZL, I declare:

In aspiring towards a political-territorial agreement with the area indirectly conquered by Britain in eastern Palestine known as the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" the Government has brought about the relinquishing of part of our homeland, the annexation of parts of western Palestine, effective recognition of Britain's right to establish and maintain military bases in our country on both banks of the Jordan and the total isolation of Israel in the international arena.

We do not, and never will, recognize the plunder of part of our homeland by an enemy and an oppressor. The entire Land of Israel is ours. The Government's recognition of the illegal conquest, whether through signing a peace treaty with the conquerors or in any other way, does not and will not commit the Jewish people and its youth.

M. Wilner (Maki): Maki's resolution is as follows:

1. The Knesset resolves not to recognize and to oppose the annexation of the Arab parts of Palestine by the Transjordanian kingdom;
2. The Knesset resolves to ask the Security Council to take steps against Britain and Transjordan for the illegal annexation of part of Palestine by Transjordan, constituting a British base;
3. The Knesset resolves to support the struggle of the Arab masses in the rest of Palestine to establish a democratic, peace-loving, independent state which is friendly to Israel.

Furthermore, I would like this proposal to be put to the vote, while at the same time our faction will vote for Mapam's proposal since it contains two principles we share: opposition to the annexation and agreement in principle to an independent Arab state.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): I would like to state, though not to put to the vote, our refusal to recognize the annexation. We authorize the Government to refrain from recognizing it.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote on the proposals.

The Vote

| | |
|---|----|
| Those in favor of MK J. Kusoy's proposal | 53 |
| Those in favor of MK H. Rubin's proposal | 16 |
| Those in favor of MK M. Wilner's proposal | 2 |

MK Kusoy's proposal: "The Knesset notes the Government's statement regarding the annexation, with its attendant reservations," is adopted.

The Knesset has heard and placed on record the Herut faction's statement that it will not participate in the vote.

Institution for Coordinating between the Government and the Zionist Organization

Introduction

The objective of the Zionist Organization had been formulated in the Basle Program of 1897 as "the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people secured by public law."

Once the State of Israel had been established and its institutions of government constituted there were those who felt that the Zionist Organization had accomplished its mission and should therefore be dissolved. Other believed that the establishment of the state was but a milestone—however important—in the long road towards the attainment of the Zionist goal of ingathering the exiles. These ideological differences of opinion were compounded by more concrete problems—the difference in political composition between the ruling body of the World Zionist Organization and the governing coalition in Israel.

Thus it was, two years to the day after the Declaration of Independence, that a formula of coordination between the Government and the Zionist Organization was submitted to the Knesset for discussion and approval.

Sitting 139 of the First Knesset

15 May 1950 (28 Iyar 5710)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the meeting of the Zionist Executive held...in April focused on the problems of the Zionist movement in light of the establishment of the State of Israel, and the need for close coordination and cooperation between the Zionist Organization and the Government in the spheres of immigration...absorption and settlement.

The Government has taken note of the Zionist Executive's request, and a joint committee of the Government and the Organization has formulated the following proposal for coordination and cooperation, which has been approved by the Government and the Zionist Organization:

1. A joint institution of the Government and the Zionist Organization will be established for development and coordination.

2. The institution will comprise 4 Ministers and 4 members of the Organization, who will be supplemented by a representative of the JNF.

3. The Government representatives will be: The Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Finance, Labor and Immigration. The representatives of the Organization will be: the Chairman of the Organization in Jerusalem, the Treasurer, the Head of the Immigration Department and a representative of the Absorption Department.

4. The institution will coordinate planning and implementation in the spheres of immigration, absorption, housing for immigrants, and agricultural settlement and development. It will also coordinate the budgets for these purposes and decide on the division of implementation tasks between the Government and the Organization.

This arrangement will be in force until the next Zionist Congress, when both sides may propose changes in the structure and activities of the institution.

This is the decision which has been agreed upon. The institution will shortly meet and decide on its activities. Obviously, the Government representatives in the institution will bear collective governmental responsibility...and will operate within the framework of Governmental decisions, having reference to the sovereignty of the Knesset.

The members of the Zionist Organization in the institution will also operate within the framework of the Organization's decisions, and will be subject to the Zionist Congress and the Zionist Executive.

The preliminary meetings between the representatives of the Government and the Organization prove that there is nothing to prevent close cooperation and collegial coordination, since there is no difference between the aspirations of Israel and of the Zionist movement....

...
I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): ...We should welcome the agreement regarding the establishment of a coordinating institution between the Government and the Zionist Organization, although the Prime Minister's brief remark is not sufficient....

The Prime Minister said: "The Government has noted the Zionist Executive's request." This is the first time that the Zionist Organization, which gave birth to the Government and the state, has been mentioned by the Government in this House, I believe. I must point out two inaccuracies in this statement. The Zionist Executive did not only mention establishing a coordinating committee. The resolutions passed at the said meeting of the Zionist Executive include the following one: "The Zionist Executive deems it necessary that the Jewish Agency be given a legal status in its activities in Israel, and charges the Organization with including this demand in its negotiations with the Gov-

ernment." I assume that the Executive body of the Zionist Organization fulfilled that request, and the absence of any indication of this in the Government's statement requires an explanation....At present, the juridical situation of the Zionist Organization in Israel is such that the mother of the state, which prepared all the conditions and enabled us to get where we are, is in precisely the same position as such charities as ORT or the Joint, abroad....Clear steps should have been taken long since by the state to hand over specific tasks to the Zionist Organization, deriving from the important role it played prior to the establishment of the state, and which it should continue to play in the future...the principal one among them being...the ingathering of the exiles.

...I cannot help noting with regret that this appropriate action comes so belatedly. Our colleagues in the Provisional Cabinet...as well as the Zionist Organization itself...demanded this a year and a half ago, when it was in effect rejected....This delay...and the resultant lack of planning and coordination...has had unfortunate results....Knowing what the attitude to these demands was in the past, and desiring to understand why the Prime Minister had to stress...the temporary nature of this agreement...it is hard for us to accept the joyful news and believe that henceforth...a genuine effort will be made by the Government to work together with...the movement which settles and gathers in Israel's scattered nation.

...I cannot conclude without adding...that, on this occasion too, the representative of the Government has done everything to undermine the cooperation between our two parties in the place where it existed, namely, the Zionist Organization. In formal, juridical terms, that cooperation still exists, and we are members of the Executive body. But the institution which has been established...at the Government's demand...has in effect deprived us of our position there. This merely provides another illustration of the need to approach the statements made by members of the Government and of the party which is its chief component with scepticism; it also arouses our suspicions regarding the implementation of the coordination. Will it increase the free, voluntary forces...needed to undertake the tasks this state must fulfill, or will this institution also be exploited to crush from above any indication of free public activity organized from below? These doubts make it difficult for us to accept this agreement gladly.

...
Peretz Bernstein (General Zionists): ...Does the Government statement mean that the Knesset should accept responsibility for the agreement by approving it...? The question is...whether this is the way to attain the objectives of those in the Executive who sought to establish cooperation between the Government and the Agency? I know that the bridge between the fact that the Jewish Agency consists of Israelis and the fact that its

object is to maintain the Zionist Organization in the diaspora is a very narrow one.

But if we assume...that the Zionist Organization should be maintained in the diaspora, the Jewish Agency should have an important function in the state....This raises the question whether this coordination, which appears to be very desirable, is not intended to achieve something which we wish to avoid, namely, putting an end to the Jewish Agency. It is no secret that many people fear that that is the intention, or will at least be the outcome, of the coordination agreement. I would be glad if those who are party to the agreement could allay these fears.

...

Y. Bader (Herut): Gentlemen...despite my party's great sensitivity to the sovereignty of the state...I cannot forget that I am chairman of the World Association of the Herut Movement in the Homeland—the Hatzohar Association in the diaspora, and undoubtedly also have a natural tendency to concern myself with the rights of the Jews abroad in Israel, as reflected in the rights of the Zionist Organization....And consequently I realize that there is a need for a settlement between the state and the Zionist Organization.

The movement which I represent believes that a settlement of this kind must come in the form of a law which, on the one hand, will stress the particular importance and tasks of the Zionist Organization while, on the other, will assure that, like every other law passed by the Knesset, it can be changed.

I believe that the time has come to end the chapter of the Jewish Agency. The Prime Minister's statement referred to the Zionist Organization, not the Jewish Agency, and I regard this as a step forward. The moment we come to the end of the Jewish Agency, which cooperated with the foreign ruler on the basis of the fourth clause of the Mandate, and sometimes beyond that, where the representatives of the greatest capitalists sat...but failed to donate funds to the state

I. Galili (Mapam): For how many years have you been trying to end the chapter of the Jewish Agency?

Y. Bader (Herut): I do not want to mention each individual's part in that cooperation, so I will not reply. We did not forget the founding role of the Zionist Organization, even when we came to the conclusion that a more effective and efficient tool was needed for fulfilling the objectives which still confront us....

It must be clear that when we speak of the Zionist Organization we are referring to the representatives of world Jewry. But what kind of representation is it when...it is appointed by the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem?...These representatives will sit on the coordinating committee not on behalf of one side or another, but...as persons whose appointment is based on a prearranged and peculiar key....In brief, this

arrangement will ensure that members of Mapai, who will constitute an absolute majority according to the way the committee is to be appointed, will decide everything among themselves.

Is there no better and simpler way of doing this? Our friend Mr. Aharonowitz is an important and wise man. By virtue of the discipline of the party, which is very democratic, so its members tell me, he could give instructions to five or six people on this committee, and then the coordination would be quick and easy. That being so, what is the need for a coordinating committee, where eight citizens of the state will sit and decide things without any one of them having the right to represent world Jewry? If you need this in order to make a good impression on the UJA, I will not oppose the arrangement; but if you claim that this is serious and genuine coordination, I beg to differ.

Be that as it may, I think that it was not about this that the discussion in the Zionist Executive was held, and this was not the point of dissension. The serious dispute and problem is: how can world Jewry be given its appropriate share in building up the country, and in planning this undertaking, while the sovereignty of the state is preserved?...

A democratic body representing world Jewry and the Government should be established....An arrangement of this kind embodies many negative aspects, because a mixed body of this kind would decide on the use and allocation of funds which in many cases would be Government funds, and these decisions would be outside the jurisdiction of this House and of the State Comptroller. It is not a good idea for the Government to allocate subsidies while another body decides how to use them.

The emphasis on the fact that this arrangement is temporary is not simple either. Because if a miracle occurs, and the Zionist Congress elects an Executive which will not be like the present one and will not send just those particular representatives to the coordinating committee, the stupid Opposition might think that it had a chance of attaining the separation of powers, with one authority keeping the other in check. But you, Mr. Prime Minister, as a brilliant tactician, have decided otherwise. Meanwhile, temporarily, you agree to the coordinating committee, in which the Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the Head of one Department or another will participate. You know those people. But after the Congress you'll see what to do.

This is not a question of the influence of the Zionist Organization on the state, but of the Government's control of the composition of the Zionist institutions. Mr. Prime Minister, I congratulate you on your tactical ability and your success in giving the arrangement this form. Now the Jews in New York and Johannesburg will be happy because there is coordination; and as far as you are concerned nothing has happened.

I propose that the House refer this arrangement for further discussion in the appropriate committee, which in my view is the Public Services Committee. But since a member of my party group, Mr. Recanati,

is chairman of this Committee, and since in this matter it is not the title and position which count but the individual concerned, I will agree to any other committee. A serious, detailed, penetrating and comprehensive discussion of every word in this agreement is required....If, however, you think that this agreement is not a serious matter, you can reject my suggestion.

Z. Aharonowitz (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, I think that respect for the Knesset and the Zionist Organization demands a more serious approach to this debate than that displayed by the previous speaker.

...Although the processes of establishing the state have come to fruition, in my view all the Zionist parties should be aware of the fact that now that the state has been established, the Zionist Organization has not only not completed its task but, quite the contrary, must increase its strength...at least for another generation, until the work of building the state is completed. There have been various explorations on this subject. I remember the meeting of the Zionist Executive which dealt with the issue of coordination for the first time and came to the conclusion that coordination would be attained by separating the authority of the Zionist Organization from that of the Government.

The positive and negative experience of that approach proved to many of us that the separation arrangement was an artificial one to a great extent, for it was not possible to prevent the Government from dealing with absorption and settlement, just as...it was not possible to wrest those functions away from the Zionist Organization....

At the last meeting of the Zionist Executive this issue was discussed again, in light of the experience of the attempt at separation. As a member of the Zionist Executive, I also participated in those clarifications, which were conducted with great gravity, as to how to attain organic coordination between the Zionist Organization and the Government. Happily, the Zionist Executive concluded that coordination would devolve not from separating activities but from combining them in the spheres of development, absorption and settlement....

The coordination institution is a very serious matter as far as the state is concerned. It is not an academic institution but a practical one, dealing with coordination here and now, not in the diaspora, and encompassing the Government's three major functions: development, absorption and settlement. Take note, distinguished Knesset Members, the Government has handed part of its powers to the coordination institution at first glance only in the spheres of development, absorption and settlement, but in effect this enables it to influence all the Government's work, because the budgets for Government services, security, absorption and settlement are interconnected. Anyone who decides on matters of settlement, absorption and development automatically decides what the extent of all the Government's other activities will be.

Because the matter is so serious it is brought before the Knesset, and also has to be approved by the Zionist Congress. The arrangement is temporary because only the supreme Zionist authority—the Zionist Congress—can decide on a permanent arrangement. I think that Mapai in the Zionist Congress will be in favor of approving that arrangement.

MK Y. Bader contradicted himself here. On the one hand he questioned the validity of the Jewish Agency, which was merely an expanded form of the Zionist Organization, and on the other, he claimed that he wants coordination with the entire Jewish nation—with the World Jewish Congress—and then he will have an expanded Jewish Agency. Mr. Bader, make up your mind....

I would like to discuss MK Bar-Yehuda's ethical reservations concerning the way the Zionist Organization is represented in the coordinating institution. I focus on the ethical reservations, as the formal ones are not within the Knesset's jurisdiction. The Zionist Organization is not a branch of the Knesset, and the way its representatives are chosen is not the Knesset's concern.

Might I remind the Knesset that this Government and the public forces comprising it entreated Mapam to join the Government, as it did the General Zionists, in order to bear the burden of the ingathering of the exiles together. Those parties declined...but I must ask Mapam now: If you declined to enter the Government through the front door, why do you seek to do so via a side entrance? (From the Mapam benches: God forbid! We'll enter the Zionist Organization but not from a side entrance.) The coordinating institution has in effect been granted the power to act in crucial areas of government. Why do you, the members of Mapam, who have condemned every aspect of this Government, thereby avenging your failure to enter the Government...demand the moral right to enter the Government via the coordinating institution?

The answer is that you wish to participate in the work of the Government under the easiest conditions...without bearing responsibility for its actions. In my view that demand is immoral. There is no room for the kind of division of responsibility whereby the failures, restrictions and limitations are credited to the Government coalition, and the achievements, generosity and successes are shared by those who do not accept governmental responsibility....

I know what is bothering you. I still doubt whether there is an historical dispute between us, but we live in historic times, and apart from what each political party and every settlement body does...there is a pressing historic burden of the ingathering of the exiles. You, the members of Mapam, have placed yourself outside the camp of those who bear that burden. The fact is that the Government, without you, bears that heavy load. One day the historians will examine the bound volumes of *Al Hamishmar*, and will find opposition speeches and articles there

instead of responsible participation in the historic task confronting us all. You must examine yourselves and reassess your stand regarding participation in the Government.

M. Nurock (Religious Front): I welcome the Prime Minister's statement about the coordination with the World Zionist Organization. This will benefit our country and the diaspora. The historical achievements of the Zionist Organization, which was founded more than fifty years ago, are many and great. With it and with God's help we have reached this point, fulfilling the vision of many of those who went before us. Without the Basle Program, the Zionist Organization, the Congresses, leading to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, without the JNF, the Keren Hayesod and pioneering we would not have attained the sovereign State of Israel. And now the young state cannot accept responsibility for the ingathering of the exiles, immigration, absorption and settlement on its own. The Jewish people throughout the world must share that task. Not merely to collect money, but also to express its views regarding the disposition of the immigrants. For this purpose we will have need of the Zionist Organization for many years to come.

Our Government has done well to recognize the Zionist Organization's moral rights too. The Government's attitude to the Zionist Organization should be like that of a child to his parents....Our sages have said that one does not envy one's child, consequently this cooperation is based on friendship....I am convinced that the Knesset will support the Government's decision, and I pray that the Almighty will bless them and help them gather the scattered members of our nation and restore them safely to their land.

E. Elyashar (Sephardim): Distinguished Knesset, our party group welcomes the coordination arrangement. The time has come for the two great branches which have brought us thus far to unite. We address the Prime Minister on a far graver matter, however. We all desire the ingathering of the exiles, but the issue is the ingathering of the exiles from the Moslem lands. These people are reaching our shores in considerable numbers, after having undergone unimaginable suffering...as a result of the fact that our state exists....Sephardic Jewry is within the Zionist Organization, and has always aided every enterprise of national fulfillment.

If you read "From the East," published by the Middle East Department...you will find accurate descriptions of those Jewish communities which, for thirty years, have not been enabled to participate in the Zionist undertaking...or in Zionist Congresses....This does not mean that this situation should continue now. We are very surprised at not having been invited by the Government to join the coordinating institution, because there is no point handing over the treatment of basic and essential problems to people who do not understand the language or cus-

toms...of this population. Should not these Jews be enabled to participate, as was done at former Zionist Congresses, when representatives of German, Polish and Czech Jewry, which could not vote, could at least express their opinions?

We participate in the Government. We were always in the Zionist Organization. We always sent representatives to Zionist Congresses, inasmuch as this was possible. We ask the Prime Minister and the entire Government...to allow a Sephardic Minister to participate in the coordinating institution, so that he may serve as the mouthpiece of the population he represents....This may reduce the increasing bitterness of these people to some extent....I appeal to the Prime Minister to appoint a representative of the Sephardic party group to the coordinating institution.

M. Wilner (Maki): Distinguished Knesset...the issue of coordination, as presented to the Knesset, contains much that has not been explained. It is not clear if the institution will be above the Government, which is above the Knesset. No such decision has been made by any institution of the state. It is not clear what will happen if the four members of the Agency (or the Zionist Executive) and one member of the Government are in agreement, while the three Government representatives think otherwise. It is not at all clear whether this does not constitute a precedent whereby the elected representatives of the state are placed under the control of a committee of eight, only half of whom have been elected by the public. We believe that this would be unthinkable....Even now various forces are aiding Israel's war of independence and survival and the preservation of peace. This does not mean that any body outside Israel may make decisions regarding Israel's problems in such spheres as development, housing or agriculture. That authority is the sole prerogative of the institutions of the State of Israel.

I would like to protest the...attempts made...by certain Jews in America, who hold important...positions in the governing institutions of the UJA, who made more or less overt threats or expressed their wishes regarding the composition and policy of the Government, and in particular regarding Israel's participation in an anti-Soviet, Middle-Eastern pact. Their interference reached such dimensions that even Israeli newspapers reported that financial aid, capital investments and fund-raising were contingent on the participation of certain parties in the Government. The reference is primarily to the General Zionists. It is our view that if the coordinating institution opens the way for...this kind of interference in Israel's internal affairs by people who head fundraising campaigns or institutions abroad, out of a desire to influence our external policies, this opposes the sovereignty, independence and freedom of action of Israel's citizens. For all these reasons...we oppose the establishment of the coordinating committee.

E. Mazor (Religious Front): On behalf of Agudath Yisrael I would like to express my movement's displeasure at the fact that the request of our representative in the Government, Rabbi Levin, to be a member of the coordinating committee...was not accepted....I do not want to go into the subject of the close connection between the Ministry of Welfare and the absorption of immigration just now...but merely to stress how important it is for our organization to be represented on this committee, because we do not belong to the Jewish Agency and as a result are discriminated against in settlement, absorption, housing, etc. I therefore demand that our representative be appointed to the coordinating committee....

...

K. Cahane (Religious Front): On behalf of Poalei Agudath Yisrael in the United Religious Front, I would like to...point out that some of Israel's citizens do not belong to the Jewish Agency, because that membership is associated with belonging to the Zionist Organization. Once the coordinating institution was established the Government should have seen to it that all the citizens of Israel could participate in the Jewish Agency....

J. Klivanov (General Zionists): Perhaps you should have seen to it yourselves.

K. Cahane (Religious Front): Forgive me, Mr. Klivanov, but as yet there is no law in Israel which obliges one to belong to an organization or party. Once such a law exists we can talk. At present we are free citizens of the state.

...The Government should at least have ensured that those citizens of Israel who cannot be represented by the Agency should participate in the coordinating institution....

Y. Kusoy (Mapai): Distinguished Knesset, had we been blessed with a different Opposition in this House, the Prime Minister's statement regarding the establishment of a coordinating institution would have been regarded as a great...political event, evincing the link between the State of Israel and this House with the Jewish people and the Zionist movement....

Since the establishment of the state there have been extensive deliberations...regarding the relations...between the Zionist movement and the state. The establishment of the coordinating institution provides a framework for cooperation...assuring a close connection between the state and the Zionist movement, and a joint effort in building the state and absorbing immigration.

...Only three weeks ago the Zionist Executive resolved unanimously...to approve the establishment of a coordinating institution, regarding it as a serious and positive step towards solving the grave and

very complex problem of the cooperation between the Zionist Organization and the Government....

...Instead of gaining the general approbation of the House, as the Government's statement deserves...we have heard criticisms and reservations which in my view constitute a blot on the Knesset's escutcheon....We are suspected...of plotting to "swallow up" the Zionist Organization by means of the coordinating institution. The movement which brought the proposal to establish a coordinating institution to the Executive, which prepared the plan for cooperation which was accepted by all the parties and the Zionist movement, is berated and suspected....

...I do not accept the complaint that the representatives of the parties which are not in the Government do not participate in the coordinating institution...since the cooperation between the Zionist Organization and the Government...can exist and flourish only on the basis of the complete understanding and sincere goodwill of both the parties concerned. But what can one do if parties which have chosen not to be in the Government make their very participation in the Zionist Organization a tool with which to attack this Government? They have not proved yet that by participating in the Zionist Organization they intend to deepen the cooperation between the Government and the Zionist movement.

I do not accept the claim that the representatives of the Zionist Organization in the coordinating institution should be Zionists from abroad. For dozens of years the Zionists in this country...we...the members of the Labor Movement, have worked in the highest institutions of the Zionist movement, not only as local residents but also as representatives of the Zionist movement, and no one deprived us of the mandate and the right to act on behalf of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement and to do the work of building the country and establishing the foundations of its existence.

The objective of this institution is to be a joint tool, coordinating between the Government and the Zionist Organization in order to implement the huge undertaking of the ingathering of the exiles. This institution does not solve all the problems of the Zionist movement....There are big problems of coordination between the Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency....We should congratulate the Government for having been able to establish this institution even before the Congress, for the tasks are difficult...and the work must be done together....

The Opposition speakers discovered another "plot," claiming that the timing of the arrangement is designed to ensure that if another, less desirable, executive body is elected at the Congress, the coordinating institution will evaporate....Anyone who thinks that the Zionist Congress will elect an executive which will fight the Government is mistaken....Because the links between the Jewish people and the State of Israel can be based solely on sincerity and cooperation...Only the Zionist movement, at the forthcoming Congress, can make basic deci-

sions about these and other issues which were not solved at the Zionist Executive meeting. The perfect form of the cooperation will come after the Zionist Congress. The suspicion voiced here is groundless, and should be rejected.

MK Bar-Yehuda claimed that the intention is to put an end to the Zionist movement. We also read that in *Al Hamishmar*. What is the point of such irresponsible statements? Who is interested in ending the Zionist movement? The party which has been accused of this has borne, and still bears, the responsibility for the existence of the Zionist movement, and will do everything it can to strengthen it so that it may fulfill its historic task.

Gentlemen, we must welcome the Prime Minister's statement and give encouragement to the Government, which within the three weeks since the executive's decision established the coordinating institution....This institution will also help us in our endeavors to attain the cooperation and support of the Zionist movement in the great tasks our generation has been called upon to fulfill in the ingathering of the exiles and in helping them to put down roots in the homeland.

...

I. Cohen (Progressives): ...Fears have been expressed here regarding both the restriction of the Agency's authority and the reduction of the state's sovereignty....We have heard similar fears in the past, and they have proved to be unfounded....We all realize that MK Bernstein's rhetorical question—whether the coordination does not mean ending the jurisdiction of the Jewish Agency—has no basis. Everyone knows what difficulties the Zionist Organization encounters in its work of fulfillment in Israel. Not only is this coordination necessary, it should have been implemented a year ago...because of the duplication involved in the various bodies....

There is no basis for the fear that the Jewish Agency or its jurisdiction will be ended. Everyone understands that the combination of the state's political and financial strength with the authority and tasks of the Zionist movement in Israel will only add to its power....

I would like to add, as regards the composition of the committee, that the intention was not to achieve coordination between individuals but between tasks, and primarily in the three spheres of immigration and absorption, settlement and development....

As regards MK Cahane's claim that he should also be represented on the coordinating institution, I would like to ask whether he is not already represented...by the Minister dealing with a matter in which the entire Government has authorized him to act?...If the Government is represented in the coordinating institution, does it not also represent Minister Levin? Is not the Government collectively responsible for its decisions?

MK Bader claimed that the Jews of the diaspora are not represented on the coordinating institution. Should they be awarded a prize for remaining abroad?...Finally, I interpret the term "temporary" as meaning until Zionist responsibility leads the General Zionists and Mapam to join those sharing the burden of responsibility for the state, because that burden is one and indivisible.

I. Rokach (General Zionists): We are responsible now too.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Distinguished Knesset...I will start from the end. MK Cahane asked the Knesset to pass a law enabling any Jew to participate in the Jewish Agency. There is no need for a law to achieve this. Every Jew has the right, because the distinction MK Cahane makes between the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organization belongs to the past....Today there is no difference of ideology or orientation between the two bodies. The Zionist Organization is the Jewish Agency, and vice versa....

I am sure that the majority in this House would be glad to see Rabbi Cahane and his colleagues in what he calls the Jewish Agency, namely, the Zionist Organization. It depends solely on him. I must point out to MK Mazor that his demand that Agudath Yisrael be represented is surprising. Two bodies sit on the coordinating committee. One of them is the Government, representing the inhabitants of the country, not people living abroad, whether they are Zionists or not. The government cannot take it upon itself to represent World Agudath Yisrael, it represents Agudath Yisrael in Israel. Agudath Yisrael in Israel is part of the Religious Front, which is in the Government; the Government is a collective body and each member of it represents the whole Government. In each instance the Government decides which of its members shall represent it, and the four members of the Government participating in the coordinating committee represent the whole Government, including Agudath Yisrael. The other body participating in the institution is the Zionist Executive, representing the World Zionist Organization.

MKs Wilner and Bader both voiced their concern for the Knesset's sovereignty. Had they read...the details of the coordinating institution more carefully they would have seen that their fears were unfounded. They state explicitly that the members of the Government who participate in the coordinating institution are not absolved of their responsibility to the Government, and every penny they spend is subject to review by the Knesset and the State Comptroller. The members of the Zionist Executive also remain responsible to the Zionist Congress.

...MK Bar-Yehuda doubted the Prime Minister's Zionist intentions....That is, of course, his own affair; I have no intention of competing with him as regards Zionist patriotism. In a Zionist forum I may perhaps debate with those who speak loud and long about immigration and hinder it in practice....Mr. Bar-Yehuda deplored the breakup of the

partnership. I regret to say that I did not know that a partnership had existed. I knew that a war was being waged on the Government, with no holds barred, not only within the Knesset and the state....A partnership was proposed, by myself, as Prime Minister of Israel, when I asked the two Zionist parties which had sat in the Provisional Cabinet to join the Government on the basis of the six principles I defined in the Knesset. The General Zionists declined. Mr. Bar-Yehuda's party has not bothered to reply to this day....

...I must make something clear to the members of the Opposition who belong to the Zionist Organization: if you think that you can injure the state and the Government through the Zionist Organization you misunderstand the Zionist movement and the Jewish people.

I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): Are you the state?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: For nothing is dearer to the Jewish people in the diaspora than the Jewish state, which is represented by those who have been elected to do so....The Zionist Organization also elects its representatives, and I do not understand Mr. Bar-Yehuda's complaint. I was not present at the meeting of the Zionist Executive when the coordinating institution was discussed...but I was told that the Executive approved it unanimously, and that there were differences of opinion only as regards one of the Executive's representatives....The choice was between the candidates of Mapam and the General Zionists, and the majority in the Executive decided—correctly, in my view—in favor of the representative of the General Zionists, who had 130 delegates at the last Congress as compared with Mapam's 50....

MK Bernstein fears that the intentions of those who wanted the coordination will not be implemented. I am not sure that I know what the intentions of everyone who wanted coordination were, but I will try to clarify what may and may not be implemented. If the Opposition in the Knesset thinks that the World Zionist Organization will be its ally in opposing the Government, it is in for a big disappointment....Even Zionists who oppose certain aspects of the state...will not cooperate with those who seek to undermine the state and the Government. The coordinating institution...was approved by all the Zionist parties in the Executive, and the coalition there is wider than it is in the Government, comprising Mapam as well as Herut, which makes the criticism expressed here particularly surprising....

The Knesset is not the place to discuss Zionist ideology....If I participate in the next Zionist Congress I will discuss the matter with Dr. Bader, Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Bar-Yehuda and prove that there is no need for the Zionist movement to supervise affairs in Israel. The argument is not a new one; I debated the same point with my colleagues in Poalei Zion abroad forty years ago. A fund was established for the workers in Palestine, and when its program was debated at the world

conference of Poalei Zion we, the delegates from Palestine, demanded that we should decide how funds were to be allocated ourselves. Our colleagues in the diaspora claimed that our approach was too philanthropic...and since they were thirty and we were two their view prevailed. When the Histadrut (Labor Federation) was established with 4,433 members Poalei Zion abroad no longer tried to impose its will on the workers in Palestine....MK Bar-Yehuda has reverted to the approach of Poalei Zion in the diaspora before the First World War....

Dr. Bader from Herut also rejects a Zionist Executive comprising Jews from Israel. In his view only people from the diaspora can conduct Zionist affairs....Dr. Bader fails to understand that it is no mere coincidence that for the last twenty years all Zionist activities have been conducted by people living here, because the Jews abroad—and most of the Zionists are Jews who live abroad—have faith in the Zionist activities conducted by the Jews living here....The members of Hatzohar also seem to have the same attitude, as their leader lives in Israel rather than in Johannesburg or New York.

MK Bar-Yehuda maintains that the arrangement does not fulfill all the decisions of the Zionist Executive....But the Government of Israel is subject to the authority of the Knesset, not to the Zionist Executive.... There is a limit to the ability of the inhabitants of Israel, however, and three-quarters of a million Jews cannot bring over and absorb a million people, and Zionism's objectives are not restricted to a million immigrants....

The Zionist enterprise is more than either the state or the Zionist Organization can undertake on its own...and that is why they must cooperate and coordinate their activities. Two years ago the Zionist Executive decided that immigration and settlement should be dealt with by the Zionist Organization, but it is unreasonable that the State of Israel should not deal with those topics...however small its resources. There is only one task which the Zionist Organization can undertake on its own, namely, the work in the diaspora....The Opposition seems to be disappointed that the Government and the Zionist Organization have agreed to act in concert....

The coordination will, I hope, enable immigration and settlement to be handled more efficiently. Mr. Bar-Yehuda also criticized the temporary nature of the coordination activities. But the Zionist Executive does not think it can oblige the forthcoming Congress, which must be free to decide how to act....We, the citizens of Israel, do not bear enough of the burden, and depend too much on the Zionist Organization and the Jews of the diaspora....

The objectives of the coordination are two-fold: To increase the efficiency of both the state and the Zionist Organization in dealing with immigration and settlement; and to heighten pioneering consciousness in Israel and the diaspora, making both sides ready to contribute and

sacrifice more.... The Jewish people will respond to our demands if we serve as an example and accept an even heavier burden upon ourselves....

The Speaker, N. Nir-Rafalkes: There are three proposals: a. MK Rubin's that the subject should be referred to the appropriate committee, which should examine the status of the Zionist Organization; b. MK Bader's that the subject should be referred to the appropriate committee, which should make detailed recommendations about the coordination; c. MK Aharonowitz's that the Knesset has heard and noted the Prime Minister's statement about the coordinating institution.

(MK Aharonowitz's proposal is adopted.)

Law of Return; Nationality Law

Introduction

Only two years after the establishment of the state, the Government presented to the Knesset twin laws of fundamental importance: the Law of Return, granting every Jew wherever he may be the right to immigrate to Israel, and the Nationality Law, defining the rights of all Israelis, both Jews and non-Jews, in that area. The elaboration of these laws had been delayed by considerations of both principle and political expediency. The importance of the laws was underlined by the fact that they were introduced by the Prime Minister. In view of frequent and bitter discussions in later years, it is remarkable that no attention was paid in the course of the debate to the question of defining "a Jew" in legal terms.

Sitting 160 of the First Knesset

3 July 1950 (18 Tammuz 5710)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, may I first of all welcome the Speaker, M. Sprinzak, on his return from his important national mission to the other side of the world.

The Law of Return and the Nationality Law...are closely connected and share the same ideological basis, deriving from the historic uniqueness of the State of Israel as regards both the past and the future, on both the internal and the external levels. These two laws determine the special character and destiny of Israel as the bearer of the vision of the redemption of the Jewish nation.

Israel is a state just like any other...having its own land, population and sovereignty....The Jews of the diaspora, who are nationals of their countries and wish to remain there, have no civil or legal connection with Israel, and Israel does not represent them. But Israel differs from other countries in the reasons for and trends of its existence. It was founded only two years ago, but its roots extend to the distant past....Its rule is limited to its nationals, but its gates are open to all Jews. It is a Jewish state not solely because most of its inhabitants are Jewish but also because it is open to any Jew who wants to come here.

On 14 May 1948 the Jewish state was established not as something completely new but as the restoration of our ancient glory, 1813 years after our independence had been destroyed, supposedly forever, at the time of Bar Kochba and Rabbi Akiva. The establishment of Israel was

not due solely to the immediate events preceding the proclamation of the state; in history, as in nature, there are miniscule elements which cannot be seen even under a microscope, as well as huge factors which our imagination cannot grasp, and both are governed by universal laws....

The revival of the Jewish state cannot be understood without some knowledge of settlement here during the last three generations, the Hibat Zion Movement, Zionism, the Enlightenment and Hebrew literature, as well as the national and revolutionary movements of nineteenth century Europe—the revival of Hungary, Italy, the Balkan nations, etc.—the results of the First and Second World Wars, and the foundation of the League of Nations and the U.N. But neither can the revival of the Jewish state be understood without knowing the history of the Jewish people during the periods of the First and Second Temples, the history of Jewish prophecy, spirit and vision, the history of the Jewish diaspora and the concept of messianism, and its various manifestations, the incessant attempts of the wandering nation throughout the generations to return to its land...and the history of the eternal culture which was forged in this land and its influence on the Jews and the rest of the world.

...It was no coincidence that our Proclamation of Independence opened with a brief statement regarding the eternal connection between the Jewish people and its ancient land, that it states as one of its basic principles that: "The State of Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and the ingathering of the exiles," and that it calls upon "the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to join forces with us in immigration and construction, and to be at our right hand in the great endeavour to fulfill the age-old longing for the redemption of Israel." And just as it was clear that the revival of the State of Israel was a continuation, not a beginning, so is it evident that it is not a conclusion, but one stage in the long road towards complete redemption.

The Jewish dispersion did not end upon the establishment of the state. The dispersion is not a new phenomenon, it existed long before our independence was destroyed. Jews lived outside Israel as early as the seventh century B.C.E., when the Jewish kingdom ended....The Jewish historian who lived at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, Josephus Flavius, wrote: "There is no nation in the world where our people cannot be found." That statement is probably as true today as it was then...even though the frontiers of the world have been expanded....The fact that volunteers from 55 countries came to help us in our War of Independence is unprecedented in its extent and variety even in Jewish history....This is the crucial event of our time which will determine the fate of the State of Israel and mold the character of the Jewish nation for generations to come....

The motives for Jewish immigration to Israel have always been many and varied, including the yearning for redemption, ancient

memories, religious sentiments and love of the homeland, not to mention economic, political and spiritual hardship. With the establishment of Israel another factor has been added—the attraction of the Jewish state. Our ability to increase this attraction, to make Israel a center for the fulfillment of the nation's...physical and spiritual needs, will determine the pace and extent of immigration, including that from the New World.

The Law of Return is one of the State of Israel's basic laws. It encompasses the central mission of our country, the ingathering of the exiles. This law determines that it is not the state which accords the Jews of the diaspora the right to settle here, but that this right belongs to every Jew by virtue of the fact that he is Jewish...although...Jews do not have preference over non-Jews within Israel. The State of Israel is based on the complete equality in rights and duties of all its citizens, as stated in our Proclamation of Independence....It is not the state which grants the Jews of the diaspora the right to return, this right existed before the state did, and it is that which built the state. This right derives from the historic, unbroken link between the people and the land, which has also been recognized "de facto" by the world.

The Law of Return is not one of those immigration laws which determine under which conditions the country will accept certain kinds of immigrants....It is the unchanging law of Jewish history, reflecting the principle whereby the State of Israel was established.

It is the historic right of any Jew anywhere to come and settle in Israel...for whatever reason....The Nationality Law complements the Law of Return, determining that by virtue of the fact that he has immigrated to Israel a Jew becomes a national of his country, needing no further formal verification or condition other than his desire to settle and live here. The Law of Return and the Nationality Law constitute the charter of rights guaranteed to every Jew...in Israel.

...
The Minister of Justice, M. Shapira: Distinguished Knesset, this is a festive occasion for us, as we give our young state the law which will define those who are its nationals and the ways of acquiring nationality. A state and its national citizens are two interconnected concepts...and if it has taken two years since the proclamation of the state until this law is submitted to the Knesset it is mainly because during the War of Independence and immediately afterwards it was difficult to formulate the precise legal tools for dealing with the various problems associated with nationality rights.

This does not mean that the state has been without citizens during these past two years. "De facto," Israeli citizenship existed from the outset even without a Nationality Law...even appearing in various documents, including those used for travel abroad....But "de facto" nationality is not enough....There are a great many spheres in which the legal

definition of nationality is important. Internally this applies particularly to the right to vote for and be elected to parliament. In most countries only nationals may do so. Till now we have adopted a different policy, giving this right to anyone who was a resident of Israel on a certain date...

Another sphere which necessitates clarification of the question of nationality is...that of civil law...namely, marriage, divorce, alimony, inheritance, etc....Uncertainty as to the nationality of the parties concerned...can complicate matters....The same applies to the international arena. The absence of a Nationality Law has prevented the Government from signing certain international treaties, such as those concerning extradition, sea trade, air trade, etc., because these involve the interests of the nationals of the countries concerned. In the absence of a Nationality Law the Ministry of Immigration was unable to provide persons going abroad with national passports. Instead they were given a laissez-passer, and Israelis had to explain to every customs official and policeman abroad why someone from Israel had to travel on the basis of a document generally used by stateless persons.

...Our representatives abroad encountered difficulties in providing diplomatic protection or consular assistance to our people because they were unable to prove that those persons were really nationals of our state. All this is enough to show how badly we need this law....For us, however, as Jews living in their own land, the Nationality Law has special significance.

The Nationality Law does not create or renew the link between a Jew and the Jewish people, this link between the individual and the nation has never ceased throughout the years of our dispersion. But the legal-political link between the individual and his state, that connection which Jews lacked and yearned for ever since our independence was ended 2000 years ago...will be renewed by this law.

Many Jews were "nationals" in the dispersion, but that was in countries which were not their own and, despite assurances and legal undertakings of various kinds, their position was insecure and could easily be worsened, as is evinced by the large number of stateless Jews. Now, with the establishment of the Jewish state, the Jews will also have a genuine nationality in their own land....The Palestinian nationality which Jews could acquire during the Mandate was not nationality in the full sense of the term. It constituted external, formal affiliation to an artificial political unit....Even before the establishment of the state the Jewish population of Palestine regarded itself as the heir of the nation which had dwelt in this country in ancient times....Affiliation to the Jewish population of Palestine has now been replaced by nationality of the...sovereign, independent State of Israel. All this great change will be reflected legally and officially in the Nationality Law before you....

The Law of Return defines the rights of Jews to immigrate to Israel, and the Nationality Law defines their rights to be nationals of Israel....But there will be no discrimination between those who are nationals by birth and those who are nationals by immigration....Consequently, the Law of Return is mentioned in only one paragraph of the Nationality Law, and all the others deal with acquiring nationality by being included in the population register, by birth, and by marriage, as well as with losing nationality, and apply equally to Jews and non-Jews.

...The population register derives from the census taken in November 1948 as a basis for elections to the Constituent Assembly. The right to participate in those elections was the first right of Israel's nationals, and the Nationality Law accords Israeli nationality retroactively to all those who were given that right then. Children born to Israeli nationals will be given Israeli nationality, even if only one of the parents has nationality and even if the birth took place abroad. Children born in Israel will be granted Israeli nationality even if neither of the parents is a national, provided the children do not receive different nationality at birth.

...As is the case in other countries, women marrying an Israeli national will be accorded nationality, although they may waive that right if they thereby lose their nationality in their country of origin....We are introducing a bold innovation by extending the right to acquire nationality by marriage to men marrying Israeli nationals. Nationality may also be acquired by fulfilling certain conditions, namely: residence in Israel of at least three of the last five years, permission to remain permanently in Israel, the intention to settle in Israel and some knowledge of Hebrew. All these conditions...which are common in other countries, must be supplemented...by the permission of the Minister of the Interior.

A person may waive his right to nationality if he wishes to do so and is a national of another country...although in most cases nationality will be granted automatically, both to immigrants and to those in the population register....People who are nationals of another country may hold dual nationality....

On the day the Nationality Law goes into effect all the Jews living in Israel will become Israeli nationals, as will approximately 63,000 non-Jews who appear in the population register of November 1948....In extending nationality to non-Jews living in Israel we will be adhering to the vision of the prophets, who even at the dawn of our nation preached equality, as it says in the Holy Book: "Ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land." Knesset members, the Government has considered the bill before you very carefully, now you are called upon to complete the work, so that one of the basic laws of the state may go into effect.

...

I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): Immigration to Israel...is the natural right of every Jew. It need not even be called a charter, as the Prime Minister said...The state should give a charter to the Zionist Organization, which is still bringing masses of Jews to Israel; but there is no need to give a charter to the Jews. It is a natural law, it is their natural right, which no one can give them or take away from them....

There are two points which I would like to raise. Firstly, is it correct, and advisable, that there should be so many people in Israel with dual nationality?...I think that the Committee should examine this closely, with the object of reducing the number of people with dual nationality to a minimum....Secondly...the power to permit or forbid immigration to Israel is in the hands of the Minister of Immigration, since he may prevent the immigration of someone who "has acted against the State of Israel or could endanger public health."...The Minister of the Interior may also deprive a person of his Israeli nationality "if he thinks that the welfare of the state requires this." In my view, this matter is too weighty to be placed in the hands of one man, whoever he may be. We must be as careful in these matters as in passing the death sentence, where the subject is reviewed at several levels before a final decision is made.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): The Law of Return falls into the category of laws for which we would make a blessing in the Provisional Council of State....This law answers the question of the connection between world Jewry and Israel, giving every Jew the right to come and live here. This is both a right and a duty...in accordance with every Jew's ancient right, as a member of one of the tribes among which the land was divided up, to a share in Israel, and in accordance with the Biblical precept that Jews should live in their land.

...I would like to propose that clauses be added to the Laws of Return and Citizenship...enabling the State of Israel to grant nationality to Jews abroad even before they come here, in certain cases. The bitter experience of recent years has taught us that if the State of Israel had existed and had been able to grant nationality to Jews who were still abroad...lives would have been saved....

I oppose giving new immigrants the right to opt out of receiving Israeli nationality...although I can accept this in the case of persons who are already living here. The immigrant can always request a different kind of visa, such as a tourist's, but should not be enabled to forego nationality after coming here as an immigrant....

I do not agree with MK Bar-Yehuda's reservations about persons with dual nationality. We...want to encourage immigration in a variety of ways, and if this will facilitate the immigration of people from certain countries, all the better, though the possibility of dual citizenship

should be limited....On the whole, I agree with the basic approach of both these laws....

Y. Bader (Herut): ...I pray that this law will really succeed, because the experiment regarding dual nationality arouses doubts....In my view, nationals should link their fate and that of their children to their country, and this law gives people an easy way out, if they want it, though I realize that in some cases it is difficult for people to abandon their former nationality.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: What is the danger in having dual nationality?

Y. Bader (Herut): The danger is first of all a formal one, of dual loyalty, preventing us from demanding unlimited loyalty from someone with dual nationality....It may also raise conflicts regarding such duties as military service. If someone has both British and Israeli nationality, for example, and the cold war which prevails between Britain and Israel today erupts into an armed conflict and that person serves in our army, he will be regarded as a traitor under British law. There may be other dangers too. I agree that people should be able to hold dual nationality, but not as widely as the law proposes.

...

J. Gil (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, this sitting of the Knesset...is an historic one, and it is a pity that not all the Members have honored it by attending...We are molding a legal pattern and organizational framework for the connection between the Jewish people in its land and its state, and between the state and the diaspora....I have two amendments to propose....

The Law of Return, which is an historic law, should not contain a clause enabling the Minister of Immigration or any other Minister to prevent the entry into Israel of any Jew because he acted against the Jewish people or the State of Israel. If he is a criminal, he should be brought here and judged here. Let me use an historical example: According to Saul, David had committed a crime against the state, but when he had to leave the country David said: "They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods." This is interpreted as supporting the Jewish view that residence in this country is given to all Jews unconditionally....

The problem is more difficult regarding someone who endangers public health. A leper endangers public health, but in the Bible lepers are merely kept outside the camp, not driven out of the country. Why do we have hospitals? Why do we have a Minister of Health? Let those Jews who are sick be brought here and cured, or isolated....The same applies to criminals. Why do we have prisons?...I think it is a mistake to put these things into the Law of Return and limit the right of Jews to live in

their country....The case is similar with regard to depriving Jews of Israeli nationality....

I would like to propose an amendment to the Nationality Law which concerns the basis of the state and the nation. If one studies the law one sees that it is a philosophical-ethnographic law, and is by no means superficial. It addresses the problems of state and nation...raising the question of what is a nation and what is the Jewish nation....The problem of defining a nation is a relatively recent one which emerged only after the French Revolution. In the ancient world and during the Middle Ages nationhood was not defined. The problem of nationhood arose for the Jews after the French Revolution with regard to their receiving equal rights. Since that time thinkers have studied the problem of nationhood....Allow me to quote the definition given by the foremost thinkers, namely, that a nation is a building which consists of four storeys. One is land and a homeland...one is the state...another is culture and religion...the fourth, controversial, one is race....The Jewish nation has suffered a great deal because of this problem....The Jews of the diaspora do not have the first three storeys, in many cases...and the fourth alone is not enough to form a nation here in Israel....It is our task to provide the nation in Israel with Jewish culture, the Hebrew language and nationality—which constitutes part of the second storey—...and to bind the nation in Israel to the diaspora....

I propose that the Nationality Law be extended to encompass the Jews of the diaspora who wish to become Israeli nationals, enabling them to hold dual nationality just as Jews living in Israel may....We must find the optimal way of linking the two parts of our nation, by granting nationality, by imparting our culture, and enabling those who live elsewhere to feel that they are part of our state....

...

I. Cohen (Progressives): ...The Prime Minister said that the right of every Jew to return to his homeland does not depend on the state and its laws but is part of the essence of the state and the nation. The Law of Return is merely a symbol and a testimony of this....I must, however, point to the bitter fact that...as the gates to Israel open, those leading out of other countries are closing. The question is whether the Government intends to act on the international diplomatic level, primarily within the institutions of the U.N., in order to ensure people's right of exit?...I fear that without the basic human right...to decide where one wants to live...which is one of the basic premises of our state, Israel may be deprived of its security and existence.

I would also like to point out that one of the countries of Eastern Europe, which until recently...had opened its gates to those Jews who wished to leave, has now stopped the departure of the Jews, preventing the Zionist leaders of Romania from joining their people here....We do not know the reason for this...and at this moment of rejoicing over the Law

of Return I would like to express my sorrow at this arbitrary closing of the gates.

In conclusion, I implore the Government to do everything in its power...to bring about the liberation of the Romanian Zionists....I hope that it will soon be able to report its success in this to the Knesset, which would indeed be an appropriate and necessary conclusion to the legislation of the Law of Return.

...

B. Mintz (Religious Front): We have long awaited this law, and it is a good thing that it has at last been brought before us....I would like to propose, however, that where it states that every Jew is entitled to immigrate to Israel, the words "and to live there" should be added, since that is, after all, the principal object of the law....I also think that the term "immigrant" (*oleh*) should be defined....

I endorse MK Gil's proposal that...the clauses authorizing the Minister of the Interior to prevent the immigration to Israel of Jews who have acted against the nation or who endanger public health be removed. I think that this right should not be given...to anyone. No Jew has the right to prevent another from immigrating to Israel....

I. Cohen (Progressives): Even if he is a criminal and has converted?

B. Mintz (Religious Front): Yes, if a Jew is a criminal, he will be judged here when he comes. We read in the Torah that Moses buried the Egyptian in the sand after he killed him, and our sages comment that he did this after God had enabled him to look into the future and see that no good would ever come of him or his descendants. We have no way of foreseeing the future, and we should not punish the future descendants of someone who endangers public health or has committed a crime.

I would like to note that I have heard that the Nationality Law was reworded 20 times, and in my view even now it is not perfect....I propose that it be submitted to the Internal Affairs Committee.

Law of Return (Second and Third Readings)

Introduction

To enhance the symbolic value of the adoption of these laws it was decided to adopt them, on the third reading, on the anniversary of Herzl's death, which in 1950 fell on July 5. Thus, the committee stage was inordinately brief—only two days, quite an unusual phenomenon when important laws were being discussed.

Sitting 162 of the First Knesset

5 July 1950 (20 Tammuz 5710)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

...
J. Lamm (on behalf of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...two days ago the Prime Minister explained the details of the law from this podium, and I do not want to repeat what he said. I would like to confine myself only to the important changes introduced by the Committee....

There was considerable debate as to the title of the law and its first clause....Suggestions such as "The Ingathering of the Exiles," were made, but it was felt that "The Law of Return" best conveys the idea of our nation's return to its ancient land....The Committee rejected the proposal that the words "and to live there" or "to settle there" be added to the first clause, after the sentence "Every Jew is entitled to immigrate to Israel"...since it felt that the term "immigrate" encompasses the senses of "to live" and "to settle."...

...The original proposal enabled the Minister of Immigration to refuse to grant an immigrant's visa to someone who had acted against the Jewish people or the State of Israel, or who might endanger public health. The Committee considered it superfluous to mention acting against the State of Israel, since this is included within actions against the Jewish people....The Committee changed the word "acted" to "acts"...feeling that a Jew should not be prevented from immigrating to Israel because of things he did in the distant past, and has stopped doing. If he has not stopped, then he still acts, in which case the Minister of Immigration can prevent his immigration....

The Committee also added the right of appeal to the law, in the following clause: "Anyone who has requested an immigrant's visa or certificate and has not received one within three months, or whose application has been rejected, may appeal to the Supreme Court."...Any person in Israel or abroad who feels that he has received unjust treatment through administrative action is entitled to make use of the Supreme Court...so that arbitrary and unjust considerations and decisions may be overruled....

...
J. Klivanov (General Zionists): ...The first clause of the Law of Return, which says that every Jew is entitled to immigrate to Israel, is so absolute as regards both its internal intention and its external form that it is impossible to qualify and restrict this in the following clause....I fear that if the matter is brought before a court of law it will be decided either that the second clause has no place in the law, in view of the first one, or that the law contains mutually contradictory clauses, and the court will have to decide which of them is to override the other....The aim of these

restrictions...is not so crucial as to warrant undermining the basic, sacred principle expressed in the first clause—the right to immigrate freely. It says that the Minister of Immigration may withhold a visa from someone who acts against the Jewish people. I think it is unnecessary to dwell on the political significance of this and explain that this enables the ruling power to interpret things in various ways and prevent anyone from immigrating whom it does not want....But if there really are Jews who act against the Jewish people, is it not better to let them come to Israel so that we can control them and prevent them from acting against us? The same applies to the restriction regarding someone who endangers public health....It may perhaps be necessary to restrict immigration to Israel in times of war or emergency....At that time special emergency laws can be passed to prevent undesirable elements from entering the country, but why should we qualify the Law of Return, which should be a fundamental law of our national revival, intended for normal times?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Because we wanted to hasten the passing of the law we could not answer all the points raised two days ago, so I would like to address them now....I share the feelings of MKs Bar-Yehuda and Klivanov regarding the content of the law, but if they think that the second clause detracts from the first one they are mistaken. On the contrary, without the second clause the first one is an empty phrase....The entire law is, in effect, the proclamation of Zionism, but we must not empty the law of content by putting too much into it....Nothing is better for the Jewish people than Zionism, but not blind Zionism....Every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel, and this right derives from the Jewish people's right to live as a free nation in its own land. This right is not something metaphysical. I oppose MK Gil's suggestion that we bring criminals or prostitutes or madmen here and put them in prison or hospital. We are building a country for the Jewish people, not prisons or lunatic asylums.

Every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel because he is part of the Jewish nation and wants and is able to participate in rebuilding it. But we will not make a mockery of the idea of immigration and bring prostitutes and base persons here. Immigration is not going to prison. People immigrate to Israel in order to join in building their country, their culture and their national revival, not to sit in prison because they are a danger to the public.

J. Gil (General Zionists): Even though a Jew has sinned, he is still a Jew.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: One can always find verses for anything. The thing has become quite absurd. Without the second clause, which gives the law a realistic framework, the first clause is meaningless....I would also like to protest...on behalf of the Hebrew

language against the Committee's amendment of "acted against the Jewish people" to "acts." In Hebrew there are only two tenses, past and future....Einstein's physical-mathematical theories confirm the logic of the Hebrew language, where there is no present....

I have doubts about appeals to the Supreme Court. It appears to me that the Knesset, i.e., the representative of the people, is the body to which appeals should be directed....I think it is unnecessary to accept MK Bar-Yehuda's amendment that someone who cooperated with the Nazis should be prevented from immigrating to Israel. Anyone who did this acted against the Jewish people, and as such is precluded from immigrating....Many Jews had to cooperate with the Nazis when their country did so, and I do not know if we should punish them for that.

E. Lankin (Herut): Distinguished Knesset, the Government has found an easy way out of implementing laws. In almost every law we find a tiny clause giving a Minister almost unlimited authority to make a mockery of the law....I think this habit has been passed down to us....As you know, the Governor-General, by virtue of the Emergency Regulations, could do as he wished with Jews who were defined as endangering security—exile or imprison them or prevent them from entering the country. There is a well-known instance when the Governor-General was at a party in Jaffa...and was asked to sign a document exiling 3,000 immigrants on the grounds that they were a danger to security, which he did, in the middle of drinking and making merry. Did he check that every immigrant was a danger to security?

Y. Duvdevani (Mapai): Aren't you ashamed to compare the British Governor-General with a Jewish Minister?

E. Lankin (Herut): I am making no such comparison, and you have no right to preach to me. I fought to replace the Governor-General with a Jewish Minister more than you did. (Shouts from the Mapai benches.)

...Gentlemen, the wording of this law allows for too many interpretations of who endangers public health or acts against the Jewish people....And who is to guarantee that the information on which the Minister acts is correct?...I ask the Knesset to delete the clause enabling the Minister of Immigration to keep certain people out of Israel, particularly since this is a basic law.

M. Wilner (Maki): ...I propose that the clause preventing persons from immigrating to Israel who endanger the security of the state be omitted from the law....The security of the state is a political concept which could be used as a tool by the bourgeoisie and the present Government against sections within the Jewish people. Neither the Minister of Immigration nor the entire Government is entitled to define who endangers the security of the the state....

...As regards persons...accused of acting against the Jewish people...the Prime Minister might think that supporting those in the U.S. who are preparing a third world war, or handing the oil refineries to the British is in the interests of the Jewish people, and then he might change his mind and think the opposite. That is why "cooperating with the Nazis" must be added to "acts against the Jewish people." (From the Mapai benches: "What about cooperating with the Mufti?") That is what the Government is doing now by placing fascist elements over the Arab minority, so as to repress the free trade union of the democratic Arab labor movement in Israel.

...In conclusion, I propose that the phrase "endanger the security of the state" be deleted, since it is arbitrary...and be replaced with "cooperation with the Nazis" against the Jewish people, and that the authority should not be solely in the hands of the Minister of Immigration. But my first proposal is that that clause be removed.

...
(The Knesset votes on the various amendments to clauses of the Law of Return and all are defeated.)

A. H. Sha'ag (Religious Front): I propose...that in view of the historic nature of this law the vote be taken upstanding and conclude with the national anthem.

The Speaker, N. Nir-Rafalkes: We cannot vote on proposals of that nature. We will vote on the Law of Return in its entirety.

(The Law of Return, as approved by the Committee, is adopted.)

The Speaker, N. Nir-Rafalkes: Today, the twentieth of Tammuz, the anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl, the First Knesset passed the Law of Return unanimously, symbolizing the aspirations of our people for two thousand years.

The Korean Question

Introduction

The State of Israel was established at the height of the Cold War. Its war for independence coincided, in large measure, with the Berlin Crisis. Yet its establishment was supported by both major Powers—each one for reasons of its own. In November 1947 both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. voted for the Partition Resolution. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were among the first governments to extend recognition to the new state. The Government of Israel was fully aware of the importance of a Big Power consensus for its future development; a plank on non-identification with either one of the Blocs was included in the coalition agreement for the first government, established after the elections of 1949—even though the left wing Mapam party did not join the coalition. At U.N. debates Israel's delegation took care to tread an independent path. When the Korean War broke out, however, in July 1950, and the Government of Israel was asked to support U.N. action—coinciding at the time with U.S. policy—the Government decided on a positive response. The left wing opposition considered this as a departure from Israel's policy and a watershed in its diplomatic orientation.

Sitting 161 of the First Knesset

4 July 1950 (19 Tammuz 5710)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: In accordance with motions for the agenda proposed by the Mapam party faction, as well as MKs Hillel Cook and Meir Wilner, a debate will be held on political questions. I give the floor to the Foreign Minister.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Mr. Speaker, although the issue has been placed on the agenda by the Opposition, in which case the Government is not obliged to open the debate, it always reserves the right to do so, and sees fit to open the debate now.

Distinguished Knesset, the world which hangs between uneasy peace and threatening war, which see-saws between hope and despair, was horrified to hear the first news about the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Whoever initiated the fighting there is regarded by the world as having thrown a lighted match into a powder keg....

The Security Council of the United Nations...met three times....At its first meeting the Council expressed its deep dismay at the armed at-

tack launched on the Korean community by North Korean forces. It declared this attack to be a breach of the peace, ordered the hostilities to end forthwith and demanded that North Korea withdraw its forces to the 38th parallel; it also asked all the member-countries of the U.N. to aid it in implementing the resolution and prevent aid from reaching North Korea. At its second and third meetings...the Council announced that North Korea had not ceased hostilities or withdrawn its troops to the 38th parallel, that urgent military aid was needed to restore international peace and security, and that the Korean community had asked the U.N. to act...towards this end....The Council asked members of the U.N. to extend the necessary aid to the Korean community to enable it to repel the attack and restore peace to the region.

In view of the events and the direct appeals by the Secretary-General of the U.N., the Government met for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the situation and receive a detailed report. The Government had no reason to doubt the veracity of the accounts and the description of the situation in Korea as reflected in the Security Council resolutions....The rapid advance southwards of the Northern forces serve as evidence of a planned initiative. It was South, not North, Korea which appealed to the Security Council for help. North Korea declined to heed the Council's demand to cease hostilities and withdraw to the previously agreed line.

The Government addressed the fact that the Security Council met without one of its regular members. (From the floor: Two.) Without one of its regular members, I repeat. The U.S.S.R.'s withdrawal from the meetings of the Security Council...was a cause of sorrow and concern...for the Government of Israel....Without justifying the withdrawal, Israel understands the considerations which led to this step and will do all it can to restore the integrity of the Council.

...But the fact that one of the members of the U.N. has ceased to participate actively in that body does not mean that the U.N. can no longer function....As a small state, and one which has been the victim of aggression and is liable to be so once again at any moment....Israel is unable to accept the U.N.'s paralysis and the surrender of its right to intervene in order to restore international peace simply because one of its members has withdrawn from the Security Council....

The Government of Israel regards the U.N. primarily as an association of countries with the purpose of providing mutual guarantees of peace. This accords both rights and duties. And just as Israel will not waive its rights and demands in the U.N., it cannot escape its obligations towards it....

Israel gave careful consideration to the political significance of the decision in favor of one side or another, with which it was confronted as a result of events over which it had no control. Ever since the establishment of the state the Government has upheld the principle of non-alignment with either of the world powers against the other as a basic

tenet of its foreign policy. This tenet still maintains. Israel has, equally, always adhered to the preservation of world peace...and has supported the U.N. as the major vehicle for attaining this.

The policy guidelines of this Government, as presented before the First Knesset by the Prime Minister on 8 March 1949, included...the aspiration for neutrality, peace with all nations...and adherence to the principles of the U.N....

...There are other nations in the world...which share our stand on this grave international dispute, and which try to tread the narrow and treacherous path between moral independence and political neutrality. None of those countries maintains that this means keeping quiet...failing to identify with the U.N. against those who breach the peace...or that the U.N. should not apportion blame where it belongs in this dispute....

We knew that although the U.N. had not intervened physically to help us when we were attacked, it had acted to impose ceasefires and bring about armistice talks, eventually leading to the cessation of active hostilities. Neither our negative nor our positive experience with the Security Council will lead us to abandon our right to demand the U.N.'s intervention and protection should we be attacked again.

On the basis of all those principles and considerations, the Government of Israel formulated its position in the following special resolution, which was submitted to the Secretary-General of the U.N.:

"The Government of Israel denigrates and condemns all acts of violence, wherever they take place and by whomever they are instigated. By virtue of the clear undertakings of the U.N. Charter, Israel supports the efforts of the Security Council to put an end to the breach of the peace in Korea and restore tranquillity to the area. The Government of Israel hopes that the U.N. will continue with its efforts to unite all the world powers in a joint effort to maintain world peace."

Israel does not regard itself, as a result of this resolution, as becoming a party to the serious dispute between Eastern Europe and the Western world which splits most of the world and presents an ominous prospect for the future....By this decision Israel is merely fulfilling its commitment to the Charter and to peace....It regards the U.N. as the first defense against a world cataclysm on an unprecedented scale. Israel's needs in terms of defense and building the country, fulfilling the historic mission of the ingathering of the exiles in the homeland, and its anxiety for the fate of those Jews of the diaspora who have survived the Holocaust, heighten its responsibility and reinforce its determination to continue on the path it has taken, independence without being aligned with either Bloc, the aspiration to negotiated settlements and the preservation of the U.N.'s role as a peace-maker.

Israel cannot be satisfied with merely stating its attitude...and ventures to speak out to the whole world, advocating peace...and the

brotherhood of nations....From this city of Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people, from the place which has been sanctified in several religious traditions, from the site of the great spiritual struggle between justice and evil, freedom and slavery, war and peace, from the country where the wonderful vision of the reparation of age-old injustice has been fulfilled, where the scattered members of an exiled nation have been gathered together and redeemed, the cry goes forth to all those who have it in their power today to lay down the sword in the Far East, to give one another their hands and work for the restoration of peace and the salvation of mankind.

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, we stand aghast at the Government's decision. We are shocked by the bitter fact that even at this hour of life and death for our nation, our state and all mankind, this young state cannot speak with one voice. The Government has taken a serious step on its own on the Korean question, without consulting this House or its representatives in the Foreign Affairs Committee. I do not know whether we would have been able to prevent the Government from taking the dangerous step it has taken, but we would at least have tried to find a way of achieving national responsibility at this grave hour.

The step taken by the Government means abandoning neutrality, a line to which it has claimed to adhere since it came into existence. We regard this step as...joining the aggression of one Power against a relatively small nation, while exploiting the authority of the U.N. We regard this step as endangering the position of the Jews of the diaspora and of Israel in the world. We regard it as constituting a grave danger, since Israel is identifying with the imperialist Western Bloc as world security and peace is threatened. Although this step does not surprise us...it must strike terror into every Jewish heart. Even if we are not heard now...it will not be long before the entire nation, both in Israel and in the dispersion, realizes how serious and dangerous this step is....

The Government of Israel is trying to justify its decision on legalistic grounds. If it had bothered to examine the basis and constitution of the U.N. in order to refrain from joining the aggressors in the Korean question, it would have...discovered that the step taken by the majority in the U.N. was illegal...because not all the permanent members of the Security Council and the representatives of the sides to the dispute were present at the meeting....The step the Government of Israel has taken is ill-judged both politically and ethically....In what way is the action of the leader of the fascist gang in South Korea different from that of Chiang Kai-Shek in the past? In both cases there was a social and national struggle within a nation and a struggle against the fascist reaction....

After all, Israel followed Britain and other countries in declaring that it recognized the victorious democracy as the legitimate representative of the Chinese people. How is it, then, that Israel regards the Korean war of independence in a different light? It is no different in ethical and national terms. That nation was forced to accept the division of its land, and who if not Israel can understand a war fought to unify one's country?...

The Government was at pains to adorn its decision with fine phrases about its non-alignment with one Bloc or another within the U.N....but these were empty in view of its identification with an aggressive Bloc. And this comes from people who still recently were admonishing us that we would be lost if we intervened in the struggle between the two major Powers. That was what the Prime Minister said, directing his words against Mapam, when he mistakenly thought that we rejected the policy of non-alignment....The Government of Israel has now taken a fatal step towards identifying with one Bloc, and one which has embarked on a path of aggression....

...It is not true that this Government has always been and is today so sensitive to injustice anywhere in the world. Grievances have been inflicted by the U.N. and its member-states on large parts of the world and Israel has made no protest, and certainly did not join the socialist Bloc which fought against those actions. We never heard Israel's voice defending the Chinese people's right to be represented at the U.N. or protesting against the cruel punitive action taken by the imperialist countries in Vietnam and Malaya....In the rich history of that very nation which has made itself a policeman there was the Civil War....What did Lincoln say then about the British intervention on behalf of the South in order to maintain the institution of slavery? What does America say and do today, when its bombers are decimating the Korean people? Had it not been for this intervention that civil war might have ended and Korea would already be at peace and united....

The Government of Israel made no contribution towards restoring peace to Korea or keeping Israel out of the danger of a third world war. It did not place the Jews or Israel on the right side, whose war for independence is no different from ours....It took a step which endangers our very existence, as well as that of world Jewry, placing the State of Israel, the pinnacle of the aspirations for liberty and independence of Jews all over the world, on the side of the unjust, the warmongers and those who kill innocent civilians....We know that in this Knesset our voice is that of one who cries in the wilderness...but we must reject the politically and morally unsound action taken by the Government and maintain our non-alignment and our independence...and return to our role as a peace-loving nation.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): ...I think that our nation is sufficiently experienced—at least within the last few years—to beware of adhering blindly

to the decisions and discipline of the U.N....After all, were we not attacked by the armies of five nations who were members of the U.N., and who have not been punished for their actions to this day?...And are not the Arab countries continually being supplied with arms and ammunition by England?

One cannot say that it is right and just to fight aggression in one part of the world and stupid to do so elsewhere....It seems to me that on the question of Jerusalem the Government and the state adopts a very different view from that of the U.N....I think that there are still many questions on which we disagree with the whole world, which looked on impassively as six million Jews were murdered...and our young state was attacked by invading armies.

I do not think it is very responsible, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that the Jews are still scattered throughout the world and only a few of them are in Israel, to make pronouncements which simply identify with the U.N. We are in favor of alliances between nations, but those must be alliances which reflect mutual friendship, understanding and aid, and not the despatch of arms, warships and cannons to our enemies.

The tragic situation in Korea is the direct outcome of the game played by the major Powers, who make use of small countries in order to advance their own interests...basing themselves on the principle of "divide and rule."...

We experienced a similar though different situation not long ago....The Great Powers continue to use tribes and small nations to further their own ends, and the question is whether our Government should make pronouncements of the kind it has just published. Should it not have emphasized the fact that a situation like that of Korea has existed in the Middle East for the last two years, and that our country is subjected to constant infiltration and attack organized by member-states of the U.N.?...Would it not have been better for the Government of Israel to declare that it opposes aggression in international relations and will not support either side?

...As for the cables from the U.N. requesting aid for South Korea sent to us and to other countries...what aid can we give while our country is surrounded by enemies?...How can we promise to shed our blood on someone else's account?...I think it is the duty of the Knesset to make its voice heard as the representative of a nation which, for the two years since the state was established, has been in a state of siege, without receiving any help from anyone. As for the ceasefire which, according to the Foreign Minister, has been honored both by us and the Arab countries, allow me to point out that they honored it because they were defeated by our army, not because of their adherence to the principles of the U.N....

...Our experience in the Middle East has taught us that the Arabs always chose to place themselves in a position requiring conciliation....The Western, or democratic, world knows that the Jews have no choice but to ally themselves with the democracies. And now it will be necessary to conciliate Egypt, at our expense, of course....

Consequently, our party identifies with the spirit of the declaration condemning aggression and advocating peaceful methods in international relations. But in our position, and in view of our experience...we cannot declare that we identify with every resolution of the U.N., which is about Korea today, was about Jerusalem yesterday, and may well be about Jerusalem again tomorrow. We propose, therefore, that the Knesset pass the following resolution:

The Knesset condemns the aggressive act of North Korea against South Korea, and hopes that everything will be done by peaceful means to restore peace to that country....This resolution does not constitute identification with either of the Powers acting through the U.N. The Knesset regards the tragedy in Korea as being the result of the pernicious policies of the Powers in both the East and the West, which have divided nations and countries in order to solve national and international problems.

The tragic situation in Korea is the outcome of the lack of a responsible and firm stand by the U.N., which did nothing...to stop the five Arab countries, who are members of the U.N., when they attacked Israel...in an attempt to destroy our nation and our state. At this very moment Britain continues to foment unrest and threaten peace in the Middle East, undermining the territorial integrity of our country and supplying arms to the aggressive Arab countries.

The Knesset denigrates the Government of Israel's unconditional orientation towards the U.N., which...has not discharged its elementary duties towards the peace and welfare of Israel.

...

B. Mintz (Religious Front): ...Our support of the U.N. is irrevocably bound up with our support for its main task, namely, preventing aggression and war....We are interested above all in being allowed to live in peace....The second pillar of our policy is non-alignment with either of the major Powers.

In formulating our stand on the Korean question we had to ask ourselves, first of all, if there had been aggression....Our reply was, of course, in the affirmative. An attempt was made by the northern part of that country to impose its views, regime and rule on the southern part, by force of arms....It is of no concern to the State of Israel whether this is a war of independence, as has been claimed by some, or not....Any war, any attempt to impose the will of one political entity on another by force, is unacceptable to us....Just imagine—any Arab country which wishes

to attack us in the future merely has to use the magic phrase "war of independence."

Nor could we accept the contention that this war is an internal Korean affair, and consequently there is no justification for U.N. involvement. Wherever there are two governments, with a border separating their territory, war across that border cannot be regarded as an internal affair. This can easily be understood by looking at Europe. If one of the two Germanies attempted to conquer, or liberate...the other, would that be regarded as an internal German affair or as a reason for a third world war?...And if there is any doubt as to who is the aggressor in Korea one has merely to recall that North Korea rejects the Security Council's right to intervene.

But how should we have acted in view of our policy of non-alignment?...It is true that the Eastern Bloc is not happy about the U.N.'s intervention in the Korean war, but the fact of the matter is that the Eastern Bloc has not officially identified with North Korea's war even though the Soviet press favors North Korea, as does the pro-Soviet press in the world and in Israel....Despite the fact that the Soviet government made it clear that it was dissatisfied with the Security Council's resolution, it refrained from identifying openly with North Korea's war of aggression, and this makes all the difference. If the U.S.S.R. identified with North Korea we would have a clash between the two major Powers, as well as between our two principles of support for the U.N. and adherence to the concept of non-alignment.

The Soviet position being what it is, our stand...is dictated by the facts that there has been evident aggression by North Korea, which we must condemn, and that this condemnation in no way contradicts our policy of non-alignment....Israel's reply to the...U.N...analyzed the situation correctly and constituted a careful and mature response...a call for peace from the city of peace.

The preservation of the integrity of the U.N. and the prevention of war are too essential for us to enable us to adopt an evasive, false or obscure stand on this crucial issue....We do not ignore the fact that the U.N. did not support us in our hour of need, though in the final event it played an important role....It is in God that we trust, but we will not spurn the aid of the U.N., for want of any better implement for attaining peace on earth.

J. Sapir (General Zionists): My party group supports the Government's decision...and does not regard it as a deviation from its policy guidelines, with which we have always agreed....It is not for us to be judges in matters concerning the two Blocs....Our task as a nation is not to label bodies or countries as...reactionary...repressive or progressive...but to do all we can to bring peace to the world....Our nation's bitter experience of two world wars has taught us that we cannot afford a third....

How can we prevent war and advance peace? I have not yet heard any advice from those who criticize our present stand vis-à-vis the U.N....Whoever the aggressor might be, as a state we are interested in preventing aggression. That is the main basis of our foreign policy, for although we have no intention of attacking we are liable to be attacked....I endorse the view expressed here that in matters of this nature the Government should consult the Knesset before acting....

Y. Harari (Progressives): Distinguished Knesset, a country which has no border dispute with either East or West, no intention of gaining control of territory belonging to either East or West and is not affected by the cold or hot war which is about to erupt at any moment between East and West should be neutral. A Great Power which has no dispute with the other Great Powers should also be neutral, as should a small, poor, weak country which is concerned with establishing itself. All this and more applies to a country like ours, whose people are scattered throughout the East and the West, and upon whom identification with one or another of those Blocs could bring disaster.

In the region defined as "the entire region" by the three Powers we are alone and unique among the Arab countries; if the Arab countries join one Bloc and we join another, this country will become an arena, another Spain, where new armaments will be tried out. And if we join the same Bloc as the Arab countries, the decisions and influence within that Bloc will always be controlled by the Arab countries....In this part of the world we are on the border between the two Blocs, and whichever Bloc we represent...we will always be the object of conquest for the other, with disastrous consequences for us. Our only hope of salvation lies in complete neutrality.

...In my view there is no need to go into the question of which side is right in the Korean question. MacArthur's alacrity in sending the U.S. army in before the Security Council had decided what to do could be questioned, and America's Monroe Doctrine would seem to encompass South Korea too. But questions should also be asked regarding North Korea, which for a long period would not allow any U.N. committee into its territory....That is why I would advise the House not to concern itself with these issues, but to examine the problem with which the Government was confronted when it received a message not from one Bloc or another but from the U.N., to which both of them belong, and the question was whether to infringe the decisions of that international institution or not.

It is very likely that the U.S. did well in obtaining decisions in its favor from the U.N....But the U.S.S.R. also conducts its affairs in accordance with its own best interests, and it is on that basis that Israel should—and did—act.

I know that the decision was not an easy one, nor was the wording of the message, but at a time when our Government is confronted with the

problem of the countries surrounding us, as well as that of the borders and the probability that we may need the U.N. (even if it is as unresponsive as it was before), and taking world public opinion into account, we must weigh our actions very carefully, just as the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. do, and act in our own best interests.

There is also the question of the U.N. itself, and whether there can ever be world peace without an international organization....I know that the U.N. may stumble and fall, just as the League of Nations did, but it will get up again. It may even decline completely, but does that mean that we should help it on its way down? It seems to me that as long as we can comply with the U.N.'s decisions, and as long as it constitutes a binding framework on the world, at least formally...we should obey it.

I should point out that our Government did as little as possible....I would ask the entire House not to read unintended meanings into the Government's reply. Let not the 38th parallel divide this House into North and South, because that would divide the whole country, and we have enough dividing lines of our own. I believe that despite that wording, and because of that wording, our Government will continue to adhere to its policy of neutrality.

M. Wilner (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, the Government's most recent step is the gravest it has taken since the establishment of the state. The Government did not act on the basis of what is happening in Korea. It is...constantly endeavoring to find ways and opportunities of joining the Atlantic Bloc and its branches in the Middle East. This policy is planned and directed in a variety of ways, primarily the Prime Minister's systematic propaganda in his speeches, preparing public opinion in Israel for joining the Atlantic Bloc, which is preparing a third world war. Korea merely provided the "opportunity."

In Korea there is no war between the North and the South. All those concepts are propaganda disseminated by United Press and Reuters....No international institution divided Korea into two separate states. Only American bayonets...hangings...and executions, including that of the leader of the trade union, only Nazi terrorism in South Korea, established the rule of the American quislings there....The entire Korean nation, in both North and South, including the partisans in the South, are fighting against the American aggressors and their quislings. The partisans in South Korea have managed to liberate many towns, and they are fighting together with the Koreans of the North against American aggression. Neither the Korean nation nor the U.N. have ever recognized the legality of the existing situation of partition in Korea. There is no war between two Korean countries....There is a civil war there between the landowning quislings who desire American rule and the entire Korean nation, which desires independence and unity.

The war on behalf of "South Korea" is being conducted by American generals and their mercenaries, not by Koreans. Even United Press denied the falsehood about Russian participation in the Korean war. There certainly is aggression in Korea, by the Americans. The U.S. sent planes and ships to Korea even before the invalid Security Council resolution. It also declared that it was taking Formosa and Vietnam under its protection, without any Security Council resolution. Why was the Government of Israel not shocked by that?...

It is palpably evident that the provocation organized by the American quislings in South Korea against the People's Republic of all Korea was intended to enable the American army to return to Korea, after having been obliged to leave together with the Russians, and to gain control of Formosa and Vietnam, where a national war of liberation is being conducted....We all know that the Government's claim that it is merely "implementing the decisions of the Security Council" is a specious one. We are in favor of a strong U.N. which will preserve world peace, but we are not in favor of an American U.N....The moment the U.S.S.R. and China left the U.N. that institution became the Atlantic Bloc.

...Today we heard that the American aggressors have sent five warships, including an aircraft carrier, to the Middle East. Who decided that they should exert pressure on us and the other states of the region? This expansionist action, like that in Formosa and Vietnam, proves that America is preparing a world war, and is pressuring us in various ways to join its plans. The American aggression in Korea is as cruel and barbarian as the war waged by the Nazis in Spain....It is an action undertaken by the ruling class, seeking relief in war for the economic crisis and the loss of influence over other nations, attempting to use force and the atom bomb to suppress the war of independence of the East Asian peoples.

The Government of Israel has decided in effect to support American aggression in Korea. I want to stress once more that the Security Council resolution is illegal, because only six representatives voted, not seven....How can the session of the Security Council be legal when the representative of the People's Republic of China is not there and that of Chiang Kai-Shek is? And our Government has recognized the government of the Republic of China...The Government decided under pressure from America...as well as in competition with Egypt as to who is more loyal to the U.S....An independent government would not have embroiled our country as Ben-Gurion's has.

...The Government has not changed its course, as has been claimed here, it has merely removed the mask of neutrality....The Government and the Jewish people are not one and the same thing. This Government will go, but the Jewish people will go on, and it will not help to prepare a third world war! (From the floor: But without communism!) The Jewish people will live with communism, that does not depend on you! You

won't succeed any more than Chiang Kai-Shek. The trend is towards the independence of nations, not their enslavement. The hundreds of thousands of signatures collected from among all the sectors of the population in Israel on the petition to ban the atom bomb prove that the general public does not agree with the Government's policy of supporting American aggression. This Government represents neither the will of the Israeli public nor the interests of the state, and by its recent declaration can only be called a government of national treachery.

We propose that the following resolution be passed:

The Jewish people, which was recently the victim of the aggression of the Arab governments organized by Britain and encouraged by the U.S., expresses its full support for the heroic struggle of the Korean people for independence and unity against American aggression. Together with all the peace and freedom-loving nations, Israel demands that the U.S. take its hands off Korea....The Knesset regards the Government of Israel's reply to the Security Council as openly joining the Anglo-American camp of those who incite to war, acting against Israel's interests and endangering its security. The Knesset therefore rejects the present Government's declaration of identification with American aggression in Korea.

The Knesset expresses its lack of confidence in the Government which has abandoned its independence and become a tool in the hands of the U.S.

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): There is a terrible symbolic significance in the fact that the Government's decision which is the subject of this debate was made on 17 Tammuz, the date when, almost 1900 years ago, the enemy succeeded in completing the siege of Jerusalem, thereby deciding the fate of the Jewish people and ending Jewish independence....By its decision, the Government of Israel...has abandoned the principle of neutrality....This means that it has dragged Israel into a war which is no longer cold, which is hot in the Far East today and may well extend to our region tomorrow...and which has nothing to do with our own national interests....

Reliance on the authority of the U.N. does not make the decision any less grave. The U.N. does not exist today, being totally under the influence of one Bloc....Is the Government of Israel completely convinced of the moral rectitude of the Security Council resolution? Any other government might answer in the affirmative, but with our experience of that institution's resolutions we cannot accept them in full....Why should we accept the moral standards of savages and assume that a decision against us is unjust, while in every other instance the Security Council acts wisely?...

Is our Government fully apprised of the situation in Korea and developments there? Why does the Government swallow the stories put

about by the news services of the Western powers? Korea is far away, and we have little information about it. Even Western journalists who visited Korea before the fighting began painted a gloomy picture of South Korea. Government is in the hands of people who collaborate with the Japanese, who are MacArthur's henchmen, and they are depraved men who are hated by the people....Does the Government of Israel think that its task is to save the rotten regime in South Korea?...

...A precedent has now been established in Korea of intervention by outside forces...under the auspices of the U.N. Is there any guarantee that that precedent will be used in our favor one day? Our recent history has proved to us that the U.N. did nothing when our very existence was threatened....The Security Council's assistance amounted to a ban on the sales of arms to attackers and victims alike...intervening only when the Arab armies were defeated....

The neighboring countries, led by Egypt, have expressed their reservations about the Security Council resolution. They are not prepared to throw in their hand. It has been said that they are using blackmail again, as they did in the Second World War. Has that method harmed them in the past? Were they not courted by the Powers at the end of the war...? Why must Israel sell its neutrality for nothing? Why must we sacrifice our young men and our homes for a war which has nothing to do with our interests?...

...The Government of Israel will be judged by history for the folly of its act, because unfortunately the public has not yet realized what damage has been done....I imagine that, as is his custom, the Prime Minister will ascend the podium at the end of the debate to settle scores with those who have criticized the Government's decision. He will cut his opponents to ribbons, verbally. All that remains for us is to appeal to him to remember that the subject demands consideration and moderation, for there may still be a way of escape from the sorry impasse to which we have been brought.

...

J. Riftin (Mapam): We have recently witnessed an unprecedented flood of reactionary journalism. Special journals have even been established to conduct regular and systematic anti-Soviet incitement. To our regret, we do not have much hope that, as happened with the British Labor party, representatives of Mapai will condemn the Government's decision as being against their principles....Even the representative of the Progressive party had the courage to doubt the "purity" of the American procedure in this case....

...Although we do not expect to gain wide support for a motion of no confidence, we have chosen this extreme way of parliamentary conflict for a variety of reasons. First, we regard this decision as a turningpoint in Israel's political path, both internally and externally. Second, by opposing the attitude of the Ben-Gurion Government on the Korean ques-

tion we are expressing the views of a large section of the public, including many who are far removed from us ideologically. Third, we wish to give the sign for the thousands of workers, soldiers and intellectuals, for the supporters of freedom and progress in our country, to intensify the struggle against the policy of the present coalition. Fourth, we regard this action of the Government's as a gross infringement of its declared policy of neutrality. On the issue of Korea the Government has adopted a policy of...identification with the imperialist Bloc.

We all wish to preserve the U.N., yet we did not recoil from disagreeing with the decision of the Security Council when it sought to separate Israel from its natural and eternal capital....In view of our attitude to the U.N., how does the Government dare to preach to the Korean nation and support an arbitrary resolution designed to split its country into two?

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Why did the U.S.S.R. sign it?

J. Riftin (Mapam): For you, sir, the Soviet position is not a sufficient motive. You talk about Israel's independent policy. Is it legitimate to shrug off the Korean nation's desire for liberty and unity because the American imperialists have set up a fascist puppet government in South Korea which kills the workers and is hated by the people? Don't you know what rivers of working men's blood have been shed in South Korea?

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Do you know?

J. Riftin (Mapam): I know!

E. Lowenstein (Mapai): And wasn't working men's blood shed in Russia?

J. Riftin (Mapam): I have no argument with you, Mr. Lowenstein; but if you don't know that working men are killed in fascist countries, if there can be representatives of the workers here who are not shocked by this, that is a terrible thing. In effect, the government of Syngman Rhee in Korea is merely a Korean "Altalena." (Shouts from MK Hillel Cook.) Mr. Cook, I know that you are sensitive to U.S. politics.

H. Cohen-Magori (Herut): You shed the blood of your brethren.

E. Raziell-Naor (Herut): Is this your conciliation, sir?

J. Riftin (Mapam): Knesset Members of Herut, I must define you as pro-American and pro-imperialist, and remove your disguise of national patriotism.

H. Landau (Herut): You are a great fighter, Mr. Riftin.

J. Riftin (Mapam): The U.N. arose on the ruins of Hitlerism, based on...the idea of continuing the anti-fascist coalition in peace too....It is

inconceivable that the U.N. should be used for war without any agreement between the major Powers...The decision to undertake military action under U.N. auspices...without the agreement of the U.S.S.R. and China, is a decision...against the U.N. It is a decision by the imperialist Bloc which you, by your statement—

S. Marlin (Herut): Which imperialist Bloc?

J. Riftin (Mapam): Do you ask, sir? It is your Bloc, the American one! By your statement you accepted its moral and political authority in questions of war and peace too, at a time when that Bloc regards the Korean conflict as an international one. It sends its navy to our region...and may try to use the purloined imprimatur of the U.N. to set a worldwide conflagration.

Even if we assume that...the Government of Israel viewed the Security Council regulations differently, why should our "neutral" country identify with one or another interpretation of such a controversial issue...? The reasoning presented by the Foreign Minister is totally ridiculous. If the fact that the North Korean army is advancing successfully proves that it is the aggressor, then Israel must have been the attacker, and not the invading armies. I can assure the Foreign Minister that any popular army, any liberated nation—like ours—guards its homeland and is prepared to launch a counterattack with the strength and power which distinguish a liberated nation.

Be that as it may, how do you know that the American story is true? Why were you in such a hurry to give your blessing to the first U.N.-inspired military intervention...? We remember how the imperialist world stood aside before the Second World War, when the Ethiopians and the Spaniards were slaughtered; how it did not lift a finger when millions of Jews were murdered; how it did nothing when the State of Israel, which was established in accordance with a decision of the U.N., was attacked...by seven countries...

The imperialist conscience stirs only when—parallel to the alliance with Hitler's heirs—MacArthur revives the policy of the "anti-Cominform treaty," also founded by Hitler, in East Asia. When nations rise to defend their...liberty these people join a mighty peace movement against war-mongers...How could you, as workers, as Jews, join this hypocritical, self-righteous and murderous chorus?

...Today the Americans celebrate their independence, and on this day we say: we have no dispute with the great American nation regarding Korea. It is false to describe it as a united imperialist body. The Americans have a tradition of democracy and a deep-rooted hatred of war. Millions of Americans oppose their government's aggressive policy...We believe in the future of American democracy and regret the unnecessary deaths of Americans in a conflict which does not concern

them (Shouts from the floor), but American democracy is not blood-thirsty American imperialism.

Y. Bader (Herut): You cooperated with the imperialists, you wanted the British imperialists to remain here.

J. Riftin (Mapam): It is just because of that belief in American democracy that we say to the American government—together with the mighty movement which encompasses one-third of mankind today—Cease this provocation! Take your hands off Korea!

The victory of the freedom-loving nations is assured. Imperialism can merely delay it for a while here and there...and from this podium we say to the brave Korean nation that we hope it will not be long before imperialism is forced to retreat from its country. Let not the State of Israel appear...as the ally of murderers. Let Israel appear as befits the history of its establishment, the saga of its martyrology, the progressive tradition of our liberation movement and the nation's firm desire for stable peace. Let Israel appear as the friend of the freedom-loving nations.

...On behalf of Mapam I...propose the following resolution:

Since the Government of Israel has endorsed the illegal decision of the majority in the Security Council which is designed to cover up the U.S. intervention in Korea; since the Government decision constitutes identification with the Bloc which is preparing war; since this identification damages Israel's independence...and the security of the Jewish people, and endangers the peace of our country...; since the Government of Israel has abnegated the best tradition of our liberation movement, which supported the struggle for freedom of repressed peoples, and has placed itself at the side of imperialist oppressors...distorting the object of the U.N., the Knesset declares its lack of confidence in the Government.

...

E. Elyashar (Sephardim): ...Distinguished Knesset, "Out of the north an evil shall break forth"—seems to be no mere phrase. Evil really has broken forth from the North, because the North began the attack....The real danger now is not from Korea but from the fact that at this moment several Knesset members have the audacity to claim, under the guise of neutrality, that the entire population of Israel is linked to the popular democracies and the decisions of the Cominform. Don't laugh, MK Sneh, because you are liable to declare from this podium...that the entire House is subject to the influence of the East...We are surrounded by enemies; the aid of the U.N. is important for us; we were happy and eager to enter its portals. The Government did well...in announcing that Israel must follow the course adopted by the U.N. That is why we will vote

in favor of the Government. We hope that people in this House will dare to speak on behalf of the West as the members of Mapam did for the East.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...In this debate we are confronted with only one question. Not the nature of the regime in one part of Korea or another, for the regime of a country is its own internal affair....No one here is interested in the information of MKs Riftin and Wilner on the two parts of Korea, nor does anyone have to rely on it. South Korea is open, and anyone may see its faults, but I do not know whence the Korean experts derived their information about North Korea, which is hermetically sealed....The only thing which concerns us and the whole world now is peace, and the question is whether to accept the aggression of North Korea and whether the U.N.'s stand strengthens world peace or not....

...I do not pretend to be a prophet, but I do not share the general view that the events in East Asia have led to a deterioration in the situation of the world. It seems to me that its situation has improved and the chances of peace are greater...though the danger of a third world war has not vanished completely....The Great Powers do hardly anything but arm themselves....It seems to me, however, that the U.N.'s rapid and courageous response has lessened the danger to some extent...striking a telling blow at aggression....

...I don't have to prove that the North is bad and the South is good. I won't say that it doesn't interest me; whatever happens anywhere in the world interests me, because we Jews are citizens of the world, or cosmopolitans....The Jews have always been cosmopolitans, and have no reason to be ashamed of the fact, because after the establishment of the state that status became infused with new content. We are cosmopolitans not because we are gypsies and homeless but because we are a nation with equal rights and share responsibility for mankind and world peace....

The important question confronting us, however, is not what regime exists in one corner of the world or another but the issue of war and peace. And everyone must place themselves on the side of either those who set fires or those who extinguish them. It is very strange that those two parties in the Knesset who only a few days ago would not take a single step without the dove of peace on their banner, trying to get young and old to sign the peace "petition," now deny the miserable peace which was broken by North Korea, and speak only of "progress." What is the reason for this sudden change of heart? Even if Mapam and Maki have grown weary of peace, that does not mean that the world is no longer concerned with it, and this concern is shared by the U.S.S.R., the entire Eastern Bloc, the U.S.A. and all the countries of the West. I do not believe that people want war, whatever their rulers may think...not even for what Ben-Aharon and Riftin call "progress." People want world

peace, and it is from that standpoint...that the Government of Israel approaches the Korean question.

...Neither I nor anyone else is surprised by what MK Wilner said here. When he says one thing one day and the opposite the next, everyone knows why. But why this change of heart in Ben-Aharon and Riftin...? Why this sudden abandonment of the concern for peace and the fate of the Jewish people...? When I heard Ben-Aharon's definition of the Prime Minister of South Korea...there was something strange about it, and I remembered the definition used by the Egyptian invaders. They did not fight against Israel but against Zionist gangs, against terrorist gangs, and I was the leader of those gangs. Today we heard a description of the Government of Israel from MK Wilner which is not very different from Ben-Aharon's description of the government of South Korea. And I have to ask: if it is permitted to fight South Korea in the name of "progress," why is that not the case here...? Here, too, there is a "north," there is Lebanon, and in Lebanon there is a "progressive" party...and it can even obtain weapons and attack the "fascist" government of Israel. I have read such definitions of the Government in the paper of MK Wilner's movement—even when Ben-Aharon's colleagues were in it....

The trio which defended the aggression of North Korea this evening...did so on the grounds that it is a civil war, which is not prohibited by their peace petition, especially if it is started by the force of "progress." I always thought that every war is a civil one. Was not the Second World War a civil war on a global scale...? As Litvinov said on behalf of the U.S.S.R., peace is indivisible, as was proved by Hitler's aggression in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and anyone who defends a war of aggression by any side cannot appear at the same time as an angel of peace.

Riftin cannot justify North Korea's attack by saying that in the North they are workers and peasants and in the South landlords. When North Korea attacks the South and kills people, it kills peasants and workers first of all, because they are the majority in any nation. And when I heard Riftin's condemnation of the murder of workers and peasants, I remembered the beginning of the Second World War, when Hitler attacked the Poles and the Jews. We called for the formation of Jewish brigades to fight Hitler, and Riftin and his colleagues opposed this. (From the Mapam benches: That's not true.) You have not burned all the issues of your paper since then, and your denials here will not help. Your statements are there in black on white.

I first heard opposition to the mobilization of Jews against Hitler from Hashomer Hatzair in America. I told them that I would return to Palestine and "sneak" on them to the Kibbutz Artzi, because I could not imagine that Hashomer Hatzair in Palestine would object to Jews fight-

ing Hitler. But on my return I found, to my amazement, that the Kibbutz Artzi was of the same view as their colleagues in America.

A. Zisling (Mapam): You cabled Palestine from America objecting to joining the British army on those conditions: "Don't give soldiers to the British." Sharett, Galili and Kaplan, who were at the meeting where your cable was received, can verify this.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I didn't hear what you said and I don't understand why you are interrupting. You weren't with Hashomer Hatzair then....Their answer was "no."

H. Rubin (Mapam): That's not true....

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Your attitude was no secret...it was published in your newspapers at the time....Hashomer Hatzair's position changed later, not because Hitler began killing Jews, Belgians, Dutch people and French, but because he attacked his ally, the U.S.S.R.

H. Rubin (Mapam): You should be ashamed of yourself!

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: It's the truth.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I really was ashamed of Hashomer Hatzair's attitude, although they were not the only ones to adhere to it. I encountered similar views at the beginning of the war in England and France. I was in England at its most critical moment...after Hitler had split Poland in two and invaded Belgium, Holland and France. The whole world thought that it was England's turn next. At that time, when England stood alone against Hitler, when America was still neutral and the U.S.S.R. was still allied with Hitler, and Nazi planes dropped death and havoc on London every night, I heard and saw the meetings of the "Friends of Peace," as the Communists in England were called then, and every Sunday those people would condemn Churchill's "war-mongering" and defend Hitler....It is to the credit of the British people and the world that the influence of the Communists was negligible. That was not the case in France, however, where Communist propaganda against the war with Hitler influenced the French workers and contributed to France's defeat. Naturally, the Communists changed their views later.

M. Wilner (Maki): They termed the war anti-fascist from the outset.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Only the independent mind of Wilner and his associates can identify a call for peace with Hitler with a war against fascism. The fact remains that at that time the forces of "progress" did not question Hitler's murders, and Hashomer Hatzair toed that line, consequently Rifting's bleatings about the killing of workers make no impression on us. The killing of workers is not always a bad thing as far as he is concerned, it depends who is doing the killing.

We cannot accept that "dialectic." Murder is murder, and war is war, and only those who pursue peace for all nations are true lovers of peace....

If acts of aggression are not quashed at the outset a new world war could develop. If the governments of France and England had dared to stop Hitler's entry into the Rhine area and the subsequent conquest of Austria in 1936 the Second World War might well have been averted. The world is to be congratulated for having learnt from its bitter experience, although perhaps not sufficiently. For the first time the U.N. has acted boldly to stop an act of aggression. If this effort succeeds it could be one of the factors strengthening world peace....Unlike MKs Wilner, Ben-Aharon and Rifting, I do not believe that America and Russia want war. If they did, they would have found an appropriate opportunity long since....

We might be asked what tiny, distant Israel has to do with the Korean question...? We are a small and insignificant nation on the map of the world, it is true, but in one sphere we are the equal of anyone else, namely, in spiritual and moral matters....As people and as Jews, as a nation and a state, we cannot be indifferent and neutral to the supreme need of mankind and the Jewish people: world peace.

We cannot ignore the special responsibility of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., each of which is responsible for the lives of many millions....But moral responsibility is not measured solely in numbers, and we regard ourselves as bearing the same moral responsibility as other countries. I do not belittle the value of physical strength. For the last five years I have done hardly anything...but build up Israel's physical strength. But even when we had to use our physical strength to the maximum, and not completely without success, we knew that in the final event it would not be physical strength that prevailed....This secret is also known to the most fervent militarists. It was Napoleon who said that two forces operate in history, the sword and the idea, and in the end it is the idea which prevails.

We have always known that the spirit is mightier than the flesh, and our spirit has never been vanquished by superior physical force....The Jewish people has an unparalleled history, we have withstood tests to which no other nation has ever been subjected. We have seen and suffered a great deal....Our conscience has been refined in the furnace of suffering, blood and fire....And our very return to this land and the renewal of our national existence after all we have gone through during two thousand years proves something....Israel's position is significant...provided it is independent...and arrived at freely....Anyone who has identified in advance with the position of one side or another cannot speak in Israel's name....The Government of Israel does not belittle the strength and value of the Great Powers and the

U.N., but it has dared to defy the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and the majority in the U.N. when it thought their views were unjust.

In one of the papers I read an article attacking our position on the grounds that we had not received our due for it. The author did not know that Israel cannot be bought, and that its conscience is its strength....Neither America nor Russia have enough gold to buy our conscience....Together with the U.N., the State of Israel condemns all acts of aggression, whatever the reason for them....We will not send our army to Korea because we are still threatened by aggression ourselves....But Israel's voice has weight even without force, in the world and especially in the diaspora. The question of peace in the world concerns all Jews everywhere....The Knesset's approval of the Government's reply to the U.N. will affirm Israel's desire for peace and its international freedom.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The following resolution is proposed by MKs Lubianker and Sapir: "The Knesset approves the Government's reply to the U.N. regarding the Korean question."

...

The Vote

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Those in favor | 68 |
| Those against | 20 |
| Abstentions | 8 |

(The resolution is adopted.)

Judges Law

Introduction

The process culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel entailed political strife with the Mandatory Government, at times violent opposition to its policies, indeed, to its very existence, and violent repression of such opposition. At the same time, some of the institutions developed by the British Mandatory Government were regarded as positive and worthy of continuation. This holds true of the Judiciary which, except for blatantly political cases normally adjudicated in Military Courts, was regarded as fair and reasonably efficient in the discharge of its mission. The Judges Law, introduced by the Government in February 1951, two years after the convening of the First Knesset, preserved many of the basic features of the juridical system under the Mandate—the three-tier system, the absence of a jury, etc. The two main innovations were the introduction of an Appointments Committee for Judges, with a built-in majority of members of the legal profession, and of a Disciplinary Tribunal. While the latter played only a marginal role in days to come, the former was to become vitally important in the continuous effort to maintain the independence, professional and moral standard and the prestige of the Courts of Justice.

Sitting 231 of the First Knesset

26 February 1951 (20 Adar I 5711)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Minister of Justice, P. Rosen: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, it is with joy and pride that I submit the Judges Law to the Knesset. This law accords Israel's judges their legal status and determines their independence, the method of their appointment and the disciplinary procedures to be applied to them. As regards the judges' independence, a law which is intended to determine this merely reinforces something which already exists, because there is no judge in Israel today who is under any authority except that of the law. During the Mandate, the English legal structure, known as Common Law, was instituted here, its foremost principle being that every judge is independent, having to account for his decisions to no one but his own conscience. In effect, however, the Government can dismiss any judge today, and the bill before you introduces a radical legal change in this sphere, as in others.

Prior to the establishment of the state there were 23 Jewish judges in the country, one in the Supreme Court, nine in the District Courts and 13

Justices of the Peace. Twenty-one of them received new letters of appointment as soon as the state was established, and they are continuing to do their work till this day. Two of them were appointed to the Supreme Court, and three of them preside over three District Courts today. In addition, 48 judges have been appointed since the establishment of the state, bringing the total number of judges in Israel to 69. Thirty-one of the 48 new judges were private attorneys, 13 were government officials, 3 were former soldiers and one was a professor at the Hebrew University.

There are 7 judges in the Supreme Court and 26 in the District Courts—5 of them in Jerusalem, 15 in Tel Aviv and 6 in Haifa. There are 36 Justices of the Peace, 5 in Jerusalem, 18 in the Tel Aviv area and 13 in the Haifa area....The number of judges in the country is not great in relation to the population, and if the Government's budget allowed it we might have been dealing with more appointments, so that the law courts could answer the needs of the country without the delays for which they are often criticized. I will bring a few figures before the Knesset for comparison, naturally with certain reservations, because every statistical analysis of this kind is inevitably incomplete if we do not take the area of the country and the number of trials into account....

...At the end of 1947 there were 68 judges in this country, 7 in the Supreme Court, 20 in the District Courts and 41 Justices of the Peace. Thus, the number of judges in the country today is almost the same as at the end of the Mandate; and if the population was larger then, it should not be forgotten that the number of Jews was far smaller, and the majority of civil judges came from the Jewish sector....

In 1948 the population of Uruguay was 2,200,000, and there were 220 Justices of the Peace...but only nine judges of the next rank and five Supreme Court judges. In Norway, where the population is 4,000,000, there were 94 Justices of the Peace, 36 judges of the next rank and 14 Supreme Court judges. In Nicaragua, with a population of 1,100,000, there were 153 judges, while in Peru, with a population of 6,200,000, there were only 114 judges.

The number of judges necessarily affects the rate at which cases are heard. There are various reasons for the fact that cases drag on too long here. One of them is that our judges do not follow the rule that a case should not be interrupted or deferred once it has begun....I should point out, however, that if our judges did follow that rule, this would cause many problems, primarily to the attorneys, but also to the parties concerned and the witnesses. The upshot is that after one witness has given evidence in a certain trial the continuation of the case is postponed for another day, and thus it goes on, prolonging the duration of trials....

Nevertheless, I do not think that our trials continue much longer than those in other countries. The problem is a worldwide one....In

most cases a complex case takes between two and three years, even if it goes through three levels, and many cases are not appealed....

Another difficulty we encounter is the fact that the courts also deal with all the criminal cases....In America and England most criminal cases are tried in special courts which have no connection with the civil courts. In England only the most serious criminal cases are heard by one of the Supreme Court Judges or by one of his deputies....In many countries minor offenses...are dealt with by the administrative echelon; a policeman issues a fine on the spot, and the offender can choose whether to pay or take the matter to court. For good reasons, gentlemen, our judges also collect these petty fines, and this takes time and energy....Furthermore, our Justices of the Peace also sit on criminal cases...and in some instances also require the services of an interpreter, primarily when hearing cases involving new immigrants. It should also be recalled that we are increasingly having to appoint judges as chairmen of Statutory Commissions.

I mention these things today not in order to justify far-reaching changes in the laws governing our courts...but in order to emphasize that the claim that there are unnecessary delays in the courts cannot be accepted without a close examination. Some people say that the judges should have a longer working day. When a proposal to increase the number of judges was debated in the British parliament, the person replying on behalf of the government said that a judge's working day should not exceed five hours. After a while one's ability to understand and grasp information diminishes, especially since in our courts the judges also write the record of the proceedings and many people oppose changing this. Many of our courts have introduced afternoon sessions, particularly in cases of murder and other extended criminal cases, and the sittings continue until the evening....This is not a desirable state of affairs....If a judge does not have free days or hours to study books and write his decisions the result will be that decisions will be held up.

The law itself...has been preceded by extensive discussions with the legal community, and I believe that most judges agree with its underlying principles....The bill before you determines that anyone who served as a judge before this law came into effect is regarded as having been appointed in accordance with it. The law introduces radical changes in the way judges are appointed. During the Mandate judges were appointed by the High Commissioner and Supreme Court judges at the order of the king. The appropriate section of the Transition Law of 1948 determined that the Supreme Court of Israel would consist of judges appointed by the Cabinet with the approval of the Knesset and at the recommendation of the Minister of Justice, while as regards the appointment of District Court Judges and Justices of the Peace, the High Commissioner's authority was transferred to the Minister of Justice....In effect, the appointments were made on the basis of the recommendations

of advisory committees....Once this law goes into effect these committees will be dissolved, and we thank them for their loyal help.

The major innovation of this law is that judges will be appointed by the President of the state. The judges' independence will be reflected in the fact that they are appointed...by the President, who symbolizes the entire state, rather than by the Executive. The President will be advised by the Minister of Justice, who in turn will act on the recommendations of the Appointments Committee, comprising representatives of the Executive (the Cabinet), the Legislature (the Knesset) and the Judiciary (the judges), as well as members of the profession (judges, lawyers and jurists). Subcommittees...will discuss the appointment of District Court Judges and Justices of the Peace.

The Appointments Committee will not be free to choose anyone who puts himself forward as a candidate. The law determines minimal requirements....Even though our Bible instructs us: "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all they gates"...these judges were also required to meet certain conditions, such as wisdom, learning, some knowledge of secular subjects, etc.

Mandatory Law determined that anyone who had served as a judge in a District Court for any period of time or had served at least three months as a Justice of the Peace, in the Ministry of Justice or as an attorney could be appointed a judge in a District Court. The bill before you proposes that a judge should have at least five years' experience in a District Court, or ten years in some other legal capacity, before being appointed to the Supreme Court. The exception to this is the possibility of appointing a "distinguished jurist" as a Supreme Court Judge, if this appointment has the unanimous support of all the members of the Appointments Committee. This provision is intended to enable Supreme Court judges from abroad or well-known professors of law to be invited to join our Supreme Court. The experience required of candidates for the District and Magistrates Courts is graded accordingly. For an attorney to be appointed a Justice of the Peace he must prove that he has worked in the profession for three years, and must have appeared before Israeli courts for at least six months of that period....This is...intended to prevent judges being appointed directly from among officials of the courts or the Ministry of Justice without their having experience of appearing in court as attorneys....In this we are following British and American, rather than European, legal practice.

The main principle of the law is that judges are appointed rather than being elected by the people, as is the case in the U.S.A....We feel that the appointment of judges is a matter for legal experts, and should not be made subject to political considerations....As Minister of Justice, under the existing law I am not authorized to take disciplinary measures against a judge who has strayed but has not committed a criminal offense (for that he will be judged in the same way as anyone

else)....The bill before you proposes that a disciplinary tribunal be established to discuss complaints against judges. It will consist of three members of the Supreme Court and two other persons, who are not judges and are appointed by the President at the recommendation of the Minister of Justice.

Experience has taught me that most complaints against judges are unfounded. People complain because they do not understand the law itself or the procedures determined by law....The proposed law will not enable just anyone who has a complaint to submit it to the disciplinary tribunal; complaints will first have to be submitted to the Minister of Justice, and he will decide if they will be brought before the tribunal....

The law distinguishes between unseemly behavior by a judge in the discharge of his duties and behavior which is inappropriate for a judge in Israel....In the discharge of his duties a judge must bear in mind his special obligations, such as being impartial and judging correctly....Judges must be "God-fearing men of truth who hate injustice"—

E. Preminger (Mapam): And what if they are not God-fearing?

The Minister of Justice, P. Rosen: That was a quotation. The words "in Israel" were also inserted deliberately, being regarded as adding to the obligations of a judge here in comparison to judges elsewhere in the world, but without going into details....Although the disciplinary tribunal will discuss complaints brought against judges and make decisions about them, it will not be authorized to dismiss judges, and will merely submit its conclusions to the Minister of Justice. If at least four of the five members of the disciplinary tribunal consider the judge unfit to remain in his position, the Minister of Justice will recommend to the President that he be dismissed....

Another innovation of this law is that only the Attorney General may instigate criminal proceedings against a judge....The Knesset has already approved this procedure for other officials....It is my personal opinion that the police should not be authorized to press charges against people, apart from in trivial cases, and that this task should be given over entirely to the Attorney General, so that uniformity and supervision may be attained in this important and delicate sphere. Not every criminal case against a judge entails appearing before the disciplinary tribunal and the danger of dismissal. The condition is that the judge is convicted and the crime is one which involves disgrace....This would not apply, for example, to a judge convicted of exceeding the speed limit or of failing to renew his radio license....Whether the crime involves disgrace or not is for the disciplinary tribunal to decide....

Apart from dismissal, a judge's term may conclude with his demise, resignation, retirement, appointment—with his agreement—to another position or his being relieved of his post for health reasons....

Unlike other civil servants, he may be dismissed only by means of the verdict of the disciplinary tribunal. Whatever the pensionable age is for other civil servants, a Supreme Court judge may continue in office until he is 70....Our tradition has always held that old age goes hand in hand with wisdom, and 70 can certainly be considered a ripe old age; we prefer to set an upper limit to a judge's term of office, however, allowing him to retire before reaching 70 once he has attained the age at which civil servants may do so....

If a judge has fallen ill and is unable to discharge his duties he does not resign unless the Appointments Committee has decided that he should. The Committee will have to be convinced that there is no chance that the judge will recover in the near future, and that the circumstances justify his retirement....

The position of judge is not like any civil service position....In determining the independence of justice in Israel, this law takes its place among the state's basic laws. Most of its clauses constitute operative instructions—who is to be appointed, how, what procedures are to be used by the disciplinary tribunal and when, and how a judge's appointment is terminated. The basic constitutional clause is clause 12, which I mentioned at the beginning of my address, and which reads: "There is no authority over a judge in his judicial actions other than that of the law." A clause of this nature is to be found in all legal systems throughout the world....Just as there are no rights without attendant duties, this independence of the judges constitutes a kind of "noblesse oblige." Anyone who is made a judge in Israel accepts a heavy burden upon himself, and neither he nor his colleagues must lose what the law accords them. The work of Israel's judges must redound to their and the state's credit. May it come about that there are many judges in Israel who endeavor unceasingly to further the cause of justice and righteousness. I propose that the law be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

D. Bar-Rav-Hai (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I share the Minister of Justice's sense of joy and pride....I think that the first speaker in this debate cannot help but use the opportunity to note what a revolution has taken place in the State of Israel....Anyone who has worked in the courts of the Mandate remembers their alien atmosphere...and this refers not only to the fact that a foreign language was used but also to the general legal climate and mentality....On more than one occasion we found ourselves up against a brick wall as we attempted to explain our social relations and special concepts, which are very different from those underlying the legal system of the misty isles of Albion....

There has been a radical change in all this, of which the man in the street may not be aware but which is reflected in the decisions of the Supreme Court of the last two and a half years, enriching our legal thinking....It might be a good idea...to present every senior official

with a copy of the Supreme Court's decisions, particularly those concerning the management of absentee property....I would like to direct some remarks to the Minister of Justice, and hope that he will accept the criticisms of a loyal and admiring friend in the spirit in which they are made.

The volume of collected Supreme Court decisions is distinguished by the fact that it is in Hebrew...but the Hebrew used is archaic and flowery....Nevertheless, I appreciate the fact that an attempt has been made to create an original Hebrew legal style....I would also like to express my approval of the fact that women judges have been appointed, ending generations of discrimination....I hope the day will not be too far off before women will also be appointed to the District and Supreme Courts....

Naturally, I welcome the principle that judges will be appointed by the President, who is above politics....As regards the categories of persons eligible to be appointed judges...allow me to point out that people who plough fields or labor in workshops may have the appropriate characteristics for serving as judges, but go unnoticed. I would also like to note that the phrase "a distinguished jurist" puzzled me until the Minister of Justice...made it clear that this is intended to enable persons who have been judges abroad to undertake this position here. With all due respect for these persons and their knowledge of international law, this would introduce an alien, unfamiliar atmosphere to our courts....I disagree with this definition, and ask the Committee to cancel it.

...Clause 16, about which the Minister of Justice spoke at length, concerns the disciplinary tribunal, which will consist of three Supreme Court judges and two members to be appointed by the President....From what special category will those two persons be drawn?...Clause 17 states that the Minister of Justice may make a complaint to the tribunal regarding a judge who has behaved in a way which is inappropriate for a judge in Israel. This definition is unclear, and for all we know could be interpreted as including anyone who smokes on the Sabbath....I think that the sentence should end after "judge." That would not alter its meaning but would prevent undesirable interpretations. I hope that the Committee will be able to polish this law, but it is one of the State of Israel's basic laws, and this Knesset can take pride in the fact that it will approve the Judges Law before it is dissolved and new elections are held.

N. Nir-Rafalkes (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, since I do not owe anyone any compliments, I can use all my allotted time to talk about the law itself. First of all...I would like to know how the Minister of Justice intends to appoint Municipal Judges. I am not saying that they have to be appointed in the way the bill proposes, but I think that this ought to be determined by law....Such judges exist, I have spoken with some of them, and they claim that they have the same rights as Justices of the Peace....

I endorse MK Bar-Rav-Hai's remarks about a "distinguished jurist," but I would like to add...that this clause makes it possible for people with clout to obtain appointments, and I therefore oppose it....

As regards the appointments made in accordance with Clause 5, the Appointments Committee will consist of nine members....We think that the Judiciary should be completely independent of the Executive, because the influence of the former is far smaller than that of the latter. But this clause indicates that the Executive nevertheless plays a significant role in these appointments: there are two Ministers, the Attorney General, and so on. I would like the Appointments Committee to be closer to the public, and I think that the members of the Knesset, who are nevertheless the representatives of the public, and—

The Minister of Transport, D. Joseph: Weren't the Ministers elected by the public?

N. Nir-Rafalkes (Mapam): They are also members of the Knesset. But Ministers have many more ways of influencing people than a simple Knesset Member....I agree that the judges should be appointed by the President of the state, even at the suggestion of the Minister of Justice, but the recommendation should come from an Appointments Committee which consists solely of Knesset members, without the participation of any Minister or government official. I don't understand why the plenum of the Committee should discuss only the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court, while that of District Court judges and Justices of the Peace should be the concern of a subcommittee. Why cannot the Committee discuss those appointments too? There are not so many of them, just a few dozen....

I do not agree with the Minister of Justice regarding the judges' retirement age. Why should a Regional Judge retire at 65 and a Supreme Court Judge at 70?...I do not agree with the retirement age at all.... There are people in this Knesset who are nearing that age, who give speeches here which are sometimes interesting and sometimes less so, yet they run the affairs of the country. So why should a judge retire at a given age?...

...The Minister of Justice has said, quite rightly, that the judges must be independent, as appears in Clause 12 of the bill....But if Clause 15 says that the Minister of Justice may move a judge from one town to another, with the agreement of the President of the Supreme Court, this may be used as a way of getting rid of him....In clause 9 we read that the Minister of Justice may appoint a temporary judge for a period to be determined by him; if he turns out to be suitable, he will be appointed, if not, he will be dismissed. This certainly works against the independence of the judges....

In principle judges are independent, but according to this law they may be brought before a disciplinary tribunal. This also seems to act

against their independence, particularly when the definition of what constitute a judge's offences is so vaguely worded....What is "inappropriate behavior"?...I am sure that not everyone here will agree on a definition of that phrase....The disciplinary tribunal will consist of three Supreme Court judges and two persons who will doubtless be government officials; the experience of two and a half years of the state's existence has taught me this. Those people will decide how to define "inappropriate behavior."...Is that independence? This law makes the judges dependent upon the administration. All the clauses after and including Clause 16 should be removed. There is no need for a disciplinary tribunal. A judge should be dismissed only if he has been convicted of a crime....If he has been fined instead of being sent to jail he should not serve as a judge. A judge should serve as an example, and should not have even a formal offense on his record. We lawyers plead in court that our clients have committed only a formal offense, but you know that the judge never accepts that.

M. Ben-Ami (Sephardim): A distinction should be made between a technical offense and a moral one. A driving offense could be formal.

N. Nir-Rafalkes (Mapam): I understand that you are worried because you drive. This law places the judges under the influence of the Executive, and I would not want that to exist in our state.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): Distinguished Speaker, gentlemen, I also subscribe to the Minister of Justice's feelings of satisfaction and joy at the fact that this important law has been brought before the Knesset. May I express the hope that the Minister of Justice will hasten to lay before the Knesset a bill concerning the judges of the religious courts, the Dayanim....I am concerned about what is happening in our courts....The situation today is such that many people think that there is no point in taking a matter to court, because they know it will not have its first hearing for another year, and will then be delayed for another year, and so on....This is not the fault of the judges but of the British procedure, which is inappropriate for us and should be changed. Perhaps there are not enough judges, or perhaps...their approach to trials is too Olympian, and they do not devote sufficient time and consideration to bringing trials to a speedy conclusion....

I would like to propose that rabbis be added to the various categories of people eligible to be appointed judges. In my view it is enough if a rabbi is acquainted with Jewish law, and...anyway, it is important that Jewish law be revived and introduced into our courts. Law is the language of the state and the spirit of the nation. When we returned to our land we accepted the Hebrew language and did not seek others, despite the difficulties confronting us. The reborn State of Israel should have accepted Jewish law straightaway. There are various ways of doing this: through research, adapting Jewish law to new patterns...through

legislation or through establishing precedents, or Case Law, as is the practice in the British law on which our legal system is based....If experts in Jewish law are to be found in the courts, rather than persons who are ignorant of it, a great deal of Jewish law can easily and painlessly be brought back into our legal system....Our law is our pride, as it is written: "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" And then, when we establish our own state, we abandon all that wealth, and do not even try to draw on it.

...The Minister of Justice was right to describe the problem of the independence of the judges as a central problem of justice....I know that there are people who would like the judges...to represent their interests....The Minister of Justice mentioned the fact that it is inadvisable to accept the principle of the election of judges. I know of one constitution, that of modern Hungary, in which judges are responsible to those who have elected them. I do not want judges who are in that position.

I would like to draw the Minister of Justice's attention to Clause 8, which states that the Minister of Justice may appoint a District Court Judge as a Supreme Court Judge for a certain period or a specific matter, etc. Whereas I can understand appointing a judge for a certain period, because the Supreme Court needs a judge, I cannot grasp why a judge should be appointed for a specific matter, because that restricts his independence....

I concur with MK Nir's remarks about transferring judges. In my view, the administration should not be able to move judges, because I know of a country where the independence of the judges was seriously undermined because of this. In that country judges could not be dismissed, so a way was found of doing this indirectly, shifting the judges around irrationally, so that they resigned.

...I think it is desirable that at least the appointment of the Supreme Court Judges be approved or recommended by the Knesset....This will strengthen, not weaken, their independence....I am not convinced that appointments for life are appropriate for Justices of the Peace. This may be good for judges who have experience, and who are appointed without any limitation of time, but not for new Justices of the Peace, who may turn out to be quite unsuited for the work....

I would also like to propose...that the statement: "There is no authority in judicial matters over a judge other than that of the law," be amended to read: "There is no human authority in judicial matters"...because this ignores Divine authority—

The Minister of Transport, D. Joseph: That is your view.

Z. Warhaftig (Religious Front): If that is my view, and the view of some judges, there is no need to write that there is no authority. Divine authority always exists.

I do not agree that the Minister of Justice should make all the rules, both the administrative ones of the courts and those of the disciplinary tribunal, as the bill proposes. I think it is preferable that the latter function be left to the disciplinary tribunal itself....Finally, I do not think it advisable that only the Attorney General may bring criminal charges against judges....After all, there is a general respect for judges, and charges are not brought against them lightly. This, however, makes it possible to claim that charges were not brought against a person because he is a judge....

J. Klivanov (General Zionists): Distinguished Knesset, since several learned Knesset members have already spoken on the bill, there is not much for me to add....

There is no doubt that one of our Government's greatest achievements...has been the vast improvement in the management of the courts....We have every right to be proud of our courts, especially if we compare them with those of the Mandate. Perhaps not all the judges are of equal excellence...but they are all impartial and honest....The slowness of legal procedures is also not always a bad thing. There should, of course, be more judges, and in this respect the issue of economy should not be considered, since justice is a matter which affects the very soul of the nation. We hear that the recent decisions of the Knesset and the Finance Committee regarding the judges' salaries have caused unrest among the public and even among civil servants...but this derives solely from their failure to appreciate the role and responsibility of judges....

On the whole, the bill before us seems to me to be acceptable, though I have a few points to make....I do not understand the criticisms voiced by some of the previous speakers regarding the appointment of a "distinguished jurist" as a judge....Why should we block the way to the bench of people who are qualified but do not meet all the requirements stipulated in the bill? I know that there are such people among the jurists arriving in Israel now. This also answers MK Warhaftig's question about appointing rabbis....There are certain branches of law, such as Marine Law, which are little known in Israel, and there may well be an expert in that field amongst the new immigrants....

Clause 5, regarding the composition of the Appointments Committee, should be amended in such a way that of its nine members only one, namely, the Minister of Justice, is a member of the Cabinet, while two of its members rather than one should be drawn from the Legal Council. The Cabinet will be represented on this Committee by both the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, while a wider representation of the legal profession is desirable....

I oppose fixing an upper age-limit for judges. Not long ago a man of 65 was regarded as being extremely old and both physically and mentally unsound....Today this situation has been radically changed, and

consequently I propose that the upper age-limit for judges be either abolished completely or altered to 75 for all levels of judges.

The Minister of Transport, D. Joseph: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I share the sentiments of the Minister of Justice as he lays this bill before the House today. I must, however, express my regret at the fact that the benches facing me are empty. A few days ago, when we debated a certain demonstration in the streets of Jerusalem, the Mapam benches were full. It would seem that Mapam attaches more importance to a small demonstration than to a basic law of the state, and that is regrettable.

I assume from what MK Nir said that he is not optimistic about his party's chances of ever being in power; otherwise I do not think that he would have expressed himself with such hesitancy and suspicion regarding the Cabinet...refusing to countenance the fact that two of the nine members of the Appointments Committee will be members of the Cabinet. A cabinet is usually charged with running all the daily affairs of a country, and Israel's Cabinet may also participate in the appointment of judges. Mr. Nir's demand for the removal of the clause enabling judges to be appointed on a temporary basis is also unjust. This is necessary in order to facilitate the regular work of the courts from time to time. Mr. Nir suspects that the Minister of Justice will appoint a judge for eleven months, then dismiss him for two and reappoint him once again, and so on. An honest man would not do such a thing, MK Nir. I do not think that the Minister of Justice of the State of Israel can be suspected of planning to circumvent the law in this way. Those suspicions do not indicate a high regard for the Government of Israel. I hope the Knesset does not accept Mr. Nir's approach in these matters.

As regards a "distinguished jurist," allow me to support the wording as proposed in the bill....It is possible that we may wish to appoint someone from abroad....Why should we lock the gates to further office for jurists who have proven their excellence abroad?...The Appointments Committee...will not appoint just anyone....I think we can rely on it, particularly in view of its composition...and I do not think there are any grounds for MK Nir's fears that it will be used to further personal interests or graft....

MK Bar-Rav-Hai thinks that the disciplinary tribunal should consist of fellow-judges...but this is inadvisable primarily because it is unpleasant for a person to be obliged to judge his colleagues....A tribunal which also comprises people from the outside will, in addition, appear to the public to be more objective....

...I know that in many countries there is no age-limit obliging judges to retire, but I nevertheless think it advisable that we fix an upper limit, not because a man over 65 or 70 is unsuitable to be a judge...but because a person should judge on the basis of his experience of life, and someone over 70 does not share the experience of most of the people he

judges, who belong to a different generation and a different world....Be that as it may, a man who has reached 70 and has worked all his life is entitled to rest....

I think that MK Warhaftig is confusing two concepts: independence and the right to criticize. A judge must be independent, but with all due respect for the judges and the courts I cannot accept that they are above criticism....The right to appeal and the right to question decisions must be maintained, and this is no insult to the bench....I do not agree with MK Warhaftig that the Knesset should approve the appointment of judges because this will strengthen their independence. On the contrary, if the Knesset has to approve judges' appointments...political factors may play a part...and this would work against the judges' independence....

Finally...I do not share MK Warhaftig's view that the right to press charges against a judge should not be solely in the hands of the Attorney General. The honor of the judges should be preserved...and should not be subject to the whims and fancies of the man in the street....The right to press charges against judges should be in the sole hands of the Attorney General, who is the state's most reliable official....Therefore, I am glad I have had the opportunity of supporting the bill the Minister of Justice has brought before us.

Y. Harari (Progressive Party): Distinguished Knesset, I think that this law constitutes another stage in the fine structure of the law courts...strengthening the judges' status, independence and ability to mete out true justice and removing them from the political, class and party arguments of the state. Thus, one of the best and most important aspects of this bill is the Appointments Committee, which will assess every candidate on the basis of his knowledge and abilities, rather than of other considerations.

That is why I am surprised by MK Warhaftig's proposal that...the Knesset should be involved in the appointment of judges....This will inevitably politicize the process, to a greater or lesser extent....One of the main benefits of this bill is that it removes the appointment of judges from the sphere of the Legislature and the parties.

In addition, the bill assures the legal background and experience of the judges....I would like to take this opportunity of condemning the slighting way...in which I have heard the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and others talk of "legalists and jurists."...It should be noted, furthermore, that...of the thirteen members of the Cabinet of the First Knesset, seven have a legal background....

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Maybe that's the reason.

Y. Harari (Progressive Party): The reason for what? That you're in the Opposition? If that's the reason, I don't envy you for having to be in the Opposition.

At any rate, the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Defense, Trade and Industry, Transport, Agriculture, Justice, Police, Health, Immigration and the Interior have all received legal training....And I think that the members of this House would be well-advised to give this sphere the respect it deserves....

As to the bill itself, MK Warhaftig...said that the courts are not open to everyone...but I do not think that there is any barrier. This can be proved by the Supreme Court, which can be approached even by illiterates and which, as the pinnacle of justice in Israel, sometimes has to decide between the individual and the authorities, and always listens to anyone who appeals to it....I think that to this day the most civilized way society has found of settling disputes between people is through the courts....

...There is no doubt that an age at which judges are to retire should be fixed, as the Minister of Transport proposed. Even if a judge is still willing and able to work, there are more than enough commissions of inquiry and other legal spheres within the state where he can make a useful contribution....I would like to know why land-settlement clerks, who have virtually as much power as judges, are not included in this law....To the sound of the Speaker's gavel, I transfer my other remarks to the Committee.

M. Ben-Ami (Sephardim): Distinguished Knesset, a law of this kind is intended...to enhance the position of the judges, but merely makes it more difficult to appoint judges, or, to be more precise, for a man to be appointed a judge. I regard the conditions posed by the law as being unnecessarily stringent. The amount of time during which a person is expected to have worked in the legal profession...is too long. I do not know if there are a great many people today who are eager to be appointed judges, taking into account the salary judges receive. I do not mean that anyone should be eligible to become a judge, but persons who have worked in their profession a reasonable amount of time should be given the opportunity of being made Justices of the Peace, at the very least....There are people who have worked in a certain job all their lives and remain professionally ignorant to the end, while others become experts in a very short period. All this depends on the individual's innate ability...and if a judge has to work for five or ten years as a lawyer I fear that only idle persons, who have not advanced in their professions after working in them for a long time, will apply to become judges.

...This bill does not address the question of judges of religious courts, whether in the Jewish courts or those of other communities, and there is as yet no law regulating their appointment, rights, immunity, pension rights, etc....This is no light matter, because in Israel all Family Law cases are brought before the religious courts....Whereas great care is taken in the appointment of civil judges, there appears to be no formal requirement for judges of religious courts. I do not know how this

matter should be arranged, but something should be done about it. A committee, representing various elements, should examine the qualifications of those judges. Not everyone who has read a page of the Gemarah and wrestled with problems can pass judgment....I know that it is far more difficult to make decisions in matters of Family Law than in Property or Criminal Law....

The matter of land-settlement clerks, who have extensive powers, has already been raised here. During the Mandate these officials, like judges, were appointed administratively, but now this is not the case with judges....The persons in charge of courts dealing with rents and businesses, whose decisions cannot be appealed, have no legal training....I think that matters should be settled regarding these courts too....

...The bill before us proposes that judges should be appointed by the President of the state, on the grounds that the Knesset is too political to undertake that task....I do not know of anyone who is not political. This does not mean that I think that the Knesset should appoint judges, heaven forbid, merely that that argument is not valid. The Knesset is too big and unwieldy to appoint judges....The Appointments Committee, with its nine members, is also too large a body. In my view it should consist of one Minister, one Knesset Member, chosen by lots, a Supreme Court judge, and maybe one other person....I do not understand why the Minister of Justice appoints judges, while the Committee merely makes recommendations. I am not saying that the Minister will act improperly, but it is possible....

The appointment of temporary judges does not seem advisable to me either. If a person is suitable, he should be appointed on a permanent basis, and if not, then he should not be appointed at all. Nor do I agree with those who claim that an upper age-limit should be set for judges....In Jewish tradition, the older an educated person is, the wiser he becomes....Even someone of 70 was young once....Dispensing with someone's services because he is unable to think clearly or work is one thing, but doing so because of his age is another....However, it does not seem right that people in elevated positions, like Supreme Court Judges, may remain in them until they are 70, while...other judges have to retire at 65.

To conclude, I maintain that on the whole the law is necessary, desirable and timely, and we welcome the Government's initiative...but on the other hand, there are criticisms concerning the details, and these will have to be discussed by the Committee.

The Minister of Justice, P. Rosen: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I would like first of all to thank MK Bar-Rav-Hai for his praise for the work of the courts, though he probably felt that it should have come from my lips. Nonetheless, even he will admit that it is more appropriate for it to come from a member of Knesset than from the Minister of Justice.

MK Klivanov, whom I also thank...extended his praise to include the Government and the Minister of Justice. If a government is accorded such praise only after it has resigned, that is an advantage of this special situation....I concur with MK Klivanov's view that the Government has done well in establishing law courts of which the state may be proud, but I am not unaware of their deficiencies, as I made clear in my opening words....I fear that the Ministry of Justice has not succeeded completely in settling administrative matters....One of the reasons for the relative inefficiency of administrative supervision is that as yet no Director-General has been appointed to the Ministry of Justice....

The Knesset Members have noted the fact that...the bill contains two major innovations, both for Israel and the world, namely, the Appointments Committee and the disciplinary tribunal....I note with satisfaction that almost all the speakers agreed with the principles of the proposal....I hope that the Committee, to which the bill will be passed, will not change a great deal of those important clauses.

Some people have opposed the idea of appointing a "distinguished jurist" to be a judge. I have nothing to add to what the Minister of Transport has said, but will only say that this could also apply to someone who is knowledgeable in Jewish law....

Mr. Nir was right in saying that a judge must know the law and how to interpret it. We also demand that a person should have some experience of pleading before the bench before becoming a judge. We have learned this from experience and also from the Anglo-Saxon tradition....MK Ben-Ami may be correct in claiming that our demands of Justices of the Peace are too stringent, and three years of legal experience may be too much. Lawyers who have worked for three years may not be interested in becoming judges, especially if they are talented, and we wish to attract particularly those lawyers who are able. An apprenticeship of one year may be sufficient, but I leave this to the Committee to discuss.

All the speakers agreed with me that...the appointment of judges must not be guided by political considerations....I do not agree with MK Nir that the Appointments Committee should consist solely of Knesset Members, or with MK Warhaftig, who wants the appointment of Supreme Court Judges to continue...being approved by the Knesset. I think that our experience has demonstrated that there is no justification for this....The issue in appointing judges should not be their political affiliation but their personal characteristics—if they are able, loyal and honest....I believe that the composition of the Appointments Committee is such that it will enable it to work successfully, as the Minister of Transport has pointed out. Naturally, it is possible to argue about certain details, but we reached our conclusion after debating the matter at length and consulting judges....

I noticed that the topic of retirement age was of great interest to the learned Members who participated in the debate. Although England does not fix an upper age-limit for its judges, many countries do....Our consideration should not be only whether a man of 65 is still in his physical and mental prime—on this matter I would not like to argue with MK Klivanov, who is, I hope, right in claiming that at a given age people are younger than they were 30 years ago—but we should also take into account the fact that people who have served as judges for 20 or 30 years or more may...fall into a routine. I am not saying that this is always the case, but it is important that a judge approach each case with the same gravity and seriousness as he did at first....

In addition...the need to make room for others should be taken into account. No administration can ignore that kind of consideration for long, and it is better to regard it as necessary. It is, of course, possible to ask why we have made an exception in the case of Supreme Court Judges. The theoretical assumption is that people who attain this elevated position...are exceptional; the weighty responsibility they bear...lessens the danger that they will adopt a routine approach....It seems justified to me to ask judges to retire upon reaching a certain age...rather than making discrimination possible by leaving this to the Appointments Committee to decide.

MK Nir appears to oppose the entire clause regarding the disciplinary tribunal, though out of caution he focuses his criticism only on certain passages....I cannot accept his contention that the definition of Clause 17 is unclear and inadequate. According to Clause 17, the Minister of Justice may make a complaint about a judge on the following bases: 1. If the judge behaved in an unseemly manner in the discharge of his duties; 2. If the judge behaved in a manner inappropriate to a judge in Israel; 3. If the judge has been convicted of a crime which involves disgrace. He asks what should be regarded as unseemly behavior. Sometimes I find it difficult to understand MK Nir. When we give detailed definitions in bills he complains that we go too much into particulars, and proposes that the matter be left to the judge's discretion, in accordance with the Continental system. Sometimes he thinks that we are not detailed enough, as in the case before us. I think I said in my opening remarks that we have not defined all the cases which might occur, and here we have to leave a great deal to the discretion of the disciplinary tribunal....A judge would be behaving in an unseemly fashion, for example, if he came to the court drunk. That is not a very good example, as it does not happen in Israel, but it occurs elsewhere....

I have told you that in the U.S.A., and in the State of New York in particular, the establishment of a disciplinary tribunal is being considered. I have read that it has happened that judges took very long vacations, and it was impossible to sue them because judges must be independent. Independence can be a curse if it is completely unrestrained, if

there is no disciplinary tribunal. I am not saying that our experience has taught us that there is an urgent need for a disciplinary tribunal, but it has already happened that I regretted the fact that it did not yet exist....Judges are not administratively independent, they are independent in the decisions they hand down....

...It is true that in some countries judges cannot be transferred from one area to another without their consent, and it is also true that in some countries this restriction is regarded as regrettable, because it interferes with the competent administration of the work of the courts....We have made the transfer contingent upon the consent of the President of the Supreme Court. I assume that if the Minister of Justice, together with the President of the Supreme Court, decides that administrative considerations...justify transferring a judge from one place to another, this will not have an adverse effect on the independence of the judges. It is highly unlikely that they will both decide to transfer a judge because they do not like his decisions.

MK Warhaftig and others, including MK Harari, criticized the clause by which judges could be appointed for specific purposes....Their objection is, I gather, to the phrase "for a certain matter."...This was the practice in this country during the Mandate, and we have continued that tradition....I see nothing wrong with our proposal, and certainly do not regard it as threatening the independence of the judges....MK Nir and others oppose the appointment of judges on a temporary basis....This may be required, for example, when there is a large backlog of work in the sphere of traffic offenses, and we wish to "clear our desk," as the saying goes. Why should we not appoint a judge to deal with this work for a year?...This is common practice in England, for example, and has not interfered with the independence of the judges there....Another question is whether this clause is very practical, because we will not easily find people who are prepared to serve as judges for a year....

...I do not think MK Warhaftig is right in opposing the clause that only the Attorney General may bring charges against a judge....It is undesirable that anyone may bring charges against a judge, and it is better that such charges should first be brought before the Attorney General, so that he may decide whether they should be brought to court or not. We must maintain the honor of the judges, and I have had some experience of quarrelsome charges made against judges....

I propose that the Knesset transfer the bill to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and although I know that the Committee is very busy, I ask it to act speedily, so that this law may be written in our law books during the term of the First Knesset.

The Speaker, N. Nir-Rafalkes: The vote indicates that the proposal to transfer the Judges Law to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is accepted.

Foreign Minister's Statement on the Conflict with Syria

Introduction

The General Armistice Agreement with Syria, the last to be signed in July 1949, was the first to be violated massively. Syria regarded itself as the only invading Arab country which had not been defeated by Israel, and the terms of the Agreement were deliberately vague and ambivalent in some major respects—demilitarization, supervision, sovereignty and normalcy. Internal instability in Syria encouraged an aggressive stance vis-à-vis Israel. On the other hand, some of Israel's major development projects, in the spheres of land reclamation and water utilization, were perforce concentrated in the relatively water-rich area in the north, adjacent to the Syrian frontier. Early in April 1951 seven Israeli policemen were killed by a Syrian ambush in the narrow defile of the Yarmuk River in the demilitarized zone. In view of the difficulties of the terrain, Israel deployed its air force for the first time since the Armistice Agreements had come into effect. Some weeks later, at the beginning of May, Syrian units established themselves on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, west of the mouth of the Jordan River. IDF units, sent piecemeal to dislocate them, suffered heavy casualties before succeeding in their task.

Sitting 251 of the First Knesset

14 May 1951 (8 Iyar 5711)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: I would like to report to the Knesset on the situation in the north of the country.

The events of the last few weeks on Israel's northeastern border have been made public at every stage....The Government's responses to these events have also been published in official statements to the press and the institutions of the U.N. and in the speeches of Israel's permanent representative to the U.N., made at the sessions of the Security Council.

It would appear that the conflict erupted as a result of the work to drain the Hula Valley, but the true cause of it lies in the special nature of the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria, which is vague on essential points, as well as in the unfounded demands of the Syrian government regarding certain parts of the region. The Government of

Israel has always rejected those demands unequivocally, and still does so today.

The conflict reached its peak at the beginning of May, as a result of events which were unconnected with the draining of the Hula swamp, indicating the true nature of the plot confronting us. An armed force consisting of local Arabs, who had been deliberately recruited and armed for this purpose by the Syrian army, as well as well-armed Syrian regulars, seized positions in Israel's territory in and around the central section of the demilitarized zone, and opened fire on our military units. This impudent deed, constituting a blatant infringement of the Armistice Agreement and an act of aggression against Israel, required an immediate and firm response. Early on 6 May an IDF unit attacked the enemy's main outpost on the border of the demilitarized zone...gained control of it and drove those holding it across the Syrian border. The enemy abandoned its other outpost very hastily.

I would like to use this opportunity to praise the heroism of the IDF unit which implemented this mission in very difficult conditions. Particular mention should be made of the valor of soldiers who are recent immigrants. I am sure that all the members of the Knesset join the Government in its gratitude to the officers and soldiers who participated in the action. From this podium I would like to offer condolences to the families of those who fell in the battle; they should be regarded as casualties of the War of Independence, of which this incident is a belated manifestation.

The reliable information received by the Government of Israel regarding the Syrian army's direct responsibility for this escapade and the involvement of army regulars in this action was borne out by the discovery of bodies of soldiers wearing Syrian army uniforms and of large quantities of modern weapons and equipment...in the outposts.

Israel complained to the Security Council, accusing Syria of infringing the Armistice Agreement and instigating an act of aggression against Israel, and requested an urgent debate on the subject. This took place on 8 May, at a meeting which had already been set aside to discuss the dispute concerning the Hula region. Israel's representative, Mr. Abba Eban, presented Israel's complaint and described Syria's act of aggression. There is reason to believe that the proof he presented there was accepted by most of the members of the Council.

The Security Council resolution, which was passed unanimously, was published in the press. Its main point was: "The Security Council appeals to the sides and to individuals in the areas concerned to cease hostilities, and draws their attention to their undertaking according to Clause 2, Section 4, of the U.N. Charter, on the basis of the Security Council resolution of 15 July 1948, and their commitments under the Armistice Agreement, and accordingly asks them to fulfill the obligations and conditions they have taken upon themselves."

Both Israel and Syria proposed that the resolution be amended. Israel...wanted it to contain an explicit demand that armed forces...leave the demilitarized zone. Syria...wanted it to state that the Arabs who had left the demilitarized zone could return to their homes and that the Israeli police had to leave it. Both amendments were withdrawn before the vote. Israel did so after it had been made clear to our representative...that the mention of the parties' undertakings in the original resolution also referred to the withdrawal of armed forces from the area.

Israel agreed to maintain the ceasefire...provided the other side did so too. At the moment the area is quiet and the work of draining the Hula swamp is continuing.

Two issues still cause the Government concern: the safety of the Jewish settlements in the demilitarized zone within Israel, and the fact that Syrian forces or local Arabs armed by Syria are there....

On the whole, considering the complex situation arising from the establishment of the demilitarized zone and the conditions of the Armistice Agreement, the situation has improved considerably in the wake of the recent events. Nevertheless, the Government is involved in ensuring the security of the Jewish settlements in the area, which have increased and expanded since the Armistice Agreement was signed. The Government...is determined to act first of all through the institutions of the U.N. in order to eradicate any illegitimate armed force from the demilitarized zone.

The Hula conflict has caused a stir in the neighboring countries....There is only one reason for this: Syria's desires, which have not been and will not be satisfied....

During the War of Independence, when the aggressive invasion was being repulsed, Israel's forces gained control of extensive areas across the border in both the north and the south. They left those areas voluntarily, because Israel has no designs on them. Syria deserves no prize for participating in the Arab attack on Israel....

Just as Israel has no intention of expanding across the border into Syria's territory, it will defend its land against aggression by Syria....It would be better for all those concerned...to take heed of Israel's firm stand.

Motions for the Agenda: The Conflict with Syria

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I give the floor to the proposer of the motion, MK Landau.

H. Landau (Herut): Mr. Speaker, we are very surprised that the Government has not allowed a debate to be held in the Knesset following the Syrian aggression and the blood that has been shed in the north, so that

those responsible for the events can give a report on them. That is why we have had to demand a debate in this way.

Two years ago the Government of Israel signed an Armistice Agreement with Syria, and in addition to the demilitarization of areas held by the Syrians, our Government agreed to the demilitarization of the Ein Gev and Dardara areas held by Israel. From this podium MK Meridor warned the Government that if the armistice lines passed within Israel's territory they would be a source of conflict and we would have to give in or fight. But the Foreign Minister said that the demilitarization was essential, and that the Syrians sought "peace and stability with Israel." Now, two years later, we see how this assessment has been verified....

The Syrians began their attack...from outside the demilitarized zone, which is also under Israeli sovereignty, and the Foreign Minister makes no mention of that fact...perhaps because he has agreed and given in in advance.

Seven Jewish policemen were murdered by the Syrians and no help was given by the IDF. Instead they turned to that Gentile and asked him to be so kind as to remove the bodies, and this was followed by the bombardment. But for some reason our Government was alarmed by what it had done, and next day the self-justification and self-accusation began, indicating to the Syrians that they could advance and conquer more of our country. That was an opportunity to clean up that area after the murders and the Syrian invasion of our land. It was an opportunity to create a "fait accompli."

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Would you please propose your motion.

...

H. Landau (Herut): I am explaining why it is necessary to discuss it—that is my right. There is a very grave development in that area. After retreating the Syrians advanced again, killed four soldiers and conquered Israeli territory outside the demilitarized zone. Then the Government woke up and the IDF set out to conquer one outpost, in the course of which a great deal of blood was shed. For some reason the Government has concealed this fact.

What is serious is that the Syrian invasion still exists, armed Syrian forces are in the main demilitarized zone, which is under Israeli sovereignty, and the Foreign Minister completely ignores this, regarding the fact that the Syrians have been driven out of Tel-al-Muteila as a great "victory." This worthless policy of retreat cannot be allowed to pass without comment. Nor should the military censor be used to prevent a political debate on recent developments, as the Government has done....Sir, there is nothing to reveal, the world press—

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The censor will protect the security of the state, in accordance with the Government's instructions.

H. Landau (Herut): You think that's the security of the state, but it's the failure of the Government....Let's hear the facts of the matter, so that everyone may know that our policy is one of cowardice. We condemn that policy, because every concession is an admission of failure. Don't evade a debate and don't hide behind supposedly military considerations and the censor's pencil.

Consequently, in view of the fact that our territory has been invaded as a result of inadequate policy...we demand that the entire affair of the Syrian aggression and the behavior of Israel's Government be discussed forthwith.

M. Argov (Chairman, Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee): Distinguished Knesset, the issue upon which the statement made by the Foreign Minister...and the question raised by MK Landau focused has been discussed four times in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, including two meetings during the recess. All the political, military and strategic data were presented to all the members of the Committee. What is the point...of bringing them out in public?...We held an extensive debate about the Armistice Agreements at the time, and the Knesset endorsed the Government's view by an overwhelming majority and rejected the views and warnings you uttered then. What is this feeble attempt to speak about the IDF in this way?...Where is your respect for the blood which has been shed? MK Landau, in speaking of the policemen who were murdered you do not know the details of the affair. Explanations were given and statements made about that too. If it is necessary to continue the debate, I state on behalf of the Committee that the Government has given its assurance that...at every stage of this conflict, whether the developments are political or military, the issue will be discussed in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. The Government has not given in on three basic issues: the work on the Hula continues, the demilitarization remains in effect...and Israel retains its sovereignty over the demilitarized zone.

H. Landau (Herut): Which army is there?

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: You don't know what you're talking about!

M. Argov (Chairman, Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee): I can't argue with you here as I do in the Committee....MKs Landau and Bader are so brave, so patriotic, and I, of course, am dwarfed by them....But I think that you should show some respect for those who went armed with bayonets to drive the Syrians out of Israel. (Shouts from MK Landau.)

Do you really think that I regard you as a hero? How can you say that the affair was hushed up when the matter was brought before the Security Council and ended in armed hostilities?...The political campaign is

still continuing, and how can you demand that we hold a public debate on all those questions? Can we give you all the reasons here?...

Consequently, I propose that the issue be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee for discussion....If members feel that the subject should be discussed by the plenum, they will be free to do so. At this stage it would be both pointless and irresponsible....

I. Bar-Yehuda (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, there is no doubt that we are all united in our feelings of gratitude to and sorrow for the families of those who fell, and we are all united in our anger with...and opposition to the Syrian aggression....The additional information we have received from the people living in and around the demilitarized zone fills us with concern, not only for the fate of the settlements but for the way the entire Government functions. That is why we propose that the Foreign Minister's statement on behalf of the Government, and the debate on the situation and the Government's actions, should be transferred to the Committee, which will decide what should be brought to the plenum.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Because of the interruption in our work the members of the Knesset appear to have forgotten our customary procedures. A motion for the agenda has been put forward and it is possible to propose to discuss it, to transfer it to a committee or to remove it from the agenda. One cannot request the floor.

I. Rokeach (General Zionists): I request the floor in order to respond to the Foreign Minister's statement on behalf of my party group.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will not alter our procedures. MKs should not seek other ways of obtaining the floor.

I. Rokeach (General Zionists): Is there room for a proposal? MK Bernstein wants to make a proposal on our behalf,

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The rules determine which proposals may be put forward with regard to a motion for the agenda. I will not give anyone the floor for other proposals. I now put MK Landau's motion that the subject be debated here and the proposal that the discussion be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to the vote.

(The proposal to debate the matter in the plenum is rejected.)

(The proposal to transfer the discussion to the Committee is adopted.)

Security Council Resolution Regarding the Hula Region

Introduction

The clashes discussed above served as a prologue to a confrontation concerning Israel's major development project in the north—the drainage and reclamation of the Hula swamps, which had been initiated under a concession obtained from the Mandatory Government but abandoned because of the outbreak of hostilities. The Hula project was discussed by the U.N. Security Council, which on 18 May 1951 adopted a resolution noting, inter alia, the request of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization “to cease all operations in the demilitarized zone until such time as an agreement is arranged...”.

Sitting 258 of the First Knesset

29 May 1951 (23 Iyar 5711)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Mr. Speaker, in my statement to the Knesset of 14 May I reported on the military events which had occurred in and around a certain sector of the demilitarized zone in the northern part of the country. I said that the events appeared to have been due to the Hula dispute but in actual fact there was no connection between them and the drainage work and they were evidence of Syria's desires to expand and control the area. I said that the Syrian attack had been repulsed and that the vageness of the Armistice Agreement regarding the demilitarized zone and the conflict of the last few months had led to an amelioration in the situation there from our point of view. I stated that the Security Council resolution calling on both sides to cease hostilities was passed at a meeting which had been arranged prior to the battles in that part of the demilitarized zone, and which had originally been intended to discuss the Hula dispute.

It could have been assumed that the Security Council would confine itself to demanding a ceasefire, in accordance with its resolution of 8 May, and to sending the chief of the U.N. Armistice Commission back to his post so that he could conduct negotiations intended to settle matters and revive the activities of the Armistice Commission. That was the assumption of the members of the Security Council and of senior U.N. officials....But within a few days it transpired that certain governments,

including that of the U.S., thought otherwise...wanting the Security Council to make decisions which should have been left to the...Armistice Commission.

Thus, on May 18, the matter was brought up again in the Security Council, with the intention of reaching a definite decision. Once again, it seemed obvious that the decision would reflect the events which had occurred, and...would not decide matters in advance and prior to any negotiation between the parties. But this was not the case. The resolution which was passed was one-sided, as regards both the past and the future.

The Security Council was provided with detailed factual information about the development of the conflict. It was proved...that on 15 May the Syrians fired on people engaged in the work of draining the Hula swamp. It was also proved that the deterioration at every stage of the conflict since then was due to Syrian aggression....U.N. observers have verified some of our claims concerning the involvement of the Syrian army....

And now, after all the evidence and the discussions...the Security Council resolution focuses solely on—and condemns—our air force's retaliatory bombing of the Syrian position which was responsible for the murder of the seven policemen....A general preamble states only that any military action taken by either side in the demilitarized zone... constitutes an infringement of the Armistice Agreement and the U.N. Charter. Syria is not mentioned at all....

The resolution also states that the Arabs who were transferred from the demilitarized zone by Israel should be permitted to return to their homes. Once again the resolution ignores the fact that these Arabs were moved to the interior of the country at their request. The resolution reminds both sides of their commitment under the U.N. Charter to settle disputes peacefully...and expresses the Security Council's concern at the failure of the governments of both Israel and Syria to advance towards peace...putting both on an equal footing....

The logic which governed the wording of the resolution underlies the directive issued to Israel to obey the instructions of the U.N. and cease drainage work in the demilitarized zone. The legal and moral basis of this clause is extremely dubious. The fact that the Security Council has taken a stand, albeit symbolic, against progress, against an attempt to prevent the waste of land, water and human health, against turning a natural disaster area into a beneficial resource, cannot enhance the importance of that institution....

Ten of the Security Council's eleven members voted in favor of that resolution. Only the U.S.S.R. abstained, as it did in the previous session on the ceasefire....The ten countries which voted for the resolution...have encouraged aggression. The clouds looming on the world horizon make countries impatient in their search for security. Impatience leads to imperfect recollection and impaired vision. The Arab

countries were appeased on the eve of and during the Second World War at the expense of the Jews in their land. This caused the deaths of millions of Jews, sowed bitterness among those Jews who survived...and failed to achieve its objectives....

Just as the policy of appeasement on an international scale did not bring world peace or prevent war, the attempt to revive it on a small scale in the Middle East will not bring concord and the spirit of compromise to the region or impel the Arab countries to seek peace with Israel. On the contrary, it will harden their fanatic resistance to compromise and encourage them to renew their attacks....

The day after the Security Council resolution was passed Damascus informed the world that the Arab League had passed a series of resolutions designed to sow hatred for Israel, intensify the Arab boycott and prepare for war. The Syrian Prime Minister added that "there will never be peace negotiations or discussions with Israel," and also expressed his satisfaction with the Security Council resolution which called upon him to do precisely that. Meanwhile there were troop movements within and between the Arab countries around us on an unprecedented scale....Israel warned the interested parties of the dangers of these developments, and took appropriate security measures.

The overall results of the campaign in the Security Council raise serious problems. The threats made by the leaders of the Arab League during the meeting at Damascus appear to have had an immediate influence on the formulations at Lake Success....Developments such as those we have just witnessed in the Security Council can only strengthen the leaders of the Arab League in their obduracy...encouraging them to use the League to undermine stability and sow hatred throughout the Middle East....

Meanwhile, we must give our full attention to the situation created in the wake of the Security Council resolution. Our dissatisfaction with the injustice of the resolution does not solve our problem. As a country which seeks peace and is loyal to the U.N. as an instrument of peace, we must honor the authority of that institution...to which we have had recourse in the past and may need to have again in the future. Even a resolution which we regard as unjust is morally binding upon us, and we must obey it insofar as it does not harm our vital interests. Thus, the Government has not shrugged off the instruction contained in the resolution regarding temporarily stopping the draining of the Hula swamp in the demilitarized zone.

I have already said, and I say it once again, that the Government of Israel regards the entire demilitarized zone on the Syrian border as an integral part of its territory. Although the Armistice Agreement...does not determine sovereignty over this area...this does not diminish the fact that it belongs to Israel....Syria's objective is to cancel the border

between it and the area formerly under the British Mandate, replacing it with one that passes through the lakes and the Jordan River.

This aim is not a new one. When the border between the areas of the British and French Mandates was being determined, immediately after the First World War...serious disagreements arose between the two allies...concerning who was to control the sources and the upper parts of the Jordan River.

In his book, *The Truth About the Peace Treaties*, Lloyd George wrote about this issue....He made it clear to the French that the waters of Palestine were essential for its existence, and that without them it would be a desert....They had no value whatsoever for Syria, other than as a means of controlling or bargaining with Palestine....

...Although the source of the water coming from Mount Hermon was not within the borders of Mandatory Palestine, Syria has no hope of obtaining from Israel in 1951 what England refused to give its ally, France, in 1920....

...The Government regards it as its right to drain the Hula swamp through the agreed institutions....However, the Government seeks to avoid unnecessary conflicts...and preserve the Armistice...and this obliges us to be patient and act carefully.

...One of the sources of the lack of clarity of the Armistice Agreement lies in the vague definition of what constitutes "civilian life in the demilitarized zone." Another possible point of conflict arises from the fact that isolated spots within that zone are owned by Arabs, among them Syrian citizens. During the discussions in the Security Council...this fact was presented as the sole reason for the problem and the only justification for demanding the temporary cessation of the work. The authors of the resolution stressed that these owners' insistence on unacceptable demands could not prevent the drainage work from going forward, so that if a way of satisfying them could not be found by the head of the U.N. Force the matter would be returned to the Security Council.

According to the Security Council resolution...Israel must cease the drainage work in the demilitarized zone until an agreement regarding its continuation is obtained via the chairman of the U.N. Armistice Commission....Since the Government of Israel has discussed the matter with the Chairman of the Commission, and found itself in agreement with him, it reached the following decision on 22 May...:

First, that the work in the entire demilitarized zone would be halted for one day;

Secondly, that the work would be stopped for short periods in areas which are privately-owned, so that the Chairman of the U.N. Commission could reach an agreement with these owners;

Thirdly, that the work would be resumed in the rest of the demilitarized zone after 24 hours.

The Government announced that whereas it has agreed to cease work on privately-owned land for a while, it reserves its inalienable right to complete the Hula drainage project. Israel has adopted this path in the knowledge that by so doing it is faithfully fulfilling the Security Council resolution regarding the Hula project.

...The demands of the...landowners were always heard, and Israel was always ready to accommodate them, whether by paying fair compensation or by providing them with alternative land. Israel will keep a careful watch on the U.N.'s efforts to resolve the dispute and enable the work to be resumed....

Thus, the clause referring to the Hula in the Security Council resolution has created a problem which remains open....The drainage work is continuing at present, but that is not the only problem confronting us.

There has been a long interruption in the work of the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission, and many issues remain unresolved....The Government of Israel would like the Commission to resume its work...but it has informed the parties concerned that it will not participate in its meetings until Syria accepts the ceasefire imposed by the Security Council on May 8....Israel accepted this ceasefire as soon as it was proposed, on the assumption that Syria would do likewise. Syria ceased hostilities, but refused to accept the ceasefire officially, claiming that irregular forces, not the Syrian army, were involved in the fighting....

Israel refused to accept the imbalance in the status of the two sides regarding the Security Council resolution. At the meeting of the Commission held yesterday the Syrian representatives announced that their government had accepted the ceasefire....

Beyond the day-to-day problems...the question of the future concerns us. Is the situation of continual conflict inevitable?...The recent clashes led to losses on both sides, though there were more on the Syrian side. The border regions are under continual strain....Syria realizes that Israel will not allow its territory or population to be attacked....Syria's unstable regime may benefit from this temporarily, but not indefinitely....

...Israel is ready to maintain the Armistice Agreement indefinitely if need be, and it hopes that, by combining patience with firmness, it will be able to assure its present and future needs.

M. Bentov (Mapam): In his previous statement about the state of affairs in the north of the country, the Foreign Minister told us that Mr. Abba Eban had addressed the Security Council, proving Syria's guilt to it....My friend the Foreign Minister sometimes likes to put matters in a light which is not quite in accordance with reality. On that occasion he was unduly optimistic....Today we heard a far less optimistic report, although the sole conclusion to be drawn from it was that we should be patient and give in. The question is whether this Security Council reso-

lution does not require the Foreign Minister and his colleagues to undertake a more far-reaching reassessment of their policy.

Why was the failure so grave? You had an opportunity to test your foreign policy in almost "laboratory" conditions. We ploughed and the Syrians fired; they killed our people and we retreated; they entered the demilitarized zone and we hung back; we accepted the ceasefire, and in effect agreed that the Syrians should remain in the area. We displayed exaggerated loyalty to the U.N., restricting our army's operative freedom, which cost us lives. The censorship has been trying to conceal this, for internal political reasons.

I sometimes wonder how the Foreign Minister, who only recently told us that MacArthur's operative freedom in Korea should not be limited by the 38th parallel because the other side had disregarded that border, has limited Yadin's operative freedom here by the demilitarization line, even though...the other side has disregarded it....

What was the diplomatic campaign which our Foreign Minister should have conducted in the Security Council? No resolution is passed there unless it is supported by seven members, and all he had to do was to ensure that there would be seven abstentions. The U.S.S.R.'s abstention was assured in advance...but after all the advances to Yugoslavia, and the declarations of friendship with Turkey...our diplomacy did not manage to raise four members, not to vote for us, but to abstain, to be neutral on the question of whether to drain the swamp or encourage highway robbery! In the entire free, democratic world which the Foreign Minister has accepted so enthusiastically, you did not find four countries to support you.

There are serious differences between us in our evaluation of the regimes of the U.S.S.R. and the peoples' democracies, but who can complain about the U.S.S.R.'s stand regarding us in the international arena?...Thanks to Washington we have only half of Jerusalem, and I fear that were it not for the Kremlin we would not have even that....It is said that once the English translation of the Bible influenced the spirit of the English language; now it seems that the Hebrew translations of Senator McCarthy's speeches influence the spirit of the Hebrew language of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and even the members of Herut....

...A year ago a delegation from one of the Eastern countries was here with samples of weapons it was prepared to sell us. The weapons aroused great enthusiasm among our military experts, and large orders were prepared. Then our diplomacy killed the whole affair, because it was hoped that we would receive better, cheaper arms from a Western source....And today those arms go straight from the West to Syria and Iraq, and we have fallen between the two stools.

We are told that it is in the U.S.S.R.'s interests to vote as it does. I'm glad that it is in the U.S.S.R.'s interests not to prevent the drainage of

the Hula swamp. But in what way is it in the interests of Ecuador, that representative of the "free" world, to prevent it?...In contrast to his tune at the time of the debate on Korea, the Foreign Minister no longer sings the U.N.'s praises. Now he talks of "one-sidedness" and..."distortion" because he has experienced them himself. When others experienced them he was not so sensitive....

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Didn't South Korea experience it?

M. Bentov (Mapam): Maybe the Foreign Minister should weigh the American truth in Korea against the American truth in the Hula....Do you really expect us to believe that law, truth and justice prevail in the U.N. over and above the interests of the great imperialist Powers?...Do you think that if Britain lands troops in Iran America will send its soldiers to protect it against the British invader as it did in Korea? You are the victims of your own "double talk."...The aggressor is not the one who attacks but the one whom American policy wishes to declare the aggressor....

...The Foreign Minister has told us that he is walking a tightrope. I think he fell off it long ago...and all his efforts to find favor in the eyes of the Americans are unavailing....The Foreign Minister spoke of the imperfect recollection of those who appease the Arabs. What has happened to his own recollection? Why does he not remember that whenever we are in trouble our American friends turn their backs on us—if they don't stab us in the back? I'm not saying that we have no friends in America. We have many loyal friends there. But the forces which mold U.S. policy have cold-shouldered us since the events of 1948. This was reflected in Marshall's advice to his friend Sharett not to proclaim the state, in the arms embargo aimed at forcing us to stop fighting in the Negev and withdraw from Rafah, and once again now in the Security Council resolution....

...To this very day our foreign policy is based on serving the imperialists and opposing socialism. Yes, opposing socialism, comrade Sharett. I don't say that there are no socialists in the West, but for the moment socialism exists only in the East.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The question is, is that socialism?

M. Bentov (Mapam): I know that as far as you are concerned that is the question. The "socialism" of Chiang Kai-Shek may be closer to you than that of Mao Tse-Tung. My opinion is the opposite. It is true that not all the good is on one side and all the bad on the other, but most of the good is on one side and most of the bad on the other....

My friend the Foreign Minister tells us that...his Government keeps an open mind...nevertheless, I am perfectly prepared to bet that I can predict the way you will vote on any issue in the U.N. That is your freedom. That being the case, what moral right do you have to condemn

regimes which have labored long and hard to build socialism despite a capitalist world which harries them on every side like a pack of hungry wolves? Those regimes are fighting for their existence and fulfilling great ideals. And for great ideals people are prepared to sacrifice much more than in order to maintain the profits of those who exploit them....That is why you are wrong in thinking that you will gain from serving capitalism rather than socialism.

You are repeating the fatal experience which ended in the White Paper. Today there is America instead of England, but the interests are the same: the same oil, the same socialist forces, the same geopolitical situation, the same avarice and the same lack of conscience, as defined by Lord Passfield in his famous phrase that reality supersedes principles.

I remember the neutrality of the British Colonel commanding the tank force near Mishmar HaEmek when Kaukji bombarded the helpless settlement. Now you have the same neutrality in an American version in the Hula!

You explain everything as being due to the need for money. I'm a farmer and I know the value of money, but I also know that money isn't everything. There were times when we all suffered greatly for lack of funds, and yet we managed to build something. And without that spirit which impelled us to work, build and create—even without money—no money would have helped us afterwards. Money can build, but it can also destroy. Nothing is a greater cause of moral degeneracy than the belief that without money you are lost....We could obtain the minimum we need from the Jewish people....What you are teaching them is that Zionism involves loyalty to American policy rather than to the needs of the Jews....Instead of making Zionism the focal point of their lives you are turning them into "Zionists according to Truman's Point Four."...In order to increase our income there was no need to turn Ben-Gurion's parade along Broadway into the funeral cortege of Israel's independence. (From the floor: Shame! How can you say that?) I warn you, friends, not to imitate Faust, who gave his soul for the philosophers' stone, which he thought would bring him redemption. That stone is not called "the dollar." It is made of blood, sweat, hard work, stubbornness, faith and a great deal of independence....

In his program of two years ago the Prime Minister included friendship with all the peace-loving nations, especially the U.S. and the U.S.S.R....But friendship with America does not mean friendship with the Truman doctrine and acceptance of the anti-Soviet policy....When our existence was in the balance almost our only support came from one side, but today, because of your policy, that support is disappearing...and it will not be long before it has vanished completely.

A. Goldrat (Religious Front): Distinguished Knesset...we disagree with the way the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has dealt with certain essential matters....It appears to be overconfident, acting without con-

sulting anyone outside the confines of its circle and refraining from reporting to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee until after the event....On the other hand, there seems to be a certain nervousness in its actions...so that eventually apologies are necessary....It would seem that the failure at the U.N. stems primarily from this overconfidence, this egotism, as if all the affairs of the state have to be arranged by a certain circle, even if that is a large and respected party. Nonetheless, things were misconstrued in this instance....

What I am saying is...that wise and experienced Jews abroad, whose actions helped us in the initial stages of the establishment of the state...should be encouraged to participate in our decision-making processes still now....Our overriding policy should be that of non-alignment, as the Foreign Minister stated in his speech of 4 January 1950....It is evident that there are certain factors which oblige us to favor one side in the world conflict rather than another: a. our democratic way of life and parliamentary system, which resemble those of the West; b. the vital contact with Western, American Jewry, which helps and supports us, as compared with the lack of contact with Soviet Jewry and the hostile attitude towards our enterprise of all the peoples' democracies. Another reason is the fact that the West, not the East, rules this part of the world, and therefore we must at the least not annoy the West. But that is a far cry from blindly pursuing it....

"*C'est le ton qui fait la musique,*" and I think our political tone has been somewhat strident of late....We should take India as our model in this sphere, though our situation is very unlike that of India....We knew that sooner or later we would have to get off the fence and come down firmly on one side or another, but there is no need for us to hasten that process, quite the contrary....Three years ago the State of Israel had two midwives, and we should not reject either of them, or at least not gladly. We must make sure that the other side realizes that we are being forced to do this because of our difficult situation and the need to gather in our exiles....But what does this have to do with the statements we make? Do we have to sow hatred against ourselves everywhere? Do we care how one ruler or another came to power?

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: What are you talking about?

A. Goldrat (Religious Front): I'm talking about a hint the Prime Minister gave about the way a certain ruler came to power. The damage that caused is obvious....At the time of the talks about the Armistice Agreement with Syria many people said that the agreement was risky, but we prefer peace to war, even if this involves taking risks, so we did not oppose the agreement....Now we have witnessed the failure at the U.N....and although the Foreign Minister cannot be regarded as bearing the responsibility for this on his own, he must accept his share of it....In conclusion, this Government should be as careful in issuing

statements as it has been in issuing food and commodities....The less we appear in world headlines the better....

...

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...my position and our foreign policy is not determined according to whether socialism has failed somewhere in the world or not.... Naturally, everyone aspires to peace...and I think it would be better for us to refrain from talking about imperialism; large political blocs have a natural tendency to expand, and this gives rise to all kinds of problems. That is why, as a small and young country, we exaggerate greatly in talking so much about lines and orientations and all those wonderful things, when we should really be trying to find our way between forces which are so much vaster than we are.

...What is serious...is that on a certain issue those Powers which at present have the most influence in the Middle East have joined forces—against us....The question now is whether we can continue with that activity without those acres. And as far as I understand, the issue revolves around only a few acres.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The issue is not how much area is involved but what the topography is.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Those acres are situated in a certain area, but that does not alter the fact that we are continuing with the work of drainage without that area. If it had been technically possible I would have suggested starting from the outset from our side, and seeing what happened....It was no coincidence that the attitude of the Powers was revealed on this issue. It is particularly serious because it occurred when...our Government had adopted a certain stand, and the decision of the American government came as a very unpleasant surprise. It is difficult for us to understand how it came about.

With regard to the question of our foreign policy, I believe...that it is dependent not so much on our talent in this sphere as on the...strength of the state. Though...it is surprising that our Foreign Ministry was surprised by the Security Council resolution....

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Maybe someone else was surprised too.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Maybe. If more than one person was taken aback that is some consolation, but that doesn't sweeten the pill. One of the previous speakers has noted that there is a contrast between the self-confidence generally evinced by the Foreign Ministry and such surprises. But I regard the unity of the Powers against us and in favor of our enemies as constituting a far graver threat....

On this subject we must admit that we have incurred a defeat....I say this because it is generally accepted that...all our successes are

credited to the ruling party and all the failures are inexplicable....I would not be at all surprised if the Prime Minister's current fundraising efforts in the U.S. were not in some way connected with the fact that the U.S. joined those opposing us...because financial and economic weakness give rise to political weakness. I think that those in the U.S. who made that decision know much better than most of the citizens of Israel—and most of the members of the Knesset—how much money we need....To my sorrow, I must assume that all the powers which determine their policy not on the basis of likes and dislikes but on the basis of their assessment of the strength of certain factors in a specific area reached conclusions which are not so good for us. I say this because I am sure that they know these things better than we do. The conclusion we should draw from all this is that we must strengthen our position....

Apart from the fact that these powers have united against us...there is also the bitter fact of the Prime Minister's statement prior to the resolution: "If such a resolution is passed, we will not give in to it"...and so we have reached a situation in which we must either give in to the U.N. or rebel against it. This is not the first time we have rebelled against the U.N. We also rebelled on the issue of Jerusalem, although then our general position was far stronger than it is now. But why make statements which put the state in an awkward position?

A. Govrin (Mapai): Did we rebel or did you?

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I'm talking about the state. I opposed the rebellion and I opposed transferring the Government to Jerusalem, and in this I was the only one in the whole House. If you want to hear it again after two years, you're welcome. In this matter I also opposed my own party; that happens sometimes....I think we should restrict our statements, not only regarding foreign policy.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, the Security Council resolution regarding the Israel-Syria border dispute is but one aspect of American imperialism's campaign against Israel and its independence....This resolution...was passed despite our Government's policy of bondage within the U.N. during the past year, and despite its policy of blind deference...to the U.S. on all international issues....But nevertheless, the imperialist wolf cannot change its nature. It cannot display gratitude even for the blind servility of our Foreign Ministry in the U.N. Its own interests are what govern its decisions....

In his speech the Foreign Minister obscured the entire issue, presenting the conflict as if it were solely between the governments of Israel and Syria. He did not tell us, for example, who has been organizing the border disputes from the very first...he did not tell us that they were "organized" by our American "friends," such as General Reilly and the "Conciliation Commission," which is under the auspices of the U.N. There are border conflicts in other parts of the imperialist-controlled

world too, not only in this region....The Foreign Minister refrained from pointing this out.

He also omitted to tell us why the Americans organize these disputes...but I will tell you in his stead. They organize them because they want to increase the arms race in the Middle East, because they want to help the governments of Israel and Syria justify their huge expenditures on arms and the nation's declining standard of living. Because we claim that Syria is a threat to us, and Syria claims that we are a threat to it, and so on. What they need is an arms race. They need to amass weapons at our expense, at the expense of our food and that of the Syrian people, so that those weapons and the cannon-fodder attached to them can be turned against the U.S.S.R. and against world peace; so that, with the aid of those weapons and our manpower, our country may be turned into a battlefield and the future of our country endangered. The Foreign Minister did not tell us that....

Our Government's share in all this lies in its agreement to "demilitarized zones," which we opposed from the outset, and to the Conciliation Commission, which the Foreign Minister admitted recently at the U.N. has contributed nothing to peace. He did not dare to add that it has contributed greatly to the border disputes....The outcome of all this has been that our Government and Syria's are competing in servility to the Americans....The Prime Minister has announced in the U.S.: "We will stand beside the Western democracies; the flags of Israel and the U.S. will always fly together; if Truman requests it, we will send our army to fight with its customary courage."...

The Foreign Minister also omitted to mention that Ben-Gurion has been negotiating with the American oil companies about handing our oil over to them. For years he concealed the fact that we had rich sources of oil, leaving the drilling rights in the hands of the Americans and the British. He enabled them to control our economy and our resources....At the same time as the Security Council resolution about the border dispute was passed, Israel's representative at the U.N. voted for the embargo against the People's Republic of China....

We are interested in peace between Israel and the neighboring countries, but this is impossible when...the leaders of Israel, Syria and Transjordan serve British-American imperialism, which seeks war and strife and whose motto is "divide and rule." Peace can be attained by an independent, non-aligned policy which fits the needs of peace in the world and the Middle East, and Israel's requirements of independence and security....

...Time does not permit me to list all the occasions on which Israel gave in to hostile forces from without....All I will say is that the American ambassador is the political and economic supervisor of Israel, as you will find out once Ben-Gurion returns from the U.S. Although we talk of our "national independence," Israel's sovereignty is constantly

sullied and its independence and security abandoned. And now, as the elections draw near, you have adopted the slogan, "The Kremlin or Jerusalem," seeking to conceal the tragic fact that you, the Ben-Gurion government, have handed Jerusalem over to Washington.

I would like to ask this Government...how many Israeli divisions have you undertaken to send to the Turkish-Soviet border if your American friends should succeed in starting a war in that part of the world? The Prime Minister discussed this with Truman too. But Jewish youth will not raise its hand against Moscow, which helped us politically, morally and materially to establish and defend the State of Israel. We say to you: Jerusalem will not belong to Truman's Washington, because Jerusalem belongs to us, to the State of Israel. The nation in Israel will break all Ben-Gurion's commitments to the U.S. government.

...

M. Begin (Herut): ...On the fourth of April a Jewish patrol which was advancing on the north road towards El-Hamah was stopped by a Syrian military policeman. He summoned armed Syrian forces and in the ensuing clash seven Jewish policemen were killed, others were wounded and some were taken captive. This was one of the gravest clashes since the establishment of the state. First of all, seven of our sons fell; secondly, they fell in an area which is under Israeli sovereignty, not only for those people who believe—and their belief will be fulfilled—that Hebron and Bethlehem, Shechem and Amman are integral parts of the Jewish homeland, but also for those who accepted the Partition Plan.... Even though that area is termed "demilitarized," it is still under Israeli sovereignty.

We demanded a full report on what happened with that Jewish patrol, and I must lodge a complaint here against the General Staff of our army, which is very dear to me, and against the Government, which is not at all dear to me, at the fact that till now we have not received any report, even though almost two months have passed since then....If the executive organs continue to set the will of the Jewish Legislature at naught we will have to propose establishing a parliamentary commission of inquiry, which will bring the facts before the Knesset as to how those seven young men were killed and whether there was criminal negligence or not. It is not our intention to reproach our army because of a failure or losses; the army is very precious to us, and we know that any army may incur failures or losses.

One fact, however, needs no further investigation, though it requires an answer from those responsible, both the Government and the army. How did it happen that in a clash between our forces and the enemy in our territory there were no reinforcements to back up our men, and we had to ask a French officer who happens to head the Mixed Armistice Commission to be so kind as to interrupt a meeting, arrange a ceasefire and extricate our casualties? Is El-Hamah a copy of Nebi-Daniel? Since

the incident at Nebi-Daniel—when a British officer kindly intervened to save dozens of members of the Hagana, provided they handed their weapons over to the enemy—have we not established our army, have we not founded our state? Do we need a French officer in order to save our army and extricate our casualties? Why were not reinforcements sent, why did we not get our casualties out ourselves and why was the enemy not destroyed? We have had no reply to these questions. That was, indeed, one of the gravest incidents, in military, moral and political terms.

After that incident the Government decided to send our air force to bomb the demilitarized zone around El-Hamah. Our planes dropped a few bombs there, and the next day Mr. Ben-Gurion addressed the Merchants' Association and said two very serious things: first, that two Arab villages had been wiped out, and second...that if the U.N. forbade us to drain the Hula we would disregard its injunction....Mr. Ben-Gurion deserves a severe reprimand from the nation for his ill-considered, indiscreet and imprudent words....

A. Bahir (Mapai): Was what you said five minutes ago discreet and prudent? Do you know the area where the policemen fell?

M. Begin (Herut): I sit on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and I certainly know more than you do.

A. Bahir (Mapai): Have you ever been to El-Hamah and the road to it?

M. Begin (Herut): After Mr. Ben-Gurion's statement there was a great commotion in Washington and other capitals regarding the retaliatory bombing...and our ambassador received a reprimand....We regard this as a grave infringement of our sovereignty. It is impudent for any government to rebuke ours for reacting to the murder of our people.

We want America's friendship. We believe that the American nation is great and free. And the investigation currently being conducted by the American Senate, before which America's leading military men appear humbly and respectfully...proves this. But we do not want to be the satellites of America or any other country....Our Government failed to act as it should have, returning the letter of rebuke to young Mr. McGee and telling him that he had no right to rebuke us for doing something which was our sovereign right.

T. Toubi (Maki): And where would we get dollars from after that?

M. Begin (Herut): You'll have to ask Mr. Ben-Gurion that. The Government accepted the rebuke, bowed its head and bent its back, because just as it has a superiority complex with regard to internal elements, it has an inferiority complex with regard to external ones....Then it instructed Mr. Abba Eban to apologize for the retaliatory bombing.

I demand that Mr. Sharett bring before the Knesset at least one diplomatic precedent when a sovereign state apologized to external factors for actions undertaken on the basis of its government's decision....

I remember that after the police station and the area around El-Hamah was bombed the press associated with you wrote: "Now we have taught those Syrians a lesson....We have taught them to respect our fighting power."...We were not very enthusiastic about that bombing action, as the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee know. It is true that the Syrians are a primitive people upon whom a display of strength may have some effect, but when this is followed by an apology all the psychological impact is lost. By the apology you have said, in effect, that you are sorry for what you did and won't do it again....

That apology, which is as shameful as Mr. Ben-Gurion's resignation is prideful, has caused the Syrians to grow impudent and realize that they can continue to attack Israel. And that which we feared has come about. A few days after you apologized in the Security Council the Syrians seized land within the State of Israel, outside the demilitarized zone, and said "It's ours"! Only then did the army step in and drive the enemy out of its entrenched positions, at the famous battle of Tel-al-Muteila. Naturally, we bow our heads before those who fell there, but this battle should also be investigated. How could it happen that the enemy entrenched itself in Israel's territory, obliging our infantry to storm it and thereby suffer heavy losses?...

Why do you complain because the Security Council condemned your bombardment? You admitted that you did it, while the Syrians admitted nothing. The Syrians killed the policemen, but the Syrian government refused to accept the blame. The Syrians invaded Israel, but their government denied that, claiming that, on the contrary, Israel had invaded Syria. You admitted your deed and apologized for it, so why be surprised at the fact that you were condemned?...Apologizing is merely a form of self-condemnation. In this instance, too, you led the nation from one failure to another, the culmination being the Security Council resolution demanding that we permit the return of the refugees and stop draining the Hula, and condemning us, to boot.

...No sooner had Mr. Ben-Gurion uttered his eloquent pronouncement regarding our refusal to bow to the injunctions of the U.N. to cease the drainage of the Hula than the Government announced that it accepted the U.N. resolution....We are "good children," and as members of the U.N. we will accept its decisions. (From the Mapai benches: The work on the Hula is continuing.) I'll come to that in a minute.

David Hacoheh (Mapai): Were you there? I was.

M. Begin (Herut): You've been stuck in the mud for a long time.

A. Bahir (Mapai): You wouldn't go and drain swamps, that's obvious.

M. Begin (Herut): You said that you wouldn't give in, but you did...And now the head of the U.N. observers, General Reilly, has commanded the work in the Hula to stop. I want to hear a statement from Mr. Sharett as to whether you will obey that injunction or not. I also want to be told whether you will return the refugees or not. If you do, remember that there are other refugees behind them, and this will be the precedent they are waiting for.

Another question is why you handed the whole issue of the drainage of the Hula over to the Security Council? The U.N. Charter contains a clause, Clause 7, which prevents that body from intervening in any country's internal affairs. Draining the Hula, over which Israel has sovereignty, is an internal affair. So why did you hand the authority over to the U.N.?

Finally, I would like to direct a few words to Mr. Sharett, who is in...the unfortunate position of being Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Education simultaneously, a burden which would crush even a better man....You have done the nation an injustice by establishing a concentration camp, and consequently I, a member of the IZL, have to compliment the British, who treated you better than you treat your compatriots. They used Clause 111 against you, but they did not send you to Latrun, and they gave you better food than Dov Yosef has given the free citizens of the country.

(From the floor: Shame! False! You're lying!)

A. Harzfeld (Mapai): MK Raziell-Naor, are you short of food? This outburst is due to a surfeit of food, not to a lack of it! How can someone stand on the podium of the Knesset and talk of being hungry?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: There is no doubt that the speaker was not speaking to the point, and jumped from one subject to another and from one incident to another. The debate is about the Syrian-Israeli conflict, not concentration camps. MK Begin, kindly conclude, your time is up.

M. Begin (Herut): I was speaking to the point, and I will conclude the point I was speaking about. Soon Mr. Ben-Gurion will return, and I assume that he will rebuke you for what you have done in his absence, just as you would like to rebuke him for the bombing and the statement he made about the U.N. Then you will be relieved of the posts of Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, and you will be able to choose between being Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Education. And as long as the allocation of ministries depends on your party, I suggest, for the good of the nation, that you decide to be Minister of Education. (From the floor: What has that got to do with anything?)

Y. Kesse (Mapai): Is that a way to speak to the Acting Prime Minister?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: You shall not speak!

Y. Kesse (Mapai): Clown!

E. Raziell-Naor (Herut): What unseemly language is being used here. Will someone please control MK Kesse.

A. Harzfeld (Mapai): MK Begin has to be answered in his own language. (Uproar on the floor.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: As Speaker, I inform MK Begin that his remarks about security matters and the personal insult he has made will be brought before the House Committee.

M. Begin (Herut): We'll clarify it there. Ruffians, ignoramuses! Why aren't they reprimanded?

...

Y. Harari (Chairman, House Committee): Distinguished Knesset Members, I would like to ask some of the Members of this House, with all of whom I am personally acquainted, whether they think that this form of debate, with its constant interruptions and interjections, adds to the clarity and weight of the discussion of this important, grave and decisive issue? Is this the way the nation's elected representatives attempt to influence one another? I would also like to know whether the object of this debate is to clarify and amend matters or to convey information which should have remained in the Knesset committees?

As for the subject under review, we all knew when the majority in this House approved the Armistice Agreement that this was a special treaty and that what we had achieved was the lesser of the various evils. We did not create the demilitarized zone, nor did we want it. It is the outcome of the U.N.'s weakness at that time...when the Syrian army invaded our country, and afterwards...

As far as we are concerned, there is no doubt that the sovereignty over that area is ours...though from time to time we hear that the sovereignty belongs to other factors...such as the irregular Syrian forces, the local authorities, the Armistice Commission, etc....In the final event, it would seem that sovereignty is in the hands of the Security Council, which has suddenly begun intervening in matters of drainage, thereby exceeding its mandate. The next question will be: will the Security Council also intervene as to which crops should be grown there and whether organic or chemical fertilizer should be used?

In my view there is no doubt that in the matter of the drainage of the Hula the Security Council intervened in something which is not its concern. But if the situation is unclear and the question of sovereignty is left vague, the more we create *faits accomplis* in the area concerned, the more we settle it and cultivate it, the more evident it will be who has sovereignty over it.

I fail to understand all the criticisms levelled by MK Begin regarding certain actions. I somehow thought that bombing was one of the actions favored by him. But he should at least have mentioned the military actions which succeeded, and should have said a few words praising the valor of our soldiers when the Tel-al-Muteila position was captured...eventually leading to the evacuation of Syrian villages deep inside Syria....

And if the Security Council can decide on a ceasefire, and this is accepted by the Syrians, this is solely because of the beating taken by the Syrian army. The Security Council always arranges ceasefires after the Arab armies have been defeated....

What does surprise me is that during the battles at Tel-al-Muteila the public in Israel seemed to be indifferent to the events on the northern border. Before the state was founded every citizen was anxious about every shot that was fired. But now there seems to be an exaggerated confidence in the power of the state, the army and the Government....Our state has grown strong because of the devotion of its citizens, and it still needs their dedication to and identification with the national endeavor....

MK Bentov spoke earlier...criticizing the Foreign Minister for sometimes speaking in an inappropriately aggressive way. What does MK Bentov propose instead of the situation in which we find ourselves? We have not yet forgotten the time when MK Bentov, as a representative of the Israeli public, wandered through the corridors of the U.N., speaking soft words and distributing his pamphlet about the binational solution for Palestine, in opposition to the views of the Zionist Organization whose emissary he was. That is the result of soft words which are appropriate to a man's weakness.

He mentioned the fact that Marshall warned our Foreign Minister...not to establish the State of Israel. I don't know where Marshall took his words of warning from, maybe from MK Bentov's pamphlet...but the Foreign Minister spoke out firmly on behalf of the nation in Israel and Marshall gave in and the State of Israel was established!

...Is there more freedom in the socialist regimes...which Bentov favors than in Ecuador or other countries? Does Soviet Russia spurn oil, and is it only the West which seeks it?...

S. Mikunis (Maki): Russia gets it internally! It doesn't go to Iraq for it!

Y. Harari (Progressives): But when Gromyko's pronouncements set Bentov's plan for developing Palestine and resolving the problem at naught, Bentov is surprised too. And so, surprises are not experienced only by the adherents of one kind of policy...and are not sprung only by the West.

...It is undoubtedly regrettable that at the beginning of the dispute there were actions which I would call both regular and irregular; a word

to the wise is enough....But the military action itself was successful...and for that the army should be congratulated from this podium. The lesson we should learn from the political blow we have received through the U.N. resolution...is that there is no point continuing to speak of an orientation towards the U.N., as has been contended on various occasions here and elsewhere. I should point out that the Foreign Minister has always been careful not to use that expression. But other members of the Government have recommended that approach, and we must take very great care, because it has happened in the past, and may happen again, that our interests and the opinion of the U.N. have not coincided....The U.N. decides on the basis of the views of the majority of its members, and what they regard as just is what suits them best. Consequently, I think that from time to time we should review...our path and our political activities. In my view, the conclusion we should draw from that resolution is that we must adhere more rigorously to our declared policy of non-alignment.

...

N. Yellin-Mor (Fighters): ...Distinguished Knesset, I think that the U.N. resolution...itself is not the most shocking thing—after all, it is no more than a piece of paper; what is shocking is that Mr. Sharett regards his interpretation of the resolution as the height of diplomatic sophistication, proudly stating that we have stopped the work in the few acres which belong to Arabs, but not in the rest of the area. Mr. Sharett is the scion of a long line of diaspora Jews, who learned to circumvent the law rather than oppose it....However, in his disputation with Hovevei Zion and Ussishkin, the spokesman of "Practical Zionism," Herzl put things in their correct proportion, saying: "Even if all of Ykatrinoslav belongs to the Jews, political rule belongs to whoever has sovereignty over the area."

Mr. Sharett has now established a dangerous rule: that our sovereignty extends only over those areas which are owned by Jews.... Of late, the issue of sovereignty has been taken lightly...leading to a defeatist attitude regarding matters which are of the highest importance. After the dispute regarding the 78th kilometer on the Arava road and the compromise reached there, people said: "What are one or two miles of desert worth?" The issue is not whether those miles are desert or fertile land...but whether they are ours or not. If they are ours, no matter how stony or infertile, they are sacred and we must be prepared to give our lives for them. Sovereignty is not an empty phrase or an illusion. Sovereignty exists...for those who are prepared to defend it at all costs....

A second shocking fact is that as a result of the resolution and the Foreign Ministry's actions we have ceased creating policy and are once again an object, something which is traded between the U.S. and the Arab countries. The latter were told: "If you vote for the sanctions

against China we will vote for the condemnation of Israel." This sheds some light on the way Israel voted on the issues of Korea and China.

Furthermore, the truth has been concealed from the nation. This has become a habit....The public learned about the Government's apology to the Security Council for bombing El-Hamah only belatedly and indirectly. Why didn't the Government have the courage to inform the nation of this? The fact that we incurred heavy losses in the fighting in the north has also been concealed from the nation....All these things are well-known abroad...but are concealed from the public here by means of the Emergency Regulations....The whole world knows that the embargo on the sale of arms to Israel by the West has recently been renewed...but the Israeli public does not....

Concealing the truth, withholding information by means of the censor, never helps those concerned....It leads to demoralization through the spread of rumors and the creation of a gulf between the Government and the public. In the end officials conceal the truth from their superiors, until one day the Government is surprised and its representatives faint in the U.N....

Another shocking fact has been revealed in this debate. Only two years ago neutrality and non-alignment were spoken of here, and when the U.S. exerted pressure regarding the borders and returning the refugees the representatives of Mapai still had the courage to resist, insisting that our Foreign Ministry should remain independent....To our regret, in the last two years Mapai has progressed towards servitude to American policy; so much so, in fact, that it said nothing to oppose the U.S.'s attempt to cause us harm in a crucial area....

The restraint of the last ten or fifteen years, reflected in Mr. Sharett's claim that our position should "combine patience with firmness," is also worrying....The Foreign Ministry's approach seems to combine external weakness with a display of internal firmness.

...There is a close connection between the freedom of the individual, which has often been mentioned in this House during the last two weeks, and the liberty of the nation and the homeland. I warn the Government that its attempts to restrict our independence will come to naught...even if you set up prisons and send people to the gallows, for there are youngsters in this country who will fight for the independence of the Jewish homeland, no matter what the price!

...
The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: This debate has covered many and diverse subjects, not all of them connected with the subject under review....This is neither the time nor the place to respond to all of them, nor will I stoop to reply to the demagoguery which has been voiced here in order to impress the confused masses outside this House....

MK Bentov's...contention that a certain transaction did not come to fruition for political reasons is false, but I cannot go into the details of it in a public forum....MK Bentov recommended that we endeavor to obtain increased funds from U.S. Jewry....If Mapam wishes to be honest about this it should tell the Americans the same things it tells us....As long as it adopts one line in Israel and another in encountering the Jews of America we cannot take any advice it may proffer....Furthermore, there is absolutely no basis for his accusation that we are in bondage to America as long as we request aid from it....We receive aid from the U.S. because public opinion there favors us and despite the fact that there are elements there which seek to deprive us of it....

In my present capacity, which I gather causes MK Begin considerable annoyance, and which will apparently continue to do so for some time...it is difficult for me to go into details on certain matters which have been raised here....First of all, we did not turn away any offers of help, quite the contrary....At the beginning of 1948, when the attitude of the U.S. Administration was turning against us, despite all our efforts to raise support and obtain a sympathetic hearing...we suffered a far more serious blow than we have now as a result of the U.N. resolution. Then we had no state, and because of the Administration's 180 degree turn we were confronted once again with trusteeships and mandates, and all our efforts and influence were to no avail....And yet we overcame that situation, by virtue of our own strength, such as it was, and certain influences. Thus, this problem could not so easily be resolved by mobilizing American Jewry, as has been claimed here....

I would like to point out that we do sometimes manage to prevent matters turning against us...but we do not always publish this...for various reasons....We must face the fact that this dispute will not be over quickly, just as the draining of the Hula will not be completed quickly....It will involve long drawnout discussions in international forums...and the nation will simply have to be patient....I would also like to point out that none of those who participated in the debate gave the Government any advice as to what to do now....

T. Toubi (Maki): Preserve our independence!

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The Government reported on a certain situation to the Knesset....No one suggested that the Government adopt a different approach to the one it has taken. That is an important and positive outcome of this debate....

Today we heard that the head of the U.N. Force, General Reilly, informed the Security Council that there had been an oral misunderstanding between him and the Government of Israel, namely, between him and me...that the cessation of work in areas not under dispute in the demilitarized zone and its resumption 24 hours later was the result of that misunderstanding, and that he had asked us to stop work there until

the matter had been settled....I would like to point out that there may be disagreements between the head of the U.N. Force and us, and one side or another may even change its mind, but I hope that there will be no argument between us regarding the facts and the truth.

The truth is that before the Government's decision of last week we met with the head of the U.N. Force and heard his views about resolving the situation. There was no doubt in our minds that he regarded our decision favorably...and there were no objections to the written record....We are prepared to clarify any misunderstanding which may have arisen between us and the head of the U.N. Force...for we adhere to our policy of cooperating with the U.N. and respecting its resolutions.

General Reilly's report upholds our interpretation of the U.N. resolution, namely, that the cessation of work on our part is intended to be temporary, not permanent, so that matters may be settled....General Reilly agrees with us that this is a matter between Israel and the Chairman of the Armistice Commission and does not concern Syria....

Thus, our position remains, as it was before, to insist on our rights, to implement them in full without undermining the authority of the U.N. and to adopt a position combining firmness with patience, thereby concluding the large settlement undertaking we have finally begun to implement in the north of our country.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We now come to the conclusion of the debate on the Hula....Will the proposers of the resolutions kindly read them out.

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Mapam's proposal reads as follows:

The Knesset regards the U.N. resolution concerning the drainage of the Hula as an infringement of Israel's sovereignty over its land, an attempt to impede the development of the country, an arbitrary breach of the conditions of the Armistice Agreement and another expression of the imperialist policy of rewarding aggression and encouraging war-mongers. The Knesset asks the Government to renew the work of draining the Hula without regard to pressure from U.N. representatives.

In view of the U.N. resolution and General Reilly's orders to stop the public work of draining the Hula in the area under Israel's sovereignty, the Knesset condemns the Government's policy of servitude to U.S. politics as reflected...in its capitulation to the pressure of those in the U.N. who would appease the Arab countries and its decision to cease the drainage work. The Knesset asks the Government to abandon this policy, which is not in the interests of the state and the nation, to leave the line of bondage and adaptation to the interests of forces which are hostile to every movement of liberation,

progress and independence, and to base Israel's policy on the foundations of non-alignment and independence.

The Knesset lauds the stand of the border settlements, the army and the police in confronting the aggression on the Syrian border and extends its condolences to the bereaved families. In view of the armed clashes on the Syrian border the Knesset asks the Government to reexamine the ways the border settlements are defended.

E. Razieli-Naor (Herut): The Herut proposal reads as follows:

No.1: The Knesset asks the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee to investigate the factors which led to the Government's failure in its policy in the Security Council regarding the conflict with Syria.

No. 2: The Knesset asks the Government not to accept any orders intended to interrupt or stop the drainage of the Hula, which is totally under Israel's sovereignty.

No. 3: Since the existence and activity of the U.N.'s supervisory institutions harms Israel's sovereignty, the Knesset asks the Government to take the appropriate steps to free the State of Israel from alien supervision.

We have asked the Speaker to put each proposal to the vote separately.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists):

"1. The Knesset affirms that the Government's policy on the issue of the border conflict with Syria has led to failures which damage Israel's international position severely.

"2. The Knesset affirms that the Government has conducted the crucial stages of the policy associated with foreign elements without any prior consultation with the Knesset or its Foreign Affairs Committee, and demands that in future it regard such consultation as obligatory."

M. Argov (Mapai): The proposal of Mapai and the Progressive Party is as follows: "The Knesset expresses its regret at the Security Council resolution and its support for the Government's insistence on Israel's sovereignty over the demilitarized zone and the right to implement the plan to drain the Hula fully."

M. Wilner (Maki): Maki's proposal is as follows:

The Knesset views the bloody clash on the Syria-Israel border as having been organized by American imperialists and their agents in the Middle East in order to justify and intensify the arms race between Israel and the Arab countries, and to prepare these countries as a military base for aggression in the third world war which the British and American war-mongers are preparing against the U.S.S.R. and world peace.

The prime aim of organizing border conflicts is to distract world opinion from the construction of the military bases for the U.S. army, in both Syria and Israel.

The second aim of organizing border conflicts by the British and American imperialists through their Conciliation Commission observers is, as has been proved by the resolution of the American-British majority in the Security Council, to give the British and U.S. governments an opportunity to increase the pressure on Israel and Syria, expand the authority of the American observers-spies on the borders and heighten their involvement in the affairs of both Israel and Syria.

The organizers of the bloody border clashes are interested in creating an atmosphere of war in this part of the world, in preventing the signing of anti-imperialist peace treaties between Israel and its neighbors and in blocking the establishment of a united front of the peoples of the Middle East for the defense of peace and the assurance of true independence.

Consequently, the Knesset resolves:

1. To cease supporting the existence of the demilitarized zones within Israel, since these constitute a perpetual source of bloody clashes and provide a basis for spying and intervention for American "observers." The continued existence of the demilitarized zones is against the interests of peace and security of both Israel and Syria.

2. To cease recognizing the Conciliation Commission and the U.S. observers, which are interested in organizing border clashes from time to time in order to justify their existence and their intervention. The Government of Israel must act to bring about the dissolution of the meddling Conciliation Commission and the observers.

3. The Knesset condemns the decision of the Government, which gives in to the decision of the American-British majority in the Security Council intended to strengthen the rule of the American spies on the borders.

The security of Israel demands orientation towards the forces of peace in the world and the Arab countries, who are our natural allies in the struggle for peace and national independence.

...

The Vote

| | |
|---|----|
| In favor of the proposal of Mapai and the Progressive Party | 51 |
| Against | 23 |

(The resolution is adopted.)

(All the other proposals are voted on and defeated.)

Conclusion of the First Knesset

Introduction

Because of a cabinet crisis involving the education of immigrant children, which caused the Religious Front to break away from the Coalition, the First Knesset decided to dissolve itself before the end of its term, and elections were held on 30 July 1951. On 20 August 1951, a few hours before the Second Knesset convened for its first sitting, the First Knesset met once more to formally wind up its activities.

Sitting 272 of the First Knesset

20 August 1951 (18 Av 5711)
Knesset Building, Jerusalem

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Dear and distinguished Knesset Members, in another five hours the Second Knesset will begin, and this sitting is the concluding one of Israel's First Knesset. Once this sitting is over the First Knesset will become part of Israel's history....It will be judged by future generations, but will always be distinguished by having been something new in the life of the Jewish people, following the establishment of the state and the Jewish Legislature.

Future historians...may find that this House has its roots in that which existed in the most distant past, when the nation dwelt in its land, and in the ensuing periods of the various dispersions. They may well bear in mind glorious chapters in the leadership of the nation...the Great Knesset and the Sanhedrin, the Councils of the Four Lands and, above all, the Zionist Congress....From the time of the return to Zion they will undoubtedly bear in mind the Zionist Organization, starting with the Assembly of Zichron Ya'akov of 1902 and, above all, the Representative Assembly which existed throughout the period of the Mandate until the War of Independence and the reestablishment of the State of Israel.

The historical precedents and parallels...do not detract from the primacy of the First Knesset, however, since there has never yet been an independent Legislature consisting of the democratically-elected representatives of the people with the power to formulate and impose laws. When we embarked on the work of the Legislature...we lacked experience but possessed knowledge and learning. We knew full well that this Knesset symbolized the state and its independence, constituting something for which all the generations of Zionists ever since the Congress at Basle...had yearned. We knew that this Knesset was the outcome of the efforts of the nation's finest pioneers after the time when the first Jews moved out of the Old City of Jerusalem and founded Petah

Tikva....We knew that the Knesset was built with the blood of our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, who liberated our nation and commanded us by their deaths to preserve Israel's honor and independence. We knew that the Knesset must evince the nation's desire to live honorably and freely, combining its great past with the present....All this stood before us in molding the basis and character of Israel's Legislature.

The term of the First Knesset was not an easy one. It arose amid the enthusiasm of our independence, but also in a time of material hardship, when streams of immigrants were flocking to our shores...when the outside world was confused and divided and when we were preoccupied with defending Israel's borders, status and rights....The nation's elected representatives brought to the Knesset a burning desire for the existence of the state and the ingathering of the exiles together with fierce differences of opinion regarding the ways in which the country should develop....

The work of the Knesset was conducted in full view of the public, for good or for bad. There were ups and downs...but the existence of Israel's Knesset became an incontrovertible fact. This was borne out by the elections for the Second Knesset and the exemplary work of the Central Elections Committee on Election Day, 30 July 1951.

This Knesset existed for two years and seven months, failing to serve its full term. During this brief period we managed to establish the Knesset's pattern of work, discuss the Government's daily activities...amend laws which were alien in origin and begin establishing our own legislation. We set up the Knesset's institutions and founded Israel's parliamentary procedures....

This Knesset comprised people of diverse views and tendencies, who opposed one another ideologically and had never met and worked together before....The joint efforts undertaken in this House have brought people together and established parliamentary friendships despite the divergencies in Members' views....

Although our term was not long, we did our utmost so that our work should reflect the will of the people...and we feel we have achieved that aim....We part from the First Knesset with a deep sense of affection for it, gratitude for the nation which enabled us to be among its founders and congratulations for the Second Knesset, which will make its own contribution. May the people of Israel dwell safely in its land....

The Deputy Speaker, N. Nir-Rafalkes: Distinguished Knesset, at the conclusion of our two and a half years' work I do not wish to go into details about what we have done, what laws we have passed, and which issues we have discussed, because the value of the First Knesset lies in its very existence and orderly operation.

For two thousand years our nation's sole parliamentary experience was the suffering it endured as a result of hostile laws passed by alien

parliaments throughout the diaspora...but now, within the space of three short years, we have managed to establish a stable parliamentary regime in our country. We learned a lot from the experience of other countries, but we always preserved a critical attitude to their parliamentary practices, never imitating them blindly and always examining carefully what was appropriate for our country and our nation. This was no easy task. In the twentieth century voluntary organizations...such as the Zionist Organization arose within our nation to fulfill various needs...displaying various bad qualities, including resentment of others and the search for power....These, together with our inexperience, have worked against us, giving rise to difficulties at the beginning of our parliamentary path.

I remember our first steps in the Provisional Council of State. For two months we fought over something which is self-evident today, namely, that the Prime Minister cannot be Chairman of the Council; six months passed before we realized that the office of Secretary to the Cabinet cannot be identical with that of Secretary to the Council. We thought that the reading of a law should be taken literally, and for an hour and a half we read out the Law of Military Trials, in the absence of most of the Members of the Council. By comparing our situation three years ago with that of today we realize what a long way we have come in that period....We have created a parliamentary tradition of which we may be proud...with good working relations between the members of the various party groups....

...We have not yet, however, imbued the citizens of Israel, and particularly government clerks, with a sense of respect for the country's supreme institution, the Legislature....Correct relations have not yet been established between the Cabinet and the Knesset. Whereas the procedural aspect of parliamentary questions has been settled, the answers given by most Ministers are unsatisfactory, and these questions have less effect on our daily life than at the time of the Provisional Council. We have also found a procedural solution for motions for the agenda, but this is rarely used. We did not give the state the Law of Citizenship, although thousands of residents are eagerly awaiting it, nor did we formulate a constitution....

...I was chosen Deputy Speaker of the Knesset on 15 February 1949, before the Government was formed. My party did not join the Coalition, and I remained together with it in the Opposition. As Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and a member of an Opposition party I had to make my way between the Scylla of loyalty to my party and the Charybdis of loyalty to the Knesset. I have done my best to disappoint neither one nor the other, attempting to help in creating appropriate procedures in the Knesset as well as in developing an efficient and polite administration. I have tried not to be haughty. *Feci quod potui, faciant meliora potentes.*

We conclude our work and I take my leave of you...together with many members of the First Knesset who will not participate in the Second Knesset. I hope that the Second Knesset will follow in the footsteps of the First, and will attempt to amend the things we were unable to. We leave the Second Knesset a stock of bills which have been tabled and the experience we have acquired, in the hope that it will use them for the good of the state and its citizens. I trust that the Second Knesset will give the State of Israel a constitution. Farewell, Members of the First Knesset, and may God bless the Second Knesset.

The Deputy Speaker, J. Burg: As one of the one hundred and twenty members of the First Knesset elected by the nation, and one of the three Knesset Members chosen by the elected representatives, I wish to add my words of farewell to those of the previous speakers on this festive occasion.

The First Knesset lasted 920 days....During this period, which may have been brief in measured time but was great in its tasks, while the Cold War threatened the stability of the world and an uneasy peace prevailed on our borders, we did not desist for one moment from the sacred work of the ingathering of the exiles. The state accepted the difficulties of absorbing the immigrants with love, and during this time a new immigrant reached our shores every two and a half minutes, each wave of immigration bringing its own problems and crises.

It was inevitable that this great movement of people should affect the sittings of this Legislature, which is very sensitive to the problems of the Executive....If the debates held here were not always harmonious...they nevertheless combined to produce the chord known as the "First Knesset." The existence of different parties is the basis of parliamentary life...as is the struggle between the actual and the desired...and in this sense all the one hundred and twenty Members of the First Knesset have joined to serve a shared ideal—the life of a free nation in its state....Thus, this Knesset has known many historic moments of elevation to a high level of responsibility....

We began to learn how to think in "etatist" terms at the Zionist Congresses, which reflected the implementation of the nation's age-old Zionist aspirations. We have taken an important step forward by establishing this platform, enabling the nation that dwells in Zion to express itself....It was not easy for the First Knesset to find the golden mean between argumentativeness and the pressing needs of the hour. Making use of freedom of speech can endanger freedom itself. The Knesset took the middle road, leaving theory to the plenum and practice to the committees, illustrating the saying of Rabbi Elazar the son of Azariah: "A person who is wiser in thought than in deeds is like a tree with many branches but few roots, which can be easily overturned by the wind. Whereas a person who is wiser in deeds than in thought is like a tree with few branches and many roots, which cannot be moved by even the

strongest wind." The Knesset is firm and upright, having become a true institution.

I rejoice that I have been able to be among the crew and the navigators of this ship of the First Knesset, which has known both tempests and calms. A good spirit of true cooperation has enabled us, the Members of the Praesidium, to do our work with mutual understanding and a shared goal of enhancing the democratic regime through that delicate instrument known as the "parliament." We have been helped in this by a dedicated and understanding secretarial staff, which has created an efficient yet economical administration from virtually nothing. Our thanks go out to all of them, from those involved in taking the minutes of the sittings to those producing the *Knesset Record*, from the stewards to the secretaries.

The term of the First Knesset has ended, but the work is not completed. There is still a long way to go, and the Knesset of Israel still needs the love of the God of Israel. Therefore, I conclude with the words of the prayer traditionally uttered towards the conclusion of the sacred service on the Day of Atonement: "Open the gate for us at the time of the closing of the gate."

A.H. Sha'ag (Religious Front): Distinguished Knesset, I gladly accepted the invitation of the Praesidium of the First Knesset to speak on behalf of the various Members at the closing sitting, bidding the First Knesset farewell and welcoming the Second Knesset....

I venture to say on behalf of us all that we will wear the badge of the First Knesset with pride....History will judge our achievements in due course, and it is not for us here and now to assess the value of our actions....

In brief, it can be said that the First Knesset...can be justly proud of what it has done in its legislation in the fields of politics, economics, security, education and culture, immigration and absorption. These laws are milestones and foundation stones in our national endeavor....In my view two laws are of outstanding importance, the Law of Return...and the decision, made after an extensive debate, to transfer the Government and the Knesset to Jerusalem, our holy city. This last, in effect, made Jerusalem the capital of our country. The First Knesset also created the framework of the Knesset, the Jewish parliament, determining procedures and practices which do it credit....The Jewish parliament should follow the rule "silence is golden," and reduce the amount of talking...and I would like to praise not those members who spoke a great deal but those who spoke little....Much of the credit for the Knesset's successful functioning must go to its Praesidium, with our distinguished Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak, at its head....On many occasions he was our guide and teacher, not necessarily by means of his gavel...but by finding the right words to soothe tempers and by pouring oil on troubled waters....He also remained above party interests,

although this was sometimes difficult for him, and I occasionally heard the different tones of voice he used when putting motions to the vote....

I will conclude by hoping that the Second Knesset will continue along the path of the First Knesset, but will avoid its one great mistake, namely, failing to complete its term....

When the Temple existed the teams of workers would change each Sabbath, and the outgoing team would say to the incoming one: "May He who dwells in this House cause love and friendship, peace and collegiality to reign among you."...And I would like to say to the Members of the Second Knesset: May He who gave His name to Jerusalem, the holy city, cause love and friendship, peace and collegiality to reign among you for the common cause of building the state and gathering its scattered sons together within it.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Members, at this moment, as we conclude the First Knesset, let us remember two members who are with us no longer, one of the founders of the state, David Remez, and the emissary of the Yemenite community, Abraham Tabib, both of whom worked with us and made their contribution to the honor of the Knesset and the State of Israel.

...In the work of the First Knesset we have attained the friendship and respect of the family of parliaments throughout the world....Permit me to read the cable sent by the oldest parliament, that of Iceland, which has existed for a thousand years, to ours when it was perhaps one thousand hours old: "The President of the oldest House congratulates the youngest House."

...I would also like to thank all the employees of this House, the secretaries, the workers in the plenum and in the offices, and everyone who worked not only diligently and loyally but also enthusiastically and out of affection for this institution. They have contributed to establishing the Knesset. I would also like to thank the police force, which preserved the honor of this House and maintained order outside it....I express my gratitude to the press corps, which was sometimes annoyed by the Speaker and his deputies, but whose articles and remarks were always imbued with a sense of respect for the state, and who added to the honor of the state and the Knesset, the state's Legislature.

I thank all the Members of the House for the polite and friendly spirit in which they worked here. We all worked out of a sense of reverence for the will of the people, and in the hope that the Jewish nation would renew its national life with honor and distinction. We leave this House with a deep sense of affection, and will wear the badge of the First Knesset with pride. Let us all go out to welcome the Second Knesset.

The First Knesset is concluded.

(The sitting ended with the national anthem.)