

Volume 3

MAJOR KNESSET DEBATES,
1948-1981

Second Knesset 1951-1955

Third Knesset 1955-1959

Edited by
Netanel Lorch

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and Dafna.*

May they grow up, and understand.



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SECOND KNESSET 1951–1955

Reparations from Germany

Introduction

Since the State of Israel came into existence only several years after the end of World War II, its material claims against Germany, and those of the Jews of occupied Europe, victims of the Holocaust and their survivors, were dealt with in an offhand manner by the Allies; one—the Soviet Union—did not reply at all to Israel's representations. When Chancellor Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the FRG, declared in September 1951 that he considered it as an "obligation of the German people to make compensation to the Jews," World Jewry—and Israel—were faced with the dilemma of either rejecting the offer, or establishing direct contact with the Government of the FRG in order to reach an agreement, in spite of the revulsion against any contact with Germany and the acceptance of "blood money." (The DDR, consistently considering itself as a victim rather than an heir to the perpetrators of Nazi atrocities, never considered the question of reparations.)

The issue gave rise to one of the most dramatic, soul-searching and heated debates in the Knesset, which took place against the background of a violent demonstration in the immediate proximity to the building in which stones were thrown into the Knesset itself.

Sitting 38 of the Second Knesset

7 January 1952 (9 Tevet 5712)

Prime Minister's Statement

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: Mr. Chairman, honorable Members of the Knesset, as the members of the First Knesset will recall, the Government of Israel submitted a note on 6 January 1951 to the governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France, regarding Germany's obligation in respect to compensation and the restoration of property to the Jews. That note referred to payments and restitution owed to individual Jews, and it was stated that the satisfaction of all of these individual claims would not in any way absolve the German people of its heavy obligation to the Jewish people for the theft of property and possessions belonging to Jews throughout Europe, who were driven to the slaughter and who left no heirs.

Accordingly, the Government presented a second claim to these same four powers on 12 March 1951 in a formal sense unprecedented in the realm of international relations. In this note the Government of Is-

rael demanded the imposition of a levy upon Germany, East and West, in the amount of \$1.5 billion, a figure which represents only part of the plundered Jewish property. This claim was made on the basis of the perception that the German nation in its entirety bears the responsibility for the murder and plunder of the Jewish people in Europe, and that this responsibility falls indiscriminately upon both segments of modern-day Germany. It was further noted that the State of Israel has both the right and the obligation to demand satisfaction in the name of the millions who were slaughtered, as well as to make claims regarding their rights and property, as the sole sovereign manifestation of that nation, membership in which was the sole reason why millions of people were killed and cremated in ovens and in gas chambers, and their property confiscated, their goods plundered.

The amount of the claim was determined according to two basic assumptions: 1) that it is our moral obligation to retrieve as much as possible of the stolen property of those Jews who left no heirs, and to recover from the murderers and their successors both in East and West Germany the inheritance of Israel, lest the murderer also be the beneficiary; 2) that the State of Israel, with the aid of Jewish communities throughout the world, has taken upon itself the obligation of absorbing the survivors of the Holocaust and rehabilitating them in this country, and for that purpose it must salvage the stolen Jewish property presently held by the Germans.

The note states that this claim has no precedent, in that the State of Israel did not exist at the time of the Holocaust and did not have the privilege of fighting against Nazi Germany with its own army, regardless of the fact that thousands of its sons volunteered for Jewish units—foremost among them, the Jewish Brigade—all of which took part in the defeat of Hitler's regime, alongside the Allied armies. It was likewise noted that there is no precedent for the enormity of the slaughter and plunder perpetrated against the Jews of Europe by the German people under Hitler.

More than 6 million Jews were killed by torture, starvation, mass murder and mass suffocation. Many were burned and buried alive; they took no pity upon the old, the women or the children, and infants were snatched from their mothers' arms and thrown into the furnaces. Prior to this systematic mass murder as well as coincidental with it, there was the plundering, also on a vast unprecedented scale. According to a very cautious estimation during the Hitler period, the Germans plundered Jewish property worth approximately 6 billion dollars in Germany proper and in the other countries under Nazi rule. And there are estimates which are higher yet.

A crime as great and awful as this cannot be atoned for by any material compensation. No payment, no matter how large, can compensate

for the loss of human life or for the suffering and agony of men, women and children, old people and infants.

Moreover, the German people, both in the East and in the West, continued to enjoy the fruits of the slaughter, the spoils plundered from the murdered Jews, even after the defeat of Hitler.

Palestine played a decisive role in the absorption of refugees from Germany after the outbreak of Nazi persecutions in 1933 and well before the establishment of the State of Israel. During the [Second World] War, the men of the Jewish Brigade were the first Jews to make contact with the survivors in the concentration camps and in the death camps of Germany and Central Europe, to encourage them and to bring them the message of the creative and fighting homeland; with the establishment of the State of Israel, it opened its gates to all the wanderers and survivors from the lands of death, and hundreds of thousands have reached this haven of refuge in an independent Israel in the last two or three years.

Most of the survivors brought only their souls with them as all of their possessions had been stolen. The Government of Israel took upon itself a monumental effort, itself unprecedented in recent history and possibly even in earlier generations: to absorb and rehabilitate hundreds of thousands of immigrants possessing nothing more than their skins, over a short period of time within a young, poor and besieged state. The burden which this large influx of people bereft of capital places upon the state is beyond its capacity and the Jewish communities in the free world considered it their responsibility to participate in this great undertaking, but with it all, the burden upon the state is a heavy one.

The government of Israel has stipulated a figure of \$1.5 billion which it claims for Israel from both parts of Germany as this is the minimum amount needed for the absorption and rehabilitation of the half a million immigrants from the countries under Nazi rule, even though, according to the documented estimation of authorities on the subject, the theft was many times greater.

Payments of these reparations does not absolve the German authorities, either in the West or in the East, from the responsibility of paying that which is due, either to individual Jews living among us or to their legitimate heirs, for that which was plundered. These reparations will be claimed by the representatives of world Jewry.

As I have stated, this note was sent to the four occupying powers: the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France and referred to both parts of modern Germany, the western and the eastern.

To date, we have not received any response from the Soviet Union nor are we aware of any response on the part of East Germany. We have received an official reply from the other three powers, all three phrased

almost identically. The replies were formulated on 5 July 1951 about four months after our note was submitted.

The American Government, in its note to the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, writes that the Government of Israel must certainly be aware of the fact that the heinous crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazi regime in the planned destruction and despoiling of masses of Jews in Europe have aroused in the American people and in its government revulsion and resentment.

The Government of Israel, it continues, must also be aware of the fact that since the beginning of the German conquest, it has been the determined policy of the American Government to bring to justice all those responsible for the planning and execution of this crime and to rectify the injustice done to the victims of Nazi persecution to the greatest possible extent. Furthermore, the U.S. Government notes that it granted asylum to thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazi persecution during the war and that after the war, special laws were enacted which opened the gates to many who remained bereft and empty-handed as a result of the war and the Nazi persecution. It also made considerable contributions, along with Great Britain and France, to the various refugee organizations and among them to the organization known as IRO, which settled refugees in Israel.

While the Jewish victims of the Nazis—the United States note continues—were not represented at the Claims Conference in Paris, a sum of \$25,000,000 was set aside out of German funds deposited in neutral countries for the rehabilitation of the victims of the Nazis and it was acknowledged at the time that most of the latter were Jews. It was thus decided that 90 percent of this amount, as well as all the property in respect to which there were no heirs in these countries, would be used on behalf of these victims among the Jews. The U.S. Government does not believe that these reparations made to Jewish refugees were sufficient compensation for their suffering. The United States Government agrees with the Israel Government that no material compensation could suffice. However, the United States Government notes that other nations which suffered greatly from the Nazi blows have no chance of receiving payments which would compensate them to any considerable degree. The main thrust of the note, and of the notes of the other two countries—Great Britain and France—as well, is that in light of certain agreements to which the United States is party, it is not entitled to demand additional compensation from Germany at this time, neither for itself nor for others.

Both Great Britain and France responded in this same spirit.

In all truth, it must be said that this formal response did not reflect the full, definitive position taken by these three countries. In these countries, there is not only the government, there is also unfettered public opinion capable of influencing both its own government and other

nations as well. There are also free Jewish communities in these countries whose voice, pain and demands, while not being decisive, do carry considerable weight. Public opinion in these countries, both general and Jewish, was not satisfied with a formalistic stance and Platonic expressions of sympathy on the part of their governments, but rather demanded the righting of the injustice in so far as possible, at least in respect to the return of the loot. This pressure of public opinion led the Prime Minister of West Germany to declare, at the end of September 1951, that the atrocities committed against the Jews during the Nazi regime obligate the German people to make compensation to the Jewish people, which declaration was then approved by the West German Parliament.

At the end of October 1951, through the initiative of the Jewish Agency, a conference of Jewish organizations from the United States, Canada, South Africa, South America, the countries of Western Europe and Australia, as well as such worldwide Jewish organizations as the Jewish Agency, Agudat Yisrael, the World Jewish Congress, etc. was held in New York to discuss the matter of Jewry's claim against Germany. In a unanimous decision, the [Claims] Conference in fact identified with the Israeli Government's note to the four powers. The Conference likewise declared that there could be no atonement or material compensation for the extent and cruelty of the Nazi regime relative to the Jews. No reparations, no matter how large they might be, could void the annihilation of millions of Jews and the destruction of their cultural assets. At the same time, the Conference of the Jewish People decided to demand at least the return of plundered Jewish property, compensation to the victims of persecution, their heirs and their descendants and the promise of reparations for the rehabilitation of the dispossessed, as demanded by the Government of Israel in its note of 12 March 1951.

The Conference declared that the declaration of the West German Prime Minister would be judged and assessed in the light of actions taken by his government, and according to the speed and scope of their execution. It expressed its full and firm support for the claims of the Government of Israel for the payment of \$1.5 billion by East and West Germany. It demanded the satisfaction of the rest of the Jewish claims against Germany, including the claims of Jewish individuals and organizations.

In consequence of the pressure created by this conference, and through the friendly intervention of government circles in Great Britain and other countries, the Prime Minister in Bonn, West Germany, undertook in writing, several weeks ago, in the name of his government, to discuss reparations payments with the State of Israel and representatives of world Jewry, based upon the claims made by the State of Israel in its note of 12 March 1951.

The Government of Israel, as well as the entire Jewish people, holds the German people responsible for the atrocities committed during the Second World War against European Jewry. These atrocities will never be forgotten. And any regime in Germany, either in the West or in the East, which does not make a full, firm and practical effort to repair that which can be repaired cannot free itself from the full responsibility for the crimes of the Nazis. The righting of injustice does not relate solely to the realm of the material, the reimbursement to individual Jews, Jewish organizations, the Jewish people and the State of Israel for that which was taken from them forcibly. It is the obligation of the United Nations—all those united nations which are true to the principles of peace and human dignity—to prevent the Germans from evading their weighty responsibility, possibly unparalleled in human history. And, at the United Nations General Assembly now in progress in Paris, the Government of Israel has expressed its fear and concern regarding the danger inherent in the arming of West and East Germany.

At the same time, the Government of Israel considers it its obligation, together with the representatives of world Jewry, and without undue delay, to make all the appropriate efforts to [facilitate] maximal and speedy repayment to individual Jews and to the Jewish people for that which was taken from them, in accordance with the demands stated in our note of 12 March 1951.

Let not the murderers of our people also be their heirs!

Debate

Elimelech Rimalt (General Zionists): The government is requesting that the Knesset give it the authority to negotiate at the present time with the West German Government for compensation for confiscated property, referred to, for some reason, by the term "reparations." This matter has engaged public opinion for many months. It has stirred up agitation for some time and continues to do so; as the date of the debate approached—the Knesset insisted upon holding a debate on the subject—the general agitation increased. I am certain that the question is a painful one even for those who endorse direct negotiations with the Germans. I am certain that those groups—the government and the parties—who demand that we grant them the authority to negotiate the payments (this term is more appropriate in the present circumstances; reparations smacks of revenge and retaliation), even they do so not without hesitation and inner conflict. The argument is permeated with pain, saturated with memories of tragedy and inexpressible nameless holocaust, unparalleled and unprecedented even in our own history—we, a people used to suffering and torture, a people reared on destruction, in the physical if not the spiritual sense. It is essential that the discussion in this

chamber be conducted on the highest moral level of which we are capable. We must not adopt the stance of the righteous confronting the wicked, the loyalist versus the traitor, the "goodies" versus the "badies"; we must argue with brothers who, in our opinion, are mistaken and terribly confused. At one time our people had an absolute criteria: the Torah, the spiritual legacy, common to all the people and binding upon all. Even if there were differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of this legacy in respect to this or that scriptural passage, sometimes even contradictory opinions, there was always the possibility of turning to a "third passage which would decide between them", that decisive passage also being acceptable to all, none doubting its authority. Today we have no authoritative binding moral criteria. For a short time in the recent past, the Zionist movement and the values of the national reawakening were able to provide such criteria; that was a period in which we all not only spoke one common language but also thought in the same terms.

It is so paradoxical that precisely with the establishment of the state, the culmination of the yearnings of generations, it is as if we lost this commonly-shared standard, so that now we are searching for that "third decisive authoritative source", binding upon us all, and this explains why we are confused. We must conduct a serious, bitter and painful debate against the background of the tragedy of the Holocaust, and it is tragic that this question has even come up for discussion at all, no matter how positive are the intentions of its proposers and of those who are in favor of the negotiations.

One more point by way of introduction. We will not be able to refrain, for the purpose of this debate, from calling upon witnesses of whose blood-chilling presence we are all aware. We must not blaspheme their memory; let us not turn this polemic into a cheap partisan fight and let us not try to make political capital out of it, for the pain is too deep and the heart of each and every one of us bleeds. Willingly or unwillingly, we will turn these sessions into such an awful memorial for the dead, such as this house has yet to witness. Consequently, we must conduct an amicable debate out of anguish. We will attempt to convince you, to imbue you with our perception, arouse, to shock and to knock however conscientiously, upon the closed hearts of the Knesset and of the nation at large.

The debate will be difficult for yet another reason, in that it will not be balanced. There are two basic forces at work in the soul of the individual and apparently in the collective soul of the people. One is that of logic, reason, systematic thought based upon rules which appear to be common to the human race. The normal, civilized person makes use of his logic, his rational capacities, in practical everyday living. The second force is the non-rational or the emotional. In the case of normal healthy people, under ordinary circumstance, these forces operate in

different areas. Logic and reason rule in the practical realm, while feeling and emotion control the spiritual realms, such as religion, art, etc. However, there are times when these areas become confused, thus bringing about tragedy in the life of the individual or of the nation. Whether it is the emotional faculty which takes over in areas in which straight practical logic should direct and guide man, or whether in exceptional and critical times, when the weak beam of logic, or ordinary common sense, is insufficient to light the way, to show the way out of the labyrinth, man nevertheless depends upon reason and acts according to cold logic—in such situations, the outcome may well be tragic.

There are also moments in the life of nations when cold logic cannot provide more than a weak light. Were all of man's thought processes outside the realm of the irrational and only influenced by logic, then there would be no room for debate, as rational logic is objective, its arguments lucid and convincing. But not all of our thinking is logical. Our thought processes are to some extent influenced by the irrational, which is what makes discussion possible.

As for the issue under discussion, the proponents of the proposal, whatever their intention, base their argument upon logic: "They have murdered, should they inherit as well? The State of Israel needs money and assistance in order to fortify itself, the state is the embodiment of the yearnings of generations, perhaps we can see this as retribution of sorts, some kind of justice, if we use this money to strengthen the state." This is the rational approach. But those who are opposed cannot argue in this vein, because the discussion is based upon something without precedent. The Americans claim that other people also suffered damages and did not receive full reimbursement for that which was stolen from them, and we, wanting to be compensated for this theft, have now shifted the argument onto dangerous grounds: compensation for plunder and humiliation. There are many precedents for the plunder of Jewish property in the history of the Jewish people. What nation didn't plunder us? Rome, Byzantium, every nation which conquered and trampled the Jews stole their money and then exiled them from their land. But this slaughter, this Holocaust, this has no precedent in any generation. And it was not just some barbaric nation from the Asian steppe, nor wild men from the desert in the habit of slaughtering and plundering. This was a civilized nation, possibly the most civilized in the world in the technical and material sense, university professors, educated doctors, an entire nation with all its abilities, its skills, with all its technical knowhow, slaughtered a second nation. What for? What was the rational, logical reason? Not only did they steal, they stole and murdered. This German hatred derived from the realm of the darkest impulses deep down within the beast in man. There is no rational explanation why people, educated people, should torture children to the sound of a military band; should drag infants to cremation and to slaughter. Is

there any one of us who has not seen the pictures taken by the Germans of the piles of corpses out of which, here and there, there appears the clenched fist of a dead man, a terrifying protest to heaven? They were proud of what they did, of those pictures. How was this crime logical? Can it be dealt with in the realm of logic and rational argumentation? Is there any wonder that there is a reaction beyond that of logic and reason? And since when is logic the decisive factor in our lives? Indeed, our entire history is often nothing else than a revolt against simple logic. The proof is that for two thousand years the Jewish people yearned for and aspired to a country in which it actually dwelt less than two thousand years—if you add up all the years in which our people inhabited its own land, from the Patriarch Abraham to the destruction of the Second Temple, the total is less than two thousand years....Zionism taught us that the people as such cannot find a solution in assimilation but rather in national renaissance and the return to our homeland. The very idea of nation is however only a recent chapter in modern history; in the Middle Ages, individuals were able to adapt, to choose the logical path and escape the suffering [through conversion to another faith—N.L.], and in the modern period every assimilated Jew could certainly escape. But the Jew retained something incomprehensible which tied him to his people, namely the sense of the uniqueness of the Jewish destiny, which demands of a person that he not do that which is to his personal advantage but rather precisely that which it is not worth his while to do.

Consider what else the Germans have done to us. As if according to some diabolic plan, they also wanted to deprive us of the sanctity of "hallowing God's Name." In fact, all of them, all of the holy victims, "hallowed God's Name," but what does this concept really mean? If I have the choice of running away, disappearing, of dodging the Jewish destiny, and thus of saving myself, but I choose to go to the gallows, then I have done so out of my own free choice. But there is no "hallowing of God's Name," without free choice, if I am not allowed the moral act of deciding in favor of death with sanctification as opposed to a life of contamination. The evil Hitler did not allow us this choice, no one could escape or find refuge from this destiny, there was no possibility of being saved.

...Our national vision is not measured by its inherent logic. And we will not be able to exist here in this state without a vision. Many nations and states have had money. The economy has not as yet been able to rescue a nation when its vision ceased to exist, when it ceased to cherish and value moral values, for there is nothing so worthwhile, so essential, that the moral foundations of the nation should be sacrificed in its favor. It is in this sense that Zionists were opposed to Uganda; this is why there was opposition to many of the solutions which Zionism presented; for this reason we were opposed to the Crimea, to Birobidzhan, to

many things which appeared attractive, and it was out of the deep irrational will that those who took the decision decided in favor of the struggle and the establishment of the State of Israel in the face of all logical considerations.

And here we think that it is possible to settle an account of generations which we have with the Germans, in terms of rates and payments. We think that it is possible to say: We will take their money, it is rightfully ours, but there is no reconciliation. We will not be on speaking terms, we will loathe them, we will hate them but we will take the money from them. It is quite a different matter if a nation is victorious over its enemy, and conquers his country, so that the enemy is downtrodden and vanquished, as the Germans were in 1945...and the victors extract a contribution from the vanquished. That would have been in some way connected with reparations. But now we must make a "gentleman's agreement" with the Germans, who are once more on top, who are much sought after, and the Germans of the West and of the East are the same, as a nation does not change within a period of a few years. A nation most of whose people were murderers—the few who were not either fled abroad or were interned—a nation like that doesn't change quickly. And it is with these "gentlemen" that we are to enter into a "gentleman's agreement."

And we, in stately manner, are about to sit down together with them at one table....They dictate the terms of the negotiations and we, not being barbarians, will sit down with them at the table, drink with them, clasp many hands which have shed blood, the blood of our brothers and our parents. It may be that the West German Chancellor is not one of the killers, maybe he is different—better—than the vast majority of his people, but what about his followers? I do not know what is happening in the East—there there is an Iron Curtain—but we do not even know how much time will elapse before the Nazi Remer [General Remer, neo-Nazi leader] takes over from Adenauer.

There is really no difference between money and its equivalent when it comes from the Germans. But what do they offer us? Merchandise! We will have to go out and peddle German goods in the world. We will receive crates from Germany which may have written on them, in a concealed hand: *Jude Verrecke*. There are Nazi stevedores who would send such a message to us. And what motivates them to do this? Why do they want to pay up? Maybe the good ones amongst them want to salve their conscience, maybe they want to attain quiet through the compensation, nights without nightmares of remorse, without the vampire of pangs of conscience. Perhaps we should leave them like this, allow their nightmares and vampires to churn up their blood and the juice of their conscience, leave them with the mark of Cain upon their foreheads. We are forbidden to remove it. For if there is any rhyme or reason in history, then the mark of Cain must remain upon the forehead of this nation.

It is a good thing that the good ones among them not find rest, that they remember what their people brought about and tremble. But if we enter into a bargain with them and say, in the manner of our casuistic Jewish reasoning: We have taken the money but we have not forgiven. What will they say? They will simply not believe it. And the nations are familiar with the ancient adage: where there is trade, there is social intercourse.

And what shall we tell the youth, our children, whom we have brought up to think in terms of values, for whom profitability is not necessarily the standard. Will we be able to prevent them from figuring out the amount we will receive and dividing it by the number of skulls. My little son came to me and asked me, how much will we get for grandma and grandpa? for both of my parents were murdered. These matters are too serious and too painful for us. We did not want to bring this bitter argument down to the level of a political polemic and you know that this is so.

And one more thing, perhaps the worst of all. I don't know what we will receive. Let us assume that we receive compensation. Have we imagined to ourselves the moral destruction which will ensue? For we are a people with something peculiar, a special Jewish spiritual uniqueness, without which there is no hope, and no existence for the state, or for the Jewish people even if there is a state. This uniqueness guarded us through all the generations and did not allow us to be destroyed.

What will remain of this moral uniqueness if we remove all the barriers, if we lose the concept of the "prohibition against benefit." We once had such a concept, not only juridically speaking but also ethically—and what if we say, we are permitted to derive benefit from everything? Let us not rationalize it by "shalt thou kill and also inherit." In the case of King Ahab, the murder was committed in order to claim the inheritance, and the punishment had to be in keeping with the crime....But Hitler did not kill the Jews for their money. He could have, and did, get their money without committing murder. The German people committed murder out of the basest of impulses. Maybe we should leave the mark of Cain upon the whole world for we believe that the world will not achieve peace and quiet, even if we do reach some compromise between the various social regimes, if the original sin of mankind against the Jewish people is not atoned for, and if there are no guarantees that what happened in recent years will not be repeated in the history of mankind. This world does not need peace and tranquility and we ourselves are contributing to its artificial calm, to the calming of its impure soul.

It may be said that it was the Holocaust which brought about the establishment of the State of Israel, and this, for two reasons: It came into being not only after we saw what could be done to us and we said: there is no refuge, no salvation and no existence for the Jewish people without a

state of its own; tomorrow there will be a Maidanek here and the next day, there. This was the logical reason. But at the subconscious level, there was another reason. What shook us so badly after we recovered from the first blow? A tragic thought that maybe, Heaven forbid, there is no reason for the suffering, the slaughter and the tragedy. Is there any ethical/moral sense to this awful Holocaust? Was it all for naught? In vain?

During the struggle of the War of Independence, there was a strengthening of the deep awareness that indeed there was a purpose, a higher logic, regarding all this inexpressible suffering: it gave birth to the State of Israel, the culmination of the yearning of generations. And under what circumstances does this awful memorial have the power to serve as an eternal warning to all of humanity and to the Jewish people? (We do not differentiate between Jewish morality and human morality, for the former has never foresworn that morality which is universally accepted.) Only if it is unmarred, undiminished, and if we do not turn our account with Germany into a bargaining session over money.

Let us not pay attention to the staged wrath nor to the shouting in the streets, because these sounds are likely to silence the inner voice which each one of us must hear within his soul. All of us, the endorsers and the negaters—even the endorsers—hear the voice which says to us: Jews, what are you about to do? At this point, the Knesset has no alternative but to decide that there will be no negotiations with murderers! The account cannot be settled in this generation. And if we do receive reparations, then the Talmudic adage: "He who pays is not lashed" is applicable, both in the ethical as well as the juridical sense. There is no alternative but to decide that we will not accept blood-money from bloody hands.

The state is in need of funds and of means with which to strengthen itself. Let us all make a joint effort on behalf of the state; this money will not bring us salvation. It is a matter of belief and it is difficult to discuss it in terms of an adding machine, because it is tainted with blood, a curse is attached to this money. It damages the ethical backbone of each one individually as well as of the nation as a whole, the subconscious spiritual core of our very being.

Let us not add to the day of calamity which falls tomorrow, on the 10th day of Tevet, yet another calamity, the final breakdown of the highest values of our people, the ethical value which is neither understood through logic nor measured in mathematical terms, on utilitarian grounds or by utilitarian considerations; neither is it justified on the basis of need. Defeat the motion. Let us free ourselves and the nation from this nightmare. As with every healthy organism, if you damage its equilibrium it will go into convulsion, make strange distorted movements and will not find repose. The decision to accept reparations may well damage the moral, spiritual equilibrium of the nation, may affect its moral strength. It will lead to general disquietude. Let us not

do this thing. Just a few minutes ago, from this very podium, we were told something which is very true: there are governments and there are governments. There are those which make decisions according to their own volition and there are regimes in which public opinion exerts an influence, public opinion which is the litmus paper of a free regime. With the consent of the general public and of all those who are not present this day but are dumb witnesses to this debate, let us remove this question from the agenda.

Yaakov Hazan (Mapam): Honorable Knesset members, on the 5th of November the fateful debate on foreign policy was held in this hall. The implications of this government's recommendation and the decision which was passed by a majority of the plenum meant the relinquishing of our political independence. This has resulted in a deep political rift within the population, a rift which continues to deepen and which threatens our very future.

Today we have the continuation of the above, only seven times more serious. Today the government is suggesting that we relinquish our spiritual independence, the sale of the soul following the sale of the body.

There are two situations in which we would be justified in dealing with the question of reparations from Germany: 1) if the vanquished Germany had been ordered to return to us all that had been stolen from us, in the same way as it was obligated by the victorious powers at the end of the war to make a "reparations;" 2) if we were dealing with a German nation which had mercilessly wiped out both Nazism and the Nazis in its midst, in this way making atonement for its sins and expressing its readiness not to pay reparations but rather to return all the property stolen from the Jewish people.

But what is the reality? 1) The victors, our Western "friends," did not want to include us among the victors or among the recipients of the "reparations," and not without reason. 2) The German people did not wipe out Nazism, or kill the Nazis. On the contrary: Nazism is enjoying a renaissance in Germany and it is our Western "friends" who are nurturing this Nazism, they are reestablishing Nazi Germany with a renewed mandate to make the world tremble. Now, it is with this Nazi Germany that they are suggesting that we conduct negotiations, the significance of which is very simple: the denial of the heroic struggle of the ghetto fighters, a betrayal of the hell of suffering experienced by the Jewish people.

This is the shattering inner Jewish reality of this motion. But what is the political agenda hiding behind the entire question of these reparations? We heard a clear answer on the day after the first announcement was made on Radio Berlin by Adenauer. Radio Berlin stated that we should not hope for much reparations. They—the Germans—are, as we know, a poor nation. But in my opinion this is not really the major prob-

lem. In the final analysis, these are matters of the past. The main problem is that we, the Jews, and they, the Germans are now together in one boat and we are obliged to work together to save human civilization from the danger of communism "which threatens to destroy Western civilization, to wipe us out together with our brethren." This is the claim of Radio Berlin, and this and only this is the true significance of the agreement to negotiate with them.

What is it that the government is suggesting? It is suggesting something very peculiar, something which even a political novice would not believe possible or plausible: to conduct negotiations with the German Government while not recognizing the German Government. Nothing of this kind has ever been done by any country in the world, nor will it be achieved by us. This is an example of squaring the circle. Negotiations over reparations with the Bonn Government is recognition of neo-Nazi Germany. This is the essence, this is the awful political conclusion arising of necessity from all of the negotiations.... You want to give these murderers gratis that which they did not achieve through murder—you want to place them in the center of Europe, and the price tag on the gift—a new agency for international murder. They want them to lead Europe against the Soviet Union. And you want to be a party to the white-washing of this despicable worm? We, the State of Israel, which is the sole heir of six million, which was even ready to pass a law which would make those six million citizens of the Land of Israel—we should exonerate this worm? Do you not see that this is the significance of your motion?...

If this motion is passed, it means that we will be entering into official negotiations with a government run mainly by ex-Nazis, and whose army is already Nazi. That is not all. The most awful part of it is that they are already preparing us to be partners in that camp in which the Nazis will be the foremost, determining factor. Our army, the Israel Defense Forces, will unwittingly enter into the political arena and will find itself in the same camp as the Nazi army, while the Nazis who are already found in our region will begin to penetrate it, not as the most awful enemies but as our partners, and there is nothing more awful than that. This is the true significance of the Government's motion.

I don't see anything else in it. I understand that there is concern over our economic future and that there are financial worries. There shall be no reparations. They have already deceived the entire world once. They deceived a world which had the power to compel them, and they won't deceive us? Did they pay reparations after World War I? Haven't they already begun to default on what they owe from World War II? That is how they will pay us as well. We will receive pennies, for which we will forfeit our entire world. How can we allow ourselves to be caught so awfully in that same net of deception which would turn

us, the victims of Nazi murder, into the sponsor whose task it is to reinstate the Nazis into the international arena....

The motion presented by the Government will certainly create this situation. It has already meant that when we came to the Knesset today, we found it surrounded by barbed wire. We saw many policemen, prepared for action. And the witch's dance, the frenzy, has already begun amongst ourselves....

We are discussing one of the most tragic problems of our life, a problem which must of necessity deepen the chasms of alienation and animosity within our nation, so that we will cease to understand one another, and all this in a period in which existence will be impossible without some sense of national solidarity, no matter how small, and despite the contradictions, and without the conviction that despite everything, we all live within the same moral world. The Government's motion places all this in jeopardy. It means the reconfirmation of the Bonn Government, it means our incorporation into a camp in which the German army will be the main army, that we will march together with them in the new world murder parade. It means that we must extend a hand to those who will once again be murderers of our people, that is sure. They will return to the stage of history as they are today—Nazis. And those who give us reparations will murder us all over again...wherever they are...even here. These are our new partners.

This is why we are protesting with all our strength, with all our spiritual forces, against this thing. We shall vote without hesitation against the motion. And after the vote, we shall not regard the motion as binding upon us. We shall carry on the fight and the mobilization of the masses in Israel against this proposal which we consider to be one of the worst things which the Government has brought upon us.

Yizhak Rafael (Hapoel Hamizrahi): Honorable Knesset. Today's debate is without doubt bitter and tragic and requires a serious and well-considered approach. Only one immersed in the depths of the Halacha [Jewish law], who has been persistently bothered by this question and has examined it from all sides, in the light of the love of Israel which is in his heart, only such a one is capable of taking a stand pro or con, and has the right to do so.

A debate of this sort requires an atmosphere of calm and quiet in which to listen to each other, to hear each other and try to understand one another. My heart is open to the negators. I have read their articles and their propaganda. I have thought, I have considered the matter and I have decided not to accept their decision. In matters such as these, history is disqualified, especially when it is employed artificially....

What is required is a response which comes from within, which is to the point and is free of all foreign side issues. We must deal with the issues on their own merits, and not under the influence of the party gavel, in accordance with factional loyalties. We have heard mention of dif-

ferences of opinion within the ranks of the General Zionists, and it has not been denied. Doesn't the majority decision of the faction overshadow the personal uncertainties of MK Bernstein and his colleagues who are of like opinion?...

I wouldn't think of passing judgement in this way were it not for the all-encompassing nature of this particular faction's approach, and for the call of inducement that went out to all its members to get up and come here, lest, God forbid, someone should neglect to come and stay at home with a clear conscience....

The general sensation of "the wrath of the masses" surrounding this debate, organized by runners and messengers and riders on their mechanical mounts, accompanied by noisy competition between the parties, leaves a bad taste. The impression gained is that not everyone is motivated by altruism, and doubt creeps in as to whether there are political factors and narrow sectarian groups at work here.

Haim Boger (General Zionist): And your intentions are altruistic? You should be ashamed of yourself.

Y. Rafael (Hapoel Hamizrahi): If the intention is indeed altruistic, then why should those who are opposed be interested in representing the proponents as seeking reconciliation with the the Germans? What use is there in putting words in our mouths which are not ours and interpreting them incorrectly? What is to be gained by the elimination of any chance of payment or by lessening its scope? Does this not have any implication for the strengthening of our position externally? Those who are in favor of the move to return the property plundered from our brothers and our fathers, even if it implies personal contact with representatives of Germany, have explicitly stated that this claim is in no way a step towards the obliteration of the ghastly blood-account which we have with the children of this nation of murderers, descendents of Asmodeus [the king of the demons].

Meir Wilner (Maki): You are speaking hypocritically.

Y. Rafael (Hapoel Hamizrahi): The Prime Minister and the leaders of the nation have stated time and again that there is eternal hatred between us, refugees from the sword and those who have been saved from Hell, and the German Nazi nation, as well as its various henchmen and accomplices. This pronouncement is a vow for eternity. Our account with the bearers of pagan culture and those who spread its spirit by thought and deed is beyond measure, even though there are some Jews, unrestrained, frivolous and without roots, who sit down to dine with the Germans, and enjoy their bread and their wine, even reaching the point of intermarriage and accepting literary prizes. But these are individuals who will be remembered to their shame. The nation will remember. A nation such as ours will not forget.

Our account is much broader than that, cutting across categories and breaking through boundaries. It is not limited to the boundaries of West Germany. East and West were united in satanic crime, blood-letting and destruction, theft and plunder, the torture and murder of babes-in-arms. And who has the right to separate that which is joined together and to make the contaminated pure, and what are the moral and logical grounds for doing so? The attitude of the members of Maki and Mapam, those who make pilgrimage to East Berlin, and who differentiate geographically between this and that Germany, is fundamentally and totally unacceptable to us. It is the result of general, alien, political considerations and not of feelings welling up from a Jewish heart, nor is it even guided or directed by concern for our enterprise and anxiety for its success.

M. Wilner (Maki): We sit here philosophizing while people are being killed outside.

Beba Idelson (Mapai): What are you so excited about? You brought them here.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I must ask the Members of the Knesset not to disturb.

Y. Rafael (Hapoel Hamizrahi): This approach is alien to us. The mantle of fighters for the honor of the nation does not suit those people, is not cut to their proportions. Those who blacken the name of Israel in far-away, foreign forums must not be turned all at once into protectors of its honor. Those who removed the Holy Name from the Book of Books without flinching and without shame should be ashamed to pretend to be zealots for the legacy of their forefathers. No one will believe them. This is another clear symptom of an important creative and constructive national force descending into the abyss of the criminal, self-denying *Yevsekzia* [NKVD section dealing with Jewish affairs]. (Shouts from MK Wilner and MK Vilenska.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I must insist that MKs Wilner and Vilenska desist. We shall get the correct information. You have already given out unauthorized information.

I am only able to determine the fact that stones have been thrown into the Knesset chamber, and that the Knesset Guard did not fire. I ask that the Knesset members remain seated. (Shouts from all sides of the House.)

Y. Rafael (Hapoel Hamizrahi): I can empathize with the negators in so far as it is honest, pure and consistent, even while I take issue with their practical considerations. While there is much justice in the arguments presented at the outset by the proponents, who demand the return of Jewish property to us, the legal heirs, and regard the claiming of this in-

heritance and its removal from the hands of the enemy as a religious obligation, there is still room for qualms and hesitation. Were it not for the extensive needs of the people, the serious financial difficulties involved in executing the tasks which have been thrust upon us, it is doubtful whether even the most enthusiastic of the proponents would be happy to have direct contact with the representatives of Germany, which entails much potential danger and requires extreme caution. And it is a very painful thing that the appreciation of these needs and their extent is what determines that the decision be in the positive. The burden of obligation which we are pleased to shoulder is extremely heavy. The upbuilding of the country requires both physical and spiritual sacrifice. The ingathering of the exiles has only just begun and we must not slow down its pace. The Jewish dispersions, groaning in their suffering, in a state of decline and in danger of extinction, cry out to be saved. Hundreds of thousands of our Jewish brethren are awaiting immediate salvation, but the extent of the immigration shrinks before our very eyes due to a lack of funds as well as the means with which to provide medical treatment for Jewish children in anticipation of their immigration. Poverty and privation frustrate the execution of the rescue plans. And it should be said openly that if we had the ready change in our pockets, we could even blow open the exit gates which currently close upon fine, healthy, loyal, pioneering young people who guard the embers of our nation lest they die out, and who yearn for the day of redemption which is to come.

Anyone who has seen Jewish children in the ghettos of Tehran and Isfahan, Casablanca and Marrakesh, in the southern villages of Tunisia and Algeria, rotting away from hunger, filthy and dying from lack of care knows, and must attest to the fact, that their rescue must come first, especially as it relates to the upbuilding and development of the country. And the hardship faced by our brethren here in the homeland, living in torn tents for lack of permanent housing, in the cold and the flooding rain without warm clothing—shall we view them with indifference? I attentively read the Order of the Day of the Herut institutions in preparation for the "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem" in which the "servicemen" who have been recruited for the Day of the Emergency are told, "Those who travel should prepare warm clothing," and I was very touched by the true concern which Herut shows for its party activists. But are we in any way exempt from expanding this concern to include others, the children of the *maabarot* [tent camps] and the infants in ripped tents and the old people in those camps who suffer from the cold? And not only on one Day of Emergency, but on many such days. And one's heart breaks many times over at the realization that, in these great days, in the generation of the resurrection, in the period of the redemption, in this opportune time, the spirit of that part of this great nation dwelling in the tranquil parts of the Diaspora was not able to meet

the challenge of fully committing all of its resources to the aid of the nation and to the rebuilding of its homeland, so that we can carry on our shoulders the burden which has been thrust upon us. And if our people does not give us what we absolutely need, and if the nations of the world only help us a little bit, and we are knocking on locked gates to request assistance and understanding, should we also give up that which is ours by right, which was taken from us by force? The hour requires it. We shall overcome doubt and hesitation, even when some innermost feeling holds us back. We shall stand up forcefully and shall loudly, clearly claim that which is ours. We shall make demands of West Germany and press our claim against East Germany, whose conqueror—the Soviet Union—has to this day not even seen fit to reply to our note stating our claim. The goal on behalf of which we shall claim our brothers' legacy is a most sacred one; the needs to which it will be applied are lofty ones.

I do not join in the refrain, "...remove the beam from your own eye," voiced by the proponents of negotiation with regard to those who are opposed to it, seemingly as a complaint against those individuals and companies, kibbutzim, and organizations which brought in goods and machinery from Germany at the time. The thousands of immigrants from Germany, the remnants of the Holocaust, brought precious little with them, and what they did bring was brought legally; it belonged to them. The tools, machinery, workshops, and medical equipment which were brought out of Germany by individuals and groups can be put to great use here, and it is a good thing that they brought them. "And they despoiled the Egyptians" (Exodus 12:36) was not only a matter of the moment, but applied to all times. This is not even a fraction of one percent of the Jewish property and the value of our brothers' labor which has gone down into oblivion. Even that which we are now claiming as a body, as a state, as the representatives of the nation, is nothing more than a small part of what we should rightfully receive. And those who will present the claim in our name and will determine in practice the ways in which the reparations are made and the form they will take, will kindly see to it that the period of time during which we have to have contact with the Germans is kept to a minimum as much as possible. And if we must receive the reparations in the form of goods and industrial products, then they should choose those things which we ourselves need, so that we do not become the distributors of German goods among the nations. We shall demand materials and manufactured goods which do not imply the subordination of our industry to German spare parts. Germany has things which it can give us which will involve a one-time transaction. We need raw materials, chemicals, iron pipes, steel sheets, lumber for construction, prefabricated housing, etc., all things which are essential to the country's development and the creation

of a foundation for its industry and which do not involve any long-term trade with Germany.

The tone in which the negotiations are conducted is also important. We shall appear as plaintiffs, as the members of a victorious nation, imbued with national pride, because the very fact of our existence as a people after the bloodbath is our outstanding victory. I am convinced that we should send people to these talks who are not originally from Germany, people who will speak to them through an interpreter. It is desirable that people who themselves experienced the Holocaust be included in the delegation; they will know what to say and how to say it, and will be able to demonstrate our commonly-held intention: to demand restitution without showing any signs of conciliation and forgiveness. We shall charge our government with the adoption of the steps required in order to salvage the maximum possible, under the conditions, from the flames and the lions, and it will carry out that task with the self-consciousness and the national pride befitting the government of a sovereign state which is just now for the first time tasting the taste of its independence and which speaks in the name of the state as well as in the name of the Jewish people in the Diaspora, whose major organizations have granted it their full support.

Menachem Begin (Herut): Honorable Knesset members. On 13 March 1951, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Sharett read out to us the note which he had sent to America, England, France and Russia, regarding what he called reparations from Germany.

During the debate, I attempted to share with the members of the Knesset the tremendous shock which I felt when I read the following sentence: "There can be no progress towards the restitution of Germany's honor as a nation within the family of nations, as long as the matter of reparations to the Jewish people is not arranged." These words are not open to interpretation. They are perfectly clear: they state that if the matter of the compensation of the Jews by Germany is taken care of, then, in the opinion of the Government of Israel, the restitution of Germany's honor as a nation within the family of nations would indeed be possible.

My dear opponents, at that time you made noise, you erupted like a volcano, you disturbed and you accused me of accusing him of being prepared to enter into negotiations with Germany. The venerable Rabbi Nurock made the Foreign Minister swear that he would not commit the "national crime" of contact with the Germans. And behold, the government is about to go to Nazi Bonn. Mr. Ben-Gurion, sir, you were the one who reproached a Member of the Knesset for having gone to Berlin, and you said: "You went to Nazi Berlin?" Bonn isn't Nazi? Doesn't the theory that West Germany is good and East Germany is bad, lead to the theory that West Germany is democratic while East Germany is Nazi?...

Perhaps you will say that the government of Adenauer is a new German government, not a Nazi one. You must know who this Adenauer is. I ask you: In which concentration camp was he when Hitler ruled Germany, into which prison was he thrown as a result of the bloody regime of the Nazis? I ask you: Who are Mr. Adenauer's assistants? You reply: About half the people in Adenauer's Foreign Ministry are members of the Nazi Party. With them you will hold discussions—with the "specialists" of Ribbentrop, with the "specialists" of Weizsaecker, with the assassins who laid the groundwork for the destruction of millions of our brethren by telling the world that information about the persecution of the Jews was nothing more than "atrocities propaganda."

You may say that with this government, which is prepared to give back part of the property, we can negotiate because it is not responsible for the murder. I will remind you of facts. Sixteen million Germans voted for Hitler before he came to power. There were twelve million communists and socialists in Germany. Where did they disappear to? There were twelve million soldiers in the Germany army, millions in the Gestapo, in the SA and in the SS. Millions. From a Jewish point of view, there is not a single German who is not a Nazi, nor is there a single German who is not a murderer. And from them you are going to get money?

You have an argument: If we don't go to them to get this property, then it will remain in the hands of the thief. Indeed, the figures have already been published. You hope for a maximum of three hundred million dollars in German Nazi goods. You estimated the stolen Jewish property at six billion dollars, which means that you are going to get 5 percent of the stolen Jewish property, while leaving 95 percent of the stolen Jewish property in the hands of the murderous thief. The difference lies in the fact that if you don't go to Bonn, the property remains "stolen" and Israel's claim still stands; but if you do go to Bonn, and sign an agreement with Nazi Germany—by virtue of your agreement, of your signatures, you will announce in the name of the entire Jewish people, in the name of the millions of murdered, that it is proper that 95 percent of the Jewish property remain in the hands of the murderer, the thief. Who appointed you to do this? Who gave you the right to do it? Those who are no longer here gave you the authority to speak for them?

From whom are you going to claim the property? Let me present a simple example: Shimon sets fire to the house of Ruben's father and Ruben's father dies in the fire. What can Ruben do? He might forego the house, since his father burned to death in it. Or he might go to the court, declare himself a litigant and demand that he be compensated for the cost of the house, on the basis of a court decision. But in which barbaric tribe would you find him turning directly to the murderer and demanding compensation for the house from him? Whereas you, bereaved chil-

dren orphaned of your parents, you go directly to the murderer. Not to demand the "ransom" as you put it but rather to get, as it were, the value of the house which was burned down, with your fathers in it. In what barbaric tribe would you find such an abomination. What are you trying to make of the Jewish people, a people which has been civilized and has taught others to be civilized for some four thousand years.

You built the foundation for the negotiations with Germany upon the message of Mr. Sharett.

But there is yet another foundation of the bridge which Mr. Sharett crossed from Jewish Jerusalem to Nazi Bonn, i.e., the statement of Mr. Adenauer himself. You deserve to have this statement read to you in the original, in the language of the doers of evil, through whose services Mr. Adenauer is negotiating with you, but as long as the fateful decision is not yet taken—fateful not only for me but for all of us, not only for years but for generations—the honor of this House is dear to me and I will therefore read the statement in Hebrew. This is what Herr Adenauer says: I declare that the vast majority of the German people had no part in these crimes. He also stated that the German government is prepared to work together with the representatives of the Jewish people and the Government of Israel to solve the problem of making amends, or in his contaminated language, *wieder gutmachen* [For the material aspect of the problem], in order to ease the way for a spiritual cleaning of the slate of the guilt for untold suffering.

A member of the Knesset has accused both Mr. Sharett, and yourself, Mr. Ben-Gurion, of having this statement in your possession before Mr. Adenauer revealed it to his Nazi advisors. If this is true, woe unto us! You read it; you accepted, as a basis of the negotiations with the Germans, the suggestion that the majority of the German people were revolted by these crimes and took no part in them. You accepted, as a basis of the negotiations, a statement according to which this money would be given to you *zur veelischen Reinigung eines unendlichen Leidens* [For the spiritual cleansing of unending suffering]. If you didn't read it, how could Mr. Sharett consider it as a basis for negotiation? And if you did read and approve it—then let the Jewish people know upon what sort of base the bridge between Hebrew Jerusalem and the Nazi Bonn government was erected. Adenauer's note has been read by millions of Germans, millions of Americans, millions of Frenchmen; it has penetrated the hearts of the non-Jews. All the nations of the world knew that that was the basis upon which we were to receive the money, as a "payment for unending suffering." How they will bemoan us, how they will despise us! What have you made of us? Your demurrers will be written in Hebrew—who will read them? The nations will see only one thing: you sat down at the table with the murderers of your people, you acknowledged that they are capable of signing an agreement, that they

are capable of keeping an agreement, that they are a nation, a nation among the family of nations.

The non-Jews not only hated us, not only murdered us, not only burned us, not only envied us—primarily they despised us. And in this generation which we refer to as the last of slavery/the first approaching redemption—in the generation in which we achieved respectability, in which we went from slavery to freedom—you would deprive us, for a few million filthy dollars, for some tainted goods, of the little honor which we have managed to achieve. You will probably establish a firm called "Ger-Pal"—short for "Germany-Palestine"—to distribute German goods in France, in England, in America; you will become Nazi agents for the distribution of Nazi goods. How they will despise us when a Jew, the emissary of the Government of Israel, standing in his shop in Argentina, will call out: come and buy, this is good stuff, "Made in Germany." By doing this you are destroying the very foundation under our feet, you are jeopardizing our honor and our independence. How they will despise us!

And what is the international background to all this? Our talented Ambassador in America has referred to "Germany in renewal." Certainly, Germany is in renewal. Five million from this one and 25 million from that one. Its industry is flourishing. Nineteen million tons of steel per annum—these are the achievements of "Germany in renewal." Churchill devoted half his book to a description of the blindness and stupidity which led to the rearmament of Germany and to World War II. Today, he himself stands at the head of the parade on behalf of German rearmament. Out of blindness, out of terrible fear, they are returning to the teutonic wolfpack the very teeth and claws which had been removed. Are we going to be party to this? We are going to say that they are a nation, that they are capable of negotiation, that they will keep an agreement which America or England will sign?

Mr. Ben-Gurion, Sir! If instead of talking about the bankruptcy of American Zionists you would summon the Jews of America to propagandize among the American people regarding the danger to America itself inherent in the rearming of this wolfpack—then the situation might be different. Were this great Jewry to rise up and say: Germany shall not be rearmed—the situation might have been different. Then it might have still been possible to prevent this tragedy. But you became friends with the assimilated Jews and as for them, their wealth was always in inverse proportion to their courage and their loyalty to Zion. One of the leaders of the assimilated Jews has said: If the Government has decided to rearm Germany, well its none of our business." These are your partners.

Woe unto us, for we see, five years after the end of the war, how the Nazi murderer has arisen, how he takes up his weapon. At the moment,

he still speaks softly to the Americans and the French; soon, when he feels his strength, he will make his real voice heard.

Therefore, I will conclude my remarks with a number of appeals. First, to you Mr. Ben-Gurion, Sir. I turn to you not as an opponent—as such, there is an abyss between us, there is no bridge nor will there be a bridge, we are separated by a bloody abyss. I turn to you in the zero hour as one Jew to another, as the son of an orphaned nation, as the son of a bereaved nation: Stop! Do not go through with this. This is the abomination of abominations in Israel; there has never been anything comparable to it since we became a people. I am trying to give you a way out. As my adversary, I would not provide you with it; as a Jew, I do so: Go to the people, a referendum. Not because I suggest that you call for a popular vote on this issue; I don't think that it is even possible to vote upon it. The vote has already been taken—at Treblinka, Auschwitz, Ponary, there the Jews voted under the torture of death—not to have contact, not to negotiate with the Germans. Go to the people.

You don't have a majority in this matter in the Knesset. Members of your own party are opposed—and I am proud that Jews, even if they are my opponents, even though they hate me, are opposed to these unholy negotiations. Part of the Poalei-Mizrachi party is opposed, part of the Mizrachi is opposed, part of the Agudath Yisrael is opposed. In fact, you are in the minority. So what have you done? You used force, you frightened Mr. Pinkas into thinking that he would be removed from this chair and transferred to another....

David Zvi Pinkas, Minister of Transport: Don't talk rubbish. Nobody frightens me. Not even Begin can frighten me, with all his heroics.

M. Begin (Herut): Go to the people. And if the people should say yes, possibly one cannot escape the conclusion that: "Surely the people is grass" [Isaiah 40], and maybe all the sacrifices were not worth it. But then you can say: The people is behind me, 51 percent of the nation is prepared to negotiate with them. But if the people says nay—you will not lose. For you are a democrat. You will bow your head before the wishes of the people. Why take it upon yourself to make the decision here. You do not have a majority. And this is the way out. In God's name, I ask you to take council with yourself, stop, place the matter before the entire nation—and may He have pity.

My second appeal is to those Members of Knesset elected by Arab constituencies. Far be it from me to deprive them of their formal right to vote. They have equal rights. I believe in equal rights, I believe in the actualization of the vision of the leader of Betar [Revisionist Party], our great teacher: "Here he will be satiated with plenty and with happiness, the Arab child, the child of Nazareth and my child, for my banner, the banner of purity and honesty, will purify both banks of my Jordan." You have the formal right to participate in this vote, but you should differen-

tiate between the formal right and the moral right. This is our issue, the blood of our mothers, our brothers and our sisters is mixed up in it, let us decide in this matter....

My third appeal is to the members of the religious parties. This was not the issue on which you fought the election. You contested the election in the name of the religion of Israel, the Torah of Israel. What connection is there between the Torah of Israel and negotiations with Amalek? For by this vote you will wipe off an entire verse which has been sanctified by the Torah: The Lord will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages [Ex. 17:16]. How can the Lord fight Amalek if you, the defenders of the religion, vote for peace with Amalek, for receiving money from Amalek?

Today is the Tenth of Tevet, a Commemoration Day for us all, both the memorial day for my father and the memorial day for the entire nation. (Noise in the Hall, shouts from the Mapam benches.) I stand here before you, members of the religious parties, as a believing Jew, son of a believer, and plead with you: Do not do this thing. Coalition, opposition, man's life is a passing thing, how much more so the life of a coalition. How come that you didn't see it? Last year you split away on the issue of enlisting girls into the army, but on this issue you are not prepared to say nay? Counsel with your consciences, with your belief. How will the Jewish youth believe in the religion of Israel when its spokesmen/representatives raise their hands in favor of negotiations with Germany?

So, at this last moment, take counsel, caucus, sit and discuss the matter, have pity upon this people, do not give your support to this abomination which is unparalleled in our history ever since the incident of the concubine on the hill [Judges 19].

And now Members of Knesset from all of the sides, I have come to the end of my speech. I know that this is a turning point in the history of our people. I also know what awaits me and my colleagues, and I say to them....

Moshe Shapira, Minister of the Interior: What is going on outside, is that the Jewish way? And you appeal to us!

M. Begin (Herut): I say, there shall be no negotiations with Germany. There shall be no negotiations with Germany! You have claimed that the fury is "staged" but I have here a list: Rabbi Maimon, Rabbi Mordechai Nurok, Prof. Klausner, David Shimoni, Asher Barash, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Dr. Dvoretzky, Yaakov Cohen, Abraham Sutzkever—That is staged fury? If it only were staged....

(The session was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. and reconvened at 9:35 p.m.)

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I hereby reconvene this session of the Knesset. I was forced to adjourn the session as MK Begin refused to re-

tract an insulting expression which he used in reference to the Prime Minister. I have the honor of informing the House that MK Begin has made a retraction regarding his insult to the Prime Minister and the sentence in which he said that if he can't speak, then no one will speak.

I wish to take this opportunity to say—and I believe that I speak for all the Members—that I am very sorry about what transpired during the speeches of MK Rafael and MK Begin, and about the shouts which violated the honor of the Knesset. And I appeal to the Members: we still have a harsh and penetrating debate ahead of us and we must maintain our composure and the honor of this House at least from within, so as to enable the Knesset to complete its deliberations whatever the result may be—with honor and in a manner befitting the Parliament of Israel and its members.

M. Begin (Herut): I accept the announcement of the Honorable Speaker of the Knesset; I do so not as a result of pressure or threats to have me removed from the Hall—leaving the Knesset would be easy for me under the present circumstances—I accept it because I still have a function to fulfill here, possibly my last, and I intend to fulfill it completely.

In 1919 a tragedy occurred in a Jewish city, a small city but very significant in the Jewish world, a city called Pinsk. An anti-Semitic Polish general took 34 Jews whom he suspected of being Bolsheviks, stood them against a wall and murdered them. I was a youth then. I was taught a song about that murder. I do not remember all of the words but one sentence I do remember: "It is better that you not come to the Seder table." The world was different then and it was very much shaken by the murder of 34 Jews. Morgenthau came from America; a Committee of Investigation was sent from Britain; the Polish Government—half anti-Semitic and half not—set up a Parliamentary Committee of Investigation and behold on the basis of the decision of that Parliamentary Committee, the Polish Government offered to compensate the bereaved families for what had happened to their fathers and brothers. And the Polish Government was not directly responsible for the murder. General Lezansky did what he did of his own accord. The Polish Government disassociated itself from the murder and offered the families compensation. And then, according to the book in front of me, the Zionist Committee of the town came together, called all the families involved and told them: "If [you] take compensation [you] will be sinning against the memory of the saintly ones and [you] will be a disgrace; it will be said that the Jews sold the souls of the saintly ones for money." Then and there, a protocol was drawn up in which it was emphasized that they would not sell the spilled blood for money and that only by punishing the murderers for their evil doing could the sin be atoned for. The protocol was signed by the heads of the families and was sent to the War Ministry and that is how the matter ended.

Now what was understood by the Zionist Committee in the city of Pinsk cannot be understood by the government in the State of Israel? What was understood by the Zionist Committee in the city of Pinsk cannot be understood by the Hebrew Parliament? For if, after you yourselves sign a mutual agreement with the Germans, you would succeed in getting them to sign a statement such as: We the Germans who murdered six million Jews hereby give you three hundred million dollars over ten years, while agreeing that you shall continue to hate us, as we are guilty of the murder of six million, and we do not ask you for atonement—even if you could get them to sign such a statement, even then the fact would remain that you are still accepting money directly from the murderers on the basis of a mutual agreement and based upon compromise. You demanded such and such, they refuse to give the entire sum and offer less, you agree. And agreement will be signed, in front of everyone, with the murderers—this can only be ransom.

I intended to warn you and I am doing so: Members of Knesset of all parties, this cannot pass. If there is any meaning to the term "Sanctification of God's Name," if there is any substance to the phrase "rather to die than transgress"—then this is where they apply.... This may be my last speech in the Knesset and I can do no other than say very straightforward things which come straight from a heart drunk with blood—perhaps these words will enter your hearts. For three years we have sat with you in the Knesset, as a minority. You were the majority. You were an elected majority and we accepted that. We did not come to the Knesset from a rich home, from a life of pleasure. My colleagues and I came here in the aftermath of a war which lasted many years. We were ruthlessly persecuted, we were not left in peace, a price was set upon our heads, detectives were looking for us throughout the country, we endangered ourselves 24 times a day. We succeeded, the oppressor withdrew, the state was established on a part of the divided homeland, the time came for the elections. But there was one more event before the elections. Mr. Ben-Gurion will remember it. He gave the order to shoot at me with a cannon. I stood on the deck of a burning ship, I saw my comrades, my men, my disciples killed: they held machine guns, mortars, rifles, but I gave the order not to respond and they heeded me. In this Knesset, in the course of three years, how many decisions have you taken which have made our blood boil. After each such decision, we went out covered in shame, greatly saddened that we had perhaps not succeeded in our mission. And after those decisions we went, my colleagues and I, to that youth whom you vilify while they risk their lives for their people and their country; they gave their lives, twelve of them were executed with the words of Hatikvah [the national anthem] on their lips to the last—I went to this youth, accustomed to war, battle-wise, and I said to them: this is our parliament, this is our government. The majority will decide, let us go to the people and try to convince them. If we

do not succeed—what more can we do? This is our people. After that I went to the Diaspora, I met with thousands of Jews—they are my witnesses, they will confirm what I say—and I said to them: This government is a different government, a Jewish government. Our government, my government—that is what I said to the Jews of America, Argentina, Mexico—no matter what its composition. That is how we have educated our youth. We accepted everything even though our souls were raging. We wanted to educate this nation to statehood, freedom, independence, to a normal life after two thousand years of exile. Don't we have children too? Don't we have wives? Don't we also deserve a quiet family life? Don't we also have the right to live as free citizens in this state? For we have certainly given our all for its establishment. We were given nothing: neither command nor army nor police nor government nor any office—nothing! We came to you with the request that with respect to rights you recognize those fighters as soldiers—and you refused; for two years you refused. The Prime Minister said that as long as this government is in office, it will not give a penny to them—leg-amputees, arm-amputees, invalids for life, bereaved families, poor, shattered. We also accepted that. We once more approached those young people and said: we will still get them to change their minds, we will convince them; never mind, it is our country.

That is how I trained those young people. That is what I learned from my "father" and mentor [Jabotinsky]. But there was another thing which I learned from him, which I also passed on: there are things in life which are dearer than life itself. There are things in life which are worse than death itself. And this is one of those things for which we will give our lives. We will leave our families, we shall bid our friends farewell but there will not be negotiations with Germany.

Nations worthy of that name took to the barricades for much smaller things. On this matter—we, a part of the last generation of slavery and the first generation of the redemption, who saw our fathers dragged into the gas chambers, who heard the clattering of the wheels of the death trains, who before our very eyes saw the ancient father thrown into the river along with five hundred Jews from the glorious town of Bresk in Lithuania and the river turned red from blood, who before our very eyes saw the old mother murdered in the hospital, before whose very eyes there occurred all those events, unparalleled in history—should we hesitate to endanger our lives in order to prevent negotiations with the murderers of our fathers? We should hide our faces in shame if we did not rise up. We are prepared for everything, anything, just to prevent this shame from falling upon Israel. I hope that we will prevent it.

In Zion Square, before the 15,000 Jews who gathered there outraged, in the rain and cold, I said: Go, stand around the Knesset. Do not disturb the proceedings. All those lies, as though we intended to disrupt the debate—rubbish! I said: Go, surround the Knesset as, in the days of Rome,

when a Roman Governor wanted to put a statue in the Temple, the Jews were alerted from all over the country and they surrounded the Temple and said: Over our dead bodies shall you pass. I said: let your silence scream out, for there shall be no negotiation with Germany. They attacked them with gas bombs made in Germany and that is when it occurred. [Stones were thrown into the Knesset chamber—N.L.]

And I say to you: Gentlemen, Woe unto me that I have come to this; happy am I that I was thus privileged! There are still youth in Israel. No, this youth does not desire war; it does not desire battle or death; this youth wants to live, it has the right to live. But the hour has come when all is in the balance. Shall we not fulfill this religious imperative. We shall!

This is my final appeal to the Knesset: prevent a holocaust. The voice of Satan is heard in the depths of Hell—consider what he has achieved in addition to the devastation which he wrought in his lifetime? Spill Jewish blood over German money! What for? The money will be used up, will eventually disappear, but the shame will remain.

I know that you have power. You have jails, concentration camps, army, police, detectives, cannons, machine guns. Never mind. Over this issue all that power will be shattered like glass on a rock. For this just cause we will fight to the end. Physical power in such cases is of no value; it is vain deceit.

I warn, but I do not threaten. Whom should I threaten? I know that you will drag us away to a concentration camp. Today you arrested hundreds. Perhaps you will arrest thousands. It is nothing. They will go along, they will sit there and we will sit with them. If necessary—we will be killed together with them. But there will be no reparations from Germany. And may God help us all to prevent this holocaust for the sake of our future and our honor.

Will the Speaker be so kind as to put it in the record and to inform the proper authorities that, as of 4:00 p.m. today, I, a Member of the Knesset entitled to parliamentary immunity, hereby consider that immunity null and void.

Pinchas Lavon (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset. Today we have been witness to one of the worst things to have happened in the history of our young state, I allow myself to say...even in the history of our people: a calculated attempt—the conclusion of MK Begin's speech leaves no doubt that it was calculated and prepared—to mount an attack upon the only sanctuary which the Jewish people has in our day, its Parliament. There have been times in our history when the sanctuary was put to the flame by foreign adversaries. It shall be recorded in the short history of Israel that a criminal attempt to intimidate the elected representatives of the nation through physical terror, and thus to prevent them from carrying out their duties, an attempt—intended but happily foiled—to do something similar to the burning of the Reichstag, was

made by Jews, in the name of the "honor" of the Jewish people and of "Jewish History."

We have heard a pronouncement made which, if it was made seriously, is of great significance. It is an announcement of intended rebellion against the State of Israel. We heard it proclaimed: This shall not be, because I will not allow it. We heard a challenge to the freedom and independence of the State of Israel. We heard a proclamation which takes us back to the days in which a gang, whatever their motives, could impose its will upon the state through brute force. This proclamation, this deed...tell us that the young republic of Israel is in danger. Irrespective of the question of reparations, the decisive question for all of us remains: How are we to live in this state and how are things to be decided—by the will of armed sheikhs or freely, as a free nation...freely or at pistol-point? I say "pistol-point" advisedly. I must say that these gentlemen are currently involved in incitement to murder. If you read the written word and the speeches—there can be no other possible interpretation.

At this time, we have a primary obligation: to bring together all those faithful to the state in order to eradicate this danger at the root. May I be permitted to address one sentence to Mr. Begin: you are too small to threaten the State of Israel. It has many enemies who are stronger than itself and it is possible that it may not be able to cope with all of them and that you will be able to sow havoc and create agitation, but the State of Israel does have enough strength to deal with the source of this anarchy.

The Knesset will decide on this matter under discussion, and whatever it decides, that is what will be. Boastful arrogance may cause suffering and insult but it can not effect this basic fact in the slightest. For once we make concessions on this basic principle, we will have relinquished the very existence and future of the state.

With respect to the discussion at hand, we heard a very comprehensive explanation by MK Rimalt of the irrational and the rational forces at work in man's soul. I think that he will agree with me that this is not a very revolutionary thesis in the year 1952, but I would submit two amendments to MK Rimalt's basic assumptions. The one is that we cannot be divided into those who are totally rational and those who are totally irrational. Emotion is common to all and no one holds a monopoly on it. An hysterical scream does not always reflect true emotion or deep pain. We are all feeling people and we are all people in whom reason functions nonetheless.

I would like him to accept another amendment as well...When we gather here to debate an issue, it will not suffice to invoke the taboo that the issue is irrational and consequently my stand is sacred, so don't touch me, and let us not discuss the matter nor bring relevant argu-

ments. No, MK Rimalt, with due respect to your feelings and to mine, we must discuss the matter rationally.

I must tell the honorable MKs: There has been and certainly will continue to be, a great deal of competition among the speakers over the description of the atrocities of Auschwitz, Maidanek, etc., with everyone speaking in the name of the father, the child, the mother, etc.

Yohanán Bader (Herut): There will be those who attempt to put it out of mind.

P. Lavon (Mapai): Gentlemen, by what moral Jewish right do you monopolize the six million slaughtered, in favor of a specific position? By what right? Did they give you permission? Did they tell you what they think? Who is to decide? The living decide.

Haim Landau (Herut): The living also determine whether to sell the dead.

P. Lavon (Mapai): The living decide according to their considerations, their understanding, according to their sense of loyalty to humanity and to the nation. We, the living. And when I say that it is we the living who decide, I do not differentiate or assign greater privilege to anyone, neither to the partisan nor to the soldiers in the army, for the living partisan did not receive a testament from the dead partisan telling him what to do in this respect. And the same applies to the soldier.

Shoshanna Persitz (General Zionists): And who did?

P. Lavon (Mapai): No one. We must debate this matter as a living nation, with responsibility towards the past, the present and the future of Jewish life in its entirety.

Arieh Altman (Herut): And that is appropriate to the past of this nation?

Israel Bar-Yehudah (Mapam): The future lies in Bonn.

P. Lavon (Mapai): I will get to that too.

Y. Bader (Herut): I know that you will get to Bonn.

P. Lavon (Mapai): The Zionist movement has been faced many times with very serious questions regarding relationships with hostile nations, enemies and foes. Before the establishment of the Zionist movement, the Jewish way was simple: outwardly pleading, while inwardly satisfying our feelings of Jewishness by creating prayers, by proscriptions, rejection, etc., etc. There was a value to the prayers, and a great value to the proscriptions and rejection because in the life of a helpless nation these were moral and spiritual weapons of the first order.

And since the founding of the Zionist movement, from the very outset, it has been faced with this problem: how to fashion the relationships between the as-yet-stateless Jewish people, desirous of sovereignty and

the other nations and its enemies? Then came the Herzl-Plehve [Russian Minister of the Interior] incident—the harsh argument over this issue is well remembered. And now, decades later—it may be possible to summarize it by saying that while in a practical sense Herzl was mistaken, from the political-historical viewpoint it is very possible that he was right, as his action gave expression to the budding awareness of the great change in these interrelationships resulting from the fact that instead of individual communities there was now a Zionist movement aspiring to a sovereign existence.

Eliezer Shostak (Herut): How does this relate to the money?

Meir Argov (Mapai): Wait and see. Begin arranged a pogrom. Let Lavon talk and you will hear.

P. Lavon (Mapai): There was another incident, I don't remember whether in 1921 or 1922, the agreement between Jabotinsky and Slavinsky, the representative of Petlyura [Ukrainian government-in-exile], the agreement made by the "father and mentor" [Jabotinsky] of the one who is "shaken to the depths of his soul."

Y. Hazan (Mapam): And how did the people relate to it?

P. Lavon (Mapai): Wait. I will get to the point at which you will have the opportunity to interfere.

The agreement was signed two years after the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in the Ukraine—and hundreds of thousands was at that time a ghastly figure for the Jews of Russia. They were perhaps not slaughtered as systematically as in Hitler's system, but very thoroughly indeed. The agreement was not signed with an Adenauer, it was signed with the leader of the butchers. It was not an agreement on reparations—it was an agreement on cooperation and mutual help.

Shemuel Mikunis (Maki): This is in effect the same agreement.

P. Lavon (Mapai): If there were any measure of historic decency in our life, then it is precisely the disciples of the maker of that agreement who should be talking about the present situation in minor tones.

Y. Bader (Herut): Everything would be fine if this were all true.

P. Lavon (Mapai): The Jewish public rightly rejected that agreement. And there is an interesting document which, if we read it after having heard the speech of Mr. Begin, we would not think that 30 years have passed since then at all. When the signee was called before the Zionist Executive to explain his actions, he said: As for the agreement between myself and Slavinsky, the relations between him and the Steering Committee didn't interest me then, and don't interest me now, and I had no intention of taking the latter's opinion into consideration, neither as a member of the Executive nor as a private citizen.

E. Shostak (Herut): That was not an agreement on reparations payments.

P. Lavon (Mapai): If we were to change a few words in this statement, then we would have, to all intents and purposes, a copy of Begin's statement here. "It is not of interest nor is it important to me, and from 4:00 p.m. on, I utterly disregard my right to immunity, but take heed: me, myself and I will not allow it!" History is repeating itself and apparently with rather boring exactitude.

Then there was a third very serious incident which also split the Yishuv [Jewish population in Palestine] and the Zionist movement. This was when the Nazis first rose to power, when the question of the "transfer" was to be decided. Most of us still remember that incident. It seems to me that a number of the figures who took part in this drama also took part in that one. But it is not only a matter of personalities; if we compare the speeches of then and now, we will find that there is no argument brought today which wasn't brought then. They said that it was an abomination, selling the honor of Israel for monetary gains, enabling Hitler to enter international society. And to them it was obvious that Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and Ribbentrop's agreement with Molotov were a direct result of the "transfer" which was arranged to salvage Jewish property. Almost twenty years have passed since then and we can ask ourselves a simple question: assuming for a minute that we went the way of negation, and the property which was salvaged had remained in the hands of Hitler's destruction machine and we hadn't been able to absorb the German immigration which was to become the cornerstone in the upbuilding of the Yishuv....

Y. Bader (Herut): That is not true. The money was brought in in a different way.

P. Lavon (Mapai): ...Whom would we have helped by doing that? Hitler or the Jewish people? The decision was not easy for any one of us. We did it because the spark which was kindled within the Zionist movement developed into a flaming awareness of the centrality of the Land of Israel in the life of the Jewish people, of sovereign responsibility even before the state was actually ours. This was a positive historic awareness, which built up Jewish strength, the strength of the Jewish population.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Did the "transfer" really build up Jewish strength?

H. Landau (Herut): You opened the way for Hitler.

P. Lavon (Mapai): And while then too they called for the referendum and employed all sorts of stratagems, and intimidated us with generations past and also told us that the very foundations of Jewish morality were crumbling, today we can say—with a clear conscience—that our

decision was a very positive one from the national, political point of view in terms of saving the nation and building up Jewish strength.

In this debate there has been a rather inflationary use of "morality" and "conscience," clearly referring to public morality. This is a point worth looking into. Forgive me for speaking harshly. The point of this discussion is not to say nice things to each other. It seems to me that the opposition in this case represents an alliance of public immorality: the honorable Rabbi Nurok with his special argument and his unique background, joining together with MK Wilner whose condemnation of the Bonn Government stems only from its failure to accept the political will of the Soviet Union. Had Adenauer only accepted the suggestion of Grotewohl [Otto Grotewohl, former Social Democrat, who on 5 October 1949 became the First Prime Minister of the DDR—N.L.] to be elected for at least one year as the Chancellor of a united Germany, MK Wilner would have had to prove, in his newspaper and in his speech, that Herr Adenauer had become a progressive factor. This argument might be decisive for MK Wilner but not for the people of Israel nor the State of Israel.

Esther Vilenska (Maki): The determining factor for you is the pressure from Truman.

P. Lavon (Mapai): Please use other arguments. That one is rather boring.

If Rabbi Nurok [Mizrahi] is joined, parliamentarily, by MK Wilner [Maki] and they are both joined by MK Rubin [Mapam] and then by MK Bernstein [General Zionists], then I allow myself to say that this alliance is fundamentally deceitful as it glosses over the unfathomable truth which divides them; the position of each one and the reasoning behind it is diametrically opposed to that of the others, and there is nothing which unites them.

M. Begin (Herut): Your alliance with the clericals is also deceitful.

E. Shostak (Herut): What is it that connects you with Rabbi Feldman?

P. Lavon (Mapai): Talking about collusion, it seems to me that in terms of morality and conscience, this is collusion par excellence.

Let us consider the position of Mapam. Simply stated, and leaving out extraneous phraseology...with respect to East Germany, a predetermined attitude of forgiveness even without reparations; regarding West Germany, no contact and no reparations, just a single demand: that they accept the rule of the Cominform. Our attitude towards both East and West Germany is the same: reparations from all but forgiveness for none. Make up your minds: if we accept the theory that every German-born person is a Nazi, then the fact that just recently someone took on a particular color doesn't change anything. If the problem is a Jewish one, then it makes no difference which regime is in power where.

The position which you are attempting to foster has nothing to do with Jewish interests; it is related to a world view, to the socialist philosophy, to a political philosophy, but it has nothing to do with Jewish interests.

It is only a few years since the World War. The Ukrainian nation was educated in the doctrines of the Soviet Union not for three but for almost thirty years. And when the shake-up came, what happened to the Soviet Ukraine? What did the masses of the Ukrainians do?

Meir Wilner (Maki): They saved Jews.

Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (Mapai): That is a lie.

P. Lavon (Mapai): The Ukraine was one of the European countries in which the slaughter by the indigenous masses was nearly total. Despite our historical experience, you want us now to accept the theory that if a Christian Socialist of the Adenauer type is a member of the East German government, then he is 'kosher' as are the thousands of Nazis and SS in the various levels of government in the people's democracies; 'kosher' and freed of all obligation. They deserve our unlimited love and prior pardon. But to claim reparations from that part of Germany which is at least willing of its own accord to pay, that is taboo by definition. Why? We are told that if we claim and receive reparations from West Germany, this will bring the German army into the army of Europe. Dear Lord, are you really so naive? Do you think the Jews of this country so naive that they believe that this question of whether the German army will or will not become a part of the greater European army—we do have an opinion on this matter—is really dependent upon the reparations?

Mordechai Ben-Tov (Mapam): It means a great deal.

P. Lavon (Mapai): No, sir, because if it is a matter of finding an alibi for the nations, then Adenauer, having said what he said, even if Israel decides in the negative, the Germans will have achieved the desired effect without having done anything to return that which they plundered....There is a growing competition between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers, a general and all-encompassing competition for the sympathy of the Germans, and the Soviet Union is not far behind in the race. According to your theory the West needs an act of purification for Germany, and that effect (if there is value to an effect) has been achieved by Adenauer's statement; our rejection would only strengthen it. But it is ridiculous to assume that questions central to the international life of this mad, quarrelsome world could be decided by our position in respect to reparations. We can only determine one thing: what is essential to the Jewish people and what is just; what is the State of Israel, as the body responsible for the fate of the nation, entitled and obliged to claim from the German people?

I could understand it if the opposers said: No reparations; only revenge, for the debate would at least be to the point. But all these speeches....

...All I hear here is rhetoric. They say "revenge" with nothing to back it up; they use the word "Amalek" without anyone knowing what the reference is. "Revenge" is a very real thing.

M. Begin (Herut): The revenge will be very real.

P. Lavon (Mapai): Don't try to frighten me and the others so much. You know I have a weak heart.

There is a lot of talk of national honor; I am sorry to say that this is also empty talk. "National honor" is only words, a phrase which is easily tossed around. "National honor" demands real input, it is not a matter of artificially boasting of how respectable we are. Honor expresses itself in doing.

A. Altman (Herut): The thing to do is not to talk.

P. Lavon (Mapai): Tell that to your friend Begin.

...
I want to emphasize: this is the first time in the history of the Jewish people that the murderers feel some compulsion to return at least a part of the plunder. I say: the honor of the nation and its revenge lie in this, that the German people work in order to clothe, to rehabilitate, to cure, and to house masses of immigrants in Israel.

S. Mikunis (Maki): You should be ashamed of yourself! They will clothe and rehabilitate you?

P. Lavon (Mapai): Revenge and national honor, insofar as the German nation will have to work in order to assist in the economic consolidation of the State of Israel, because the only possible revenge and the only possible national honor are related to the amassing of our strength and all the rest is empty rhetoric. If the entire nation was not destroyed in the Holocaust, and our hope was not utterly destroyed, it is only because of one thing: by virtue of the renaissance of the center of Jewish strength, the State of Israel. We need strength, more and more strength, more and more Jews, a healthier nation, a stronger state, able to withstand the stormy seas, because the historic answer to the designs for the elimination of the Jewish people lies in a healthy nation and a strong state.

We shall approach this claim for reparations with heads held high, as the messengers of the Jewish past, present and future, loyal to the sole truthful voice of Jewish history: healing the wounds, gathering in the exiles, the consolidation of the state and its economic strengthening, and the reconstruction of the nation.

(The session was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.)

8 January 1952 (10 Tevet 5712)

...
Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members of Knesset, I feel obliged to open my remarks with a word of appreciation for those hundreds of boys, loyal and devoted to the State of Israel who, in police uniform, formed a wall around this House and defended its honor and that of the state; their wonderfully proud stand served as a warning to all those who might wish to consider raising a hand against this country's independence.

I have no intention of entering into a debate with the faction responsible for yesterday's scandal. Yesterday, we heard the leader of that faction say, from this very podium, that until now we have existed only by virtue of his grace and that despite the fact that his faction was not pleased with decisions taken by a majority of the Knesset, they nevertheless most graciously granted it their recognition.

Haim Landau (Herut): With our blood we created this Knesset for you and we are not seated here as a favor.

Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: Until now, he has graciously kept his boys, his disciples, quiet but yesterday he decided otherwise. We shall know how to protect our independence from the attacks of strangers and if necessary—may it never be so—from internal attack as well. We have the forces to do it.

H. Landau (Herut): Again talking about force.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: You will eventually have to give an accounting.

M. Begin (Herut): You too, Sir, will have to give an account of your crimes.

Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: I do not intend to argue with the members of Mapam either. For it seems to me that on this subject, as in others, we do not share a common ground; since my colleagues and I have one and only one criterion: the Jewish one, I cannot argue with people who are bound by other criteria. It makes absolutely no impression upon me that somewhere, clandestinely, MK Bar-Yehudah [Mapam] objected strenuously to the fact that he was represented in Berlin, while nothing was heard publicly about his objection.

Aaron Zisling (Mapam): Aren't you ashamed to compare negotiations with the Nazis to participation in the Internationale?

Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: I had the honor of heading a delegation to the Conference of the Socialist Internationale held in Zurich in 1947, and it was only because the Israeli delegation would not agree to abstain but voted against, that the German Socialist Democratic party was prevented from becoming a member.

As far as I am concerned, there is one rule regarding the German people. Every German, whether in the East or the West, is guilty in my eyes. It may be that there are those exceptional ones who have not sinned, but I am not yet ready to go and look for them and I am not yet prepared to give a certificate to this effect to even one of them, be he in the Easternmost circles or in the West. I am left with only the Jewish criterion which tells me that each one of us must ask himself why we have paid such an awful price, why were we, such a small people, the recipients of so much of the awful cruelty which was visited upon the world? And there is only one answer: we were weak, we were not independent, we did not have a state of our own. We asked various nations, in the East and in the West, to protect us, but not a single nation in all the world protected us. A part of our people lived in this country but we were not an independent state as yet; nonetheless, this was the only place where Jews qua Jews were enlisted in the war against Hitler. We did as much as we could but it wasn't very much. I very much want to refrain from making too much use of the names of those who are no longer alive.

And I am forced to ask myself: what is our obligation in light of this great tragedy which has befallen us? First and foremost, it obligates us to be strong, as a basis for all the rest. We must be strong not only because in that way we will truly honor the memory of those who were murdered, but rather in order to prevent the recurrence of such a thing in the life of the Jewish people. And I believe that that was the final wish of our saintly ones. They slaughtered us and cremated us because we were weak and we can only prevent this if we are truly strong. This must be the primary imperative for every Jew who is truly devoted to the State of Israel and believes in its future, and is not simply exploiting the memory of those who are no longer with us, for the purpose of the debate.

What was the situation? Had we been an independent state at the time of the Second World War, and had our army fought against Hitler together with the many armies in the world which did so and had it entered Berlin together with the armies of the East and the West, then we would have done what all those countries did: each state took from that cursed country what rightly belonged to it. We did not do this because we were only groups of Jewish fighters within other armies. Therefore I say: this is rightly ours, not by the grace of Mr. Adenauer or anyone else. It is ours.

I know that there is no comparison between the tragedies which have befallen us throughout our tragic history and the Holocaust brought upon

us by Hitler and the Nazis. There is no comparison, and yet how is it that after one or another of those pogroms in one country or another (and there are very few countries which have not seen uprisings against the Jews), it neither occurred to us to demand, nor to anyone else to offer, the return of at least some part of the plunder? What were we? We were not an independent nation, nor a state, we were not one of the nations, and who had to pay any attention to us? The most we could do was to elicit an expression of remorse from some neutral country. And that is where we invested all our efforts and our abilities, for decades—going around the world in search of some good non-Jew who would say to us: what a shame, my heart goes out to you. This is the first time that we can address the murderer and the slaughterer as an independent nation presenting its claim.

Someone asked, how can we sit down with them? We shall sit with them as a victorious nation sits with a vanquished nation. Our primary victory is that we are alive. It was Hitler's intention that not a single Jew remain alive. He certainly did not anticipate that after all that destruction there would still be Jews in the world—not a few individuals dependent upon the good graces of the non-Jews, good and bad, but Jews as a people, as a nation with a state of its own, a nation determining its own fate and building up its strength so as to prevent similar tragedies in the future. This was most certainly not his intention and in this we were victorious.... We have in the first years of our existence managed to build up our own strength and even to save and bring masses of Jews to this country and to assure them that tragedies of this kind will not befall them again.

I want to appeal to the members of the Knesset who talk about these things honestly and out of an aching heart: consider this—Jewish children, alive but endangered, old people who are still alive and in danger—are they less holy in our eyes because they are alive? Is there anyone in this hall who can get up and say, in full certainty, that he knows of a corner of the world where Jews live, outside the State of Israel, where their lives are absolutely safe? Those Jews—children, women and men who have remained alive—don't we owe them anything? Doesn't their being alive obligate us to save them with all speed?

Those Jews have only one salvation—this country. We must strengthen ourselves in every way in order to save them quickly and to put all our means at their disposal. There is no more sacred obligation, there is no more Jewish obligation, there is no more patriotic obligation, there is no prouder obligation for a Jew than this. And we shall demand that which is rightfully ours and the people responsible for the Government of Israel, members of that government, have proven both in the past and in the present, even before we achieved our independence, that they know how to speak proudly, with Jewish pride, with the non-Jews. And I have no doubt that we shall be able to sit down with our arch-ene-

mies in a way which will add strength and honor to the people of Israel and not the opposite.

M. Begin (Herut): It will bring us honor to sit down with the Germans?

Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: We shall demand the Jewish property which they are holding. It is rightfully ours and we need it in order to strengthen Jewish life and save living Jews. We shall demand this forcefully and with all the pride and the honor of a Jew and an Israeli.

Obviously, it is possible to mix all sorts of things together—friendship, forgiveness—but this is pointless and without logic, it is unnecessary and it will not happen. There is no one who is in favor of making this claim who would dare even to think of such a possibility, of negotiations which would in any way obligate us to any one of these things.... We shall sit down with the representative of Germany not for peace nor for friendship, nor for forgiveness, nor for forgetfulness. The Jewish people will never forget this, there cannot be a single Jew who will forget.

...
There are people in this hall who are in favor of reparations but not on the basis of direct negotiations. Let us ask others to do it for us, they say. But we have asked, and some of those to whom we turned have told us that they are not prepared to do so. And there is one Great Power which has not responded at all, a Power in whose capital city one sees an abundance of German merchandise offered for sale—I am not sure if it comes from East or from West Germany. I cannot imagine that Moscow considers it a slight to her honor to take any merchandise which she can from West Germany; on the contrary, and rightly so, she considers it an obligation since Hitler caused no little destruction in the Soviet Union. And I ask myself—and there are other people here who should certainly do likewise—what is going on here?

Why is it that it is the Soviet Union which didn't consider it necessary even to respond to us? Why didn't they tell us: Go to East Germany and negotiate with them, since they know that East Germany won't make a move without Soviet agreement. That particular door is closed for the present; are we going to reconcile ourselves to that? No! We shall claim what is ours from East Germany as well...exactly as we do from West Germany.

I can understand that there may be people who, out of genuine pain, cannot accept this conclusion, but that is a far cry from the weird philosophy which says that logic is invalid...that there must be a "tragic contradiction" between the heart and the mind, as we have heard from the circles of the Hashomer Hatzair. There is no such necessity; sometimes there is such a fissure and that is bad indeed, but it does not have to be so. In this instance, both the Jewish heart and simple logic dictate that we tell those who murdered and plundered that in this world in which no

one is prepared to aid in the doing of justice, that we rejoice that we are no longer dependent upon the favors of others. We are overjoyed that we need no longer run about in the corridors of other nations and in the different congresses to seek out protectors who will do something for us. As a free independent nation which took this task upon itself, it is incumbent upon us to secure the lives, the security and the honor of the people of Israel; as the representatives of a proud people we shall go honorably to claim from the murderers that which is ours! In order that we become stronger and survive.

(Session adjourned.)

9 January 1952 (11 Tevet 5712)

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: ...In closing I wish to say that all this moralizing about non-forgiveness and non-pardon and neo-Nazism is directed to the wrong address....On its own initiative, and without any urging from the Opposition, this Government took up the standard within the United Nations of the fight against the Nazi legacy, against its very existence, both in West and East Germany. Five speeches were made on this subject by the Israeli delegates in the course of the present General Assembly convening in Paris.

Jacob Riftin (Mapam): The vote reflected it.

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: Correct. The distance between us and the East, in our approach to the question, was like the distance between the East and the West, but we nonetheless voted with the East because we came to the same conclusion on this specific point. They claimed that it was an insult to the German nation to send a Commission of Inquiry to investigate whether the latter was ready for elections; that it is a culturally superior nation and this would be a mark on its honor. We asked, what is the role which the German people is to play in the future course of human history, in light of its past. We were not caught up by racism and the wholesale condemnation of an entire people. We pointed out that time and again this nation has been overwhelmed by evil forces which shook the European continent and led to bloody world war, murdered whole nations and plundered vast countries. What assurance do we have that the German government will not do so in the future as well? We presented the German problem as the problem of the future of world peace. The government of Israel has no intention of deviating from this position and any negotiations which it will conduct will be confined to the question of reparations, the return of that which was looted. There is no question here of recognition or the establishment of relations. But it does involve contact which may be

unavoidable if we are to achieve this restitution of stolen property. The State of Israel stands before the German nation, before whatever German government there is, before any representative of Germany, as a victorious witness to the historic failure of Nazism, because Nazism intended to humiliate us totally and we are now one of the family of nations, while the heirs of the Nazis are left pounding on the gates for admittance. Nazism attempted to destroy us but, as we said at the Assembly, we fought back and we are alive.

Today we are an independent state. How can it be humiliating for us if the heirs of this same Nazi regime sit down in some neutral capital to negotiate with the representatives of an independent Jewish state whose very appearance represents the absolute failure of the Nazi mission?

I wish to conclude with an announcement in the name of the Government: the Government is of the opinion that it would be for the best if the Knesset would accept its suggestion and transfer to the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee the determination of future action with regard to the claims for compensation.

Haim Landau (Herut): Why are you trying to avoid presenting a clearcut motion here? You have already stated in the debate what you intend to do.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: No one is trying to avoid anything.

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: ...Furthermore, I hereby declare in the name of the Government: Firstly, that the Government remains firm in its determination that the responsibility for the destruction of the Jewish masses in Europe lies with the German nation in its entirety;

Secondly, that the Government does not see any convincing signs that anti-Semitism has been eradicated in Germany, either East or West, since the war;

Thirdly, that we do not consider reparations as an overall cleansing of the slate; the reparations claim is no more than a claim for the restitution of part of the property stolen from the Jews. The satisfaction of this claim cannot nullify the Nazi atrocities or the vestiges of those atrocities within the German people.

...

Zeev Sheffer, Chairman: The results of the voting are as follows: Out of a total of 120 Members of Knesset, 4 were not present at the time of the vote, 5 abstained, 61 voted for Motion A (to give the Foreign Affairs Committee the authority to determine the action to be taken under the given circumstances) and 50 voted for Motion B (the Knesset rejects the motion to conduct negotiations between the Government of Israel and Germany regarding reparations).

Official Language Bill

Introduction

Under the British Mandate there had been three official languages in Palestine—English, Arabic and Hebrew. All three languages were permitted in courts of law; laws and proclamations were published in all three, with the English text determinant in case of dispute.

That law had been abolished by the Knesset, but no new law had yet taken its place. Some of the problems involved were aired in the course of a preliminary debate on a private member's bill of a member of Herut.

Sitting 102 of the Second Knesset

2 July 1952 (9 Tammuz 5712)

Esther Raziel-Naor (Herut): Mr. Chairman, Honorable Knesset, the motion which I have the honor to present to the House in the name of my faction...was first tabled on the 11th of Kislev (10 December 1951), just short of seven months ago. This proposal has been on the table for such a long time simply out of bad luck and as I had no intention of withdrawing it, I could do no more than wait patiently until it came up for debate.

This proposal—the Official Language Bill—is intended to legally establish Hebrew as the state language, and to determine that MKs shall not use any other language in carrying out their duties in the Knesset and its committees. In the working of the rest of the official institutions of the state, in the ministries, the law courts, the local councils and for didactic purposes in the schools, the use of foreign languages will be permitted according to specific need. As the highest authority, the Government shall be authorized to issue regulations from time to time determining the use of foreign languages, in accordance with this paragraph.

This law is intended to repair a serious breach in our public life by administrative regulation. Every country diligently protects its language and is concerned that the people speak in their own tongue. For language is symbolic of the uniqueness and independence of a nation. The special situation of the Jewish people—dispersed, stateless and lacking in any sovereign framework throughout a very long period in the course of its history, calls for the energetic and forceful preservation of this principle. If we scrutinize the position of foreign languages in our literature and in the so-called “arts,” and if we see the large number of foreign-language newspapers whose presence foster alienation, then

we shall be able to appreciate the real importance of this law. There are people who have lived here for decades who have not yet learned to read a Hebrew newspaper; they have an English or even a German paper, and what is more, they are proud of the fact that they read foreign papers. The question of the absorption of immigrants does not consist only of arranging housing, of finding work and of supporting one's family; it is much more serious than that. The acute spiritual crisis facing the nation is of no less importance than the economic crises, and it is in this context that we must accord to the state language a position of importance and respect in the life of this nation residing in its own land. It is clear that if this motion is passed and it is determined that Hebrew is indeed the state language, we will still be faced with the problem of the acquisition of the language. However, the very fact of the law's existence will bring home to all those who are not capable of speaking or of reading and writing, the status which the Hebrew language has in the country, and no one will think that he can live here for decades without feeling any obligation to first acquire a rudimentary knowledge of the language, which he would certainly have felt had he chanced to live anywhere else in the world.

There is yet another side to this issue. Israel, the State of Israel, is not a bilingual state, just as it is not a binational state. It is the State of Israel and the position of the Hebrew language in it must be secured. I take the liberty of reminding you of the debate in the House Committee regarding passes for Members of Knesset. Because of a self-deprecation complex which revealed itself among certain MKs, the Hebrew word "Knesset" was removed from these passes and the members were issued with blank passes with some picture writing on them such as was common before people knew how to read and write. I am thankful to those who fell prey to this complex for not also demanding that the emblem be removed from above the entrance gate.

The Hebrew language must be recognized in the State of Israel as the official state language, and I propose that this recognition find its expression in law.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: The Government does not accept the proposal presented by Herut as the basis for a law concerning the state language. The Government will introduce a motion concerning the official language—obviously the Hebrew language—at the appropriate time. That motion will take into account the double necessity which immigration has created: masses of immigrants come here who do not know Hebrew and it is impossible to shut their mouths and to pre-

this community during the transition period should be made to assist this process of acquisition.

There is one respect in which we are in fundamental disagreement with Herut's motion. We reject the premise that the Arab citizens be forbidden to use their Arab language, if they so desire and wherever they desire, even in the Knesset. Israel's clear policy is to help all its inhabitants to acquire the Hebrew language, including its Arab minority. And the Arab children want to learn Hebrew. But in no way will we forbid the Arabs the use of their language, even in the Knesset.

It is true that this is not the practice in most of the world's parliaments but we are not obliged to learn everything from others. There are a few important things which we have taught the world, and we all ourselves to set an example for a humane attitude to the language of the minority.

The state should see to it that every Arab child learns Hebrew just as all children in Israel do and if an Arab Representative wishes to speak Hebrew in the Knesset—more power to him, but should he wish to speak Arabic, this is also his right, and it is not in any way dependent upon whether he knows Hebrew or not.

I am sure that there is no need to explain why Hebrew is the state language; the State of Israel is a Jewish state which is symbolized by the Law of Return and the Hebrew language. The state must see to it that Hebrew is not only the official language, but that the necessary tools be created by which it can be taught to all the immigrants and inhabitants of the country, without depriving the Arab minority of its right to its own language. These are the principles upon which our proposal will be based.

(The Knesset voted not to place the motion on the agenda.)

Motion of No-Confidence by Mapam

Introduction

On 15 July 1952, President Truman signed the appropriation bill of the Mutual Security Program for military, technical and economic aid to members of NATO and most other non-communist countries, under which Israel was to receive over \$70 million for resettlement of Jewish refugees and technical assistance. Suspecting a secret political commitment to NATO in return for arms—Mapam presented a motion of no-confidence on 27 August 1952, which was defeated by an overwhelming majority. In fact, Israel did not receive any military aid from the U.S. until some ten years later.

Sitting 128 of the Second Knesset

27 August 1952 (6 Elul 5712)

Yizhak Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Honorable Knesset, we find it quite impossible to be party to the conspiracy of the Government, in conjunction with the parties of the right in this House, aimed at deceiving the public regarding the new obligations which the Government has undertaken in the matter of the acquisition of military equipment in the United States. Information was furnished to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee and a debate was held. But this information is intended solely for the members of the committee, as we know. We are of the opinion that the issue must be subjected to public scrutiny and that that step, as well as any future steps, must at the very least receive the approval of this House as the representative of the inhabitants of this country.

This demand which we first put forth in the Committee did not receive the support of the Coalition members or of those parties which in the past few days, since the recess, have slipped into a jovial pact with the Government, moving in the direction of deepened reaction, and cooperation with the war-mongering elements in the world.

I know of no other country in which this subject was not debated at the parliamentary level, be it in the American Congress where the relevant law—the Mutual Security Act—was adopted in 1951 and then amended in 1952, as well as in the people's democracies which benefit

still not sure whether the majority of this House favors the holding of an open exhaustive debate on the subject.

I am allotted only a few minutes—a rather peculiar procedure, by the way—in which to explain the grounds for our motion of no-confidence in the Government which signed an agreement for the acquisition of arms against payment, following its presentation of a request for free military aid under the Mutual Security Act of 1951/2.

In so doing, I am also fulfilling the function which generally, even in people's democracies, devolves upon the Government, that is to supply the House with the necessary information.

On 23 July 1952, a representative of the Israeli Government signed an agreement with a representative of the United States for the purchase of arms. The impression given to the public by the Government or its spokesmen was that this was a normal commercial transaction: money paid, arms received and that is all. But information was presented to the Committee according to which this acquisition, fully paid for, was also related to the signing of a treaty between the two governments, a treaty which was signed without its contents being revealed, before or after the signing, to either the Knesset or the public. This treaty determined in essence that even these arms, fully paid for with our money, will not be available to the State of Israel or its government; even these arms are under the primary jurisdiction of the United States Government with respect to their use...we will be forced to participate in the arrangements for regional group defense, in accordance with the interests of the United States or, in their terminology: the interests of the United Nations. On the basis of this agreement Israel will be obligated to supply equipment and arms which it produces to a third party, if it is asked to do so. The equipment and arms thus acquired are designated not only for Israel's defense but first and foremost, for the internal security needs of the region or of any collective security zone in accordance with the stipulations decided upon by the United States Government and the Government of Israel. The Government of Israel will not, of course, be able to use these arms in any way it decides.

This is the first such treaty attached to arms acquired with our own money, which means that this is no ordinary financial transaction, of the sort which we have had with other countries at other times. This purchase involves a prior obligation to participate in a regional organization and in regional defense in accordance with the concept, fundamentals and principles laid down by that same law which gives us the right to make the purchase.

I am sorry about one thing and that is, that among all its obligations it does not include the obligation of the recipient government to translate the law and present it for public scrutiny, so that it is left to a member of the Opposition to do so. I have no time to present all the essential elements of the law to you, and must limit myself to the most vital ones.

The aim of the law, as determined by the United States Congress, is: "to maintain the security and to advance the foreign policies and to secure the general peace of the United States through aid to friendly nations." The law places certain conditions on nations which will be deemed worthy of this aid...the President must be convinced that doing so will serve the security of the United States. Among other things, the recipient must undertake to "take those measures—as mutually agreed upon—which are necessary in order to participate in the uprooting of elements causing international tension, to fulfill the military obligations which it has taken upon itself through bilateral or multilateral agreements to which the United States is party; to make its full contribution of men, economic resources, and services towards the development of the self-defense and general defense forces of the free world; to make efficient use of the economic and military aid provided by the United States. No country will receive aid unless it takes decisive steps to direct its full forces and resources towards its integration into regional defense plans and participation in programs the function of which is to maintain the collective security in that region."

The powers which this law grants to the American President, to the person who determines the terms of the aid and to the Secretary of Defense include, inter alia: to supervise the development and administration of plans and the mobilization of the recipient's war efforts and their intensification, including production, installations and the purchase of equipment in any country or group of countries which receive American military aid; to supply equipment and arms of the quantity and type needed to carry out the common defense programs. The administrator of the aid will see to it that all the necessary efforts be made within the recipient countries to establish industry for the production of mutual defense requirements, etc.; he will also insure that the recipient country mobilizes its full fiscal, budgetary, political and military resources as well as the capital needed for the immediate realization of the goals of this American Mutual Security Act. The American Secretary of Defense will determine the kinds of military equipment needed by the recipient countries and will be in charge of supplying it in a way which will enable its integration into the general security plans; the American Secretary of Defense will be in charge of supervising and of determining the way in which the equipment is utilized by the recipient countries, to which end he will appoint an American military committee which will be resident in the recipient country and will supervise its use of the aid it receives and he will supervise the training of the recipient

country's soldiers; he will be responsible for the manner in which the arms are transferred and the place of transfer, as well as the way in which the arms are used.

I recommend that the public become familiar with this law because as soon as we apply for aid under it, it ceases to be a law of a foreign country, and principles outlined within its clauses become ours by virtue of the obligation which the Government has taken upon itself. I ask that you be patient for just a few more minutes while I conclude my remarks.

The obligations which the Government is taking upon itself, or intends to take upon itself, are a negation of the country's sovereignty and its authority, in the determination of its own defense policy; they will in effect limit the country's freedom to enter into international relationships on the basis of decisions made by its authorized institutions. These undertakings make Israel a partner in a military pact controlled by the United States; they make the State of Israel the enemy of millions of Jews in the world; they make the State of Israel, both potentially and actually, a partner in the incitement to war against half of humanity.

We claim that this government did not have the public, moral authorization for this step. No one of the parties represented in this Knesset has gone to the voters with this program. The elections were held only 14 months ago and I have scrupulously reviewed all the statements made by the members of this government to their constituents—every one of them undertook to maintain the independence, sovereignty and freedom of decision of the country and not to accept obligations and laws of foreign powers. At that point at which the Knesset allows the Government to agree to the obligations resulting from the Mutual Security Act, the Government of Israel and the State of Israel cease to be independent not only in respect to foreign policy in general, but first and foremost in the determination of its defense policy and strategy and the establishment of its defense forces in the Middle East. We will automatically become a function of strategic non-defense interests; the United States has aggressive interests in this region, but absolutely no defense interests.

On this basis we move that the Knesset hold a full debate on the obligations already undertaken and those which the Government has already announced its willingness to accept, and express its non-confidence in the Ben-Gurion Government.

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: Honorable Knesset. In the formal sense, MK Ben-Aharon has dealt with a number of issues all at once, blurring the boundaries which divide them. On the one hand, he referred to the obligations which the Government has already undertaken and on the other hand, he has already guessed which obligations it intends to accept in the future.

Secondly, he quoted a law of another country—I do not know how exactly—while in the same breath presenting the contents of that law as

obligations which the Government is prepared to undertake in the future.

The result, whether intentional or simply due to lack of time, is total confusion.

So much for the formalities, except to point out that MK Ben-Aharon did say that the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security "did not support" the motion to bring the matter to the Knesset for debate. I assume that could he have said that the motion was postponed, he would have done so, as he is not one to sugar-coat his parliamentary expressions too much. The fact is that the Committee passed the decision regarding the making of a public statement in the Knesset as well as the question of when—before or after the recess—to make it, to the Government and the matter is still under discussion there.

MK Ben-Aharon allowed himself something else: while appearing to be honest and not to divulge that which the Government told the Committee, he used the opportunity to reveal a little bit, under the guise of generalities and to present the Knesset with his own summaries of the obligations which he claims that the Government has taken upon itself. I therefore wish to announce here that he has done so on the basis of a perversion of the facts and their true significance. For example, in stating that the Government would be subordinated to the dealings of a foreign state, since the use of these arms would be dependent upon instructions emanating from an outside source, he totally perverted the truth. Anyone listening carefully to his words would have noted the contradiction on the basis of what he himself said. He said that certain actions are dependent upon agreement between the Government of Israel and the Government of the United States—in other words, there is no question of total a priori agreement; rather, the Government is free, and everything depends upon agreement—we can agree and we can not agree—and the Government agrees only to those things which it considers essential and useful and not what someone else dictates to it.

Esther Vilenska (Maki): Why are you afraid to make this public? Why should Truman know it before the Members of Knesset?

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: So much for the formal aspect. Now I turn to the essence. The MKs representing Mapam in the Knesset are not experts on security matters and if not all, then at least most of them are hardly neutral when it comes to questions of armaments, but they do know that the State of Israel lacks the arms necessary for its defense. They also know that there is only one source from which to get that which is missing. This doesn't mean that we are assured of getting

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: For the purpose of defending the State of Israel.

M. Wilner (Maki): Not so—for the purpose of anti-Soviet aggression

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: The no-confidence motion originates with Mapam. On the basis of a foreign policy line to which they have committed themselves, the members of Mapam demand that the Knesset express its non-confidence in the Government, because the latter is attempting to get the armaments necessary for the protection of the homeland and for the maintenance of our independence....I am presenting the position of the Government which I am sure is also the position of most of the MKs. You cannot demand a full debate in the Knesset and ignore the fact that there is a parliamentary majority, which implies a majority of the nation, on this issue. There is no element of deceit, as the Knesset decided to transfer the debate on this issue to the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security....This is not the first time that Mapam has called for a vote of no-confidence. It did so before we received the financial and economic aid. They voted against the loan and the grant knowing full well how essential that money was for the existence of the state, to enable it to absorb masses of immigrants and build its economy. But Mapam places blind, stubborn loyalty to policies dictated from the outside, above the most vital needs of the State of Israel.

The Vote

For the No-Confidence motion 13

Opposed 60

(The motion was defeated.)

The Prague Trial

Introduction

A major portion of the arms vital for the defense of the Jewish population of Palestine, and subsequently the State of Israel, in 1948, had been purchased from Czechoslovakia. Although subsequently they cooled off considerably, Israel's relations with the CSSR in 1952 were still closer and more intimate than those with any other of the people's democracies.

This changed abruptly in the autumn of 1952, when many of the previous leaders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, including a number of Jews, were put on trial in Prague for a series of crimes including those of spying on behalf of Israel and conniving with Zionists. The inclusion amongst the accused of Mordechai Oren, a prominent member of Mapam who had gone to Prague on a party mission from Israel, made this trial particularly painful and poignant for that party, which had consistently advocated closer relations between Israel and the Soviet Bloc, and stood up for the latter whenever a dispute with the West and with NATO was on the agenda.

Sitting 141 of the Second Knesset

24 November 1952 (6 Kislev 5713)

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: Mr. Chairman, Honorable Members of the Knesset. The entire world stands once again in a state of wonderment and horror before the mirage in the form of a trial presented this time on the stage of a court of law in Czechoslovakia. Party leaders and captains of the regime, who only yesterday stood at the head of the camp and controlled the policies and fate of their country, are today represented for all to see as a band of traitors, deceivers and saboteurs. To our great amazement, the accused seem anxious to implicate themselves, acknowledging wholeheartedly every abomination and obscenity written in the charge sheet. This vision of moral suicide and self-humiliation is absolutely shattering for anyone who believes in the sanctity and spiritual power of the human personality.

This shameful drama is the first of its kind in one respect: Most of the accused are Jews, and the prosecutor took pains to give prominence to that fact and to relate their imaginary crimes to it.

Esther Vilenska (Maki): You are the ones who are giving it prominence!

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: The charge sheet, the course of the trial and its publication in the official Czechoslovak press are riddled with pernicious anti-Semitism.

Meir Wilner (Maki): Shame!

E. Vilenska (Maki): That is not true!

...

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: The entire staging of the trial is infused with inflamed propaganda and anti-Semitic incitement in the pure Nazi tradition....

E. Vilenska (Maki): Only "The Voice of America" presents the trial in this light....

...

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: The prosecution spread out a dark canvas of malice, crime and acts of enmity and destruction apparently planned or carried out by these Jewish enemies of the Czech nation. But it did content itself with their denunciation as Jews and attempted to relate this infamy to Zionism. It attached the label of Zionism to people who never were Zionists, some of whom had themselves persecuted Zionism most vehemently. It besmirched and slandered the Zionist movement as a whole—this movement of liberation and return to the homeland of the Jewish people—as a gang of mischief-makers and spies undermining the foundations of the Czech regime, dedicating themselves to the destruction of that country and deceitfully exploiting the property of its citizens for their own gains. It denounced the attempts of Jews—the survivors of the Nazi inferno—to return to themselves a tiny part of the vast property which was plundered from the Jews of Czechoslovakia by fraud and thievery. In its net, the prosecution caught Israeli citizens who had labored in the service of Czechoslovakia and its allies, and laid totally unfounded charges of sabotage against them.

E. Vilenska (Maki): How do you know that they are unfounded?

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: And finally it made accusations against the Israeli Ministers and Israel's authorized representatives, making them out to be conspirators in collusion with the enemies of Czechoslovakia from without and within, the destroyers of its economy and its security.

The Government of Israel does not consider it necessary to enter into a detailed factual rebuttal of the mesh of lies with respect to the actions of its members and representatives, in which the investigators and the Prosecutor General of Czechoslovakia have invested so much creative imagination. These libelous accusations are self-contradictory when held up to the light of simple logic. The lies which they con-

tain are clear for all to see and are refuted by cold facts. Israel has always had sincere sympathy for the Czech nation. Israel tried to establish and maintain friendly relations with the present Czech state. Israel received valuable help from Czechoslovakia during its War of Independence and paid in full for this aid. This was done with the knowledge of the official heads of the regime, including men who are today at the head of the Government. At a certain point, Israel entered into a commercial contract with Czechoslovakia based upon conditions which both sides considered fair. Israel had absorbed thousands of Jews who left Czechoslovakia legally, leaving most of their property behind them. The contract stipulated that a portion of the value of that property would be deducted from the price that Israel was to pay for goods it imported from Czechoslovakia. All these things were not done secretly but in full daylight; not as a conspiracy of swindlers working behind the scenes but by official negotiations held between the official representatives of the two states...for the agreed good of both sides. Those who represent the State of Israel have never been agents or spies. Only those for whom spying and sabotage are their daily fare could possibly level this false accusation against these people. Only those who see international relations as a bundle of evil intentions put together clandestinely could possibly make up these horrific tales about the Israeli Ministers, which only arouse scorn and mockery in cultured people in the free world. All these abominations which the prosecution is trying to attribute to the spokesmen of the State of Israel reverberate upon the indictors in any case. What does reveal itself in all this disgraceful story is the spiritual and ideological background of its authors.

History has passed judgement upon regimes which are in need of the monster of anti-Semitism in order to turn the attention of the masses away from their own troubles and from the failure of their government, and to turn their wrath against the Jews who serve as scapegoats. The liberation of Czechoslovakia from Hitler's armed forces is debased before the entire world by the attempt to revitalize his contaminated spirit there. This trial of indictment threatens the Jews of Czechoslovakia and of the neighboring countries as well. It is intended to make the State of Israel despicable in their eyes and to uproot whatever pride they have in being Jews. It is contrived to make the common people hate the Jews and to justify in advance all discrimination and persecution to which they might fall victim....

At this hour, our hearts are with the masses of our brethren who have been cut off from the State of Israel and from the rest of the Jewish people and who are forced to bear their fate in loneliness and quarantine. Even our voices will not reach them but all our concern is for them, for their welfare and their future.

Our people is endowed with a very long memory. It will never forget assistance given it in times of trouble, aid extended for its revival. The

Prague Trial has introduced an ugly black mark on the magnificent chapter of friendship which existed between the Czech nation and the Jewish people. It puts a heavy sad burden upon the common memory of the Jewish people.

...

25 November 1952 (7 Kislev 5713)

Peretz Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. It is no exaggeration if I say that the entire community is in a state of shock over the news of the last few days: the trial now being held in Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia.

Not all of us are shocked about the same thing but I would say that the vast majority is reacting to more or less the same thing. The gaping abyss which separates the East and West may not be primarily a matter of social structure or of economic systems alone; the difference is in the regime, which is so very far removed from us that we find it difficult even to understand the processes which are common practice there. We know that there have been trials in the past...which have been used in devious ways to eliminate political rivals....But what is really beyond understanding is that the accused plead guilty to things which no one can believe they are guilty of. Numerous explanations have been given for this but I will not discuss them here....What is most shattering is that this time the accusations were based for the most part on the fact that most of the accused are Jews, and this fact was also noted, so that the concepts "Jew," "Jewish descent" and "Zionist" have themselves become part of the guilt.

According to our information, there has been unusual emphasis placed upon economic policy conducted by the accused. Planning is not only a characteristic of the people's democracies; on this side of the Iron Curtain there are more than a few countries which have attempted economic planning and there have been more than a few failures, not necessarily the fault of the planners. On this side, however only those who try to cover up for the failure are convicted of sabotage, over there, failure itself is sufficient reason for conviction. And there is reason to believe that all this is aimed at finding a scapegoat for economic disaster. While these things happen throughout the world, this is the first such incident in a people's democracy and that is what is most shocking. You know that in Soviet Russia anti-Semitism is forbidden by law. This is the first time that the reins have been loosened and these dormant sentiments exploited. A law is required only when there is a need to repress destructive tendencies. A loosening of the reins is quite sufficient to stir up this dangerous movement, dangerous not only to us, and we are most concerned that this has been done so blatantly....

In this trial, anti-Semitic sentiments were aroused and they were permitted. A Jew was mentioned who is still in a high position but everyone knows that there are always Jews of that sort—even the accursed Goering kept a Jewish general on his staff, saying: I will decide who is a Jew. We are very worried indeed.

It is apparent that in the defense—whatever defense there was—there was an element of apology for the Zionist movement in that, to the sorrow of those who wanted to justify the Zionist movement to those who are now attacking it, it includes certain bourgeois reactionary elements. I would not bring this up today were it not for the fact that we must relearn something from this anti-Semitic outburst: that the hatred of Jews or anti-Semitism is not only one of the motivating factors of the Zionist movement, but also one of the things which the concentration of the people in its homeland is designed to cure. Indeed, this fact is not so accepted today—we are slightly ashamed to admit that anti-Semitism was also an important factor in the history of the Zionist movement—but look at what is actually taking place there now! Is this not a replay of things which we have already seen and heard; is this not how all the movements which culminated in the destruction of Jewish communities began? Do we not comprehend through this that there is a vast Jewish and Zionist solidarity, however forced—what Herzl called “the common enemy”—resulting from the hatred which affects all of us, irrespective of position or philosophy? And doesn't this also imply the need for national solidarity, the decisive factor when there is any question of loyalties?...

With respect to bourgeois reaction, there is much which could be said about the terms themselves....But the very fact that they were introduced...does it not imply a serious breach of the national Jewish and Zionist solidarity to which we are committed?

It seems to me that there are also political implications to this trial but I suggest—and I don't know to what extent the other speakers will agree with me—that we do not discuss this aspect today, but that we rather direct our attention to this frightening phenomenon which has appeared in Czechoslovakia for whose people we felt a sense of friendship. I certainly will not forget that they gave us assistance which was not available from any other country, at a time when it was very much needed, which is all the more reason why we are so pained that these things are happening there.

The Foreign Minister will himself reply to peculiar accusations made against himself, the Government, etc. I only wish to say that it is impossible to understand these accusations...every child knows that they cannot possibly be correct....

M. Wilner (Maki): So why do the accused plead guilty to them? (Laughter in the hall.) Laugh as much as you want, they have pleaded guilty.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I must admit that the Communists have interrupted very little, much less than I expected....We are unable to comprehend the fact that there are people who think that a certain part of the public will be impressed by these absurdities. If someone claims that the Foreign Minister authorized spying in Czechoslovakia, then the next question is: what does Israel have to gain from conducting espionage in that country? There are Arabs who claim that we want to conquer the entire East [sic!]. I don't know if they really believe it but as our neighbors, and for the time being our enemies, we can perhaps forgive them for it. But who in his right mind could imagine that we have any reason to send spies to Czechoslovakia?

M. Wilner (Maki): Were we in our right minds when we sent aid to the murderers in the Crimea?

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I did not intend my previous praise to be an excuse for future interruption. In any case, I am finished....I trust that the entire House will join in the expression of our bitterness and our great concern for the fate of the hundreds, thousands, possibly millions of Jews....

M. Wilner (Maki): What about concern for the Jews in the *maabarot* [immigrant tent camps]?

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Oh shut up! I am a very quiet person and I do not get excited quickly, but I cannot tolerate aspersions cast not even upon the honor of the Speaker or of the House, but rather upon their intelligence. Is this question, the question of whether we are concerned about the *maabarot*, is this the reply to our great concern for the fate of those Jews there?

I trust that the House will take part in our expression of bitterness and great concern.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: As Defense Minister since the establishment of the state and head of the Defense Department of the Jewish Agency before that, and therefore the person upon whom the responsibility for the supply of arms to the Yishuv and afterwards to the state devolved, I must correct a major error in the statement of the previous speaker—probably inadvertent as a result of insufficient knowledge—which is grievously injurious not only to the truth but also to those friends who came to our assistance in the War of Independence. I concur in MK Bernstein's assessment of the importance of the aid which we received from Czechoslovakia, but for some reason he added: “assistance which was not available from any other country.” This is incorrect. During that same critical period we also received assistance from somewhere else—I see no reason to expand on this point except to say that it came from a Western country—aid so vitally important that I

have my doubts whether we would be sitting here today, whether there would have been a single Jew left in this country, without it. It is this aid, as well as the aid from Czechoslovakia, which salvaged our independence and our very existence.

Eliezer Peri (Mapam): Honorable Knesset. I have the honor of making the following statement in the name of the United Workers Party (Mapam):

1. The United Workers Party is shocked by the attempt to include Zionism in general in the Prague trial, Zionism which is in its very essence a movement of salvation and liberation for the most persecuted of nations in its historic homeland. We vehemently reject generalized accusations leveled against the Zionist movement. The fact that there are reactionary forces at work in this movement, just as in every national liberation movement, does not in any way invalidate the progressive content of our national liberation movement. At the same time, the Mapam Knesset faction completely rejects the statement made by the Foreign Minister in the name of the Government which exploits the Prague Trial for the purpose of anti-communist agitation, thus serving imperialism in its preparation for aggression. We absolutely reject the accusation of Nazism applied to that military force which played such a decisive role in the routing of Hitlerism and the salvation of the survivors.

2. The United Workers Party considers itself to be an indivisible part of the revolutionary camp throughout the world, headed by the U.S.S.R. We stand unflinchingly by the side of the socialist countries and the people's democracies in their struggle for the realization of socialism and in their defense in the face of internal and external enemies. No attack and no amount of incitement will make us budge from our position to which we have been faithful this past generation and a half, and which has been tested most rigorously. Steadfastly, proudly and with pioneering dedication we will fulfill our Labor-Zionist mission just as we will remain loyal to our revolutionary-socialist course.

3. The State of Israel is the product of the movement for Jewish national revival and came into existence through an anti-imperialist war of liberation...its primary goal being the ingathering of the exiles of the Jewish people. Socialist countries and the people's democracies, in their decisive assistance in our struggle for independence, in the supplying of arms, and in the opening of their gates to the immigration of Jews, have written a glowing chapter in the history of the founding of the state.

The activities of reactionary forces within the Zionist movement and the State of Israel are a factor in the misrepresentation of the image of the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. But we state again and again that the presence of these reactionary forces against whose policies of enslavement to imperialism we shall increasingly struggle, does not give the prosecutors in the Prague trial the right to

besmirch the progressive course of our liberation movement, nor to connect the accused, who are detached from their people, with Zionism against which they have long fought.

To the forces of peace and socialism in the world we say, as emphatically as is at all possible, that our struggle on behalf of the Zionist solution of the Jewish national problem, the territorial concentration of the Jewish people in its homeland, democracy and the independence of the State of Israel, is compatible with freedom and peace for all progressive humankind, and that that struggle is deserving of their positive attitude and their greatest support.

4. The United Workers Party emphasizes once again that to its best knowledge, its member, Mordechai Oren, who was on a public mission, is totally innocent. We are convinced of the purity of his intentions and cannot imagine that he has carried out any pervidious activities against the Czech Government. We are certain that it is only a combination of tragic circumstances which led to the accusations leveled against him, and we look forward to his release and speedy return to the homeland.

Haim Landau (Herut): Are you ready to go there and attempt to get him released?

Mordecai Namir (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. I doubt that there is much which can be added to yesterday's statement by the Foreign Minister in which he expressed the outrage of the citizenry of Israel and of the entire Jewish world but in which he also laid great stress upon the efforts of both of them to establish and promote friendly relations with Czechoslovakia, an approach which continues to date, despite the bitterness of this hour.

The Foreign Minister dealt mainly with the Zionist and Jewish-human aspect of this monstrous trial and I agree with MK Bernstein that there will be other opportunities to discuss its other aspects....

There is one element, a psychological one, which has appeared throughout the trial, which involves a mixing up of commonly-held concepts, thus making communication impossible. This practice did not originate with the Prague trial...We know how that very tongue which sings the praises of dictatorship as a way of life and as a mode of government, and despises the democratic regime, labels dictatorship "democracy," war "peace," etc....Here too there is a confusion of concepts. One of the decisive points in the trial is the slandering of Zionism and of the State of Israel, despite the fact that those accused of the sin of Zionism include men who have for many years basically and totally opposed the Zionist movement.

At the very same time, there are those who remain in power, in whose name the prosecution speaks, who have publicly and whole-heartedly stated their sympathy with our state and the aim of our struggle. I

had the opportunity to visit Czechoslovakia, together with MK Kesseh [Mapai], just before the establishment of the state (approximately in March 1948), on a Histadrut mission to Eastern European countries, during which the following statement was made to us at the Government Palace and subsequently appeared in the official Czech Government publication and in our newspaper—*Davar*, 28 March 1948: "In the name of the workers of Czechoslovakia and in my own name, I ask that you bring warmest greetings to the workers of *Palestine*. The new Czech Government (installed after the February Revolution) not only intends to continue its traditional favorable attitude regarding the cause of [Jewish] Palestine but it believes that that friendship will also increase. The Government will remain loyal to its political line with respect to Palestine and will not prevent any Czech Jew from participation in its upbuilding."

This statement was made by Antonin Zapotocky, presently the head of that same Czech Government in whose name the prosecutor speaks about the accused, the Jewish people and the Zionist movement. Then, he was only Vice-Premier of Czechoslovakia.

It is a very great question indeed as to how this same regime reached the point of anti-Semitic incitement.

E. Vilenska (Maki): That is not correct. There is not now, nor has there been in the past, any anti-Semitic incitement in the Socialist countries.

M. Namir (Mapai): Why is there a need for such provocation, such as can be heard over the radio, in a country as cultured as Czechoslovakia whose inhabitants have a high level of civilization, both industrial and agricultural, much above that of the other countries of the Eastern Bloc? I do not think that those who have staged this trial hate the Jews on racial grounds. Apparently the present regime is so unpopular with the vast majority of the citizenry that it has to resort to incitement against Jews, to stirring up the darkest and basest instincts in order to arouse a wave of Czech national patriotic sentiment. No other reasoning can explain it. This is not some culturally backward nation; it has almost no uneducated, backward people who might be easily persuaded that their fighters and leaders of the last decades were traitors from the outset.

E. Vilenska (Maki): How do you know that they were not?

M. Namir (Mapai): In order to attain this goal, they apparently had to serve up the very strongest brew possible. There is a theory which says that it is possible to artificially arouse love for one object by concurrently provoking a deep hatred of another object. Only this could explain why they have resorted to this most despicable and dangerous device: anti-Semitic provocation. The Jews are apparently the only nation about which people will believe anything...for example, that they murder Christian children to satisfy some religious requirement associated

with the festival of Passover. This accusation simply would not stick with other nations. The awareness that by playing upon the "Jewish angle" it is possible to stimulate the darkest instincts and to achieve the greatest effect—only that awareness can possibly explain in some way the dark threatening sounds which we have heard in the last few days....I do want to devote a few words to the internal implications of this affair. We have just heard the statement of MK Peri, most of which related to Mapam's reservations with regard to the earlier statement by the Foreign Minister and to detailed praise of the people democracies....Members of Mapam, have you not yet made a reckoning with yourselves, with your own conscience? Do you not have something to do with this trial and with the proclamations being made there? Hasn't all your own libelous slander and vilification of the State of Israel, its Government and its policies, spouted time and again from this podium, provided some ideological and political fodder for the staging of the trial? I do not say that you brought it about—you don't have that much influence; but it would be a good idea if you would read over the things you have said here and which your emissaries say in international conferences, which blacken our name in those very circles....

There is yet another aspect which has not been taken into account....We know the propaganda system employed in those countries which relies almost entirely upon quotes. In the case of Israel, these are taken from *Kol Ha-Am* and *Al HaMishmar*. Have you ever thought about how many sleepless nights you have caused many Jews living in that region with your libels about the most beloved object buried deep in their hearts...how many spears you have plunged into the hearts of those Jews, how you desecrated their purest sentiments...the only information available to them coming from newspapers with Hebrew names. You have darkened their world more than once, a sin for which you will never be able to atone.

Isaac Ben-Aharon (Mapam): That is very base demagoguery.

...

M. Namir (Mapai): ...Mordechai Oren's trip to Berlin, where he was represented as an "emissary" of Israel, was made against the wishes of the Yishuv and of the Histadrut of which he is a member. MK Rubin also went there...these are our emissaries, whom we "sent" as it were. And yet they admit their fault—of course they do. Better men than they have done likewise.

Eliezer Shostak (Herut): Mikunis will also plead guilty.

M. Namir (Mapai): I will not argue with the Communist Party which from time to time arrogantly and unabashedly reveals its true nature. It is a puzzle to me how our good land bears you upon its surface.

M. Wilner (Maki): You use language which is too American!

M. Namir (Mapai): You are a fifth column, the open contemptible enemy of the people of Israel. (Shouts from the Maki benches.) Here you shall not silence our freedom of speech! We will say what we have to say!

E. Vilenska (Maki): You won't silence us either.

M. Namir (Mapai): However, to the members of Mapam I want to say: It seems to me that this time you will not get away with stuttering and evasion...

E. Vilenska (Maki): It's not for naught that you met with Truman.

M. Namir (Mapai): and glossing over this awful event with which we are living, day and night, with declamatory statements...

I. Ben-Aharon: And what are you doing now?

M. Namir (Mapai): solely about the personality of Mordechai Oren. Is he the only saint who has been falsely accused? There is another Israeli citizen there. I don't know him and I don't know if he is honest or dishonest. Mapam knows him better. Isn't he a human being? Since his interrogation does he speak any differently than Oren? Of course, there are those who have not pleaded guilty. Your Nahumi didn't have to admit to the libelous charges thrown at him in the Kostov trial in Sofia, because he is here. We have not heard as yet from Rafi Ben-Shalom. He too is not forced to admit to false accusations but can refute them ...because here there are no basement torture chambers.

M. Wilner (Maki): Slander! Libel! Vilification! (Shouts from Mapai benches: Shut up!)

M. Namir (Mapai): Members of Mapam, you shall not be allowed to evade the issue! You shall have to explain to us and to all normal people (so long as we have not been confined to a madhouse) one simple thing: Why is it that only the statements Oren makes about himself on the radio are false accusations while the statements of the others are not? You must give us a reasonable explanation. Have you had a chance to recover your wits? During the first few days it was impossible to find you....Today your newspaper carries the headline: Sharett attacks Czechoslovakia. Haven't we been attacked in these days? Until today there were no headlines...not for the trial itself nor for the information about the trial over three or four days, not even one headline about the prosecutor's slanderous attack on the State of Israel, not even as a matter of objective fact....But the nation will not let you off this time.

Meir Yaari (Mapam): Do you think that we are afraid of a witch hunt? (Shouts from the Government table and the Mapam benches.)

E. Peri (Mapam): Ben-Gurion, is this how you spoke about the Soviet Union in 1949?

Pinhas Lavon, Minister Without Portfolio: Is it forbidden to speak against the Soviet Union? Is it sacred? Is it the Sovereign of the Universe?

Yohanan Bader (Herut): Why have you abandoned Oren? Any one of you could have been in his place.

M. Namir (Mapai): MK Peri's statement was not a matter of "reservations"—that is an evasive parliamentary term—but rather a defection from the frontline defense of the entire Jewish people at this hour. That is its true definition....

E. Peri (Mapam): We shall not fight against the Soviet Union.

M. Namir (Mapai): I must say that the real educational danger to our youth is not posed by people like Mikunis and Wilner or even [Sneh] who catapulted himself from the highest echelons of the General Zionist leadership, reaching as low, in the spiritual sense, as the torture cellars of Pankratz Prison.

M. Wilner (Maki): The danger lies in joining in the anti-Soviet war effort.

M. Namir (Mapai): The greatest danger is not from these men but from the Zionists within Mapam, because you are blinding our youth, castrating them intellectually, poisoning their souls, confusing their way. You shall have to answer not only for your admission of Mordechai Oren's innocence. If there is still a god of Zionism, then you should beat your breasts openly and make full truthful confession for true sins, and beg forgiveness from the youth whom you have deluded and made miserable and have led into a spiritual prison. If you do not do so, then the people will judge you—and the judgement will be a just one, not like the judgement at Prague.

...

Menachem Begin (Herut): Honorable Knesset. I take the platform as one of the prisoners of Zion, the disciples of Jabotinsky and Borochoy, activists of Betar and Hashomer Hatzair who were required, after uncounted nights of interrogation, in the wee hours of the morning, to sign a statement prepared by the interrogator cum prosecutor cum judge: I hereby admit that I am guilty of being a Zionist.

I am here primarily to address myself to the young Hebrew, including those who wonder in shocked amazement: Is Mordechai Oren really a traitor and a criminal? And if he is not—then is that regime which Oren taught us to believe in criminal and traitorous?

This youth is aware of the fact and must keep it in mind that Slansky is not the first person who started out in his early youth unconditionally committed to Communism and ended up in the twilight of his days having been totally cut off from it. And he won't be the last....Likewise, Oren is not the first Hashomer Hatzair person to be faced with reality, not the make-believe reality of international congresses but that of the isolated interrogation chamber in which echo the words of the authorized representative of the Soviet regime: You are an enemy of mankind, worse than a murderer, the most dangerous of the servants of the bourgeois and imperialism in that you serve them deceitfully, behind the mask of revolutionary rhetoric.

Many have preceded Oren and many will get to the same place, if they follow in his footsteps. I have seen those who preceded Slansky and Oren. I saw them in their exhilaration and in their brokenness, at the peak of happiness and in the depths of despair. I have never seen, nor do I think that anyone else has ever seen, greater exhilaration or blacker despair. Indeed, there is nothing comparable to their tragedy in the history of human aspiration and remorse.

The shocked young people press on: If all the accused have indeed rebelled against the regime in the Hradcany or the super regime in the Kremlin, why is their admission not accompanied by a proud statement, appropriate to veteran experienced revolutionaries, to fighters with characters of forged steel: Yes, we have come to the conclusion that this regime, which we were instrumental in bringing into existence, is not beneficial to the people and if we must suffer or even die for our belief, we are prepared to do so, such is our belief. These people have indeed made such statements in the past and were prepared to give up everything for their belief....And they were not the only ones. Not in Prague nor in Warsaw nor in Moscow but in Jerusalem, before our very eyes, Hebrew fighters stood before the representatives of a mighty power and said insolently: this is our faith and if you put us on the gallows, we shall still be victorious. On the other hand, if they have not done anything against the Hradcany or against the Kremlin, they are nonetheless not doing what every creature born of woman would do, out of the instinct for self-preservation—for some reason, they are not shouting out, as did Dreyfus even after his trial: I am not guilty, I am loyal, my innocence will yet be known.

M. Wilner (Maki): For the reason that they are traitors.

Esther Raziell-Naor (Herut): You don't even understand the issue.

M. Begin (Herut): The spectacle to which we are witnesses is so far removed from the accepted concepts of humanity that those who attempt to comprehend what is taking place in the hearts of the accused take refuge in the mysterious and imagine the use of means of influence unknown to revealed science. For myself I have only to ask: Isn't there an injection

which will activate man's memory and cause him to speak for hours, to mention names and numbers—in order to realize that there are indeed horrors involved in the Prague affair but nothing mysterious.

Torture? The history of the Inquisition shows that there were more people who could not bear the torture than those who could. But there in Prague, there has not been a single person whose spirit has withstood the tortures of the body. And yet, in the past, there were many who were tortured but whose spirit remained unbroken.

At close quarters and from within I learned that it was something else which overpowered Bukharin, the foremost author of the ABC of Communism, and Garin, the Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, my neighbors in that hell-on-earth known as a "corrective labor camp." And that same thing overcame both Slansky and Oren. First of all—isolation. Not just your ordinary "incommunicado" which was already denounced by freedom-loving people even before the advent of "reactionary progress." This is isolation at its utmost, its most perfect: absolute isolation. The visit of a lawyer or a relation? Public interrogation? "Reactionary progress" mocks these prejudices; it still makes use of isolation. No newspaper, legal or clandestine, no pamphlet, no whisper of what the suspect/prisoner/accused/condemned man said. Thus, night after night, the awareness is brought home to the doomed man that resistance to the interrogator/judge is useless.

M. Wilner (Maki): That is the sort of thing that Goebbels used to say about Communism.

The Speaker, Joseph Serlin: MK Wilner, you are on the list and you will be able to have your say.

The Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett: There is nothing which you can say.

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Wilner, you may be there sometime and then you will know the truth. Under circumstances differing even a little bit from those I have described, the revolutionary knows and the fighter senses that his sacrifice is not for naught, that his willingness to make sacrifices, his position, his stance serves his belief. But under the circumstances which I have described, and which I have seen, the sense of mission is destroyed, any awareness of serving is rooted out and in its place there is implanted the growing awareness that there is no point to it all, that to sign or not to sign is no longer the question there.

When the lovers of Communism and its servants are put to the test in the interrogation cellar, another factor, peculiar only to the Communists, is added: isolation, which may well be the most decisive factor in the breaking of the spirit. Their whole world collapses. And they have no other, for Communism is their ideal and those who define that ideal

and decide how it is to be implemented say to them: you are a worm, a mad dog, will you tell us veteran Czekists that you are loyal to the party? Don't you realize that we know everything? And if you have any slightest shred of gratitude for all the good which the party did for you, than admit, reveal, tell and sign. It was from Garin, not from Wilner but from Garin, the assistant editor of *Pravda*, the secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, one of the great leaders of the Soviet Union, a Jew who at the age of 17 took the vow of loyalty to Communism, was caught by the Whites and tortured inexorably by them, withstood it, rose to greatness in the Soviet Union—it was directly from Garin, in the Arctic region, that I learned of this process. There was nothing left for him to fight for or suffer for either. He signed as well.

E. Vilenska (Maki): It is enough that you defend him; that is one of the proofs.

M. Begin (Herut): I will defend any innocent man who has fallen into the hands of tyrants. There is yet an additional third factor, spiritual or perhaps physio-spiritual. I refer to night interrogation. Or nights of interrogation. The withholding of sleep from the interrogatee. The order of things is as follows:

...The whistle calling for "Lights Out" pierces the air at sunset. The prisoners fall asleep. An hour or two later the door opens with a creak. Everyone wakes up. "Who is here? Hello" is heard in a whisper. The names are called out, the list is checked. That is that!

E. Vilenska (Maki): This is a witch hunt....

M. Begin (Herut): *Na dopros!* ("to the interrogation")! And the interrogation begins and does not end until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. At that hour, the prisoner is returned to the cell; laying his spinning head on the straw mattress, he falls asleep. But after only an hour, the air is pierced by the whistle for reveille. And there is no more sleep, for during the day it is forbidden even to doze off. And should the guard see you dozing off through the probing "eye" in the door—the Christian prisoners called it Judas, after Judas Iscariot—he would open the door and issue a warning: if you sleep, you will be put in solitary confinement.

Thus night after night the story repeats itself, night after night, weeks, months, unlimited time. A strange fog is created within the head of the interrogated prisoner and he longs for only one thing: sleep, a little sleep; if I could only sleep a little bit. Someone who has not experienced this eternal torture cannot possibly understand, for neither hunger nor thirst can be compared to that abysmal longing: to sleep, to sleep and nothing else.

And one night the breaking-point is reached, the signature is obtained. As long as it isn't given, there is no trial. And if it isn't given—Tuchzavsky never did sign—there is no trial but there is hell.

This time sons of our nation, citizens of our state fell victim to this system, possibly the most awful of the methods of the Inquisition.

We know that if Mordechai Oren did sin, it was not a sin against Czechoslovakia; if he committed a crime, it was not committed in Prague but in Berlin. And today he drinks the bitter cup, to the end. And we are very sorry for him indeed, just as we are sorry for his wife whose suffering is double and triple. And no matter what we think of him and his activities, we must defend him, for he is a citizen of the state and other citizens might have been in his position. While we cannot defend him physically, the least we can do is to give him moral assistance—openly. After Dimitrov was tried, public trials were conducted (and not particularly by the Communists) not of the accused but of the accusers, not of the man who stood in judgement but of the judges.

In this instance, as we watch an Israeli citizen writhing in pain, shall we not take the initiative—and if the members of his party won't do it then, then the other members of the nation will have to do it—and announce by way of open public trials here and abroad: this man is a victim of international intrigue, of an attempt at distraction, a victim of a regime which for all its enormous size is petrified lest its vassals—the Czechs, Hungarians, Poles and Russians—say that it is a Jewish regime, a regime which has sold out to the Jews. Shall we not say publicly: In this case, this man is innocent; it is his accusers, his judges, those who have broken him down, and his executioners who are guilty.

Secondly let us remember that each and every one of us could have been there. The interrogating judge said to me openly one night: Paragraph 58 of our Criminal Code applies in principle to everyone in the world. The only question is to catch the person. Therefore *nostra res agitur*—it is a matter of concern for us, for you, for every free man. Consequently we must approach the nations, through the United Nations, and suggest that that soul-destroying system of night interrogation, of withholding sleep from a prisoner, be denounced by international convention, proclaimed by international law as a crime against humanity and that all those who do this criminal thing will eventually be brought to justice.

M. Wilner (Maki): The Americans won't sign that. It is precisely the Communist bloc which will be the first to sign.

M. Begin (Herut): Ask Clementis about that.

The Speaker, J. Serlin: MK Wilner, I call you to order for the first time.

M. Begin (Herut): I don't know if this suggestion will be accepted...but it is right that it be aired both in the homeland and before the nations. And with respect to the relations between the State of Israel and Czechoslovakia, what is the subject of discussion among millions of Slavs today, not just Czechs: *Zid*. And the Russians hear the word *Zid*.

In Czech it is not an insult but in Russian it has a totally different significance.

E. Vilenska (Maki): The Russians saved the Jews and the state.

M. Begin (Herut): Among millions of Slavs the talk is about a "Jewish black-marketeer."

M. Wilner (Maki): Why are you inciting against the Slavs?

M. Begin (Herut): The first step is to raise the level of Israel's representative in Czechoslovakia to the same level as that of Czechoslovakia's diplomatic mission here....

I cannot but close with a few words directed to Oren's colleagues. We heard your statement and it pains me a great deal to say this but you have abandoned your comrade. Look here. Were it not for Oren's involvement in the Prague Trial, you would have said that it is unsullied, truthful and just; that the accused are all traitors, Judases, imperialists. So is there a double truth? Does justice have two faces?

Secondly, stop casting aspersions on your fellow Jews...for one day it will be your turn. Remember, there is nemesis in history.

Thirdly, learn...that in the Hebrew language, "homeland" has no plural. A nation cannot have two homelands, just as a man cannot have two natural mothers.

And I must say to Oren's "students," the shocked youth: Your leaders have called you from afar to raise the standard....And you have seen how your mentor Mordechai Oren clasped this flag to his heart, swore fealty to it, and what remains of this flag—only the pole! That same pole which beats into his head night after night: traitor, spy, criminal, Apache.

For the sake of Oren's honor, if not his freedom; for your own sakes, for your own souls, for your future—drop this flag, the flag of Pankratz. Look at the military dictatorships which are closing in upon us, the anticipated danger to our very existence, remember the mission of the generation of the "beginning of the redemption," the mission of the liberation of the homeland, the redemption of Jerusalem, the ransoming of that nation which you continue to refer to as "the most persecuted of nations." Raise the standard, carry the flag, the one and only flag, and "let not a Government of two kinds of stuff mingled together come upon thee" [Leviticus 19:19].

Meir Wilner (Maki): Honorable Knesset. As part of their preparation for war against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, the American millionaires and their "hangers-on" are attempting to infiltrate spies and saboteurs into the communist parties in those countries in order to undermine the popular-democratic regimes from within, to lay the groundwork for the return of capitalism—as in Yugoslavia—in order to turn these same countries into war bases like Yugoslavia. In

Prague, the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Czechoslovakia, where socialism is being built up, a trial is presently underway against the Slansky/Clementis gang of spies and traitors. As is usual in such cases, when spies working in the service of the war-mongering imperialists are exposed, and their designs to destroy the people's democracies are thwarted, a hypocritical wail of the jackals is heard from the imperialist camp. But the facts contradict their demagogic propaganda. Everyone knows that the American Senate has officially budgeted one hundred million dollars for espionage, acts of sabotage and murder within the Soviet Union and the people's democracies. All the various espionage services available to the capitalist countries, those of Britain and France as well as America, are used for the execution of this contemptible work....

When the conspiracy against the Democratic People's Republic of Czechoslovakia came to light, Czechoslovakia's distinguished President, Clement Gutwald, announced that his country would not be a second Yugoslavia, that the Czech peoples would not allow the return of capitalism, or the conversion of their country into a base for aggression against the Soviet Union. The Czech nation under the leadership of the worker's class and the Communist Party is keeping this promise with honor.

Foster Dulles, the initiator of the Korean War who was appointed Secretary of State by Eisenhower, has just announced that he hopes, through espionage and sabotage, to cut the people's democracies off from the democratic peace camp....Anyone who is interested in world peace, upon which peace for Israel is also dependent, must welcome the scuttling of the imperialistic warmongers' designs against Czechoslovakia....In accordance with the system of "catch the thief," the imperialistic propaganda organs have begun spreading the absurd provocation that the socialist revolutionary forces are supposedly anti-Semitic. And who makes this outcry? Those same circles which encourage anti-Semitism in the United States, which free the Nazi war criminals, which reestablish the Nazi Wehrmacht with the Hitlerite generals at its head. The Mapai newspaper *HaDor* has fallen so low as to defend Gestapo people such as [Josef] Frank who appears in the trial as a member of Slansky's gang. The Foreign Minister accuses the prosecution of anti-Semitism but it is led by the Czech Minister of Justice Reis, himself a Jew. And on what do the slanderers base their statements? On the radio known as "Free Europe" paid for by the American Senate and supported by a ragged band of "pogromchiks," Eastern European Jew-baiters. So you see, there is no limit to the depths one can reach when one supports the policies of the American war provocateurs. The imperialists and their agents in Israel are trying to confuse the people. But they are doomed to failure, for the accused have admitted their guilt. When

faced with the mass of facts, they had no choice but to plead guilty of espionage, sabotage and murder.

...What are all these fantastic concoctions which only a sick imagination could produce? The fact is that George Dimitrov who remained alone surrounded by Nazi cannibals in the staged courtroom in Leipzig not only did not confess, proudly and with contempt, but rejected the Nazi libels as befits a communist.

Recently, two Jewish democrats, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, faced an American fascist show trial and were condemned to death on the basis of false charges. Despite the imminent danger of death and the assurances given to them that they would be saved from the electric chair if they would only confess, they did not make a false confession and announced that they would remain faithful to the truth, justice and their beliefs even if it meant paying for it with their lives. And we could bring additional examples from the inquisitional countries of the "free world."

In the Prague trial, the accused confessed because they are guilty....As for anti-Semitism...everyone knows that the communist parties have been at the head of the fight against Hitlerism and wherever they are in power, they are eradicating racism and anti-Semitism at the root and have declared anti-Semitism a grave crime under the law....

The agencies of Wall Street, United Press and the "Voice of America" are presently spreading the fabrication that the communists and the peace camp who were in the forefront of the struggle for Israel's independence "regret" having lent their support in 1948. But what are the facts? They show that it is not the communists who changed their minds regarding 1948; they fought and continue to fight for Israel's independence. (General laughter.) It is the ruling circles in Israel which have forsaken the tradition of that war. The nation fought for its independence, for its liberation from foreign rule. But the large bourgeoisie and the leadership of Mapai have simply exchanged British rule for American rule....

Baruch Azaniah (Mapai): You still haven't responded with regard to Oren.

David Hacohen (Mapai): You imported arms from Czechoslovakia—be careful! You are protecting Oren!

M. Wilner (Maki): No anti-communist provocation of the Goebbels or *Der Sturmer* sort can hide the real facts, as they are now coming to light in the trial of the spies and the traitors in Prague, from the Israeli public. Anti-Jewish incitement is being carried out in Tel Aviv and not in Prague, by those who identify that filthy gang of spies with the Jewish people.

Israel Bar-Yehudah (Mapam): You promised to respond with regard to Oren.

B. Azaniah (Mapai): Your cowardice with regard to Oren will be noted both here and there. Every Jew wants to know what you have to say about Oren.

M. Wilner (Maki): It is those in Tel Aviv and not in Prague who equate the State of Israel with the government of Ben-Gurion and the Executive of the World Zionist Organization, which work in line with the policies of the war-inciting imperialists...who provoke anti-Israeli sentiment....

This incitement campaign directed against the people's democracies is also intended to divert attention away from the shortages and the hardships, from the terrible rise in prices, from the elimination of price control with respect to the most essential commodities, from the theft of the working man's daily bread, from the abandoning of the new immigrants by leaving them in tents for yet another winter, from the curtailing of social services and the cutting down on housing....

We hereby call upon the members of the Knesset, the working classes and the youth: ...we shall not allow our people to be pushed into preparations for a new war, for new Maidaneks; we shall not allow the State of Israel to be in the same camp with the Nazis.

We move to reject the inflammatory and slanderous statement of the Foreign Minister.

(Calls from the floor: What about Oren?)

...

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. Just a few remarks on the essence of the issue and not for the sake of controversy. For reasons which I will not discuss at this point, I do not intend to argue with any of the MKs who have spoken so far and will not reply to anyone who interrupts me.

The event taking place in Prague raises four serious problems. First, the human aspect of the tragedy in Prague, the true nature of the "trial." The Foreign Minister has already spoken about this and there is no need to repeat one word of his excellent speech. Second, the international implications of the "trial." I do not believe that there is anyone in Israel or anywhere else either who is naive enough to think that this is strictly a local issue, initiated on the local level and directed solely against a number of past Communist Party workers—Slansky, Clementis and Frank, or against Zionists like Oren and Orenstein, or against the Jews or the State of Israel. This atrocity may well have terrible international implications, but I will not discuss that at this time

either. Third—and this may be the worst problem of all—the anticipated fate of the two and a half million Jews living under Communist rule, but I will not go into this issue for the moment. Fourth, the reaction in Israel to the Prague Trial. We have no control over what is going on there but we do have control over ourselves, and “ourselves” is the determining factor here. I don't know how much influence we can have outside...but the fate of Israel is in our hands, not just the material, economic and social fate but our ability to see things as they really are, not to follow blindly after false prophets, after deceptive slogans....It would probably be worthwhile to discuss the reactions of all the different groups but I will limit myself to two at this time: the reaction of *Kol HaAm*, the organ of the Israeli Communist Party, and that of *Al HaMishmar*, the organ of Mapam. The former totally identifies with all that is happening there: accusations against Czech Communist leaders who have suddenly been revealed as spies, traitors, saboteurs and agents of imperialism, anti-Semitic charges against the Jews of Czechoslovakia and the world, the maligning of Israel and Zionism; *Al HaMishmar* also identifies but with reservations. And that “identification with reservations” is far worse and far more dangerous in my opinion than full identification. And this is the issue to which I want to devote most of my attention.

Before the death of Alexander Jannaeus, the last of the independent Hasmonean kings, in whose days the controversy between the Sadducees and the Pharisees escalated considerably, the King said to his wife: Be not afraid of either the Sadducees or the Pharisees but of the hypocrites, who act like Zimri and demand to be rewarded like Pinhas. (Shouts from Mapam benches.) It is not that the open Zimris are not dangerous and harmful but they are less so due to their openness and to the fact that they show themselves to the public as they really are. Not so the hypocrites....

The reaction of Maki, while it is full of lies and deceit, at least does not differentiate between the charges levelled against distinguished Czech Communists like Slansky and against the Hashomer Hatzair people—Oren and Ben-Shalom. They are now all of them traitors and saboteurs and spies....

They are in total agreement with those who arranged the Prague “trial”; therefore the danger they pose to this country, to the Yishuv and to the youth is not so great. This does not apply to *Al HaMishmar*.

I have in front of me the lead article from that paper from 23 November 1952, entitled: “False Accusations,” apparently written and edited with the agreement of the authorized institutions of the party, after consideration and rational discussion. We have here the position of a party which boasts of its Jewish and Zionist patriotism—and it is riddled with hypocrisy and contradictions. They identify with everything being said and done there...without even one word of censure against this human

and Jewish moral abomination, and silence in this case is clearly a matter of acquiescence....Their only reservations relate to the aspersions cast against the members of the Mapam (Oren and Ben-Shalom) and the accusations made against the Zionist movement. The specific mention of these two “reservations” clearly implies identification with all the rest of the horrors and atrocities of this staged trial.

Let there be no mistake—I am prepared to join the editorial staff of *Al HaMishmar* and to say unequivocally...that all the accusations made against Oren and Ben-Shalom are totally unfounded. But what I ask Mapam is: How can you acquiesce to all these charges made against party leaders in Czechoslovakia no less faithful to the Communist regime there than Oren and Ben-Shalom? Is Slansky less of a Communist than Oren? If Oren is innocent because of his known “deep friendship for the socialist countries,” why don't they acknowledge that Slansky and his colleagues are also innocent—for the same reason? Is this not hypocrisy?

Al HaMishmar is being hypocritical even in its choice of language, in its terminology...using the phrase “revolutionary socialism” when referring to Communism...the term commonly used in the East as the newspaper knows as well as I do....But it is not convenient for Mapam that the Jews of the free world hear of its loyalty to the Communism of the Soviet bloc, so they hid behind the mask of “revolutionary socialism.” So I ask Mapam: Does anyone doubt the loyalty of Slansky, Secretary of the Communist Party and many years a member of Beit Carmel; of Frank, Deputy Secretary of the Party; of Andre Simone, editor of the official Communist Party newspaper *Rude Pravo*; of Vlado Clementis, Foreign Minister in the Communist Government; Karl Schwab, Deputy Defense Minister, etc., to “revolutionary socialism”? If an injustice is being done to Oren, why not to the others as well?

The assumptions made by *Kol HaAm* are at least formally logical and if they are based upon deceit, which they undoubtedly are, then at least they are consistently so.

If Oren's testimony is unacceptable because, as *Al HaMishmar* says, it was not freely given, then why is Slansky's and Clementis' self-implicating testimony acceptable? Should we assume that special means were used only against Oren to make him give false testimony?

...It was only a year or two ago that Mapam enthusiastically acclaimed Clementis, and that Dr. Sneh demanded that we honor him and vote for him as Speaker of the United Nations General Assembly. And we did publicly acclaim the help which he gave, at the time, along with the present Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister, Zapotocky, to Israel in the War of Independence. Isn't Mapam in any way obligated to defend the loyalty and honor of these Communists, as it does with Oren, if they are indeed coming out in the defense of truth and con-

science? In any case, they won't deny that Slansky is as much a Communist as Oren.

E. Vilenska (Maki): Since when do you determine who is a Communist?

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: I wish to add a few words in explanation of why I have no complaint against the *Kol HaAm* people. Two and a half years ago (3 January 1950), when the Knesset was discussing the problem of Jerusalem, MK Erem [Mapam] stood on this podium and said: "Before I go on to discuss the Foreign Minister's review, I allow myself to quote two sentences for the benefit of MK Mikunis [Maki]. The first is from *Kol HaAm* and reads: "The internationalization of Jerusalem is an imperialistic plot of the agents of Truman and Bevin." The second, which appeared only two weeks later in the same paper, reads: "The most practical and just way to solve the problem of Jerusalem as part of the democratic solution of the problem of Israel is the internationalization of Jerusalem." I am not obligated to explain, continued Erem, how MK Mikunis can relate one sentence to the other.

At which point laughter broke out in the Mapam benches. I must say that I was somewhat surprised by this Mapam laughter. Don't the members of Mapam know that every loyal communist has a sacred obligation to agree to everything which comes down from above, without hesitation or reservation...without respect to facts, reality, truth or conscience? Communism is based on two commandments: 1) loyalty to the official line, be that what it may, even if today's line is the opposite of yesterday's, and tomorrow's the opposite of today's; and 2) the end sanctifies the means...Maki is loyal to this system and if it is called upon to vote in favor of the internationalization of Jerusalem, it will do so, and vice versa.

...
In 1923, I was in Moscow for the Agricultural Exhibition there. I stayed there for three months. Everywhere I went, in offices and in other places, I saw two pictures hanging next to each other: one of Lenin and the other, no, not the person who automatically comes to mind but Trotsky. There was no public or governmental or workers' or communal site on which they did not appear together. And today when I read modern communist literature about those days and see pictures from that period, I still see two pictures hanging side by side, but of Lenin and the person you are thinking about at this moment. And if I speak to a young person educated after 1923, he won't believe what I say because all the sources he has read say that Trotsky was not the friend of Lenin, but that he wanted to murder Lenin and also to undermine the Soviet regime with the help of the German army at Brest-Litovsk, just as a member of

Maki stated in the Knesset that there was never a treaty between Ribbentrop and Molotov, between Hitler and Stalin...

And if Mikunis, for example, should not return home but should be put on trial in Prague...no one from Maki will say after his trial and his "confession" that all were guilty except Mikunis. While I don't think that anyone from Maki would agree to go from here to Czechoslovakia, they would certainly not discriminate between a member of theirs from Israel and a member of any other Communist Party who would be executed after such a trial. At least they are consistent.

...How can people believe that their leaders of twenty or thirty years or more are spies, murderers and foreign agents; how did they manage to fool all their colleagues and disciples, and to remain at the head of a party which they were secretly working to undermine? How can one believe any of the communist leaders after this? Who can guarantee that tomorrow or the next day these leaders too will not be discovered to be traitors and spies?...Maybe there is something fundamentally rotten here?...Does the world need a regime which cannot exist without turning its creators and those loyal to it into a bunch of criminals? There is not a single hint to any of these issues in *Al HaMishmar*. On the contrary, both Mapam and its newspaper are even now overflowing with expressions of total loyalty to the communist regime and its "trials," except with regard to Oren. Only in that regard are the trial and the regime mistaken.

Meir Yaari (Mapam): And with regard to Zionism.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: I will come to Zionism soon. And I ask: If these trials and this regime are good for Czechoslovakia, then why not for Israel? And if in Czechoslovakia all the Zionist parties, including Mapam, are boycotted and prohibited as agents of imperialism and Jewish reactionary bourgeoisie, "reformers" and Titoists, Trotskyists, etc., why should this not be allowed in Israel. If they execute the leaders of Czech communism because they aided immigration to Israel (including those who opposed that aid, such as Slansky), why should they permit migration to Israel when a people's democracy is established here? If Zionism is a crime as well as all assistance to Zionism, why should victorious reigning communism not eradicate it at the root, the root being the pioneering actions in this country.

Earlier, I pointed out the human aspect of Mapam's reaction to the trial as well as that of its newspaper. No pangs of conscience, no concern for justice or for the honor of man which this trial violates; only the defense of a member of their party. As for the others—the end justifies the means, except when it is injurious to Hashomer Hatzair. That is the human hypocrisy revealed in the reaction of *Al HaMishmar*. Now I will point out the Jewish hypocrisy.

In the Prague trial—and this is the frightening innovation of this trial—Jews are abused because they are Jews, derided for their Jewish origins, their Jewish facial expressions presented for all to see, their connections with the Jewish world condemned, a picture shown from “The Elders of Zion”—all in all stirring up the vilest impulses within Czech anti-Semitism.

E. Vilenska (Maki): Nothing of the kind. Nonsense.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: Those of the accused who had all along denied their Jewishness and had changed their Jewish sounding names, had their old names derided, as if it were only Jewish communists who changed the family names which they had inherited. Their Jewish names and their Jewish accents were presented for all to see. The Mapam newspaper, the newspaper of the party which stands for pioneering and a revolutionary position, hadn't one word to say about this anti-Semitic abuse and vilification. Does Mapam permit communism, “revolutionary socialism” to be anti-Semitic?...I understand the *Kol HaAm* people; they stick with their system. They will not oppose anti-Semitic expressions emanating from the communist world just as they did not oppose the aid given to the Mufti of Jerusalem [by the Communists] in the 1936/37 riots.

I am reminded of the trial of the Histadrut [Workers Organization] against the members of the P.K.P. (the original name of Maki). It occurred in Nes Ziona in 1932. A group of “Fractionists,” as the Communists then called themselves, veterans of Hashomer Hatzair, made war against the members of the United Kibbutz Movement and other Jewish laborers who wanted to work in Nes Ziona. The Communist Munster, who claimed to have spent four years in a Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz in Galicia, and one year in a Kibbutz Artzi settlement in Israel, openly and uncompromisingly announced at the trial that the Jews have no right to come to Palestine or to work here, despite the fact that every man has the right to migrate from one country to another as he wishes, and every man has the right to work; he determined that that which was permitted to all men everywhere was not permitted to a Jew in Palestine. And why not? The Jews are not migrants, they don't have to go from one land to another. Every Jew coming to work in Palestine, whether in an agricultural settlement or in town, is an oppressor and a usurper, even if by doing so, he creates higher wages and better working conditions. The higher pay which a Jewish laborer receives is nothing more than a bribe which the Jewish bourgeoisie pays him for serving them. The receipt of higher wages by Jewish laborers is nothing more than corruption. And when I asked him if he also takes bribes and is party to corruption, he answered in the positive. Munster was even prepared to debase himself if by so doing he could debase the Zionist enter-

prise and the workers organization in Palestine, clearly under orders from above.

Munster's colleagues, who enlisted the support of the leftist Poalei Zion in their fight against the “conquest of labor”—as the Jewish efforts to get jobs in agriculture was called—referred to the Jewish agriculturalists and kibbutz members as fascists and the like. Their language was not very different in style and essence from the slander emanating from the Prague “trial.” It is no wonder that the members of Maki see nothing unusual in the anti-Semitic incitement being voiced there. They are at least loyal to themselves—and to their bosses, who raise the banner of equality among nations and national liberation but to the exclusion of the Jewish nation...and while we do hear protestations from Maki against the allegations of the anti-Semitic nature of the trial, the party closest to them [Mapam] is quiet. They don't have the gall to stand up and testify that there is no anti-Semitic manifestation there. But not a single disparaging word about the uncontrolled provocation against Jews as such appears in their newspaper *Al HaMishmar*....They see to it that their young people don't read any other newspaper because they want them to get all their information from “safe” restricted party sources, lest they be exposed to another opinion....

In the Prague trial, the Jews Slansky, Avriel, Sharett, Morgenthau, Oren, etc. are presented as an international monster, a gang of robbers without a homeland scheming to exploit and impoverish unfortunate Czechoslovakia, to extract its wealth, to deceive and defraud through commercial treaties, etc. *Al HaMishmar* does not see anything unusual in this anti-Semitic show.

What does the newspaper defend? Two things: Oren and Zionism. It does not defend other communists who have been falsely accused. It does not defend other Jews. Only Oren and Zionism. This calls for an explanation.

First of all, the false impression created by this defense of Zionism on the part of *Al HaMishmar*, as though this were the first time that communists have attacked Zionism, as if this were the innovation emanating from the Prague “seminary.” However, I am certain that the members of Mapam know as well as I do that Communism fights Zionism everywhere without reference to “left” or “right,” bosses or workers, and that in every country which has a communist regime, all the Zionist movements and parties are outlawed, and that Mapam itself can only operate outside the Soviet Bloc.

According to the *Soviet Encyclopedia*—the highest instance with respect to communist science, published by the government of the Soviet Union under the supervision of the highest leaders of the Russian Communist Party—the Zionist movement is defined as a “reactionary, bourgeois, chauvinistic trend” and the Zionist Organization in its entirety as a “reactionary organization”; Dr. Weizmann is described as

an agent of British imperialism with whose assistance England exploited the Zionists, using them to support its colonial rule in Palestine; after England became weak, Weizmann became the servant of American imperialism, "executing a policy of oppression towards the Jewish workers and the Arab national minority in accordance with the instructions of the American imperialists...likewise throttling the forces of peace and democracy within Israel."

These things were not said in some staged trial, perhaps in order to meet the incidental and local needs of a failing regime, but were printed in the highest scientific organ of the Soviet Union and of world Communism. Thus, Mapam represents the forces of peace and democracy throttled by Weizmann....But they seem to identify with Weizmann, if we can believe what they said about him in his eulogy. In any case, it is a known fact that they are members of that same "reactionary" Zionist Organization and belong to that "reactionary, bourgeois, chauvinist trend" called Zionism, which must mean that they are working together with Weizmann to oppress the "forces of democracy and peace" in the State of Israel.

Mapam knows that this is a long-standing Communist stanceThey know as well as I that Maki is simply doing the bidding of world Communism; when they pretend that it is Maki alone and not Communism which is responsible for the indictment of Zionism, they are only deceiving themselves and others; when they teach their young people that the Russian Communists and the others are right, while it is only the Jewish Communists who are mistaken and who confuse others with regard to Zionism, the young people will certainly discover the deception involved in this argument. It is not Maki which fights Zionism, nor has animosity to Zionism suddenly become apparent as a result of the Prague trial. It is Communism in its entirety which negates Zionism and has always done so, and wherever it has the power to do so, it strangles it, outlaws it and liquidates its followers. And it is absolute hypocrisy and political chicanery to pretend that the Prague trial is the first instance in which Zionism has been attacked by a Communist regime.

Mapam's hypocrisy is a double one, with respect to both Communism and Zionism. I am not talking about subjective hypocrisy. I am sure that some of the Mapam people believe what they themselves say—I cannot say that for all of them, for there are people in Mapam who already see themselves as leaders of the *Yevsekzia* [NKVD section dealing with Jewish affairs] while continuing their traditional membership in another party for tactical reasons—I would say that there are quite a few members of Mapam who see themselves, subjectively, as communists even though loyal communists mock them and relate to them as they, Mapam, relate to the rest of the Zionists: as agents of imperialism, warmongers, "reformists," Titoists, Trotskyites, Fascists, and oppres-

sors of the working classes and of the forces of peace and democracy in the world. But I am talking about objective hypocrisy, hypocrisy with respect to deeds, position, education, activities, all of which is much more dangerous than any subjective hypocrisy.

I am not concerned about any harm accruing to Communism by dint of Mapam's hypocrisy. The communists know how to mock them for their "revolutionary socialism" while using them to promote their own slogans such as "the united worker's front," "peace and democracy," etc. In this way communism reaches our youth in Israel as well as the uneducated immigrants, through staged "hunger demonstrations" and strikes. They are attempting to wreck the economy of the country and to frighten the Jews presently living in the Soviet Bloc countries away from the idea of immigrating to Israel.

There is a greater and much more serious danger in their Zionist hypocrisy, for it provides an easy background against which the *Yevsekzia* can increase its influence over the youth, the workers and the masses of immigrants. Open denial of the hopes of the Jewish people and of its independence is not readily accepted in the State of Israel, the anvil of Zionist realization. The Zionist rhetoric, the speeches about pioneering and immigration and independence all have a ring of subjective honesty but they are in fact empty of all real content as a result of Mapam's adherence to "revolutionary socialism," that is, to the Communist Bloc, and are the first stage in the process of spiritual apostasy, of which the obvious modern embodiment is the *Yevsekzia*. The members of Mapam, insofar as they are loyal to the doctrine of the Cominform which distorts the image of the world, are obliged to oppose all attempts at friendship with those few parts of the world to which we have free access and in which the local Jews have some measure of freedom to participate in the upbuilding of the State of Israel and to contribute to its security.

Immigration and security, to which Mapam has committed itself, are impossible without the participation of Jews from outside, without capital from abroad, without foodstuffs from abroad, without raw materials, machinery, tools and arms from abroad, without specialists and the opportunity for studying abroad. We are as yet unable to produce our own tractors, vehicles, machinery, boats, cannons, airplanes or even sufficient food. We do not as yet have internal sources of iron, wood, textiles, copper, medicines, and other things. And we don't have the foreign currency with which to buy them. The Jews of Russia cannot help us in the slightest, and not because of any lack of desire to do so. The same applies to the Jews of Hungary and of Rumania and of the other people's democracies. In all these countries, Jewish property has been confiscated, the Zionist movement has been strangled and local Jews are forbidden to maintain contact with their brethren in the rest of the world and in the State of Israel. Two million Russian Jews cannot

leave, and not because they don't want to do so. The Jews in certain other countries are also bound to the wishes of the peoples and the states in which they live. And if America and England and Turkey and South Africa were to adopt the Russian practice, then the Jews in these countries would likewise be unable to lift a finger in order to help us. In order to activate Jewish immigration and Jewish assistance in immigration and security, it is necessary not only to activate the Jews of the Diaspora but also to create a friendly climate of opinion towards Israel in those countries in which these Jews live. Anyone who, in accordance with the doctrine of the Cominform, vilifies all the countries not subservient to the Soviet Bloc, and sees any friendly relations with them in terms of a crime against "revolutionary socialism," and wishes to bequeath this doctrine to the workers, the youth, to the entire nation, to the entire Zionist movement, is actively destroying all possibility for immigration and security....We simply cannot survive without the goodwill of the free world.

One cannot maintain a double standard indefinitely: justifying Oren and condemning Slansky, denying the "confessions" of the one while accepting those of the other, rejecting the base charges made against Weizmann while condoning the same charges made against the heads of other democratic states; justifying the independence of Israel which is humiliated by Communism while spurning the independence of Yugoslavia, itself a communist country; acknowledging the communist vilification of all the free movements and countries in the world while denying it with respect to the Zionist movement. If Communism is correct with regard to all nations, it cannot possibly not be correct with regard to the Jewish nation. This is the necessary conclusion of the belief in the doctrine of the Cominform.

Just as there cannot be a double standard in the spiritual realm, so there is no room for the double-entry bookkeeping system used by Mapam in the practical domain. Here too their hypocrisy is quite flagrant: it is not possible to deride the efforts of the Government of Israel to get American aid and also to benefit from that aid. It is not acceptable for the Government to acquire tractors and other vehicles from America, but it is all right for Mapam farms to have them; sending soldiers for advance training in England or America is "American imperialistic subjugation," but the Mapam kibbutzim can send their members to study in those same countries. This Zionist hypocritical double-dealing cannot continue for very long....

This hypocrisy is not new to the circles of Hashomer Hatzair—it used to be called, more pleasantly: "tragic contradiction." They created the doctrine of the tragic contradiction between Zionism and Socialism, a contradiction which exists only between rhetorical Zionism and perverted Socialism.

The Prague trial has shed a cruel light upon this "tragic contradiction." The Communist hypocrisy has not succeeded to date in deceiving a single communist. Those Zionists whom the Communists referred to as a "loathsome mob of traitors, chauvinists, cosmopolitans and war criminals" included members of Mapam. The Prague trial may possibly be of some benefit in that Zionist hypocrisy will also no longer fool a single Zionist—perhaps not even the members of Mapam themselves.

...

Severing of Diplomatic Relations with Israel by the Soviet Union

Introduction

On 9 February 1953 a bomb exploded in the precincts of the Soviet Embassy in Ramat Gan, wounding several members of the Embassy staff and causing some damage. Three days later the Soviet Union announced its decision to break off diplomatic relations with Israel. Although not unexpected, coming as it did in the wake of a steady deterioration of relations between the two countries, accompanied by an escalation of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist activity in the Soviet Union and its satellites, the rupture gave rise to a particularly poignant debate, in which the three left-wing parties put the blame on the policies adopted by the Government of Israel. The perpetrator of the crime, a former member of IZL, was tried and jailed. Many years later he became a member of the Knesset.

Diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were restored a few months later, during the short-lived post-Stalin regime of Malenkov, but never returned to their original cordiality.

Sitting 189 of the Second Knesset

16 February 1953 (First of Adar, 5713)

Statement of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset, three days after the bomb explosion in the courtyard of the Soviet Embassy, about which I reported to the Knesset on Tuesday last, the Soviet Foreign Minister presented a note to our Ambassador in Moscow stating that it had been decided to recall the Soviet mission from Israel, and demanding that the Israeli mission in Moscow also be recalled.

The Government learned of this step taken by a great power with amazement and great concern; we could not find any justification for this shocking action in the note handed to our Ambassador, as the grounds given therein have no basis in fact and are in contradiction to the Soviet Union's own international practice.

The Government vehemently rejects the contention that the explosion occurred with the connivance as it were of the police.

Some time ago, the Foreign Ministry suggested that a police guard be posted in the Embassy courtyard and it was the Soviet Ambassador who rejected the proposal. The absence of police in the courtyard undoubtedly facilitated the execution of the crime.

The Soviet police is also not always able to prevent crime; in Soviet Russia, the representative of a foreign country was murdered and the Government of Moscow did not place the responsibility for this crime on its police force.

There have been attacks on consulates in many countries; there have also been attacks on Soviet embassies, in the wake of which the Soviet Union has not broken off diplomatic relations. We can cite for example the murder of the Soviet Minister in Warsaw in 1927; the placing of a mine in the Soviet Embassy in that same Warsaw in 1930; and the attack upon the Soviet Embassy in Riga in 1926, with no subsequent severance of diplomatic relations.

As soon as the fact of the explosion became known, the Government published a statement expressing its abhorrence of this criminal attack which was much more damaging to the State of Israel than to the Soviet Union, and the Foreign Ministry apologized in the name of the Government and expressed the Government's deep sorrow for this heinous crime, announcing that the Government of Israel was prepared to make reparations for the harm and the damages incurred. However, the Soviet note stated that these expressions of regret were only intended as a cover-up for the attackers and an evasion of responsibility for the action, and that they are in contradiction to the incitement to acts of hostility against the Soviet Union practiced by those newspapers belonging to the parties represented in the Government, by members of the Government and by members of the Knesset; particular reference is made in this respect to the speech of the Israeli Foreign Minister in the Knesset on January 19 in which, according to the note, he openly incited to acts of hostility against the Soviet Union.

There is not a particle of truth in this description of the Foreign Minister's speech. One cannot find a single word, not even a nuance, in this speech which directly or indirectly incites to hostile action against the Soviet Union.

In his speech, the Foreign Minister rejected—he had a moral and political duty to do so—the libelous statements which appeared in the Soviet press regarding Jewish doctors who allegedly committed shocking, heinous murder at the behest of a large, much-lauded Jewish organization of American Jews and international Zionists. At that time, the Foreign Minister stated—and rightly so—that the Government of Israel cannot remain silent when someone attempts to abuse the name of Jewry.... We are not prepared to establish the practice in Israel whereby the accused pleads guilty to the sins of the accuser, nor do I know of any purer movement in the world than the renaissance revival movement of

the Jewish people, known as the Zionist movement; neither are there many institutions in the world which are more deserving of praise and recognition than the "Joint" [Joint Distribution Committee] for its humane activities on behalf of uprooted, oppressed and exploited Jews in all lands, including the people's democracies.

In that same speech, the Foreign Minister also stated that "the Government of Israel has always considered its friendly relations with the Soviet Union as a precious asset," expressing here too the attitude of both the Israel Government and of the nation.

The allegation that the Israeli press, as well as the members of the Government and of the Knesset, incite to hostile action against the Soviet Union is totally unfounded.

There is no country in the world, without exception, which is more concerned about world peace, peace among the nations, than is the State of Israel. This concern for peace evolves out of the Jewish tradition which sees it as an obligation, as well as from the status of the Jewish people, scattered as it is throughout the world, both in the East and in the West, and from the essential needs of the State of Israel: to develop the country and to settle within it masses of immigrants, something which can only be accomplished if there is peace in the world.

However, in Israel the right of each and every citizen to defend the social and political ideology of his choice, as well as to oppose those social and political ideologies which he deems unacceptable, is preserved.

There is no basis for the allegation contained in the note that the conditions necessary for normal diplomatic activity on the part of the Soviet legation do not exist in Israel. This legation was promised such freedom of action in our country as our legation in Moscow would not dream of demanding for itself.

I am not aware of any instance in which the Soviet Union made the existence of diplomatic relations between itself and another country dependent upon the Communist Party in that other country being given a monopoly over political and social propaganda and international dispositions. Just as in any other country in which there is freedom of thought and freedom of speech, so it is permissible in Israel to preach the negation of the communist ideology and the harm inherent in totalitarian regimes. Moreover, the State of Israel reserves the right to defend its democratic regime, its Zionist mission and the freedom of thought and speech of its citizens, both in principle and in practice.

The Government of Israel has always maintained the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of foreign states, and will continue to do so, and is absolutely determined to carry out the policy stated and approved by the Knesset: "to nurture a relationship of friendliness and mutual assistance with every peace-loving state without reference to its internal regime."

We cannot find any justification for the severing of relations, not in anything done either by a citizen of Israel or by its Government. Neither can we find a precedent for this action in the behavior of the Soviet Union towards other countries which, like ourselves, have a democratic regime.

To our regret we can only see this note in terms of an additional stage in the hate campaign which has been conducted in the Soviet press against the State of Israel, the Zionist movement and world Jewry for some time and which has now turned into an official demonstration of animosity through the Slansky trial in Prague and through the libels first published in Moscow on January 13, which have continued since then without let-up.

It is difficult to reconcile this hate campaign and the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Israel with the stated policy of the Soviet Union with regard to the right of every people to self-determination, and the need to strengthen world peace.

The Government of Israel declares that along with its firm, unwavering stand in the face of the torrent of libel and slander directed against Judaism and Zionism and the State of Israel, it is also prepared to cooperate with any country in the world which is committed to international peace—be its internal regime what it may to the same degree that it is prepared to guard its own most precious possession: its democratic regime and its Zionist mission.

The Government of Israel considers itself obligated, in the wake of the regrettable and incomprehensible step of the Soviet Union, to once again announce most emphatically that it will not suffer any acts of violence, or organization for such a purpose, irrespective of its form or its source, even if these acts or organizations wear the disguise of "patriotism" or "progress" or profess other similar slogans; the Government will make use of all its legal authority to eradicate at the source any attempts by anyone to let loose and take the law into his own hands; it will harshly punish any production or transportation of bombs, any illegal use of weapons, any attempt at burning down bookstores, sabotage of cars, forceful interference with freedom of speech and any other acts of sabotage, for the purpose of instilling fear or of revenge or for any other reason, just as it will forcibly prevent any damage to state security and any support of anti-Jewish incitement of any sort and any cooperation with the enemies of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

I will not have fulfilled my moral obligation if I do not add to those things which I have said in my capacity as Prime Minister, in the name of the Government, a few words in my capacity as a member of the Jewish people, a capacity which is more modest, of longer duration and in my estimation more important.

In the course of its long four thousand year journey on the earth, covering most of the countries in the world—to the East, to the West, to the North and to the South—our people has met with innumerable manifestations of hatred and animosity, libels and accusations, oppression and torture, destruction and slaughter, but it remained strong in spirit and body, its faith unbroken, and by dint of supreme spiritual heroism was able to preserve its uniqueness and fulfill its mission.

In the course of those thousands of years, the hatred and the animosity expressed itself in various ways, but the basic idea, encapsulated in the indictment of one of our ancient enemies, changed very little: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every people and they obey not the king's laws; it is not worthwhile for the king to tolerate them." [The Scroll of Esther, Chap. II, verse 8].

Of what have we not been accused over all those generations and what excuse has not been invoked for the spilling of Jewish blood? And the blood of the millions slaughtered by the Nazi hangmen and their allies in the various countries of Europe still cries out to us, while the enmity of generations towards the "scattered and dispersed people," both overt and covert, still seethes in those countries, and any fanning of the flames of this enmity is likely to gain the sympathy of the benighted masses. In all ages and in every country, regimes which have not been accepted by their own peoples have taken to fanning the flames of anti-Semitism, and brandishing before the masses the monstrous image of the "criminal Jew," a monster whose specific form is adapted to the needs of time and place.

I may not know the exact motives behind this anti-Jewish campaign which began in Prague and which has been promoted through the vast resources of the totalitarian regimes in numerous other countries, nor its intent, but as a Jew trained by long and bitter experience, I cannot help but be aware of the awful frightening results of such a campaign for millions of our people, the remnant of European Jewry, and possibly not only for them.

I am duty-bound to issue a warning precisely from this place, from the sole small stronghold of Jewish freedom and independence, a warning directed to the masses of the Jews throughout the world as well as to the human conscience as such—and it does exist in every country and within every nation—and to the rulers of that great power, the Soviet Union, and to make the following demand: An anti-Jewish campaign, no matter what the internal justifications for it are....

Esther Vilenska (Maki): There is no anti-Jewish campaign there.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: MK Vilenska, I call you to order.

Meir Wilner (Maki): This is a blood-libel against the Jews of the Soviet Union. Would that we were as free as they are, would that Israel were free. (Laughter in the hall.)

Yohanan Bader (Herut): Why do you put such a curse on us?

Haim Landau (Herut): Go there and you too will be free.

M. Wilner (Maki): There shall be a free regime here and that is what we are fighting for.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I ask you to desist immediately.

The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion: Such a campaign carries within it a terrible threat to the well-being, honor and very existence of millions of people only because they are Jewish.

If there are Jews who are unwanted in the Soviet Union and in the people's democracies, then let them—those who want to do so—leave, and join the ancient and revived Jewish homeland which the Soviet Union, together with other countries great and small, in the West and in the East, helped at the time to become an independent sovereign state.

There are many lands in which the Jews have been forced into silence; in the Soviet Union their schools have been closed and not a single Jewish newspaper is published anywhere. Only those who deny their people and their human honor are allowed to speak out there.

Let not the voice of the Jews be silenced in those lands in which they do have the right, in manly pride and Jewish loyalty, to voice their protest against the slander and libel directed against the State of Israel, Zionism—the movement of liberation and resurrection of the Jewish people—and the Jewish people, its organizations, its personnel, its scholars and its leaders, in the East and the West.

And this time, let not the voice of the conscience of humanity be silent. The evil which will affect millions of Jews will also bring harm, like a plague, to the masses of other people.

With Israeli humility backed by Jewish forcefulness, I call upon the rulers of the Soviet Union: honor your pronouncements regarding the right of self-determination, peace, and the brotherhood of all peoples also in respect to your relations with Israel and the Jews.

May the voice of human conscience be heard in the world and may it not let us down.

Debate

Isaac Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Mr. Chairman, Honorable Knesset. We have gathered here to debate the Government's statement made in response to the announcement of the Soviet Union that it is severing

diplomatic relations with Israel. This is one of the most serious events to have occurred to our state in the few years of its existence. Who is more in need of the assistance, the recognition and the friendship of all parts of the world, and who is more deserving of it, than our state and our nation, and particularly from that part of the world which has for some thirty years now carried the banner of socialist fulfillment and national liberation.

Samuel Dayan (Mapai): You believe that?

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): The day on which the Soviet Union severed its relations with Israel is a bitter day indeed for the state; this is terrible news for the masses of our people throughout the world.

We do not ignore the event which led up to this step on the part of the Soviet Union. The debate which the Zionist movement has been conducting over the last twenty years with the Soviet Union over the solution to the Jewish question and the concentration of the masses of Jews in their historic homeland—this extremely serious debate has not abated for even one day. In the course of time, and despite this debate, we have been privileged to see the recognition of our enterprise and our state; and the opening of the gates for hundreds of thousands of Jews from the democratic republics. And it seems to us that a new page has been opened and that a thread has been tied which needed only to be braided and strengthened in order to make it into a strong bridge between the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, its state and its historic homeland, and the large great power of the socialist world.

And then came Prague, and the information published in the aftermath of the arrest of the group of doctors in Moscow. And now this very serious attack on Zionism, and these manifestations of anti-Semitism.

Meir Wilner (Maki): You are daydreaming!

Yohanan Bader (Herut): That's slander...

I. Ben-Aharon (Mapam): And now we have the condemnation of the State of Israel and the bearers of our national liberation movement, and we considered it our obligation and our privilege to come to the justified defense of our undertaking, our heroic movement of revival, and to reject these false accusations.

And we were convinced that these were days in which we must unite around the issue of the defense of this just undertaking of the Jewish people, and the continuation of its historic existence in its homeland. But what was our amazement and our shock to discover that those elements concentrated in and about the Government of Israel—in whose name the Prime Minister spoke today—have turned the defense of our enterprise into an excuse for a campaign of incitement and provocation against the Soviet Union and the regimes of the people's democracies. How shocked we were when they commenced to pour whole pitchers of oil

on the fire and, with a frightening lack of national responsibility, to devote their best efforts towards the deepening of the abyss and the creation of an atmosphere of incitement and hatred towards the representatives of the Soviet Union in the State of Israel. It was by dint of this pressurized atmosphere that the bomb was thrown, the bomb which struck at the very heart of our state and shattered our position in the international scene. It is a bitter thing, bitter and sad, that at this time we are unable to absolve the Government of Israel, its parties, its press and the majority of this House from the major responsibility for this last development.

Of course, we are not a decisive factor in world issues; we are not a decisive factor in the decision-making process in the Soviet Union. But we are a decisive factor in the determination of the fate of the Jewish people and of the State of Israel. At the point at which the Government of Israel abandoned the line of non-identification, and gave up the fundamental neutrality of the State of Israel in the power struggle between the two blocs; at that point at which it combined within itself the political and socialistic ideology of Mapai with the bourgeois right, and established the anti-communist ideology as a basis for the foreign policy of Israel, and in so doing made Israel an integral part of the anti-communist, anti-Soviet front—that was when we realized that the Government and the forces which it represents are taking upon themselves the responsibility for the tragedy which will sooner or later befall our people; that the Government of Israel and more particularly, its Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, would bear the responsibility for this tragedy when it occurred. In the days to come, people will ask: what has the Government and its Prime Minister and Foreign Minister done during the period in which the fate of Israel was in danger, in the period during which that reorientation took place. And they will discover in their speeches, in their actions, and in their writings—whether published in their own names or under a pseudonym—that they made an effort to widen the gap, to deepen the abyss; not to lessen the tension in any way or to try to prevent the tragedy but, by their own efforts, to bring it closer, to hasten the process. In this respect, this Government is indeed responsible for this latest turn of events.

...
Honorable Knesset. I do believe that if there were any remnant of national and Jewish responsibility left in those circles which support this Government, they would of their own free will do something to demonstrate to the Jewish people and to the entire world that they had learned their lesson. Those people who ask to be rewarded for the success of their policies must also bear the responsibility, both objective and subjective, for the catastrophic results of those policies. We are faced with an objective failure, due in large measure to this government and its foreign policy, a fact which cannot be denied. Consequently those responsible must resign; they no longer have the moral and public right to

continue to embroil the country in commitments the first awful implications of which we are witnessing at this very moment.

We see this as a warning, a very grave warning. We foresaw it two years ago and we cautioned them at the time; now the entire nation and all the various internal groups are faced with the reality of the terrible political bungle created by the heads of this Government. They themselves said that if this were to happen, it would be a black day indeed for the State of Israel. This failure means that this country is now at the mercy of the goodwill, as well as the chastisements, of the Western powers, who will do with it as they wish; we will become a tool in the hands of our enemies. You foresaw the objective consequences of such a shift and you bear the responsibility for them. You must open the way to the creation of a new policy in this hour of impending danger. The State of Israel must overcome; it cannot live with failure and catastrophe; it cannot allow itself to be the helpless victim of this new course of events. We must be of good courage; we will not reconcile ourselves to this break and we trust that it will not last for long. We cannot resign ourselves to being encircled, to our awful isolation in the world....

The State of Israel must be courageous. We cannot live in despair and disappointment, with bitter words and bitterness of the spirit. We must pull ourselves together and overcome this disaster by fashioning a new policy, a policy faithful to the independence of the state and to true neutrality in the war between the blocs. Even though each of us has his own philosophy, each one has his own ideology and each one is loyal to it and zealous on its behalf, the State of Israel as such is not sufficiently strong to bear the burden of embroilment in that war or of joining one of its numerous fronts. We must close the ranks of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, and the State of Israel around the correct policy of national redemption and maximal immigration from all parts of the globe, from all regimes and from all countries, in order to be able to continue our undertaking: the building-up of Zionism [sic!] and the revival of our independence through our own endeavors. It is in our power to observe real neutrality and to seek the true friendship of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies as well as that of the other parts of the world concerned with our good; to conduct an authentic Jewish, Zionist, Israeli policy, and to pull out of the imbroglio and the adventures in which you have become involved. In order to do so we must have a new government. We need a combination of loyal, Jewish, progressive and workers' forces. We need new leadership. The present leadership has proven to be impotent and has led us to this bitter day. It must resign and make way for a concentration of Zionist, progressive workers' forces, the forces of peace and independence.

...

Elimelech Rimalt (General Zionists): Mr. Chairman, Honorable Knesset. With respect to the serious issue which is before us, we must

carry on our discussions as members of the Second Knesset of the State of Israel, as citizens of the Jewish state and as members of the Zionist movement. Russia's severing of its diplomatic relations with us is undoubtedly a very serious occurrence, perhaps the most serious thing to have happened to us in the realm of international relations since the inception of our young state.

The criminally-planted bomb was intended to be used as an excuse for this breaking-off of relations and was indeed so used. It would be difficult for us to discuss this act of enmity towards the State of Israel without discussing, even reviewing in depth, the relationship of the Communist world towards Zionism and the State of Israel from the earliest days of communist rule in Russia. No, it is not possible to discuss this latest event without reference to the Doctors' Trial; we cannot discuss the Doctors' Trial without discussing the Prague Trial; and it is impossible to discuss the Prague Trial without reviewing the developments which preceded it.

There were those who thought that when the Soviet Union voted for and encouraged the establishment of the State of Israel, that vote marked a changing-point in the attitude of the Communist world towards us and that Zionism would no longer be forbidden and that the liberation movement of the Jewish people would no longer be seen in Russia as something vile, out of bounds or criminal. It is hard to understand why Zionism has been outlawed in Russia. It may perhaps be impossible to incorporate a movement such as Zionism, a messianic movement, an irrational movement of a people cut off from its ancient homeland, into the dialectic-materialistic framework of communism. This is a possibility. In any case, those who had convinced themselves that a change did take place after 1947 very quickly discovered that they were mistaken. Three weeks after the Russian diplomatic mission arrived by boat at Haifa port, the famous article appeared in *Pravda*, discrediting Israel, Zionism and the connection between the Jewish people and its homeland.

There is no country in the world whose Jewish citizens are so cut off from anything originating in Israel or anything symbolizing Israel as they are in Soviet Russia. It is very possible that the rulers of the communist world made a mistake in 1947-48; they may have assumed that the establishment of the State of Israel would have put an end to Zionism, would completely rupture the mutuality and the sense of a common fate which existed among the Jews of the various diasporas and between the Jews of the world and those of the State of Israel; it is possible that they hoped that the establishment of the state would help to solve the Jewish problem throughout the world on the pattern of the Cominform; perhaps there was someone who hoped that, following upon the hoped for demise of the Zionist movement, a vacuum would develop among the masses of

Jews in the world which could then be filled by the Communist-Cominform ideology.

The normal relations which we so desired and to which we aspire to this day—being as we are interested in maintaining normal relations with all countries and with all the places in which Jews live, since we have not lost our hope of being able to bring them to us here—these normal relations soured long before the Prague Trial, when the first anti-Semitic signs appeared and they began to emphasize the Jewish origins of people who were no longer in favor with the authorities, and to point to the original Jewish names of those who had taken Russian names. But the strongest warning came with the Prague Trial, and the Doctors' Trial which followed.

I ask MK Ben-Aharon, does he or does he not justify the Prague Trial? If he does not justify the Prague Trial, then how can he say the severing of relations is the fault of the Government of Israel, and not see this as simply one more step in a long process? It is impossible to blame Israel for Russia's breaking-off of diplomatic relations since many of us are forced to the conclusion that this is either the final step or at least an additional stage in their planned anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist and anti-Israel policy. And if MK Ben-Aharon does not justify the Prague Trial, how can he justify the breaking-off of relations? And in general, I allow myself to say to him, as there is no suspicion of my wanting to convert him to my point of view, that there can no longer be any ideological disagreement between us, and that is because we no longer share any common ideals; he belongs to a group to which we can only relate with pity, he is torn asunder, and we sensed from his speech that he is wounded internally, that the evil impulse within him is contradicting what the good impulse tells him. I would like to say to MK Ben-Aharon and his colleagues: Turn back! One more small step and you will have crossed that fine line, hidden to the eye, beyond which there is no return. Do not hide behind those who have excluded themselves from the Jewish entity, who will be condemned to eternal disgrace by Jewish history. Turn back, Ben-Aharon, you and the youth which follows you.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Now, after such an invitation, he surely won't do it.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): We do not know, and it is not our job to clarify the reasons for the anti-Semitic campaign, carried out along the well-known lines, which has been undertaken by the Soviet Union and those democracies which are called people's democracies, but we must understand the situation as it is. It may be that it meets current internal needs; internal loyalty may be wavering. Thoughts must arise as to what sort of faith this is if the heads of the government, the heads of the party, the rulers and the spokesmen suddenly disrobe and reveal themselves to be criminals, traitors, frauds and murderers.

In order to salvage internal trust, perhaps the smartest thing was to find a scapegoat demon, that legendary figure the international Jew who is the force behind all national and world crime, and to say that it is not the movement which is guilty nor the party but that the blame lies with that black-magical power, the "Jew-demon." It may be that this is one of the reasons behind it, in addition to the external need to win the hearts of the Arabs and the Germans.

Indeed, the cursed bomb was discovered, nothing has as yet been proven and we trust that the Israeli Police will track down the criminals....As of this moment there has been no identification and their identity remains unknown, but one thing is clear: either this was done on the basis of cold cruel consideration—in order to harm the State of Israel—or else it is the work of politically pathological madmen, which does not in any way minimize the crime. And it makes no difference if the criminals have a Jewish or non-Jewish background; we must rid ourselves of these people.

But only a sick imagination, only some perverse logic could lead anyone to conclude that a responsible individual in the State of Israel would have an interest in and would encourage such a crime, an act which has destroyed our prestige and our honor in the eyes of the non-Jews, has done us serious damage and has strengthened the Arabs. And another thing: this bomb turned the vilifiers, the organizers of the anti-Semitic campaign in the Soviet Union, the object of the accusations of the conscience of humanity, into our accusers. It is only a sick imagination which could assume that there is anyone in the world who would believe this story even for one minute.

The Prime Minister has correctly pointed out that more serious incidents than this have occurred in the realm of diplomatic relations, including those which have involved Russia. Russia did not break off diplomatic relations with Greece nor with Titoist Yugoslavia. And I ask MK Ben-Aharon and his colleagues: Doesn't Titoist Yugoslavia make slanderous statements about Russia? In fact, it is the most defaming of all.

Yohanan Bader (Herut): It certainly does.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): And what have we done? The State of Israel, the Knesset, simply fulfilled its obligations: It reacted to acts of anti-Semitism out of concern for the fate of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain...out of the shock that the hundred-headed monster of total anti-Semitism, along the lines of "Rosenberg" and "international connection" has again raised its head and threatens to endanger the lives of millions of our brethren.

M. Wilner (Maki): Don't worry—there is no danger from the Soviet side.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): If only I could be as sure of their fate as I am of yours.

M. Wilner (Maki): They are in no danger there. We are in danger. You are planning something totally different: war, our participation in a war.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): There is a Jewish tradition which says that when there are hard times, the Jews consider their deeds and the religious Jew always says...“because of our sins....” He doesn't accuse the whip or the fist or the axe raised above him—he accuses himself.

Today we are witness to a soul-searching of a different sort: there are people in Israel who accuse themselves and also vindicate the fist and the axe and praise the boot which kicks. These people who justify the Prague Trial and the Doctors' Trial, who justify all accusations, and praise every vilification, those who are prepared out of a vast self-hatred to debase and to profane everything which is sacred to the nation, thus placing themselves outside the Jewish entity—we relate to them with extreme revulsion and contempt.

Emil Habibi (Maki): Are you implying new acts of hooliganism?

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): Have you finished with the old ones?

M. Wilner (Maki): What you are saying is provocation to ruffianism and acts of terror.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): But I would not want us, in the course of that soul-searching, to berate ourselves too much.

One thing is clear: we shall have to do some soul-searching. We must consider whether we have indeed done everything in order to fortify the state, and if not, we shall do so with increased strength and increased energy. We shall also have to consider whether we have really exploited the wonderful material available to this state: our natural ally, the Jews of the Diaspora. Whether we have strengthened the alliance between them and us or not, we must in any case strengthen the pioneering arm of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement. We shall proceed with heads held high, without having to yield to the threat of our enemies, without having to ingratiate ourselves with friends, for there is one thing which the Zionist movement has taught us, something which they [members of Mapam and Maki] do not understand—not to grovel, not to flatter and not to yield. They do not understand this. They do exactly that....

M. Wilner (Maki): Tell that to Abba Eban.

E. Rimalt (General Zionists): We Zionists will proudly greet the future, face the obstacles and the dangers and will overcome them. Out of concern for the fate of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain, we call on the Jews

of the world and the Zionist movement to unite and to make it possible for us, the State of Israel, to fulfill our task completely, that task which the Jewish fate has placed upon the State of Israel.

...

The Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson: Mr. Chairman, Honorable Knesset...there are movements and there are representatives of those movements who cannot differentiate between a time for seriousness and a time in which a certain amount of levity is appropriate. One cannot say that the representative of this movement got up and said serious things at this serious time. However, a bitter account remains to be settled with other factions in the Knesset.

MK Ben-Aharon said that this is a bitter, evil day. And I too say that this is a bitter day and that it is sad to hear MK Ben-Aharon explain the issue in this way, defending one of the powers, and presenting that which the latter has done to the Jewish people, to the Zionist movement and to the State of Israel, in such a light.

Moshe Erem (Mapam): Was that in Ben-Aharon's remarks?

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: I advise MK Erem not to defend either Ehrenburg or MK Ben-Aharon. Only a month or two ago you also defended MK Sneh in an interjection from the floor. Therefore I suggest that you not do it again. It was bitterly shocking to hear how MK Erem was shocked by something said against Ehrenburg; we shall yet refer to this gentleman. I greatly yearn for the days in which MK Ben-Aharon and his colleagues had the courage to defend the honor of the State of Israel and of the people living in Zion, without restraint, without fear, without feelings of inferiority, but with honor and courage—those days seem now to be very far away indeed. I understand that there is a difference between one non-Jew and another. There are non-Jews before whom one can stand courageously, without fear, and there are those to whom one must speak politely, in hushed tones, and even when he beats one or humiliates one, one must vindicate him. But all the pain which is in our hearts, a pain which exists nonetheless, must only be directed inwardly, against the state, the Government and not, Heaven forbid, against that *Pariz* [Polish squire].

Let us recollect some history. MK Ben-Aharon, in today's speech, and his colleagues, in speeches and articles which have appeared for some time now, want to present what has happened in a positive light. And something has happened to us. The Government of Israel did not choose the path of neutrality as defined by the United Workers Party, because the truth is that that party's foreign policy recommendations for the State of Israel were never really neutral. “Neutrality” as defined by the United Workers' Party is as follows: If Israel's representatives at the United Nations vote together with the Soviet Bloc, that is neutrality. If they vote against the Soviet Bloc or abstain from voting, that is not

neutrality, and all of our troubles relate to the fact that the State of Israel did not understand how to maintain this "neutrality" in matters of foreign policy.

There are some other things which are worth recalling; for example, the first Israeli delegation to the Soviet Union which arrived in Moscow in the early part of September, 1948. I trust that MKs Ben-Aharon and Erem recall that in those days the State of Israel was still happily approved. That was the period of the Provisional Government and we were fortunate enough to have the United Workers' Party as a member of that Government. Approximately one week after the arrival of the delegation, Mr. Ehrenburg's article appeared. There are no words appropriate for use in the Knesset which would also be appropriate to describe the character of this Jew, a Jew who has lost all semblance not only of his Jewishness but of his human dignity as well...

M. Wilner (Maki): You are defaming a man with whom you cannot begin to compare yourself.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: ...a Jew who knows one thing and one thing only: to carry out the command of his masters and to deny everything Jewish, even Yiddish in so far as it is the language of the Jewish people; to deny his own Jewishness in the presence of a non-Jew; to deny the Jewish past, present and future. This Jew, "the courageous fighter," approximately a week or ten days after we had arrived in Moscow, while the members of the United Workers' Party—MKs [Mordechai] Bentov and [Aaron] Zisling—were still a part of the Provisional Government of the State of Israel, (and it is unthinkable that they would have been members of a government which was unable to maintain neutrality or to sustain its friendship with the revolutionary world) this Jew wrote an article...

Moshe Erem (Mapam): At that time a reaction to Ehrenburg's article appeared in *Al HaMishmar*.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: You certainly get credit for that. And since there is no one present who believes what MK Wilner shouted out before, that is, that real freedom is only to be found there [in Russia], not even MK Wilner himself, then it is apparent to everyone that neither Ehrenburg nor writers who are more important than he write newspaper articles in which they express their own opinions. In Ehrenburg's long article it said that there is no such thing as a Jewish nation since there is nothing which is common to the various groups of Jews in their respective diasporas throughout the world. He used a delightful comparison when he said that talking about "an interest common to all the Jews of the world" is like saying that all people with red hair have something in common with each other. It was stated in that article that the Jews of the Soviet Union have no connection with the State of Israel, nor with Zion-

ism; moreover, in the opinion of those in whose name the article was written, the state is of no interest to them, nor do they need it; it is needed only by the imperialistic countries since that is where there is anti-Semitism. The Jews of the Soviet Union are not interested in it nor do they have any connection with it, as the issue of the Jews of the Soviet Union has already been resolved and there is nothing in common between the Jews there and Jews anywhere else in the world, including Israel.

This was written in September 1948. In the beginning of January 1949, a number of events occurred in the Jewish sphere: one day, out of the blue, the sign was removed from the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the last remaining Jewish institution in the Soviet Union other than a synagogue...

The Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett: ...and a cemetery.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: At that same time, the Jewish newspaper in Moscow as well as all the other Jewish newspapers throughout the Soviet Union were closed down. MK Ben-Aharon, that was in January 1949, when Mapam was still in the Government, acting as the guardian of neutrality and friendly relations with the revolutionary world.

Isaac Ben-Aharon (Mapam): This was also your program.

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Is this a response to the above point?

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: At the same time, the "Emes" Publishing House was closed. And if MKs Vilenska and Wilner claim that Yiddish books are still published in the Soviet Union—the only difference between the two being that MK Vilenska really does believe that it is so—if they make this claim, then they either do not know the truth or others tell them things and they deliberately refrain from speaking the truth. There were books in Yiddish and they are no more. There is no Yiddish publishing house there. Within a short period of time the Yiddish books disappeared from all the stores. Neither is there a Yiddish school, and it goes without saying that there is no Hebrew school.

One thing remained: the Yiddish theater. I shall not discuss the cultural level of the theater as I saw it in Moscow. But it was a Jewish theater, and its language was Yiddish. And one evening we sat there, burning with humiliation, and watched a play about the Warsaw Ghetto rebellion which informed us that it was not the Jews who rose up in rebellion there but that it was a non-Jewish emissary who arrived there and demanded that they do it and pushed them to do it, encouraging them and explaining to them that they must rise up against the Nazis. It was not the Jewish pride of Comrade Ben-Aharon, of my comrades and of the comrades of all the Jews sitting here which rebelled against Hitlerism in the Warsaw Ghetto but rather an emissary and they barely

followed him. But at least it was in Yiddish, a Yiddish word could be heard in Moscow—and the theater was closed.

In that happy world there are no parliamentary questions and there are no motions-for-the-agenda, and no one of the half a million Jews (so they say) in Moscow or the two million Jews throughout the Soviet Union asks questions, not even parliamentary ones and there are no demonstrations or gatherings, no requests, not even a letter to the editor—nothing.

At the same time, the authors disappeared; including that author who wrote about Zionism in the early days of our stay in Moscow and behaved exactly like Ehrenburg, just as a slave who has lost his divine spark should behave, but to no avail—he disappeared along with his colleagues and no one asked about them, not in a lead article, not in a parliamentary question, not in protest, and also not in a letter to the editor. Nothing. He was, and is no more. The theater had been named after [S.] Mikhoels who was very respected. He built the theater, was one of the heads of the Anti-Fascist Committee and was also sent on missions abroad. At that time, they apparently thought that there was some connection between Jews because at that time it was necessary that there be such a connection, and Mikhoels travelled to America, imperialist America. Then, no one knew that he was guilty of anything, but under that regime, not only does a living man have to confess to every crime, even to crimes which he did not commit, but he must do so retroactively, that is he must confess to crimes which he apparently committed years previously, or even 6 or 7 years after his death. This Mikhoels is now a criminal and the poor fellow cannot even sign a confession. The verdict is signed; he is dead.

And now they want to justify all this on the grounds that our delegation at the United Nations dared to vote in accordance with its own views....Somebody said, I think it was [Zalman] Aranne [Mapai] that Mapam, Maki and the leftist faction are the cause of all this.

Zalman Aranne (Mapai): I said that they helped it along.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: They didn't do that either. More important people than those seated here can neither influence, help or hinder over there. There, there is an accounting, an accounting of what is necessary and what is unnecessary, of what should be salvaged for some purpose, that and only that. It is neither a question of friendship nor of enmity. Those of us who used to meet with the members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow know: were all the diplomats true friends of the Soviet Union? And in the countries which those diplomats represented, in America, in England, in France, in Mexico, in Cairo—there was an Egyptian ambassador there too—in Argentina and in tens of other countries, was there never a word said against Communism and against the Soviet Union? Are there not representatives in the Soviet

Union of countries in which there is no Communist Party, nor can there be one, according to the law? Is the Soviet Union so sensitive that it is ready to break off diplomatic relations with countries because of something like this? As if there is any difference of opinion here in Israel that what occurred in the courtyard of the Soviet Embassy is a heinous crime? As if one Jew in this country—with the possible exception of the ones who did it and they are maintaining silence—has gotten up and said one word to justify it?

Yohanan Bader (Herut): What makes you think that a Jew did it?

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: Because we know that the bomb did not simply blow up some wall; because we know that this explosion hurts us more than anyone else, and this was immediately given expression by the Government....Is it for this that we did all that we did, for this state and this people, over generations and decades? Did we fight the War of Independence and did we bring hundreds of thousands of Jews to Israel, just so that one bright day we could all turn into one big Ehrenburg and admit to everything which is said against us? Should we all become Wilners and now Ben-Aharons?

M. Wilner (Maki): But not Eisenhowers either.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: After the Prague Trial, we all behaved as would any self-respecting individual. True, there are elements in the country—happily, they are small—who justify everything in advance, as well as those whose doubts and confusion are more hurtful than the wholehearted vindication of Wilner and his colleagues. From them we do not expect anything. In the camp of MK Erem and his colleagues, however, there is considerable blurring of the lines, much “yeaing” and “naying” in the same breath: vindication and non-vindication, all mixed up together. MK Erem, members of the United Workers' Party: the overwhelming majority of people in this country, and the Government as well, are not prepared to acquiesce to accusations which someone has made against us, whether as individuals or in terms of the entire Jewish people, no matter how big and strong that someone may be; neither are we obligated to do so.

The Prague Trial was followed immediately by the Moscow libels against the doctors. Where was the strong, respectable, Jewish, Zionist word of protest from the ranks of the United Workers' Party? You say: But have we justified it? No, not yet, but with whom are you angry: the members of Maki who immediately vindicated these libels, who immediately transformed those doctors into murderers, or with those who came out strongly against it, against the distinction made between Zionism and the Jewish people? And what about the attempt made in the article to say that you do not accept direct responsibility for all the actions of the “Joint [Distribution Committee]”? What is all this talk about

our being forbidden to protest against this blood libel either in Prague or in Moscow? Is it because your comrade, an Israeli national, has been incarcerated there for more than a year and you do not dare to make the simple demand that they let him go!

Moshe Erem (Mapam): That is also not true.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: I would request of MK Erem that he bring me a single issue of *Al HaMishmar* which includes the simple sentence: We demand that the Government of that great and beautiful world which is Czechoslovakia release Oren.

If it were really the case that the Soviet Union severed diplomatic relations with the State of Israel as a result of the fact that someone said something, that the State of Israel said what had to be said, from this very podium, in order to preserve the honor of the Jewish people and of the state, then the matter would not be so tragic at all. But anyone who claims that this is the case either knows that it is not so or is very seriously deceiving himself. Whatever has been said here in the aftermath of the Prague trial and the rumours about the Jewish doctors in Moscow, and in the present debate, has been said with a heavy sense of anxiety and in fact it is only with the latter that MK Ben-Aharon concurs.

If we examine MK Ben-Aharon's statement, that we are faced with a tragedy, I think that we will find that it has a very simple meaning, although he has not made it explicit: there were times when the members of Mapam also charged us with forgetting that there are two million Jews of that country. Now, let us assume that the Government of Israel does not speak well of Communism; let us assume that not everything which happens in the Soviet Union is to our liking. Is this sufficient reason for us to put two million Jews in jeopardy? In other words, you also acknowledge that the danger exists. But you are mistaken in one respect: whatever will be done to the Jews of the Soviet Union will not be done as a result of our having spoken thus or otherwise, but on the basis of a very cold calculation according to which this or that action is deemed necessary.

M. Wilner (Maki): What is going to happen to them? What are these libelous statements? Who is harming them?

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: And that is why we are so very anxious. And I have no doubt whatsoever that MK Erem is anxious as well.

M. Wilner (Maki): This is so artificial, one hundred percent artificial.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: And I ask: why, when faced with this awful danger, and feeling this great anxiety, don't you have the courage to tell that world the truth? To defend the honor of Israel and the lives of the Jews against that power, as we have been able to do in the

past? Why is it that when [you] approach that particular border [you] lovingly accept all humiliation and all danger without reacting with a proud, Jewish, socialist worker's voice. Why is all the fight and all the enmity only directed inward? You are certainly heroes when it is for internal consumption.

E. Vilenska (Maki): What did you say when the Nazi army was reinstalled in West Germany? Why didn't you react then? What danger is there for the Jews of the Soviet Union? I am asking a question and I want an answer.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I call MK Vilenska to order, and give her a first warning.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: MK Vilenska, I decided a long time ago that I have no answer for anyone who was involved in pogroms against Jews—I will not argue with you.

E. Vilenska (Maki): That is a lie! That is a provocation! There is no danger to the Jewish people in the Soviet Union!

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: This day, the day on which diplomatic relations were severed between the Soviet Union and the State of Israel, is a difficult, bitter one, but not only for the State of Israel, and my heart is primarily with the masses of Jews in the Soviet Union and all the countries of the Soviet Bloc. We have only seen them from a distance, but despite all of Ehrenburg's denials, I have no doubt that the hearts of those Jews, like the heart of every Jew throughout the world, beat in rhythm with the State of Israel and with the Jewish people. I realize that in these heavy days this will sound like empty rhetoric but had we not believed in things which were difficult to believe in, we would never have achieved what we have achieved—independence in a state of our own. I cannot refrain from believing—I refuse not to believe—that the day will come when those wonderful Jews will be here with us, will live here in liberty and Jewish independence.

M. Wilner (Maki): Under American occupation!

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: Those Jews will live with their language and their culture, in the homeland. The day will come when we and they will see it happen. In the meantime, we must do all we can—and would that we could do it all of us together, with the exception of one group which cannot be taken into account—on behalf of the great day when these two and a half million Jews will live together with us, in our homeland, as an independent free nation, living a life of liberty.

(The session was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. and reconvened at 8:30 p.m.)

Moshe Sneh (Leftist Faction): Honorable Knesset. Those speakers who made the connection between the event under discussion and other links in the chain of events which preceded it were correct in doing so, but it would seem to me that there was an attempt to bend the connecting line slightly to one side. The true sequence is as follows: the severing of diplomatic relations was preceded by the attack on the Soviet embassy, which was in turn preceded by anti-Soviet policy, and anti-Soviet policy is the forerunner of an anti-Soviet war, as war is nothing more than an extension of policy but by other means. This policy makes use of all the means possible, including that of spreading libelous statements about anti-Semitism where none exists, and at the same time covering it up where it does exist. This policy, which aims at bringing the nations to war, may be understandable when seen from the side of those who initiate it, from the side of the big capitalists who have an interest in it, but what do we, the Jewish people, the State of Israel, have to do with this policy?

The formal severing of diplomatic relations did indeed occur this week, and was initiated by Moscow, but the real, as opposed to the formal, rupture has been going on for four years, and was initiated by the State of Israel and not by Moscow. There has been much talk about mutuality in the friendly relations between us and the Soviet Union. We received a large advance of friendship, a great deal of credit in that respect, beginning with the time when we could not yet give it in return, before we were a sovereign state. Someone here said: other states also come out against the Soviet Union in the United Nations, but it does not sever relations with them. In those countries they do not blow up the embassies, but the State of Israel is not like other countries.

The Soviet Union fought in the United Nations for the right of the Jewish Agency, which had no sovereign status, to appear and to plead its case, fought for this as late as the spring of 1947; the Soviet Union first brought us in and then continued to support us until the young state was admitted to the United Nations as a full member in 1949. It supported us, from that first proclamation in the U.N. arena stating that the Jewish people has a right to a state of its own, to support for the establishment of our boundaries in accordance with the demands of the Jewish Agency representative and sometimes even in excess of those demands; it supported us starting with our opposition to the American plan to invalidate the decision in favor of our independence, and continuing with a firm stand against sanctions which England, America and France wanted to impose upon us at the time of the clashes in the Negev, at Beer Sheva and the surrounding area; it supported us with assistance in 'illegal immigration' followed by assistance in the period of the invasion [of the Arab armies] and the siege of Jerusalem.

This was an advance given against Soviet friendship for Israel... And what stand did your Israeli mission take in the U.N. arena with

regard to the Soviet Union? What stand did it take when the Soviet Union introduced certain elementary proposals for ensuring world peace? Where did it stand in the Korean conflict? How is it that you sided with MacArthur and Syngman Rhee? Why did the Israeli Foreign Minister give his blessing to the American invader to cross the 38th parallel? Was this in the Jewish interest? Was this a recompense for friendship? And when the idea was raised, which was not carried out and which I fervently hope never will be carried out, of a Middle East Alliance, you were the first in the region to express your readiness to join it in a thousand and one different ways. And when the Prime Minister was in America, did he not promise that only Israel, along with Turkey, would fight on the side of the West? And didn't Abba Eban say in the U.N. that the granting of bases to foreign forces does not contradict the concept of governmental sovereignty? And when Abba Eban came to Israel did he not say that the Israel Defense Forces have an additional role—he called it an "international" role—in "the defense of the entire area"? Defense against whom? Against the Soviet Union? And didn't Sharett request, through the columns of the *Sunday Times*, that they build airfields, military ports and strategic roads at the very least? For the Arabs, he said, jet planes, and for us, at least bases. And what has Abba Eban now said in Washington? We endangered ourselves, he said, for the West; now you should pay in economic and military potential, the main thing being that you should give us dollars since we have put our relations with Russia in jeopardy!

In light of these facts, these events which took place long before the Prague trial, is it possible to accept the theory of an "anti-Jewish attack" as a reason for your anti-Soviet position? It was before Prague that the Prime Minister, in his capacity as a member of the party, wrote in a message to the youth of his party with respect to the regime which had already liberated eight hundred million people, that it is a "regime of oppression and tyranny." And Sharett followed after him and came out at Ein Harod in an offensive against the Communist world. That was before Prague! Where, oh where, is the recompense for friendship, the mutuality with the Soviet state which, by all accounts, including a telegram of greeting sent by the Prime Minister—and not according to the articles written by S. Sh. Yariv [pseudonym used by Ben-Gurion for his articles published during his term of office as Prime Minister—N.L.]—saved the remnant of the Jewish people from Hitler's grasp and lent a helping hand in the establishment of the state? That is how you make recompense? And all this was before Prague; you did not yet have the excuse of Prague.

This is why we are forced to charge you with total responsibility, rather than only formal responsibility for not guarding the embassy. Ben-Gurion has twice referred to that courtyard and how they would not let him post policemen there, but is it impossible to guard it from the out-

side? Could the guards not be posted outside the fence? If one wants to guard something, then it is possible to do so. You knew that there was danger, that there was excitement, you knew that a car had already been burned near the Embassy building. But that is not what I want to talk about, because that is not really the subject of the Knesset debate, even though you, Prime Minister, brought it up.

Jonah Kesseh (Mapai): Why do they call you a spy?

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): Don't get me off the subject; the strategy won't work. If you wish, I will prove to you that there they know whom and what to believe, and the proof is...(Shouts from the Mapai benches: If so, why did you run away from there?) I never ran away. That is one of the lies circulated about me.

And thus I must say that not only can I not free the Government of responsibility but that the full responsibility for the severing of diplomatic relations by that power which was the first to support the establishment of the state, which saved Jews from destruction, and which was the first to grant to the state immediate full recognition, lies squarely with Ben-Gurion and Sharett, with their government and their policies and they bear the responsibility for the results....

J. Kesseh (Mapai): It is no use; they already said in Prague that you are a spy.

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): The Jewish nation and the people of Israel will not accept this rupture....

Beba Idelson (Mapai): It is you they won't accept.

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): We did not cut the cords of friendship....

B. Idelson (Mapai): That is clear!

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): Even today, the Soviet Union is the principal guarantee in the world against a second Maidanek. Those who incite against the Soviet Union will be utterly ashamed when history once again proves what it has already proven in our generation, that when the great disaster threatened to overcome the Jewish people, it was the Soviet army which saved the remnant. The danger has not passed for the source of that danger is still with us. Then it was German imperialism and now it is American imperialism. As long as the cartels are inclined to war, the sword of destruction will hang over the Jewish people. The Soviet army which saved us in the past will again save us from the danger of a new slaughter. You will be totally ashamed, as it will yet be shown that this Power is the primary friend of Israel's independence; the enemy of Israel's enslavement, and a friend to its independence.

What have we come to. To the point where you have cut yourselves off from the friendship of the socialist world. Have you gotten anything

from the "open world" as you call it, with which you have "an affinity but no dependence"? Will Israel live in security under the patronage of Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles? For these rulers carry war, subjugation, ruin, cruel destruction and brutal exploitation under their cloaks, not only for a tiny state like Israel but for such great countries as Britain and France along with the smaller nations.

Minister Without Portfolio, Pinhas Lavon: What a defamation of a foreign country!

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): Will you also deny that, after the explosion in the Embassy in Tel Aviv, and after the severing of relations between Moscow and Israel, there is a fear of increased political, economic and military pressure on the part of the combined British-American imperialism upon this State of Israel which has become totally subordinate to it? Will it not now take a stand against you?

J. Kesseh (Mapai): Tell that to Stalin.

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): Serious accusations have been made in this place against the left, and the accusations which I have made are also very serious, but they were not made in an outburst of anger. I address myself not to the Knesset but to the nation which elected it, in all seriousness and with full consideration: The Government of Ben-Gurion—if heaven forbid it should continue to hold office—will be the Government of the Third Destruction. Therefore we must force it to resign. It has brought this disaster upon us, this isolation, this enmity which is directed at us from all sides: hardship and hunger, decline and dejection, the cessation of immigration—all kinds of troubles. We are doing our patriotic duty even if we are a minority, even if we are shunned in this Knesset, even if we are defamed in the press; we are certain that we carry the banner of Israel's future and the salvation of the Jewish people through true alliance with the socialist world, with the Soviet Union striding at its head, towards the redemption of humanity which includes the redemption of our people.

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: Which flag is that?

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): The one which you tossed away, which you sold for dollars.

17 February 1953 (2 Adar 5713)

Conclusion of Debate

The following motions were presented:

Mordecai Bentov (Mapam): The Knesset views the severing of diplomatic relations with Israel on the part of the Soviet Union as a severe political blow to the Jewish people, to Zionism and to the State of Israel.

While it cannot ignore the history of the Soviet Union's anti-Zionist attitude in respect to the State of Israel, an attitude which was given expression in the Prague trial and in publications from Moscow, the Knesset nonetheless cannot free the Government of its responsibility for the course of events which led up to this action, after the Government abandoned its policy of non-alignment and neutrality; adopted a line of increasing subordination to the West; encouraged incitement against the Soviet Union on the part of official bodies; transformed its justified self-defense in the face of increasing attacks on Zionism and Israel into an anti-Soviet vilification campaign, in contradiction to the demands of Zionist and Jewish responsibility; and was unable to prevent the scurrilous attack upon the Soviet Embassy by fascist elements who are allowed to go wild in the streets under the very eyes of the authorities.

The Knesset has determined that the masses of our people in Israel, who are sympathetic to the Soviet Union and remember its faithful assistance in the establishment of the state and in our war for its existence, will not be reconciled to this rupture and will fight in the cause of mutual friendship between the Soviet Union and Israel and for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between them. The masses of the people in Israel likewise reject the policy of the Government towards the Soviet Union, a policy which sabotages the building-up of the country, the ingathering of the exiles, and the peace, security and independence of the state.

Therefore, the Knesset expresses its non-confidence in the Government.

Meir Wilner (Maki): The Knesset hereby determines that the Government of Ben-Gurion and Bernstein bears full guilt for the severing of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and bears the political and moral responsibility for the bloody clash in the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv, which is the result of a campaign of anti-Soviet incitement on the part of the heads of the regime in Israel, incitement which was intended to prepare public opinion for Israel's joining the aggressive anti-Soviet bloc organized by the American imperialists.

Therefore the Knesset expresses non-confidence in the Government.

Eliezer Livneh (Mapai): The abominations should not even be put to the vote.

Abraham Hartzfeld (Mapai): Absolutely correct, we cannot possibly vote on these abominable statements.

M. Wilner (Maki): An American agent shouldn't talk that way! Friend of Mussolini, American agent!

M. Sneh (Leftist Faction): The Knesset places the responsibility for anti-Soviet policy and propaganda upon the Government which led in the end to the criminal attack in the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv, to the severing of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel, and to Israel's isolation in the international arena.

The Knesset rejects the Government's statement in this matter and expresses its non-confidence in the Government.

Akiba Gобрin (Mapai): In the name of the Israel Workers' Party faction, the General Zionists, the Hapoel Hamizrahi, the Progressive Party and the Mizrahi Party, I present the following motion: the Knesset concurs with the statement made by the Government.

Votes on the various motions

Mapam—in favor: 8

Opposed: 85

Abstaining: 8

(The motion was rejected.)

Maki—in favor: 8

Opposed: 81

(The motion was rejected.)

Leftist Faction—in favor: 8

Opposed: 85

(The motion was rejected.)

Israel Workers' Party, et al—in favor: 79

Opposed: 16

(The motion was passed.)

Menachem Begin (Herut): I request that my abstention be recorded.

Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Act—Yad Vashem

Introduction

From the beginning of the state—indeed—ever since the magnitude of the Holocaust had become evident at the end of World War II, it was clear in Israel and in the Diaspora that the proper place to document, describe, analyze and teach the Holocaust, to identify its perpetrators, commemorate its victims and eulogize its opponents was not in the place of the crime, in Europe, but in Israel. However, the discussion of modalities, ways and means of such a unique undertaking tarried, and thus it was only in May 1953, on the eve of Israel's Fifth Anniversary, that the Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Act was presented to the Knesset for its first reading.

Sitting 227 of the Second Knesset

12 May 1953 (27 Iyar 5713)

Minister of Education and Culture, BenZion Dinur: Mr. Chairman, Honorable Knesset. The act which I have the honor to submit to the Knesset in the name of the Government, the Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Act, 5713–1953, is a unique law for which there is no precedent in any other country, since the issue to which this law addresses itself is also unique; there has been nothing like it in the history of man on this earth.

“Martyrs” in this case refers to the victims of the Holocaust, the destruction of European Jewry, the annihilation of more than six million Jews—actually six and a half million—the destruction of thousands of Jewish communities, myriads of cultural and charitable institutions, synagogues, seminaries, schools, and orphanages and hospitals, infant care centers and old people's homes, the very eradication of Jewish life in countries in the majority of which the roots of the Jewish community go back a thousand years and more. It seems to me that all the descriptions of destruction as found in the *Kinot* [liturgical poems commemorating such events throughout Jewish history—N.L.] pale in comparison to this terrible destruction, except perhaps for the single verse: [the enemy] did not have mercy upon any of the dwelling places of Jacob (Lamentations 2:2), for this destruction also included all of the “dwelling-places of Jacob” in twenty-one countries: Germany and Austria, Poland and Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, White Russia and the

Ukraine, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia, France and Italy, Belgium and Holland, Denmark, Norway and Finland. In all these countries there was barely a single community which remained untouched by the arm of the Nazis or their fellow travellers or their helpers. Prior to the Holocaust, close to eight and a half million Jews lived in these twenty-one countries; of these, only one and a half million remained alive there. And while all this actually took place during the World War, it did not occur on a battlefield nor was it carried out by rampaging masses; rather, it was the net result of premeditated murder organized by the authorities, by an apparatus of the state, by a regime which came into being in a legal way, as it were, and continued to exist through the cooperation of the German nation and its organized society; killing and murder were carried out in the open, in front of all, that all should know about it; before the very eyes of those peoples among whom the Jews had lived for hundreds upon hundreds of years. All of this was planned according to an organized program designed to wipe the name of Israel, its culture, and its memory off the face of the earth. All this was planned with unparalleled precision, with scientific methodicalness, utilizing all the achievements of science in order to annihilate every man, woman, youth, old person, child, and infant. The alarm went out from Jerusalem to the world's rulers, to the heads of churches, to presidents and governors, to heads of state and leaders of nations, to activists and spiritual leaders, to every human being in whom the image of God could be found: Help us! Save us! But it was a desolate cry. Jerusalem's warning that “generation after generation shall the blood of innocents drip down, and it shall be as a sign of Cain on the forehead of a silent world and a rot in its bones” went unheeded; the destruction and the annihilation continued. This destruction is a marker in the history of the Jewish people, for all practical purposes bringing to a close a chapter of more than a thousand years duration in the life of this nation, a chapter centered in the countries of Europe.

The tenth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising occurred one month ago, on 27 Nisan. This uprising, in which a few survivors, under siege in the ghetto, cut off from the world, alone and isolated, without equipment, without arms, without any hope of victory or of being saved, without any chance of receiving assistance, rose up nonetheless, symbolizes the heroism of Israel during the Holocaust. It was only the strength of their determination and their loyalty, their belief and their rebellious spirit which inflamed them to the point of literally placing their very lives in the balance and fighting with supreme heroism, under conditions without parallel. This uprising, with all that surrounded it, is in many ways symbolic of the entire destruction, this entire dreadful chapter which will be commemorated by the generations of Israel,

which they will study and probe, in an attempt to understand, to grasp its significance and to learn its lesson.

For the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was not the only uprising; its flames illuminate the hundreds of uprisings, the myriad of struggles conducted practically everywhere. In each place the situation was the same: desperate struggle empty of all hope, the struggles of a people cut off, isolated, humiliated and starved, until "the faces of the Jews were yellow with hunger, the same yellow color as the badge [placed] on their garments."

The primary heroism of the people was in the battle to stay alive, a battle which was fought every day without let-up. Due to the circumstances, the people were restrained in their struggle, both because the nation was permeated, for the most part, by a sense of common responsibility and solidarity, and because the people were strong in their conviction that "the wicked ones eventually come to ruin," that "there is hope for Israel still," and that they would yet see the downfall of the wicked. For this reason, in the early years, the people fought for survival for the possibility of staying alive, of holding on until the enemy would fall, just not to give him any excuse. This struggle of the people to retain their human image under conditions of degradation, brutality, and torture is a story of a special kind of heroism, because all the efforts of the enemy—who had already then made the final decision regarding his horrible design—were directed and planned to break the peoples' spirit, to place inferior degenerate elements over them, and amongst them, as their masters, to seek out such people, to nurture them and to make them masters over the Jews. The promotion of these elements was the beginning of the Holocaust. The story of martyrdom and heroism is not just a story of life and death, of murder and uprising; it is the everyday life of the Jews in the ghettos, the life of the Jews in all the countries of Europe from the day on which the Nazis grabbed power, from that day on which they conquered each country.

Five years have passed since Israel's resurrection. Five years after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Israel's independence was proclaimed. We endured a hard struggle, we were victorious, we succeeded. Again, the proclamation of Israel's independence marks a new frontier in Israel's history. A new period has commenced, a return to the days of old; we renewed our independence, we recovered our land after more than two thousand years of subservience; our strength, our spiritual steadfastness in this war, is the direct continuation of the great struggle of million of our brethren who died in the struggle for life and of the participation of more than one and a half million of our soldiers in the Allied armies and the ranks of the partisans and the underground fighters in battles on all the fronts, who fought against the Nazis during the period of the Holocaust, in the Second World War. By their spirit and their steadfastness they inspired a generation of the best of our youth who

gave their lives, who stood up and fought for our independence, our country and our lives in this place. The story of Israel's heroism is an indivisible one.

And when we ask ourselves, what is the source from which, in those awful days, our brothers drew the strength of spirit, the resolute confidence and the faith to sing:

Never say that you have reached your journey's end,
that heavy clouds conceal the light of day.

Upon us yet will dawn the day for which we yearn.

Our tramping feet will then proclaim that we are here.

(Song of the Partisans)

Then we must know that one of these sources was their deep awareness, I should say their sensation of being a part of the Jewish nation, of the great and lofty covenant which is as old as time. That cry of Yitzhak Katznelson: "Woe is to me...there is no one, none; there was a people, was but is no more; there was a people, was but it has already been liquidated," gave expression to the feeling of many. But also in the depths of gnawing despair, they believed, they knew that it is not possible to erase the name of Israel from under the firmament. Each one felt in his heart the authenticity of Jeremiah who, in the hour of Jerusalem's destruction, was permeated with that awareness which he expressed in his chapter of Consolation:

"Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hosts is his name. If these ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever" (Jeremiah 31:35-36).

And when one reads the letters, notes and diaries of our brethren, one finds that they were all permeated with this faith. One of the concerns of the depressed and tortured besieged was that their tortures be recorded, that the deeds of Cain and Amalek be chronicled for the generations to come, for all mankind, that the story of their torture and their suffering, their lives and their deaths be recorded.

Thus it would seem that there has never been a holocaust or a destruction in our blood-stained history in which so many people endangered their lives, laying their lives on the line day by day in order to preserve the record of that which happened for posterity, in order to hand it on to their brothers. Not only historians and distinguished personalities did this, but common people, plain everyday Jews. It was not just Simon Dubnov who called out, already in the beginning of the Holocaust, "Brothers, record it, write down everything, in order to tell it to the latter generation."

Emanuel Ringelblum was not the only one who systematically gathered historical material. Simple Jews tried to write down the de-

crees, the announcements, and the orders of the enemy in order to preserve them. Jews found ways to collect documents, to photograph all the atrocities insofar as it was possible to do so; even in Auschwitz they planned to bring out a collection entitled "Auschwitz." I take the liberty of reading certain passages from the preface to that collection which was never published, which expresses the deep-set national and spiritual basis of this concern for a memorial:

All of us who are dying here in the face of the indifference of the nations, an indifference as cold as the ice of the North Pole, who are forgotten by the living, we have the need to leave something to the generations to come, if not complete documents than at least crumbs and poems; what we thought, what we felt, we the living dead, what we thought and what we desired.

Upon the graves in which we lie covered with earth while we are still alive, the world dances the dance of the devil, silencing our groans and our call for help with its dancing feet. And when we have suffocated, they will take us out of our graves, we shall already not exist, and only our ashes will be scattered to the four winds. And afterwards, every man of culture, every upright man, will consider it his duty to grieve over us and to eulogize us.

Certainly people will leave here alive, but not Jews! What will they tell about our lives, what do they know about our suffering, what will they know about Jewish distress when things return to normal? They will know that we are a nation of Rothschilds. Afterwards, the margarine wrappings and the sausage cases will be energetically collected and they will say: yes, they didn't have it so bad in the camps. They will not want to scratch about in the garbage pail of the memory, and to resurrect those pale shadows with the burning eyes who, with constant fear, groped their way around the blocks and with blue fingers scratched about, scraped out the soup barrels; and even though they chased them away with blows untold times, they continued to search among the garbage pails.

No, it is we who must tell them about ourselves. Of course, we know that everything which is written need not be judged on its literary merits; these are things recorded on the gallows before death, with the rope tossed over one's neck; the hangman is patient, he has plenty of time, he plays with his victim, just now he drinks a glass of beer, smokes a cigarette and smiles with satisfaction. And, we make use of the moment while the hangman is busy boozing, using the gallows as a writing table, and we write down what we have to say. And so, friends, write, record it briefly and sharply, briefly as the days remaining to us and sharply as the knives poised above our hearts. A few pages will be left for YIVO, for the archives of Jewish pain; these pages will be read by our brethren who remain alive and free, and possibly they will even learn a little from it, and

we ask of Fate: May it be the will that our tears be put in your waterskin and kept there until they reach trustworthy hands and will be given redress.

This law is in response to the concern that their demands be fulfilled and that this primary obligation be met.

There is general agreement on the need for a special institution which would be responsible for insuring that this awful episode be preserved in the nation's memory. Immediately after the end of the World War, there were people who began to talk about the need for such a thing. In this regard I must make particular mention of Mordecai Shenhavi, for whom the establishment of Yad Vashem was a constant concern and the core of his existence for many years. At the time, a committee was set up under the leadership of David Remez, of blessed memory, the then Chairman of the Va'ad Leumi, and it was decided to create an institute. The name of Yad Vashem is taken from Isaiah: "Even unto them will I give in My house and within My walls a monument [Yad Vashem] and a memorial better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting memorial that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:5).

The idea behind the name is that the enemy wanted to erase the name of Israel, to cut off the children, to cut off any memory of Israel, but in this place the memory will be preserved. But the term Yad Vashem also has the connotation of a place. According to the *Targum Yonatan*, the Aramaic translation of Isaiah, the meaning is: a location and a name, a place and a name, and in this respect it reflects our intention not only to preserve their memory and their deeds, their struggles, their lives, their suffering, and their deaths, but also to see to it that their memory be physically preserved in our midst. And this name also implies that Israel, our land, and Jerusalem, our city, is their place and a memorial to them.

How shall we go about preserving the memory? First of all, the law is intended to insure the erection of a memorial to every Jew. To the degree that we shall succeed in collecting the names of each and every Jew who died, who was killed, or who was butchered, and arranging the names of all those to whom the poet referred:

With ease were they finished off,

Helpless they were put to death.

No one knew, no one saw.

And they have no grave.

In a register, that same register will, in a very physical way, bring back to us the millions of our brothers from the "deep pits, the closely filled rows, layer upon layer, flooded and burnt"; this register will bring to us and to future generations our brothers put to death at Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz, Belzac, Ponary, Babi Yar, and many other places. It will enable our "dried out, ground up and pulverized" brethren to pass before the eyes of future generations and before our own eyes; old men and old

women, fathers and mothers with their children held close to them, the millions whom they turned into torches—they shall stand and demand their satisfaction until the last generation.

The Names Register will serve as the basis of a second register, a family register in which we shall list, in the language of Israel, all those families of the House of Jacob which were destroyed. The family is the primary element in the structure of the nation. The enemy was diligent in breaking up and destroying families. The enemy fought against the family as such and we want to give them new life in our memories. We shall encourage the recording in the book of all the families of Israel which were overpowered and wiped out in their entirety.

The enemy was desirous of erasing the name and the culture of Israel, so he wielded his abominable axe on the past as well; he tried to dry out our roots from underneath, that all recollection of us should disappear from the earth, that we "should not be known in the world," both with regard to individuals and to the collective: he wanted to "push us from light into darkness," not to leave "a single great-grandchild or grandchild of this people" nor "any remnant of its habitations." So that it is our obligation to gather together all the memories, the documents, and anything which remained of the communities, the Jewish settlements, the institutions, the synagogues, the seminaries, the yeshivahs and the schools, the cultural and philanthropic institutions which were destroyed. We must establish an enterprise in which every Jew can see the Jewish civilization in its many dispersions, in all its richness, the cultural and spiritual endeavors of generations which came to expression in social creativity. We shall build a great hall in which we will preserve the documents and the creative works, the memories and the remnants of all the Jewish communities.

The exuberant Polish communities over which hovered the glory of ages, communities bubbling with the energy of youth, established by dint of initiative and astuteness, work and ability influenced by the spirit of the "fear of heaven" and the ways of piety, by ardor for the redemption of the nation and strength to perfect the world; in which the joy of life of masses of working people and the strong sense of security of a nation which believes in its own fortunes made them sing aloud.

We shall certainly preserve the character of the communities of Lithuania and White Russia, centers of study and of learning for generations; modesty and simplicity were their glory, the love of Torah and longing for knowledge were the property of all; their way lay in work and in making do with little, rebelliousness and sharpness of expression were their trademark.

We shall surely recall the joyous communities of the Ukraine, both long-standing and more recent ones, most perfect in piety and in the love of Zion, experienced in dire calamity and magnificently secure,

glorious in their graciousness and open-heartedness, light of movement and loving life.

We shall surely establish a memorial to the communities of Germany and Austria, deeply rooted, steadfast in their way of life, firm within the framework of their national regime, saturated with worldly culture, and fighting to maintain their unique character, communities rich in institutions and with a tradition of orderly governance.

We shall establish a memorial to the communities of Bohemia, Moravia, and Holland, veteran, traditionally religious, modest and simple, integrated into the country's towns and villages, and meshed into their lives, faithful to the tradition of generations and steadfast in fraternity.

In special halls and rooms, places will be set aside to commemorate the communities of Italy and France, some of which date back to the days of the Dispersion; communities rich in tradition, whose glory lay in the past while the present generations only watched over the embers lest they die out; among which were ancient communities which had been revitalized by an influx of new blood from the east, until the enemy raised his axe and cut off ancient and new alike.

We shall remember the Jewish communities of the Balkan states, ancient communities in which the masses preserved the tradition of generations within their lives wholeheartedly and lovingly; which flourished as a result of their contact with the Spanish exiles, and the Portuguese refugees whose fathers had escaped from the sword of the Inquisition and who themselves knew how to rebuild their own lives through work and creativity, and established centers of learning and culture—they have now all been cut down, felled, destroyed.

We shall yet remember the communities of Hungary and Romania, large effervescent communities, humming with life, which in the course of the last two hundred years or less gathered within them a million and a half Jews—some of which yearned for the new, while others were highly conservative and full of religious fire and enthusiasm.

This Act is called the Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Act and is charged with establishing a memorial to the heroism and spiritual strength of the Jews who fought in the campaigns against our enemies: soldiers, partisans, and those who took part in the ghetto uprisings. We must hoard together all the information, the notes and the memories of this spiritual strength and of their dedication. It is difficult to exaggerate in respect to these matters once we bring to mind the enemy and his victims, the Nazis vis-à-vis their victims: on the one hand, a great power which enlisted all its forces, collected around itself other nations and states, directed its entire army, its entire administration, its wealth and power, even its scientific and technical powers, to the purpose of fighting against the Jews and destroying them; on the other hand, a people without a country, without any land under their feet, no breathing

space, without weapons or assistance and without the force of a regime, just man in his humanity, faithfulness and rebellion against wickedness and abominable evil, the love for relatives and those close by and the great pity of a man for his brothers. For this they gave their lives. The world had not known a war of man against beast, a war of human sanctity against bestial contamination such as this one.

The Jews were not only victims. The slogan of the Nazis was that the Jews were their greatest, their ultimate enemies, that they were the moving force behind the entire war being waged against them, especially with regard to the partisans. While this slogan was indeed exaggerated from the point of view of Jewish capabilities and Jewish influence, it was not at all exaggerated in terms of Jewish existence. There is nothing which is as inherently repulsive as this reign of blood, this abominable regime which was created out of the cesspool of recent history, the disgraceful garbage heap of human society, and which remained that way. This regime was permeated to its very essence with terrible enmity towards the Jews, whose very being has been oriented from earliest times in terms of Abraham's admonition to do justly, a people whose inherent spirit of liberty and equality has always aroused it against idolatrous regimes of all sorts.

We must gather together every testimony, every certificate, every memory, every remnant which reveals the heroism of Jewish soldiers in the armies which fought against the Nazis and underground fighters who gave their lives in the battle against the Nazi foe. And we must erect a memorial to all the besieged of the ghettos who fought to the last for the honor of their people. Here, too, we must make a register of the fighters, the rebels, the people of the underground and their activity.

It is quite clear that an undertaking of such proportions will have many aspects and many ramifications. First of all, we have to collect all the material and in this regard, it will be the first task of Yad Vashem to gather into the homeland the memories of all members of the Jewish people who have been murdered; to list the names of the individuals, to organize the list of communities and settlements, of institutions, and so forth. This will be done both through research and through a great deal of actual collection. All this vast material will be arranged in the form of registers: registers of communities, families, settlements, institutions, and so forth.

According to the provisions of this act, Yad Vashem will be authorized to initiate and to administer memorial projects. One of the first and most essential of these will be a large archive in which will be kept all the documents, certificates, the notes, and the memoirs, everything which has been written and published on the Holocaust. This is the hall in which the registers will be kept. This project will also include a general archive of Jewish history in which there will be preserved not only that which relates to the destruction of the communities (in the Holocaust

archive), but everything which remains from the life of the Jews and their creativity in the Diaspora, so that we become aware of what it was that was destroyed.

There is one more authority which this act proposes to bestow upon Yad Vashem which in a certain sense requires further clarification and explanation, and that is the authority of Yad Vashem to grant "memorial citizenship" to all those members of the Jewish nation exterminated in the Holocaust. What is the significance of this concept? I should say that this is really the ancient Jewish concept embodied in the Biblical phrase "he was gathered unto his people" but expressed in legal terms. For what was the unholy intention of the murderers? To erase the very name of Israel, to annihilate them and to scatter their ashes, to wipe out their name and their memory, but we, the entire nation, the land and the state, receive them as citizens, gather them in. This "memorial citizenship" symbolizes their return, their arrival at this, their place.

The circumstances of the Holocaust, their isolation from the world and from neighbors, lend a special moral and human validity to this "memorial citizenship." How will it be done? Yad Vashem will bestow this citizenship upon each and every one of the victims whose name is presented to the appropriate authority by members of the family, the community, institutions and organizations. The administration of Yad Vashem will be authorized to formulate regulations determining the procedure involved, such as will give it an individual flavor. There is no remuneration involved in this act. Israel is the name of a state but also of a people. We are the heir of Israel, the heirs of all the generations, and the members of our nation who were butchered and whom the land itself did not even afford a final resting place, are entitled to claim their right to be gathered to their people after their death. And let none come forward with formalistic reservations.

Anyone approaching the discussion of such sublime matters on the basis of routine criteria shall be told, "Remove your shoes from your feet!" [Ex. 3:5].

As for the official fee: the suggestion is that it be possible for individuals, families, institutions or organizations to request a certificate acknowledging the granting of "memorial citizenship" to those included in the list of victims of the Holocaust which they present. It is the remuneration for this certificate which will make its recipient into a partner in the establishment of this memorial project.

We are not the only ones to have dealt with this issue. The feeling that there is a need for a memorial is widely felt among the people and many hundreds of books have been published by organizations of former residents of specific towns and villages, members of large and small communities in Israel and in all the dispersions. Centers and collections of certificates, documents, and remnants have been set up.

Most worthy of attention in this area are the activities of YIVO in New York, an institute which has gathered together much rich material in memory of the Holocaust; the "Center for Documentation" in Paris is also worthy of mention. It was founded by Mr. Shneerson, who collected much documentary material, a large part of which was of considerable value in the Nuremberg trials. The large archive of the American Jewish Congress which came into being as a result of the work of the Congress during the Holocaust period is also worth mentioning.

The committee which was formed to create Yad Vashem has also managed to collect much important material, which is presently housed in the general archives of Jewish history and in the Zionist Archive. In addition, there is much material in the Ghetto Fighters' House in Kibbutz Mordei HaGhettaot, and in other places in Israel. And there is still more material scattered throughout the country with various organizations and communities.

The name of our undertaking, Yad Vashem, implies not only a place; it has the connotation of a specific place, Jerusalem. The heart of the nation is here, the heart of Israel, this is where everything must be concentrated. The "Forest of the Righteous Ones" project of the Jewish National Fund, not far from Jerusalem, which is worthy of particular mention, must also be combined in some way with Yad Vashem.

It is clear that one of the tasks of the Memorial Authority will be to integrate all of these projects throughout Israel, to counsel them, and to unite them. It is clear that we cannot agree to a phenomenon of division and duplication, of splintering and deflecting the combined effort of the entire people, when it comes to memorializing the martyrs and heroes.

This is also the case with regard to institutions abroad. Of course, there is a place for the creation, in all the countries in which masses of Jews fought and in which they were killed and exterminated, of memorial monuments and enterprises which will bear witness for posterity to this awful episode and to the desire of the people to show their respect to those who were murdered, as well as their feelings of grief and revulsion toward the murderers. But the Jewish people as such should establish only one central Memorial Authority in its homeland. It goes without saying that this authority will cooperate with all the memorial efforts in the various countries.

The Act is called "Martyrs' and Heroes' Memorial" and not "Victims of the Holocaust." This is not coincidental, because one of the aims of the authority will also be the remembrance of the martyrs and the heroes themselves....

How did this Holocaust come about? For three generations our enemies publicly announced their intentions and we did not pay any attention. How is it that we did not understand, how is it possible? There certainly were those amongst us who warned us and there were even some Gentiles who warned us of what was about to happen. How is it that we

did not hear them? How is it that the pace of which the hatred, the enmity, and the murderous planning developed was so fast while the Jewish response, our inner preparedness and our spiritual ability to defend ourselves evolved so slowly? Of course we must also erect a memorial and collect the testimonies which relate to the light in the darkness, those same people who were also willing to help the besieged, the refugees, and the fighters even in the face of their own danger; to those few circles which knew to preserve God's likeness in man even in this generation of darkness, who protected men, women, and children, providing them with hiding places and all manner of assistance. They are deserving of our blessing and it is only right that Israel record their names for posterity. They are deserving of special recognition because they helped to maintain our faith in man, and in the great humanistic response: nonetheless and in spite of everything, an element which is essential to the security of the individual and of the people. This is the memorial to heroism.

The ancients have said: Israel is the strong one of the nations. A careful review of the literature related to the daily struggle of the individual Jew against the mechanism of extermination, the humiliation and the annihilation, planned and organized in secret and executed upon besieged, isolated, frightened, famished, and degraded masses, reveals the truth of this opinion. The study of that struggle of the masses to maintain their human image before all odds will, of itself, restore our appreciation of the basic strength of the Jewish character. It is a source from which we can draw out the vast strengths which are within us, which will serve us in the many difficult struggles which still await us.

And now just a few words on the technical, practical provisions of the act. The initial cost connected with the establishment of the Memorial Authority have already been included in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Very small sums are required for the initial organization and basic activities. But it should be made clear that the overall sums which will be needed for this enterprise are great. The government will not be able to cover this expense from its own budget, which is why a special clause has been inserted giving Yad Vashem the right to solicit funds and other means of support by permission of the government.

Yad Vashem will be administered by a council and an executive body, both located in Jerusalem. The details of its administration, etc., as well as the manner in which its budget will be determined, will be incorporated in the Regulations.

Honorable Knesset, I do not know if I have succeeded in convincing you of the national and moral importance of this act. I move that it be transferred to the Education and Culture Committee and the Law Committee for a combined debate, and I trust that the second reading will be

facilitated, that the law will be passed quickly and that this project will be established in the near future.

I allow myself to request that the discussion of the act be on a level befitting its importance and its unique character and will reflect the solidarity of the representatives of the State of Israel with the memory of the masses of Israel, whose feelings I have attempted to convey to you by quoting from their own writings, recorded under duress and in the very process of extermination. Let us try to remember that what we say will also be recorded in the book of posterity.

The Chairman, Benjamin Mintz: Members of the Knesset, after what has been said here it seems to me that we do not have the strength to go into the details of the act at this time. Therefore the debate will be held next week. I hereby adjourn this sitting.

Trial and Execution of Dr. Moshe Marzouk and Samuel Azaar in Cairo

Introduction

In July 1954, a number of incendiary bombs were placed in cinemas, a post office and the U.S. Information Center, in Cairo and Alexandria. Eleven Egyptian Jews were detained as suspects allegedly placing the bombs in order to undermine relations between Egypt and the West, when Anglo-Egyptian negotiations were under way concerning British evacuation of the Suez Canal. The detainees confessed and admitted that they had acted as Israeli espionage and sabotage agents. An Egyptian Court condemned two of them—Dr. Moshe Marzouk and Samuel Azaar—to death, and six others to long jail sentences. In spite of pleas for clemency from many quarters, the sentences were carried out, and the two were executed in a Cairo jail, in the early hours of 31 January 1955.

Sitting 541 of the Second Knesset

31 January 1955 (8 Shevat 5715)

Statement of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett: Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. The Israeli nation, the Jewish people in all its dispersions, and all lovers of justice and peace throughout the world received with fury and moral revulsion the frightful news that the death sentences passed by the military court in Cairo against two young Jews, Dr. Moshe Marzouk and the teacher Samuel Azaar, have in fact been carried out and that they died a martyr's death this morning.

The number of victims of the atrocious trial in Cairo has thus reached four. Eliahu Karmonah expired under the questioning of his torturers; another—Max Bennet—committed suicide, according to the Egyptian authorities, as a result of the nightmarish atmosphere which enveloped the trial; two others—Dr. Moshe Marzouk and Samuel Azaar—were executed today. We shall rise and stand in silence in their memory, and we send to their families the expression of our participation in their deep mourning. (The Knesset rises in honor of their memory.)

The ruling clique in Egypt has decided to strengthen its position vis-à-vis its internal adversaries and its external opponents by shedding Jewish blood. Many regimes have travelled this bloody road and have paid the penalty for it in the end. Egypt has chosen to take its revenge upon Jews who are committed to Israel in body and soul. The military tribunal sentenced them to the death penalty and the head of the regime approved the executions of the two, as well as life imprisonment or extremely long sentences for the others.

These tortured Jews are the victims of the same criminal, bloody war in which Egypt has involved Israel since its inception, and its rulers have continued it to the present day in all the ways it can. Egypt will not be acquitted of the blood which it has so maliciously spilled. The Jewish people and the State of Israel will not forget its martyred victims. The commitment of masses of Jews to Zion has not been eradicated in the past and will not be eradicated in the future by terror and persecution. Their love for their people will overcome the hatred which runs wild around them.

The Government of Israel points with deep satisfaction to the efforts made throughout the world—in Europe, Asia, and America—by governments, organizations, and public and political figures, including people of repute and leaders of nations, to save the accused in Cairo from the gallows. In condemning with aversion the rigidity of the rulers in Cairo who rejected all of these vigorous appeals, while at the same time not refraining from leading those who made the appeals astray—the Government wishes to express its appreciation to all those who gave a helping hand and raised their voices to save human life and to prevent the shadow of the gallows from over-shadowing the relationship between these nations in the future.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: As a sign of mourning, we hereby adjourn this sitting for half an hour.

Change in the Composition of the Government

Introduction

The Cairo trials and the execution of Dr. Marzouk and Samuel Azaar became the starting point of a prolonged political struggle in Israel, lasting well over a decade, known as the Lavon Affair, or simply: The Affair, which in the end brought about a split in the Labor party, the isolation of Ben-Gurion and his removal from the active political scene. Paradoxically, the immediate result was, on the contrary, the return of Ben-Gurion to Cabinet office. The Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett, had not been consulted about or informed of the miscarried sabotage operation in Egypt; the Minister of Defense, Pinhas Lavon, claimed that he, too, had had no prior knowledge, whereas the Chief of Military Intelligence maintained that he had received oral instructions from Lavon to carry out the operation; the Chief of the General Staff Moshe Dayan, who had been on a visit to the U.S. at the time, also put the blame on Lavon. The Prime Minister appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court and a former Chief of Staff as a Commission of Inquiry. The Commission, whose appointment and report were kept secret, was not "convinced beyond any doubt" that Lavon had not given the instruction. Thereupon Lavon resigned from the Cabinet, and Sharett prevailed upon his erstwhile chief, Ben-Gurion, to return from his retirement in the Negev and once more to assume the Defense portfolio.

Sitting 554 of the Second Knesset

21 February 1955 (29 Shevat 5715)

Statement of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett: Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members of the Knesset. It is my duty to inform the Knesset of a significant change which has been made in the composition of the Government.

In accordance with Para. 11(c) of the Amendments to the Transition Law of 5712-1952, I must bring to the attention of the Knesset the fact that the Minister of Defense, Mr. Pinhas Lavon, has resigned his position and his membership in the Government. I pass this information on to you out of a sense of deep personal sorrow. His resignation became pub-

lic knowledge this past Thursday. Yesterday at a meeting of the Government, Mr. Lavon informed us of his reason for so doing, which is as follows: he does not see any possibility of continuing in his position after his suggestions for changes in the structure of the defense establishment were not adopted by the Government. The Government took note of Mr. Lavon's announcement regarding his resignation and the reasons for it and regretfully took its leave of him.

With the departure of Pinhas Lavon from this office, I must give public expression to the importance of the position which he has filled both as Minister of Defense and as a member of the Government, and to his unlimited devotion to the state and to matters connected with its security. In the course of his tenure as Minister of Defense he played an initiating, encouraging, and directing role in a long line of important achievements and improvements in the security arrangements of the state, primarily in the increased strength and quality of the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] and in the improvement of its equipment. The organization of the IDF, its actual strength and its combat capacity have improved considerably during the tenure of the out-going Minister of Defense. As a member of the Government, our colleague Lavon was a source of advice and resourcefulness, and had a clear position in regard to every serious matter on the agenda, and through his strength made an obvious contribution to the work of the Government and to its policy. With all the differences of opinion which sometimes existed between us, I always valued and appreciated the strength of his convictions, the clarity of his vision, the sharpness of his analysis and the speed with which he was able to orient himself, as well as his sharp, clear pronouncements.

I truly trust that MK Lavon will continue to serve the nation with his great talents and his rich and varied experience, and that this Government or the ones to follow will still find the opportunity to utilize his abilities in important state positions.

Members of the Knesset, under the circumstances I felt that it was of utmost necessity to complete the composition of the Government which had been maimed by this resignation, and to do so, if at all possible, with the utmost expediency and moral authority. I was convinced that there was no candidate for the position who might fill it more successfully or who might enjoy a greater measure of public confidence than that same man who established the IDF, directed its various battles in the days of its most trying tests, strengthened its foundations for years to come, and was attached to it with all his soul. I therefore turned to the first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, MK David Ben-Gurion, presently residing at Kibbutz Sde Boker, and through the services of a faithful emissary, I begged him to accept once more this difficult task.

David Ben-Gurion has answered the call—I know that it is not without qualms and soul-searching. My suggestion that he be co-opted into

the Government and entrusted with the Defense portfolio was approved by the Government yesterday. It is my desire to express, in the name of the Government and in my own name, our deepest appreciation of the decision of our old/new colleague David Ben-Gurion. We are aware that it will considerably disrupt the way of life which he has chosen for himself and will divert his attention in no small measure from the tasks which he has taken upon himself in our public life and in the settlement movement, which are of great importance to many of us. But he has responded to the voice of his conscience and has answered the call with exemplary courage. The Government greatly appreciates the willingness of David Ben-Gurion to return to the Defense Ministry, all the more so under the new conditions existing within the Government, and welcomes him happily into the counsel of its members.

We are certain that the fact that he heads the Defense Ministry will be a great blessing for the army and for the state alike. We further believe that in becoming a part of the Government he will be a valuable strengthening factor in its joint deliberation. In accordance with Para. 11(c) of the Amendment to the Transition Law of 5712-1952, I have the honor to request that the Knesset approve the co-option of MK David Ben-Gurion to the Government.

Statements of the Various Factions

Haim Ariav (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. The statement of the General Zionists is as follows: Changes of personnel within the Government, such as the one presented to the House today, are a common phenomenon in every parliamentary-democratic regime.

Our faction welcomes the appointment of MK Ben-Gurion to the position of Minister of Defense, with the hope that his personality and his experience will strengthen the stated policy of the Government, whose main task at this stage is to unify the decisive majority of the nation for the purpose of insuring the continued existence of the state, for its fortification, and for the completion of the immediate urgent tasks which face it.

At the same time, we are convinced that there was no need to take these decisions or to publicize them with such haste, even before they were placed on the agenda of the Government and the Knesset.

The special situation in which the State of Israel finds itself, the tremendous responsibility which devolves upon all of us concerning the future of the state and of the nation, require of the Government that it carry on with its political struggles and arrangements with renewed strength and increased energy in order to strengthen our independence, to secure our borders and to bolster the international status of the State of Israel.

Meir Yaari (Mapam): Honorable Knesset. On the occasion of the return of David Ben-Gurion to the Government benches, I must first of all express my satisfaction at seeing him here amongst us. We do not conceal the fact that we were not among the enthusiastic admirers of the two-headed leadership of Mapai—the legitimately elected Prime Minister in Jerusalem and the head of the party in Sde Boker. It seems to me that this problematic coexistence could only continue on account of the unusual actions of the out-going Minister of Defense. The return of David Ben-Gurion to the Government at least insures greater normality in our public life and less romantic chaos, as it were.

We followed this noisy retirement to Sde Boker with mixed feelings. On the face of things, what could be closer to our hearts than the relocation of the workers' leader, a resident of Tel Aviv for decades, from the city to the country, and not just to the country but to the edge of the desert, the farthest reaches of the country. But we were to find our apprehensions quickly justified. Sde Boker served as a springboard for the intra-party aggression of the head of Mapai, with all the attendant side effects. It is there that the plans were laid for the elimination of other pioneering workers' parties, and for the newspaper articles attacking them, in order to strengthen the coexistence between the reformist party which freezes the wages of the workers on the one hand, and the reactionary party which expropriates the earnings of speculative capital on the other hand. David Ben-Gurion's year of pioneering in Sde Boker perhaps without any intention to do so covered up an acceleration of the anti-pioneering process within the coalition government in all areas of its activity.

Ben-Gurion returns to us in order to replace Pinhas Lavon. What does this exchange imply? Does it herald any change of line whatsoever? If Pinhas Lavon failed, then he failed as the disciple of the man whom he originally replaced and who is now replacing him. It is really irrelevant if the resigning Minister of Defense added a little spice and frivolity to the mix.

For this is a terrible disease which clings to us and begins to eat away at us with voracity. We were aware that threats to the secure existence of peoples and states have always provided a springboard for demagogues and tyrants. To our sorrow, something of this sort has infected us as well. We are also blessed with all sorts of "patriots" and activists who are trying to make party, factional, or personal capital out of the dangers to our security which threaten on all sides. In these circles, for instance, a patriot or an activist is not one who fights against our subjugation to imperialism which sets nation against nation, which arms the dictators of the neighboring countries against us, and which, in the final analysis, is responsible for the tensions on our borders. This is not, in their opinion, indicative of activism or patriotism. A patriot in this version is a man who sticks pins in British or American imperialism

and indulges in other small inconsequential annoyances in order to persuade them to include us as well in one of their aggressive alliances. All the patriotic noises of these activists do not in any way serve to insure our increased independence, but rather our increased subjugation. The continuing existence of tens of settlements in the outlying areas, through stubbornness and loyal commitment to our security, is not sufficiently patriotic-activistic to their minds. A patriot is one who rattles his sword and lets loose with war whoops, knowing full well that they do not obligate him to actually do anything. They are willing to create an atmosphere of the imminent announcement of a preventative war, and at the same time to disavow such a war when pressed to take responsibility for their statements. To my sorrow, this political speculation in respect to the security of the state and the country has ceased to be the portion of one known party, which was in any case heading toward such a calamity from the outset. It now has partners, both in veteran and new ones, even from the ranks of the workers' parties themselves, and even from within Mapai.

To our sorrow, even the out-going Minister of Defense, a member of Gordonia and one who hates adventurousness, and a past opponent of continuous activism, even he was caught up in patriotism and activism of this sort during his tenure in office, until he had to pay the penalty.

David Ben-Gurion is in no small measure responsible for this course. But we have not forgotten that he is also capable of freeing himself for actions of another sort. We have not forgotten his firm reaction regarding the Altalena or against the adventures undertaken during the War of Liberation. But he also got involved in party calculations during that period, such as the episode of the Palmach, while he knows full well who resisted at Negba and under what conditions, and under what circumstances Sheikh Jarrah, on the way to Mount Scopus, was abandoned. Had he not been aware during the War of Liberation of who the true patriots and activists were, then we would not be here to tell the tale.

In conversation with me and with my colleague [Jacob] Hazan at Kibbutz Merhaviva a few weeks ago, he made reference to irresponsible activist patriotism. I therefore appeal to the in-coming Minister of Defense to remove the issue of the security of the nation and of the country from the arena of party competition, and not to allow the substitution of chauvinistic demagoguery for true patriotism. We are trained by bitter experience and will not forget that he is responsible for that political line which bore the bitter fruit which the out-going Minister of Defense was forced to eat. We are aware of the fact that we are dealing with a personality central to the life of our country, who bears the main responsibility for our political line, both internal and external, which we do not accept. We shall judge his deeds on a practical level, but we cannot give him our confidence and we shall vote against his endorsement.

Haim Landau (Herut): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. We have never had any confidence in Mr. Ben-Gurion nor do we grant him our confidence today. It was he who led our country downward from one failure to another. He is responsible for the spilling of our blood; it is his approach which has led us to the edge of the abyss. Our faction will vote against his co-option to the Government.

I wonder at the fact that the Government refused to hold a debate on the issue of Mr. Ben-Gurion's appointment as Minister of Defense. For the Government, this is a great event; its organs are already heralding his return, which has caused a world-wide tremor; Nasser is afraid, Dulles is reflecting, Eden has yielded. So why not debate an event such as this one? For our part, nothing has transpired; what was, will be. As far as we are concerned, it is just a new paradox, another one in the line of paradoxes which are part of our country, which is being presented today for debate and decision. How so?

Here we have a minister who failed in his job for an entire year and has now tendered his resignation, which is as it should be. But the vacancy is to be filled by a man who failed in that same job over a period of six years and the activities of both of them are directed by a man who has been a failure throughout the seven years of his tenure in office. This is the true picture of our political and security situation.

Our military victory in the War of Independence revealed us to be a decisive force in the Middle East, enjoying support and admiration in the international arena. Six years of Mr. Ben-Gurion's reign were sufficient in order to fritter away this asset. In those years, years in which there were many appropriate and convenient moments in which to set boundaries, to stabilize security and to consolidate peace, it is precisely within those years that our security was undermined and we were politically isolated; in those years, the years of opportunity, our enemies waxed strong and attacked us. We were legitimate prey, the blood of our soldiers was shed, the lives of our citizens were uncared for and the regime of the armistice—the epitome of Mr. Ben-Gurion's vision and not only that of Mr. Sharett—turned into a reign of blood. The victory was turned into a new bloodbath by a failure-of-a-minister.

At that point Mr. Ben-Gurion decided to withdraw from the political arena. Why? On the whole, he was silent on the subject. He only revealed that, like the great ones in human history, he was in need of solitude. But his followers did not keep still, they revealed the "secret." According to them, Mr. Ben-Gurion left because he could no longer stomach the anarchy in both the governmental and public realms (of which he was the architect, by the way) and more importantly, because he was hampered in his efforts to bring redemption to his people and was not given a free hand within the Government, due to his fight with the yielding Foreign Minister whose approach involving retreat and restraint won out in the Government. Therefore, Mr. Ben-Gurion re-

signed, waiting for the nation to call him back and salvage the situation, in the tradition of: "Thou hast a mantle, be thou our ruler and let this ruin be under thy hand" [Isaiah 3:6]. As a precaution, Mr. Ben-Gurion saw to it before he resigned that the post would be filled by one of his trustees, Mr. Lavon, replacing him as Minister of Defense.

And what applied to the first six years applies to this last year as well, in which security followed the line of Mr. Ben-Gurion and foreign affairs followed the line of Mr. Sharett: a little reaction on the one side—totally silenced of late—and a great deal of restraint, relinquishment, and surrender on the other side. And the results are clear: the increasing aggressiveness of the enemy and the awful danger of a war of annihilation before which the authors of both lines, the "activist" and the "defeatist," stand in total, utter helplessness.

I feel that I must take this opportunity to explain our position with regard to the controversy—abandoned for the present—between the proponents of restraint on the one hand and the proponents of reaction on the other hand, which, as we are told by the press, is also the main reason for Mr. Lavon's resignation from the Government. As reported in *Davar* and in the *Jerusalem Post* of Friday last: Mr. Lavon's programs and approach in the area of defense were not acceptable to the Prime Minister and therefore he resigned. By the way, I wonder at the fact that the Prime Minister accepted his resignation, considering how he has just mentioned the value of Mr. Lavon's wise counsel, his diligent devotion to matters of defense, and his many successes; I really am surprised that in light of all this which now will be lacking, he has nonetheless accepted the resignation.

With regard to this argument, I must say that the problem of the peace and security of the State of Israel will not be solved by mere reaction. Mere reaction will not stop the bloodshed.

But it must be made clear that there is nothing worse than the one-sided spilling of blood, for that is a pogrom, which undermines our internal security, increases the audacity of our enemies, and, in the final analysis, leads to collapse on the home front and the loss of position on the outside.

So, who is now taking the place of Mr. Lavon, who was vanquished by Mr. Sharett? None other than Mr. Lavon's mentor. Therefore, we demand a straightforward reply from the Government: which political and defense line is going to control its actions from now on? It is a known thing that Mr. Lavon represented the line of his predecessor and he was beaten by Mr. Sharett and forced to resign. What will we be now—a state governed by "law" or a state governed by "theft"? Will we continue to be Mr. Sharett's "state governed by law," "a state which breaks down the barriers at Suez and moves forward stage by stage, bringing pacification to its borders," or "a state governed by 'theft'," which reacts to theft and the murder of its citizens? What will be now?

Has Mr. Ben-Gurion accepted Mr. Sharett's line of restraint and surrender, as assumed by the *Times* of London and as bruited about by people-in-the-know here, or will the two approaches continue to fight it out in the government, so that in essence, in respect to the most crucial issues, there will be two separate Governments, one for foreign policy and one for security policy? We demand a clear statement on these points which are critical to the State of Israel. It is the people's right to know the answer.

Why Mr. Ben-Gurion went is a matter which I have attempted to explain in brief. But what is he coming back to? The same anarchy, the same restraint, surrender and withdrawal, just as it was. What has changed? Nothing has changed, unless possibly Mr. Ben-Gurion has changed, and in the course of his very short seclusion at Sde Boker has had a chance to realize that the course of Mr. Sharett, which brought him to leave the Government, was indeed the correct one.

I wish also to comment upon the tumult on Kol Israel (radio) which surrounded the return of Mr. Ben-Gurion before his appointment had been approved. This is not a democratic procedure. Apparently Mapai learned it from countries whose style is well-known. And I also wish to take this opportunity to comment on the fact that a certain highly-placed figure in this country has seen fit to voice his opinion with regard to this issue which is primarily related to the upcoming elections. It is preferable that that figure remain aloof from all party commotions.

In summary: nothing has changed. And nothing will change. We do not have confidence either in Mr. Ben-Gurion or in the Government as a whole, and we shall vote against his co-option to the Government.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: The floor now goes to MK Ben-Aharon (Mapam).

Meir Wilner (Maki): What sort of order is this?

Isaac Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. The Prime Minister's statement which we heard just a little while ago in this Knesset leaves no doubt that Mr. Pinhas Lavon has not resigned his position due to political differences. If it is a matter of failure, then the Government cannot cover up for it by the resignation of a single minister only. For those very same reasons for which the Minister of Defense had to leave, we cannot approve the choice of MK Ben-Gurion to replace him. To the best of our knowledge, the out-going minister upheld the policy and the system of arrangements initiated by the previous Minister of Defense, MK Ben-Gurion, who continued to supervise them in an unauthorized fashion from Sde Boker. We have, therefore, the same measure of confidence in the outgoing Minister and in the incoming one.

We demand that the truth with regard to this very serious matter not be concealed in the inner sanctum of one political party. Those respon-

sible cannot themselves be both the investigators and the judges. The public, which has given its life for the defense of the country and will continue to do so, has the right to demand that its rightful representatives know the truth in its entirety.

We entrust our youth and our children to the Government for the defense of the state and we shall continue to do so in the future. But based upon what we have heard here, there is reason for serious worry. We are not certain that the administration of defense issues by this coalition is free of vested interests, and the Government has not proved, to our sorrow, that it is capable of instilling stability and mutuality in this realm which is so sensitive and so dear to every person loyal to the House of Israel.

MK Ben-Gurion did not desist from his supervision of security matters even though he had relieved himself of his official authority, and his return to the Government does not, to our sorrow, insure any change, but rather a continuation of the present deficient situation. From the moment at which he broke up the workers' partnership in the administration of security matters, within the framework of the highest authority of the state, public responsibility in this area became a fiction. The formation of interest groups, which led to the departure of Mr. Lavon, would have brought about the downfall of any other person in that position; and now MK Ben-Gurion appears, not in order to cure the illness but rather to save his party and its partners, the powers that be, from the verdict of the public.

Anyone who does not include all of the superior constructive forces available within the country in the administration of defense matters, will not receive our support for his appointment to this position.

We repudiate both the foreign and defense policies of the Government which were set by Mr. Ben-Gurion and are managed by him. We support a policy of independence and responsible, daring self-defense, without defeatism or adventurism, both of which negative elements were combined, in our opinion, in the present policy of this Government.

The return of MK Ben-Gurion to the Government and to the Defense Ministry does not, to our sorrow, forecast a fundamental change in this mistaken policy.

Only a Government built around pioneering Zionist/Socialist cooperation, in conjunction with all of the responsible forces found within the nation, is capable of making the State of Israel secure in the face of lurking danger.

As soldiers, every single one of us places himself at the service of the nation, its elected representatives, and its authorized institutions for the defense of our very existence and our independence, but as the duly elected representatives of the public to the Knesset, we shall not lend a hand in the continuation of the existing situation and the existing Gov-

ernment. For these reasons we shall vote against the co-option of MK David Ben-Gurion to the Government as the Minister of Defense.

Shemuel Mikunis (Maki): Your Honor Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset. Our Communist faction greets with satisfaction the dismissal of Minister Lavon and vehemently rejects the co-opting of MK Ben-Gurion to the Government as Minister of Defense. Our position derives primarily from our worry and concern for Israel's security. (Shouts of "ho ho" in the hall.) To our best knowledge, there will yet be a different "ho ho" in the Knesset. Our position derives primarily from our worry and concern for Israel's security.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I must remind you that this is a statement and not a lecture.

S. Mikunis (Maki): I must request that you relate respectfully to the statement of a parliamentary faction.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: And I must request that you relate respectfully to the Knesset.

S. Mikunis (Maki): As I have said, our position derives from our worry and concern for Israel's security. According to our best understanding and to the facts as they are, both the dismissed minister and the co-opted minister—the disciple and the teacher—represent a pro-imperialist and adventurous political and defense approach which are in opposition to Israel's interest, endanger its security, and undermine its international status.

You will remember that our Communist faction initiated a motion of no confidence in the Government in connection with the adventurous speech of ex-Defense Minister Lavon at the Milo Club on the 24th of December, 1954, in which the ex-Minister of Defense allowed himself, as you will recall, to denigrate the idea of peace between Israel and the Arab states, to speak positively about starting a war against the neighboring countries, etc. Today, in light of the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Minister Lavon as a result of his adventurous, unsuccessful, and misleading projects, it is possible to ascertain with greater ease that we were right in having raised the issue of the Knesset's lack of confidence in the Government and that it was done for the sake of the security of Israel and its well-being.

However, as we know, Mr. Lavon and the entire Defense Ministry worked in coordination with the "recluse" of Sde Boker and under his guidance. It is MK Ben-Gurion who determined the line and it was also he who laid the foundation for turning the Ministry of Defense and the IDF into an independent force, no longer dependent upon either the Government or the Knesset, a thing which has invariably led to tensions, clashes, and conflicts within the Government; this is something which in and of itself deserves the most serious attention on the part of the

Knesset and the nation, because it contains within it the dangers of military control over the state, a military dictatorship.

And if after all this the Government comes to request the Knesset's approval for the co-opting of MK Ben-Gurion as Minister of Defense, it can only be interpreted as a request for the approval of a militaristic, adventurous policy at an even higher level than that of his disciple, MK Lavon, a policy which is liable to endanger the security of the state under very serious conditions.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister himself said in the Knesset after the resignation of Mr. Ben-Gurion, that certain actions undermined Israel's international position and stained its reputation. The return of MK Ben-Gurion to the Government as Minister of Defense, in the wake of some of his activities carried out from Sde Boker behind the back of the Government, is a source of worry to all those to whom Israel's security, the freedom of the nation, and its future in this part of the world is dear.

The Government is conducting its affairs secretly and does not reveal its moves either to the Knesset or to the nation. No serious person can accept the straightforward reading of the situation with respect to the return of MK Ben-Gurion, such as the desire of Mapai's top leadership to strengthen itself in view of the approaching elections. While there must be a grain of truth even in this, a grain of truth is still not the whole truth. The "whole truth" is: the interests of the forces at work behind the scenes which manipulate the policy of the Government of Israel.

The truth is that the most pro-American person among Israel's rulers is MK Ben-Gurion. His ideal scenario was, and remains, that of Turkey and Israel serving as the primary aggressive shock troops of the Middle East against the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies, as well as that force which depresses the movements of national liberation and peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the strategic plans of the rulers in Washington.

The truth is that on account of the increased tension in the Near East and the Middle East, following in the wake of the criminal activity of the American-British imperialists directed on behalf of the establishment of an aggressive anti-Soviet bloc similar to the Ankara-Baghdad military alliance; the intensification of the arms race in the area; and the artificial exacerbation of the contrasts and the enmity among the Arab countries themselves and between the Arab countries and Israel, Israel faces very serious danger.

MK Ben-Gurion, who symbolizes and represents the most militaristic, adventure-seeking, anti-Arab and anti-Soviet circles in our country, is the man whom the State Department deems to be the most useful in assisting in plans for war in the Middle East. The latter requires a systematic worsening of tension; adventures on the borders for the purpose of magnifying the enmity between Israel and the Arab countries as

much as possible, and the intensification of the arms race; the exaggeration of the "Israeli danger" hanging, as it were, over the Arab countries, in order to harness the countries of the Middle East to an aggressive regional bloc; and the laying of the groundwork within Israel itself for its full exploitation within the war network of the American-British imperialists.

That is why there has been such an enthusiastic reception for MK Ben-Gurion's return to the Government on the part of the ruling American and British press. That is the reason for the enthusiastic reception on the part of pro-imperialistic circles in this country. The masses of the people are not party to that reception, since MK Ben-Gurion has no intention of changing, but rather of increasing Israel's policy of dependency upon the rulers in Washington, as well as our country's subjugation to the aggressive plans of the American-British imperialists regarding the Middle East.

An outstanding sign of this direction is his plan, for which he is increasingly active, to suspend the democratic system of elections to the Knesset, as a first step towards the abrogation of the democratic freedoms of the people. These designs of MK Ben-Gurion are intended to create conditions which will make it easier for him to repress the struggle of the masses of the people for peace, bread, self-defense, and the security of our country, to repress the violent struggle against the policies of exploitation and poverty.

We accuse MK Ben-Gurion and the entire Government of concealing from the public dangerous plans for the abandonment of state lands to the imperialists and their army bases, for making foreign military conquest possible, for placing the IDF at the disposal of what is referred to as "regional defense," which endangers the peace of the region and the security of Israel; we further accuse them of conducting negotiations with Washington and London over Israel's participation in aggressive military alliances which endanger the general peace and the peace of Israel in particular. Together with all Israeli patriots, we shall continue the struggle on behalf of national security and the IDF, which must remain faithful to its name and dedicate itself to the defense of Israel and not to Dulles' "regional defense." We raise a warning against the secret policy aimed at the annexation of Israel to that bloc, the single purpose of which is anti-Soviet aggression, the provocation of an atomic war of annihilation. Our concern in this matter reflects our concern for Israel's real security, while you who chatter on incessantly about security are actually endangering it through the policy of Israel's dependence and subjugation to the rulers of the United States.

Your fraternization with Dulles, with those who reestablished the *Wehrmacht*, is a betrayal of our security, and a danger to Israel and to the Jewish people. A defense policy requires unceasing effort in the direction of peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries.

This is also the way in which to decrease military expenditure for provisions and for military security, to the benefit of development and the raising of the nation's standard of living.

For all these reasons, we shall vote against the co-opting of MK Ben-Gurion into the Government as Minister of Defense. We shall continue to struggle for an Israeli government dedicated to peace and national independence.

Zalman Ben-Yaakov (Agudath Yisrael): His Honor the Speaker, Honorable Knesset. On behalf of the Agudath Yisrael faction, I make the following statement:

When MK David Ben-Gurion served as Prime Minister and was responsible for its policies and its actions, MK Rabbi Isaac Meir Levin, a member of our faction, left the Government, as it was impossible for him to continue to accept collective responsibility for the laws passed at that time which so agitated the entire Orthodox community in Israel and abroad, in that they conflicted with the basic Orthodox principles of organized, independent Judaism, regarding which there can be neither concession nor compromise. As long as this pain is felt the subject will remain engraved in our memories. But despite all this, our faction will vote in favor of the co-option of MK David Ben-Gurion as Minister of Defense and will give him its confidence, while following closely and with great concern the dangerous deterioration of the security situation in the country, which troubles our sleep and is in the forefront of our concern.

It is our intention in so doing to demonstrate before the entire world the unity of all the various groups around the burning problem of security, and the willingness of each one of us—with God's help, may He be blessed—to put our weight in the balance on behalf of the security of our country, caught up in a conflagration of infiltration and atrocious murder, and continuously threatened with a war of revenge by our vainglorious neighbors.

At the same time we wish to express our hope and our certainty that Mr. Ben-Gurion, the strong man with whose name we associate events and developments of historic proportion in our day, who is able when he so wishes to rise above narrow party politics and see the truth as it is, without preconceived notions, and does not recoil from acknowledging the truth, even when he has sinned against it unwittingly, as he has shown of late in relation to various stormy issues, that he will not disappoint us, and will justify our faith in him by his consideration of those things which are essential to the Orthodox community and by his efforts to make amends for what was done, to the satisfaction of the Orthodox, all of which will determine our attitude towards him.

Meir Argov (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, Honorable Knesset.

Yochanan Bader (Herut): Was this speech also handed in to the Speaker?

Meir Argov (Mapam): Yes. The defense systems determine the existence of the state, and they must not be dealt with in terms of the sanctified "normal procedure" as the opposition in its wisdom would like us to do. This is not a routine matter which can be dealt with by means of "statements" according to the whim of each speaker.

Minister of Defense Pinhas Lavon presented the reasons for resigning to the Prime Minister and the Knesset Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, which has been granted special authority by the Knesset in relation to defense matters. In this way he fulfilled his obligation as a minister and as a Member of Knesset who bears the political and moral responsibility of his position. The Minister of Defense correctly emphasized before the Committee: A minister comes and a minister goes, but the IDF is the defense wall of the state and we are all obligated to see to it that no damage comes to this wall. Therefore, it is a strange thing that some of the members have tried to cross over from one realm to another and to find differences of opinion and interpretation...

Isaac Ben-Aharon (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, is this a statement?

Isaac Bar-Yehudah (Mapam): Is this a statement?

Meir Argov (Mapam): Why are you shouting?

Isaac Bar-Yehudah (Mapam): To the speaker.

Meir Argov (Mapam): Don't interrupt me.

...interpretation of facts which are themselves not correct, and in any case, it is not possible to argue about them here.

We are very sorry about MK Lavon's resignation from the position of Minister of Defense. The Prime Minister has designated the period of his tenure as a period of progress in the IDF with respect to organization, equipment, and increased strength. We are hopeful that Pinhas Lavon will continue to devote his political, personal, and public strengths and abilities to the service of the nation and the state.

As for the Minister of Defense David Ben-Gurion, for whose appointment the Government is requesting approval, there is no need to go into the question of his personality and his service to the nation before the House, nor to evaluate his life's work. The resurrection of Israel, the building up of the country and its security guided his life and they brought him to the point of shouldering the weighty burden laid upon him, they alone. When he left his job as Prime Minister approximately 14 months ago, he did not resign from the state or its problems, its concerns and its security. He took a personal step which called attention to the Achilles' heel of the state, the dangerous breaches in its walls. And

he issued a bold call to the youth and to the Labor Movement to gird up their loins once again and become active in the settlement of the Negev and in making the desert bloom, in the creation of settlement regions which will serve as a supporting wall and a security belt in one.

The nation's heart was with him during this entire period, with him and with the place in which he lived. The nation has received the news of his return to the Government as Minister of Defense with appreciation. And there is no doubt that he will be given all confidence and assistance in this high service. The entire nation welcomes David Ben-Gurion as Minister of Defense and we are certain that he will carry his high position in the Government, under the leadership of Mr. Sharett, with all his strength and stature.

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: In the future we will have to put a limit on the length and form of these statements.

We now turn to the vote. I hereby call for a vote on the Statement of the Prime Minister with regard to the co-option of MK David Ben-Gurion to the Government.

Menachem Begin (Herut): First we must approve the resignation of the Minister of Defense.

The Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett: No.

Menachem Begin (Herut): I am sorry about that.

The Vote

In favor	74
Opposed	22

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: Who abstained? There is one abstention, MK David Ben-Gurion. The motion to approve the Government's statement regarding the co-option of MK David Ben-Gurion to the Government has been carried. I welcome MK Ben-Gurion as a member of the Government of Israel.

The Swearing-In of Minister David Ben-Gurion

The Speaker, Joseph Sprinzak: I ask MK Ben-Gurion to come to the podium and make his declaration of allegiance.

David Ben-Gurion (Mapai): I, David Ben-Gurion, obligate myself as a member of the Government to be faithful to the State of Israel and to its constitution, and to honor the decisions of the Knesset.

THIRD KNESSET 1955-1959

Presentation of the Government

Introduction

The Second Knesset completed its mandate, and elections for the Third Knesset took place, as scheduled, on 26 July 1955. Mapai lost a number of seats, obtaining forty as against forty-five in the outgoing Knesset, but was still by far the largest party in the Knesset. Two other Labor Zionist parties—Mapam and Ahduth Avoda—together gained nineteen seats; the National Religious party obtained eleven and Agudath Israel six. The General Zionists—the principal losers—came down from twenty to thirteen, losing seats primarily to Herut, which increased its representation from eight to fifteen seats. Lists of Israeli Arabs, linked with Mapai, obtained five seats.

In spite of the dire security situation, with almost daily *fedayeen* incursions from across the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, and the increasing threat of a second round, stoked by the Egyptian-Czech arms deal in the autumn of 1955, the formation of a coalition took eighty days. It was only on November 2 that Ben-Gurion, who had headed the Mapai list and now took over once more as Prime Minister, was able to present his Government to the Knesset.

Sittings 19, 20 and 21 of the Third Knesset

2, 3 November 1955 (17, 18 Heshvan 5716)

The Composition and Guidelines of the New Government

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I hereby open the nineteenth sitting of the Knesset. I welcome the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister back from his important mission. On our agenda is the announcement of the composition and program of the new Government.

I congratulate the Minister of Defense on his recovery and ask him to make his statement.

The Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: I thank the Speaker for his congratulations, and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the friends and acquaintances in Israel and abroad who sent me their wishes for my recovery.

Distinguished Knesset, I ascend this podium today in fear and trembling, not without anxiety nor without hope, as I bring before you a Government and a plan of action for the term of the Third Knesset.

First, I must express my deep gratitude to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, my friend Moshe Sharett, who steered the ship of state for two years with talent and good taste. He returned today from a great and difficult mission to world leaders, and the entire nation welcomes him back. Without offending anyone, I can say that the second Prime Minister is blessed with skills and abilities which the first Prime Minister did not have nor, I fear, does the third....But the fact that Moshe Sharett will continue to serve in the Government as Foreign Minister indicates that any changes which may occur will not be too radical....

On August 18 the President asked me to form a government, and after talks and discussions with all the parties separately and some of them together, I completed the task on October 7, when I submitted my final proposal for the composition of the Government to the five parties which had agreed to joint guidelines. Thus, the discussion about the composition of the Government took seven weeks, which is quite a long time, especially in these times. I will not go into...all the ins and outs of the difficulties we encountered in forming the Government...but as a citizen of the state, I reserve the right to tell the nation on another occasion about the grave dangers the current electoral system represents for the country, its stability and its democratic regime, because of undue party splintering, the exaggerated number of parties and the right small minorities think they have to impose their will on the public by virtue of their capacity to prevent the formation of a Government.

But more than I regret the many delays in forming the Government, I regret the narrowness of its basis. It has always been evident to me that we need to unite all the constructive and responsible forces in the country, and when the President asked me to form a government I turned to all the seven parties which had participated in the Provisional Government. Despite the differences of opinion between the parties, I believe that the nation in general is far more united on all the fundamental issues than the multiplicity of parties would indicate. We can and must concentrate in the Government all the responsible forces in the state, utilizing what we share and what unites us. That is why I sent the general guidelines of the Government's program to all the seven parties, and also published them. The representatives of the General Zionists answered immediately in the negative; I did not accept that reply, and asked for a meeting with their leaders; this request was granted and I thank them for that. But the outcome did not change, to my regret.... They informed me that my program "cannot serve as a basis for negotiations for their party joining the Government."

Agudat Israel presented me with a list of demands to which I did not think I had the right to accede, because one should not impose laws on the majority which it does not want to keep. In the final event, only five parties participated in delineating the guidelines which I bring before

you today: Mapam, Ahdut Ha'Avoda-Poalei Zion, Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi, the Progressives and Mapai.

For reasons beyond my control, the presentation of the Government was delayed for more than two weeks, which I regret. These are the guidelines of the Government's program which were accepted by the five parties participating in the new Government:

A. Rules

1. The Government will be established on the basis of the joint responsibility of all its members and all the party groups participating in it. The responsibility applies to the agreed program and the Government's decisions.

2. The Government's activities during the four years of the Knesset will focus on the following objectives:

- a. Bringing Jews here from countries where they are in difficulties and encouraging immigration from other countries.
- b. Progressing towards economic independence.
- c. Populating the empty and desolate areas in the north, the Negev and the south.
- d. Focusing attentively on security, peace and friendly relations with all nations.
- e. Closing the gap between the veteran population and new immigrants.
- f. Ensuring the maintenance of moral values and encouraging pioneering and popular volunteering.
- g. Assuring full employment for the established population and new immigrants, and safeguarding a decent standard of living.
- h. Cultivating education, science and research.
- i. Fortifying Israel's democracy and independence.

B. Economic Policy

3. The Government will concern itself with planning Israel's economy in accordance with its absorption, development and security needs; it will encourage every creative initiative by individuals, private companies and cooperative enterprises from inside or outside Israel; every fertile initiative which will benefit Israel's economy will gain the Government's full support, whether it be public or private, based on private or joint capital, without any discrimination. All citizens and groups will be guaranteed an equal opportunity to contribute to developing the country and advancing its economy.

4. The Government will work towards attracting private capital to invest in essential production and will grant concessions to foreign investors in productive enterprises in Israel, whether by partly remitting taxes for a certain period, granting them the right to take part of their profits out of Israel, or other measures. The Government will encourage

the participation of private capital from Israel and abroad in Government companies.

5. The Government will concentrate on expanding agricultural settlement in all its forms; it will continue to populate Galilee, the south and the border areas; it will aid in increasing the absorption and production capacity of old and new settlements, and in developing the cultivation of orchards; it will continue to discover sources of water and will develop irrigation schemes throughout the country, particularly in the Negev and the south; in order to hasten the establishment of new settlements, the Government will focus on the planning of production in the principal spheres and, when necessary, will ensure minimum prices.

The Government will guarantee the right to self-determination of all candidates for settlement. Every candidate for settlement and every organization of candidates is entitled to choose for themselves the form of settlement and the organizational framework they prefer, and there will be no compulsion.

6. The Government will develop and encourage fishing and shipping in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and distant oceans; it will aid the development of fishing settlements along the shores of our country; it will invest public funds in enlarging the merchant navy and purchasing fishing boats, and will also assist every private and communal enterprise in fishing and shipping.

7. The Government will prepare a plan for the speedy development of light and heavy industry; it will establish basic industry which can increase our economic security and independence; it will hasten the development of the resources of the Dead Sea and all the other natural resources beneath our soil or sea; if necessary, the Government will establish its own development enterprises or will do so in partnership with private and public capital from Israel and abroad.

8. The Government will ensure that the public budget is balanced and, if possible, that extra funds are created to be used for financial development and stabilization; inflationary trends will be checked; the machinery of government will be made more efficient, administration will become more economical and all duplication will be ended; credit will be directed to creative channels, giving preference to agriculture, industry, crafts and shipping; popular saving for urban and rural building, the purchase of the stocks and bonds of development enterprises and other ways of accumulating capital will be encouraged; an effort will be made to increase foreign currency reserves.

9. The Government will act to prevent an increase in the cost of living; it will attempt to stabilize prices, maintain the real value of salaries and ensure that the cost-of-living index reflects price changes.

10. The income tax system will be imposed equally on the various sections of the nation, in accordance with their financial capacity,

without favor or discrimination, being based on the principle of progressiveness, without harming the increase of productivity and essential, productive initiative, through correct assessment and accurate tax-collection.

Income-tax reductions will be granted to large families, new settlements and border and development areas, as well as to the encouragement of export enterprises.

Indirect taxes will be used primarily to protect locally-manufactured goods and to absorb excess spending-power which exceeds the necessary minimum and could cause inflation.

In order to achieve accurate tax-collection, the network of public assessment committees will be expanded, and steps will be taken to ensure full and prompt collection.

11. The Government will increase its efforts to expand productivity and make production methods more efficient, to improve the quality of products and reduce their prices, to reduce production and marketing costs without harming wages, and to make our products competitive on the international market.

12. The Government will use efficient methods against the negative effects of cartels and monopolies, and against increased exchangerates and speculative tricks, and will ensure that the reparations money is used effectively.

13. The Government will help artisans establish marketing and export institutions and will provide easy credit and appropriate housing for workshops. The Government will protect small and retail trade against discrimination in the distribution and supply of goods, both from imports and from locally-produced goods, and will help it obtain credit for its business operations on appropriate terms.

14. The Government will take steps to make importing cheaper and more efficient, and to adapt it to the development needs of local production; it will block imports which harm or compete with local goods.

15. The Government will increase tourism by the appropriate arrangement and marking of all historical sites, and by ensuring appropriate transportation, lodging and entertainment.

16. In determining the wages of employees of the Government and the local authorities, the Government will ensure:

a. a fair minimum for every employee.

b. appropriate, additional, graded pay for academic, professional and administrative employees for their extra application, expertise and responsibility and for working in development and border areas.

c. a balanced budget.

17. The Government will ensure that price rises do not cause undue changes in the existing grades of wages paid civil servants.

18. The Government will assure full productive employment to new immigrants and veteran inhabitants, with decent living conditions and an adequate level of productivity.

C. Populating the Country

19. The concentration of industry and the large majority of the population in the central coastal strip constitutes a serious security and defense danger for the future of the state, and the Government regards the distribution of the population and industry throughout the country as a vital necessity.

20. The Government will ensure that empty areas are settled. The new areas of settlement will be based on a mixed economy of agriculture, crafts, industry and mental work, as well as fishing and shipping near the coast.

21. The Government will extend all the necessary aid to Nahal (pioneering settlement) nuclei which engage in settlement undertakings, and will encourage members of the Working and Studying Youth Movement to join the Nahal; it will work towards expanding the chain of settlements along the borders.

22. The Government will give priority and special concessions to housing and industry in new settlement areas; it will place land reserves at the disposal of local authorities for popular housing, farms and productive absorption; it will extend all the necessary aid to professionals, intellectuals and pioneering youth who go out to new settlements in Galilee, the south, the Negev, the Jerusalem corridor and on the borders.

The Government will encourage residents of the towns to go and live in the country, in old and new settlements, and will give all the necessary aid to every pioneering movement and settlement organization which cultivates the barren areas.

23. The Government will do its best to ease the burden of guarding the border settlements, aspiring to attain the participation of all citizens in this. Settlers in remote and desolate areas should receive the necessary services and essential aid from the state, as far as financial and physical resources allow.

24. Talented pioneers who live on the borders or in the Negev and are sent by their settlements to study will be entitled to receive vocational higher education at the state's expense, provided they go back to live on their settlements.

25. The Government will focus on the development, construction and fortification of Eilat as a port city, on opening the Red Sea to Israeli shipping and fishing and the free passage of Israeli and other vessels to and from Eilat; it will assure land and air communications between the center of Israel and the Negev and Eilat; it will also establish a chain of settlements on the road to Eilat.

26. The Government will work to complete the Yarkon River scheme and to conclude the first stage of the diversion of the waters of the Jordan. Israel's water will be diverted to the south, as far as possible. Every effort will be made to collect rain—and flood—water in order to make the desert bloom.

D. Immigration and Absorption

27. The urgent mission of rescue immigration requires a special and additional effort from the nation in Israel and world Jewry. All our internal resources in Israel as well as those of the diaspora should be mobilized to absorb the masses of immigrants in work and settlement, giving them housing and establishing them in our homeland.

28. Together with special efforts to absorb the immigrants from North Africa and other countries where they are persecuted, the Government will encourage immigration from Western countries and will work to enable immigrants to come from Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe.

29. The Government will take special steps—with housing benefits and adequate working conditions—to encourage the immigration of experts, professionals and scientists from all countries.

E. The Integration of Immigrants

30. Most of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to this country after the founding of the state and the tens of thousands who will come in the near future are from poor and backward countries.

Many of these immigrants have found their places in Israel in work and production, establishing agricultural settlements in the north, the Jerusalem corridor, the south and on the borders, and becoming a fruitful and strengthening force in our economy and our defense system. Nevertheless, the social and cultural differences between many of the immigrants and the veteran population have not yet been erased.

The long-term existence of this material and spiritual gap between the two groups within one nation and one country contains within it the seeds of danger and destruction, and both the institutions of the state and the entire nation must make a concerted effort to eliminate this gap, to uproot ethnic barriers, to cancel differences of origin and to enable the entire nation to share in Israeli values, in the new culture and society which we are striving to mold in Israel.

This will not be achieved in one day or one year. But we will not become one nation and we will not have an adequate cultural standard for all our inhabitants if the Government does not work ceaselessly to raise the material and spiritual level of those immigrants who have been deprived of education, and if there is not large-scale popular volunteering by the younger generation, the pioneering settlements, intellectuals, teachers and youth leaders to help the immigrants.

31. The Government will work energetically and urgently to put an end to the immigrant camps and poor neighborhoods; to give the youngsters of the deprived population vocational and pioneering training; to transfer a maximum amount of immigrants to permanent productive work in agriculture and industry; to allocate grants for the most talented youngsters among the immigrants who have finished elementary school so that they may continue to vocational, theoretical, religious and higher education; to provide the resources needed for expanding the activities of the Gadna (cadet corps) amongst immigrant and working youngsters; to make special efforts in the army and educational institutions to enable new immigrants to become officers in the IDF and hold positions in the state and the nation; to do everything we can...to teach Hebrew to adult immigrants, both men and women.

The Government will encourage youngsters from pioneering settlements, and from towns and villages, to go to the immigrant centers to train them in work and defense as well as in social and cultural values, and will give those youngsters all the necessary aid.

F. Defense, Peace and Foreign Policy

32. The Government will continue to make vigorous efforts to increase our military readiness, and to improve the organization, equipment, training and morale of the IDF, both in the regular army and in the reserves, as well as in border settlements. The Government will act to incorporate settlements in the national security system.

33. The Government will take efficient steps to defend border settlements and endangered areas, and to reduce tension on the borders, and will work ceaselessly to attain peace and cooperation between Israel and the Arab countries.

34. The Government will continue to maintain the armistice agreements between Israel and its neighbors faithfully, and will also ensure that our neighbors keep them.

35. Israel's relations with other countries will be based on:

a. The firm aspiration to strengthen peace in the whole world, and particularly in the Middle East.

b. Israel's security, immigration and development needs as well as its political and economic independence.

c. The situation and needs of Jews throughout the world.

d. Loyalty to international cooperation and the principles of the U.N. Charter.

36. The Government of Israel will work to develop relations of friendship and mutual aid with any peace-loving nation, without examining its internal regime and without harming the interests of another nation; it will continue its efforts to establish friendly relations with the nations of Asia and will act to strengthen its ties with all countries where there are Jewish communities.

The Government will strengthen its ties with all the countries which assist Israel's security and development and enable their own Jewish communities to participate in building Israel and to immigrate to it.

The Government will make an effort to obtain support for the ingathering of the exiles and agreement for Jewish emigration from countries where this is still possible.

Israel will not support any attempt or aggressive pact directed against any country whatsoever, and will do what it can to help reduce international tension.

37. In all its external relations the Government must maintain its full sovereignty, the integrity of its borders and Israel's independence and democratic regime, and must ensure that all its links with other countries are based on equality and mutuality and the prevention of aggression by any side.

G. Purity of Morals and Popular Volunteering

38. The principles underlying Israel's Compulsory Education Law were: "Inculcating the values of Jewish culture and scientific achievement, love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and nation of Israel; providing training in agricultural work and crafts, and pioneering achievement; aspiring to a society based on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual help and love of mankind." These should be our guidelines in educating the entire nation and in operating all the institutions of the state.

39. The Government will work to uproot every manifestation of corruption, the embezzlement of public funds, the illegal smuggling abroad of capital, the exceeding of the legal rate of interest, arbitrary behavior by officials and the waste of public property and funds; it will cultivate relations of honor, honesty and fairness between people and the discharge of the individual's duty to the state and the nation.

If the internal organs of adjudication of institutions, organizations and parties discover criminal acts, they must inform the appropriate state institutions of this, so that the offenders may be brought to trial.

40. The Government will bring before the Knesset the Civil Service Law which will ensure, amongst other things, that:

a. Employees will be accepted into the civil service and local authorities solely on the basis of their personal abilities, without favoritism.

b. Civil servants will be morally upright.

c. The status, rights, professional organization, working conditions and future security of employees will be maintained.

d. Arbitrariness and party or personal considerations regarding dismissals will be prevented.

e. The political activity of certain kinds and grades of civil servants and local authority employees will be restricted.

f. A disciplinary tribunal is established before which civil servants may be brought if they have infringed rules or regulations defined in law.

Civil servants must be an example to the entire nation in their moral uprightness and honesty; in their skill and efficiency; in the precision and discipline with which they do their work; in their loyalty to society and the individual; in their civil behavior and politeness towards every citizen and person in need who comes to them.

The Government will work for the constant improvement of the efficiency, skills and loyalty to their work of civil servants.

41. Judges and *dayanim* (Jewish law judges) who have been granted state accreditation and are paid by the state or the local authorities may not engage in political activity or election campaigns.

42. The objectives of the State of Israel will not be attained solely by government, law and budget. The Government must cultivate pioneering values amongst youngsters and encourage mass volunteering amongst all sections of the population in order to help immigrants, aid absorption, increase the state's security and inculcate in all citizens the awareness of the fact that they have obligations as well as rights, and that the latter are dependent upon the former.

H. Education and Culture

43. The Government will develop elementary education, emphasizing agriculture, crafts and pioneering preparation in elementary and secondary schools; it will aspire towards extending compulsory free education to preschool and high school ages too; it will expand agricultural and vocational education for youngsters; it will cultivate physical education and sport in Israel; it will continue the training of teachers and raise the standard of their education and professional skill; it will give scholarships to those without means, particularly Jews from Moslem countries, whether veterans in the country or new immigrants, who wish to acquire vocational, agricultural, secondary, religious or higher education with the aid of the state; it will ensure secondary vocational education in appropriate conditions and at minimal tuition fees for working youngsters and those with restricted resources, and will enable youngsters who are supporting themselves to obtain higher education at low tuition fees; it will continue with programs for teaching the nation Hebrew; it will open institutions of higher education; it will work towards raising the standard of science and research in Israel and towards cultivating intellectual treasures and literary and cultural works in every sphere; it will aspire towards inculcating the entire nation with the achievements of science, literature and art and the attainments of human progress; it will attract Jewish religious and scientific leaders, writers and artists from all over the world to Israel, making it a world center of religion, knowledge, science and research.

44. In elementary, secondary and higher education the Government will aspire to increase Jewish consciousness among Israeli youth, rooting it in the history and traditions of the Jewish people and heightening its ethical attachment to world Jewry, recognizing the common fate and historical continuity which unites Jews throughout the world, in every generation and in every land.

I. Links with Judaism and the Zionist Movement

45. In accordance with the law governing the status of the Zionist Organization and the charter between the Government and the Zionist Executive, the Government will help the Zionist movement in the search for self-fulfillment and increased financial volunteerism; in disseminating the Hebrew language; in cultivating the pioneering movement; in bringing children and youngsters to Israel; in expanding immigration and settlement and the flow of capital to Israel; in attracting Jewish youth from all countries to be educated at high schools and universities in Israel; in standing by Israel in its struggle for its international rights and position; in deepening Jewish awareness and unity within the diaspora, and in combating any manifestation of assimilation and national denial.

J. Religion in the State

46. During the period of the ingathering of the exiles, groups of Jews are coming to Israel who have been under the influence of mutually remote cultures and environments for hundreds of years, and are divided in their views, customs and practices. The unification of the nation and proper national life require us to cultivate and maintain mutual tolerance and freedom of conscience and religion in Israel; to prevent any religious or antireligious coercion from any side; to ensure that public religious needs are met by the state; to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience to all the non-Jewish communities in Israel and to supply their religious needs at the state's expense.

K. Complete Equality for Arabs and Other Minorities

47. Arabs and other minority groups will benefit from all civil rights and bear all civil obligations in Israel.

All the educational, health, development, welfare and other services which the state and the local authorities provide will be available to all citizens, regardless of race or religion.

Arab laborers and clerks will be guaranteed a wage equal to that of their Jewish counterparts.

48. The Government will encourage cooperation in all its forms within the minority villages, will work to raise their cultural, professional and social standards and will establish municipal authorities in those centers on the basis of democratic elections.

49. The poll-tax in the minority areas will be replaced by a progressive tax.

50. As in the past, Arabs will be assured of education in Arabic while learning Hebrew as a compulsory subject; the use of Arabic by Arab citizens of Israel will also be guaranteed in all Government Ministries and institutions.

The state's institutions of higher education will be open to all citizens, without discrimination; outstanding Arab and minority pupils in elementary and secondary schools whose parents cannot afford to pay for the completion of their studies will receive scholarships like Jewish pupils.

51. Security measures in the border areas, which are dictated by the fact that the neighboring Arab countries refuse to make peace with Israel, will be reduced to serve basic defense needs and will not needlessly impair the civil rights and freedom of movement of the residents of those areas. The Government will appoint a special committee to examine the possibility and necessity of reducing the Military Government and the extent of its activities in the area.

L. General Health Insurance

52. The Government will aspire to expand the National Insurance Law to offer general health insurance to the entire population of the state; the insurance will be supplied via the various Sick Funds, while avoiding duplication in extending medical aid, filling gaps, etc. The autonomous administration of the Sick Funds will be maintained within the framework of the state's General Health Insurance Law. The Government will appoint a committee to examine the needs and possibilities of the above general health insurance at the expense of the state, the insured population and the employers.

M. The Labor Exchange

53. The Government will bring a law before the Knesset proposing that a general labor exchange be set up, to be run by representatives of the organized workers and supervised by the Government.

The just allocation of work will be assured, without favoritism or prejudice, on the basis of order of arrival, seniority and other rules which will guarantee efficiency and fairness in the allocation of work.

The Ministry of Labor will supervise the allocation of work, and a supreme appeals committee headed by a judge will be set up.

The officials of the exchange will be accepted for employment by the exchange's administration, and will be appointed by the Government. The rules of behavior governing civil servants under the Civil Service Law will also apply to the officials of the exchange.

Employees will be accepted within the framework of existing rules only via the labor exchange, and this rule will be binding on all em-

ployees and employers. The activity of the exchange will be supervised by the State Comptroller.

The employers' organizations will be represented at the exchange, at the central office of the exchanges and at the exchanges in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, and will participate in a committee comprising an equal number of representatives of employees and employers in order to determine the professional types of job-seekers. Differences of opinion between the sides on this subject will be decided by a representative of the Ministry of Labor.

N. Basic Laws

54. The Third Knesset should complete the work of legislating the basic laws which should constitute Israel's constitution, based on democratic principles. These laws will ensure full equality of rights and obligations for all citizens of the state, regardless of sex, race, status and nationality; there will be freedom of religion and conscience; the authority of the President, the Knesset, the Government and the law courts, and the rights and obligations of Knesset Members will be defined; civil liberties, rights and obligations will be fixed; the rights of the individual, freedom of association and of verbal and written expression will be guaranteed, while preserving the security and independence of the state; the democratic regime will be protected against violence and tyranny, while fully maintaining the rights of the individual; state and military secrets will be protected and emergency authority for the defense of the country will be determined.

These are the guidelines.

I'm afraid that one can't see the forest for the trees, so please allow me to add a few words about the central missions we must fulfill in the next few years and about the serious situation in which we find ourselves at present.

There are various concepts as regards the character of the state which we would like to create in Israel and the elements which should dominate our regime. It seems to me, however, that one thing is clear and is shared by us all, despite the differences between us regarding society, economy and matters of the mind. Any regime is possible provided one condition prevails: that we live in this country. Consequently, the problem of defense is at the center of our concerns. And our defense problem is unlike that of any other country.

Our problem is not merely one of guaranteeing our independence, territory, borders and regime, but our physical existence. Our enemies do not threaten only our land and our independence, and we must have no delusions on that score. They intend, as many of them say quite openly, to throw us all into the sea or, to put it more simply, to kill all the Jews living in Palestine. Let us not forget that during the Second World War most Arab rulers supported Hitler and hoped for his victory. Haj

Amin el-Husseini was one of the aides of the Nazi butcher in annihilating the Jews of Europe, and that war criminal is still active in Arab countries; at the Bandung Conference he was the companion and advisor of the Arab rulers.

I was never one of those who said that the Arab leaders' declarations about a 'second round' were just empty threats, and I had no illusions about the character of that "second round."...Five years ago, on 1 November 1950, I said from this podium that I had not shared the nation's rejoicing at our victories in the past...and the dangers that faced us in the future were no less grave than they had been three years earlier, perhaps more so, and that I was still anxious. A year later, on 2 January 1951, I warned the Knesset again of the fact that our enemies...sought to destroy us completely....King Saud of Saudi Arabia has said that he is prepared to sacrifice ten million Arabs to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. Similar sentiments are expressed by Radio Cairo, which is the mouthpiece of the ruling military junta.

Thus, the problem of our defense is simply that of our physical existence. And the entire future of the Jewish people depends on the existence of the State of Israel henceforth....Just as our defense problem is unlike that of any other nation, our defense needs are greater than those of other countries.

We must see the fateful difference between us and our enemies with cruel clarity. Our enemies think that they can solve the problem of Israel once and for all, in one fell swoop, by annihilating us completely. We cannot attain security of that kind by military victory, however complete. We cannot, do not want and are not entitled to destroy the tens of millions of Arabs of the Middle East, and no war-like and patriotic rhetoric can change that fateful fact. Our defense lies in our ever-increasing might, in every sphere....

At this moment the nation is very concerned about the large amounts of arms streaming to the enemy, especially Egypt, but it is just at this moment that we should stress that Israel's security cannot be based solely on military might—although without it there is no security....

Israel's security means immigration. Egypt alone has more than twenty-two million inhabitants. Israel has just one and a half million. Immigration is not only the *raison d'être* of Zionism and the state's historical mission, it is also a fundamental security need. Immigration is not merely the physical transportation of Jews from North Africa to Israel, but rooting the immigrants in work, the soil of the homeland, the economy, the Hebrew language, the values of the nation, national responsibility, general Jewish involvement, a sense of pride and national confidence, and the desire and ability to build the homeland and mold its character.

Security means settlement, and first of all settling the desert....We must distribute the population and industry throughout the country. Upper Galilee, the empty Negev and the south are the nation's weak points, and no military strength will maintain them if we do not settle them forthwith and with the maximum possible density....

Security means conquering the sea and the air and our becoming an important maritime power. In ancient history, the Middle Ages and today, too, we have seen how small nations which dwell by the sea can become great maritime powers by developing shipping and fishing. The first historic example comes from people who lived in our land and spoke Hebrew—the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon. Settlement need not be linked to the land, there is also settlement of the sea, and the great advantage of that is that it is not bounded by any border. All the seas of the world...are open to it. We must send our young people to the coastal towns...for on that border we are not besieged....

Security means economic independence. We cannot grow continually if we are always dependent on outside aid. Reliance on foreign help is more than an economic failing, it is a political and military danger....We cannot and do not aspire to attain economic autarchy, but if we do not balance our foreign payments with what we produce...our economic existence and political and military independence are at risk....

Security means developing scientific research and ability in all the physical, chemical, biological and technological spheres to the highest level. This is not a luxury or the need of a few but a necessary condition for building our economy, increasing our independence and heightening our security. We will never be numerically superior in either manpower, equipment or material resources; but we are intellectually superior, and we must cultivate this facet to the utmost. Our international standing, national character and ability to develop our economy, whether urban or rural, at sea or on land, as well as our military might, will be determined to a great extent by our scientific and technological capacity....Those of our gifted youngsters who study law instead of scientific and technological subjects are wasting valuable human resources....We need to focus our efforts on scientific research and endeavor....

Security means training youngsters in agriculture, crafts and industry, construction work and seafaring, so that they will work efficiently and industriously, producing high-quality goods which can compete on international markets. Each year about 24,000 youngsters turn twenty, and they have to earn a living....It is our task to train them for productive work by giving them first-rate agricultural and vocational training....

Finally, security means national participation...in the difficult and dangerous tasks of settlement, defense and the ingathering of the

exiles. Our enterprise here would not have come into existence had it not been for the wonderful pioneering and volunteering spirit which our nation has evinced in the last three generations....The symbol of that...spirit today is Varda from Kfar Vitkin, who left her parents' home and flourishing farm, went with her colleagues to live with Kurdish immigrants in the southern settlement of Patish and help them in the spheres of work, education and security, and gave her life in the course of that mission.

The mission of our generation is in security, settling the desert, absorbing and integrating immigrants, raising human standards in Israel and strengthening our economic and political independence. This can only be achieved through close cooperation between the national institutions and all sections of the nation, not out of coercion but through a sense of responsibility and a shared concern for our future in Israel....

...Two weeks ago a debate was held here about something the Czech government calls a "commercial transaction" and which is tantamount to selling poison to a convicted murderer....I am sure the Czech government knows perfectly well why the Egyptians have bought large quantities of tanks, planes, cannon, submarines and other weapons.... It knows as well as I do that those arms are not intended to improve the working and living conditions of the workers in Egypt, nor to ameliorate the material situation of the *fellaheen*, eradicate the widespread diseases or educate the illiterate masses there. It knows that Egypt's rulers are buying the arms for one reason alone: to destroy Israel and its people. Like us, it has heard the repeated declarations by most of the Arab leaders that they are preparing for a "second round."...

The head of the military junta ruling Egypt has...declared that his war is directed not only against Israel but against world Jewry and Jewish capital, which supposedly rules the U.S. We know this kind of talk from Hitler's time, and it is very surprising that the Czech government ignores the Nazi ideology now being broadcast from the banks of the Nile....In all fairness, however, I must state that what the Czech government does is guided and probably initiated by the U.S.S.R.

Although several Arab leaders do not conceal their intentions regarding Israel and the Jewish people, some of the Powers seem to be competing as to who will be the first to gain the friendship of tyrants and aggressors in the Middle East. Czechoslovakia is not the only one offering arms to the Arab rulers. Britain, which signed the agreement made by the three Powers to maintain the balance between Israel and the Arab countries and prevent an arms race in the Middle East, has sold arms to Egypt which it has refused to sell to Israel. Even the U.S. sent arms to Iraq, which refused to sign the Armistice Agreements with us.

But we say to the entire world...with all the modesty of an emissary of a small nation and with all the moral force of a member of the Jewish people: the Israeli nation will not go as sheep to the slaughter. Any at-

tempt to injure us is an attempt to injure the Middle East....Not many nations have fought for their freedom as we have....The responsibility for any attack upon us will also have to be borne by those who supplied arms to the many aggressors and those who denied arms to the few defenders....

When we renewed our sovereign existence seven years ago we were attacked by the neighboring countries...and we would have been destroyed had it not been for the heroism of our sons and daughters. Yet we did not bear our aggressors ill will, and extended our hand in peace. Our neighbors refused to make peace with us, however, and merely signed armistice agreements. Even those have not been kept by our neighbors and the war against us has been continued by other means, through boycott, siege and murderous attacks from across the border. Recently, Egypt has spearheaded this type of warfare. During the first 9 months of 1955 the attacks from the Gaza Strip alone have wounded and killed 153 people. Egypt's representatives at the U.N. have declared openly that the state of war between Israel and Egypt still exists. The Egyptian government has broken the international law regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal...and is now trying to block the Red Sea to Israel's shipping. This one-sided war must stop, because it cannot remain one-sided for ever.

The Government of Israel is prepared, as it was before, to observe the Armistice Agreements to the letter, but this obligation also rests on the other side....If the borders are open to murderous attackers they will not be closed to defenders either....We will adhere to our freedom of action to defend our rights in the most effective way.

We seek peace, but not suicide....We have never initiated war against anyone, nor will we ever do so. We do not covet a single inch of foreign land. But as long as we live we will not let anyone take an inch of our land away from us. We see no reason for the dispute between us and Egypt; on the contrary, there is every reason for our two nations to cooperate....

In order to avoid the dangers of the existing situation, I am prepared to meet with the Prime Minister of Egypt and with any Arab leader at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to reach a mutual agreement, without any prior conditions. The Government of Israel is prepared to make peace and to embark on political, economic and cultural cooperation with its neighbors, on a long-term basis. If the other side is not yet ready for this, we are prepared to make a more limited agreement: guaranteeing adherence to the Armistice Agreements, preventing mutual attacks, ceasing all hostilities, boycott and siege and maintaining freedom of navigation....

On the internal front we must not be complacent or negligent. Although we cannot rely on verbal guarantees, we will not despair of the human conscience or of public opinion in enlightened countries. The

best nations and honest people—who constitute a large part of mankind—can tell the difference between tyrannical regimes based on violence, aggression and the degradation of human dignity, and countries based on freedom, human respect, justice and peace.

We support the U.N. out of loyalty to the heritage of the Jewish prophets of peace between nations and the love of mankind, as is inscribed in the Charter and principles of the U.N. But the U.N. does not absolve its members from looking after themselves. Our work, and above all our work of ensuring our security, will not be done by others....

I respectfully ask the Knesset to approve the Government's guidelines and express its confidence in the proposed Government....

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, permit me, on behalf of the largest opposition party in the Knesset, to congratulate my rival on his recovery, which I hope is complete. Politeness impels me to congratulate him also on his success—dubious though it may be—in forming a government after birth pangs lasting eighty days and nights....I cannot help expressing my surprise...at the fact that the Minister of Defense agreed...to head the Government...in view of the fact that his party incurred a relative defeat at the last elections....

Nevertheless, despite the relative defeat, Mapai is still the largest party in Israel, and there is no doubt that in accordance with the rules of parliamentarism it has the right to form the Government and to decide who should head it....What is surprising is that the head of the present Government said two years ago that Israel's present electoral system was a fraudulent one...and that the Third Knesset would be elected by the party secretaries and not the nation. Every citizen has a right to criticize the electoral system, but there is a difference between explaining changes and rejecting parliament as the true representative of the nation....

I think it is a very grave matter indeed if a Prime Minister has fundamental reservations about the house of representatives' right to speak on behalf of the people....I think many here would agree with me if I claimed that the Prime Minister should retract his words and say that this Knesset does indeed represent the people....

This attitude of the Prime Minister's was expressed here today too. A Government has been formed, we heard the 54 sections of the guidelines, but we also heard that additional agreements were signed. Where are they? Do the coalition parties really want to treat the Knesset and the nation as if they were sovereign states accustomed to signing treaties—which are published—and to adding on agreements—which are secret—the latter being the main part? What did you sign in inner rooms, gentlemen of the Coalition?...Where are the "Protocols of the Youngsters of Zion?"

...Someone here who signs himself "Yariv's Grandfather" has written...in connection with Mapam's support for the U.S.S.R. and the various people's democracies...that if Iraq, for example, followed by other Arab countries, were to declare itself a people's democracy and, I quote, "and all those people's democracies were to come to liberate the masses of enslaved workers in Israel and end Israel's bondage to American imperialism, what would the champions of pioneering Zionism and revolutionary socialism do then? Would they fight alongside the bourgeois reformers for Israel's independence, or would they support the people's democracies?" The author concludes: "That's the question!"

I am not sure whether it was pure chance that led the distinguished author to make that hypothesis about Iraq, since when he wrote that his hand was still—as it is today too—extended to the "progressive regime" in Egypt. But regarding Egypt that hypothesis seems to be about to be realized....Nasser receives arms from Czechoslovakia, i.e. from the U.S.S.R. Who can guarantee that...the Egyptian ruler will not declare his country a people's democracy?...And eventually Nasser may send the Soviet weapons, as well as the British and American weapons, not to destroy us but to "liberate" us from bondage to American imperialism and on behalf of those who seek peace.

...Did the person who formed the Government raise the same questions before his Coalition partners which Yariv's Grandfather did? That's the question....The answer lies in what the man who will be Minister of Development tomorrow (Mordecai Bentov) wrote, namely, that Mapam is...the U.S.S.R.'s greatest friend in the Middle East....

...Political rivalry will never prevent me from telling the truth. I would like to say that as Prime Minister Mr. Sharett displayed sterling qualities. From Ministers who served with him on the Government I heard that he was almost always collegial, except perhaps for one instance concerning someone from his own party....He also always displayed generosity towards the Opposition...which repaid him in kind. If an atmosphere worthy of a house of representatives reigned in this House during the last two years it is in no small measure due to Mr. Sharett.

As Prime Minister he evinced fine qualities, but as Foreign Minister, allow me to say, sir, without anger, with all due respect, that he brought disaster upon us. How has it happened that a nation which fought for its independence...and overcame seven aggressors, found itself seven years after its victory facing what the entire Knesset, except for six members, has defined as the danger of a war of destruction? The Minister of Defense spoke of our anxiety regarding the future today, and added that he was not yet ready to express all the anxiety he felt.

The Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: Four years ago.

M. Begin (Herut): Sir, I know, I do not dispute that. I sometimes think I remember your speeches better than you do. I imagine that you will...admit that you were not the only one to express warnings of that kind.

How did it happen? That statement by the Minister of Defense that he does not want to express the full extent of his anxiety, is shocking. He knows the data and the figures.

The root of the evil...lies in the illusion...of security guarantees, which we call a mutual defense pact with America. This mutuality will doubtless be expressed in the fact that if the Mexican army invades the U.S. we will rush to America's aid and drive the intruder out; and in return, the Americans will promise to stand by our side should we be attacked.

This is no mutual defense pact, it is a guarantee; in effect, it is patronage. In this day and age the Foreign Minister seeks security guarantees from a great Power for a small country surrounded by enemies. In this day and age, when all guarantees have been proved to be valueless!

...When the U.S. Secretary of State, Foster Dulles, was asked recently whether the Soviet arms sales to Egypt...did not require that Israel receive arms in order to maintain the balance of power, he replied: "The facts are obscured...." Our enemy receives arms. The balance of power, which has long since been upset by America and England, is drastically shaken by the U.S.S.R., yet the U.S. Secretary of State still maintains that his statement should fit the facts....

Why seek guarantees when we have no other guarantee, after the Rock of Israel, than fighting Jewish youth? Seeking a guarantee is a mistake; begging for it is a humiliation; accepting it is a disaster....

What is the guarantee for the problem of arms and security? No one denies that the Soviet arms sales have given our enemies a terrible superiority in equipment. The question is, what are we to do? The Foreign Minister has said...: "If Israel is attacked, it will retaliate." How very new and original!...Of course, if we are attacked, we will fight back. Of course, we have youngsters the like of which we have not had since the time of Bar Kochba. Of course, if the enemy succeeds in entering our settlements every path will run with his blood, every house will be a fortress, every street will be a battlefield. The question is, are we sure that in that campaign, when Israel is attacked by all the weapons in our enemies' hands, we will win...?

We believe that we will win, but that is not merely a matter of inner belief. Modern warfare must also take account of strategic and tactical matters....I and my colleagues know something of human heroism and courage in the battle of the few against the many....But today I must voice a very grave warning in the ears of the Government and the entire nation: remember, gentlemen, that there is a certain superiority to

weapons and equipment in modern warfare against which all the heroism in the world is unavailing....We want to be victorious, not to be courageous in defeat.

That is the question, not whether we will defend ourselves if we are attacked. What, then, should we do?...The Foreign Minister has said that there is a possibility of a preventive war....

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: I did not say that.

M. Begin (Herut): That is what we all read.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: I told the journalist: "The fact that you ask indicates that you regard this as possible in view of the situation. I hope things will not go so far."

M. Begin (Herut): A very diplomatic reply, I admit. But be that as it may, that is what the whole world understood from it. But what "preventive war" is meant here, I wonder?...Throughout the world the term is regarded in a negative light....Will it be a preventive war if we strike first at those who seek to destroy us? Our enemies have been attacking us for seven years, boycotting and besieging us....We have suffered more than a thousand casualties. Do we really have to wait until their armies cross our borders?...If we strike at our enemies, that will be a defensive war in every sense of the word....We will be acting to put an end to bloodshed, mourning and pain, in order to give this nation security....How long shall this nation's blood be shed?

Beware of phrases and do not speak of "preventive war." One can undertake campaigns, and I spoke of those two weeks ago....Military history teaches us that in well-timed battles with strategically-disposed forces, many can be defeated by few and the course of history changed....You must decide where we are going and what is to be done. There is no point playing with words and degrading Israel's honor by speaking of "warlike and patriotic rhetoric," as if anyone suggested killing millions of Arabs. That is, after all, the whole difference between them and us. Their war against us is to destroy us, through genocide; ours against them is to save the nation and bring peace.

The most recent example is that of Nitzana...where, the radio informs us, "the Egyptians have invaded Israel," "the Egyptians have entrenched themselves in Israeli territory," "the Egyptians have brought in another unit," "and yet another unit." Soon they will have a battalion there. But sovereignty is like morals, which one cannot allow to be undermined piecemeal...but what are you doing about it?

This Government is unable to solve our principal problem. For seven years it has proved that it does not know what to do, swinging from restraint to retaliation, from extremist talk to inaction, and then offering to meet with Nasser. We all know what the reply will

be...This Government cannot solve the economic problems....By its nature it will block the capital investments we need so badly.

We will, of course, be in opposition to this Government. We will serve our nation in the Opposition....On this point I would like to address a few words to the Prime Minister-elect, who has a certain attitude to the Opposition, and has said...that any opposition in Israel is by definition a subversive element....If that is the case, how can you take Mapam into the Coalition if it has been a subversive element—i.e., a member of the Opposition—for the last six years...? The General Zionists were in the Government for two years and are now in the Opposition.... Are they a subversive element?

It is not true, sir. Being in the Opposition does not mean that one is a subversive element; the Opposition is essential. It indicates that there is true freedom. It should be respected. And we will respect those who respect us and vilify those who vilify us. We will serve our nation loyally in the Opposition. Our patriotism does not require any imprimatur....It has been proved often enough....

If this bad Government does good things we will praise it...because of our awareness of the fact that Israel is surrounded by enemies, and we are loyal members of this nation....This Government is doomed, however....It is based on exploitation and dispossession, on corruption and the concentration of the nation's resources in the hands of one group....This nation is not stupid, and on July 26 it gave its first warning. It will continue proving that no one here was born to rule. You rule now, but one day you will be in the Opposition....

That is democracy. The ruling party changes. The wheel turns....This nation has already given a warning. One day the ruling party will change. And so we will serve the nation in the Opposition...without hoping for a seat in the Coalition, but trusting in the patience, desires, hopes and vision of the nation...until we win and God gives us the strength—and the nation the mandate—to fulfill them.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I would also like to congratulate Mr. Ben-Gurion on his recovery...not only because I have always had good personal relations with Mr. Ben-Gurion, but also because there is nothing else upon which to congratulate anybody.

...It has been my wont to say a few words in the Knesset about each new Government...and the changes in their composition have on the whole been slight....This time, however, there has been a significant change....Mr. Ben-Gurion has presented us with what is known in our political jargon as a "labor coalition," something he has avoided doing in the past because those parties were considered unsuitable to participate in the Government due to their pro-Soviet orientation....I would not dwell on this point so much today...if I did not think that in every re-

spect an experiment in forming a government of this kind at this time is highly inappropriate.

In his speech Mr. Ben-Gurion focused less on the guidelines—which lie before us, and which we can read—than on the situation in the country...as a result of what we have all felt to be a revolution in our security situation....It would seem that we are all agreed in our analysis of the situation, but not in the conclusions which should be drawn from it....Mr. Ben-Gurion devoted a great deal of his speech to the supply of arms to Egypt by the Soviet-Communist Bloc. What is amazing is that there is nothing in the Government's composition and guidelines to reflect that radical change, and the rule of "business as usual" seems to prevail....

The economic aspect...was inappropriate beforehand, but now it is simply archaic and has no connection with reality....In the last three or four months, the economic situation has deteriorated considerably.... But the Government does not appear to be prepared to tackle the great tasks confronting us, and routine dominates its composition, apart from the fact that it is labor in character....What is routine is that no effort has been spared to ensure that the same party as before, Mapai, continues to have absolute rule, even though its situation in the Knesset has been weakened somewhat....

Mr. Ben-Gurion said here that we told him that we did not regard his guidelines as a basis for negotiations. He omitted to mention that we added a long memorandum in which we expanded on this point....We did not even begin to discuss the issue which I regard as crucial, namely, the composition of the Government and the allocation of Cabinet posts....And its present composition indicates that Mapai dominates all the important Ministries....

...What most arouses our forebodings for the future is...the fact that a labor Government must, by its nature, be one of class conflict. Some of the points in the guidelines...are almost laughable in view of what the reality of a labor Government and class conflict augur for us....I know that there are classes in Israel, though I do not know how many....I also know that frameworks are very important in matters of this kind, and this Government symbolizes the division of the nation into two parts, the people in the Histadrut and those outside it....

...Sometimes people talk about the need for a stable Government, and I would certainly agree with that. In effect, this Government is very stable, because since the state was founded we have had one basic Government, with minor changes at the margins. Naturally, the changes in the Government lead to interim periods which weaken the Government's ability to act, sometimes almost paralyzing it, which is certainly not desirable....When we spoke of stable governments we meant those which would serve a full term, i.e. four years. I think I may express the hope that this Government does not last long.

J. Hazan (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Mapam...has decided to support the new Government, regarding it as a duty and a right to bear the burden of collective responsibility for our national and socialist undertaking of liberation....

The composition, socialist tendencies, economic programs and international policies of the previous Governments are what prevented us from joining them. We decided to join the present Government because there were increased chances that as a result of its composition and guidelines...it would be able to constitute a turningpoint in the process of building and molding the social and economic character of our state.

We know that this is only a chance. We decided to enter the Government in order to bring our full weight to bear towards realizing this hope...at this dark and fateful time in our history....Even when we were in the Opposition we did not ignore our state's struggle....But it is evident that great trials still await us...even though by now we have laid the foundations....Only some 14 percent of our nation is gathered in our country. Most of our land is desert. The process of integrating immigrants is still in its infancy. Our security situation is very serious. Our political isolation has increased. A supreme effort is required of all the constructive forces in the nation so that we can overcome all our problems....

We live in the constant shadow of a war of destruction by the tyrants of the Arab countries....We must do our utmost to build the country and revive mass Jewish immigration to our country...in order to guarantee our strength and security...while at the same time striving earnestly and continually for peace with our neighbors and all the peace-loving nations of the world....All this is assured in the guidelines of the new Government....

Although we have joined the Government we have not changed our views regarding the role, status and value of a fighting and constructive Opposition in building our state....An Opposition of this kind is a national and socialist duty, which are one and the same thing today....Even though we have joined the Government we know that it is not the Government but the people—the toiling masses in town and country, the craftsmen and the laboring intelligentsia...workers employed by the labor organizations and those in private enterprise who live by the sweat of their brow and not by parasitical speculation—who bear the real burden of building the state. It is they, not the Government, who build roads, make the desert bloom, construct the economy and guard our borders daily. It is in the Government's power to hasten or slow down this process, and to our regret the previous Governments, against which we fought, appear to have slowed the process down.

But even then we rejected opposition for opposition's sake, and that is what any Opposition is which does not share the practical, daily burden of building the country and ensuring our security, in the special cir-

cumstances of our national struggle for liberation....It makes no difference to us if this empty Opposition is situated on the left or the right of the political spectrum....

Even as a constructive, fighting Opposition we regretted every failure in our internal or external policy—though we never ceased to oppose the previous Governments....We fought the Government's political and economic line, regarding it as undermining our great enterprise and creating grave dangers for our political and national existence....Yet at the same time as we combated the Government based on the unholy alliance between the largest labor party in our country and the reactionary bourgeoisie, we bore the burden of building, educating pioneering youth in Israel and the diaspora, ingathering the exiles and integrating immigrants; we fought the worker's just fight for a decent standard of living and against arbitrary wage-freezes; we stood at every border and the blood of our brethren and our sons saturated the soil of our country as they defended the fortress and last stronghold of our people wherever they might be....

...The very fact that bourgeois reaction is not represented in the new Government offers hope that there will be a serious change in every sphere of our social and economic life. The party which represented the parasitical-speculative sector of the Jewish bourgeoisie is no longer in the Government....Now that party has begun to obscure the differences between it and the reckless attitude towards security of Jewish fascism. That party hated the organized Jewish workers and their independent economic undertakings. It propounded the reduction of Jewish immigration and supported a foreign policy which undermined Israel's independence.

We did not seek to establish a labor Government. It is not our custom to take that name in vain and use it as an empty election slogan....We seek merely to unite all the constructive forces in the nation....Knesset Members Rimalt and Bernstein need have no fear, this is not a Marxist-socialist government of class warfare....It could, however, be a truly progressive government which will seriously attempt to impose a pioneering regime in Israel....

We welcomed...David Ben-Gurion's efforts to obtain the participation of the Progressive Zionists in the Government, and did our best to help him....Knesset Member Begin's speech hinted at financial sanctions against this Government, threatening that Jewish financiers will stop investing their money in building Israel's economy. He and his colleagues may make a "patriotic" effort to frighten these Jews, but he should not be too confident of succeeding....

I represent a party which is not religious and whose entire worldview is secular. We believe that eventually the whole nation will come round to our way of thinking. We nevertheless seek to maintain all our great cultural values....A party which disregards that condemns itself

to barren cosmopolitanism even if it begins and ends every speech with a pathetic declaration that it is the most patriotic party in Israel. The religious form of our nation's great creations has never concealed their greatness, humanity, moral superiority, adherence to truth and justice, yearning for world peace and aesthetic beauty from us....We oppose all religious coercion, but favor giving complete religious freedom to the orthodox. Most of the Jewish population of Israel is secular, and must be allowed to enjoy similar freedom of conscience....Only 15 percent of the population voted for the religious parties....

We agreed to the participation of the religious parties in the Government on the basis of the preservation of the status quo regarding the laws in this sphere, though we disagree with some of them....In my view, this stand of ours displays far greater respect for the feelings of religious people than the performances of Knesset Member Begin, who starts and ends every speech with a pathetic appeal to the Rock of Israel.

...We do not delude ourselves with false hopes...but we trust that the composition of this Government and the circumstances in which it functions...will make it possible to change the existing situation. This should be reflected in emphasizing the pioneering aspect of our society, fighting against all corruption, speculation and careerism in our life...directing economic efforts to productive channels which increase the state's absorptive capacity and hasten its economic development, attaining a just distribution of the tax burden, taking from the rich in order to give to the poor, supporting all productive private enterprise, guaranteeing the workers a decent standard of living and increasing productivity, not only by introducing technological innovations but also by establishing a regime in our country whereby the speculating few do not get rich at the expense of the masses, distributing the population and supporting border settlements, settling the mountainous and Negev regions, increasing immigration and heightening the cooperation between us and the diaspora....

We believe that all those who have joined this Government earnestly intend to end the shameful immigrant camps as speedily as possible....The future of our country depends on its ability to attract and absorb immigration....

We utterly rejected the policies of the previous Governments regarding the Arab minority in this country, both as socialists...adhering to the principle of the brotherhood of mankind, and as Zionists, knowing that a national movement which discriminates against others today is doomed. A nation which restricts the rights of the minority in its midst jeopardizes its own future....The concern for the security of our country also obliges us to do our utmost to make the Arab minority loyal to the state...but for that it should have full and equal rights....This cannot be achieved through the Military Government...

The passages in the guidelines which refer to this problem are not identical with our views. They are the product of a compromise. But their implementation can help ease the situation of the Arab minority....

The welfare of our nation and the entire region is at risk. There is a very real danger of war. We must muster all our strength in order to save the peace. We do not want war. We are sated with blood and destruction. We came here in order to build and save, not to kill and be killed, to destroy and be destroyed. Our tormented nation, which has lost one third of its number in our generation, needs a safe haven....Each year of peace is a year of saving lives, of building the country and strengthening our security.

We therefore reject any idea of a preventive war....It makes the attacked the attacker....There is no doubt as to who is interested in peace in the region and who is attempting to stir up war....With all our criticism of the previous Governments...we never doubted their sincere desire for peace with the Arab countries....The new Prime Minister's heartfelt appeal for peace in these dark days is evidence of this. Cairo's response provides additional evidence of its intent....The Arab tyrants continue to pronounce their intention of destroying Israel, rejecting any proposal to negotiate with us....But that is why we must continue striving for peace....

We also reject the idea of obtaining peace by submitting to the aggressor, which means annihilation for us....The Egyptian tyrant has adopted Hitler's slogans and speaks of war against world Jewry and the rule of the world by Jewish capital and communism. We know very well where this leads....

We know that the chain of provocations may continue and increase. We have no choice but to defend ourselves, but we do not want war....We must weigh our actions carefully, responding only on a limited, local level....We congratulate those who fought at Nitzana and repelled the aggressors, and weep with the mothers whose sons fell....But let us not forget that on the other side there are mothers who weep for their sons too, and that the tears of mothers for their children are the bitterest tears of all....

The...desire for peace, preparedness on the security level and readiness to hit back if we are attacked underlie the guidelines of the new Government....War itself is the outcome of misguided policies...and it is in the power of policies to bring it nearer or set it at a distance....The "crime" of our state is that we are weak...and our situation is aggravated by the geopolitical and international position....Our political isolation is not necessary, however, and is the outcome of the erroneous policies of the previous Governments...in adhering to one side rather than maintaining Israel's independence and neutrali-

ty...This has enabled our enemies to use their false neutrality as a disguise for their unrestrained aggressiveness.

We reject the policy of the previous Governments, which aspired to base our security on our involvement in regional pacts and a defense treaty with the U.S. We always spoke out against arms sales by Britain to Egypt, against the arming of Iraq by America and against any attempt to make our region a military base directed against the U.S.S.R., and we especially condemn the supply of arms to Egypt by the People's Democratic Republic of Czechoslovakia. We know who...began the dangerous arms race in the Middle East....America and Great Britain are not entirely innocent in this, but nothing can justify the Czech arms sales to Egypt....

We are not afraid of what is called "Soviet penetration of the Middle East." It is the U.S.S.R.'s right to do what it can to see that this area does not become a military stronghold to be turned against it. We believe that the security of the region will be ensured only when the four Great Powers guarantee it within the framework of the U.N....and cannot be achieved by giving arms to nations which announce their aggressive intentions against us....Anything which threatens the existence of the State of Israel, and thereby the existence of our entire nation, cannot be just, and we will fight ceaselessly against such manifestations.

This region is crying out to be developed. Its inhabitants live in poverty and ignorance, exploited mercilessly by tyrants. The socialist world...could have eased the economic situation of the Arab nations...but instead sells them arms....The policies of the previous Governments could not have prevented this...only a policy change favoring neutrality and independence could have helped....

...The right is dissatisfied with this Government. It is purely a good omen for this Government if the General Zionists and Herut do not want it. This Government has gathered within it the best constructive and pioneering forces in the nation; only this Government has the potential to bring our enterprise forward and open before us a new era of progress and salvation, of increased security and a brighter future. We will do our best to help the Government in this.

...

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, the Prime Minister-elect has said here that his Government regards security as being of paramount importance....Although we agree that this is the case, we disagree as to the causes of and solutions for the problem....On the contrary, we are sure that even the foreign affairs and defense policy of the new Government will only make the situation worse...being merely a continuation of the policies of the previous Governments....

Despite the fear of "pro-Sovietism" which Knesset Members Begin and Bernstein have tried to instill into the public in criticizing the new Government, and despite the illusions which Knesset Member Hazan

has tried to create in justifying his party's participation in it...the policies delineated in the guidelines are just the same as those of the past...and certainly do not accord with the manifestos published prior to the elections by Mapam and Ahdut Ha'Avoda....

Yesterday we heard Mr. Ben-Gurion affirm Mr. Sharett's policies...of a military alliance with the U.S. and a "preventive war," which makes Israel's rejection of the U.S.S.R. and the people's democracies a permanent fixture.

...Thus, the new composition of the Government does not lead to any new policy, plan or approach for Israel....The new Government will continue to pursue a military pact with the rulers of America...and this pursuit will predetermine Israel's unfortunate and dangerous international position, isolating it and making it hated, making it the gendarme of imperialism, the sentry of colonialism and the spearhead of anti-Sovietism in Asia Minor....The U.S.S.R. has already said that it will regard a U.S.-Israel military treaty as being anti-Soviet....The U.S.S.R. has proposed that the nations of the Middle East establish friendly relations with it on the basis of equality, non-intervention in internal affairs, non-aggression and respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and national independence...while warning against "dangerous aggressive adventures...."

The Government, public and press of Israel ignored this important statement...until Mr. Sharett announced that we sought a pact with America, thereby rejecting the Soviet position....The U.S.S.R.'s reaction was to define such a pact as anti-Soviet and aggressive...and as being bad for Israel too, since it increased tension in the region....

The U.S.S.R. continues to extend its hand in friendship to Israel and all the nations of the region, but Israel continues to reject it. It has chosen to follow the example of Iraq, not of Egypt or Syria...and conducts an anti-Soviet campaign....

How can you, who sent the special memorandum to the State Department asking for arms to be sent to Israel and the Arab countries to defend themselves against the "Communist danger," attack the arms shipments from Czechoslovakia to Egypt? Don't pretend that you don't remember any such memorandum, Mr. Ben-Gurion....How is it that Ben-Gurion sang such songs of praise to Neguib and Nasser when they first came to power...? Because then he hoped that they would join him in an anti-Soviet Middle East pact. But when there was a change and Egypt showed signs of opposition, and refused to join any such pact, you condemned it utterly!...

The artificial fuss you made about the Czech arms for Egypt was not because arms were being sent to an Arab country, for that is happening the whole time with arms from the West....You were angry because the arms were suddenly coming from elsewhere. Don't pretend otherwise!

Israel should heed Moscow's friendly advice. It does not demand ideological identification of you, whereas you are constantly declaring your ideological identification with the Arabs, and getting kicked in return....All the U.S.S.R. asks of you is not to join an aggressive pact. Then, Israel will get all the help it needs for its economic development, for security, defense, and even in bringing peace....

There, in the imperialist West, is the source of the hostility. Ben-Gurion "discovered" that there is hostility between Israel and the Arab countries....But what is the reason for it?...You yourself know who fanned this hostility, how the British General Staff prepared the invasion before 14 May 1948. You said, quite rightly, during the War of Independence that the Arabs of Palestine were not dragged into the war against the Jews despite the incitement to do so. It is imperialism which fans the flames of this hostility. Anyone who is enslaved by imperialism fans those flames. And instead of regarding London and Washington as the source of the dispute, you seek the solution for it there. You are sliding towards a preventive war, but it makes no difference what name you give it....Even Knesset Member Begin said it would be better not to define a war as preventive....You all know how dangerous this would be for Israel and what the price of defeat would be....Israel's border will always be bounded by Arab countries, history has sentenced us to live side by side....You are making the people despair with your constant cry of "By thy sword shall you live!"...But we say: Israel must have peace!

What value is there in Mr. Ben-Gurion's dramatic call for a meeting with Nasser...when it is followed immediately by a military meeting....Peace-loving people throughout the world solve disputes like the one at Nitzana by political not military means....

The way for Israel is not the one you have taken. You thought that you could join with the Arab countries in an imperialist, anti-Soviet framework. First of all, that's not possible. And if it were, it would not bring peace between Israel and the Arabs. What did Dulles suggest recently? A military pact with each side separately. Not peace between the nations but the servitude of all the nations....

There is a split in the Arab world. Most Arab countries are going with the nations of Asia and Africa against imperialist pacts. Only Iraq has joined the military agreement....The military campaigns against Egypt serve American-British pressure on states which refuse to join the anti-Soviet pact, just as Turkey put pressure on Syria and Pakistan on Afghanistan....Do you want the hostility to endure for ever?...Peace is likely only once imperialism is removed from the scene...and the golden age of Jewish-Arab cooperation can return.

...In order to resolve the Israel-Arab dispute...both sides must be ready to reach an agreement, a compromise, and refrain from military aggression....This is not reflected in your policy....You are sliding

down the slippery path to war....You speak of development, but how is this possible when you invest such vast sums in purchasing weapons? The militarization of the economy means inflation, the reduction of wages, the diminishing of civilian production and the decrease of productivity....

The policy of war is the main aspect of your guidelines, determining the attitude towards the Arab minority....Your internal stand—we have heard a call to isolate the Communist Party—means giving the hegemony to Herut! And the next day the leader of Herut assembles the members of IZL and declares: "God has chosen us to rule!" But he does not rely on God alone, he also raises stormtroopers to help him implement that "divine" choice.

We warn you, the social democrats—Mapai, Mapam and Ahduth Ha'Avoda, as well as the bourgeois-democratic parties—of the danger of fascism in our public life....There is a triple strand of war, the starvation of the masses and fascism. Those three go together, and that strand must be severed. The Communist Party stands in the breach against that combination. With us it is possible to establish a different front, one of anti-imperialism, anti-fascism, peace with the Arab countries and friendship with the socialist countries, assuring the future of the State of Israel as a peace-loving, democratic, independent nation rooted in the family of the emerging peoples of Asia. That is the front which should and will be established from the depths of the nation, at the initiative of the Communist Party. It will also give us a different government, one of peace, national independence and social progress.

...

I.M. Lewin (Agudat Yisrael and Po'alei Agudat Yisrael): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I join the previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Ben-Gurion on his recovery....The protracted negotiations to form a Government, the extensive guidelines, the publicity given the negotiations and the ensuing argument as to who would get which Ministry...have not enhanced Israel's prestige at this critical moment.

When the coalition negotiations began it was said that almost all the parties would participate in the Government, but we soon found that this coalition rests primarily on the left, and a particularly aggressive stand has been taken against religious people and matters.

...As soon as we heard about the arms shipments from the Russian bloc to Egypt...we should have set aside the long guidelines, stopped the discussions...and established a wall-to-wall Government....For years we have been told that we should look to the West for support...and not the closed world behind the Iron Curtain. Now the Russians have endangered us, supporting the Arabs for some reason. It seems unlikely that we can convince that sphinx by speaking of justice and honesty and the right of one and a half million Jews to their own land. That is why

Mr. Sharett...has done his utmost to obtain the aid of the U.S. and the West in arms, guarantees and a defense pact.

For the moment there is no positive response to our requests, but we can feel that there is a shift....The main threat to the state today is from Russia, but it is just at this moment that people are joining the Government who believe in the communist idol. We still remember their declarations about a "second homeland," and that they would never fight against Russia, etc....Mapai has always said that, and consequently the Government, being pulled in opposite directions, will end up being paralyzed just when it should be able to move easily.

...The Arabs have declared their intention of destroying us, and we are one and a half million as compared with their fifty million. Although they are divided, the one thing that unites them is their blind hatred of Israel....They incite others to hate us too, particularly in Asia....The Russians are also involved in this, and are readily joining the anti-Israel chorus....

...If the Egyptians are constantly arming themselves, the situation is steadily getting worse....An attempt has been made to mobilize world and Jewish public opinion...but we cannot depend on miracles and must turn our eyes heavenwards for help. That is how it was seven years ago, at the time of the war with the Arabs, and that is how it is today. Then we witnessed miracles, and we hope for them again today.

We religious Jews put our trust in Divine Providence, and there are many verses from the Psalms which bear this out....Only Almighty God can and will save us....At the moment the skies are dark and danger confronts us, but the skies can clear and the danger pass in a moment.

...We are not afraid of the Arabs, the Russians or anyone else....What we are afraid of is the bad religious and moral situation in this country....People say to us—you have your religion, what do you want of us?—but we seek to bring everyone nearer to God....After two thousand years we are building our state with the best modern innovations but without a solid basis, without spiritual content, disregarding the main point, which is our holy Scripture....We did not spend two thousand years in exile in order to live in the State of Israel just like any other nation.

...Instead of being one nation we are very divided. There are no ideals, no joy in living...egoism is everything...it is the new idol, which is worshipped everywhere. The Sabbath and the holydays are trampled underfoot. The religious immigrants who are brought to the Holy Land are made to be something else....

...When there were discussions about our joining the Coalition we made only minimal demands...despite the fact that there are many features of life here—particularly in the economic sphere—which displease us. We asked, for example, that public transport be stopped on the

Sabbath in Haifa as it is in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv....We also demanded that women no longer be mobilized into the army...that missionary activities be banned, that the growing of pigs be forbidden, that religious immigrants be taught by religious instructors...that the scandalous autopsies be stopped and that Reform Judaism be banned from Israel. Only our demand for funds for our schools was accepted. The words spoken here by Knesset Member Hazan today indicate how far Godlessness and heresy have penetrated our society....

In reply to our demands Mr. Ben-Gurion said here that one should not impose the will of the minority on the majority. But we say that if you ask the people they will themselves want most of the things we have asked for....As for Hapoel Hamizrahi...all I can say is that if you had formed a united front with us both you and we would have achieved more than we did....But you have entered the Coalition alone, and have been forced to give up most of your demands and Ministerial posts....All the guidelines lack the main point, namely, that we are the people of God. I believe that the day will come when the entire nation will return to its roots...and will recognize the fact that our path is the true one....

Be that as it may, we cannot place our confidence in the Government presented here today, and we will vote against it.

...

Saif-Aldin Elzuabi (The Democratic List for Israel's Arabs): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...we congratulate Mr. Ben-Gurion on having formed a Government which can withstand shocks and difficulties....We cannot ignore the delicate situation prevailing at the moment, when Israel's leaders are acting carefully...and expressing their regret at the fact that the Arab leaders are being led astray by their desires and those who incite them...and all this at a time when Mr. Ben-Gurion has extended the hand of friendship to them....

I will not forget the speech Mr. Ben-Gurion made in the Knesset immediately after the coup in Egypt, expressing his satisfaction, welcoming this change and voicing the hope that it would be beneficial to the Egyptian people....It is to be regretted that they have dashed our hopes, ignoring the needs of their people and seeking to embroil them in a disastrous war against Israel....I appeal to the leaders of Egypt, Syria and the other Arab countries to recognize the fact that war will not solve anything and will not serve the interests of the Arab peoples....

The IDF stands ready to repel any invader...and the Israeli nation is equally prepared...believing that the cause for which it fights is a just one. When a defense fund was established recently...we saw how every section of the nation—including the Arabs—gave money willingly....However, the Arab minority is sometimes attacked by certain sections of the public and the press and aspersions are cast on its loyalty to the State of Israel....

I appeal to the members of this House, to the Government and to the people of Israel to remove the doubts from their minds and hearts and to cease regarding the Arab minority as being responsible for acts of aggression perpetrated by attackers coming from the other side of the border....The relevant authorities know everything about every Arab in Israel...leave it to them to deal with things....Let all the citizens of Israel know that the Arabs are also citizens of the state! This has been expressed in section 47 of the guidelines....

I conclude by asking those representatives of Mapam and Ahduth Ha'Avoda who have concerned themselves with Arab affairs in the past and are now in the Government to continue being active on the subject of the Arab minority even now. I hope that they will answer questions put to them in the same vein as they phrased the questions they submitted in the past, proving that they meant what they said then.

T. Toubi (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, Mr. Ben-Gurion's Government is presented to the Knesset at a time when the peoples of Israel and the Arab countries are full of fear as regards the fate of peace in the Middle East. The nation in Israel is particularly anxious...because of the official and unofficial statements about a preventive war against the neighboring countries and on behalf of those who would make pacts in Washington and London. Despite everything...this war-mongering has not succeeded in repressing the people's thirst for peace....

...We would like to be able to accept Mr. Ben-Gurion's assertions about his desire for peace and direct talks with Arab leaders at their face value. But pronouncements of this kind are mere lipservice to peace when they are accompanied by aggressive saberrattling....

...We, of course, condemn any act of aggression against Israel by Nasser's or any other government; we condemn the infraction of the Armistice Agreement. But if the Government seeks peace and if it is convinced that it is in the right regarding the current dispute in the El-Auja (Nitzana) demilitarized area, why does it not ask the U.N. Security Council to settle the matter by peaceful means...?

...We do not ignore the fact that in the Arab countries there are elements which are hostile to Israel...and we condemn them...but there is also a strong popular desire for a peaceful settlement with Israel which will honor the nations' just rights and which is part of the growing anti-imperialist struggle in those countries....

...In the Arab countries, too, the mouthpieces of reaction quote statements made...by representatives of the State of Israel, including the Prime Minister, about a preventive war against the Arab countries and the demand for "action," and even about restoring the integrity of the country on both sides of the Jordan. But we say: that is not the true face of Israel...and we must welcome any development in the Arab countries which is anti-imperialist and favors peace. The Prime Minister-elect has declared that he wants direct peace talks without preconditions; but

he has also said that no Arab refugee will return to his home....Is that not a precondition...?

The Prime Minister-elect says that there is abundant goodwill on our side. Why does he not display it within Israel towards the Arab citizens who have been living under military rule for seven years and have been deprived of the most elementary right—the freedom to move about freely and dwell where they wish?

...As for the members of Mapam, how can you, who have spoken against a military pact with the U.S., join a government which is working towards just that end...? What about your assurances to the Arab voters during the election campaign that you would fight against the Military Government prevailing in Arab areas...?

Consequently, distinguished Knesset, the Israel Communist Party opposes the new Government and will vote against it. Those who pursue peace in our country, the masses of workers who are fighting for their daily needs and the forces which are struggling for peace between Israel and the Arab countries...will continue to do so...with the Communist Party at their head, until Israel's present policy is changed and Israel finds the road to independence, thereby gaining the aid of the mighty socialist camp. Therefore, the Communist Party will serve peace and Israel's happy future as a sister and ally of the Arab countries of the Middle East.

M. Nurock (Hamizrahi and Hapoel Hamizrahi): ...We welcome Mr. Ben-Gurion back and congratulate him on his recovery....At this fateful hour, when Israel's enemies are openly and brazenly announcing their intention of destroying the country, we need a responsible and stable Government....

...It is regrettable that a wall-to-wall coalition was not established in this hour of grave danger...except, of course, for those parties which regard the Egyptian tyrant as the angel of peace....

Our party was the first to propose a broad Coalition...but one party, which is as patriotic as one could want, which is imbued with a love of Israel, which sacrificed itself on the altar of our liberation, has been excluded from this....Another secular party and two religious parties which have already proved their responsibility are not in the Coalition either....Our brethren in the diaspora find this difficult to grasp....

This fateful hour, when our bad neighbors seek to destroy us, is no time for intransigence and ambition....We have waived our party group's just demands because of the present crisis, putting the state above all else....We call on our brethren who have refused to share the burden of responsibility not to set themselves apart now....

We welcome the participation of the parties of the left, and were satisfied to hear their statements against those who would destroy us. A Jewish heart beats within them. That is why we reject accusations made here to the effect that we support a pro-communist Government....Our

colleagues of the left may have made certain statements in the past, but their position today is quite different. They have repented, than which there is no greater righteousness, as our sages have said....Our only strength is in unity, in a genuine, wall-to-wall Coalition, because the danger threatens us all, regardless of ideological differences, as at the time of the Holocaust....

...
The Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I would first like to extend the sympathy of the Government-elect and the entire nation to the parents of the five soldiers who fell in the defense of the state last night....They will always be remembered with pain and pride....I also regret the 50 Egyptian soldiers who were killed, because they were the victims not of their own wickedness but of the aggressiveness of an ambitious tyrant who is playing with the lives of his people.

I must thank the two leaders of the Opposition, Knesset Members Begin and Bernstein, for their good wishes for my health. I hope they will not regard it as ingratitude if I say that I heard hatred, class incitement and arrogance in their speeches here last night....Naturally, they are entitled to oppose the Government, though they did not bother to explain why. A newspaper which is close to the General Zionists said that Knesset Member Bernstein's speech smacked of tale-bearing...and it is enough for something like that to have been said, whether it is true or not, though Mr. Bernstein speaks in a cultured way and Mr. Begin in his own way.

I would like to assure the leader of Herut that I stand behind every word I said and wrote about the danger of excessive splintering and the damage caused by the current electoral system. But a law is a law, and should be upheld even if one thinks it should be changed.

MK Bernstein was angry that I did not read out all of the long letter he wrote me. The main point of the letter came at its end, and that is what I read out to the Knesset....The party which represents pure patriotism was unable to accept the basic points I submitted to it as a basis for the Government....I have never maintained that a responsible Zionist party should be rejected out of hand...as Mapam has said about the General Zionists, refusing to sit in the Government with them, or as MK Bernstein has said about Mapam....

There have been elections three times, and...each time I have been called to form a government. Each time I sincerely sought to include all the parties which participated in the Provisional Government. I will not settle scores with MK Hazan as to why his party was not in the Government till today, because I have not come here to dwell on the past. I completely reject the totalitarian view, which regards individuals or parties on one side as completely white and on the other as completely

black....Everyone combines both good and bad, what is crucial is the mix of the two....

MK Begin does not usually represent matters accurately, not out of malice, I imagine, but out of an inability to distinguish fact from fiction....He was not more accurate this time, claiming to have read a pamphlet and articles written by Yariv's Grandfather. There is no such thing. I have read what he is talking about—which was signed Y. Grandfather—and I consulted the author before forming the Government, because he is very close to me, and I agreed with his criticism of Hashomer Hatzair. I also told MKs Ya'ari and Hazan of my views when I visited them at Merhavia last year....

...Y. Grandfather told me that the root of Hashomer Hatzair's—not Mapam's—mistakes was its separatism from the mass of the workers...and that if it were possible to get it to share the burden of government responsibility every effort should be made to do so...for the benefit of the people and State of Israel. I took his advice.

...A coalition government cannot be based on uniformity of ideas, only on unity of action....Members of the Government cannot do as they please, even if they disagree with the decision of the majority in the Government....Anyone who cannot accept that must leave the Government....

We were asked about supposedly secret agreements of the "elders of Zion" or the "youngsters of Zion." There are agreements, but they are not secret, and I will read them out to you....

With the permission of my colleagues from Mapam I will read out the letter they sent me about their reservations regarding foreign policy. I told them...that we were aiming at a mutual defense pact with the U.S....They wrote to me: "...Our party interprets the phrase "Israel's independence" in the guidelines as refraining from giving bases in Israel to any foreign country, preventing any outside element from controlling the IDF, not making military pacts with foreign powers and refusing to accept grants which involve political subservience....We are not ignoring Mapai's intention...of continuing the negotiations to establish a military pact with the U.S. We still oppose it and reserve the right to act accordingly.

"As long as that pact has not been signed—and we hope it will not become a political fact—we reserve the right to refrain from voting on it in the Knesset and to make a statement on the subject....We will vote for the Government should a motion of no confidence be proposed on this subject....If a military pact with a foreign power is signed Mapam reserves the right to leave the Government."

Naturally, this letter will not prevent the Government from continuing to negotiate a mutual defense pact with the U.S.

There is also an agreement with Hapoel Hamizrahi, in which we undertake to maintain the religious status quo in matters of marriage,

divorce, public transport and other religious matters, to pass a Sabbath observance law, to limit the breeding and sale of pigs and to ensure supervision of religious schools by the Religious Education Branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture....

MK Bernstein spoke on behalf of a party known as the General Zionists, but his speech contained little Zionism and even less generality. He tried to dismiss this Government because it is a labor Government....That is not something of which I feel any need to be ashamed...and just as MK Bernstein is entitled to delude himself with aspirations of his party forming the Government...and just as MK Begin is entitled to dream of a Herut government, and has informed us that God has selected him to rule...I am entitled to form a labor Government. Although Mr. Begin, who claims to believe in God, should have had some respect for that noble concept and not taken the name of the Lord in vain in order to publicise his political party.

Although I claim that I would have not had to make any excuses for bringing a labor Government before the Knesset, this is not a labor Government....All three left-wing parties agree that private as well as public capital is needed for the development of the economy....All five parties in the Government can be defined as pioneering parties...being jointly responsible for two hundred agricultural settlements on the borders alone...118 of them moshavim and 79 kibbutzim.

...I also think that someone who claims to be a democrat—and no one can compete with the leader of Herut in that—should have treated a Government based on 80 Knesset representatives, constituting two-thirds of the nation, with a little more respect. Of course, anyone is entitled to oppose this Government...but why the arrogance, why the hatred and why the class incitement? The proposed Government is not one based on class struggle...it is intended to serve the entire nation, to develop all aspects of the economy, to build the country, increase security and encourage immigration. And we have no need of guarantees from the outside regarding our loyalty to the nation.

...In conclusion, permit me to say a few words about what we regard as our task....Maintaining peace does not mean accepting the penetration of our country by invaders....The current association between Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia appears to be directed against Israel....No country would accept incursions by foreign aggressors, and as for the suggestion by the representative of the Communist Party that we appeal to the U.N. to get the Egyptians off our territory, we have done that. It was not we, Mr. Sneh, but the representatives of the U.N., who asked Egypt to leave, on behalf of all the Powers, including the U.S.S.R. This demand was repeated several times but was to no avail. It is odd, to say the least, to regard removing aggressors from one's own land as injuring peace. But we will continue to use force to get aggressors out of

our country if this is necessary...while at the same time endeavoring to maintain the peace....

I am sure that all the Knesset Members were as pleased as I was to hear what the Arab representatives had to say...speaking of peace not only as loyal citizens of Israel but as faithful sons of the Arab people. May their voices be heard by their brethren on the other side.

...As for foreign policy, there are differences of opinion between the various members of the Government, but the principle of collective responsibility obtains and the Government may even act against the views of the minority within it....Our foreign policy will be based—as it always has been—on the aspiration for peace and friendship with all the peace-loving nations, regardless of their internal regimes....We will also strengthen our ties with those countries which aid Israel's development and security and enable their own Jewish communities to immigrate to Israel....

...I assume that this Government will also acknowledge...the importance of a mutual pact with the U.S., although this Government regards our internal strength and security as being of paramount importance. That is also one of the reasons we will focus our attention on attaining peace. We regard our security as lying not in warlike speeches and patriotic rhetoric but in continual efforts in the spheres of immigration, settling the desert, developing industry, crafts and shipping, and educating our youth. But if, despite all our efforts, the storm breaks, we will stand steadfast, and I am sure that, despite our differences of opinion, we will all stand united. I am convinced that despite all our internal differences, even those who are now in Opposition will be as loyal to the security of the state as we are.

We also venture to think that the nation in Israel and the diaspora has confidence in this Government, and on the basis of this we ask the Knesset to express its confidence in the proposed Government.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote on the proposed Government.

The Vote

Those in favor	73
Those against	32
Abstentions	3

The Knesset has hereby voted for the Government headed by Knesset Member David Ben-Gurion. I congratulate the elected Government and wish it success in conducting the affairs of the state.

Foreign Policy and Defense

Introduction

As 1956 was inaugurated, the coming events cast their shadow. Moshe Sharett, the Foreign Minister, reported on the failure of his mission to obtain arms from any of the Great Powers, whose foreign ministers had met some time earlier in Geneva, to offset the massive quantities of arms reaching Egypt from Czechoslovakia and other Arab countries from the West. A "second round" of full-scale war between Israel and its neighbors had become a concrete possibility, and to many almost a certainty.

Against that background, the Knesset met to debate the political and military situation.

Sittings 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 55 of the Third Knesset

2, 3, 4, 9 January 1956 (18, 19, 20, 25 Teveth 5716)

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: Mr. Speaker, distinguished members of the House, two and a half months have passed since I reviewed the foreign affairs situation here, focusing on...the dangerous shift which has taken place in Israel's security position following the Czech-Egyptian arms deal. During this time...our concern for the future has grown, and we have sought ceaselessly to increase our defensive ability....

The Government has made a concerted effort to attract world attention and arouse international public opinion to the threat to Israel's security. We have tried in particular to make the Great Powers aware of the responsibility they bear in view of this undermining of the balance of power in the Middle East....

I note with satisfaction that our call aroused a response from free public opinion all over the world. If public opinion could solve the serious problem we face, I think we could rely on it to support us....Needless to say, however, the solution still rests with several governments, whose practical policies are what determine the fate of the balance of power between Israel and its neighbors at the moment.

Our appeal to the Powers included the principal representatives of all the four governments which met at the Geneva Conference at the end of October, three of which had met previously in Paris....I regarded my meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister as being of special importance. We consider the U.S.S.R. to be the main factor in causing the current crisis. We also had severe criticism of the British government,

which sold Egypt arms it had refused to sell us, thereby disturbing the military balance between us and Egypt even before the Czech transaction. But that other deal, which we had every reason to believe was made in accordance with policy determined in Moscow, gave Egypt, which threatens aggression, tremendous military superiority over Israel, which is on the defensive, confronting our country with a danger unlike any we have known since the War of Independence.

I tried to make Mr. Molotov see the U.S.S.R.'s responsibility arising from that association. I stressed the discrepancy between massive military support for a country in a state of war with its neighbor, thereby infringing on the principles of the U.N. Charter...and the policy of peace and the reduction of international tension which the U.S.S.R. advocates in the world arena....The answers I received were not satisfactory.

Although we think that the serious discussion between us and the U.S.S.R....has not yet ended, something has cast a dark shadow over our relations with the Soviet government. We recently heard a definition of Israel's policy from the lofty podium of the Supreme Soviet the like of which we have never heard from the official representative of any country which maintains diplomatic relations with us.

The official version reads: "The activities of the State of Israel, which since its establishment has threatened its neighbors and conducted a policy of hostility towards them, should be condemned." There seem to be people and parties for whom historical facts are merely clay in the potter's hand, taking on different shapes as the needs of the hour dictate. That declaration about Israel's supposedly hostile attitude towards its neighbors aroused not only deep regret, grievous injury and bitter scorn among the people of Israel, but also astonishment and indignation in the hearts of those throughout the world who seek the truth. The world well remembers what happened in the first days of Israel's existence and what has happened between then and today. It also remembers what the distinguished representatives of the U.S.S.R. said in public then....

...On 18 May 1948 the U.S.S.R. delegate to the Security Council, Mr. Gromyko, said: "Everyone knows that military actions are currently taking place in Palestine because of the battles between the Arabs and the Jews following the entry into Palestine of the regular armies of several Arab countries...."

A few days later Mr. Gromyko said: "The U.S.S.R. delegation does not understand the attitude taken by the Arab countries regarding Palestine, particularly in view of the fact that those countries sent their armies into Palestine and are taking military action there which is intended to repress the national liberation movement in Palestine."

...There are many more examples I could give, but I do not wish to bore the House....There is just one passage I would like to quote, since it

is particularly relevant for our situation today. On 14 July 1948 Mr. Gromyko addressed the Security Council and said: "The Arab countries have no reason to regard the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Israel as something which threatens them. Seven hundred thousand or one million Jews cannot represent a danger for 26 million Arabs. A Jewish state cannot threaten the Arab East."

...In the meeting held on 2 December 1948 Mr. Jacob Malik said in the Security Council, in connection with Israel's attempts to be accepted as a member of the U.N.: "That country has already proved that it fulfills the conditions of...the Charter. Since it came into existence it has stated its desire to live in peace and maintain peaceful relations with all its neighbors and all the nations of the world. It is not its fault if this call goes unanswered by its neighbors."

...Those statements were made during the early days of Israel's existence....They give a more accurate picture of who threatened whom in the Middle East than the declaration we heard from the Supreme Soviet recently....

The same endeavor to distort the facts to fit the needs of the hour characterizes...the attempt to define Israel as a state which is exploited by "imperialistic countries" to serve as "a weapon against the Arab peoples."...Israel's essential independence needs no imprimatur from anyone. Israel arose and exists as the product of the free will of the Jewish people, as being necessary for its life, existence and future and as the bearer of its mission and its destiny. Anyone who is unable to see the miracle of the spiritual freedom and political independence embodied in Israel's existence every day proves himself to be unable to grasp one of the most wonderful events in human history: the Jewish people's return to its land.

...This distortion of the facts about Israel and this slandering of its reputation...heighten our apprehensions regarding the new Soviet policy which is reflected in the arms deal with Egypt. We will do our utmost to persuade the U.S.S.R. of the truth...but it is better for us to view the situation dispassionately and clearly. No distortion can alter the fact of the Arab aggression in the past and the present or obscure the danger of its revival in the near future.

Our demand for arms so that we can defend ourselves and, first and foremost, deter those who would attack us, becomes more urgent from day to day. This demand was the focal point of our talks with the representatives of the Western Powers. The British government, which preferred Egypt to us as far as...arms were concerned, even before the Czech deal, did not consider it necessary to adjust the balance afterwards either. Certain Western European countries showed some signs of being willing to help us, but they are subject to the discipline of NATO...or feel they must coordinate their policy with the U.S.A. Our

principal demand is directed at the American government...which has not yet made its final decision....

We categorically reject the contention voiced in various capitals that supplying arms to Israel means a new arms race....We were the first to speak out against an arms race in the Middle East and for investing the maximum resources in economic development and social rehabilitation. But preventing an arms race requires mutuality....Depriving Israel of arms in the present situation does not mean preventing an arms race, it means abandoning a small, besieged country to the aggressive urges of its neighbors, who are many times stronger than it.

The American public supports Israel and its claims....Special mention should be made of the deep understanding of Israel's problems and the display of support for it...by members of all the parties in the debate held three weeks ago in the British parliament. This lively public support...is valuable both morally and politically....

...Israel will be ready to repel any attack...but will not act aggressively against anyone. Israel will conduct its struggle against hostile associations by political, not military, means. If we struck Syria recently that was in order to repel and paralyze its continuous erosion of our security, the integrity of our territory and our freedom of action within it, and not for any other purpose.

While increasing our military strength, we will continue to strive for peace, but we will not buy peace at the price of concessions which restrict the state's ability to live and arouse the desire of others to trespass and destroy.

There is a serious debate between us and the U.S. government regarding the possibility of a settlement between us and the Arab countries....The various Western Powers hold different opinions on that subject, and in our view Great Britain cannot be an intermediary since its government has taken a stand regarding the settlement, stating publicly that it should be based on a compromise between the U.N. resolution of 1947 and the existing situation....

The U.N. resolution of 29 November 1947 was a crucial historical decision for us. But as far as international law and practical policy are concerned, that resolution, like any other passed by the Assembly, is a weighty recommendation from the U.N. to the parties involved as to how to resolve a problem which has arisen. That recommendation was made against a certain factual background and was intended to be implemented at that time, maintaining the unity of all its parts and with the cooperation of all three parties concerned—the Jews, the Arabs and the British authorities....The recommendation was overthrown, in effect, by the lack of cooperation on the part of England and by the bloody war declared on Israel by the Arabs of Palestine and the neighboring countries. History has passed over the resolution of 1947 and continued on its

way. The practical and political background to the problem has changed and the situation cannot be restored to what it was. The State of Israel was refined and crystallized in the crucible of the War of Independence. Its situation and size today are the basis for its national authority and international standing.

...To the best of our knowledge, the U.S. government does not regard the resolution of 1947 as the point of departure for a settlement...Like the British Prime Minister, however, Mr. Dulles appears to favor a compromise between the opposing claims...We have explained to both those governments that this formula could mislead many and serve as a cover for injustice. The Arabs are being asked to give up some of their arbitrary demands...while we are being asked to give up some of our property...We have made it clear...that under no circumstances will Israel forego part of its territory unilaterally or allow refugees back into its midst.

We made it evident...that we are not prepared to give up any part of the southern Negev, whether settled or not, fertile or desert, and that Israel will not abandon its control of Eilat and its approaches....

...The tension between us and Egypt following the Czech arms deal and the danger of explosion it creates has impelled the Powers to endeavor more vigorously to arrange a settlement...possibly because of their mistaken assumption that our present dangerous situation will make us more ready to relinquish our claims...

...Efforts have been made to brand us as constituting a barrier to peace...and this has impelled us to produce our own proposal for a peace settlement, which we submitted to the U.S. government...This plan contains the basic ideas we have put forward from time to time in the spheres of economics, transport and development projects on a mutual basis and within the framework of peaceful relations between us and the Arabs. Most of those proposals are based on the natural rules which are accepted throughout the civilized world between neighboring countries which have peaceful and friendly relations. One of them, which concerns the payment of compensation for abandoned Arab property, derives from the special circumstances of Israel's relations with its neighbors and does not constitute a reaffirmation of any previous commitment...The proposal also included our readiness, which we have stated many times in the past, to discuss mutual border adjustments to the benefit of both sides, within the framework of an overall agreement. We have made a clear distinction between border adjustments and territorial concessions.

By submitting that plan we hoped to shift the focal point away from the negative and unrealistic demands of the Arab countries to the positive and practical background of relations between countries, guaranteeing their common interests and mutual benefit...We are prepared to

enter into direct negotiations with the other side without any precondition....

It is, of course, doubtful whether all this talk of negotiations and a settlement have any basis in the existing reality of Egypt's attitude or Israel's relations with any other Arab country. We must be on our guard for any tactic or deception by the other side in which a Great Power could be an unwitting partner. We must beware especially of any trick or attempt to present the chance of any progress towards peace...as justifying the withholding of arms from us.

With all our doubt and caution regarding treachery and deception, it is our bound duty not to miss any chance which could open the way to a settlement. Let one hand grasp the spear and the other be extended in peace....Only a firm peace between the nations of the Middle East will assure their genuine independence and will put their relations with the Great Powers on the right footing. Only a true and stable peace will enable those nations to devote themselves to the huge, mutual effort of construction and development....

But until peace comes, and for the sake of peace, it is incumbent upon us to be ready for a defensive war. This does not mean that we can stop the work of development, investment and the absorption of immigrants. Quite the contrary....The impetus of building is the breath of life for this country. Immigration and tourism are like blood transfusions for us....Let the Jews of the diaspora, who have ever been unflinching in their support for us, come and see that life in Israel is continuing normally, that the populace is quiet, but ready....

At this time we must tighten our links with those countries which have friendly relations with us, and do all we can to establish such relations with other countries....We must increase our readiness to repel any attack while being prepared to consider any possibility of a fair settlement, build up our might while taking constant heed of our international position. War is not necessary, it is possible. This possibility must guide all our independent efforts and our demands for help, so that we may be prepared for it and, above all, prevent it.

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, the Government did not decide on and none of its committees has discussed the noble and heroic battle on the northeast shore of Lake Tiberias; the Government did not decide on and none of its committees have discussed submitting a crystallized plan of concessions, which its presenter calls a peace plan while those to whom it is submitted say: not enough, more please. In view of this collapse of the decision-making institutions, in light of this undermining of the foundations of judgment, the Jewish citizen asks, in addition to all the other questions in his anxious mind: do we have a Government or does each Minister do as he pleases, not in routine matters but in affairs which could be fateful?

I propose that we examine the battle on Lake Tiberias against the background of the Government's declared policy....We must ask the Government: what were its considerations? In order to answer that question we must go back to that bitter day when the Communist arms dealers decided to supply weapons of destruction on land, on the sea and in the air to the dictator Nasser, enabling him to try and destroy Israel....

We asked then that we act before it was too late. We were told then...that we did not intend to embark upon a preventive or initiated war. Those were the terms used by the Communists, our enemies....A preventive war takes place when there are peaceful relations between two countries and one of them fears that the other has aggressive intentions against it. Is there peace between us and our enemies? Do we need to fear...aggression? The quotations we heard here today from the Foreign Minister, who cabled the Prime Minister of Syria...a few weeks ago and said, for all the world to hear: I hope our armies meet on the ruins of that nation. How can we chatter about a defensive or preventive war in those conditions? Do we have to initiate war if our enemies have initiated it for seven whole years, and shed our blood each week, if not every day? Where are you going with those terms, which you repeated today too?

Nasser has announced that if we try to break the blockade in the Gulf of Eilat, or if we engage in any local skirmish...this means war....But you nevertheless fought at Lake Tiberias—and this can be regarded as indicating that you wanted to drag Egypt into war....I ask this Government: where are you going with those concepts which have no basis in reality? I will never recommend that you say incorrect things for the benefit of the people, but you are saying incorrect things to the detriment of the people! It's time you stopped!

You did not listen to us. Two and a half months have passed. You submitted a request for American arms. The Soviet arms are a fact; the American arms a request....That is your declared policy—to do everything and nothing, just to get the American arms. We also warned you of that illusion. We said that by doing this you were abandoning the fate of our children to others!...We also told you that there were clear policy reasons why, on the basis of a logical analysis, one could not assume that the U.S. would give us sufficient arms to offset the flow of Soviet arms to Egypt. There are inter-Bloc and intra-Bloc interests at work here....

...I must warn you, though, that if we think that Khrushchev's anti-Israel statement will improve our situation in London and Washington we are mistaken;...the opposite might even be the case, because the Blocs are competing for the favors of the Arab countries....

We warned you that the American arms might not be given, or that when they came they might be too little and too late...but you rejected our admonitions....After all this, the order was given for the campaign known as "Lake Tiberias"...and our forces destroyed the Syrian positions on the northern shore of the lake. It was known that that action, however heroic, could not change our strategic situation; the Syrians have returned. No one knows when they will open fire, but it is certain that it will come....That action was solely of local, tactical and momentary value. The order was given, and after the operation the whole world says that as a result of the "Tiberias Incident" the American State Department...has announced that "The favorable discussion of Israel's request for arms has been deferred."

If this is true...what was behind the Government's action?...What is the basis for your decisions on matters which are of crucial importance for the nation? What are your political and strategic considerations? How can the nation rely on your judgment anymore?

I think that if the news that the discussion of the request for arms has been deferred because of that campaign is true the Minister of Defense should resign. I believe that if what happened between the Minister of Defense and the Foreign Minister four weeks ago had happened in any well-ordered country, one of them would have resigned. I believe with all my heart that it would be in the best interests of Israel if both of them resigned....

As for the plan of concessions—known as a peace plan—which the Foreign Minister has presented here...allow me to say that the concept of paying compensation after a war is well known in history. Compensation is paid by the defeated aggressor or the conquered defender....History abounds in examples....But no case in which the victorious defender had to pay compensation is known to me. If someone attacks me and seeks to kill me, and while struggling with him I tear his clothes, do I have to pay him compensation? Did you learn this in civil or international law?...By agreeing to pay compensation to the Arab refugees who fled, you implicitly accept the responsibility for them which you have been at such pains to deny!

The U.S. Secretary of State...has promised us a loan for that purpose. How kind of him. I think we really could do with a loan for the absorption of refugees from North Africa....But loans have to be paid back, and we would be mortgaging our children's food in order to bear an unnecessary burden. Is that not a concession? The Foreign Minister says that in the past we undertook to pay compensation...but we made various undertakings in the past—such as that neither Jaffa, Ramle or Lod would be within the borders of our state—which we have been unable to keep....

The second concession is the passage in the Negev between Egypt and the kingdom known as "Jordan"...The area of that kingdom is

part of our homeland! It was wrested from us wrongfully....It is the land of our forefathers...and your abstention on that country's admission into the U.N. is sacrilege against God, against Jewish history and against the precious and sacred victims who fell at the hands of the murderers of the Legion! How could you abstain on that vote? Who authorized you to recognize that country?

...British influence in the region is declining....Now is the time for us to act with regard to the area to the east of us...and you come and propose providing a passage in the Negev between Egypt and the kingdom known as Jordan! So that Egypt's influence in Transjordan may increase and it may eventually come to dominate that country...surrounding our state with a ring of enemies who seek to destroy us! Is that your political and military strategy?...

Do you really think that the plan you propose will earn us a pat on the head from the world...? It has not done so during the seven years you have adhered to your inadequate policy....Britain seeks to assure itself a route from Amman to Eilat now that its soldiers are being obliged to leave the Suez Canal...and this so-called global plan has gained some support in Washington....The Soviets...claim that Israel's true borders are those of 1947. The whole world demands that we make concessions. The question is: can a small state withstand the pressure of the Great Powers?...History teaches us that it can, if it stands firm...and is not prepared to make concessions.

And it is at a time like this—when there is pressure from every quarter—that you propose a plan of concessions, compensation, a passage in the Negev, thereby inviting additional pressure....The State Department is not giving you a pat on the head. It also adheres to the borders of 1947...and proposes that conflicting territorial demands be settled by a compromise....You have done Israel a disservice by proposing concessions now.

...Had the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister told us that they were in absolute agreement today...we would have called on the entire nation to unite around this Government. It is a bad Government, it has brought military, political, moral and economic disasters upon us; it has led us from one failure to another...and has brought the nation to the edge of the abyss. Nevertheless, at this fateful hour, when one enemy stands at our gate and declares that he will meet another enemy upon our ruins, we would tell the nation: let us forget everything. Let us unite around this imperfect, existing Government, for the sake of our people, for the sake of our children....

I expected to hear something about what is to be done....But what did the Minister of Defense say? If we are attacked, we will fight. Any child in Israel will say that. This is not the diaspora, this is Israel, and a new generation has arisen here....The question is, however, what will we fight with, how will we fight and when will we fight?...This is a ques-

tion of our very survival, of our young men, of the rivers of blood of our boys....And you are leading us to a situation where we will have to fight in the very worst conditions...when our enemies are far stronger than we are. Is this the way?...

I call upon you, members of the Government and of the Knesset, to reconsider your erroneous path before it is too late. Fatalism is no solution....A cruel enemy wants to destroy us. He is given weapons of destruction. You must take the initiative and act....Do not say that after the second round there will be a third and a fourth. Is that serious? No one here can predict ahead to the end of time; no one here can propose an absolute solution. That is ingrained in Jewish tradition. The prophets were not only great seers, they were also realists. Isaiah and Micah said: "And you shall beat your swords into plowshares." That is an apocalyptic vision. But when the prophet Joel calls on the people to fight for their existence he says: "Beat your plowshares into swords." Not after the apocalypse. Beat—immediately, before it is too late.

E. Wilenska (Maki): Isaiah said: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation."

M. Begin (Herut): Do not utter profanity...(From the floor: And what did Stalin say?) Reconsider your path, and if you cannot find it, admit it openly, do not twist words. You are known as masters of words.

Y. Ben-Aharon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Poalei Zion): We won't reach your level even after the apocalypse.

M. Begin (Herut): ...But if your path is the wrong one, admit it, and then draw the appropriate conclusions. Don't tell the nation: we have a majority, and in the name of that majority we will lead Israel towards a holocaust. Chamberlain and Halifax had a large majority in the British parliament, but after it was proved that they had missed every opportunity and brought their nation to the edge of the abyss because of their erroneous policy of submitting a peace plan to the aggressor...they resigned. That is the choice before you, members of the Government. Either find a path or go.

...

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Poalei Zion): Mr. Speaker, distinguished House, I must admit that, in addition to the natural nervousness of a young Knesset Member making his maiden speech from this podium, I feel a sense of responsibility for the subject under debate. What we are dealing with here is not only one of the most important problems of our national existence but, in the present circumstances, the main one.

The revival of the State of Israel, with all its historic importance, has not absolved us from one Jewish anomaly: we must not lose a war. In our time we have seen great countries crushed and conquered by the cruellest tyrant ever known...and yet they exist. For the State of Israel,

however, a military defeat means that we lose everything. Thus, whereas an economic, social or political mistake can be corrected, grave errors in the field of national security will be difficult to put right....

I believe that the time has come to end the unfortunate dispute, which has prevailed among the Israeli public ever since the Armistice Agreements were signed, namely, whether the war has really ended....The cruel reality...of the last seven years, and the potentially dangerous developments of the last few months in particular, must finally make it clear to the Knesset and the entire nation what Israel's political and military situation is. The openly hostile policy of the Arab rulers, the extent and systematic nature of their military assaults and the scale, pace and quality of their armaments programs have made it clear for several years that there can be no mistake about assessing the situation....This is, indeed, a state of war, with all that this implies. Ignoring the gravity of the situation does not make it one of peace, and merely creates a dangerous illusion in the nation and throughout the world.

The use of the term "armistice" is basically misleading, and therefore also damaging. Our armistice is not like those between the forces participating in the World War or even the armistice in Korea. The victorious Powers completely controlled Germany and Japan between the ceasefire and the peace treaty....In our case, however, despite the magnitude of our victory in the War of Independence, we won the war but lost the peace. The Armistice Agreements cannot oblige the Arab governments to replace them with peace treaties, nor can they prevent them from increasing their military power and using it when they wish to do so.

The Israeli public—and world public opinion—is influenced by what happens along our borders: if there are many acts of aggression it sees the danger of a general conflagration, and if there is quiet for a time...it thinks the danger is over. But this is not so....Acts of aggression may not involve any danger of a conflagration, and quiet on the borders may mean that a storm is brewing....Thus, we must not assess the situation on the basis of appearances but on the basis of the social, political and military processes in the Arab countries and the international arena....It is the decisive battle beyond the horizon which...must occupy our minds and sharpen our senses.

...The IDF's guerrilla attacks across the borders are just in every respect....They do not harm non-combatants, they are politically beneficial if they are well-planned and executed...and above all, they are necessary in terms of our security, and that should be the prime consideration....I regret the fact that two terms which do not define our situation correctly have entered our vocabulary...namely, reprisal and retaliation. The IDF's actions are neither one nor the other. The correct

description is counterattack, and these actively defensive actions are necessary in terms of security.

A country cannot be hermetically sealed off by a Wall of China. Effective security can reduce the number of infiltrations...but cannot stop them completely. Counterattacks put a considerable part of the enemy's forces on the defensive...gradually making "infiltration" not worthwhile....Determining the time, place and method of our counterattacks must be devoid of all emotionalism....Our actions should not be implemented automatically or dictated by the enemy....

...At times we should restrain ourselves and at others use the "hit and run" method, and we should not rule out the possibility of uprooting the invader from the parts of Israel he has conquered, should security needs require this. We should refrain from giving examples, because we need to retain our flexibility. Every action should be considered carefully and individually.

All that I have said so far applies to the situation which has obtained these last seven years. Today, however, there has been a far-reaching change....For years the Western Powers have been trying to organize the Arab countries, together with Turkey, Persia and Pakistan, within a military framework directed against the U.S.S.R., and have been giving them a great deal of arms. Now the Soviet Bloc has suddenly begun to shower arms on the Arab countries...while Israel—against which these arms will be used—is still subject to an almost complete embargo regarding essential kinds of arms....It is not true to say that the Baghdad Pact does not endanger Israel...and is capable of keeping Iraq out of a new clash with Israel....I am afraid it will bring Turkey and Pakistan into the fray, whereas we are interested in peace with all the Arab countries, including those two....

The differences between the two world Blocs are increasing, and Israel finds itself between the hammer and the anvil. Under cover of a supposedly commercial transaction, Czechoslovakia heaps arms on Egypt, in addition to the British Centurions there....

The peoples of the Middle East do not need arms because no danger threatens them apart from that of those who are giving them the arms. The people of the Middle East, including Israel, need peace, development, non-enslaving economic aid, national independence and social and agrarian progress. Giving arms to the Arabs alone...threatens world peace....There is no doubt that if Israel had been left face to face with the Arab countries, without the interference of the Powers, a peaceful solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict would have been found long ago....

A few months ago the U.S. Secretary of State said that we should give up a barren stretch of land which has merely sentimental value for us, i.e. the Negev...while the British Prime Minister also hinted at the need for territorial concessions on our part....I wonder what basis these posi-

tions have in international law....It is the U.N. which should guarantee international peace, or at least agreements between countries....

To my great regret, the leader of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. went furthest in referring to Israel in his recent speech. He is misleading the peoples of the U.S.S.R. by simply ignoring the facts. Every Arab country is linked with Western imperialism in one way or another. There are thousands of British military technicians in Egypt, with the Egyptian government's consent. According to the latest Anglo-Egyptian treaty, Britain may return its army to the Canal if there is a clash between Turkey and the U.S.S.R. Jordan is like a British crown colony; Saudi Arabia is controlled by the American oil companies; Iraq is part of the Baghdad Pact, while Syria is influenced alternately by France, Britain or America. The only country which is not involved in a military pact with any Bloc is Israel. It is a lie to say that Israel threatens the Arab countries, and the speech by the Secretary of the Communist Party may contribute to a new war in the Middle East, in addition to the tension following the British Prime Minister's words....

...I accept that neither the West nor the East is giving arms to feudal Arab rulers and military tyrants for the express purpose of endangering Israel...but they both continue to supply those countries with arms knowing that they will be turned solely against Israel....We must arouse Jewish and general public opinion against these arms deals....

The Egyptian tyrant recently told a reporter that he cannot defend Egypt by means of hospitals and schools, and must establish a strong army instead of implementing reforms....Egypt's real enemy is not Israel but social backwardness, poverty, disease and ignorance. To fight them you need reforms, not arms. But the ruling group has found out that real reforms cannot be implemented in Egypt without a violent internal clash with the landowners, and they recoil from that....So, in order to justify the military dictatorship and in the face of growing economic difficulties they seek to engage in political and military adventures....In the struggle for hegemony within the Arab world, hostility towards Israel constitutes a convenient expression of Arab "patriotism."

The previous speakers were right to say that the modern weapons in Egypt's possession...give it decisive technical, quantitative and qualitative superiority, and there is no doubt that the Egyptian ruler intends to fight Israel...regarding this as a point on his route towards controlling a great Arab empire....

This development obliges us to draw conclusions in the spheres of external affairs, internal social policy and military strategy....We must rid ourselves of the anachronism of Israel's foreign policy conception. We must cease demanding a "mutual defense pact"...and stop relying on the one-sided tripartite statement, which impairs our national independence and has no practical basis....We should realize that...

Israel must remain "non-aligned" and independent....The U.S. does not want a pact with us anyway, fearing that this will damage its relations with the Arabs, while the U.S.S.R. is satisfied if nations remain non-aligned. This also gives us a greater chance of finding a route to the hearts of the neutral countries of Asia—one of the ways of finding our political place in that great continent.

There are two ways that war could be avoided...if the Powers were to impose an embargo on all arms shipments to the Middle East or if they were to provide Israel with appropriate armaments forthwith, so that the Arab leaders would no longer delude themselves of having an easy victory....

The debate on a "preventive war" is both misleading and damaging, whether this is regarded as positive or negative. Our problem is not how to prevent a future war but how to end the existing one....It is a bad thing if leaders in Israel speak in favor of a preventive war, thereby defining any counterattack by us as an aggressive rather than a defensive action....

Members of the Knesset, we must be on our guard against two possible errors: finding ourselves at war inadvertently, and allowing the enemy to choose the time to attack....One of the basic rules of military tactics is to take the initiative away from the enemy....

I respectfully disagree with the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. An emergency situation requires an emergency regime. Israel must institute full-scale emergency measures...in Israel and the diaspora, in the economic, military, political and moral spheres....

Each week that passes without the establishment of new settlements in the southern Negev, between Nitzana and Eilat, makes it easier to demand territorial concessions from Israel and makes it more difficult for us to defend the Negev; each month that passes without supplementing the chain of border settlements leaves us vulnerable. Each week that passes without reinforcing Jerusalem...endangers the capital. That is why an emergency regime is required immediately....Israel cannot be destroyed, not within forty-eight hours or any period of time, but damage can be inflicted on it and its citizens....

I do not share the view that every month that passes deprives us of the chance of victory, just as I do not agree that only with equal quantities of arms can our human superiority triumph....Technical skill and a higher intellectual level, spirit and ability, correct tactics and an intelligent strategy offset weapons....We will win any forthcoming battle, despite the enemy's superiority in arms....

I agree with the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense that we should not frighten the nation....We should tell the nation the truth...in order to encourage and fortify it...as Churchill told the British the truth in the darkest days of the war...calling on them to be prepared to make

personal and financial sacrifices. They had a state of emergency then, just as we should have today.

...We must not despair, because that is tantamount to inviting the enemy to invade us....We have the human resources to overcome any obstacle....We must make every political effort we can to attain peace with our neighbors, but if there is no change in this direction, and there is no alternative but to fight, I am sure we will be victorious. We will keep a close watch on what the enemy is doing. We will not act hastily, nor will we miss our chance.

...

J. Hazan (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, the debate is not about formulae or words, changing something's name does not change its nature. MK Yigal Allon said that we are in a "state of war," but his whole speech proved that we are already at war. MK Begin warned against using such terms as "preventive war" or "initiated war," but his speech was also based on the fact that we are already at war.

...The debate is really about our very life. Anyone who says that we are already at war...must reach certain conclusions. Anyone who maintains that we are in a state of peace—albeit a pathetic and imperfect one—must ask himself if it is still possible to save the peace, and how this is to be done....

I claim that we are still in a state of peace...although a dangerous one. We are still building the country, establishing villages, bringing immigrants here....Another seven such years and we will have two million Jews here, hundreds more villages, the Negev will be settled, the River Jordan will flow to the Negev and our security will be entrenched. It is dangerous to say that we are already at war....

MK Yigal Allon said that we must not lose the war, but that is a possibility....He was right to say that, unlike other nations, this would mean the end for us...but if that is so, we must do everything to prevent war....I am sure we would win, because we have no alternative...we would fight with our backs to death, not to the wall. All we ask is to be allowed to live....I believe that it is still possible to save the peace...although it does not depend solely on us....I am not ashamed to say that I do not want war....I hate its destruction and suffering. We came here to live, we want to enjoy our children, and to ensure a life of construction and peace to our unhappy nation. We want our neighbors to benefit from those things too.

...The first condition for saving the peace is for us to be strong...detering our enemies from attacking us and thereby assuring peace....That peace will be shaky at first, but will eventually become stable....The world is going through stormy times. Each year of peace is a year of extra chances for us, enabling us to emerge from the horrors of war....We must not lightly throw away the chance of peace....It is true that if we are deprived of arms while our enemies are showered with

weapons, and the present situation continues, the state of affairs will deteriorate and peace will become increasingly precarious.

...At this time...the Knesset must ask the Government to do the utmost to obtain deterrent arms, and thereby to maintain the peace. I must also, though it gives me great pain...reject the statement made by the Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, regarding Israel's character. I regard the U.S.S.R. as a fortress of peace...and therefore my situation is doubly painful...because the Czech arms deal increases the danger of war.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Aren't you ashamed to say that?

J. Hazan (Mapam): No. I'm never ashamed to say the truth. I do not doubt that the U.S.S.R. is doing all it can to prevent a world war and to undermine the Baghdad Pact, which is directed against it and peace. But it is basing itself upon a factor which is no less dangerous to peace—Egypt. A third world war may be avoided, but a war will break out here which will be fateful for us and may even lead to a large-scale war...Egypt's neutrality is false...it is a cover behind which it is preparing to wage war against its neighbor....Egypt is not prepared to find a peaceful solution to the dispute between us....

As a citizen of the Middle East, I consider myself entitled to say that we see this matter more clearly...and the U.S.S.R. may err as regards Egypt, just as the members of Maki erred as regards the Mufti in the past....You admitted your mistake, and removed from your ranks those who had supported the Mufti....

S. Mikunis (Maki): We removed provocateurs....

J. Hazan (Mapam): We have no doubts concerning the U.S.S.R.'s true intentions, which aim at peace...but we claim that the Czech arms deal endangers peace....We know who began the arms race in the region. We were aware of Britain's hypocrisy even before the "commercial transaction" in scrap became known. We remember the British Centurions...and know that even now Britain is sending arms to Egypt and America is sending arms to Iraq, and that they can all be directed against us....But we know that the intentions of those who possess the arms determine matters, not those of the parties which supply them....

Thus, the first condition for ensuring peace is that Israel should possess large amounts of defensive arms. Our Government should demand arms from the whole world and the cessation of arms supplies to the Arab countries....We should oppose any regional military pact...and certainly not seek to join one....

The second condition is our unwavering intention of defending our rights as a state and the rights of our people to live and work in peace....If anyone invades our land he will be driven out; we have not forgotten the example of Czechoslovakia, and we will not go down on our

knees or give up one inch of our land....That is our only hope and our best defense....Maki's reports that our defensive efforts are merely ways of serving imperialist interests are blatant falsehoods....

...I reject what MK Yigal Allon said here yesterday....The plan he outlined was for guerrilla warfare, not a necessary counterattack.... But we are not at war...we have no desire to "prick here and stab there," we want to defend our right to live in peace, which is essential for us....I am in favor of active defense as well as of punishing murderers and those who send them. I believe that that deters. And we have no other way of maintaining our security....

The third thing...is the constant effort by our Government to attain peace. I do not accept MK Begin's contention that anyone who proposes peace proves his weakness and is always expected to give up more. On the contrary, anyone who seeks peace proves his strength....We must also fight for public opinion, by proving that we are the ones who want peace....Our peace proposals prove Israel's moral strength and justice....

...Although I have criticisms to make about the actual proposals...I congratulate the Foreign Minister on his initiative...which I regard as one of the most important steps in our fight for peace in this region, for our peace and for public opinion....

I disagree with MK Begin and his party that this is a collection of concessions....There is no territorial concession...and our readiness for mutual border amendments is justified, because our borders are those of armistice, not peace, agreements....

The proposal that Israel should be a center of free transportation between the Arab countries which have peaceful relations with us will prevent any part of our land being taken away from us, because it means that those who really desire peace can have what they want, free passage between Egypt and Jordan and between Egypt and Lebanon....

I think that our readiness to accept the Johnston Plan was premature, however....We do not yet know what it is....I think that what MK Begin said here about the Arab refugees offends Jewish honor and counters Jewish morals....Can we ignore the terrible tragedy of the Arab refugees?...Can we declare that they are the vanquished, and only the vanquished pay? Even if their very existence were not the worst timebomb directed against us...could we ignore their human plight? Could we Jews, who were refugees for hundreds of years, do that?

M. Begin (Herut): That's what the Americans say—take them back.

J. Hazan (Mapam): Let the Americans say what they will. I did not learn morals from the Americans. We have our own morals, to which we must be loyal, regardless of political scores....I praise the Foreign Minister for saying that we are prepared to pay them compensation.

M. Begin (Herut): What about Jewish property in Iraq?

J. Hazan (Mapam): ...I would, however, like to point out to our Foreign Minister...that we have our own Jewish refugees from Arab countries....We should have made compensation contingent on some kind of payment to us from those countries...

The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: The proposal reads: "subject to reservations," and it is known what they are....

J. Hazan (Mapam): I maintain that if we reached peace negotiations....I would agree to permitting some refugees to return to Israel....And even today we should act to solve the most acute human and family problems...being prepared to accept even fifty or seventy thousand persons....

Israel's peace offensive must continue....The "neutral" force of Nasser has already told us that it rejects our proposals....We must continue nonetheless....We differ from the majority within the Government as regards the Government's one-sided foreign policy. We have said to what extent we are prepared to share that responsibility....As long as we are in the Government we will fight to change that line. I regard the issue of neutrality as a crucial one....I know how complex it is for us...but because the Jewish nation is scattered throughout the world, in both the West and the East, our country must be neutral.

Some people are afraid of what American Jewry will say. But they have to be taught to stand behind Israel's unquestionable right to dedicate itself to its own purposes—saving Jews and building up the country—to avoid world problems...and to withstand pressures....

Finally...in my view, the best preparation for a defensive war...is to protect peace fiercely....I agree with the Prime Minister, it does not matter if we declare a state of emergency or not, the problem is, under what regime will we live? For instance...we are very mild in money matters...but if there is war, heaven forbid, our money, property and lives will be burned daily....Why do we continue with the Defense Fund without insisting that every citizen of Israel give the maximum for the cause, so that we will not have to have war, so that we will be ready if attacked, so that we may defend peace...?

...We must invest all our financial and human efforts in security....We must mobilize the youngsters to work in building fortifications and settlements, so that we will not have to mobilize them for war later on....We must do our utmost to strengthen ourselves and our economy....War involves civilians as well as the army...and if we are well-prepared we will avert war. If the enemy knows that we are ready, he will not attack us. It is better for us to invest in fortifying peace now, to strengthen ourselves for the sake of peace, so that there will not be war.

Y. Harari (Progressives): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I have just returned from the Inter-Parliamentary Conference at Helsinki and the tenth assembly of the U.N., and had the rare opportunity of seeing our problems from world centers of interaction, perceiving them, perhaps, in different dimensions and from another viewpoint than those of many here.

My first impression after hearing about the Czech arms deal was that we have not fully assessed the extent of the event and the change it represents in global policy....It has changed the defensive relations between the Blocs....Within a few months the U.S.S.R. penetrated the Middle East, alliances of Arab countries broke up and the Arab League crumbled. The policies we adhered to beforehand are no longer valid....If there is only one source of weapons to counter the Soviet arms given to Egypt...we have no choice but to ask that source to give us weapons with which to defend ourselves....

...The dangers threatening Israel are not that we will be unable to withstand the war, or that we will not be united at the decisive moment, but that we will make the wrong decisions....These may be due to our undue concentration within our borders and upon our own affairs....By talking always in terms of our isolation we are isolating ourselves, although events have worked in the opposite direction....

Another danger is our failure to consider world public opinion....It is true that it is not today what it was in 1948, and that it changes from year to year. But in every year it is a factor to be reckoned with in international policy and it is a factor for which the Powers compete....The spirit of liberalism still exists, albeit somewhat weakened...and it is the only spirit which can save us and which still supports us, wherever it is found....The fatalist view that everything in the world is decided on the basis of selfish interests and that there is no place for reasoned arguments and emotions is a very dangerous mistake, particularly for Israel....

...Throughout the world there are conflicts between good and bad people....We must do all we can to strengthen the side of the good people....That is what we are doing. That war is being conducted in the State Department and at the U.N....We must not keep quiet, even though we are outnumbered, for in the end justice will triumph, as Churchill triumphed over and led the British parliament which had refused to listen to him at the time of the Munich Agreement....That is why there is a point in arguing, in putting our case, in convincing others of the justice of our cause....

...I read with horror recently that in Kenya the British have killed over 10,000 members of the Mau Mau...yet no one protests....We should propose ourselves as intermediaries there, solely for humanitarian reasons, because what the British are doing there is not done in order to

protect the existence of the British people. Every retaliatory strike of ours, however, is a struggle for our existence....

It is curious that Khrushchev also mentioned colonialism and liberated countries in his speech, but said nothing about the slaughter of the Mau Mau...probably because the Mau Mau have no vote in the U.N. The countries he did mention are members of the U.N., and he presumably hoped thereby to obtain gains for the U.S.S.R., because the Asian-African Bloc is increasing in strength there.

...With regard to world public opinion...Israel's position is unique because of world Jewry....It is fortunate for us that a large concentration of Jews is to be found in the U.S. just when that country has so much influence in the world....We may forget an important fact from time to time, but other countries do not, namely, that Israel is not only the country of those Jews who live there now. It is the focal point of world Jewry, and the attitude other countries display towards Israel reflects their attitude to Jews, for good or for bad. The Arab countries also weigh their actions...regarding Israel in light of the possible influence world Jewry might exert.

The two and a half million Jews of New York—whose importance lies not merely in their quantity but also in their quality, in the place they occupy in science, trade, industry and art, molding public opinion through the newspapers, television and literature—are a force to be reckoned with. The Mau Mau tribes would not be slaughtered today if they had two and a half million people in New York. The Arab countries envy the Jewish people and the State of Israel their influence....The Jews of New York have every right to express their views, and this is far more moral than pressure by means of oil wells....It is unfortunate that the Jews of Russia are not in the same position.

...We cannot influence the world if the Jews are not with us, and that is why we must not belittle Jewish public opinion...or disregard it when weighing our actions....World Jewry will back us—both morally and financially—in a defensive war, but not in an aggressive one....

I agree with the Prime Minister that we must be ready for any defensive war which might be imposed upon us. I concur in the view that if we have arms the chances of war are lower, while if we do not, the chances that we will be attacked...are greater....But the Prime Minister omitted to talk about our being ready for peace....As the situation stands today, peace will not come at the initiative of the Arab countries...it can only come through the intervention of another country, i.e. pressure upon the Arab countries and us to make peace.

...Israel must also be ready for the pressure which might be exerted upon it....There is no question of the justice of our cause. We are not like Arabs, who demand more in order to waive fictitious claims...as, for instance, Egypt and Jordan weep crocodile tears over the plight of the refugees....We must prepare the nation for the pressure for peace, bid-

ding it tighten its belt, stand firm and refuse to give up anything which there is no reason to give up....The demands by the Arab countries that we be ready to make concessions does not indicate their desire for peace....We must prove that pressure has no effect upon us...and then it will be abandoned....That is our advantage as a state. We can say "no."...It is all up to us....

S. Hillel (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, members of the Knesset, in order to attain a realistic assessment of our political situation in the near future we must examine all the existing theoretical possibilities one by one, and decide which are realistic and which are not. To date, the debate here has been characterized by too much wishful thinking....

The first—completely hypothetical—possibility is that the Arabs will...accept Israel's existence....That is, after all, our ultimate aim....There is no Arab country whose complex internal problems do not require all its resources and energy, rather than nourishing its people on lies and hatred....The possibility that one of the Arab countries will make peace with Israel does not exist, however, at least as far as the immediate future is concerned. The huge amounts of arms reaching those countries now will undoubtedly tempt the Arab leaders to believe that they can solve their problems and improve their standing by a display of strength...and this tendency is encouraged by the split in the Arab world and the rivalry between the two Blocs for hegemony in the Moslem Middle East....

...I dispute the contention made here by MKs Begin and Allon that we are in a state of war...for although there are certain features in our situation which resemble those of war, it is still not one of outright, total war....Nevertheless, it can be expected that the Arabs' infractions of the Armistice Agreements, such as the economic boycott, the restriction of freedom of shipping in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat, the violation of our sovereignty on Lake Tiberias and of our right to work on the Jordan River, etc., will only increase now that they have received such quantities of weapons....

...The second—even more hypothetical—possibility is that Israel will be prepared to make certain concessions in return for peace...at least for a limited period. Certain foreign politicians have proposed this...though couching it in different terms and basing it on different points of departure...but all aim at the same objective—that Israel should make concessions to the Arab countries....I just want to make it clear, for the benefit of all concerned...that no party represented at present in the Knesset—except perhaps for the Communist Party—has received a mandate from its voters to make any concessions of any kind whatsoever....Thus, that possibility cannot be taken into consideration either....

The third possibility, and to my regret the most realistic one, is that there will be a war soon....Some speakers have tried to claim that if we

manage to rebuild our military strength, Nasser will flinch from war knowing, as a military man, that this means disaster for him. I hope we manage to obtain a great deal of defensive weapons; I am prepared even to assume that Nasser will be able to understand what he should understand, but even then I doubt whether he will be able to prevent war. Because if a country invests virtually all its income and energy in amassing arms...it will eventually feel obliged to use them....It is better for us, therefore, to face the fact that in these circumstances war is inevitable....

If we assume that this analysis and its conclusion are incorrect...we must accept that the "balance of power" which has prevailed till now was based not only on the fact that our strength offset that of the Arabs...but also on our restraint in implementing our sovereignty everywhere...knowing that this involved the danger of armed clashes with our neighbors....With the increased and improved weapons in their hands, this danger has intensified....

...Almost all the speakers in this debate have spoken of the gravity of our situation...and of our need to mobilize all our strength to cope with it....We have attained a blessed unity of opinions on this subject...although we differ as to whether the imminent Arab attack is "possible" or "certain."...The only logical conclusion...once we have agreed that there will be an Arab attack, is that we must not wait and let the enemy choose when to strike....

...I take this opportunity of warning the Arab leaders that if there is a "second round," as they threaten...the third round will not be able to be made from the same basis as the second, just as the second cannot be made from the same basis as the first was....The question which concerns us now, however, is how to prevent the second round...or at least how to blunt its edge....

Knesset Members...we are a small, weak nation and we must not ignore or shrug off any factor which may influence the situation. That is why we should not forego any opportunity of mobilizing the aid of the Great Powers. The question is whether these Powers wish to use their influence to prevent the Arabs' aggression, and if they do, to what extent will they succeed. It is difficult to assume that they will be more successful now than they were in 1948, when both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. wanted to avoid Arab aggression....

...I assume that we have done and are doing all we can in the sphere of direct contact....No criticism was made in the Knesset on this score, though the Government was accused of having neglected world public opinion....The limited influence world public opinion has on policy is not so much because it does not know which side to support but because in our cynical world it simply does not have much importance....We must do all we can to win over public opinion...but we must not delude ourselves that its influence will be very great....

...It is patently evident that not only can we not afford to lose the war...we cannot even afford to lose a single battle, because international forces may try to impose a ceasefire and freeze a situation which is greatly to our disadvantage....Thus, if we cannot find a way to put an end to warlike thoughts and declarations from the Arabs...we must prevent the Arabs from choosing the time and place of the second round and of benefiting from the element of surprise....

M. Nurock (Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi): Distinguished House, I would first like to congratulate the Foreign Minister on his safe return from the lion's den of the world of lies and hypocrisy, which has words of pure democracy on its lips but holds a two-edged sword in its hand....

...In connection with our efforts to explain our cause, allow me to cite a wonderful legend from our ancient literature:

After the first Temple was destroyed, as our forefathers went into exile, they sat by the wayside and wept. Then the Law (Torah) appeared before them dressed in finery and asked: "My sons, why do you weep?"

Our forefathers replied: "Our city has been destroyed, our Temple has been laid waste, we have been exiled and the things we hold most precious have been ravaged, how shall we not weep?"

The Law replied: "You are right, but do not weep. I will ask the Lord Almighty to return you to your land."

Then our forefathers said: "That will not help us. We have no guarantee that wicked, sinful men will not come again and force us to leave our land."

The Law replied: "That is also true, but I have some advice and a remedy for you, my sons. Go into exile, but take me, the Law, with you; take the high and eternal ideals of freedom, justice and honesty, love, friendship and peace, and the noble sentiments of 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' 'one law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you,' and go with me from one town to another, from one country to another, from one part of the world to another and from one generation to another. And when these ideals belong to all nations, and you return to your land, you will dwell safely in the land of your fathers."

Our forefathers took the Law's advice, and took it from one nation to another and from one kingdom to another, disseminating those high ideals throughout mankind.

Then, when the U.N. confirmed our right to establish the State of Israel, we thought that the vision had been fulfilled. To our regret, however, we found that there is still a very long way to go. The world has not yet accepted those principles and we still have to teach it a great deal about true democracy. That is our task now.

We will continue with diplomatic negotiations, but we will not rely on that alone....We must be united, and we must rely on arms....We call on the nation in Israel and the diaspora...to come forward to save

us and themselves. We have not faced such danger since the state was established....We must make financial sacrifices in order to avert bloodshed....We need an emergency regime, we must not waste our resources on unnecessary luxuries, we must sacrifice everything for the security of the state....If we all do our duty, as a united nation, we are convinced that the Guardian of Israel will not abandon us to our enemies...and we will overcome all the obstacles, and Israel shall dwell in safety in its land.

...
The Foreign Minister, M. Sharett: This is more a subject for a statement than a debate. But since there has been a debate...I would like to say that MK Hazan's words touched me deeply. I believe, as he does, that with all our readiness to repel any aggression...it is our duty to do everything we can to preserve peace. Naturally, this does not depend solely, or even primarily, upon us.

I note with satisfaction my agreement with MK Hazan both as regards the content of the peace plan and the value of publicizing it now....As regards returning the refugees, I must make it clear that we reject any return as a solution or contribution to a solution of the refugee problem. It is true that we discuss granting permits in special cases and family circumstances. That policy will continue and may even be expanded....But there is all the difference in the world between permitting a refugee to return in order to be united with his family...and returning whole families so that the Government of Israel can accept responsibility for their settlement and economic integration...as well as for solving the security problem their presence must create. The Government of Israel does not take the responsibility for settling new Arab families in Israel.

MK Hazan mentioned the Johnston Plan....I would like to set his mind at rest and say that we have not made any commitment to the U.S. government to accept any plan....I was glad to hear that MK Hazan also accepts the plan for settling the international irrigation question in principle....The situation is, however, that the entire plan hangs by a thread, and I am using this opportunity to inform the House that the Arabs are probably about to refuse to cooperate in this....There have been lengthy negotiations, and there was even some progress...but after two years it transpired that the Arab countries concerned are not prepared to accept any kind of agreement...with Israel....We have never prevented ourselves from implementing schemes which it is our right to implement...but we felt ourselves duty bound to try to solve the problem by agreement first....

Whereas MK Hazan's concept of peace...was clear, MK Begin's concept of war was vague and indistinct. He demanded a path without proposing practical steps....The debate is not about whether a war should be termed "initiated" or "preventive"...There is, after all, a vast dif-

ference between our situation in 1947 and 1948...and during the last seven years...just as there is between war and peace, and between peace and non-peace. The responsibility for moving from a situation of—albeit malignant—non-peace to that of war is very grave.

Although MK Hillel proposed that we abandon wishful thinking in favor of a cool analysis of the situation, he nonetheless indulged in some wishful thinking of his own....Even if there are several certain possibilities, they are by no means inevitable....

In his estimable maiden speech, MK Yigal Allon made several assumptions which seem to me to be absolutely correct...although I do not think that all his historical analyses of the past, and the conclusions he draws from them regarding the future, are correct....It is, after all, very easy to be wise after the event. It is true, as he claims, that we won the war but lost the peace, i.e., the Armistice Agreements, but there were reasons why we made the decisions we did....We had to evade the dangers that threatened us...hold onto our gains...avoid clashing with the U.N....and the whole world...and do all we could to enable the work of building the country and facilitating mass immigration to begin....

...The conclusions he drew regarding the future are also beyond my comprehension....Must we declare that the Armistice Agreements are null and void...? If that was the intention, it should have been spelled out more clearly....I believe that we should still adhere to the Armistice Agreements, both as a shield and as a weapon in our political campaign against war and for peace....

...I will not go into the question of a security guarantee or treaty, because that is not the subject on the agenda....This does not mean that it is not being dealt with, but we have our priorities. When I was in America...I focused on our pressing need for arms, and if the defense treaty was mentioned, as it was...I made it clear that it could be no substitute for effective defense on our part....

MK Hazan proposed that we educate the Jews of the U.S. to a different international outlook than the one they have been accustomed to....The problem is, however, not whether and how to reeducate U.S. Jewry but that we need their help...here and now, and we need them as they are, as citizens of the U.S. and hence as partners in a certain world front. Should we try to educate the workers of America to think and act differently?...We have received a great deal of political, spiritual and social aid from American labor...and the two great branches of that movement, which have not always seen eye to eye, have now united, forming a body of sixteen million workers. At the historic meeting marking that event, the Conference passed a resolution demanding arms and a defense treaty for Israel and rejecting territorial concessions by Israel....From this podium I would like to thank the presidents of those unions, George Meany and Walter Reuther.

I would also like to say that the Histadrut did well to send its Secretary-General to that Conference...thereby expressing the great interest Israel's workers have in maintaining that close tie....

...It would seem that in their policy considerations...the Powers take into account immediate factors such as...territory, population, armies, oil and strategic vantage points...rather than the ethical, qualitative and long-term benefits which Israel has to offer....And when all is said and done, we are not the focal point of world attention....We have not created the rift between the Powers...and it is not up to us to end it....

...We disagree with certain attitudes of the U.S. and England, and certainly of the U.S.S.R. We repeat: we will not be carved up...we will not let our state be exploded from within. We are ready for peace, if it is possible, if there is a genuine desire for it. But this must be peace with Israel as it is, not with a battered, broken and dismembered Israel.

Members of the Knesset, let us not frighten ourselves....First, we are not like other countries...we will fight as few other countries have fought...because we will be fighting for an ancient heritage and a vision which will light our path until the end of days. Secondly, we have the Jewish diaspora...which will back us fiercely, capably and devotedly. Thirdly, the world has a special attitude to Israel, to the miracle of its establishment and to the vision to which it adheres.

...The doubts raised here are legitimate...but in a situation of this kind we must reach agreement on what has to be done today, tomorrow and the day after, at this stage, in the coming months....I believe that there are three things we must do: we must work to increase our strength, and above all to obtain arms...and fortify ourselves from within; we must tighten our links with the diaspora; and we must maintain and cultivate the support and aid of the world.

...

The Speaker, H. Ariav: MK Argov will read the motion proposed by the Coalition party factions....

M. Argov (Mapai): The Knesset takes note of the statement made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense and the statement made by the Foreign Minister regarding the Government's defense and foreign policy, and transfers the conclusion of the discussion to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

(The motion is passed by 69 votes to 25.)

Herut's Proposal of No-Confidence

Introduction

With the security situation worsening—*fedayeen* attacks being stepped up in spite of Israel's retaliatory raids and the overall balance of forces inclining towards Arab, and particularly Egyptian, superiority—the Herut party group submitted a motion of no confidence, to highlight the failures of the Government and publicly proclaim its doctrine of preventive war. In retrospect, the debate was a phase in the countdown to the Sinai War of October 1956, in which that doctrine was, in fact, applied, although under drastically different circumstances.

Sitting 92 of the Third Knesset

6 March 1956 (23 Adar 5716)

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, events are taking place with breathtaking speed....The circle of hatred and the ring of steel are growing tighter. And what about the Government? Part of it puts its trust in the arms in Admiral Redford's arsenal, while the other part has begun to look towards the arms in Marshall Sokolowski's arsenal. But nothing happens and nothing is done. This split Government can speak only in opposites...contradicting itself every other day....

While the Government is making contradictory statements our enemies are preparing to attack us. Of course, the British general who commanded the legion of mercenaries controlling the occupied part of our homeland to the east and west of the River Jordan was one of the Jewish people's greatest enemies. No one regrets his return to London, that center of duplicity, which began with the betrayal of the Jewish people, by undermining France's position, and continued with the dictate of historical justice and, as a direct and indirect result of the Jewish revolt, the complete disintegration of British rule in the Middle East.

After it no longer ruled us, Britain could have tried to reach an agreement with our nation. We, who had struck at the British until they left and had been sorely harassed by them, were ready—for the sake of our people and our country—to change our attitude provided what had been wrested from us was restored, namely the conquered part of the Land of Israel over which Britain has in effect ruled till now. Even today, when Britain is humiliated, we propose that it reconsider its policy, which was anti-Jewish, anti-French and, consequently, anti-British....

But let us not delude ourselves. There has as yet been no indication of a change of attitude in Whitehall. Mr. Eden continues Bevin's policy, just as Bevin continued the policy of Eden, who was one of the architects of Britain's decline in the Middle East. Thus, British rule will surely vanish, and we will not mourn it.

We must not, however, ignore the immediate objective outcome of the change which has taken place in conquered Amman. A government institution has already managed to congratulate the "historic" nation called "Jordanian" on its victory. I think that this Government holds the world record in congratulating the enemies of our people. But even those congratulations will not alter the fact that the danger of war on all fronts is closer today than it was a few years—or even months—ago. Not because Glubb is less of an enemy than his successor but because of the psychological change connected with overthrowing a hated British commander and the desire to prove loyalty to the Arab camp.

Had the Government taken our strategic advice even a few months ago, namely, an offensive campaign on the southern front and a defensive one on the other fronts, we would have smashed the most dangerous force among our enemies, deprived it of its base in Gaza and prevented the conflagration on all the fronts. But the Government stopped its ears because its plan is fatalistic passivity....

I therefore regard it as my duty to tell the Knesset and the nation the truth, because after the right moment has slipped by us...there is far less chance today that any campaign of liberation on one front can be confined to one front....Nevertheless, with all the pain and anger I feel at what has not been done...from a sense of the responsibility each one of us bears...I say to you that even today...we must take the military initiative, based on a calculated strategic plan...whose moral essence will consist in utilizing the sacred right to defend ourselves by breaking through the evertightening circle....

But this Government is characterized by fatalistic passivity. It speaks of a "time of emergency." Where are its measures? It speaks of acquiring friends. How does it acquire them? There is one great country which helps us and is prepared to continue supporting us. As one of the people who have constantly recommended that we tighten our relations with France, I am glad to say that people in the French Republic have reached the conclusion that our two nations share profound interests, our enemies are theirs, and vice versa. We bless France for all it has done—and doubtless will still do—for us and for itself.

That was why I was so shocked to read in the important French newspaper *Le Monde* that Israel's Foreign Ministry is a caricature of Britain's Foreign Office. Is that how one acquires friends?

To return to the military sphere...the choice before you is not peace or half peace....It is not even the continuation of guerrilla warfare, with its hundreds of casualties, to whom have been added the faithful police-

men of Lake Tiberias, may God avenge their blood. The only choice you have is a terrible war on all the fronts, in the worst possible political and strategic conditions in human history. The true title of this war is the War of Despair. Naturally, even a war of despair can be won...it brings out the best in people...and I believe in Jewish youth in its homeland; that is why I always tell my people that we shall fight and be victorious, but at what price...?

The situation is extremely grave, I know; we are all in the same boat....The problem is that the captains of this small vessel are liable to ground us on a dangerous reef. That is what has brought me to propose no confidence in the Government and call upon it to resign. I know that in a few minutes the majority here will reject our proposal. The Government will continue to rule. But that does not alter the fact that—like the current British Prime Minister—it has failed in its task...and is leading us to a war of despair. I call upon you to resign!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: On one point I agree with the previous speaker, that our soldiers will fight. He exaggerated slightly as regards himself, however, saying: we fought and we will fight. The speaker did not fight in the War of Independence and will not fight.

M. Begin (Herut): I fought....
(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We can discuss the matter: whether there is a war or not, this morning a serious and practical discussion was held in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and it was evident that this would come up in the Knesset, though in a demagogic way....

The Government has said that it will not initiate a war. For the last eight years this Government...has stated that we must prepare, knowing that our enemies were planning a second round. It is a slander or worse to say that our policy is one of fatalistic passivity. If a war breaks out we will meet it with united and trained strength, and we will defeat our enemies. But we are not eager for the fray. We thought we could prevent this war...and while this possibility has not been completely ruled out, its prevention is not up to us. If the war is not prevented, the responsibility for this will be on the conscience of the U.S. Administration...as well as on the head of the Soviet government, which sent arms to the Egyptian tyrant in the knowledge that they would be used against Israel....

But...at no time did we want to initiate a war. When they began the war eight years ago we defeated them. The previous speaker's claim that the Government's position changes from day to day was an empty taunt. The Government is constantly aware of the fact that there might be war and it has made preparations; it built the army and equipped and trained it....Not all doors were open to us, and we did not get everything

we wanted. We thought—and still think—that we had the moral and political right to demand arms from America. If we do not get those arms in the immediate future America will be taking upon itself a very grave responsibility. But we will not initiate war. If we are attacked, we will respond...not with despair but with confidence in our fighting forces.

I think that those things which were said—perhaps unintentionally—were like the statements of the Communist party; they merely aid those who would set the conflagration because they represent us as being incapable and passive. When I heard the previous speaker mention the British and the Jewish governments I did not know which of them he hated more.

M. Begin (Herut): Isn't that demagoguery?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: But Jewish youth, in which that speaker expresses his confidence, has no confidence in him.

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

M. Begin (Herut): You failed in the elections, not us.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Begin, it does not matter just now who won the elections.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Those shouts do not bother me, just as I am not intimidated by those who speak on behalf of "The Voice of the People."

(Commotion in the Chamber.)

The Minister of Labor, G. Meyerson: You didn't hear what was said here. Tell him to leave.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I didn't hear and I can't tell him to repeat what he said. (Commotion in the Chamber.)...

M. Begin (Herut): With all due respect, what he said here was incitement. We have every right to reply to it.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Respond to it if you wish, but not with interjections from the floor; I will not allow it. (Shouts from the Government bench.) I ask the Ministers to stop the argument too.

M. Begin (Herut): What a hero! When I fought for my people you were an informer in Israel.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Are you starting again?

M. Begin (Herut): It's the truth, it's the truth! I'll teach you to speak respectfully in the House. (Commotion in the Chamber.)

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Please stop the argument. Knesset Member Begin, I call you to order for what you have just said.

M. Begin (Herut): I will not retract what I said.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I call you to order. (Shouts from all the benches.) Will the speaker kindly continue.

E. Shostak (Herut): You should be ashamed of yourselves for this display! (Shouts from the Herut benches.)

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Members Shostak and Unichman, kindly stop immediately.

M. Begin (Herut): Did I offend him personally by a single word I said? He has uttered incitement here!

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I ask you to stop the interjections now and allow the speaker to continue.

Y. Bader (Herut): Shouldn't you direct that request to the other side?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: When I think it necessary to do so, I will, MK Bader, my friend.

E. Shostak (Herut): I know this for the last twenty years; at a time like this he always distinguishes himself by speaking out against people.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I ask all the Knesset Members to calm down. You may do what you wish, but I will not let you disturb the sitting. I entreat you to stop.

M. Begin (Herut): ...such things!

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Begin, you are starting again. I ask the speaker to continue.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: It's not easy to continue amid all this hysterical screaming. (From the floor: You're hysterical!)

J. Shofman (Herut): Why are you so happy?...What is there in the country's position to make you so elated?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Will the speaker kindly continue.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Our policy is to preserve peace as long as this is possible, and to fight until victory when this is necessary, and I have no doubt that if war comes, we will be victorious.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Before the vote, several party groups have statements to make. Knesset Member Rokeach will speak on behalf of the General Zionists.

I. Rokeach (General Zionists): Distinguished Knesset...although the present Government does not grasp the gravity of the situation, which requires preparing the public for what is to come...we must wait and see

what happens in the immediate future in order to judge it....Consequently, the General Zionists will abstain on the vote of no-confidence.

...

E. Wilenska (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Herut's proposal means initiating war, fixing a time and date for it and for actions intended to conquer neighboring lands, i.e. actions which are potentially disastrous foremost for our people. Who is interested in war? Not our people—

H. Magori-Cohen (Herut): Those who give arms.

E. Wilenska (Maki): —not the Arab countries, but the rulers of America and Britain, whose policies are undermining Asia and the Middle East and who seek an excuse for military intervention in our region so that they can increase their colonialist control within it. The Herut party group constitutes the most aggressive part, serving the interests of those imperialist groups....

In Jordan, Israel's neighbor, the nation was victorious in its struggle against colonialism....The overthrowing of Glubb, the symbol of the enslaving colonialism of the Jordanian people, is a triumph for that nation's struggle for independence and for the furthering of peace in the Middle East....The times are past when Templars, Glubbs and Dulleses determined events in Asia and the Middle East. We are witnessing the end of colonialism....The expulsion of Glubb from Jordan is good for the independence of the Jordanian nation, good for the independence of our nation and good for peace. Glubb was one of the moving forces behind the invasion of Israel....

The absence of peace between Israel and the neighboring countries is exploited by the American and British imperialists to increase tension, so that they can extend their rule in the modern version of colonialism—aggressive military pacts. Our nation wants peace....The Government does not appear to be opposed in principle to Herut's stand....To a great extent it is implementing Herut's policy. The invasion on Lake Tiberias...

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Wilenska, I think that this is beyond the framework of a statement, this is a speech.

E. Wilenska (Maki): Consequently, Maki will abstain on the vote. We stress that the solution lies in political, not military, spheres. The solution lies in a change in the Government's policy, in abandoning the search for an aggressive military pact, in adopting a policy of neutrality, in ceasing to be dependent upon the U.S., in ending military invasions and in a policy of independence....We propose a policy of initiative and readiness to make peace treaties between Israel and the Arab countries. There is no issue that cannot be resolved by peaceful methods if there is a desire for peace....Advocating a military adventure as a

policy is anti-Israel and anti-security, threatening us with war and foreign conquest. One and a half billion people live in this region....

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Wilenska, I have been very patient, and I have told you that what you are saying goes beyond a statement. I ask you to conclude.

E. Wilenska (Maki): Our nation wants peace and will struggle for peace. Our nation demands a policy of ceasing to seek a military treaty, of ending military invasions, of being ready to solve problems by peaceful methods, negotiations and an agreement.

Y.M. Lewin (Agudat Yisrael and Poalei Agudat Yisrael): Mr. Speaker, distinguished House, we wish to make the following statement:

A. The political and security situation is very serious. It is true that our situation has always been complicated, but at this point it is more dangerous than it has ever been before.

B. At this critical moment a government should have arisen combining all the groups and parties in the nation, and as long as this is not done...those concerned are taking a very great responsibility upon themselves. In any event, there should be a certain institution in which all the sections of the nation are represented. Agudat Israel is not even represented on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

C. There are defects...in policy as well as in propaganda....There is no stability in this situation, which is delicate, dangerous and complex.

D. In our view, a different kind of moral bravery from that usually represented should be stressed now, namely...self-restraint. We should not act hastily, because at any moment the match could be struck which could, heaven forbid, bring war upon us, and this should be prevented at all costs....

E. There has never yet been such a time of emergency, when almost all the nations are either against us or ready...to abandon us. At such a time...there is only one remedy, to form an alliance with our only ally—our Father in Heaven.

On more than one occasion I have said here that even though every political and military effort should be made, we can rely only on our Father in Heaven. I hope and trust that God will help us. Unfortunately...this source of succour is ignored....

F. Although we are not represented in the Government, we will abstain from the vote because: 1. This could be interpreted as constituting our support for an escapade embarked upon hastily, without thinking the problem out carefully, and this could endanger us. 2. Because we believe that at this dangerous moment in our existence, we should not impair the political stability of the Government at frequent intervals....

The Speaker, B. Mintz: We will now vote on the proposal to express no confidence in the Government.

The Vote

Those in favor	13
Those against	66
Abstentions	14

(The Herut party group's motion of no-confidence in the Government is defeated.)

Bill to Ban Pig-Rearing in Israel

Introduction

While foreign affairs and defense issues were at the center of the national agenda and fully occupied Ben-Gurion, other issues—with important implications for the religious and cultural character and political complexion of the state—returned to the fore. Thus, a private member's bill to ban pig-rearing in Israel was tabled in May 1956 by a member of the non-Coalition religious party, Agudat Israel, although it was known that the religious partner in the Coalition, the Religious Front, had accepted a compromise solution on the issue. Although as Prime Minister he could have asked another Minister to reply, Ben-Gurion insisted on answering, offering glimpses of his general outlook on religious and related issues.

Sitting 122 of the Third Knesset

23 May 1956 (13 Sivan 5716)

B. Mintz (Agudat Yisrael and Po'alei Agudat Israel): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the subject on which I wish to address the House has concerned us for many years....In the past I managed to unite members from various parties to back a bill forbidding the rearing of pigs in Israel...but the matter has been frozen because the then-Minister of Commerce, Mr. Peretz Bernstein, promised to find a solution which would not involve passing a law, and thereby deferred the matter from one sitting to another...eventually admitting that the solution would have to be in the form of a law....

I placed the subject on the agenda of the Third Knesset, too...but once again the matter was constantly delayed....The problem, which must be solved, remains unchanged....I know that there are plans to empower local authorities to pass by-laws banning the rearing of pigs within their jurisdiction, but that does not solve the problem....Moreover, the local authorities will be able to pass the by-laws or not, as they please, and it can safely be assumed that most of them will not....And even if they do, and are able to enforce them, the neighboring local authority will not....

...There are people in the country, and even in this Knesset, who support that abomination in the name of democracy and civil liberty...but I say to them that the vast majority of the citizens of Israel are opposed to it because of a natural Jewish revulsion to rearing that forbidden animal in our land....Even people who do not regard themselves as orthodox Jews share this view....It is a feeling which is deeply-rooted in all sections of the nation....In my conversations with Knesset Mem-

bers I have discovered that most of them will not allow pork in their houses. This revulsion to pork is shared by the Moslem minority in Israel....Those in Israel who support pork are only a small minority, constituting those who rear it for money...and who will do anything for money....Must all Jewish history, all the Jewish suffering of untold generations who died rather than eat pork, be wiped out because of the licentiousness of a small minority? Do "human rights" mean that...this minority may impose its will...on the vast majority?...Those who claim to defend "human rights" and "freedom of conscience" did not do so when religious new immigrants were forced to live in settlements which were areligious or even anti-religious....Now they suddenly awaken, when a tiny group of people seeking to make money insists on its "right" to deal with swinishness here, in the Holy Land.

Distinguished Knesset, I trust that I will see the vast majority of you voting in favor of placing my bill on the Knesset's agenda and, when the day comes, voting to pass the law banning the rearing of pigs and the contamination of our country.

...

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...When this Government was established matters were agreed between the parties, and I informed the Knesset of this. Two subjects were decided upon which are relevant to this debate: a. To maintain the status quo as regards religion and faith. b. Regarding the specific matter in hand, it was agreed that "the local authorities will be entitled to restrict the rearing and selling of pork."... As we all know now, but did not know then, the Supreme Court has handed down a decision stating that the local authorities cannot do this. The agreement stated that if it were to transpire that the local authorities could not do this a law would be passed enabling them to do so.

...If it is true, as the previous speakers have claimed, that 90 percent of the population of Israel wants pork banned...there is no doubt that the local authorities will ban it....There is no part of Israel which does not come under the jurisdiction of one local authority or another....

We did not accept more than the proposal to empower the local authorities...because there is nothing in the guidelines which obliges us to pass a law against any animal....Moreover, the religious factions do not have the sole and exclusive rights to decide what are Jewish values or not.

I would like to point out a historical fact...namely, that until the end of the Hasmonean period there was no ban on rearing pigs in Israel, and before the end of the Hasmonean period there were the prophets and the members of the Great Knesset, who were no less Jews than the members of the religious party groups, and they did not ban rearing pigs. Gentlemen, I know that there are differences of opinion on this issue. I have no intention of wounding anyone's sensitivities, but I think that even you ought to get used to hearing an opinion which differs from your

own....I tell you that not only was there no ban on rearing pigs in Israel until the end of the Hasmonean period, but that pigs were reared here....(Shouts in the Chamber.) You will not change my mind or stop me saying what I intend to say. You have to listen to a different opinion quietly....

We know that the ban on rearing pigs came about eventually because of a clash between two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulos, both scions of the Hasmonean dynasty, one inside Jerusalem and the other outside it, who fought for the city with the aid of the Romans....The fact that the sacrifice of pigs is mentioned in that context indicates that pigs were reared in Israel then.

Like many of those present, I was born in a traditional Jewish township. All the members of the older generation were orthodox in one way or another...and recoiled from the idea of pork. But the younger generation was different, and not only there....And if we all lived solely according to the concepts of the older generation in the township...I fear that none of us would be sitting here and we would have been wiped off the face of the earth. There have been good and bad changes among the Jews. Many things have changed. Not amongst all of them. I have every respect for those who continue that tradition, although I know that they have changed too....

Out of consideration for the feelings of many Jews, the Government has said that the local authorities should be empowered to restrict the rearing and selling of pork...but that is a matter for each local authority to decide for itself....We, who are different from you in many ways, did not invent pork. It was created by God Almighty, and even that animal was saved in Noah's ark. You can't blame us for that. The Law (Torah) prohibits eating pork, camel and other animals, but it does not prohibit rearing them.

The only argument you have raised was the feeling of many Jews. This feeling is not to be dismissed, if it indeed exists. I am ready to believe that you are convinced that all Jews or 90 percent of the Jews feel as you do. I personally doubt it.

The Minister of Religion and Welfare, M. Shapira: We could hold a referendum.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: There are more important issues on which to hold a referendum. There will be a referendum in each local authority.

It would not occur to anyone here, even the most heretical Jew, to force someone to eat non-kosher food....The Government is doing its best to provide kosher meat for all those Jews who want it....From what you say, though, it sounds as if Jews are being forced to eat non-kosher food.

I have already said several times that I will not argue matters of Jewish law (*halacha*) in the Knesset or anywhere else. I would just like

to explain something regarding the Government's attitude. Maimonides said that one should not rear pigs or dogs...not because they are forbidden but because they cause harm. If you find that dogs are harmful we will prohibit them too, and as you all know, rabies is a very dangerous disease.

I appeal to you as a friend, as one Jew to another...despite the fact that there are differences of opinion between us, not to introduce disputes here which cannot be decided by a majority and do not enhance internal unity and the mutual understanding and respect between us. Do not give the State of Israel the wrong character. We will suddenly have a strange law saying that we must not grow a certain animal, one of God's creatures...which the Law forbids us to eat, as it forbids us to eat camels and rabbits. This will distort the image of the state in the eyes of many of us.

We have taken into account the fact that there is this feeling against pigs, albeit an irrational one, and irrational feelings are the deepest, and that is why we agreed to empower the local authorities to restrict both the rearing and selling of pork....We will not force any local authority to do so if it does not wish to, but neither will we prevent it from doing so if it wishes to....

That is why I ask you to be satisfied with what was agreed upon in the Government out of consideration for the feelings of...a certain part of the nation....Obviously, there will also be those who will vote against that law, but I am sure that the large majority of the Knesset will vote for it....I am sure that even the members of the General Zionists and Herut will vote for the law, even though there are many among them who eat non-kosher meat....But do not introduce a proposal which will arouse unnecessary dispute. Why should you do this? Your proposal will be defeated in any event.

That is why I appeal to you, and if you do not accept my opinion I appeal to the entire Knesset, to remove the proposal from the agenda. I appeal to you as one Jew to another. Do not start a controversy in Israel. Accept what was agreed upon by all of us in the Coalition, and probably by other factions in the Knesset....If you find it difficult to remove your proposal from the agenda...I propose it to the Knesset because of the honor of the Knesset and of us all. We will pass a law which will respect the feelings of those Jews who have those feelings.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote on the two proposals.

Those in favor of holding a debate 29

Those in favor of not holding a debate 55

(The proposal not to hold a debate is adopted.)

Changes in the Composition of the Government (The Foreign Minister's Resignation)

Introduction

The inclusion of Moshe Sharett, after his term as Prime Minister, as Foreign Minister in Ben-Gurion's Cabinet once more, at Ben-Gurion's explicit request, resulted in continuous friction, and by June 1956 Sharett had reached the conclusion that he could continue no longer. The issues, for obvious reasons not completely spelled out in the statements made by both men, concerned different views as to the proper policies to be adopted with regard to the Israel-Arab conflict, the relative importance of "what the world thinks" and "what Israelis do," particularly in relation to military measures which were condemned on several occasions by the U.N. and public opinion in Western countries, and the coordination between the Foreign and Defense Ministries which, as Ben-Gurion pointed out, had to cooperate more fully than ever for one purpose at a time such as that. The clash between the two personalities had a psychological and internal-political background. Since Sharett did not wish to weaken the Government or his party, he limited himself to a cursory explanation of his motives when his resignation and replacement as Foreign Minister by Golda Meir were submitted to the Knesset.

Sitting 138 of the Third Knesset

18 June 1956 (9 Tammuz 5716)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Members of the Knesset, at a special meeting of the Government this morning the Foreign Minister informed us of his decision to resign. Not only the members of the Government and the members of the Foreign Minister's party but, I am sure, all the citizens of Israel, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as many people...all over the world heard the news with great regret.

Since the Provisional Council of State...and through all Israel's Governments—in all of which I have had the privilege of participating—no Minister...has worked so consistently and devotedly, even before the establishment of the state, with such skill and dedication, and has been so naturally suited for his task as Foreign Minister in both his

character and temperament, diligence and knowledge in political matters, gentle bearing and good manners...as Moshe Sharett....

He was not only Foreign Minister, he was also Israel's second Prime Minister. When I presented the current Government to the Knesset...I said "The second Prime Minister is blessed with skills and abilities which the first Prime Minister did not have," and I was not giving an empty compliment....I do not say things I do not mean....

If Moshe Sharett were to retire from political life upon resigning from the Government I would attempt to give a brief outline of the noble enterprise of one of the sons of the Biluim and one of my best friends in the service of his country over twenty-three consecutive years, as the Foreign Minister of his people, even before the establishment of the state, of the unceasing endeavor to increase immigration and settlement ever since 1933, of the bitter struggle against the White Paper after 1938, of the mobilization of the Battalion and the establishment of the first Jewish Brigade in the British Army to fight the Nazi hangman, of the desperate and heroic effort to bring in the illegal immigrants, of the struggle to establish the state in the arena of the United Nations, of the organization of the first Foreign Office of the independent State of Israel, of the extensive activity in the international arena which led to Israel's acceptance into the U.N. and its honored position in the world, of the achievement of extensive financial assistance from the U.S. government for the absorption of mass immigration in the first years of the state's existence, of the establishment of ties with countries of both the East and the West, of the education of the staff of the Foreign Ministry, ambassadors and delegates of which even a Great Power could be proud, of the acquisition of friends and of the noble and courageous stand he took when confronting petty critics in the international sphere.

But I will not do that, because Moshe Sharett's political activity has not yet ended; his manifold talents, rich experience and extensive knowledge will continue to serve Israel's parliament, and his advice will gladly be heard by all those who will henceforth deal with Israel's internal and external affairs. I am sure that the person who guided the ship of state for so many years has many more tasks to fulfill, and that is why I will not attempt to sum up the extensive and productive endeavors of my friend Moshe Sharett, alongside whom I have worked for more than forty years, not always agreeing with him, but always respecting him....

I do not need to stress that the Government's future policy will continue to follow the lines agreed upon by the Government, and particularly its foreign and defense policy....In accordance with the Government's decision, the Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson, will henceforth be Foreign Minister. The Government has decided to co-opt MK Mordecai Namir to serve as Minister of Labor, and I ask the Knesset to approve this appointment....

...
M. Sharett (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Members of the Knesset, I thank the Prime Minister for the praises he has heaped upon me....I thank the Knesset for the confidence it has displayed in me when I served as Foreign Minister and for its attentiveness and patience towards me.

...In August 1955, when the present Prime Minister was attempting to form a Government after the last elections, I asked him not to include me among its members. I feared that the cooperation between my friend David Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister and myself as Foreign Minister would not work out well this time, and I thought that it would be best if I were to release him and the Government from unnecessary complications.

The Prime Minister rejected my arguments then, and his attitude caused me to alter my views. During my term in the present Government the cooperation between us underwent several strains, which we managed to overcome in view of the many years we had worked side by side and the situation of emergency in the state. In recent weeks, however, it has become clear to me that my resignation is inevitable. This is not connected with any specific political problem....

In a frank discussion I had with the Prime Minister on June 3, I realized that I could not possibly remain in the Government. I suggested to him that he summon the Government immediately for a special meeting so that I could submit my resignation. The Prime Minister asked me to postpone my resignation for several weeks...but after a few days he realized that the sooner the thing were done the better....

...That is the way things happened, and any other version you read or hear is untrue....I will not trouble you with detailed rebuttals of all the falsehoods disseminated about my resignation, except for one case. One of the newspapers made a base attempt to involve the senior staff of the Foreign Ministry in this affair, calling them advisors to the Foreign Minister....I will only say that I hope every Minister in Israel is blessed with such colleagues as I had the privilege of working with in the Foreign Ministry, in the capital and throughout the world...as regards their education, political acumen, cultural and moral level, honesty, industriousness, sense of discipline, devotion to their work and dedication to Israel and the Jewish people.

I probably have several reasons to regret the fact that I have been forced to leave my position, but none causes me greater sorrow than leaving the staff I cherish so dearly and to whom I have become so closely attached....I would like to express my gratitude to them for their dedication, help and friendship.

Knesset Members, I have ascended this podium many times in the capacity which I leave today. Allow me to present myself now in all humility as one of you, as a representative of the people, who will feel

honored to participate in the daily work of this House without having any ministerial authority.

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's words of praise for the departing Foreign Minister were most touching. The one thought that occurred to me when I heard them was—how can one give up a Foreign Minister of that caliber? I have the honor of being the Foreign Minister's uncompromising rival....He is distinguished by the wide extent of his knowledge, particularly of languages, and especially Hebrew. If he wants, he can be the most affable of men, would that all his colleagues were like him in that....Also...he has remained faithful to his system. The problem is that his system was not right for the needs of the nation.

...But why did the Foreign Minister have to resign?...The head of Mapai maintains that there were no personal reasons dividing him from his friend....If this is the case, the reason for the resignation is political, in which case the nation is entitled to know what it is....It cannot be political success, because successful Ministers do not resign....If the resignation is not for personal reasons, it must be because the persons who caused him to resign reached the conclusion that his policy had failed. This is something new. For eight years we have...been warning you, members of Mapai, that your official foreign policy has gone from bad to worse, leading the nation towards the brink....This is the first time we hear that our foreign policy has failed, forcing the Minister responsible to resign.

But if this is the reason for the resignation...and after all, the Foreign Minister acted in your name, members of the Government, and with your knowledge, how can you let him go while you remain?...

...Our political situation is disastrous. In the eighth year of Israel's existence we no longer have any international standing in the diplomatic offices of the Powers, of countries, of the members of the U.N. But did all this happen as a result of the personal policy of the departing Foreign Minister? Did he decide that we were forbidden to say that the Old City of Jerusalem is the City of David, was ours and shall be ours? Did he decide that Jerusalem, Hebron and Bethlehem are alien territory? The Prime Minister made that statement from this podium. You all decided that we have no claim. You thereby caused the world to recognize at least part of our enemies' territorial demands, because you have no claims, and the world demands a compromise....That is your acknowledged policy. You are all responsible for it. But why do you seek the scapegoat for this policy and its results only in the Foreign Minister?...

As regards arms, your sources disseminated the rumors that...the Foreign Minister believed that we would receive arms from the U.S. This belief was proved wrong. His policy failed. He therefore had to draw the necessary conclusions. That is what we have been arguing about for the last eight months, ever since what is known as the Egypt-

tian-Czech deal. We warned you that we would fall behind in the arms race. We told you that in relation to its enemies Israel is like a local runner competing against Zatopek, and starting the race half the course behind him. How can we reach a balance of forces? We warned you that there was little chance of receiving sufficient arms from the U.S. You said that there was a chance that we would receive weapons from the U.S., in time, perhaps sufficient. It was not only the Foreign Minister who said that. Of course, he believed it too. But you supported that policy.

What is the situation today? At sea—the enemy has six destroyers, two of them Soviet....The enemy has six submarines. We do not have even one. Thus, it is possible to besiege the state from the sea, preventing supplies from abroad from reaching us....In the air—Egypt alone has 250 Migs. We have a serious chance of receiving a total of 24 Mystere 4 planes, for which we all thank the French Republic. The ratio is 1:10 in fighter planes of similar capacity.

True, Nasser is not yet able to use all the Ilyushins and Migs he has received from the peace-loving Mr. Shepilev. But time is passing. You are giving the enemy his greatest benefit: time. In a few more months, maybe a year, the enemy will be able to use all those planes in a combined attack on land, in the air and at sea. And you cannot tell the nation that by then we will receive 100 fighter planes capable of competing with the Migs. Nor do you say that. You have no such news to tell us. This means that you regard it as a realistic possibility that at some future date—we had better not define when—the ratio in the air will still be 1:10. The ratio of armored forces is known.

And then, if war comes, will we say that we will fall? You uttered the terrible words: that the policy of Britain and the U.S.S.R. could bring about the destruction of Israel. You did not alter the policy of those two Powers. On the contrary, that policy is being implemented monthly. You predict the destruction of Israel. We do not. We say to the nation: we will win. But you must ask yourselves how much blood that victory will cost. The flower of this nation may be destroyed—our treasure, our hope, our future: Jewish youth. Can a government lead a nation in such conditions to a slaughter of that kind without being prepared to consider any change? You are getting rid of the Foreign Minister. Was that policy his, or was it the declared policy of the entire Government, for which you are all responsible?

...Immediately after the elections to the Third Knesset we requested that ships be sent to Morocco, so that our people could be saved before the door was closed. Then the Foreign Minister said: "We must not abandon the system of selective immigration unless the sword is at our throat." We were surprised, nay, shocked. That is an outdated approach...the same as is used in other spheres: let us not upset our routine, let us not abandon our illusions...unless the sword is at our throat. But, distinguished Knesset Member Mr. Moshe Sharett, my colleague as

of today, when the sword is at our throat it is too late to give up the previous approach, it can no longer help....You decided that there should be selective immigration and now the door has been closed. I hope that everything was done to rescue our brethren....But was that policy Mr. Sharett's own or was it that of the entire Government...?

The Government's official policy has failed—you have admitted it yourself—in every sphere. From being a victorious country which had gained prestige which was unparalleled in our generation, we have descended to become an object of negotiations between the Powers and our enemies. The main treasure we purchased with our blood, our superiority in strength over all our enemies—a superiority the like of which the Jewish nation has not known anywhere in the world since the time of Bar Kochba—that treasure has been wrested away from us, is being wrested away from us....And now you may be facing the verdict of the U.N...that Israel must withdraw.

Those are the results of your policy. It has failed most utterly. I know of no other foreign policy which has failed so badly. I do not remember a foreign policy which has gone from such a high point to such a low one. But if, as you admit, your foreign policy has failed, you must say whether it was Mr. Sharett's personal policy or that of you all, which you all supported and which you represented to the people as a policy of "genius," as a classic policy of peace, as the only possible policy, for eight whole years.

...He is going and you are staying. How can you do this? I remember the slogans during the election campaign for the Third Knesset....The party which sought to rule on the basis of an absolute majority demanded: put the tiller in safe hands. One pair of safe hands has been removed from the tiller, the other pair remains. This is an admission that your appeal has not been heard. In the area which determines our fate, our future, you have failed and caused to fail, and today you are admitting your failure. And is he going while you are staying?

Gentlemen, the only conclusion you should draw from this forced resignation is that the entire Government should resign....The law of the land says that the entire Government bears collective responsibility for its policy. Do you wish to break that law too? But it is also a matter of morality. It is a fact that you supported that disastrous policy based on the denial of our eternal and historic rights, on illusion and on leading the nation to a bloody war which will be a war of despair and which we will win.

You cannot evade that responsibility. This is a fateful moment, a great moment, a moment of crisis, a turning point. And if this Government has reached the conclusion that its policy has failed, it should not dismiss the Foreign Minister but return the mandate it received. After admitting the failure of its foreign policy the Government should enable the nation to reconsider its path. When you called on the nation

to put the tiller in safe hands, that part of the nation which voted for you believed that was what it was doing. Today it can no longer believe that. When you made your appeal there was no Egypt-Czech deal; the revolutionary shift in the balance of power between us and our enemies had not occurred. The situation today is quite different....Public opinion in Israel has changed. Everyone fears what the morrow may bring. And will you sacrifice one Minister...and continue with the policy that is his and yours, that is an illusion, a disaster, a failure, until you lead us to a greater disaster? Give the nation the opportunity to reconsider its path, its situation, its rescue measures.

I tell you in advance, in the new test which you are bound "in duty and in honor" to enable to take place, if the nation tells you to continue you shall, for that is the will of the people. But it may transpire that the nation desires something different. How can you prevent it from reexamining the conditions of its existence, its life and the war for its future and the lives of its children? It is your duty, members of the Government, to follow in the footsteps of the Foreign Minister, and let the nation decide.

...

Y. Raphael (Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the resignation of the Foreign Minister, even if it is not accompanied by a statement regarding a change of policy...should be accompanied by a debate on our political path....We were informed by the Prime Minister yesterday that the Government's policy remains unchanged...and continues to adhere to the guidelines formulated when it was formed....Nevertheless, we may regard the Foreign Minister's resignation, which undoubtedly had personal, private and party motives, as an expression of bitter disappointment in the face of the West's betrayal of us, its repudiation of the truth and of political honesty in international relations, its agreement to arm our enemies...without perceiving that we must be given arms with which to defend ourselves and maintain peace in the region. We do not know what effect this step has on the politicians of the world....May it serve as the vigorous protest of a peace-loving statesman, the emissary of a small nation which is fighting for its right to exist....

Obviously, a government...must act in every sphere...as one body, with collective responsibility. But there is nothing wrong if various different opinions are expressed within it...thereby enhancing the discussion of issues....We cannot dispute that mistakes have been made in our foreign policy—this is only natural; but what we must do is to learn from our errors and refrain from making the same mistake twice. The present Government...is always ready to learn from the past...and its mistakes, although large, are dwarfed by those made by the Great Powers in this region....

One of the results of those mistakes is the strange spectacle of Egypt's festivities upon the evacuation of the Suez base, at which the guest of honor is the Soviet Foreign Minister, something which no Western—let alone British—politician could have imagined even in his worst nightmare, and the fruit of those errors is the Security Council's shameful submission to Arab pressure at its last session, repudiating...its own aim...of aspiring to peace between nations. The mistakes of the Powers harm themselves, first and foremost. But they harm us too. If someone thinks that a compromise can be attained at our expense, they are mistaken. If the sole result of Hammarskjold's mission is that we are to be deprived of the means of punishing those who cross our borders, by condemning acts of retaliation, while the acts of murder, damage and robbery continue, the siege of Eilat is maintained and the development of our main irrigation project is paralyzed, that is a bad settlement which we cannot accept, despite our genuine desire for peace and quiet.

...Does anyone know what the right path should be for us now?...Is time working for us or against us?...It is working for us if we use it well, strengthening ourselves, establishing new settlements, making the desert fertile, and bringing our brethren here....Formulae alone are no remedy for anything...and cannot be a substitute for a close and continuing examination of the situation....The Government has a clear and declared political plan; it will not alter because of changes in persons holding office within it; it will be examined in the light of reality.

My party...expresses its regret at the resignation of Moshe Sharett, that experienced statesman, just at this difficult time....Despite the differences of opinion there have been between us...we always appreciated his qualities, energy, dedication and human relations....We will always regard him as one of the great builders of our state....Our party will give its full support to the new Foreign Minister and will continue to contribute loyally to maintaining an independent, moderate and considered foreign and defense policy, for the benefit of the country and...its inhabitants.

It is exactly ten years since Mrs. Golda Meyerson replaced Moshe Sharett as head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency when Sharett, together with other Jewish leaders, was...imprisoned at Latrun by an alien ruler. We should find encouragement in the fact that we are now able to decide on these changes by ourselves and according to our own considerations....My party wishes the Government a time of calm in which it can fulfill the tasks it has taken upon itself...to the benefit of us all.

...

J. Hazan (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, Moshe Sharett's resignation causes us sorrow and anxiety. He was our political rival...but as

Foreign Minister his...word could be trusted....He spoke clearly and one did not have to seek for the meaning behind what he said. He defended his views honestly and frankly. He listened to his opponents, stressed the bond they shared with him and also made a genuine attempt to cooperate with them...wherever possible. We knew him as a man, and this increased our admiration for him....He knew how to be not only a Minister but also a friend...someone who cared....

...Although there were substantive differences of opinion between him and us...Sharett favored a one-sided orientation, pinning his hopes on a defense pact with the U.S. and rejecting a policy of neutrality—that was not his policy alone. It was the Prime Minister who negotiated with us prior to our entry into the Government...and who made it clear to us that our views on foreign policy served as a stumbling block to the cooperation between us....But a compromise was found, and the Prime Minister read our letter to him out to the Knesset when he presented the Government to it....It is true that meanwhile the whole subject of the defense pact has fallen by the wayside, but the line remains...and Moshe Sharett is no more responsible for it than is David Ben-Gurion....

...If we thought that by Moshe Sharett's resignation the political line would change, we would be glad...but there is no guarantee that this will occur....Some people say that after Moshe Sharett's resignation our foreign policy will be conducted with greater dynamism and daring. Dynamism and daring are very good qualities, but not where the basic policy is inadequate....We will, of course, welcome any indication that our foreign policy is emerging from the vicious circle in which it finds itself today, a vicious circle which derives from our objective circumstances: the size of our country, the number of our citizens, our geopolitical situation and the state of the entire Jewish people. There is no doubt, however, that our international situation also depends upon our policy to a great extent. I believe in our policy and in the ability of our state....I do not believe that everything is cut and dried....I believe that it is within our power to emerge from the grave situation in which we find ourselves...and also that we share responsibility for our isolation and the vicious circle we are in. That is why I welcome any change, but am afraid that there will be no change....

What I am really concerned about, however...is the issue of our security....Our situation continues to be grave....We have always favored active defense...as well as the punishment of the murderers and those who send them. Without that we cannot maintain Israel's security. But we have always opposed using force for its own sake...attacking without rhyme or reason...because that merely endangers Israel's security, today more than ever.

...No one here can ignore the fact that the coming months may be extremely bitter and that our peace hangs by a thread....I cannot dispute

the fact that this Government earnestly desires peace...with Moshe Sharett or without him. But first of all, the way the world...views the change in the Government's security policy is very serious.

I am convinced that in the coming months we will have to confront very grave challenges, as regards both foreign policy and defense, and we will have to be ready to defend our right to live, to build the country and to save our people. This is where dynamism and daring, but also careful consideration, are needed. We were not always in agreement with the outgoing Foreign Minister...but we always esteemed his ability to weigh matters up carefully...knowing that his prime concern was to preserve peace....We regarded this as one of the Government's greatest assets, and I have no doubt that this will be absent from now on, and hence our anxiety.

We were pleased to hear the Prime Minister state that the Government will continue to act on the basis of the guidelines. We would have been sure of that even without that statement, because without those guidelines this Government has no existence, and we will do our utmost to help the Prime Minister keep that promise. I hope that he will be equally glad of our presence....

...In the coming months a combination of all our qualities will be required—daring, dynamism, careful consideration, caution and a close examination of everything. Hence our anxiety, which we do not think we should conceal. We welcome the Minister of Labor as Foreign Minister and hope that she is capable of fulfilling this task. We hope she will evince readiness to cooperate with us...while we will do all we can to help her in her work which is, above all, to ensure Israel's peace and security and help it emerge from its dangerous isolation. We also welcome the new Minister, Mr. Namir...and wish him well in his important task of assuring work and constructive life for all the workers of Israel, both Jews and Arabs....

Sitting 140 of the Third Knesset

19 June 1956 (10 Tammuz 5716)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members... before I discuss the the foreign policy and defense problems which are the subject of this debate, I would like to correct a few errors and distortions which have been voiced here....It was said here that the Prime Minister conducted foreign policy more than the Foreign Minister did. Although...the Foreign Minister consulted the Prime Minister on matters of foreign policy—as is only right—never was any step taken in that sphere without the knowledge of or involvement of the Foreign Minister and his Ministry. I would also like to say to the Knesset and the

nation that the entire Government is always responsible for Israel's foreign policy, not only formally, because of collective responsibility, but also practically, each topic being discussed in full and decided upon by the entire Government...for better or for worse....As one of the members of the Government, it is with great satisfaction that I accept full responsibility for Sharett's foreign policy.

There were differences of opinion in all Israel's Governments—and I have been privileged to serve in all of them. There are people here who have been members of the Government and are not now, or who were not in the past but are now...and they know that the Government was never "completely unified," not only because this is a coalition Government in which different views are inevitable, but also because this is a democratic, not a totalitarian, Government. Even if the Government comprised only one party, and that party was the one to which I have the honor of belonging, there would be differences of opinion, because it is a democratic party. Many matters have been decided in this Government and previous ones by a majority, not unanimously...and this, I am sure, will continue in the future too.

I will not undertake to say whether all the decisions were good or not. Sometimes I was in the majority and sometimes I was in the minority. And of course, I am allowed to assume that in both cases I was right. And so is every member of the Government. But it was right, in my view, that the members who were in the minority, which often included myself, did not cause crises and leave the Government when their opinion was rejected. Had they not acted in this way this country would have been in chaos, with a fresh crisis every week....

When I spoke yesterday, I did not conceal the fact that there have been differences of opinion between myself and my friend Moshe Sharett. And not only with him, for I have disagreed with friends with whom I have had greater ideological and psychological affinity. But that has never impaired our friendship. Perhaps I failed to express all my esteem for Moshe Sharett yesterday, even though I disagree with him on several points, but I know that people with a totalitarian or fascist outlook cannot understand or believe that. Let them not believe it.

...After the last elections I insisted that Moshe Sharett join the Government because of our differing viewpoints, not despite them....I am unable to work with "yes-men," I do not believe that I am unable to err and I wish to test my opinions against those of others....That was not the only reason why I begged Sharett to join the Government, and I was very grateful to him for giving in to me on that matter....

But of late, when both defense and foreign policy matters have become exceedingly grave...I reached the conclusion that, for the good of the country...we need the fullest possible coordination between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, and that the Foreign Ministry needs a different leadership now. This is not because I think that the

line adopted...till now should be changed...but because what is needed now is maximal coordination between those two Ministries...which really deal with the same subject....The subjects the Foreign Ministry deals with and which are not connected with defense are not terribly important just now. In normal times foreign policy does not focus solely on defense problems, but that is not the case now....And although I welcome different views on such issues within the Government, I believe that it is essential that there should be harmony between those in charge of those two Ministries....

That is why Mr. Sharett told you yesterday that he found himself obliged to leave the Government. And although as an old friend I regret this on a personal level, on a national level I welcome it. It is good for the country. It is sometimes good to have a change of guard. I do not believe that the state rests on one man....Just now I believe that this will benefit both defense and foreign affairs.

I wish to say to the Knesset that neither in Mapai...nor in any of the parties in the Government is there anyone so idiotic or insane as to say, whether to himself or to his friends, that God has chosen him to rule. We think that in a democratic society it is the nation which chooses who shall rule....

...MK Hazan was wrong in...his account of the discussion between us on the matter of the defense pact....I told Hazan and his colleagues that although I seriously doubted whether we would attain a defense pact with the U.S., what was under discussion was Israel's right to make a mutual defense pact with any country it chose. I do not accept the viewpoint of my good friends Hazan and his associates that because they have or had a certain attitude regarding Soviet Russia, and the U.S.S.R. rejects any pact with the U.S., we must accept the U.S.S.R.'s view, even if the pact is designed to preserve peace in the region....

I thought that anyone who denies Israel's right to make a mutual defense pact for non-Israeli reasons denies Israel's sovereignty. I say this with great regret, although Hashomer Hatzair's spiritual link with the U.S.S.R. has become looser. There was a time, however, when Hashomer Hatzair acted solely in accordance with the Soviet "line" in political matters....

I now come to the general debate, which is not a debate with the preceding speakers but a disagreement concerning our course, and this is not something new. Since ancient Athens...democracies have known two types of individual...the demagogue and the statesman.

The demagogue's path is an easy one. There is nothing he cannot do, no country he cannot conquer, no enemy he cannot destroy, no public desire he cannot fulfill, no mass instinct he cannot gratify, for his strength is in words....The statesman is limited, his path is a difficult one, he cannot do everything, he cannot satisfy the desires of everyone,

he may not and cannot gratify low instincts, he must act, not speak, and he is responsible for the fate of the people.

The demagogue may be a very honest man in his private life. For example, he may be a fine tanner, like Cleon of Athens, who never cheated a customer. The distinction between a demagogue and a statesman takes place in the public sphere. The demagogue is a political parasite. He feeds on the cheap and changing instincts of the crowd. He knows what a certain public likes to hear and voices ideas which are impractical or potentially disastrous for the country....The demagogue spices his speeches with fine phrases and fancy expressions, and he sometimes misquotes what others have said...

When defense matters are being debated the demagogue demands that ten million be added to the budget because, after all, what is more important than defense? But when it is time to debate taxes he says: on no account should there be taxes. The demagogue is particularly anxious to exempt from taxes those categories of people whom he thinks he can win over in that way. When the statesman discusses budgetary matters, he weighs the country's capacity and needs very carefully, and after reaching his conclusion...he comes to the nation and tells it the unpleasant news: you must pay taxes, otherwise we can have no defense.

Y. Bader (Herut): The main thing is that others should pay.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The demagogue is always glorifying the army, because he knows how much the nation loves the army, how much the nation's security depends on the army, but he himself did not lift a finger for the army. Anyone hearing him would think that he conceived and labored and bore the army, organized it and equipped it, gave his nights and days for it, even though in effect all he did was tanning. The statesman loves the army no less than the demagogue, but he also sees its faults and failings and endeavors to correct them.

When the nation is attacked the demagogue claims that he is so crucial for the nation that it is more important for him to deal with party politics than to participate in the war as a soldier. As a functionary he obtains a release from military service, and when the war is ended and the army is victorious he boasts ceaselessly: "We fought and we won." The statesman approaches the organization of the war with fear and trembling. He knows what war is.

Y. Bader (Herut): He wears a uniform.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: He knows that it is death and destruction, and he mobilizes the maximum forces, and consequently does many things which are unpopular, and after victory he is not satisfied because he knows that there are greater forces in the world and the nation must not be allowed to develop a sense of arrogance; he knows

that in certain circumstances arrogance can be the nation's downfall. He also knows that there were defeats as well as victories....He knows that the next war will not be like the previous one, and that it will demand greater forces and more sacrifices. That is why the statesman does everything possible to prevent war....

These two types did not exist solely in ancient Greece. We have seen them within the Jewish people too; we saw them dozens of years ago, before the establishment of the state, and when the state was founded, and I fear that we will see them still for many years to come. This debate is between the easy way of empty boastfulness and the difficult path of those who act and bear the burden.

If I had to sum up our path...I would say that both before the founding of the state and afterwards it is the constant accumulation of independent Jewish strength in every way—economic, political, moral, military—not by making maximalist pronouncements but by establishing ties, making pioneering efforts, demanding serious efforts of ourselves and being prepared to accept the most difficult and dangerous tasks. It is not surprising that one does not find the demagogue type on the borders or in the Negev....

Our course...is that as long as there is a serious chance of an attack upon us by our neighbors defense needs have top priority. This means that both internal affairs and foreign policy have to serve that end. Defense needs are not only the army, although that is the cornerstone, but it is settling the borders and the desolate areas, helping immigrants and endeavoring to attain economic independence....

That has been the Government's path. And if you ask whether during the last eight years the army has grown or waned in strength, border settlements have increased or decreased in number, the desert has become more or less fertile, industry which is militarily and economically crucial has expanded or not, you only have to look around you to find the answer. We have no intention of competing with anyone when it comes to grand declamations and hot air.

...We never have—nor will we ever—initiate war against anyone. That is the Government's avowed policy, on which we will stand or fall....Anyone who says, as certain Knesset Members have done, that we should fight Jordan, fails to realize that this would mean fighting the British army....There is a military pact between Britain and Jordan, and Britain maintains forces there. I know...that the IDF is strong... but on no account...will I take it upon myself to send it against a European or American, Russian, British or French army....If the British were to attempt to impose something upon us by force I would not hesitate to fight them, even though we would be sure to fail. A nation which is not prepared to defend itself when attacked—no matter by whom—has no right to exist....But we will never initiate a war which could involve the

British, Russian or American army!...This is not my only reason for opposing the idea of starting a war, but it is enough for now....

...The clashes which began before the establishment of the state, on 30 November 1947...were not yet war but they were serious and we knew very well where they could lead. As the person responsible for defense, I did everything...to prevent getting involved in fighting with the British army, and we succeeded....The British had not yet left the country, and in every encounter we endeavored to hit only the Arab gangs. We were helped to a great extent by the fact that the British army, which numbered over seventy-five thousand men at the time, remained on the sidelines when we liberated Haifa, Tiberias, Safed and Jaffa. Our caution in refraining from fighting the British army stood us in good stead, and...I will not sanction taking an initiative which could, heaven forbid, place the IDF up against an American or European or Asiatic army which is not from this region. Like each one of you, I helped to establish Israel. I will not help to destroy it!

A preventive war is madness. For those of you for whom war is not merely a demagogic declamation it is madness....I will not hesitate to mobilize all the strength of the IDF against anyone who attacks us...and I have no doubt as to what the outcome will be, although we will have to pay a high price. I know the price we paid in the War of Independence; it was not small, and had we not been attacked I would not have gone to war then either, because we need our sons and daughters alive and productive. I do not want us to have bereaved families....We will not hesitate to fight back if attacked, but we will not permit military escapades based on illusory speculations and questionable patriotism.

I know that there are loyal patriots who quote the Bible to support their claims. I must confess...that I have a great weakness for that book. I believe that the inspiration of the Bible kept us alive, brought us back here to Israel and established the state. I have drawn all my human and Jewish values from the Bible. I learned science elsewhere, but I got values from the Bible, and they are sufficient for me. In no other book have I found values which are greater or higher, whether human or Jewish. That is why when people quote the Bible at me, I listen. But just as there are quotations justifying war, there are others praising peace....

This Government has stated that it is ready, as before, to maintain the Armistice Agreements in full...but this must also apply to the other side. And this was no empty declaration. When the Secretary-General of the U.N. visited Israel recently...we reiterated our position....We want our borders to be quiet, our settlements to be safe...but the other side does not accept that....Egypt...has never observed the Armistice Agreement in full; it threatens us with war and besieges us on land and at sea....Only if every clause of the Armistice Agreement is observed, we told the Secretary-General, will we withdraw from Nitzana....This

will continue to be our policy....We will keep the agreements provided the others do. If they do not, we will not....

I want you all to know that this may place us in a difficult position even though it is logical and honest. The world has not yet accepted the fact that the rules of honesty and logic apply to the Jews and the State of Israel just as much as they do to other countries. We may have to struggle for it...but it is our policy....

...We also told the Secretary-General of the U.N. that if the borders are opened to terrorists and murderers they will not be closed to defenders....There are some among us who claim that we should not fight back if we are attacked...but it is our sacred duty to defend ourselves, and it is also inscribed in the U.N. Charter....The Report of the U.N. Secretary-General denies our right to defend ourselves or to...punish those who would undermine our economy and security after having failed to defeat us in war....

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the U.N. Secretary-General for his success, at least for the moment, in getting all our neighbors to commit themselves anew to maintaining a complete cease-fire and preventing infiltrations across the border....I do not see much point in discussing the strange behavior of the Great Powers, who succumbed to the verbal terrorism of Syria and its allies and removed the clause from the resolution which had originally been formulated by the U.S.S.R. as its own policy and which stated that the dispute between Israel and the Arab countries should be settled by the parties concerned....I think that this has harmed the Security Council's moral standing and integrity....As citizens of the world we regret any reduction of the U.N.'s standing...while as a Jew and an Israeli I do not care either way, since it is what we do here which will decide matters....

We will brook no interference with our sovereignty, our security and our borders from any quarter. No settlement will be made in this country without our agreement. We will not agree to anything which will impair our integrity.

We must be prepared for the fact that attempts will be made by the Powers to dictate solutions to us which are undesirable and unjust. We will need to muster all our courage and our strength in order to say no....I do not share the view that we are completely isolated. I know that we have many good friends in America, Europe, Asia and Australia. But we cannot rest on our laurels, for we have many enemies...and we must do all we can to gain new friends in the world, both in those continents and in Africa.

Our main efforts, however...must go towards constantly strengthening and building the country and our internal independence. That is the focal point of our foreign policy, our defense policy, and all our policies. We must reinforce ourselves morally, economically, and militarily, because it is only by our own strength that we will be able to with-

stand the tests that await us....That is the only path open to us; I believe that it is the one we have taken in the past and the one we must take in the future....

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote on Herut's resolution: "The Herut movement...proposes that, with the resignation of the Foreign Minister, the entire Government should resign."

The Vote

Those in favor	20
Those against	65
Abstentions	6

(The resolution is defeated.)

Diplomatic Relations with West Germany

Introduction

When German reparations were being discussed some years earlier, Government representatives had assured the Knesset that diplomatic relations between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany were out of the question. When Chancellor Adenauer indicated that they were being contemplated the Herut party group brought the matter once more to the attention of the Knesset, eliciting the reply from the Foreign Minister that no decision had been made on the matter.

Sitting 146 of the Third Knesset

2 July 1956 (23 Tammuz 5716)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I give the floor to Knesset Member Ben-Eliezer for a motion for the agenda.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): A few weeks ago, when the Chancellor of the nation of murderers visited the U.S., he announced...that negotiations were being conducted to establish diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel....We heard no official denial from any Government body in Israel.

The Chancellor of the nation of murderers apparently thinks that after four years of reparations and "compensation" he can expect forgiveness from the Jewish people and even oblige Israel to have diplomatic relations, because the blood money has been paid....

If that statement by the Chancellor of the nation of murderers is not true, I invite the Government's representative to say so openly from this podium....In the debate on reparations four years ago the House was united on one issue: on no account to forgive the nation of murderers or establish diplomatic relations with it....Even those who favored reparations rejected diplomatic relations and recognition....

If the Government representative is to be the Foreign Minister, I invite her to repeat the statement she made then, when she was Minister of Labor: "We will sit with the representatives of Germany but not for peace, not in friendship, not to forgive and forget. The Jewish people can never forget that, there cannot be one Jew who will forget." She also said then: "We will speak to them as victors to the vanquished." But if there are diplomatic relations there can be no relations as between victor and

vanquished, the relations will be those of equals, and murderers and victims will sit down together.

I also invite the then Minister of Labor to repeat what she said then: "For me there is only one law regarding the German nation, both in the West and in the East, it is guilty; there may be exceptional individuals who were innocent, but I do not yet have any intention of looking for them."...I ask the Foreign Minister: Have we started looking for the just men among them in the last four years? Did we find any?...

The then Prime Minister said: "Let not those who murdered our people inherit them too." Even if there is anyone in this House who thinks that the inheritors returned even a fraction of what they stole from those they murdered, have they ceased to be murderers by returning what they stole?

I could quote from speeches made by other Knesset Members—who are Ministers today whether they approved of reparations then or not—how they condemned the very idea of ever discussing diplomatic relations with the murderers. After all, diplomatic relations are only the official expression of a desire for friendship, peace and good relations in...various spheres between nations.

I do not imagine that anyone in this House has changed his mind since then...is prepared to say that the wound has healed and that we are ready to forgive and forget or to establish diplomatic relations....

At the conclusion of the debate on reparations the then Foreign Minister said, in order to make it clear that the acceptance of reparations did not constitute forgiveness: "The Government remains steadfast in its view that the responsibility for the destruction of European Jewry falls on the whole German nation. The Government sees no convincing indications that anti-Semitism has been eradicated from among the German nation, whether in the West or the East, since the war." Does the Government see convincing indications that the German nation is no longer the murderous nation which killed more than one-third of our people? What indications are you waiting for?...

I admit...that my colleagues and I failed in our attempt to prevent that terrible development which brought about the penetration of our country by German uncleanness, which led to friendship between Israel's representatives in Germany and the German murderers, which led to smiles from Israel's representatives at German parties on contaminated German soil, which led to standing at attention and removing hats when the German flag was raised and the German anthem played, which even led to the return to Germany of many Israelis. A branch of the Zionist Organization has even been established there. I admit that we failed in that. But that does not mean that our fight was not just. It was just then, and still is today. The fact that we failed does not mean that we will not endeavor to do everything, with the help of the Knesset, by virtue of the will of the people, to prevent this recognition of

the nation of murderers, in order to prevent diplomatic relations between us and them.

Mr. Speaker, that official statement was made on behalf of the Prime Minister of Germany. There has been no denial or rebuttal by the Israeli Government....If the issue of reparations required the decision of the Knesset...the recognition of that murderous country and the establishment of diplomatic relations with it certainly requires that the Government bring the matter before the Knesset. I therefore ask that it be placed on the Knesset's agenda.

The Foreign Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, there can be no question of the emotions of a single Jew anywhere in the world when it concerns this political problem. How, then, can someone in the Knesset or anywhere else think that what he feels other Jews don't feel? Why should MK Ben-Eliezer speak about representatives of Israel who are doing their work in connection with the reparations, and to the best of my knowledge are doing us credit? Why should MK Ben-Eliezer list all the arguments against negotiating to establish diplomatic relations before he has asked and received a simple answer?

The State of Israel does not hold itself responsible for the statements made by the heads of other states. I can say quite simply and decidedly that there has been no decision by the Government of Israel to establish diplomatic relations with East or West Germany....The entire construction which MK Ben-Eliezer built was in vain. He should at least have asked, received an answer and then decided whether there was a point in what he said! At present there is no reason for the assumption, for the accusation, for splitting the nation or the Knesset into those who remember and those who do not. I do not know a single Jew, and not only Jews, but a single normal person, who can forget what was done to the Jewish people; and there is no need nor justification to divide the Jewish nation into those who still feel the pain and those who have managed to dull it....

If, from time to time, German people who come into contact with Israelis raise that question, that does not commit the State of Israel. MK Ben-Eliezer said that since a decision was made on reparations and there is contact with West Germany on that issue, one can already start speaking about diplomatic relations. There is no power in the world which can oblige the State of Israel to have diplomatic relations or any kind of connection with any country. Only the nation itself can approve or reject that, only the Knesset can, and no outside force. There is no danger that Israel will be forced to have diplomatic relations.

Thus, my view is that in this respect we can certainly remove the subject from the agenda. I will not oppose it coming before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee for a fuller review....

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Do the proposers agree to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee?

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): I request a debate in the plenum.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: There are two proposals, then. I give the floor to MK Wilenska, for a proposal.

E. Wilenska (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we propose that the subject be transferred to the Committee for discussion. We think that the whole nation is united in not being prepared to forget the crimes the Nazis committed against us and other nations....

Together with a large section of the population, we opposed the reparations agreement, which was intended to give a moral imprimatur to Adenauer's policy of reviving the Nazi Wehrmacht. The Government approved of the policy of the West German Prime Minister...who has continued with a policy which enables Nazis in West Germany to incite to anti-Semitism and racism. Even the right-wing press of France described Adenauer as "the last soldier of the Cold War in Europe."

The Herut party group, which raised the proposal here and spoke out against establishing ties with Adenauer, supports Adenauer's patron, Dulles, and his policy, which finances the establishment of the Nazi Wehrmacht in West Germany.

Since the Government's position on this issue is connected with its general foreign policy, which till now has been one of dependence on the U.S. and support for Adenauer's policy, we propose that all these issues be discussed in Committee, so that the question of changing the policy of dependence on the U.S. and adopting a neutral, independent policy can be discussed first....

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: There are two proposals: one, that we debate the subject in the plenum, the other that we transfer it to the Committee.

M. Begin (Herut): There is also the Foreign Minister's proposal: to remove the subject from the agenda.

The Foreign Minister, G. Meir: I said that the Government will not oppose transferring the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I will now put the two proposals to a combined vote.

The Vote

Those in favor of a debate in the plenum	7
Those in favor of transferring the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee	43

(The proposal to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

Foreign Policy and Defense (Pre-Sinai Campaign)

Introduction

The nationalization of the Suez Canal by President Nasser of Egypt and the failure of subsequent international attempts to devise a regime for the Canal which would also be acceptable to the original owners and the Canal users brought about a drastic change in the Middle East situation, entailing a conflict between Nasser and powers outside the region. Already beforehand, the government of France had regarded Egypt as one of the main stumbling blocks in Algeria, whose rebels it supported. Against this background, a far-reaching rapprochement took place between France and Israel, its first fruits consisting of secret shipments of French arms to Israel. After many months of an anxious, almost desperate, search for sources of arms to offset the growing quantities reaching the Arab countries from both West and East, a generous, capable France came to Israel's aid.

In an uncharacteristic ploy, in order to maintain secrecy, on the one hand, and share the good news with the Knesset and the nation, on the other, Ben-Gurion resorted to quoting a long poem about the arrival of arms in which the tense—whether past or future—has been left deliberately vague, though a perusal of the debate makes it clear that the arms had already been unloaded in Israel.

Great Britain is still regarded as hostile to Israel. Iraqi forces in Jordan are considered to be a major threat, and from the debate it is hard to predict that within less than two weeks, French, British and Israeli forces would take up arms against Egypt "in collusion."

Sitting 169 of the Third Knesset

15 October 1956 (10 Heshvan 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, before anything else, I bow my head in sorrow, love and admiration for our soldiers who fell in recent weeks in the defense of our country while proving to our enemies that Jewish blood is not lightly shed in our own country. I extend my deepest condolences to all the bereaved parents and families of those brave men. There is no consolation or compensation for your tragic loss. The memory of your beloved and sacred sons will be enshrined in the history of our people as a symbol of devotion, heroism and brotherly love. (The Knesset stands in memory of the fallen.)

Knesset Members...last year was a crucial one as regards the security and international status of the Middle East. It began with the Czech deal, which sent massive amounts of arms...from the Soviet Bloc to Egypt, and ended with the Suez Canal crisis. The U.S.S.R. claims that all this was done for the sole purpose of enhancing peace in the region. The actual outcome was, however, that tension in the Middle East and the whole world, and especially the threat to Israel, has increased. The Egyptian tyrant, like the other Arab rulers, has never stopped the frantic preparations for a second round against us, although where the foreign press and the U.N. is concerned he pretends to seek peace....

The bloody clashes on the borders have increased in the wake of the recruitment of murderous gangs—known as *fedayeen*—by the Egyptian government and their establishment in all the Arab countries, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the Hashemite Kingdom. These gangs cross our borders, sometimes penetrating quite deep into Israel, and kill innocent civilians as they work in the fields, women and children in their homes, and anyone who crosses their path....

...The Government's position has been and remains...that we must preserve peace—even this unstable peace of ours—as long as we can, while at the same time...increasing our military strength....The Egyptian ruler has stated quite openly that his object is to destroy Israel, and that his quarrel is not only with us but with "international Jewry and Jewish capital," formulae which we remember from Hitler....The Opposition has advocated that we initiate a war with the fascist tyrant in Cairo before the Egyptian army manages to absorb the large quantities of weapons it has received from the Soviet Bloc. My colleagues in the Government and myself disagree with that approach. We are in favor of self-defense, and if we are attacked we will fight with all our strength until the end, that is, until we are victorious. But we know how terrible war is...and do not think that it can solve all history's problems, at least not permanently....

In view of the growing Egyptian threat, we regard it as our duty to make a concerted effort to reinforce the IDF and increase its deterrent power. And also to preserve peace—inasmuch as this depends on us. We value peace because we value human life. Allow me to make a brief personal confession: on two fateful occasions I did not share in the nation's joy, although there have been few occasions in our history which were as rightfully joyous as those two.

The first occasion was on...14 May 1948, after I had proclaimed the renewal of the State of Israel....I heard the sound of the nation's rejoicing in the streets of Tel Aviv, and imagined to myself the rejoicing of the Jewish people throughout the diaspora. My joy was mingled with sadness, because I knew what awaited us in the days to come, although I had been expecting such times ever since the end of the war in Europe. After the historic ceremony at the Museum ended I hurried to the head-

quarters of the Hagana—it was not yet the IDF then—and was informed of the movement of troops from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon to the newly-born Israel.

The second occasion was at the end of the fighting in January 1949, when our young army had defeated all the Arab armies. I was not among those who gloried in this great victory, because I knew that it was not a final one, that a difficult struggle or struggles still awaited us. I did not suppose that our neighbors would accept their defeat lightly, nor did I pin great hopes on the U.N.'s ability to keep the peace in the region....I knew that it was not the fine principles of the U.N. Charter which would determine matters but opposing interests and the policy of power....Furthermore, even on the day of victory I could not forget...the heavy price we had paid it. More than five thousand of our dear sons and daughters had perished, and thousands of bereaved parents had been deprived of their dear ones forever....Since then, I have always thought of war in human as well as in political terms, and I am not ashamed to say this, because of my fierce and deep love for the young people whose lives will be endangered in war, as well as because of my anxiety for the mothers and fathers, wives and children, who might lose their dear ones.

We do not want people to be killed, from whatever nation, and if we have managed to avoid that disaster till now, during this year of anxiety, I do not know how history will judge us, but I am pleased that we have prevented war so far. Instead of war, whose losses are certain and whose historical value is questionable...we have tried to increase the defensive strength of the IDF. It has not been easy and we have not achieved all we wanted, but we acted in accordance with the dictate of our conscience....

The Members of the Knesset are doubtless aware of the fact that weapons are not easily bought....We knocked on many doors and found them closed. Britain, which sold heavy tanks to the Egyptian ruler, adamantly refused to sell arms to Israel....The U.S., to which we owe a debt of gratitude for its political and financial aid to our state, encouraged its European allies to sell us arms....This is not enough, however, and we will continue to demand defensive weapons from the U.S....We are extremely grateful to France, which was the first to supply us with 24 new Mystere 4 jet planes, and has recently been followed by Canada and Britain, which have also sold us planes. We have also purchased other kinds of arms from various countries.

I will not describe our efforts to equip the IDF with the necessary minimum, because this undertaking has not yet been completed. We have undergone many months of anxious expectancy, as well as times of great joy. I would like to share one of the experiences with you as it was penned by one of our most able poets, Nathan A...whose work de-

serves to be recorded permanently in the *Knesset Record*, as an enduring treasure of the state and the IDF.

Long will it still be told in fear and wonder,
In the annals of the nation between the seas,
Entrenched in its first and last and only land,
As an Israeli rock in an Arab sea,
How a horde of enemies only yesterday defeated,
Back to its lair on its belly retreated,
Re-emerged brandishing new, unknown weapons,
Ready to attack with all its might and venom.
Long will it still be told in fear and wonder,
How in fields and markets daily life continued,
With all its myriad scenes and sundry sounds.
While from within it, through every shout and whisper,
From the very core of its innermost being,
Through the talking and the singing, the quarreling and laughing,
One request arose: Weapons, both offensive and defensive!
Quickly, straightaway, while there's still time!

When the time comes, and peace reigns in the land,
When the East is quiet, someone might then ask out loud:
When—after 1948—did the Jews decide once again
To break the ring surrounding them?
Then some will answer one way and others another,
While a few will suddenly recall a rolling beach,
The sound of the sea and a few shadowy figures
Moving silently beneath an autumn moon.

That night may once have been, or is to come,
'Tis a night that is unknown as yet.
But the time will come when it will be known.
We'll have a date, which may be the threshold
Beyond which lies peace and prosperity.
A simple, sandy night, as yet unnamed,
But anyone who beheld it then will say:
I saw the night when history was changed.

That night may once have been, or is a dream,
A dream of metal, in quantities and new,
Its barrels long extending,
On steel chains thundering.
From afar it comes, upon the beach it climbs,
And imagination becomes real,
The instant, the moment it touches the ground

It turns into the power of Jewish steel.
That night may once have been, or is to come,
The wheel of time yet once again may turn,
And on that night, how wonderful its name,
All kinds of weapons pass by in parade.
And when each one so eagerly is grasped,
As if mirage or vision is embraced,
Its strength increases ten-fold in intensity
Because it has felt the touch of necessity!

And as each and every weapon,
Into the darkness disappears,
It changes the scenery around it,
In a way that cannot be ignored.
And soon another stretch of Jewish land,
Formerly as desolate as the desert sand,
Changes rapidly and in a trice becomes
As productive and fertile as it was once.

And if that night once was or is a dream—
Let's just suppose that this was really so—
Let each and every Jew, whether woman or man,
Here or in exile, be aware of the fact
That the dream of such a night is real,
More real than the things they do and feel,
And that it seals their very fate
And determines their actions each day.

It witnesses, whether dreaming or awake,
That the watchman shall neither slumber nor sleep,
While soldiers carrying loads,
Bare-chested, unrestrained,
Bear salvation on bent backs,
And all the while the engines
Noisily follow one another,
Sealing our fate for life and power.
That night once was or yet will be,
'Tis no illusion, either way.
'Tis an unknown night, a festive night,
Which will be remembered for all time.
Happy is the nation whose fate this is...
Whose defects are apparent to both enemy and friend,
While its finest, boldest labors
Are still concealed, obscured by darkness.
That night may be a dream, but waking and in fact

It dispels the fear of the disparity
Between us and the power of destructiveness,
Of iron approaching and the earth trembling,
Let all in Israel know
That by night it absorbs life- and fire-power...
Let Israel's body know it...
And let steel swell its spirit...

Let Israel's nation know it,
And see what matters as well as what does not,
And why, willy nilly, it must muster
All its moral and physical strength.
Let the enemy behind us also know,
For nights like these, as shadows passing by,
May yet darken his day
If he dares to strike a blow.

Perhaps that night once was. Or yet will be.
With the dimness of sand and sea,
The shriek of metal, voices whispered low,
The salt sea breeze, and also
The sense of a great turning point
As well as of wonderment.
If the nation only knew how much it owed forever
To the few who undertook this great endeavor.

That is what the poet wrote. In my poor prose I will only say that there has been a substantial improvement in the IDF's capacity, though I should note with concern that Egypt alone still has a tremendous advantage in fire-power on land, in the air and at sea. It has destroyers and submarines, it has heavy tanks—British, Czech and Soviet—it has more and better jet planes and bombers than we have. And we must not forget that the other Arab countries are also armed to the teeth. But we are not as lacking in weapons as we were at the beginning of the year....The IDF is strong not because it has better weapons than its enemies...or because it has strong allies...but because there is no limit to the devotion to the defense of the country of its soldiers, sailors and airmen....

...Although I am confident that in any clash with Egypt or the other Arab countries we will emerge victorious...we wish to avoid war and ensure our rights, status and security. The only way to do this is if our friends and those who really seek peace give us sufficient defensive weapons of superior quality to deter the enemy from fighting us or encroaching upon our rights...We do not yet have sufficient and adequate arms...and that is why we are still asking for them first and foremost from the U.S., which does not want war in the Middle East and desires

the good of both Israel and the Arab countries....The Arab rulers do not have the same sense of the value of human life as we do, and...the huge quantities of arms in their possession could cause them to act irrationally, especially since they constantly proclaim that they intend to destroy Israel.

...Every intelligent politician throughout the world knows that any explosion in the Middle East could set off a dangerous worldwide conflagration...and it is out of a sense of responsibility for world peace that I say that all those who continue to send offensive weapons to the Arab countries, who openly state their intention of destroying Israel, and all those who deprive Israel of defensive weapons, bear a heavy burden of responsibility for peace in the region and the whole world....The leaders of the U.S.S.R. repeat their desire for world peace almost daily...but the tanks, planes, bombers, cannon, submarines and destroyers they send the Egyptian tyrant can't hear; while the Egyptian soldiers who are to man and use these weapons hear their commanders and leaders make very different statements daily....

Even the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, told the British parliament a few weeks ago that the Egyptian tyrant's next step would be to make war on Israel. As in previous years, the prime concern of Israel's Government will be to preserve peace as far as is possible and to increase the IDF's ability to maintain our security. As well as the constant threat of a war of annihilation, we are also confronted with incessant guerrilla warfare...mainly from Egypt and Jordan, by armed gangs, or *fedayeen*, who cross our borders and kill any human being they encounter...and are encouraged in this by the governments of those Arab countries....

...In 1954 and 1955 Egypt caused us 242 dead and wounded in this way. In April of this year the Secretary-General of the U.N., Mr. Hammarskjold, came to Israel in an attempt to arrange a ceasefire on our borders, even if the other sections of the Armistice Agreements were not kept. Israel was prepared to keep the Armistice Agreements in full, provided there was mutuality....

The first to infringe the renewed assurance were Egypt and Jordan...initiating murderous attacks on Israeli citizens in the Negev...and near Kfar Saba...in South Jerusalem...and near Afula...in the environs of Jerusalem...and on the road to Eilat...near Um el Fahm...and at Ramat Rachel, where four archaeologists were killed. A Yemenite woman gathering olives was murdered in Aminadav, a tractor driver was killed at Ma'oz Haim...five Israelis were killed near Sedom...and two Israeli laborers were murdered by the Jordanians near Even Yehuda.

After the recent attacks from Egypt and Jordan we...asked the U.N. representatives to...help put an end to them....I do not accuse the U.N. representatives of ill will, but it is evident that they are incapable of

compelling our neighbors to keep their word. The chain of murders continued. We had no choice but to take action to defend ourselves....This was, rather, our national duty....

...In accordance with the U.N. Charter, every member of the organization has the right to defend itself....Nevertheless, certain U.N. representatives deny Israel that right...calling our defensive actions "acts of retaliation."...Israel is, I believe, the only country in the world whose citizens are unsafe because the rulers of the neighboring countries send bands of murderers against them. I don't think that any country in the world would accept this state of affairs....We will not let them "penetrate deep into Israel and make the lives of its citizens hell," as they boast....

The Jordanian ruler, who released the murderers of Israeli Druse citizens and whose soldiers killed archaeologists in Jerusalem and workers at the Dead Sea, should know that those lives were precious and those responsible for their murder will not be let off lightly. We will not be denied the right to defend ourselves as long as the U.N. is unable to stop these murders....

Regrettably, this is not our only disagreement with the U.N. For some time that organization has tended to regard the Armistice Agreements between us and our neighbors as a one-sided commitment by Israel to the U.N...ignoring their violation by Jordan, Egypt and Syria....Jordan has always ignored clause 8 of the agreements giving us freedom of access to the holy places...and the U.N. has done nothing to enforce it....That same clause allows Israel access to the Hebrew University buildings on Mount Scopus...the cemetery on the Mount of Olives and the use of the Latrun-Jerusalem road. All these commitments have been disregarded...and the U.N. has done nothing....

Perhaps the U.N. should not be blamed for being unable to prevent the murderous attacks from Jordan and Egypt and ensure that the Armistice Agreements are observed. The Security Council's failure to implement the 1951 resolution concerning the freedom of navigation...reflected the U.N.'s negligence...as well as its unevenhanded treatment of Israel and the Arab countries....

The U.N. was established on the principles of peace and justice, which are no less dear to us than to anyone else. It is our right and duty to ensure, as far as we can, that these principles apply to us as much as to the other members of the U.N. But it cannot be assumed that Israel will accept unevenhanded treatment with equanimity....

The U.N. Charter...also requires the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We have proposed meetings with Arab rulers in order to achieve this...but our call has gone unanswered. We protested against the economic boycott organized by the Arabs in order to undermine our economy—something which is forbidden by the Charter....

Israel has always sought to maintain the Armistice Agreements in full, and even to establish relations of peace and cooperation with all its neighbors, in accordance with the U.N. Charter, on a basis of equality and mutuality. We have not witnessed any effort by the U.N. to induce our neighbors to adhere to these principles....

Knesset Members, we have made a desperate effort to maintain peace, however precarious, this year...and we are always ready to aid any attempt to establish lasting peace...The British proposal, in the wake of the Iraqi ruler's statement that a settlement should be based on the 1947 Partition Plan, is not a step towards peace, however. It is a covert attack on the integrity of our borders....We have not taken an inch of the territory of Egypt, Syria or Lebanon, and they shall not have an inch of ours. Egypt still retains the Gaza Strip, which does not belong to it, and the Hashemite government conquered parts of Western Palestine illegally....We have declared our readiness to make minor border adjustments, on a mutual basis....But Israel will not be fragmented, and that proposal may have been made merely to distract world attention from the Suez problem....

The Suez problem which has currently gained world attention is nothing new for Israel....The U.N.'s helplessness regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal has been evident for several years...at least as far as Israel is concerned.

...When the Egyptian tyrant suddenly decided to seize the Suez Canal from the international company, and several countries saw that their basic interests were damaged, England invited various countries to London to discuss the matter but..."forgot" to invite Israel, the only country which had been harmed for several years by the Egyptian tyrant's disregard of international law and the decisions of the U.N. And when the U.S.S.R. suggested adding various countries to the list of invitees, including some, like Jordan, which had no contact with the Canal, it also "forgot" to add Israel's name to the list.

Israel was not particularly disturbed by the change of ownership of the Suez Canal because its international rights there had also been disregarded by the previous masters, and no international body had done anything about it....The Security Council session called to discuss the Suez problem ended two days ago with six resolutions which say hardly anything since the U.S.S.R. vetoed the proposal of the Western countries....It need not be expected that the Egyptian tyrant will pay them any more heed than he has other international agreements in the past....It is our duty to state from this podium that Israel will not accept any discrimination in its sovereign and international rights, and the continuation of the arbitrary blockade of Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea by the Egyptian tyrant will undermine peace in the Middle East. International peace and justice are indivisible....The

Egyptian tyrant is endangering peace in the region by disregarding international justice.

The situation in the Middle East is further complicated by the Anglo-Iraqi plan to station Iraqi troops in Jordan. In April 1949 we signed an Armistice Agreement with Jordan. Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which also invaded Israel in 1948, refused to sign any agreement with us and continue to maintain a state of war with Israel. The entry of the Iraqi army into Jordan undermines the Armistice Agreement we signed with Jordan.

We have known for some time that the Egyptian tyrant has far-reaching ambitions to control all the Arab countries...and the first victim of his design will be Jordan. In the "good old days," when the relations between Britain and Egypt were good, the Egyptian tyrant thought that with England's help or agreement he would be able to obtain part of Israel's Negev in order to build a land bridge between Egypt and Jordan. Ever since the Egyptian tyrant revealed his imperialist intentions regarding the countries of the Middle East, which trend is supported by external forces hostile to Britain, the plan to annex Jordan to Iraq has apparently been revived. The entry into Jordan of troops belonging to a country which does not have even an armistice agreement with Israel...undermines the status quo in the region...Israel maintains the status quo based on the Armistice Agreement with the Hashemite kingdom, but this is dependant upon its not being violated by another, hostile government, and Israel reserves for itself the right to act should the status quo be upset and foreign troops move into Jordan.

In accordance with the guidelines approved by the Knesset, the Government of Israel will continue to develop relations of friendship and mutual aid with all peace-loving countries, regardless of their internal regime and without damaging the interests of other countries. It will endeavor to establish friendly relations with the countries of Asia, strengthen its ties with countries where there are Jewish communities and reinforce its links with all those countries which aid Israel's defense and development and enable their Jewish communities to participate in building Israel and to immigrate to it.

In accordance with those guidelines the Government has taken a series of steps to strengthen its ties with several countries....We tend to claim that we are isolated, but that is only half the truth....By our very character and history we are one of the most isolated countries in the world, but in another sense Israel has no fewer friends than other countries....We also benefit to a considerable extent from international financial and material aid, as is exemplified by the loans and grants we have received from the U.S....

Some countries acquire friends easily because they are rich and powerful...or because they share a common language or religion...or even a common enemy. Israel has none of these things...so how can we

acquire friends? One factor is the Jewish diaspora, which in some, though not all, countries serves as a link with Israel. This is not the case, of course, with the countries of Asia and Central Africa, where there are very few Jews, if any. There are small Jewish communities in the Scandinavian countries, but they are assimilating at an alarming rate and do not constitute an element of any influence, so that the attitude to Israel of the Scandinavian countries is determined by the matter in hand...

...Our enemies—the Arab countries—are eagerly courted by almost all the Great Powers, some of which evince hostility to Israel solely for this reason....The firm basis upon which we may acquire friends and allies can only be...the illumination of our creative and liberating enterprise, the fact that we are an example for other nations, and our ability to help backward countries through scientific, cultural and technical aid without any fear that we seek to take control.

...We have always regarded the establishment of the state as a process involving redemption, creativity and peace, as well as the ingathering of the exiles, the imparting of our ancient cultural and moral values and the dissemination of the scientific innovations of this day and age. We see ourselves as a nation which stands on its own feet and cooperates on a basis of equality and universal partnership in the efforts of mankind to ascend to greater cultural and material heights and to achieve freedom and equality, as human beings formed, regardless of nationality, color, creed or sex, in God's image.

That is the messianic vision which beat for thousands of years in the heart of the Jewish people; it is my deep belief that it is that which has brought us thus far, and only if we remain faithful to it all our lives will our historical mission be truly fulfilled.

Our grave worries concerning security...which are foremost among our considerations just now, must not distract us for a moment from the vital missions which constitute the essence of our messianic vision. The cultivation of the country and the blossoming of the desert, absorbing and integrating immigrants, developing science, learning and scholarship, educating and training the younger generation for pioneering work, increasing productivity, working steadfastly for economic independence...the removal of ethnic barriers and the unification of the nation, increasing the birthrate and raising health standards, eliminating the slum neighborhoods and teaching the Hebrew language and minimal cultural and economic standards to the whole nation, establishing a regime of social justice and civil liberty—all these are our daily bread, they are needed of themselves and they also strengthen our security and and maintain the State of Israel.

We must not only maintain it but also make it a lodestone for all Jews, and this is possible if we all arm ourselves with good will and bear the burden of the state with love, if we help our brethren who are re-

turning to us from the various dispersions, if we work assiduously and manage our economy efficiently and well, if we do our duty faithfully, each one in accordance with his abilities and means, if we put the public good above our personal benefit, if we treat one another with respect and trust, if we dare regard the difficulties and dangers confronting us honestly and fortify our resolve to overcome them together and, above all, if we are infused with a love for our fellow-Jew...equal to that of our dear sons and daughters, who risk their lives to defend us, our borders and our independence on nights of anxiety, heroism and dedication.

We desire and are entitled to act, work and create in our homeland in peace and security, because we seek peace. But we must not ignore worrying developments in the region, whether the machinations of the Egyptian tyrant, the plotting of the Iraqi government or negative influences from outside the region. We must be on our guard with open eyes, good will, farsightedness, resoluteness and increased military strength. We are required to make a supreme security effort; it has been imposed upon us by outside factors and hostile forces. We may be confronting fateful decisions and events. If we stand ready and united the Rock of Israel will not abandon us.

...
M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, no peace, no armistice, no ceasefire, no status quo. A bloody war which kills people, an ever-increasing war of survival, is being waged between Israel and its enemies....That is the situation....We are still being forced to defend our very existence....If we recognize our historic right to the land of our fathers and our human right to defend ourselves...we will endure....At this time...all the warmth of our hearts and the love of our souls is given to our children, the heroic Israeli soldiers, to the mothers and fathers who fear for the fate of their children and to the bereaved families who mourn their loved ones...

What is legal self-defense?...Disastrously for us, the Government has placed that sacred concept between the Scylla of counter-killing and the Charybdis of counter-destruction, thereby harming the nation morally, politically and militarily. The Government owes us an explanation...as to why the killing of fifty Arabs who cannot be proved to have attacked Ramat Rachel is legal self-defense, while the liberation of the homeland occupied by the foreign ruler from which the murderers came and will come constitutes aggression....

...The Government defines its actions as "defensive," while the entire world defines them as "retaliatory."...The Government has suddenly become sensitive to semantics....I recall that last year official Government spokesmen bandied about the terms "preventive war" and "initiated war." We warned of the danger in misusing those misnomers in our situation. If two nations live in peace and one fears that the other will attack it, it attacks first....But is that our situation? Are we

at peace with our enemies?...Our neighbors say that they are at war with us and perpetrate acts of aggression against us...imposing a blockade on our shipping and murdering men, women and children.

...In the twentieth century one no longer declares war, one simply attacks....Our position, however, is extremely strange: the enemy declares war, not 24 hours before attacking but an unlimited time in advance....That is what all the Arab rulers have done....A state of war exists. And in these conditions we are told that any military action is preventive or initiated war!...The whole world regards our defensive actions in Hussan and Kalkilya as aggression...and I am prepared to praise the Government for refusing to succumb to the verdict of the world, which would have us refrain from defending ourselves in any way....The logical conclusion from all this is that the world will condemn our liberation of Hebron and Bethlehem, whence the attackers of Mevo Beitar, Ramat Rachel and Jerusalem come...demonstrating that the Government has failed in its efforts to convince the world....

...For years we have said that retaliatory actions cannot end the bloodshed. But the Government stopped its ears to our voice time and again, maintaining that one more action would deter the enemy....You based your theory of retaliation on two false assumptions. The first is that the enemy can be punished. Can nations be punished? Sometimes even individuals cannot be punished, or reformed....Was Germany reformed after its military defeat of 1918?...The second is that the Arabs do not hold human life as dear as we do....This is a regrettable fact, but true....So that if we kill even large numbers of Arabs, that will have no deterrent effect....

We must all ask the Government, where is the policy of retaliation taking us?...One possible answer is that the existing situation will continue: they will kill us and we will kill them; they will destroy our buildings and we will destroy theirs....I believe I am speaking on behalf of all the citizens of Israel if I say...that over the last two weeks the entire nation has been shocked by the terrible news of the deaths of thirty of our best and noblest sons, who fell in just two battles, not for liberation, not for a solution, but merely for retaliation, which does not solve any problems. And tomorrow or the day after a few dozen more will be killed....Is this the way? Is this our future?

There is another possibility, however....Our acts of retaliation could lead to a general conflagration in the region...and that is something we do not want. But you decide that this is the one and only course to be taken, knowing the dangers involved....I appeal to the Government to cease sending our sons into battle in conditions which...favor the enemy, by waiving the overriding advantage of surprise. Do not send our sons into the battlefield and order them to retreat so that the situation may return to what it was before....Do all you can to spare Jewish

blood and tell them: Stay there. It is our homeland. Murderers will not attack Jews from there if Israeli soldiers are there.

...As for our relations with the U.N., for many years we warned against the entrenchment of the U.N. machinery in Israel. Our voice went unheard, as usual. What illusions were based on the Armistice Agreements and the alien supervisory machinery...When the Secretary-General visited us in April he came to the conclusion that the Armistice Agreement had not been observed...and proposed to us and our enemies that we sign a ceasefire. So we did...Meanwhile, the bloodshed has continued, while the U.N. has become a party to the dispute in the region...The Secretary-General's report, further, contends that the Armistice Agreements are tantamount to establishing an international regime in Israel. I would like to ask the members of the Government if they have read the report in full and, if they have, why have they not reacted to that contention?...If they have not read it, what have they been doing?

...There is also the danger that alien Iraqi troops, in addition to the foreign army known as the Arab Legion, will enter the conquered part of Palestine. The Government stated that it was "concerned and surprised" at the British announcement to this effect. "Concern" I can understand, but why "surprise"? Did we not warn you many months ago... that Iraqi troops might enter the eastern and western parts of Trans-jordan?...Whenever we suggested that the time was right to liberate that area of our homeland did you not tell us that this was an unrealistic escapade, and that this would bring us up against the British?...And now we hear that Israel "reserves for itself the right to act" should Iraqi troops enter Jordan. Surely you know that Iraq is still part of the Baghdad Pact, the last vestige of British control in the region. On what basis have you suddenly changed your tune?...What kind of "freedom of action" do you intend? Will you advance into Jordan or will you not?...Do you not realize that the danger of encountering British troops is as great as it ever was?...

...We desire no clash with Britain. But I said two weeks ago in the name of those who sent me, one hundred and seven thousand free Jewish voters...that although Britain still adheres to a policy which is hostile to Israel, at this fateful time it should think about the price it paid for its own treacherous denial of its promise to the Jewish people. If Britain is prepared to change its attitude to us, we will be prepared to change ours to it, looking ahead and not back.

Today, as we confront overt British threats, we must remind England's government that the generation which arose to fight against Britain, and defeated it, still lives. Five hundred of those who fought were killed, twelve were hanged, but thousands are still alive. They have forgotten nothing, they have learned a great deal...We say to the British people: when the abyss opened its bloody maw and swallowed up

millions of our brethren, our mothers and our fathers in Europe, you ignored our cry....But by now you know what it is to fight the Jewish people, who are prepared to make any sacrifice for their cause....We hope that the British people will not repeat the mistakes of the past....

The crucial question today is, however, what Israel's Government will or will not do. If it fails to act, this means that it accepts the tightening of the rope around the nation's neck. If it decides to act—despite all the bitterness in our hearts because of missed opportunities in the past—we will support the Government's action....

The question with regard to the Suez crisis is when to act. The piracy of the Egyptian foe has sealed Israel's two vital marine routes....The Prime Minister has declared Israel's intention of using force to obtain a passage for our shipping in the Suez Canal and the Dead Sea....But when? For three months the Egyptian tyrant has quarreled with half of mankind, and...the Government has said: we are not involved in this dispute....All we want is freedom of navigation for ourselves. We do not care who controls the Suez Canal...Now that dispute is about to end....The U.N. will probably reach a compromise with Nasser.... What will you do—or say—then?...

...If this Government were fair and not one of machinations—I quote the Prime Minister—if the Government were democratic and not based on the division of spoils—I quote the Prime Minister—it would go to the nation today and announce general elections so that the nation could say whether it approved of the Government's policy or not. Since the elections the situation has changed radically—the Czech-Egypt arms deal, the Suez crisis, the movement of the Iraqi army. Any honest government would admit that its course was wrong: it has not put a stop to the bloodshed...it has not ended our enemies' preparations to destroy us, it has not told the nation what it will do tomorrow if the Iraqi army invades. It recites poems by Alterman. Any decent government would return its mandate to the nation....

I know that the Government will not hold elections, however, because it is not a decent Government, it is based on machinations—that is what the Prime Minister said; it is not democratic, it is founded on the division of spoils—that is what the Prime Minister said; so there will be no elections. You will not go to the people. There is nothing to be done. But if you wish to continue following your misguided course, for God's sake, take our advice, look at what you have done to us in the last eight years and change your ways. If you do, it will be better for us if you do good to yourselves by doing good to the people than if you harm yourselves by continuing to harm the people.

These are the loyal words of Israel's loyal Opposition.

...

Sitting 171 of the Third Knesset

16 October 1956 (11 Heshvan 5717)

...
P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...the Prime Minister's statement about freedom of action regarding Iraq also constitutes a serious warning, because freedom of action does not refer to sending letters or memoranda....Meanwhile, we have managed to acquire additional quantities of arms...for the moment we'll disregard the financial aspect...and we naturally approve all the efforts being made so that this may continue.

...What seems to me to be a grave mistake is that we keep repeating the phrase "defensive weapons."...But our emphasis should be on deterrence, and only offensive weapons are deterrent. We seem to have been ashamed to ask for offensive arms. The U.S...continues to manufacture nuclear weapons—the most offensive weapon there is—and claims that this is for deterrent purposes....What better example could one want that offensive weapons are deterrent weapons?...

...I fail to understand why the Powers are so upset by Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal....He has, after all, assured them that there will be the same freedom of navigation as there was before....The agitation of the Powers seems to derive from the fact that they do not trust him and his assurances...and may want to take drastic action not only to ensure freedom of navigation but also to get rid of him....

As far as we were concerned, however, not only were we unable to act because of our inferiority in arms—perhaps more in the past than today—but also because it rapidly transpired that those who would appear to be our natural allies had almost morbid reservations about us—with the sole exception of France. This is particularly the case with England, which would bear the brunt of any military action there might be. That is why I think the Government was right to decide not to undertake active intervention, i.e., to avoid any military action....

Thus, not only did the Suez crisis fail to bring us any allies...it showed us that even though we share common interests with certain countries, they have kept as aloof from us as ever. If the Prime Minister sought to prove that we are not so isolated, I think the Suez crisis has proved that we are more isolated than ever.

...I very much fear that Britain will disregard the pleas of my good friend Mr. Begin....Even Mr. Eden has said that after settling the Suez crisis, the next step will be for Nasser to attack Israel....Furthermore, each party to the crisis has stated that if it is prepared to do anything "it will not be with Israel"...as if contact with us would contaminate them....The U.S., Britain and France claim, in addition, that we have no need of arms because they guarantee our borders, which are merely

"the armistice lines." And now Britain says that we should return to the borders of the Partition Plan.

M. Begin (Herut): That we should compromise. Not return.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): ...As for our reactions, which we now call "self-defense," so as not to arouse the ire of the U.N...these have become a routine which is interpreted by the world as constituting a policy, but is in fact no such thing. Even the Government agrees that this is no policy, i.e., action intended to achieve certain objectives in the international arena....The routine has, however, led to undesirable political results...in one case serving as an excuse not to give us arms....Nor has the deterrent effect of our actions been proved, unfortunately....

As regards the U.N...I believe that the people who were sent here by the U.N. had a difficult task...and out of a desire to prove their objectivity or neutrality...made several grave mistakes in dealing with incidents. These, naturally, aroused a negative response from us...even though we have learned by now that the condemnation of one side or another means nothing....The main point is, however, that the system has not managed to stop the murders....

Recently...there has also been the U.N. Secretary-General's interpretation of the role of the U.N....If the U.N. is a third party between us and the Arabs...the logical conclusion would be to have a U.N.-appointed Governor-General running the country. I do not think that this is likely to happen, but it is the general approach which I do not like. The underlying assumption of the Secretary-General's report is that something must be done to reduce tension in the region, and that both sides are equally to blame for this state of affairs....The fact that one side is attacked and the other the attacker is completely ignored....

...It is this unfair approach which governs the entire international attitude to the problem of this region...that there are two sides, that there is a dispute between them, and that some kind of compromise has to be found between them....I regret to say, to the extent that the information I have is correct, that in our approach to foreign governments we have allowed ourselves to accept this concept of conflict, just as we allowed ourselves to accept the concept of defensive weapons. There is no conflict here. There is just one side which wants to destroy the other side, and the other side, which does not wish to be destroyed. That is no conflict. There is a conflict if two countries quarrel about a certain town, as Poland and Lithuania quarrelled about Vilna. That is a conflict....We must abandon that erroneous conception of our situation.

I would like to conclude on the same note as the Prime Minister did, with brotherly love. I agree with him that this must be the principal emotional basis of all our work. I am not saying that calling for brotherly love involves hypocrisy, quite the contrary, but it is not achieved by preaching. All religions preach brotherly love, but the results are well-

known. Perhaps setting a good example will help...and I earnestly hope that we will sense brotherly love in our daily life to a greater extent....

...

J. Hazan (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, never in our history have we needed to weigh our actions as carefully, responsibly and boldly as now. We are at the center of international tension and dangers, but not because of the Israel-Arab conflict....I have no doubt that if we could meet the Arab nations face to face, without outside intervention, the Jewish-Arab dispute would die down. I have no doubt that if the Great Powers were interested in doing so, this dispute would have ended long since. But they do not want peace, they want continued tension in this region....It aids their struggle for power in the Middle East. They take care not to get directly involved in military actions but are ready to involve us in them from time to time....Britain's Conservative government is a pastmaster at this game and, to my great regret, even the U.S.S.R. does nothing to prevent a renewed conflagration in the region....

We have not yet been enabled to continue building our national life quietly and in peace....We have to advance while the welfare of our state is constantly at risk....It is a bitter peace, one which requires many sacrifices of us; but it is better than any war, as long as the very existence of our state is not threatened and we are not obliged to diminish our sovereignty, the integrity of our borders and the continuation of our work of construction and development....

If someone could prove to me that war is inevitable I would doubtless reach different conclusions....But I do not accept the contention that war is inevitable. Each year of peace is a year of additional possibilities of struggling for peace....MK Begin, that violinist with but one string, is always harping on the same tune: war....He is constantly haranguing us about those two false concepts of his—"the last minute" and "the opportune moment." He is always complaining that we have missed "the opportune moment..." and that if we do not make the right use of "the last minute" all is lost.

...Recent events have proved that MK Begin's approach is quite wrong....Time is, after all, on our side; our situation today is better than it was a few months ago, and presumably in a few more months it will be better than it is now....Begin's argument that it is impossible to punish a whole nation disproves what he has been saying all along....If Germany rebuilt itself after the First World War, what makes him think that the Arabs won't do the same?...There is no solution in war....

The Suez dispute proves this. From the first moment of the crisis MK Begin has contended that this is "a great and unique opportunity."...As for his claim that "half mankind" opposes Nasser, I would like to know where all these people are....If we had taken his advice and embarked on a military escapade they would doubtless have stood on the sidelines,

and then, like Pontius Pilate, would probably have put us on trial and served as judges too.

I applaud the Government's stand; we are no party to the dispute concerning the nationalization....We should not forget what that half of mankind, for which Begin wanted to involve us in war, did for us when the Canal was owned by a Western company, how it implemented the U.N. resolution then....Let us also not forget what effect taking MK Begin's misguided advice would have had on our standing in the great continent of Asia....The Western Powers have abandoned their plan to wage war. Let us not allow ourselves to be drawn into a grave military escapade.

We must increase political pressure. We must mobilize world public opinion, which is more sensitive today than in the past....Not only in France...even the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister, Mikoyan, has said that all countries, including Israel, must have equal rights of navigation in the Suez Canal. I do not delude myself. We are still a long way away from concluding the struggle. But today more than ever before there is a chance for this political struggle, if we conduct it by mobilizing all our forces in the capitals of the world, if we do not let the world forget us, so that when it settles its own affairs it will not do so at our expense....

The same applies to the Jordan-Iraq issue. MK Begin must be very sad. Another "opportune moment" has been missed. Iraqi troops are not yet entering Jordan, but the situation is very serious....That is why I praise the Government's line of highlevel political pressure and a statement that we will not tolerate any change...which constitutes a substantial and dangerous alteration of the situation....I believe that it had an effect...and that Britain's Conservative government was forced to retreat....

I have one complaint about our Government: why have we not yet applied to the U.N.? Why have we not yet complained to it about the machinations of Iraq and Britain in our region? I think that we must make use of every ounce of international political pressure in order to insist on our rights....MK Begin proposes that in order to maintain peace we should make war. I know that the only thing war brings is war....I am shocked that he utilizes the nation's pain and grief at our losses to propose minimizing them by going to war....

Our active defense is not a policy, nor does it replace a policy. It is a necessity of our life. It must guarantee us time to conduct a policy of peace, to fight for peace and to continue our work of construction....I will answer the question MK Begin asked here yesterday by saying, yes, our method of defense could lead us into war, but without it we will undoubtedly be destroyed...and that is why we must do everything we can to restrict its frequency and scope. We must also take political factors into consideration....We are dealing with defense, not re-

venge....MK Begin's proposal that we seize and hold on to territory is, in my view, both absurd and criminal....

We must also make every effort to avoid harming civilians. I bow my head before the courage of our soldiers and our sons, but I pay a special tribute to those who fell because they wanted to make sure that there were no women or children in the police station at Kalkilya....We cannot waive our right to defend ourselves....Even the U.S.S.R., to my great regret, foregoes its right to admonish us as long as it refrains from condemning the murder of our citizens on our borders and from demanding that the culprits be punished, and presents us, not them, as the aggressors.

But defense is not a policy. Defense is a precondition for enabling us to continue with our policy. What is the policy which will guarantee our existence and the possibility of attaining true peace? The answer is: continuing accelerated construction, mustering all our strength to build up the country, increasing our defensive power to deter the enemy...maintaining political independence, refraining from getting involved in any alliances and acquiring friends....

We must also demand our rights incessantly. I do not think that we should end our relations with the U.N. We must put it in its place. We must not let it exceed its mandate....We must increase our explanatory efforts in Arab countries...reaching out to those there who are rethinking old concepts....We must make every effort to reach those in the refugee camps, even utilizing the radio waves, to prove to them that they are the first to suffer from every act of violence and the first to benefit from peace. We must strengthen our defensive force. We must change our attitude to the Arab minority, which is proving that it can serve as a bridge of peace to the Arab peoples....

The path is a very difficult one, and I think that no responsible person can come to our people today with false demands. It must be told the truth, namely, that only if we are ready to continue bearing every burden in times of peace as in times of necessary defensive war, only if we are endlessly stubborn and believe firmly in our course, will we overcome all obstacles and be victorious.

...

K. Cahane (Agudat Yisrael and Poalei Agudat Yisrael): Distinguished Knesset, I think it can be said, in referring to the Prime Minister's statement, that the entire nation welcomed the news of the increase in the arms at our disposal and endorses the two basic assumptions of the Government's policy: not to accept the principle that others should decide our fate and tell us what to do in the spheres of politics and security, and the deep desire to maintain peace, as far as possible.

To those who believe they have a simple solution, namely, going to war, I say that although they may believe in what they advocate, and support it with logical arguments, it is not logic alone which determines

foreign and defense policy. Politics are not a mathematical science, and not every action necessitates a given response....

During the recent debate on the Egyptian-Czech arms deal none of us here foresaw the current developments at the Suez Canal. It is evident that something has changed in our region with the nationalization of the Canal....And this morning's news that Jordan has not yet agreed to the entry into that country of Iraqi troops under British auspices also has to be taken into account....

There is no doubt that no one has the right to define our retaliatory actions as acts of incitement...as the Head of the U.N. Observers has done....On the other hand, I think that we must determine for ourselves whether acts of retaliation in their current form can be isolated events. They cannot become policy. I am sure that one cannot maintain the appropriate military morale when young men are sent to actions involving the highest danger, and are then ordered to return to their base. If one is not prepared to leave the young men in the place they have conquered, as I gather those responsible for our foreign policy are not, one should seek other ways of reacting, if such reaction is necessary....I think that two other approaches should be stressed. It has been said that we have not striven sufficiently for peace....And it is true that we must leave no stone unturned in order to prevent war.

...I think that we should...also make greater efforts to maintain the security of our citizens inside the country. The Border Guards have played an important part in heightening our security. But we must do still more in this sphere. Every military action costs us blood and money....We must find new ways of protecting our citizens against marauders and infiltrators....Nothing is dearer to us than the lives of our citizens, and there are no limits to security. I do not know if anyone can say that everything that can be done has been done in that sphere.

As for our internal situation, the Prime Minister concluded his speech by depicting his version of the messianic vision. I propose taking the first step and proclaiming an internal ceasefire. The political parties continue to taunt and combat one another....At this time of emergency we must do all we can to suppress internal dissension....Other countries involve the opposition as well as the coalition in fateful decisions. This also requires responsibility and restraint on the part of the opposition....It is not too late to determine a policy of peace within the country, in which everyone works in harness....The same applies to the cultural conflict which threatens us...because of the failure to take religious feelings into consideration. Is this really the time for a cultural war? Is this the time to injure your neighbor's feelings and arouse hatred...?

...I do not think that dramatic descriptions of battles, photos of the casualties, of bloodshed and destruction, are good methods of education.

Whatever we do, we do out of necessity...not because we wish to....We must be more modest and more cautious....

...With regard to the acquisition of friends, which the Prime Minister described in his messianic vision...it is not by democracy or equality, science or research, that we will gain friends. Look at Iraq, where there is no democracy, where there is suppression and oppression, and see how much support it has among the truly democratic countries which hardly give us any encouragement. Egypt, where there is no democracy whatsoever, has the support of the socialist Eastern Bloc. Those nations show no sign of supporting us, despite our fine democratic record.

Only by returning to ourselves will we prosper. The Law which Moses received on Mount Sinai, and which has been handed down to us through all the generations, is our wisdom and our understanding. If anyone is waiting for us to be a light unto the nations, he is waiting for something which is originally Jewish, for original Jewish life, which only our sacred Law can impart.

That is the basis for the acquisition of friends, amongst both the Jews and the Gentiles. It is also the basis for the acquisition of the greatest friend of them all—our Father in Heaven. A return to Him is a return to our source. The Prime Minister ended his speech by saying: "The Rock of Israel will not abandon us." I heartily endorse that sentiment, but only if his Rock of Israel is the same one that we mention daily in our prayers, and have done for thousands of years, which has saved us from our oppressors and has brought us thus far....

Sitting 173 of the Third Knesset

17 October 1956 (12 Heshvan 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the Middle East has recently become the focus of interest and concern for the whole world....It was necessary, therefore, to clarify the Government's stand before world public opinion and the countries concerned...as well as for internal purposes too....I note with satisfaction that all the speakers in this debate—with the exception of the representatives of Herut and the Communists—supported the Government's basic stand....

...MK Bernstein and others...have taken issue with the nature of the military actions we undertook....Firstly, the details of these affairs should not be clarified here, as the speakers themselves acknowledged, and secondly, they did a great injustice to the IDF....All those actions were undertaken with the Government's consent....and only in one case, when for objective reasons it was impossible to summon the entire

Government, did I decide the matter on my own, by virtue of the authority generally invested in me by the Cabinet....The planning and implementation was the IDF's, however...and the criticisms voiced here did the IDF great injustice....I know that we can be proud of the IDF's ability...and that everything possible was done to keep casualties to a minimum....

The matters under consideration in this debate are almost all of vital importance. This applies to the problem of the best way of maintaining our security during a period of guerrilla warfare; protecting our sovereignty from overt and covert attempts to impair it; maintaining the Armistice Agreements which to date have been the sole legal basis for the relations between us and our neighbors; examining our relations with the U.N. and its machinery; considering the possibility that Iraqi troops will enter the Hashemite kingdom, and the allied British plans; assuring freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, and above all, facing the very grave danger of an attack on Israel by the fascist Egyptian tyrant.

During the last few days, while the debate has been going on in the Knesset, there have been important—and positive—international developments as regards both the danger of Iraqi troops entering the Hashemite kingdom and navigation in the Suez Canal. We must not be over-optimistic, however, or rely solely on verbal assurances....We are not a decisive factor in the world, but in this region we are a force to be reckoned with....Matters cannot be arranged here by others without taking us into consideration, and things that have been said here may have had some influence on the positive shift which has been evolving over the past few days....

I cannot be more explicit, nor do I think this would be in Israel's best interests, about the right to act I spoke of should Iraqi troops enter the Hashemite kingdom....MK Bernstein disagreed with our definition of "defensive weapons," claiming that we need offensive weapons, like the rest....Weapons are not so readily divided up into those categories...they differ in their efficiency, range and firepower, but they are all intended to kill and destroy. The difference is in the purpose for which they are used, and that is what determines whether the arms are offensive or defensive....We know that we need arms so that we can defend ourselves if attacked, and that we need arms as a deterrent. I would like to point out to MK Bernstein...that even in defensive actions one uses various tactics, and in general the best defense is to take the offensive....I applaud MK Bernstein both for his clear distinction between attacker and attacked...and for his refusal to support Herut's aggressive plans, which go under such terms as "liberation" which mean nothing and do not even deceive anyone of any intelligence....

...But even after one distinguishes between attacker and attacked, the attacked should have all the means of defense and weapons of war

that the attacker has, otherwise there is no possibility of defense or deterrence....That is what we mean when we say defensive weapons....I would like to point out that in this sphere we have advanced. The IDF is better-equipped now and I hope that we can continue growing stronger....I must add, however, that without the aid of the U.S., which can and should provide us with arms...our progress is inadequate.

We must also realize that our most serious and most dangerous enemy is the...Egyptian tyrant, who uses force to repress all those who oppose him...seeks to control all the Arab countries and makes no effort to conceal his intention of destroying Israel....The violation of the ceasefire by Egypt—after the ceasefire had continued throughout the Suez dispute—near Sde Boker a few days ago does not bode well.

MK Bernstein does not agree with me that we are not so isolated, although I noted that this isolation has deep historical roots....We are perhaps the only nonconformist nation in the world during the last three thousand years....We appear to be a young state, having existed for only eight and a half years, and for over two thousand years we had no sovereignty....Most of the country's inhabitants are new immigrants from various parts of the world, speaking a variety of languages. Egypt is an ancient land, with a continuous history covering at least six thousand years...but whereas we now speak the language our forefathers spoke more than three thousand years ago, neither the Egyptian tyrant nor the general population can speak the language in which Pharaoh addressed Joseph. That is one of the things which points up the difference between our two nations.

There has always been tension around the Jewish people, when it dwelt in its land, when it was in exile and when it returned to its land. This tension, which has deep historical roots, will not rapidly be dispelled. More than any nation we have always been surrounded by suspicion and hostility. Yet we are still not completely isolated and without friends....

A great deal has been said here about the U.N....I would like us to make a clear distinction between the U.N. and its machinery....The U.N. machinery...tends to treat Israel as if it were international territory...and, as I have said before, the Government of Israel will not tolerate undesirable tendencies which impair its sovereignty and are in contradiction to the U.N. Charter....With his usual rhetoric and pathos, the Herut spokesman, Menachem Begin, accused the Government of doing nothing to stop the U.N. from establishing "an international regime in Israel."...Then the Herut leader announced his "discovery," namely: "There is no international regime in Israel, but a free, independent, sovereign state." In this way the Herut leader brings down the level of the moral debate in the Knesset and makes a mockery of himself....

...Despite all our just complaints about the machinery of the U.N., Israel regards the U.N. as a great human institution and the hope for the future of world peace, even though the U.N. has not yet managed to attain the aim for which it was established....We are more interested than any nation in the expansion of the U.N.'s moral authority....We hope that the day will come when this universal institution will increase the number of its soldiers and impose peace and justice throughout the world....There can be no peace without justice, as the Psalmist wrote, and although no nation desires peace as much as we do, we are not prepared to make peace at any price....War was avoided in the Middle East last year only because of our fervent adherence to peace—and the Government of Israel is proud of that....We will brook no violation of our sovereignty...but we will not hearken to the insane counsel of the Herut party to go out to war and conquest....

Out of respect for the Knesset I will not define that kind of advice in the language which it deserves. And as for the people who give that advice...I do not believe in the crocodile tears they shed for the IDF casualties.

M. Begin (Herut): You are shameless!

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Don't we have sons who were killed?

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): How many times have you proposed war?

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Don't we have widows and orphans? How many people have fallen directly because of you?

M. Begin (Herut): Why doesn't the Speaker rebuke the speaker? This constitutes a violation of Israel's honor.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We have heard many things in this House which should not have been said.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Thrice daily I thank whoever has to be thanked for giving the Jewish people the sense not to be taken in by these so-called patriotic hopes.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): You stand at the head of an army in which all Israel's citizens serve, and is this the way you speak?

M. Begin (Herut): You reprobate!

The Foreign Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, what kind of language is this?

(Shouts from the Mapai benches.)

...

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: And I express my absolute conviction that the Jewish people will never place the glorious IDF in the hands of irresponsible people, so that they will not lead us to be slaughtered

whenever they think there is a chance of what they call liberation, and will not bring them to power in Israel....They do not know what can and cannot be done...what is a fine-sounding phrase and what is political or military action....

I would like to refer to Mr. Bernstein's remarks about brotherly love....A Chinese sage was once asked who should be chosen for office. Should it be those who are loved by all? No, he replied. Should it be those who are hated by all? No, he replied, adding: it should be those who are loved by good people and hated by bad people.

Thus, just as peace and justice must go together, we must distinguish between those in the state who are responsible and those who are not, and we must tell this to the nation, making it clear that the fine-sounding phrases may involve great disasters, and no one can stop me saying this to the nation.

Mr. Bernstein said that he would like to see an example of brotherly love in our daily life. I'll tell you what brotherly love is in my opinion. It means going to the immigrants and constantly helping those who have come from the diaspora to settle in the homeland, to acquire the Hebrew language and to absorb the great values which we are reviving in Israel. It means going to the borders, to the Negev and to Galilee, and settling there so that we have the right to those areas not only by virtue of our heritage but also by virtue of our work. It means working loyally and industriously in workshops, factories and fields. It means teaching the younger generation Jewish values, the use of science for pioneering work, as is set out in the Compulsory Education Law. It means training the nation to defend itself when necessary, increasing the IDF's arsenal so that this may deter our enemies....That is brotherly love, and not polite, false phrases behind which lies the deception of the nation which is defending and building itself in this country.

It would be a dereliction of duty on my part if I were to omit to add that we grew stronger at the end of last year and are continuing to grow stronger, and this is necessary for the sake of peace...and our survival....The increase of our strength could fail for lack of means...and we must be prepared to bear heavy financial burdens....

I am unable to express the depths of my gratitude to the Jews of the diaspora, who are helping us in this endeavor. But we must not depend on them alone....For our part, we must do more than our maximum in order to achieve our aim....That is also a test of brotherly love....

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Three proposals have been submitted to conclude the debate. I call on MK Razi'el-Na'or to read out the Herut party group's proposal.

E. Razi'el-Na'or (Herut): ...To conclude the debate on the Government's statement, the Herut party group proposes the following motion:

The Knesset resolves that:

A. The concept of Israel's legal, independent selfdefense in the existing state of war, as proclaimed by its enemies, cannot be restricted to actions coming as a reaction to acts of aggression and murder underlying which is the principle of "hit and run."

B. There is nothing more immoral and less tolerable than the one-sided killing of Jews in their homeland. However, those who perpetrate those actions are incapable of ending the growing bloodshed by themselves.

Only strategic campaigns, at the opportune moment, planned with the object of minimizing casualties and guaranteeing Jewish soldiers optimal fighting conditions, and whose aim is the liberation of the conquered areas of the homeland, which have become bases for the enemy's aggression, will prevent the catastrophe of war on all fronts, will give the nation security and will make peace attainable.

C. The stationing of a foreign army, whether Iraqi or any other, in the conquered areas of Transjordan, whether in the West or the East, in addition to the foreign army known as the Arab Legion which occupies them, means intensifying the direct threat to Israel's security, independence and future. Israel can and must work in the political and military spheres in order to combat this danger.

D. There is no basis for the U.N. Secretary-General's interpretation of the "Rhodes Agreements" as constituting an international regime in Israel. This arbitrary interpretation merely constitutes additional proof of the extent to which foreign supervision endangers the country's sovereignty. Israel can and must act to free itself of all foreign supervision.

E. Israel, which is surrounded by enemies, must seek and find allies on the basis of common interests against a joint enemy.

F. The Knesset declares that Nasser's dictatorship in Egypt is a danger not only to Israel but also to all free nations and to peace.

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Israel Communist Party I propose the following resolution to conclude the debate:

A. The Knesset states that the military invasions of Jordanian territory which were implemented in the wake of the murders of Israeli citizens and soldiers by assailants from across the border do not buttress Israel's security but rather undermine it and lead to war....

The Knesset determines that the military incursions by Israeli forces into Jordanian territory provided an excuse for British imperialist designs regarding the conquest of the Jordanian army by the Iraqi army, and thus these incursions directly served imperialism rather than...the independence of all the nations of the region, including Israel.

Consequently, the Knesset condemns the Government for the military incursions across the border. The Knesset instructs the Govern-

ment to abandon the method of retaliation and military incursions and to ensure that it restricts itself to defending Israel's territory.

B. The Knesset determines that freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal is the legal right of the State of Israel, as it is of all countries. In order to implement this right the Knesset instructs the Government to refrain from using or threatening force, but to resort solely to peaceful, political measures.

C. The Knesset instructs the Government to apply to the Security Council of the U.N. and state that in order to end the Israel-Arab conflict, which endangers international security in the Middle East, and in order to attain a stable peace between Israel and the Arabs, Israel is prepared to solve all the disputed issues through negotiations and an agreement which will be acceptable to both sides and which will take into account the just national rights of all the peoples concerned.

A. Govrin (Mapai): On behalf of the party groups in the Coalition, as well as the General Zionists and Agudat Yisrael and Po'alei Agudat Israel, I propose the following resolution:

After having heard the Prime Minister's statement of October 15 regarding Foreign and Defense Policy, the Knesset notes it.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote.

The Vote

Those in favor of Herut's proposal	9
Those against	69
Those in favor of Maki's proposal	4
Those against	84
Those in favor of the Coalition and allied parties' proposal	76
Those against	13

(The proposal is adopted.)

Political and Military Situation

Introduction

After months of growing anxiety and frustration, impotently witnessing the increasing armament of Egypt and its closer relations with Syria and Jordan, Israel took the military initiative on 29 October 1956. In a brilliant campaign lasting little more than one hundred hours, the IDF smashed all Egypt's units in the Sinai Peninsula, to take up positions ten miles east of the Suez Canal. The Sinai Campaign was accompanied, in its first phase, by a joint Anglo-French ultimatum directed at Egypt and Israel, subsequently by the Anglo-French bombardment of Egypt's airfields, and ultimately by the ill-fated landing of forces near Port Said. On the other hand, the operation was condemned from the outset by the governments of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. In the early hours of 7 November 1956 the Soviet government published the texts of notes sent to the governments of Great Britain, France and Israel, demanding in peremptory terms an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Egyptian soil. The note to Israel was accompanied by the withdrawal of the Soviet ambassador and the breaking off of diplomatic relations, and was interpreted by many as a threat of direct Soviet military action against Israel.

All the same, Ben-Gurion proceeded, on the evening of November 7, to deliver a victory speech to the Knesset. Neither then nor for many years thereafter did Israeli sources reveal the nature of previous contacts and mutual commitments, not only with the French but also with the British government. Nor did Ben-Gurion reveal his concern at the Soviet threat, which had caused him that morning to dispatch his Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, and the Director-General of the Ministry of Defense, Shimon Peres, on a secret mission to France to gauge French reaction to the Soviet threat.

In a rare show of almost total unanimity (excepting only three Communist MKs), Ben-Gurion's statement was accepted by the Knesset.

Sitting 182 of the Third Knesset

7 November 1956 (3 Kislev 5717)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I hereby open the Knesset sitting. I give the floor to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the revelation at Sinai which has been revived these past few days by the IDF's heroic action is the focal point of our fortification, our security and our internal welfare as well as of our external relations in the world and the Middle East.

As you know, after a lightning strike lasting less than seven days, two days ago our army completed clearing the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip of enemy forces, from Ras-al-Nakab facing Eilat to Solomon's Gulf, which was known as Sharm el-Sheikh till now, to the southern coast of the Red Sea Straits, and from the Eilat-Rafah line in the north to the Suez Canal and its southernmost bay, an area of almost sixty thousand square kilometers (almost three times the size of Israel). This was the greatest and most splendid military campaign in the history of our people and one of the most wonderful campaigns in the history of the world.

Our army did not violate the territory of Egypt nor did it attempt to do so, and I hope that in future too the Egyptian tyrant will not force us to contravene the command given us when we left Egypt 3,300 years ago—not to return to it. Our operation was restricted solely to the Sinai Peninsula, and I will briefly describe its motives and objectives.

Approximately three weeks ago, on October 15, I submitted to the Knesset a review of our security problems, which had deteriorated ever since the Czech deal, which sent enormous quantities of heavy arms to Egypt. Only one week ago our army discovered the alarming quantity and excellent quality of these abundant Soviet weapons—only part of which, naturally, was sent to the Sinai Peninsula—and concerning which neither we, nor the Egyptian tyrant nor his peace-loving friends in Czechoslovakia had any doubts as to its intended use. In any event, neither the suppliers nor the recipients of these weapons meant that they should fall into our hands, but rather that they should be the instrument of our downfall.

The Suez crisis, which broke out in recent months and caused a furore throughout the world, did not alarm us; not because we are not interested in the freedom of navigation in this international waterway, but because our freedom of navigation had been arbitrarily and rudely impaired by Egypt's rulers several years ago, and they continued to impair this right after the U.N. resolution of 1951; that resolution was rudely and impudently violated by the Egyptian tyrant without the U.N...even trying to ensure that the resolution was enforced...

The U.S., Great Britain and, needless to say, the U.S.S.R. preferred all that time to appease the fascist tyrant in Egypt rather than enforce international law and honor the U.N. and its Charter, as long as this could be done solely at Israel's expense. Only after the action of the Egyptian tyrant had finally endangered the rights and interests of other countries...and the world had aroused itself did the Government of Is-

rael modestly state its concern regarding the assurance of its navigation rights in the international waterway, and world public opinion supported this claim. And even though the Security Council, in its decision of October 13, reaffirmed freedom of navigation without discrimination, whether overt or covert, the Egyptian ruler announced that no Israeli ship would be allowed to pass through the Canal.

The damage done by the Egyptian tyrant and the danger this involved for us was not restricted to depriving us of our navigation rights in the Suez Canal. For Israel's economy and economic future, freedom of navigation in the Red Sea to and from Eilat is no less—if not far more—vital than freedom of navigation in Suez. Israel's naval trade began in effect in the Red Sea 3,000 years ago, at the time of King Solomon, and Eilat was the first Jewish port in the time of the kings of Judah, and until the middle of the sixth century A.D., i.e., until 1,400 years ago. There was Jewish independence on the island of Yotva, in the southern part of the Straits of Eilat, which was liberated two days ago by the IDF. That island, called Tiran today, guards the passage from the Red Sea in the south to Eilat. In his book on the wars between the Persians and the Byzantines, Procopius, a sixth century Greek historian who was born in Caesaria in Palestine, describes the island of Yotva (now known as Tiran) as follows: "There the Hebrews sit from ancient times and govern themselves, and only when Justinian came to power in our time did they come under the rule of the Romans," i.e., the Byzantines....

This island remained desolate for centuries until recently, when a few years ago the Egyptians seized it and stationed soldiers there to disturb Israeli shipping in the Straits, while on the coast facing the island, at the site known until two days ago as Sharm el-Sheikh and which is now called the Gulf of Solomon, they stationed troops armed with powerful cannon capable of hitting any ship going through the narrow passage.

The Egyptian tyrant did not limit himself to placing a naval blockade on Israel in Suez and the Red Sea and organizing an economic boycott of Israel throughout the world. In all the Arab countries he organized special bands of murderers which crossed the borders from time to time to terrorize people working in the fields and dwelling in their homes in Israel. Gamal Abdul Nasser said over and over again that Egypt was at war with Israel, and did not conceal his principal intention of attacking Israel at the first opportune moment and wiping it off the face of the earth. It is no coincidence that amongst the large quantities of booty our army found in the Sinai desert, the first-rate and luxurious equipment of the Egyptian officers included a translation into Arabic of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Since I made my statement in the Knesset three weeks ago something happened which increased the danger we were in and obliged us to take vigorous and immediate steps:

After the elections in Jordan, in which Egyptian bribery played a decisive role, a pro-Egyptian majority was elected and a tripartite military pact was immediately made between Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the armies of those three countries being placed under Egypt's command. The objective was clear: to fight against Israel and destroy it. The Egyptian *fedayeen*, who had been ordered by the Egyptian tyrant to refrain from their murderous attacks on Israel during the Suez crisis, were activated again, as soon as it seemed to Gamal Abdul Nasser that the crisis had died down, and one *fedayeen* group was discovered in the area of Sde Boker; another, which was caught at Nazereth, had been sent to our country from the north by the Egyptian military attache in Lebanon; our fields were mined at Nitzana by military sappers from Egypt and twenty-three Jewish soldiers were wounded.

There was no doubt that the stranglehold around us was tightening, and the Egyptian tyrant would not recoil from anything liable to overthrow us. We had to take effective defensive measures urgently.

First of all, on the basis of the authorization granted us by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, we mobilized several reserve battalions to guard the eastern border against a surprise attack by Syria or Jordan or both of them. We mobilized a larger reserve force, particularly the armored corps, along the southern border. The Knesset Members know that there is a basic organizational difference between our defense forces and those of the Arabs. Whereas their entire military force is continually mobilized and consists solely of a regular army, Israel's defense rests mainly on its reserves and our regular forces are small, dealing primarily with mobilizing new recruits and training them to guard military installations.

When we began mobilizing our reserves I received two messages from the President of the U.S. expressing concern at this. In my reply of October 29 I reminded him of his constant efforts over the past year on behalf of peace in the region, which had met with every possible support on our part, while the only person who had foiled those efforts had been the Egyptian ruler. I described the constantly-deteriorating situation and the Egyptian tyrant's expansionist aspirations and arms buildup, undermining the independence of the other Arab countries and, in particular, his clear intention of destroying Israel by establishing the military alliance with Jordan and Syria under Egyptian command, by renewing the activity of the *fedayeen*, etc. My reply ended with the following words: "With the Iraqi army on the Iraq-Jordan border, the establishment of a joint command for Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the decisive increase of Egypt's influence in Jordan, and the renewed penetration of Egyptian gangs into Israel, it would be a dereliction of duty on my Gov-

ernment's part were it to fail to take every possible step to ensure that the declared policy of the Arab rulers to destroy Israel by force would fail. My Government has asked the nation in Israel to be alert and calm. I am sure that with your rich military experience you will be able to assess the great and fateful danger in which we find ourselves."

That night several of our units set out to put an end to the nests of murderers incorporated within the Egyptian army as well as to the planning and organizational bases of the gangs of murderers, and to eradicate the forces from which those bands came. In these clashes the Egyptians used their air force against us and fierce battles were fought in the Sinai desert. After seven days the entire Egyptian military force had been driven out of the Sinai Peninsula. As I said before, our army was given strict orders not to cross the Suez Canal, not to violate Egyptian territory and to remain solely within the confines of the Sinai Peninsula.

Military historians will study and analyze the IDF's wonderful campaign, which lasted only a few days and took place in an immense desert, facing an enemy which was armed from head to toe with the best and most modern equipment of the Soviet Bloc and several other countries. Only after the conquest of the Gaza Strip, Abu-Ageila, El-Arish, Nehal, Mitleh and the Gulf of Eilat did we realize what vast quantities of the most up-to-date weapons were in the Egyptians' possession, the heavy arms, the tanks and cannon, the sophisticated communications systems, the armored vehicles, the supplies and uniforms, which were far superior to ours in quality and quantity. Although we had known about the mighty stream of heavy arms of every kind reaching the Egyptian tyrant during the year, we did not have an accurate picture of the huge amounts of heavy weapons and the excellent quality of the weapons and the equipment. The huge booty which has fallen into our hands proves beyond a doubt that the Egyptian tyrant squeezed the last penny from the Arab nation in Egypt in order to grant every benefit and a life of luxury to the army, upon which his strength and rule rested.

But all the masses of first-rate weapons and equipment were of no avail to the Egyptian army, because the army had no spirit. This fulfilled the prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah: "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do." To tell the truth, I must add that there were some Egyptian commanders who fought bravely and persistently, and they deserve honor and praise.

There were about three divisions facing us: one in the Gaza Strip, one in the open spaces of the Sinai Peninsula, primarily near El-Arish and Abu-Ageila. There were several more units, also lavishly equipped and armed, scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Sinai

Peninsula, at Ras-el-Nakab, Kunteila, Tamad, Kuseima, Jebel Libneh, Nehal, A-Tur, Ras-Natzrani and Sharm el-Sheikh. These three divisions together with their services numbered more than 30,000 men. During the fighting Egyptian reinforcements arrived, more than two brigades, amounting to 10,000 men. This mighty army was equipped with hundreds of Czech and British tanks, superior armored vehicles and heavy cannon of every kind. It was supported by an air force equipped with Vampire, Meteor and Mig planes. As you know, the Egyptian navy was also deployed, reaching Haifa in a well-equipped destroyer, which will constitute a welcome addition to the poorly-equipped Israeli navy.

On the first night of action Kunteila, Ras-el-Nakab, near Eilat, and Kuseima were conquered, at four in the morning. The next day Tamad, El-Basos and El-Ofra in the heart of Sinai were taken. On October 31 Bir-Hasneh was taken without resistance, as well as Nehal, a fortified position. After fierce fighting, Abu-Ageila was conquered. On November 1 all the positions around Rafah and El-Gafgafa (on the road between Nitzana and Ismailiya), as well as the first outpost in the environs of El-Arish, were captured.

Early in the morning of November 2 El-Arish was conquered, after bitter fighting. Three hours later Gaza was taken without any resistance. The most serious resistance was encountered that day at Khan-Yunis.

On November 3 several important points on the western coast of the Gulf of Eilat—Dahab and Ras-Natzrani—were captured. In effect, the entire Sinai Peninsula was in our hands on that day, apart from a small bay on the Red Sea coast facing the island of Yotva (Sharm el-Sheikh), which was fortified with long-range cannon and equipped with an airfield. This last Egyptian outpost fell into our hands two days ago, on November 5, in the morning.

I know that this dry account is inadequate for the splendid tale of heroism which few people would have ever believed possible. I will say only that it was not a windfall. The campaign was planned in advance with two primary objectives: rapidity of execution and the minimization of losses. I note with deep satisfaction that both these aims were achieved beyond our expectations. In effect, the principal action was implemented within four days and our losses were few, approximately 150 dead. I know that it is not merely in numerical terms that we assess our casualties. Each one of our soldiers who fell in battle is irreplaceable. Let us stand to attention in memory of our heroic soldiers, in deep sorrow and with great pride.

(The Knesset Members honor the memory of the fallen by standing.)

We will always remember these young lions as exemplary soldiers with unlimited dedication and endless devotion, as fighting men who were deterred by no obstacle or difficulty. We send our love and esteem

to the parents of those who fell. Happy are the mothers who have borne such sons.

I know that I am expressing the feelings of all the inhabitants of Israel and of the entire Jewish people throughout the world when I say that our love and admiration go to the IDF, to those who fought on land, at sea and in the air. You have done very well, especially those of you in the General Staff, the Air Force, the paratroops, the armored corps and the infantry. The whole nation is proud of you. By your wisdom and heroism you have raised the standing of our nation in the world and have added a layer of safety and glory to the fortification of Israel. You have done something tremendous, something which surpasses any political or military significance; you have brought us nearer to the highest and most crucial moment in the ancient history of our people, to the site at which the Law was given, where our people was chosen to be a special people. Once again we see before our eyes the eternal verses from our Law which tell of the exodus from Egypt and the arrival of our forefathers in the Sinai desert: "For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain saying, 'Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.'"

Knesset Members! I cannot conceal from you that these great and splendid days were also days of deep anxiety, for me, at any rate. Like anyone else in Israel, I knew the extent of the strength hidden within us, because it should be noted with great satisfaction that not only the IDF but the entire nation evinced courage and admirable emotional maturity during these days. The weak points did not escape me, however. I knew the enemy's power in the air, and just as I had no doubt as to who would win on the battlefield, I was deeply concerned about the fate of our towns and airfields. It was necessary to use special measures to avoid their bombardment, as far as possible. I am happy to note that our special measures worked well, and the "rear" hardly felt the war. Since the danger is not yet completely over, I am sure that no one will ask me to say what the special measures were....Once again, I note with satisfaction that the results were better than expected.

As we look back on those great events, whose true dimensions may be difficult to assess just now, I am obliged to fulfill an unpleasant duty...and say that we must not be lulled into a sense of false security. We live in a complex, quarrelsome world, where not only Blocs and countries are at odds with one another, but many countries have internal conflicts, and may sanction today what they condemned yesterday

and vice versa. Thus, there is no end to the tricks and ploys used by various politicians to conceal their intrigues, and we must be on our guard and...sharpen all our senses regarding what the future may bring.

As you know, a special session of the Security Council has been called to discuss the events in Sinai and the area of the Canal. We will not ask the U.N. now why the Assembly was not summoned so rapidly when the Arab countries invaded our country in 1948, as soon as our state was renewed. No nation in the world is more concerned about the principles of peace and justice embodied in the U.N. Charter than Israel, not only because those principles are our spiritual heritage from days of yore and reached the entire civilized world via us, but because the entire future of our people depends to a great extent on the rule of peace and justice in the world.

The constitution of the U.N. states that the resolutions passed by the Assembly are merely recommendations, and every sovereign state is entitled to propose an alternative resolution to that of the majority. The special Assembly has only begun to operate, and will sit for several weeks as a regular Assembly, and we will have to determine our position regarding questions which will arise from time to time and various political combinations which could be made in certain circumstances. For the moment, however, we must clarify our stand on seven issues, and we must bring them before world public opinion with all the moral force and resolute conviction we can muster.

A. The Armistice Agreement with Egypt is dead and buried, and will not be resurrected. It was done to death after the Egyptian tyrant infringed it for several years, broke its principles and objectives and disregarded the decisions and Charter of the U.N. By repeatedly declaring that there was a state of war between Egypt and Israel, Nasser distorted the essence and objective of the Armistice Agreement, because the first paragraph of that document states that it was drawn up in order to restore permanent peace. The Egyptian ruler used the agreement as a smoke-screen to conceal the murderous attacks against Israel's citizens and to disguise the cruel blockade of Israel on land, at sea and in the air. Nasser did not content himself with the *fedayeen* gangs which he organized in the areas under his rule, but operated and directed them against Israel in the other Arab countries too. Thus, the Armistice Agreement became a damaging and dangerous fiction which merely helped the Egyptian tyrant's destructive machinations. Any return to the Armistice Agreement means returning to murder, blockade and a boycott of Israel intended to bring about its complete destruction.

B. The armistice lines between us and Egypt died together with the agreement.

C. There is no dispute between Israel and the Egyptian people. King Farouk, and the tyrant Gamal Abdul Nasser after him, brought disaster on their people by making them engage in war against Israel. The

flight of the officers of the Egyptian army as well as of the thousands of its soldiers provides ample evidence of the fact that they had no interest in fighting Israel in an alien desert.

D. We do not seek the preservation of anarchy in our relations with Egypt, and we are willing to undertake negotiations for a stable peace, cooperation and good relations with Egypt, provided the negotiations are direct, without preconditions and without compulsion from either side. We hope that all truly peace-loving nations will support this desire of ours.

E. We are ready for negotiations of this kind with any of the other Arab countries. But as long as they maintain the Armistice Agreements, even if they are not prepared to establish permanent peace, Israel will also keep these agreements.

F. On no account will Israel agree that a foreign force, under whatever name, should be stationed within its territory or in territory under its control.

G. Israel will not fight Egypt or any Arab country unless it is attacked by them.

These are our policy guidelines in these stirring times.

Knesset Members, we may be confronting a difficult political struggle, and perhaps something more serious than that. We have undergone difficult experiences in the past, and were not deterred. We will not be infected by the insolence of the Arab rulers, but neither will we be discouraged by the bullies of the world....In our efforts to procure peace and justice in this region we expect to obtain the support of all men of good will and all lovers of peace throughout the world.

We will meet the coming days with fortitude and intelligence, recognizing the fact that right is on our side and that we are strong, without ignoring our natural and acknowledged association with the family of nations.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The debate on the statement will be held at two o'clock. The sitting is closed.

Sitting 183 of the Third Knesset

7 November 1956 (3 Kislev 5717)

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the nation. The moral and historic meaning of the mighty campaign of our glorious and heroic army, the campaign of attacking, advancing, splitting, bypassing, surrounding, destroying, controlling, defeating, liberating, conquering and triumphing is legal national self-defense.

We have a special reason to rejoice at the fact that this awareness is now shared by the whole nation. I cannot help noting with a modicum of

satisfaction that a week ago the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, joined those who share this view.

At this time, when our hearts are overflowing, with both joy and concern, we turn first to our nation, to the men, women and children, to the old and young in Israel. With all proud modesty we can say, after we have withstood the supreme test: a small nation—but a great one; there are those who are stronger; there are those who are richer; there are those who are cleverer; but there is none which is braver or more steadfast than we. Our army grew from within this nation. Today we all honor the heroic sons who fell in battle. With their victorious swords and the blood of their hearts they renewed the covenant between the God of Israel and His chosen people and promised land. We honor those who fought, the thousands of soldiers who risked their lives and set off for an unknown land.

We must also honor the planners today. As a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, I had the honor of hearing an explanation of the campaign from an officer of the General Staff, and I can say, doubtless on behalf of all the members of the Committee, that the planning was outstanding, and we must thank the Chief of Staff, all his officers and all those who engaged in that sacred work.

I also know that our revered teacher Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the knight of truth and splendor, would have instructed one of his pupils to say the following today: despite everything that has been between us in the past, and despite everything that may and doubtless will happen between us in the future, with the unavoidable rivalry between us, we congratulate the Prime Minister and the Government, which made a wise and just decision last Sunday.

That decision remains wise and just, despite the fact that it has been described in terms which are not unknown to us: "an act of madness"—*Pravda*; "a low adventure"—*l'Humanité*; "bare faced aggression"—*Daily Herald*.

We stood behind that campaign before it began. We were with our heroic soldiers on nights of anxiety and days of concern. We will also stand behind that campaign in the difficult days ahead of us. If the Government errs, it is as free men, without fear or favor, that we will criticize it, with all the openness and honesty of a free and loyal Opposition which is entitled and even obliged to express its thoughts. But the whole world, both west and east, must know that 96 percent of Israel's population approves of that campaign.

With the Speaker's permission, I will say to the nations of the world: we are convinced that this small, brave nation which has defended itself, its freedom and the spirit of its liberty, should be helped by all the peace—and freedom—loving nations of Asia, Europe, Africa and both Americas.

I would like, however, to send a special plea to three nations. The first is the French nation. I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of all the citizens of Israel when I say that our nation will never forget what France did in this crucial year—a year in which the balance of forces in the Middle East was shifted in favor of our enemies because of the supply of large quantities of superior arms to our most dangerous enemy—to increase Israel's military strength. Many claimed that after the terrible bloodletting of France's heroic war against the German aggressor and invader during the First World War, and after the tragic defeat of that great nation in the Second World War, France's voice in the choir of the nations had ended and its violin had fallen silent in the world orchestra. That was not the case, however. That great nation, the bearer of the beacon of liberty for over 170 years, will yet fulfill a great role in humanity, particularly in these terrible times, when barbarism and servitude, which conceal their designs with fine phrases, are rife.... We say today to the great French nation: stand by us and we will stand by you, for your sake and for ours, for your liberty and ours!

The second plea is addressed to Britain. This month marks almost 40 years since the document known as the Balfour Declaration was published. The verse: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, 'It is a people that do err in their heart,'" applies to you British. Today we say to the British people, do not try to take away from Israel the fruits of its victory, which were obtained with the blood of its best sons; do not try to take them away, whether by force or by pressure or by threats of pressure and force. If Britain has changed its attitude to our nation, we will act likewise; if Britain treats us badly, we will act likewise; if it treats us well, we will act likewise. This plea is directed not only to that part of the British nation which is represented by its government, but also to the opposition. As far as political principles are concerned, the British opposition has proved to free men throughout the world in these fraught times how free men who believe that they are right, even if they are not necessarily right, do not hesitate even in times of war to oppose their government. In this respect, however, we also call on the opposition in Britain's parliament to leave Israel out of the party-political game in Britain. The entire British nation must understand, even after such a tragic delay, that for thirty-nine years they made very grave mistakes. We paid for them with the blood of six million Jews, but they also paid for them with Britain's standing in the world. Let the entire British nation mend its ways regarding us, regardless of political party, and it will go well with them.

My third plea is to the U.S.A. In the third watch of the night, when our soldiers set out for the desert in order to fight for the nation's existence and future, we heard very hard words, unbearably hard words, from the representative of the great American republic. He said that we

were the aggressors and demanded that Israel be punished. But things can be forgotten. Let America remember its War of Independence, let America remember the natural right which it proclaimed: "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This three-part right was given to our nation no less than to the members of the American nation.

This morning we heard that President Eisenhower has been re-elected, with an overwhelming majority, and will lead his nation for the next four years. We say to him, to all his advisors and to the American people: stand as free men behind our nation, which desires freedom and pursues justice, and it will go well with both you and us.

Let us turn our attention to the interim conclusions to be drawn from our army's mighty victory. The first conclusion is: our army did not strike the enemy so that there would be perpetual war between us and Egypt. The objective is a true peace.

The second conclusion—which we recommend—is: we must mete out humane treatment to all Arabs currently under Israel's rule—whether refugees or fugitives. The enemy should be vanquished, but once he has surrendered he must not be hurt; we must show compassion towards him, extend him our hand, help him rebuild his house.

Thirdly, a new danger, the establishment of an international force for the Middle East, has appeared on the horizon. For obvious reasons I am not prepared today, in public, to analyze in detail the danger this force—if established—represents for our nation. It is our duty, however, to draw the nation's attention to the fact that the intention may not be solely as regards the south but also to another armistice line; it may not be decisive that we will not allow that force into our sovereign area. Of course we will not let it in. The danger lies in the fact that others may let it in. And then, behind the wall of the foreign international force, our enemies will once again be sure that no harm will befall them and they will continue with their vigorous preparations to attack us once more, in geographical and strategic conditions which are unfavorable to us.

The main conclusion is: "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Mr Speaker, Knesset Members, how our hearts swelled when we heard the IDF's announcement about the liberation of the Gaza Strip. Our army said: part of the homeland, which was torn away from it, has returned to its bosom. We give praise and thanks for having been privileged to hear those words, but if Gaza was a town of our forefathers which was torn away from the homeland, what is Jerusalem, what is Hebron, what is Bethlehem?

No longer will it be said in Israel, when we demand a campaign to liberate the land of our forefathers: "aggression," "expansion," "that permanent border has been determined in the Rhodes agreements, and will remain where it is." Let the whole nation draw the conclusion from the liberation of the conquered area in the south. Part of the homeland which is under foreign rule does not cease to be part of the homeland.

Alien conquest does not annul our eternal right to the land of our fathers and our sons.

The work is not ended, there remains yet very much land to be possessed, and any campaign undertaken in order to liberate the conquered areas of our homeland also constitutes use of our right to legal, national self-defense; that is also a way of maintaining our eternal right.

The whole nation must unite today around that awareness, and then, with the help of Divine Providence, we may all—the Government, the Knesset, tens of thousands of our people—be privileged to ascend the Temple Mount in order to give thanks and praise to the God of Israel for having taken us out of slavery into true freedom in this generation.

What we have said was true and honest. Only three weeks ago, at the conclusion of the political debate in the Knesset, we proposed passing a resolution affirming Israel's national, legal right to self-defense... justifying strategic campaigns undertaken at the opportune moment and describing Nasser's dictatorship as a threat to the entire free world, not only Israel....

When we told the nation that there was no point waiting until the enemy was ready to make a concerted effort to destroy us, with the advantage of superior and more numerous weapons and the element of surprise, but that we should strike him while there was still time and wrest the weapons away from him...; when we told our people that a campaign of liberation of that nature would not only cost us less in money but also save Jewish lives...; when we said to the nation that against the background of the Suez dispute...there was a chance that Israel...would receive aid...from our enemy's enemy; when we informed the people that we would not necessarily have to stand alone against that common enemy; when we told the nation that this was the way to good relations and the prevention of bloodshed; when we said all those things, we were not being misleading. What we said was true and honest.

But we must not let this go to our heads, and we will not engage in any dispute today. We know that this is not the end of the matter. Difficult trials and days of great anxiety still await us. And just as our army—with the nation behind it—stood firm, so will we have to stand united, especially in difficult times.

Today we have emerged from darkness into dim dawn. If we are capable of using our national right to self-defense as it is understood today by the best men in the world and by the entire nation; and if we are capable of insisting on Israel's right to the land of its fathers; and if we are capable of maintaining the wonderful national unity which was revealed around our heroic sons—with the help of the God of Israel we will emerge from the dimness into a great light.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset. Repetitions of expressions of admiration for our army's victory and of

our participation in the sorrow of the families of the soldiers who fell in battle could weaken the impact of the emotions thus expressed. Nevertheless, I would like to say that this campaign...will go down in history as one of the greatest military actions ever seen....We thank the IDF for its perfect planning and execution....At this time we should all give special thanks to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, who laid the foundations for our military strength, worked ceaselessly to improve it and was capable of employing it at the right time and in the appropriate circumstances.

Nor should we overlook the moral standard and maturity of the entire public which, in the hours before the decision...maintained perfect calm, set all quarrels aside and, when the battle was over, did not become drunk with victory.

It is still too early to assess to the full what effect our military achievement will have on the political and security situation in the Middle East. There is no doubt, however, that the chief aim of the campaign—increasing our security, especially by placing the threat to our existence at a distance from us, a threat which was characterized by the military organization around us under Egypt's command—was achieved. For the moment, we note with great satisfaction that important areas from which our security was threatened daily only a few steps away from our settlements have been restored to the homeland, and the areas from which the Egyptian army was driven out will doubtless constitute a guarantee for the state's security.

Special importance should be attached to our having broken the blockade on Eilat...and we will doubtless be mindful of all the conclusions deriving from that liberation in the political struggle which will also focus on our military achievements....

More than at the time of the deal to supply heavy arms to Egypt by the Soviet government, and more than when the Suez crisis broke out, the eyes of the world were turned to the Middle East as the place from which world peace was threatened. We share the anxiety of the world, even though facts and deeds raise doubts as to whether it is genuine. From the outset, however, this anxiety was connected with a growing threat to Israel's security and existence.

I would like to note with satisfaction the attitude of the French government and nation, which displayed a full understanding of our position and were the first to afford us the greatest aid in the most effective way.

We greatly regret the fact that the mighty government which has made the call for world peace the foremost slogan of its policy turned the Sinai Peninsula into an enormous arsenal, the object of which was evident to it, and evinced less understanding than any other world factor to the threat to our existence, continuing to behave in an extremely unfriendly manner towards us. We do not determine our attitude in for-

eign policy on the basis of a country's internal regime, but there is no reason to regret the fact that we have no ties with the regime in Russia. What we regret is its government's attitude towards us.

The U.S. government has evinced a negative attitude, at least towards the military campaign we were forced to undertake, and was a party to the condemnation of it by the Security Council of the U.N. The governments of the U.S. have generally treated us sympathetically, and have extended us economic aid....We hope that it is only the fear of a wider conflagration which has temporarily clouded its judgment, and that the reason does not lie in our defensive action. We trust that upon reconsidering the matter the U.S. government will realize how necessary it was....

The British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, was not only the first of all international factors to discern the danger of annihilation which threatened us, forcing us to take the action we took; he was also the first to note that the armistice lines between us and Egypt could not be those which divided two countries. Consequently, the Foreign Office spokesman's statement that we should immediately withdraw behind those lines is incomprehensible.

In referring to international factors we should note that our Government's tendency to rely in its foreign policy on socialist parties abroad has proved a disappointment once more. This is borne out by the attitude of the British Labor Party and the resolutions of condemnation passed against us at the Bombay Conference. The socialist parties of the world determine their stands on their countries' foreign policies on the basis of national considerations, which may or may not be right, but not on the basis of international socialist solidarity.

Troops from Syria and/or Iraq as well as Saudi Arabia have—it is rumored—entered the neighboring kingdom of Jordan. This violates the status quo, and although these troop movements do not have the same dangerous significance they would have had before the Egyptian army was defeated by the IDF, we must nevertheless view them with concern, and our Government must be on its guard.

The U.N. Observers made an effort...to end the border clashes, as the murders inside Israel by guerrilla bands were termed. Now we have been told that a U.N.-sponsored international police force, whose task has been variously described, is to be established. We fully agree with international supervision of the Suez Canal by an international police force. We oppose the idea of any international police force operating on our territory. It has now been proved that if the authorities in the neighboring countries do not organize incursions, there are no incursions. It does not depend on any police force, and if there are no incursions there will be no reactions.

The armistice lines with Egypt have ceased to exist. We aspire for peace with Egypt, as we do with the other Arab countries, and we hope that

the armistice lines with them will be replaced by peace agreements. Perhaps the time has come for self-examination and reconsideration in all the Arab countries. We will be the first to welcome this.

...

I. Raphael (Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, while we are still rejoicing at the wonderful victory gained by our soldiers, and while we are still bewailing the loyal, heroic men who fell in defense of their country, we are unable to fully grasp the tremendous event of the last few days, which seems to be a miracle from heaven....

All we can do right now is to voice the nation's joy at the miracle of our deliverance, and to congratulate the Government for having made the right decision at the right time, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, whom Divine Providence has appointed to fulfill a historic mission in conducting the war of defense and liberation; the General Staff, those who planned and implemented so well; but first and foremost we must say a prayer of thanks to the Guardian of Israel, who preserves the nation's existence so that it may fulfill its mission in the world and among the nations.

Only someone who has seen the war fronts, even after the fighting has ended, and has observed the enemy's preparations, the kinds and quantities of weapons, the plans to attack us near our borders which were undoubtedly prepared with help from abroad, and probably with the aid of former Nazi officers, knows what the enemy sought to do to us, and would have done had he not been defeated. Anyone who has heard expert explanations and details of the fighting knows that God Almighty wrought miracles, many miracles, for us, when we faced the evil confronting us.

It is a mistake to think that the enemy did not fight. He fought valiantly, he entrenched himself and defended himself, but eventually he broke, because in this case man was fighting against machine, spirit and volunteering against orders and commands, soldiers who knew they were fighting for their lives and the existence of their people for lack of choice against those sent in an arrogant and malicious military escapade. Once again, we demonstrated the greatness of our army, most of which does not consist of professional soldiers, being reservists who work in other fields, men who love freedom and peace, and proved that our army is one of internal freedom imbued with the highest Jewish and human ideals.

Alongside the honor and praise which the IDF deserves, it is our duty to praise the fortitude, calm and discipline of the civilian rear. There was no fear of danger or panic, nor was there undue rejoicing at our victory and the enemy's downfall, but it discharged its crucial task honorably, as befits a great nation, a special people, at a moment of greatness.

Knesset Members, no one can delude themselves that the victory on the battlefield solves our problems. We must still be fully on our guard, because they are still sharpening their weapons on the other side of our borders. Our soldiers may be called upon to fulfill another defensive mission soon in the east and the north. Before us lies a difficult, complex and wearying political campaign. Many world politicians are not prepared to admit that we were right to act as we did.... Each one, out of their own interests, will cast aspersions upon us for doing things which they allow themselves...judging us by criteria different to those by which they judge themselves. And although official, professional politicians do not always act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, what is really astonishing is the position adopted by certain leaders of Britain's Labor Party who, for internal reasons, opposed our just cause, thereby raising doubts as to their adherence to justice and honesty in international decisions. Are they still unaware of the true nature of the military junta in Egypt? Does the appearance of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in the personal equipment of Nasser's soldiers and the Nazi planning of the battles still fail to remove the film from their eyes so that they can see what was really going on here? Do they, like the others, ignore the fact that our victory brought freedom and relief not only to us but also to other peoples, Arab and Moslem peoples, whose independence the insane Egyptian tyrant endangered in his aspiration to rule them? In their heart of hearts they know the truth and welcome our liberating action, even if they will not admit it publicly.

We stand before difficult political attacks by the various interest groups which, when combined, will constitute a tough opponent. This time we will require a great deal of courage on the political front, perhaps no less than on the battlefield. We will have to withstand pressure and threats.

The areas which were sanctified with the blood of our sons were sanctified for the future as well as for the present. The Egyptians have no greater historic right to those areas than the People of the Book, for whom the event at Mount Sinai determined its entire future course. Our devotion to the U.N. as an institution of peace and our gratitude to it for its unforgettable part in our establishment are well-known. We remain faithful to its Charter and founding principles as well as to its basic essence, and we will support that institution whenever it acts in accordance with them. Nevertheless, we must fight within its framework and with the help of our friends against any deviation from the fulfillment of its task. The leaders of the U.N. must also recognize the new situations which have been created, and should not cling to obsolete tools. The Armistice Agreements, which served a temporary purpose, should make way for a peace agreement between us and the Arab peoples. Peace will come into being provided the great nations want it. We want it, let the Arab peoples also want it, for their own benefit and welfare.

There are worrying aspects to the political campaign, which has already begun. We wanted to congratulate certain countries—France and Britain—on the understanding they have evinced for our position, as expressed in speeches and statements made by their leaders, and we entertained the hope that this would mark the beginning of a new era in the relations between us. But we challenge the new nuances in Britain's official statements, the hints that we will be asked to withdraw our forces from the areas we conquered even before we sit down to negotiate a peace agreement.

With all the moral force of a small, peace-loving nation whose only aspiration is to be allowed to live and build its future, we reject the threats of the mighty Soviet Power and the hostile attitude it displays towards us....The U.S.S.R. played a part in Egypt's defeat and downfall by giving it arms and encouraging the arrogant stance of the tyrant, embroiling him in schemes of war instead of directing him to heal his nation both socially and economically. Will the Soviets continue to interfere in events in this region, to the detriment of all who dwell here?...

While mobilizing the aid of all men of good will in the world—especially among small nations which fear for their existence as we do for ours—we must demand that the large nations respect our existence and independence, even if we are a small nation. We will assail world public opinion in order to prove our justice and our love of peace; in order to convince it that our war is solely one of survival and that we have no intentions of conquest and imperialist expansion, and that we will make every effort to achieve peace with the Arabs, because we do not hate them. Incidentally, anyone who sees how the Arabs of Gaza feel and conduct themselves under Israeli rule, cannot help comparing this with the very different situation which might have arisen had Israel been conquered by the enemy.

We will have to appeal to all groups and nations. We will seek special understanding from those nations which still adhere to the Bible, requesting that they display their true feelings to the People of the Book which is renewing itself in the Land of the Bible. Our information campaign must encompass friends and rivals, including friends of yesterday who have disappointed us. We should also try to find ways to people and groups in Arab and Moslem countries who may also be starting to understand what they have not realized till now.

The Government and the entire nation must stand firm in the face of the renewed dangers. There is no doubt that our nation in the diaspora, which understands our struggle, will stand behind us so that our victory may be established and the existence of the state assured. This is a time for unity, because the battle continues.

May the true and noble brotherhood which revealed itself on the battlefield and the refreshing national unity which the nation displayed during the days of danger and war shine their great light on the nation

in the coming time, when we will have to rescue the country from political dangers and set the ship of state afloat on the wide ocean, that it may serve as a shining beacon for our people in the diaspora and a light unto all the nations, for a life of lasting happiness and peace.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avoda-Po'alei Zion): The nation in Israel and in the diaspora is proud of and grateful to the IDF which, by striking the Egyptian armies, saved Israel from the danger of physical destruction. Eight years after the battles of 1948 the Egyptian tyrant placed a huge force at the southern approaches of our country, with the intention of invading and destroying it. Huge amounts of weapons from Britain, and even more from the U.S.S.R., were amassed systematically in the Sinai desert. New roads were built with the intention of enabling the troops to reach the heart of Israel; new airfields were built with runways for jets, so that the enemy's planes would be nearer the center of Israel. Huge bases were built for storing ammunition, food and engineering equipment; workshops for repairing tanks and vehicles were set up, and all this together constituted an immense network intended to bring about our downfall.

But the IDF headed off the danger, surprised the enemy, cast the tank and its rider to the sand, paralyzed and smashed cannon, and saved us from the awful fate that would have been ours had we not acted with foresight.

Now the spaces of the Sinai desert have been cleansed. The Gaza Strip from where incursions came has been liberated, we occupy Rafah and El-Arish, and in one sweep the IDF has broken the blockade of Eilat....

It is splendid to see the pride and joy of the officers, the planners, the Air Force, the armored corps, the Navy and all the services. Once more we drink the heady wine of the battles of defense and liberation of 1948. For me it was a great experience to see the symbolism of this. It may not be chance that those same officers who, in the final stages of the War of Independence, reached the outskirts of Rafah and El-Arish, conquered Abu-Ageila and got as far as Bir-Hama but had to withdraw because of pressure from abroad, now commanded units which were far better equipped and conquered those very places and continued south.

Our victory was no miracle but the fruit of the nation's spirit and ability, the outcome of the IDF's planning and courage, the result of meticulous work all the years, of ceaseless efforts to obtain defensive weapons, of looking ahead and of the Israel Government's ability and daring in making the right decision at the right moment. We are proud of our share in that decision.

The Sinai desert has been completely cleansed of the invading army. Now one can see how the Egyptian people was milked unnecessarily to buy offensive weapons for that Nazi tyrant's accursed and shameful escapade. The Egyptian masses may have learned the lesson

that they would be well-advised not to place their army and their sons at the command of that megalomaniac who has brought disaster upon them. We certainly have a lesson to learn. We must never again allow the Sinai desert to become a launching pad for an invasion. With all our military and political strength and with all our love of justice and hatred of bloodshed, our nation has made up its mind that the Sinai desert will be an area of peace and defense for Israel, not one from which Israel may be attacked. Not only can we no longer agree to the re-deployment of the Egyptians in Sinai, but we must firmly oppose the stationing of foreign troops in Sinai, so that Israel can never be attacked from there again.

But even though the enemy in the south has been vanquished we must not disregard the dangers threatening us in the north and the east, even though we are now entitled to regard ourselves as safer because those in the east who wish us harm will think twice and three times before attacking us.

The Prime Minister was right in saying here today that there is a distinction between the Armistice Agreements with Jordan and Syria and those with Egypt, which were buried even before the battle began.

But we must not divert our attention from the fact that the political basis upon which the Armistice Agreements between us and Jordan rest has changed radically with the entry of the Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Syrian armies into Jordan. The Armistice Agreements are a two-way concept and Israel cannot be expected to keep them if the other side does not.

The Sinai Campaign was forced upon us by our need to defend ourselves, and we emerged victorious because of our desire to live as a free nation and maintain our independence...Those who act in the cruellest manner where any danger to themselves is concerned but ignore the basic needs of our physical existence, attempting to libel us as serving foreign interests or as having expansionist aims, mock us. No false accusations will deter us from self-defense. As in the past, so in the future, too, we have no desire to fall into the false abyss between spirit and matter, even though we are the people of the spirit. Only if we exist will there be any point in our adherence to ideals. We are not prepared to admit the truth of universal, international socialist ideals if they serve to justify our destruction. We believe in human and socialist values and maintain them only because we exist, preserve our independence and defend our freedom. We can fulfill our mission in human society as a free, peace-loving nation only if we defend ourselves from destruction, even if it is disguised as progress.

In the heat of battle we feel how bitter, cruel and accursed war is. We feel that this time, when the flames of war are still burning, should teach even those in our region who wish us ill how necessary and possible peace is. It is at a time like this that Israel should take courageous

and appropriate political steps, revealing the full extent of its readiness to put an end to the unfortunate situation in which we find ourselves on all sides, and acting in order to settle affairs in our region in such a way that nations will not be exploited by others, and so that nations may live alongside one another in brotherhood, working together for progress and prosperity.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we are now summing up a brief chapter in the State of Israel's struggle for its existence and its future; we are summing up a brilliant military campaign which is virtually unparalleled in world history. We may first and foremost congratulate ourselves on the fact that with the liberation of the Gaza Strip we have removed a malignant thorn from Israel's side. Now that that has been achieved, I hope that—with the exception of one party group in this House—no party group will suggest that we put that malignant thorn back with our own hands, just as no party group will propose that we negate the glorious campaign that opened the blockade on Eilat.

Mapam has not concealed its view, to which it adheres still today, that in the long run peace, however shaky, is preferable. But the die was cast, and we kept our long-standing...vow to stand alongside the nation fighting to defend itself and alongside the IDF. We did not cease to state our opinion in public at all times, but when the die was cast we bore full responsibility for the Government's acts and the campaign in front of us. We will bear that responsibility particularly in the face of our many critics, from the State Department in Washington to the world of progress and socialism.

We were told yesterday that while warning England, France and Israel, the U.S.S.R. hastened to recall its ambassador from Israel and threatened our State's very existence and future. That is the dubious uniqueness with which, to our sorrow, even the mighty socialist state treats our people and our country.

Both avowed enemies and friends condemn the IDF's heroic campaign. Even our Labour colleagues joined in the chorus. The following three claims have been made: firstly, that during the last few years there has been a breathing space, and that the armed conflict erupted just when Egypt was about to agree to a solution to the Suez Canal conflict which would have satisfied everyone. This hypocritical contention was made even by our "friend," the well-known "man of peace," Mr. Foster Dulles. It is true that until the last day before the outbreak of hostilities between us, we heard from the Egyptians that freedom of navigation would be granted to all countries, except Israel. But, as is well-known, an unpleasant stain such as denying freedom of navigation to Israel is easily ignored by diplomats or, at the most, eased by passing non-comittal resolutions which tyrants like Nasser simply throw into the garbage.

The second contention is that despite the reduction of tension we invaded Egypt's territory and attacked it although it had done nothing. We, who have always opposed initiated war, must reject that one-sided condemnation. The truth is that not only did the government of Egypt fail to keep its commitments arising from the Armistice Agreement, and not only did it cease to declare that it continued to maintain a state of war with us, but it even openly developed the most despicable and cowardly form of war...that of murderous ambushes directed from on high, the method of the *fedayeen*. That method, which was intended to make us tire of our existence as a nation in our own land and make our daily life hell, did not distinguish between young and old, women and men, spewing death and destruction in workers' homes and immigrant villages, and was not even condemned by the U.N., which condemned our acts of retaliation. Nasser and his allies announced day and night that they were determined to wipe us off the face of the earth and that they would strike when it suited them, while the Powers which desired the Cairo tyrant's friendship vied to supply unending quantities of first-rate arms of the heaviest and most aggressive type.

It does not console us that the Stalin tanks were preceded by Britain's Centurions. In any event, the enormous arsenals situated at all stations between Suez and El-Arish, as well as between Rafah and Gaza, prove in retrospect that the Egyptian tyrant, who mercilessly persecutes communists and men of peace in his country, did not seriously intend to direct the mountains of weapons he received from the Czech arms deal against those Western Powers which had initiated the Baghdad Pact. He sought to turn all the weapons from his deals solely against us.

When an Egyptian general was chosen, before the IDF's armed campaign, to command the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and these allies used the opportunity to declare their aggressive intentions against us, we did not hear any reservations of any kind from the Powers which were competing for the dictator's friendship. Now they dissociate themselves from the affair, and sixty hands are raised against us in the U.N.

The third contention against us is that we did not utilize the path of negotiations before acting as we did...Those who preach negotiations know that for years the Government of Israel reiterated its policy of being ready to enter into negotiations with any of the Arab countries around us at any time, with the object of turning the shaky Armistice Agreement into a firm peace treaty. It took only six days for the enemy to flee before our army, and once again we heard our Government's clarion call stating that we have ceased firing and are ready for peace negotiations with Egypt and any other country....

I have no doubt that we are not attracted by the conquest of territory which is not ours. We have freed our southern border of the provocations

of the Egyptians and the *fedayeen* by liberating the Gaza Strip from Egypt, which invaded it in 1948. We have restored freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and we hope that our right to pass through the Suez Canal will now be upheld. We demand that the Arab blockade and boycott of our products and of transport associated with our country be ended. In a word, we demand relations of peace and good neighborliness. We have never heard a representative of our country speak against the nationalization of the Suez Canal. All that we demanded—and unfortunately not only Egypt ignored this—was the restoration of everyone's navigation rights, including Israel's.

To the best of my knowledge, we made no pact with France and Britain. They have objectives of their own in this armed quarrel with Egypt. Why should we look for any evidence more convincing than that given by the Prime Minister of Britain? He has already washed his hands of us, declaring while he bombed the Canal that Israel was unjustified in entering the Sinai Peninsula. We have no illusions regarding Britain's intentions. It is not so long since Britain's representative at the U.N. attacked us most savagely. If in this instance of our armed struggle with Egypt Britain used its veto in the Security Council against our condemnation as the aggressor, it did not do so because of its love for us. Let us not forget that in his famous speech at Guildhall the British Prime Minister was the first to hint at his desire to "mediate" in order to impose a peace on us based on a compromise with the Partition Plan of 29 November 1947. Yesterday the British spokesman hastened to reveal that that statement by Eden, which clashes with Israel's territorial integrity, has not yet fallen by the wayside.

To our regret, the socialist countries also hint at a compromise with the Partition Plan. The demand for direct negotiations without prior conditions has recently been replaced by the call for imposed mediation, which is totally against us. The tone was set in Bandung. That was the first time when Israel's problems were dealt with in our absence. In Bandung the demand for unconditional direct negotiations with us was replaced by an anti-Israel resolution passed in accordance with Arab demands. This was followed by a change in the climate. It is hardly surprising, then, that the first and only communist minister in any Arab country, namely Jordan, announced upon taking office that they would never conduct negotiations with "criminal" Israel. That is also the mood that was generated in Cairo by Nasser, the hero of Bandung.

Now they are preaching at us again that we should replace our aggressive reaction with an attempt to negotiate. To our regret, however, no one is speaking clearly even now. We are told to negotiate, but not what for. There is only one kind of negotiations which can serve the interests of peace in the region and the whole world, and that is direct negotiations without prior conditions....

...After the IDF's brilliant campaign there are still difficulties and dangers before us....Once again, as in the War of Independence, we have proved our superiority in battle. We have proved that we can win a lightning strike. But we now confront the difficult task of winning the battle for peace. The battle for peace is a long one, it has been going on for eight years, since the end of the War of Independence, and we are still knocking at closed doors. Those who condemned us as aggressors in the U.N. did precious little during the past eight years to bring us nearer our goal—stable peace. It is evident that that difficult task will rest on our shoulders in the future too.

What has our experience taught us? That our neighbors have one weapon which has served them far more efficiently and well than any arms deal with the West and East together, and that weapon is hatred. They have proved that they can cultivate hatred stubbornly, and that it constitutes a far more effective barrier than all the arms in their possession. For us it is a matter of life and death whether we manage to break through the barrier of hatred and put an end to the dream of unsatisfied revenge. We have only one way to break through that barrier, and that is the brotherhood of nations.

After the victorious test of battle chauvinist phrases will doubtless be bandied about at every opportunity. We must warn all those who love our country, the masses in the urban and rural areas, who have once again revealed their readiness to make any sacrifice, not to be led astray by clever patriotic phrases and not to become prideful at this testing time. We will pave the path to peace if we reduce hatred, build bridges between nations and individuals and undertake daily constructive and human acts of justice and charity.

With the attachment of the Gaza Strip to the homeland the Arab minority in Israel has grown to almost half a million persons. Henceforth we must deal with this minority in our country, where we decide our own fate, as we would have other nations deal with us. Only if we can imbue the members of the Arab minority in Israel with a sense of security in their existence, their future and their human and civilian stature, will we have any hope of making a path to the hearts of the neighboring Arab peoples, thereby bringing the peace we desire nearer.

Knesset Members, the international horizon around us is still fairly gloomy. But greater than any danger which threatens us from outside is that which awaits us if...we are unable to make the effort to break the barrier of hatred and isolation around us. After two thousand years of exile we are returning to that great continent, the cradle of civilization, Asia. That continent is currently undergoing a mighty struggle for human freedom and national independence. It would be an unimaginable tragedy if the peoples of that continent were to continue forever to regard us as an alien body, just as it would be our greatest victory if in the years to come we could combine our war of national and

socialist independence with that of the peoples of that immense and ancient continent.

...

S. Mikunis (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Israel has never known such a fateful and dangerous time as this....The efforts made by the Government and its supporters to conceal from the nation the pit it has dug for it by invading Egypt are in vain. It is not joy but deep anxiety which all Israel feels now.

The war which the Government began against Egypt on October 29 does not serve any national interest of Israel's but endangers the country. This is an unjust war, which was advocated by Herut. It will be recalled that this idea was rejected and condemned only three weeks ago, during the political debate in the Knesset, by almost all the party groups. The Prime Minister himself said then that Israel would not initiate a war. It is obvious that the Government misled the nation and embroiled Israel in a dangerous military and political escapade, the end of which cannot yet be seen. The attack on Egypt does not solve any problem for Israel, and merely creates new ones and greater isolation....The attack was not intended to enhance Israel's security but to provide an excuse for the armed intervention of the British and the French, helping them to return by force of arms to their lost positions on the Suez Canal and in the Middle East.

The Ben-Gurion Government constituted the sole factor in the entire world...which supported the rulers of France and Britain, who are isolated in their scheme to attack Egypt and conquer the Suez Canal....It is characteristic that in no speech did the Prime Minister mention his shameful plot with hated colonialism and his despicable service to the British and French imperialists.

By placing Israel at the service of the imperialist pirates in the Middle East, the Government generates hatred of Israel among the Arab peoples as well as in Asia and Africa, among all those who love peace and independence, endangering our future in this part of the world.

The aggression...of Britain, France and Israel has been vigorously condemned by 93 percent of the members of the U.N., was censured at the Asian Socialist Conference which Mapai attended and aroused protest demonstrations and strikes in many countries, including by Britain's Labor Party and the working and other classes in France.

It should be noted that only a few days after the start of the war, after the Government of Israel had created the excuse for the imperialists' military intervention at Suez, the British Foreign Office announced that it would force Israel to withdraw behind the armistice lines....The French imperialists, Israel's new patrons, will say something similar in another day or two. That custom is particularly prevalent among them just now, when both the British and the French imperialists are be-

ing driven out of Asia and Africa and their colonialist system is about to be completely destroyed.

The Government tries to conceal its service to imperialism by talking about territorial conquests, yet it is not territory which Israel lacks, however, but understanding and peace with the Arab peoples and freedom from dependence upon imperialism. A policy of territorial conquest is a two-edged sword, since it may create the precedent and basis for territorial conquests in the reverse direction, by the neighboring countries of Israel. Force cannot be the basis for peaceful coexistence between Israel and the Arabs. The time is past when it was possible to repress nations by force of arms and hold on to conquered territory on a long-term basis.

(From the floor: Like in Hungary!)

Hungary will not help you solve Israel's problems.

The war which the Government began against Egypt was so opposed to Israel's national interests that the Government had to find all kinds of wild excuses for it. No sensible person can accept the claim that the attack on Egypt was a "defensive" act. The murder of innocent Israelis by the *fedayeen*, which was condemned by the entire Israeli public, does not justify an aggressive war. This line of argument would justify similar moves by the neighboring countries, in reaction to the raid on Kalkilya, for example.

The relations between Israel and the Arabs will be settled by peaceful methods, not on the battlefield...The attack on Egypt...was an escapade, an irresponsible gamble with the fate and future of our people, with the sacred subject of peace. An aggressive war does not solve any problem, it merely complicates existing ones and creates new ones...

The experience of recent years proves that aggression is doomed to failure. That was the case in Korea, in Indo-China, in Morocco, in Tunisia—

(From the floor: In Hungary!)

M. Sneh (Maki): Who are you defending? Mindszenty? Horthy?

S. Mikunis (Maki): We have enough headaches of our own; don't go to Budapest, it's too far away.

B. Idelson (Mapai): You go there.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Are you sending me there? I came from there before you did. She's sending me to Hungary!

The same will happen with regard to Algeria, Cyprus and Egypt. It is not clever and it is dangerous for Israel's future to ignore the basic change in political forces in the world to the detriment of imperialism. It is not clever and it is dangerous for the Government to disregard the readiness of large and small countries to help attacked nations to defend themselves and ensure their national independence.

...In the Prime Minister's seven points he said...that Israel would never agree to allow a foreign force into its territory. It seems to me...that the only way to achieve this is not to hold onto foreign conquered territory. The statement that Israel will not fight any Arab country unless it attacks Israel has been confuted by events....

To the best of our knowledge, it is very difficult to accept the Government's assertions regarding its desire for peace with Egypt if it wages war against it and conquers territory. Such declarations smack of hypocrisy. The Prime Minister says that he is ready for unconditional negotiations with Egypt...but he himself is imposing conditions...on the other side by demanding that it recognize the fait accompli of territorial conquest and annexation by force of arms. The Prime Minister disregarded the basic fact that the Government of Israel has sabotaged the chances of peace negotiations with the Arab peoples by supporting the imperialists against the struggle for independence of the neighboring peoples and by stubbornly refusing to consider the just national rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

Anyone who really and truly wants peace must know that one does not get it by attacks, raids, conquests and annexations....The only way to peace is to abandon a policy of force, to consider the just national rights of other nations and to be ready to make compromises....

In order to amend the immense damage caused Israel by the invasion of Egypt, in order to prevent developments which are dangerous for our people and our state, the Government should, in our view, respond to the U.N.'s call for the withdrawal of the IDF. The grave warning and important advice of the Soviet Prime Minister should also be taken into account in view of the tireless efforts of Soviet policy to ensure the peace and independence of all the nations of the Middle East.

A. Herzfeld (Mapai): That's the whole "truth."

S. Mikunis (Maki): Because the U.S.S.R. is the only Power which has formulated just and correct guidelines, as in its statement of April 17 this year regarding the peaceful settlement of the Palestine problem.

Distinguished Knesset, on the evening of October 29, when the attack on Egypt at the order of Ben-Gurion's Government became known, our Communist party group in the Knesset proposed a vote of no confidence in the Government. We hereby revive our proposal: for the sake of Israel's security, for the sake of Israel's future, for the sake of national peace and independence, the Knesset should express no confidence in the Government of war headed by Ben-Gurion.

...

Salah Hassan Hanifas (Progress and Labor): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the events of the last few days are undoubtedly the direct result of the misguided and dangerous policy of the Arab rulers. It is highly regrettable that the Arab rulers have not yet properly assessed

the new situation in the region, and do not see—or do not want to see—where their people's true benefit lies. They continue to think and act in terms of old, outdated concepts, and by their stubborn refusal to see the situation as it really is they bring one disaster after another upon their people.

It is patently evident that Egypt's first obligation now is to learn the lesson of recent events and abandon the misguided path it has taken till now. For its own good it must abandon incitement, threats and the illusion that it can destroy Israel.

The other Arab rulers, who have not yet encountered the IDF and have not yet experienced the awesome events which were Egypt's lot, should spare their peoples and their countries similar, pointless disasters. In the final event their eyes will be opened to see that the welfare and prosperity of our region will be achieved only through a true and permanent peace between the Arab countries and Israel.

At this great and historic moment I would like to ask Allah to be merciful to the brave heroes who fell on the field of battle, the field of honor, heroism and duty, and to comfort and strengthen their families. I congratulate the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff, as well as the entire IDF, which within a few days completed this splendid military campaign which guaranteed Israel's welfare and security.

I hereby give you my assurance as a Druse and a soldier that all Israel's Druse inhabitants...are glad to mingle their blood with that of their Jewish brethren on the battlefield. It is a great honor for us, and this is our path forever.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: There are two proposals to sum up the debate, one from Maki and the other from all the other party groups. I give the floor to MK Sneh.

M. Sneh (Maki): On behalf of the Israel Communist Party in the Knesset I submit the following proposal: Because of the military attack on Egypt; because of the service to the enslaving colonialism of the French and the British; because it has put peace with the Arab peoples—the desire of all Jews—further away; because it has engendered hatred of Israel among the peoples of Asia and Africa; because it has isolated Israel in the world; because it has endangered Israel's security and future—the Knesset expresses no confidence in the Government of war headed by Ben-Gurion.

The Vote

Those in favor of Maki's proposal of
no confidence in the Government 3

Those against 87

(The proposal was not adopted.)

A. Govrin (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, on behalf of all the Knesset party groups except for Maki, namely, the members of the Coalition (Mapai, Ahdut Ha'Avoda-Po'alei Zion, Mapam, Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi and the Progressive Party) and the party groups of Herut, the General Zionists, the Democratic Party of Israeli Arabs, Progress and Labor, Agriculture and Development, I hereby propose the following resolutions:

A. The Knesset accepts with esteem the statement made by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense on 7 November 1956 about the military and political campaign.

B. The Knesset and the nation send their warm congratulations to the IDF from Dan to Yotva on its victory in the Sinai war and which, by its preparedness, ability and spirit of sacrifice, completely defeated the Egyptian enemy. May God bless the IDF....

The Knesset bows its head in memory of the IDF soldiers who fell for the life of the State of Israel, and expresses its condolences to the families which lost their loved ones, who are dear to everyone in Israel.

The Knesset wishes all the wounded soldiers a complete and speedy recovery.

The Vote

Those in favor of MK A. Govrin's resolution 88

Those against 3

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The resolution is passed by 88 votes of all the party groups to 3 of the Communists.

(The Knesset Members sing the national anthem, *Hatikva*.)

Implementation of U.N. Assembly Resolution

Introduction

Less than twenty-four hours after his victory speech, after midnight on 8 November 1956, Ben-Gurion went on national radio to announce that in reply to a note received from President Eisenhower (who had been reelected for a second term barely forty-eight hours earlier) the Government of Israel had announced its willingness to withdraw its forces from Egyptian territory occupied in the course of the campaign of the previous week, as soon as arrangements had been made for the introduction of the U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF) whose establishment had been decided by the U.N. The pressures, information and misinformation which had brought about the *volte face* were not revealed at the time. In any case, it was a bitter pill for Ben-Gurion and no less for the IDF and its commanders. In the broadcast it was emphasized that the decision to withdraw came as a result of U.N. resolutions and in compliance with the wishes of the U.S., and not in response to the Soviet threat, which was rejected in a note to Bulganin which Ben-Gurion read out at the same time.

When almost a week later the IDF had not yet commenced its withdrawal, the leader of the Communist Party asked for the floor for a motion urging speedy evacuation, while a member of Herut, in another motion, appealed for the opposite course of action.

Sitting 187 of the Third Knesset

14 November 1956 (10 Kislev 5717)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We now proceed to motions for the agenda. Proposal no. 267 is moved by MK Sneh.

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, the Communist Party regards it as urgently necessary to place on the Knesset's agenda the political problems arising from the implementation of the U.N. Assembly resolution, which was passed unanimously with the exception of the Israeli representative, that the occupied areas of Egypt be evacuated and the IDF units withdrawn to behind the armistice lines. The Government has itself proved the need for an additional political debate, because the Prime Minister's broadcast statement of November 8 cancels and contradicts the important announcement included in his speech of November 7. The situation has changed, the Government's attitude has changed, it is

therefore necessary to hold a new political debate in the plenum of the Knesset.

So much for the formal argument. With the Speaker's permission, I will add a few reasons concerning the subject itself. The Government's action in launching a military attack on Egypt on October 29 caused unimaginable damage to the State of Israel, its international standing and its security:

A. The attack presented Israel as an aggressor in the eyes of the world, both West and East, and no tricks of information-will help here because Israeli forces invaded Egyptian territory.

B. The attack presented Israel in the eyes of the Asian and African peoples, in the eyes of all the nations fighting to be freed from the yoke of foreign colonialism, as the avant garde of colonialism in the Middle East...providing the excuse and forging the path for the imperialist aggression of the rulers of France and Britain against Egypt...

C. The attack blocked the way to the peace we desire with the Arab peoples...because on the basis of acts of conquest by Israel and its partnership in colonialist aggression, and on the basis of seizing something by force and creating a *fait accompli*, no one will conduct peace negotiations or take declarations of being ready for peace seriously....

Consequently, we think that in order to cleanse Israel's name of the stains of aggression and serving Anglo-French colonialism, and in order to clear the path to Israel-Arab peace and the security of our country, the IDF should withdraw in full from the occupied territories, thereby ending the unfortunate military escapade and abandoning the policy of attaining aims by force. We must implement the U.N. resolution forthwith, because that is, first and foremost, the highest national interest of Israel, its security and its entire future in this part of the world.

...There are many worrying indications that the rulers of France and Britain intend to undermine the U.N. resolution on various pretexts, and this may lead to a widescale conflagration in the region. Political wisdom in Israel, national responsibility in Israel, obliges us to remove our country from this dangerous cycle, detaching the network of Israel-Arab relations completely from the other, alien network of the forces of colonialism against Egypt and the other Arab countries....The first step in this is to restore the situation on the Israel-Egypt border to what it was, namely, to withdraw from the Sinai desert and the Gaza Strip, clearing the way for a stable peace settlement with our neighbors and solving all the disputed issues on the basis of a mutually-acceptable agreement, and taking into account the just national rights of all the peoples involved in the dispute.

The rulers of the colonial powers seek to embroil Israel in participating in the continued adventure. The French Foreign Minister is inciting Israel not to evacuate the Gaza Strip, and official Israeli

spokesmen are also speaking in that vein. The *New York Times* reports from Jerusalem that there is not yet complete readiness to withdraw even from the Sinai desert. Elements within the American Administration are attempting to divert Israel's military forces toward Jordan. All this means new and terrible dangers for the people and the State of Israel.

It is not the withdrawal from occupied territories which is the disaster but the actual invasion and conquest, while withdrawing Israel's army from Israeli territory will save us from disaster. It is not territory which Israel needs but understanding, agreement and peace with the neighboring peoples, and the retention of the Sinai or Gaza foils the chances for understanding, agreement and peace.

The present Ben-Gurion Government has adopted Herut's approach that those areas of Palestine which are outside the State of Israel are "conquered areas of the homeland" and must be "liberated." This ignores the existence of the Palestinian Arab people of one million individuals, disregards the bitter fate of homeless refugees and overlooks its right to national existence in part of Palestine. Only by recognizing that right, only by resolving all the problems on the path to a mutual agreement, will our nation be saved from the tragedy of war and will our country attain the security it needs in order to assure the State of Israel a shining future. We call on the Knesset to forge a new path for Israel, a path of peace, national independence and the brotherhood of nations.

M. Argov (Mapai): Without going into the details of MK Sneh's verbal assault and distortion of the facts, I propose that we remove the motion from the agenda.

...

The Vote

Those in favor of MK Argov's proposal	76
Those against	3

(MK Argov's proposal to remove the motion from the agenda is adopted.)

The Government's Reply to the U.S. President's Letter

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We now proceed to motion for the agenda number 268. I give the floor to MK Ben-Eliezer.

A. Ben-Eliezer (Herut): Mr. Speaker, Knesset members, last Wednesday the Knesset spontaneously burst out singing *Hatikva*, reflecting the

nation's pride in the victory of its heroic army and its unity behind its fighting sons and their mighty battle, which was to bring them peace. At that meeting the Prime Minister issued an important political statement in which he said, amongst other things: "On no condition will Israel allow foreign forces of any kind on its territory or on territory occupied by it." The Prime Minister added: "The Armistice Agreement with Egypt is dead and buried, and will not be revived." These phrases, which were part of the Prime Minister's overall statement, were approved by the Knesset and became its decision.

A night and day passed, and at midnight the nation, which had endured the battle heroically, received information which astounded it. The Government announced a completely different policy, an unexpected turn, and by virtue of the decision the Prime Minister told the President of the U.S.: "In view of the U.N. decision regarding the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Egypt and establishing an international force, we will gladly withdraw our forces when the necessary arrangements are made with the U.N. in the Suez Canal area." Thus the Knesset's decision was completely ignored, without its being consulted.

This statement, which was interpreted by the Secretary-General of the U.N. as Israel's agreement to unconditional withdrawal, means, at any rate, that the Israeli Army will be replaced not only by what is called "U.N. forces" in the areas occupied by Israel, but that these may be replaced in turn by the regular and so-called irregular forces of the aggressive enemy, whose sole aim is to attack and kill. Thus the situation of insecurity and constant danger is liable to return.

The fate of the Sinai, which was conquered in our war of defense, must be decided in a peace agreement, in accordance with international practice, as has been determined time and again in wars between nations. This policy would further the chances for peace with Egypt. The announcement of the unconditional withdrawal of our forces means, albeit inadvertently, that we accept the false claim regarding Israel's aggression, as was expressed even today by Moscow's agents, who are Nasser's associates. Withdrawal of this kind perpetuates the state of war and the danger of its acceleration, not only on the southern front but on the other fronts too.

The objective of the campaign was to attain peace, not to perpetuate war. We found no justification for the sudden abandonment of the declared position of both the Government and the Knesset in what we heard from the Prime Minister a few hours before the midnight broadcast. The events of the following three days merely verified our view.

The army won on the battlefield—the Government retreated in the battle of nerves.

The U.N. resolution, the message from the U.S. President and Bulganin's letter, as well as those threats and rumors, were all before the Government prior to its statement in the Knesset. When it sent our

army into battle, the Government should have been aware of the political battle which awaited us. But it has not been able to withstand the first test. By crumbling in the face of the first pressure it merely invites additional pressure.

The danger of active intervention by the forces of Communism alongside our enemies was greater before the Sinai Campaign. It was weakened partly by the destruction of the forces of the Egyptian enemy in the Sinai. This danger threatens more now that the possibility that it will return to the bases of its aggression has been mooted.

Israel does not want to be a prey to Communism and its allies-cum-servants, like Korea or Hungary.

The Government failed in its duty to convey to the U.S. government and public opinion in the free world the danger confronting Israel and the peace of the whole world, and who its enemies and allies are. It is still not too late to do that.

Israel cannot be browbeaten by the threats of governments which declare that they are hostile to us, nor by those which say they are our friends. Israel is fighting a defensive war for its life. And if it withstands the political campaign, with all its moral force and with the sense of justice in its right to exist, as it withstood the military campaign, it will find friends and even allies.

While the Government must make it patently clear that there will be no discussion with anyone about the liberated parts of the homeland, it must reinforce, not abandon, the attitude that the fate of the occupied areas will be determined around the negotiating table at which a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt will be discussed.

During the last few days the impudence of the Egyptian tyrant has reemerged, and he acts as if he were the victor, trying to adapt the U.N. resolutions to his needs and plans, and proving that his plans to attack Israel some other time are still in effect. In these circumstances the Government must reexamine its last, misguided step and return to its correct policy position. There is no need for panic. We are still strong. By the unity of the nation and the diaspora, by winning friends for our just cause, we will endure in the battle for the freedom, welfare and security of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, in order to achieve this we bring the problem before the Knesset for debate.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I did not reply to the words of the representative of the Israel Communist Party, who volunteered to repeat, with a nonsensical addition, the content of the letter sent by his highness, the Chief Minister of the Soviet Union, Gospodin Bulganin, because I have already answered that letter, and the Knesset Member can read it and find the Government's reply to what he said.

M. Sneh (Maki): But you removed it from the agenda, why are you talking about it?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: I am sorry that MK Ben-Eliezer said certain things which he does not know to be mistaken, as well as certain things which he knows are mistaken.

I will first of all answer his parliamentary point as to why the Government did not consult the Knesset before answering the U.S. President. He should have asked why the Government did not consult the Knesset before embarking upon the Sinai Campaign. That was a far more serious matter, and he knew about it before the battle began. Thus, the parliamentary question he submitted to me now is neither honest nor fair.

On November 7 I informed the Knesset of the sequence of events which forced us to eradicate the nests of Egyptian murderers in their bases in Sinai, and on the Government's behalf I set out the essential policy lines involved in this campaign. Both before and after the event I was in contact with all the party groups in the Knesset, in both the Coalition and the Opposition, namely, with all the party groups which I know are not Nasser's agents or the agents of a foreign empire which uses the fascist tyrant—

T. Toubi (Maki): Which defend peace and have no common language with you.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion:—or the agents of a foreign empire which uses the fascist tyrant in Egypt for its objective of controlling the world.

On November 8, the day after the Knesset sitting about the Sinai, I also met with the leaders of all those party groups and told them what was happening both in the region and throughout the world, and about various requests which had been made of us by important persons and bodies. I kept them informed before the action began and after it ended, that is, on October 29 and November 8, of matters which in my and the Government's view should not be published, for the public good, but of which we felt it our duty to inform the heads of the party groups in the Knesset which are loyal to Israel's security.

On the night of November 8 I broadcast the following statement to the nation: "Yesterday I informed the Knesset of the circumstances and motives which obliged us to take extensive and vigorous military steps against the Egyptian *fedayeen* bases scattered throughout the Sinai desert. When the action began a special meeting of the U.N. Assembly was called to discuss the worsening situation in the Middle East. While our army was destroying the nests of murderers in Sinai, the armies of France and Britain were trying to seize the Suez Canal. The Assembly decided to demand a ceasefire of all the sides, and on 3 November we

told the Secretary-General of the U.N. that as far as we were concerned there was a ceasefire, and that ceasefire has been maintained till now.

The Special Assembly did not limit itself to a ceasefire and, on the advice of the U.S. government, passed two more resolutions with an overwhelming majority: one demanded that England and France immediately withdraw all their forces from Egyptian territory and that Israel withdraw all its forces to behind the armistice lines determined in the Armistice Agreement of 24 February 1949; the second resolution concerned the establishment of an international U.N. emergency force. Those two resolutions were transferred to us in full this morning by the Secretary of the U.N.

I also received two letters, one from the head of the government of the Soviet Union, Mr. G. Bulganin, and one from the President of the United States, Mr. D. Eisenhower.

This evening I summoned the leaders of all the party groups in the Knesset—apart from the Communists—and informed them of what was happening around us, at the Assembly and in our relations with the various Powers, as well as of the line which the Government intends to take. The cabinet met twice today, and after receiving a full briefing on the situation reached a decision whose nature you will hear in my letter to President Eisenhower.

I will now read out to you the letter from Mr. G. Bulganin, the Soviet Prime Minister:

Mr. Prime Minister,

The Soviet government has already expressed its complete condemnation of the armed aggression against Egypt by Israel as well as by England and France, which constitutes a direct and open violation of the constitution and principles of the U.N. At a special, urgent session of the Assembly, the vast majority of countries in the world also condemned the act of aggression against Egypt, and called on the governments of Israel, England and France to end the military actions forthwith and withdraw their invading armies from Egyptian territory. All peace-loving mankind bitterly condemns the base acts of the aggressors, who violated the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Egypt. Disregarding this, the government of Israel, acting as a tool in the hands of outside imperialist forces, continues in a senseless escapade, provoking all the peoples of the East who are fighting against colonialism and for their freedom and independence, and all peace-loving nations throughout the world.

Such actions of the Israel government reveal the truth behind its false declarations of Israel's love of peace and desire for peaceful coexistence with the various Arab countries. Through those declarations the government of Israel sought merely to reduce the alertness of the other nations while it prepared a treacherous attack on its

neighbors in accordance with foreign wishes and acting on orders from outside.

The government of Israel is playing with the fate of the world, with the fate of its own people, in a despicable and irresponsible way. It is sowing hatred of Israel among the peoples of the East to such an extent that this cannot fail to leave its mark on Israel's future and raises doubts about Israel's very existence as a state.

Since it is vitally interested in the preservation and assurance of peace in the Middle East, the Soviet Union is currently taking steps in order to stop the war and restrain the aggressors.

We propose that the government of Israel reconsider its course before it is too late and end its military actions against Egypt. We call upon you, the parliament, the workers of Israel and the entire Israeli nation, to end the aggression, stop the bloodshed and withdraw your troops from Egyptian territory.

In view of the situation which has been created, the Soviet government has decided that its ambassador in Tel Aviv should leave Israel and return to Moscow forthwith. We hope that the government of Israel will understand and evaluate this warning of ours in the right light.

(signed) G. Bulganin

After consulting with all the members of the Cabinet, I sent the following reply to Mr. Bulganin today:

Mr. Chairman of the Ministerial Council,

I received your letter of November 5. I read it very carefully, and I note with regret that some of the contentions in it are based on incorrect and incomplete information which has reached you.

For more than two years the Egyptian ruler has organized a special force, known as the Fedayeen, to penetrate our country secretly and murder inhabitants: workers in the fields, travellers on the roads and people in their homes. At first those bands operated from areas held by Egypt, such as the Gaza Strip. Recently he organized these groups of murderers in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and the lives of our farmers on the borders are subject to daily attacks by these murderers. At the time of the Suez crisis the actions of these groups stopped, but over the last three weeks they increased.

An order dated 15 February 1956 and issued by the commander of the Third Egyptian Division in Sinai, Major-General Ahmed Salem (as the attached photostat copy reveals), says, amongst other things: "Every commander must prepare himself and his men for the inevitable battle against Israel, with the objective of attaining our supreme aim, namely: the destruction of Israel in the shortest possible time and by the cruellest and most brutal battles."

In violation of the U.N. Charter, the Egyptian ruler organized an economic boycott of Israel. He deprived us of navigation rights in Suez and the Straits of Eilat. For the last five years he has disregarded the Security Council's decision regarding freedom of navigation for Israeli ships in Suez. After the Security Council again forbade any overt or covert discrimination regarding navigation in Suez, on October 13 this year, the Egyptian ruler announced that the discrimination against Israel would continue. Two weeks ago he made a military alliance with Jordan and Syria which was directed against Israel.

Consequently, the action we took at the end of October was necessary for self-defense, and was not undertaken in accordance with the wishes of others, as you were told. In response to the request of the U.N. we ceased firing, and for several days there has been no armed clash between us and Egypt. Yesterday I informed the Knesset on behalf of the Government of Israel that we are ready to embark immediately on direct negotiations with Egypt for a stable peace and cooperation, without any preconditions or compulsion. We hope that all peace-loving countries, especially those which have friendly relations with Egypt, will exert all their influence on that country to bring it to peace talks without further delay.

Finally, I must express my amazement and regret at the threat to Israel's welfare and existence contained in your letter. Our foreign policy is dictated by our essential interests and our aspiration for peace, and no foreign element has or will determine it. As a sovereign state we chart our course for ourselves, and we share the aspirations of all peace-loving nations in the world for relations of peace and justice in our region and in the whole world.

(signed) David Ben-Gurion

The letter President Eisenhower sent to me yesterday, but which I received only today, reads as follows:

Dear Prime Minister,

As you know, the U.N. Assembly has arranged a ceasefire in Egypt, and Egypt, France, the United Kingdom and Israel have agreed to it. A U.N. force will be sent to Egypt in accordance with a decision on this matter by the Assembly. That body has demanded that all other foreign forces should leave Egypt's territory, and especially that Israel's troops should withdraw to the armistice lines. The decision regarding the ceasefire and the withdrawal of forces was submitted by the U.S. and was approved by a large majority in the Assembly. Statements attributed to your government to the effect that Israel does not intend to withdraw from Egypt's territory, as demanded by the U.N., have been brought to my attention.

I must tell you quite frankly, Mr. Prime Minister, that the U.S.A. views those statements—if they are true—with grave concern. Any decision of that kind by Israel's government could undermine the urgent efforts being made by the U.N. to restore peace to the Middle East, and could lead to the condemnation of Israel as violating the principles and instructions of the U.N.

I trust that top priority will be given to the restoration of peace and the withdrawal of foreign forces, apart from those of the U.N., from Egypt. After that, vigorous new steps will be taken within the framework of the U.N. to resolve the basic problem which has led to the current difficulty; the U.S. has submitted two proposals to the U.N. Assembly which are intended to achieve the said aims, and it hopes that that they will be implemented when the present emergency situation is over.

I do not need to assure you of the deep interest the U.S. has in your country, nor to remind you of the various foundations of our policy which are intended to help Israel in a variety of ways. It is in connection with these that I ask you to accept the decisions of the U.N. Assembly which refer to the current crisis and to inform me immediately of your decision. It would be highly regrettable to all my compatriots if, in a matter as serious as this which affects the whole world, the State of Israel were in any way to injure the friendly cooperation between our two countries.

With the very best wishes, sincerely,

(signed) Dwight D. Eisenhower

After a deep and exhaustive discussion in the Cabinet, I sent the following reply to the U.S. President this evening:

Mr. President,

I received your letter only this afternoon, the delay being due to a fault in the communications system between your State Department and the U.S. embassy in Israel.

We gladly accept your announcement that a U.N. force has been sent to Egypt, in accordance with the relevant resolution of the U.N. Assembly. Neither I nor any authorized spokesman of the Government of Israel has said that we intend to annex the Sinai desert. In view of the U.N. decision regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt and the establishment of an international force, we will gladly withdraw our troops as soon as the appropriate arrangements are made with the U.N. regarding the stationing of an international force in the Suez Canal area.

Although an important part of our objective was achieved as a result of the Sinai Campaign, and the *fedayeen* gangs and the military bases which planned and guided their activities were destroyed, we must reiterate our urgent demand that the U.N. oblige

Egypt, which has always stated that it is at war with Israel, to abandon that position, end the policy of blockade and boycott, cease sending bands of murderers into Israel's territory and, in accordance with its commitment to the U.N. Charter, live in peace with all the members of the U.N. and sit down to direct peace negotiations with Israel.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to convey to you our gratitude for mentioning the deep interest the U.S. has in Israel and for its support for our country. I know that what you said came from your heart, and I would like to assure you that you will always find Israel ready to make its own modest contribution, alongside the U.S., to the endeavor to reinforce justice and peace in the world.

In gratitude and with all good wishes,
(signed) David Ben-Gurion

I cannot conclude without saying a few words to my comrades in arms, to all the soldiers and officers of the IDF: you fulfilled the nation's mission, as usual, with supreme valor, and whatever the outcome of the political battle with which we have been confronted and which has not yet ended, let none of you think that your heroic deeds and the self-sacrifice of your friends who fell in battle were in vain. We had three main aims in the Sinai Campaign:

1. To destroy the forces which constantly sought to overcome us; 2. To liberate the area of the homeland which had been seized by the invader; 3. To ensure freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat and the Suez Canal. For the moment only the first, and main, aim has been achieved, but we are confident that the other two will also be attained in full.

We do not know what will happen to the Sinai desert. In my statement to the Knesset yesterday I deliberately—not inadvertently—omitted to mention that great problem. We had no doubt that we would face a combined military and political attack, and nobody knows yet if either of them has ended and in what way. We confronted difficult trials at the time of the War of Independence too, and although we did not get all we wanted, we have never achieved more in our entire history than we did then.

Only short-sighted people fail to see how much we have achieved now, even though the battle is not yet over. There is no power in the world which can deprive you of your great victory, and Israel after the Sinai Campaign is not the same as it was before it. There is a great historical reward for your deed, and I believe that our nation will be worthy of it."

These words concluded my broadcast to the nation.

As you heard, I ended the broadcast by telling the IDF that we had three main aims in the Sinai Campaign, and for the moment only one of them had been achieved in full, namely, the destruction of the bases of the murderers who planned to destroy Israel. The other two aims still

exist, but I cannot yet say that they have been achieved in full. Time will tell.

In the same broadcast I also said, in contradiction to the two previous speakers, that in my address to the Knesset of November 7 I did not say a word about the future of the Sinai desert. I did that deliberately, not out of carelessness, for reasons which I will not reveal here. As a result the Cabinet could inform the President of the U.S., and the Foreign Minister could inform the U.N., without contradicting what I had said in the Knesset, that no representative of the Government had talked of annexing the Sinai to the State of Israel.

I would also like to tell the Knesset that the following day, November 9, last Friday, there was a meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee—where it is possible to discuss matters which the security of the state precludes from making public—and a discussion was held there in the wake of the Government's decision and the broadcast. I note with satisfaction that apart from the Herut party group, all the party groups, both Coalition and Opposition, approved of the position reflected in the reply to the U.S. President. The Government stands behind that reply, and also approved of the reply the Foreign Minister gave to the representatives of the U.N. on the same subject.

I have heard many haughty words, both here and elsewhere. I am sometimes surprised at the fact that the Jews, who are a clever nation, fail to realize that they have heroes, conquerors of nations, who strike fear into the hearts of the Great Powers: England, Russia and America; who set historical borders without shedding one drop of blood, merely by uttering words. And yet that clever nation fails to hand them the reins of power, even though those people are the scions of a dynasty which, they claim, is destined to rule, because they contend that God Himself has chosen them to rule.

I would like to tell MK Ben-Eliezer and his friends that I am not prepared to compete with them in patriotism, or heroism, or good deeds for Israel, or in the other matters they occupy themselves with.

From an ancient sage I learned what courage is. He said that courage is a certain kind of knowledge, namely, knowing when to be afraid of something one should be afraid of and when not to be afraid of something one need not be afraid of.

Y. Bader (Herut): Spinoza thinks otherwise.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, D. Ben-Gurion: No, my learned friend, I did not quote Spinoza this time.

We maintain that the public debate of these matters will not be to the benefit of the nation and the state. Without a doubt there will be another discussion in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, even though there has already been an initial discussion in that Committee after the

Government's decision. We think, however, that it would not be politically wise or beneficial to discuss these matters now.

I move that we reject the proposal of the distinguished Herut Knesset Member, Mr. Ben-Eliezer.

The Vote

Those in favor of the Prime Minister's proposal 66

Those against 13

(The Prime Minister's proposal is adopted.)

Persecution of Jews in Egypt

Introduction

The small number of Jews in Port Said had been evacuated to Israel in a swift and secret operation during the few days of the Anglo-French occupation of the city. The much larger communities of Cairo and Alexandria were left intact. In the weeks following the Sinai Campaign disturbing rumors—subsequently more than verified—reached the Government of Israel concerning the harassment and torture of Egyptian Jewry, which was being held to ransom for the good conduct of the Government of Israel. In spite of the vast discrepancy in numbers of prisoners of war—5,000 as against 4—Egypt's treatment of prisoners of war also gave cause for concern.

Sitting 196 of the Third Knesset

28 November 1956 (24 Kislev 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, during the last few days horrifying news has reached us, which has been verified by exiled Jews who have managed to reach Israel meanwhile as well as by external sources in Egypt, of wicked and cruel acts perpetrated by the Egyptian tyrant and his government against the Jewish inhabitants of Egypt....

Thousands of Jews without any nationality who were living in Egypt have been deported without being given a chance to take their few possessions with them. The Jews of Egypt have been stripped of their nationality. Sons, daughters and old people have been separated from their families and sent to prison camps.

The Egyptian government intimidates all those Egyptian Jews who wish to adhere to their Jewish faith, which involves believing in the return to Zion, and is about to impose severe penalties on them for the crime of "Zionism." Jews have been robbed of their property.

All these acts remind us of what Hitler did before the war. As of themselves, these deeds are extremely serious, and decent world public opinion—which we believe exists—cannot stand by passively. But in addition to warning the world about what is being done now, we must also warn it about what might happen in Egypt if effective steps to stop these actions are not taken forthwith.

Today we want to remind the world, which did not heed our warnings about Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and dismissed it as mere nonsense which no one would ever implement, that the most terrible deeds

mankind has ever known were perpetrated during the Second World War.

I must remind you that during the Sinai Campaign we found many vehicles belonging to Egyptian officers upon which swastikas had been painted. Many of them possessed Arabic translations of *Mein Kampf*. That is the education the Egyptian tyrant is giving his officers. This bodes ill for the future of Egyptian Jewry unless the world takes effective and immediate steps against such deeds.

I must also express our great anxiety concerning the fate of our prisoners of war in Egypt. We had four prisoners of war in Egypt before the Sinai Campaign. All the efforts—such as they were—of the Secretary-General of the U.N. were unavailing, and we did not get them back, even though we were prepared to return a far greater number of Egyptian prisoners to Egypt.

Several soldiers were taken captive by the Egyptians in the Sinai Campaign. We asked the Dutch government to take Israel's prisoners in Egypt under its auspices and to ensure that they were treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention, as we treat the Egyptian prisoners of war in our hands.

On November 12 we received a reply to our request from the Dutch legation, informing us that the immediate response of the Egyptian government to the step taken by the Dutch embassy in Cairo in order to attain the status of a protecting country for the Dutch government, in accordance with the Geneva Convention, was negative, on the pretext that Egypt did not recognize the State of Israel. It is our opinion that the U.N. Assembly will be responsible for the fate of these prisoners of war if it does not ensure that the Egyptian tyrant adheres to international law and the Geneva Convention.

We propose that the Knesset resolve the following: "The Knesset expresses its deep outrage at the dreadful deeds perpetrated against Egyptian Jewry—

T. Toubi (Maki): What about the dreadful deeds perpetrated against the Arab inhabitants?

(Shouts from the floor.)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Don't interrupt! Are you Nasser's representatives here?

T. Toubi (Maki): I'm the representative of the Arab inhabitants.

(Shouts from the floor.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Toubi, I call you to order.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: "The Knesset expresses its deep outrage at the dreadful deeds perpetrated against Egyptian Jewry and at the crimes of the Egyptian tyrant and the military junta ruling Egypt in

trampling underfoot the entire Charter of Human Rights, which is one of the pillars of the U.N.

The Knesset demands that the U.N. Assembly and the representatives of the Powers in the Egyptian capital take immediate and effective steps to cease these persecutions of the Jewish inhabitants, to bring about the immediate release of those held in prison camps and to put an end to discrimination against Jews in Egypt.

The State of Israel will naturally open its gates to all those exiled from Egypt, and will welcome with open arms every Jew who immigrates to Israel."

J. Serlin (General Zionists): Doesn't the Speaker intend to call Knesset Member Toubi to order?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I have called him to order.

T. Toubi (Maki): The Government should be called to order for its deeds—

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: If the Knesset tolerates traitors in its midst no call to order will help.

...

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the cry of our brethren ascends to us from the Land of Egypt, the Land of the Nile. The vanquished Egyptian tyrant seeks to wash away the shame of his military defeat in the tears of Egyptian Jewry and to quench the flames of bitterness and disappointment which threaten the basis of his rule with their blood and their tears. The sudden, mass expulsions, the deprivations of nationality and the confiscations of property, the issuing of yellow passes, the taking of hostages, the imprisonment of thousands in jails and prison camps, while starving and torturing them, all these are a revived version of Hitler's treatment of the Jews....

In this generation war criminals will not be exonerated, and all those found guilty of persecuting Jews will be brought to trial sooner or later. The State of Israel must once again declare that the Jewish homeland is open and awaits any Jew who is persecuted anywhere in the world because he is a Jew. The Egyptian tyrant is now proving to the whole world that it is in the essential interests of all civilized people that an end should be put to his rule and his base government.

I. Rokeach (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, of course we accept the proposal submitted by the Prime Minister....It is now the turn of Egyptian Jewry to suffer affliction and persecution. Since ancient times a distinguished and important community has dwelt in that land, with a Jewish tradition of its own....The Jewish community did much for the greatness and prosperity of Egypt, and its members held many elevated positions in the areas of economics,

health and culture....Since 1936 the Jews have suffered greatly as a result of the incitement of the Mufti and his henchmen, but the Second World War alleviated the differences to some extent. Since 1948, when Egypt's forces invaded our country, the authorities have harassed the Jews, imprisoning many of them...although agreeing to preserve their ethnic, religious and cultural rights....

The General Zionists demand that the Government take immediate and effective measures to save Egyptian Jewry. It also demands that, in accordance with the Law of Return, the Government make it possible to accord a safe haven and a home for the Egyptian exiles in our country.

B. Mintz (Agudat Israel and Po'alei Agudat Israel): On behalf of my party group, I announce that we will vote for the Prime Minister's proposal....The cry of Egyptian Jewry ascends to heaven. The cruel expulsions, the forcible separation of young children from their parents, the robbery, plunder, arrests, torture and unending affliction have suddenly struck at Egyptian Jewry, which has a history going back thousands of years. Nasser, that second Hitler, being unable to defeat us on the battlefield, harasses unfortunate people, and the world does not rouse itself or act against him and his henchmen....

We remind the countries of the world which remain silent, and the Secretary-General of the U.N. who speaks in their name, of the words of the prophet Obadiah: "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress....Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossways, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions."

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Knesset, the Communists in Israel, as in every other country, unconditionally and unquestioningly reject every act of national, religious or racial discrimination, every act of national repression or suppression.

The Minister of Interior, I. Bar-Yehuda: Even when it's against Jews?

M. Sneh (Maki): We therefore completely reject the unjust practice of taking the members of a given nation hostage in response to the policy or actions of another country. The Jews of Egypt are not responsible for the attack upon Egyptian territory by Israeli forces. Thus, if the news of the expected expulsion of Egyptian Jewry is true—

(Shouts from the floor.)

it will be an illegal, unjust and immoral step, a step which deserves the condemnation of all world public opinion. We raise our voice and demand: do not harm Egyptian Jewry, do not harm them because of Israel's military attack on Egypt.

...

The Vote

Those in favor of the Prime Minister's proposal 67

Those against 3

The Prime Minister's proposal is adopted.

Incident in the Villages of the Triangle

Introduction

An incident in the course of which innocent Arab villagers from Kafr Qasem in the area of the border with Jordan were killed during the Sinai Campaign had caused a series of rumors and debates. Ben-Gurion decided to set the record straight in a clearcut statement to the Knesset on December 12. As a result of the trial mentioned in his statement senior Army and Border Guard officers were sentenced to various penalties, but junior personnel were not exonerated, thus establishing the norm for the IDF that a soldier has no duty, indeed, no right, to obey an evidently illegal order.

Sitting 203 of the Third Knesset

12 December 1956 (7 Teveth 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I must report to the Knesset on a shocking deed perpetrated amongst us, the main points of which were published by the Government immediately afterwards, and later in greater detail, when the report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed for this purpose immediately after the event was received.

On 29 October 1956, when the actions of the *fedayeen* increased and the Sinai Campaign began, a curfew was imposed on several villages on the eastern border, in order to protect the lives of the inhabitants. The implementation of the curfew was imposed by a Border Patrol battalion, and the villagers observed the curfew, which was in effect between 1700 in the evening and 0600 in the morning. In general, the inhabitants of the villages obeyed the curfew orders. In certain villages, however, the inhabitants innocently returned to their homes after the curfew and were killed by several of the men of the Border Patrol. The victims included men, women and children.

As soon as I heard about this shocking incident, on November 1, I appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by District Judge Benjamin Zohar, which was charged with examining: a. the circumstances of the events in the villages on October 29; b. the extent of the responsibility of the men of the Border Patrol—the officers, the sergeants and the corporals—and whether they should be made to stand trial; c. the compensation which the Government should pay the families in view of the behavior of the men of the Border Patrol.

The Commission, which consisted of a chairman, District Judge Zohar, the Mayor of Haifa, Abba Houshi, and a lawyer, Aharon Hotar-Yishai, heard evidence from authorized representatives of each of the

villages which suffered during the incidents, from the Border Patrol and from representatives of the Army.

The Commission praised the Army authorities, which immediately furnished it with all the material it requested for the purposes of the investigation. The Commission also noted that the Army took effective steps immediately after the incident to ascertain the basic facts of the matter, which helped the Commission get the facts straight while they were still "fresh," as the Commission reported.

On November 6 the Commission submitted its report, and on the same day I made an official statement to the press about the shocking event. In accordance with the Commission's conclusions, the commander of the Border Patrol battalion and several of his men, who had obeyed an illegal order, were put on trial. Naturally, the report was given to the Government immediately, and it was decided that an advance of IL 1,000 would be given forthwith to each family which had suffered. Judge Zohar's Commission was charged with ascertaining the compensation due to each affected family as quickly as possible.

Immediately after the incident the Minister of Police visited the villages and expressed his and the Government's horror at the shocking incident to the inhabitants of the villages and their representatives.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Commission, which were submitted a few days later, compensation of between IL 1,000 and IL 5,000 was paid to those affected. It is obvious that no sum of money can compensate for the loss of human life.

I do not wish to be guilty of contempt of court, so I will not express an opinion regarding the guilt of the suspects who have been charged. I regard it as my duty, however, on behalf of the Government, the Police Force and myself, to express my deep anxiety at the fact that such shameful acts, which undermine the most sacred foundations of human morality, which is based on Israel's sacred Law, could have been committed.

The Jewish people and the best of mankind have always claimed—correctly—that they hold human life dear. "Thou shalt not kill" is the supreme commandment given to us at Mount Sinai. No nation in the world holds human life—all human life, regardless of sex, race, religion and nationality—more precious than the Jews. We were taught that man was created in God's image; nobody knows what color Adam's skin was, nor did he belong to any particular nation; he was just a man. In order to leave no doubts in anyone's heart about there being any difference between one man and another, our Law says: "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." Not only is the law the same for you and the stranger, but you should treat the stranger with love. The Arabs of Israel are not strangers but citizens with equal rights, and when it comes to

human life there is no difference whatsoever in the civil status of people. The lives of all men are sacred.

These two sacred principles were shockingly infringed in this horrifying instance—and I am sure that the entire Knesset shares the feeling I have tried to express in this speech, and hopes that nothing of this kind will ever happen again in Israel.

The culprits will undoubtedly be punished. I note with satisfaction that the leaders of the villages affected and the families concerned appreciate the Government's stand, its anxiety and its swift action on this matter. I would also like to state that during the Campaign there were no disturbances in Israel, whether in permanent settlements or temporary ones, i.e., among the Beduin tribes.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: In connection with the shocking event about which the Prime Minister has just issued a statement, on behalf of the whole Knesset I hereby express our participation in the grief of the families, and I ask the Knesset to honor the memory of the fallen by standing.

(The Knesset Members stand in memory of the fallen.)

Herut's Motion of No-Confidence

Introduction

By 15 January 1957 the withdrawal of the IDF from the Sinai was in full swing. MK Begin submitted a motion of no confidence in the Government which had ordered the withdrawal.

Sitting 223 of the Third Knesset

15 January 1957 (13 Shevat 5717)

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, representatives of the nation, what dire news we have heard: today the IDF left El-Arish and in the next few days will abandon Abu-Ageila and Kuseima. Those places are not mere geographical terms for us. They are not just battlefields where, in a mighty attack, dozens of our best officers and soldiers, our beloved sons, fell. They are also the enemy's forward bases beyond the desert, where for years he built up his offensive strength, where he briefed his *fedayeen*, from which he sent out those who mined our roads, who attacked our soldiers, who murdered our children. Nasser's defeated army will now return to those bases with a victory fanfare, and everything...will return to what it was.

Why this departure, while the enemy maintains a state of war and declares openly that he is resolved to renew the offensive of the *fedayeen* and that his objective is to destroy Israel? Is it possible that the Government has not weighed up the dangers involved in handing those bases over to the enemy? No. It can be assumed that the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense has been briefed by military experts...and knows what dangers this involves for Israel....

...Why, then, this unfortunate departure? Is it connected with the solemn commitment made to the nation at noon on 7 November 1956? In that speech of the Prime Minister's, which was made after our army's tremendous sweep around the enemy forces, splitting them and cutting them off, and after the conquest of the Sinai Peninsula, we were told that the Army had not violated Egyptian territory. We were also told: "On no condition will Israel agree that a foreign force, under whatever name, should be stationed within its territory or in territory under its control...."

Why, then, this disastrous departure? Is it the result of the letter to the U.S. President? That letter states: "In view of the U.N. resolution regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt and the establishment of an international force, we will gladly withdraw our troops as

soon as the appropriate arrangements are made with the U.N. regarding the stationing of an international force in the Suez Canal area." Did the "appropriate arrangements" involve the return of an aggressive enemy to the bases of aggression so that he could attack us once again?

Why, then, this dreadful departure? Is it because of the U.N. resolution demanding our withdrawal to behind the Rhodes lines? Almost all the parties in the Coalition have said recently that they are prepared to disobey the U.N. in other spheres for the future and security of the nation; is this matter not essential for the nation's future and security?

Why, then, this calamitous departure? Is our problem military or political? Is there a danger of our having to fight the soldiers of the U.N. if we refuse to withdraw?...Is it not necessary for what is most essential for us—the security of the nation, its children and its soldiers—to hold on to the gulf coast...?

Finally, was it pressure by the Powers, particularly the economic pressure of the U.S., which forced the Government to bend? Can the Government assure the nation that this will not be followed by further pressure?...As we have been explaining to the nation for years, our freedom of navigation in the southern sea is one of the most important things for us. But no one would suggest that the State of Israel should fall on that issue. If we can withstand that pressure of a financial and economic blockade without collapsing, why have we retreated to beyond the gate where the enemy will enter?

...The only possible answer, Mr. Speaker, is that by ordering our troops to leave El-Arish, Abu-Ageila and Kuseima, and knowing that the enemy will return to them, the Government has knowingly abandoned the security of the nation and the blood of its sons. This move has put an end to hopes of peace in the south....This Government does not deserve our confidence.

...We call upon you, members of the Government...to stop the withdrawal. Do not leave Abu-Ageila, do not leave Kuseima, our lives depend on this!...I call on you, Mr. Prime Minister, to cancel your commitment, or to be more precise, to honor the commitment you made to the nation and which you cancelled overnight by committing otherwise to foreigners. And if you cannot do it, then without anger but fulfilling my national duty, I say to you in the name of the public which sent me—the words which were said to a Prime Minister in a different parliament: In God's name—Go!

As to the future, the Government has not yet said anything in public...about our withstanding pressure regarding the gulf coast and Gaza. And since it is silent when it should speak, and speaks when it should be silent, many things are said in its name....What guarantee does a handful of U.N. troops give us regarding our freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal?...We have all said that Gaza is part of the liberated homeland. And any hint of so-called "occupied" territory or guar-

antees as a condition of a change in the situation of sovereign rule by Israel opens the way for a new disaster whose consequences are unimaginable.

...If, God forbid, the departure...is accomplished, we have said what we have to say....But the Government which is responsible for today's withdrawal must be accountable for it. The public and moral significance of the proposal of no confidence which is submitted today, knowing the balance of the parliamentary forces, constitutes the free and loyal Opposition's condemnation while drawing the nation's attention to the Government's unpardonable deed. Vote as you will! Are there not among the Government's supporters people who only a few days ago said exactly what we say?...It was in their power to demonstrate in public in order to put an end to the pressure...but they did nothing....

...Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask you to put our motion proposing no confidence in the Government which is not worthy of confidence to the vote.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I will not argue with the nation or God, in whose name the preceding speaker claims to speak. I will merely answer the long speech given by the commander of Herut—

M. Begin (Herut): Chairman of Herut, not commander of Herut. I must ask you to be precise.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: You were precise when you spoke in God's name, commander of Herut.

I saw Knesset Member Begin for the first time at the opening of the First Knesset. Since then I have heard many fiery patriotic speeches from him about conquests and historic borders, about his acts of heroism in establishing the state and, from time to time, advice about campaigns of conquest and redemption. But I have never heard him propose that we conquer Abu Ageila or El-Arish for the security of the state. And I don't believe a single word of what he just said about this being for Israel's security....

On November 14, by a large majority, the Knesset rejected MK Ben-Eliezer's proposal, which was shorter than MK Begin's but similar in content and did not bring God's name in, and approved the Government's reply to President Eisenhower and the U.N. Assembly.

Naturally, any small party group which has no chance of bearing political responsibility, like Herut, is free to say whatever it wishes, and can boast knowing that it will never have to keep its promises. I am not free of national responsibility or of active concern for our security and our freedom; I am not free of the heavy burdens imposed upon us or of the results of acts of madness.

As a member of the Government, I have to make sure that our words and deeds match...and I must weigh up the consequences of what we do

or omit to do....I do not believe that the more you say the better. Mine is not the path of easy Zionism, which believes that you only have to say something in order to change history. History is made by a creative effort in which one looks ahead rather than brags childishly.

We had certain defined and limited aims in the Sinai Campaign for which we will fight, but we will not hamper our struggle by taking irresponsible and useless steps. And anyone who wishes to take the road of freedom [*herut* in Hebrew] from national responsibility may vote with MK Begin.

I. Rokeach (General Zionists): ...We agreed to the Sinai Campaign... but we could not ignore the severity of the threats which impelled the Prime Minister to state our readiness to withdraw our forces from Egyptian territory. We believe that this expression of readiness cannot include abandoning freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat, and that this will not lead to our abandoning of our southern borders once again.

We hope that the Government will accept our party's position that the southern borders of the Gaza region and the area of the Gulf of Eilat should not be changed. With that certainty we will abstain from voting on the motion of no confidence in the Government.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We accepted your position about the Sinai Campaign.

E. Wilenska (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, my party will vote against Herut's motion of no confidence regarding the withdrawal from the Sinai. But this does not mean that we have confidence in the Government which undertook an aggressive action. We expressed our lack of confidence in the Government when the military action in the Sinai began. On October 29 Ben-Gurion began to implement the plan which Herut had advocated. As is known, that step by the Government brought about our condemnation by all the nations of the world....

Our nation is beginning to realize that Israel is paying a heavy price of general condemnation as an aggressor, unprecedented isolation in the world arena and the loss of the chance of peace....

By voting against Herut's motion of no confidence we are voting for the demand for a speedy withdrawal, a demand which is for Israel's benefit, which derives from a deep concern for its welfare, from a sincere desire to take our nation onto the path of security and peace, and to good relations with the peoples of Asia which are awakening to national independence.

The Government seeks guarantees against a full withdrawal....But the only true guarantee to ensure the just rights of both Israel and the Arab peoples is a peaceful settlement of the Israel-Arab problem. And the continued conquest constitutes an obstacle to that settlement.

H. Rubin (Mapam): And what does Maki say about freedom of navigation?

E. Wilenska (Maki): Consequently, only the complete elimination of the results of the military campaign will clear the way for a solution of all the disputed issues...including freedom of navigation....

Israel's line of defense can on no account rely on occupied territory of any kind. It must be based on four principles: a. full withdrawal from the occupied territories; b. an end to the Government's harmful partnership with the colonialists; c. recognition of the just national rights of both the Israeli and the Palestinian Arab nations; d. readiness to solve the disputed problems by political, not military, means....

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote.

The Vote

Those in favor of Herut's proposal of no confidence in the Government	11
Those against	63
Abstentions	8

(The proposal is not adopted.)

Foreign Policy and Defense

Introduction

On 17 January 1957 the General Assembly adopted another resolution calling for the additional and immediate withdrawal of Israel's forces. Since by that time both France and Great Britain had withdrawn their forces from Egyptian territory, Israel was the sole object of demands and implied threats. The Government of Israel decided to take a minimum stand, refusing to evacuate the Civilian Administration (as opposed to the military forces) from the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by Egypt since 1948, and from the shore of the Gulf of Eilat, from which Egyptian forces had prevented Israeli shipping from entering the Gulf.

In order to demonstrate the widespread support this stand enjoyed across the Israeli political spectrum, Ben-Gurion initiated a political debate in the Knesset.

Sitting 228 of the Third Knesset

23 January 1957 (21 Shevat 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, although Israel did not participate in the founding meeting of the U.N. in 1945, when it was not yet an independent entity, the principles of peace and justice between peoples, civil rights and national equality are neither new nor strange to Israel....These ideas were expressed by the prophets three thousand years ago...and were preserved in the hearts of Jews throughout their long exile and dispersion...influencing all mankind....In November 1947 it was the voice of mankind's conscience which spoke at the Assembly, when it was resolved to revive the Jewish state.

Israel's belief in the ideals of the U.N. was not broken even when, on the day the state was founded, five Arab countries, four of which were members of the U.N...invaded Israel in order to destroy it, and the U.N. did nothing....Israel does not regret the fact that it saved itself from its assailants, by its own strength, by the strength of its devoted sons and daughters, who gave their lives to defend their country and serve their people....

The eight years which have passed since we repelled the invaders in 1949 and signed Armistice Agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria have brought us bitter disappointments in the international arena. Those four countries all violated the Armistice Agreements as well as disregarding the U.N. Charter....Despite Israel's constant de-

mands to proceed from the Armistice Agreements to permanent peace settlements, our neighbors have refused to make peace....This was also ignored by the institutions of the U.N....

But those countries did not stop at refusing to make permanent peace, as the Armistice Agreements and the U.N. Charter obliged them to...and continued with their acts of hostility against Israel. Led by Egypt and the Arab League, all the Arab countries organized an economic boycott of Israel as well as against firms in other countries which traded with Israel, the object being to destroy Israel's economy.... Again, the U.N. did nothing...until, in response to our petitions, it passed a resolution in September 1951 affirming our right to freedom of navigation in Suez....This was disregarded by Egypt, and the U.N. did nothing to implement its decision....

When our neighbors saw that everything was permitted...they began acts of armed hostility, sending murderous gangs into Israel, to sabotage our irrigation pipes and, primarily, to kill innocent passersby, farmers in their fields and people sleeping in their beds, sparing neither men nor women, children nor old people....Between 1951 and 1955 alone we suffered 884 casualties...as a result of these daily incursions and murders....

The boycott, the blockade and the guerrilla warfare were not isolated criminal acts and violations of the temporary Armistice Agreements, they were an integral part of the Arab rulers' plan to wipe Israel off the face of the earth...as they declared openly and publicly. The Czech deal of 1955 constituted a grave and dangerous turning-point, since a steady stream of heavy weapons of all kinds was flowing to Egypt, and it was obvious that it was intended to be used against Israel....

The Gaza Strip, which was seized by the Egyptian invader in 1948, in contravention of international law, served all the years as a launching-pad for attacks on Israel....We have ample proof of the administrative connection between the *fedayeen* gangs and Egyptian army units there....After the Czech deal we were confronted with the danger of a fullscale war. The Egyptian tyrant made it perfectly clear...that he intended to gain control of the entire Middle East, if not all Africa. And his arsenal was constantly being swelled with tanks and cannon, Migs and Ilyushins....

The Suez crisis erupted, the Security Council met and on 13 October 1956 it again resolved that there could be no discrimination against freedom of navigation in the Canal. Egypt immediately announced that it would not honor this resolution with regard to Israel....The crisis blew over and the *fedayeen* attacks were renewed; Egypt's aggressive plans were coming to their climax. On October 23, after the elections in Jordan, a tripartite military pact was concluded between Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and the three armies were placed under Egyptian command. There was no doubt as to whom the pact was directed against.

...A brief look at the strange map of Israel is enough to reveal the danger to this country as a result of that alliance....An attack on three fronts could cut our country in two...expose our main centers of population to aerial attacks...prevent the mobilization of the reserves upon whom our security depends...and leave us defenseless....

The U.N. Charter accords every country the natural right of self-defense. And even if it were not granted by the U.N., it would be self-evident....Since Israel was in danger of being destroyed...it was our first duty to act to defend ourselves, which is what we did at the end of October and the beginning of November. We restricted our defensive actions to the barest minimum and did not attack Jordan or Syria, because the principal danger came from Egypt's centers of aggression in the Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Israel was obliged to act as it did to protect itself, and with a clear conscience it can look all nations in the eye. It is sure that any other country in the same position would have done exactly the same.

What happened afterwards in the...U.N. is well-known, and there is no need to go into all the details....The U.N. today is not what its founders intended it to be, and it is far from being an impartial and fair body....As members of the Jewish people, the bearers of the heritage of the prophets and scattered throughout the nations, and as citizens of a small country besieged by its enemies, we are especially bound to cooperate with the U.N. as far as we can, and I will say where that limit lies in a little while. That is why we will not query the resolution of November 2 and those which followed it, regarding which there is no indication that any of those directed against Egypt will be implemented, whereas we are pressured to execute those directed against us with maximal speed.

On November 8, as you know, we gave our answer to the U.S. President and to the U.N. Secretary-General, stating that we were prepared to withdraw from the Sinai when satisfactory arrangements had been made with the U.N. Emergency Force. In our letter of November 21 to the Secretary-General of the U.N. we defined such arrangements as those which would ensure Israel against hostile acts on land and at sea....To date we have withdrawn from the entire desert, more than 30,000 square miles, apart from a narrow strip along the coast of the Straits of Eilat which ensures freedom of navigation to all shipping there. We have no interest in remaining in that area, and wish to leave it as soon as possible, with a guarantee that Israeli and international navigation there will not be harmed....

...The Gulf of Eilat is important not only for Israel, but for the whole world, and primarily for undisturbed contact between Asia and Europe. By demanding effective and genuine guarantees from the U.N. to ensure...freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat and the Red Sea, we are not abandoning our right and demand to freedom of navigation in

the Suez Canal, and the U.N. will be tested by its ability to implement this....Navigation in the Red Sea will be guaranteed when the four countries bordering it—Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt—sign an agreement to this effect...or when the U.N. decides that its forces will remain there until a peace treaty is signed....

As for the Gaza Strip, this was never Egyptian. Egypt held on to it for eight years as a prize for its invasion of Israel, and all that time did nothing to aid its development....From there the Egyptian ruler sent bands of murderers to attack Israel's civilian population....Any return to the Armistice Agreement of 1949, which was continually broken by the Egyptian ruler, means a return to murder and sabotage....Israel does not claim to be at war with Egypt, though Egypt claims to be at war with Israel...and Israel is prepared to sign an agreement to that effect immediately....

The situation of the Gaza Strip is unique, and no U.N. force can prevent *fedayeen* forces being organized there by the Egyptian rulers and sent to attack Israel. The entry into the Strip of U.N. forces will injure the security situation of all the Israeli settlements along it and in all the limited area of Israel. At the same time, the Strip will be cut off from every possibility of economic development, and the refugees will once more be abandoned to Egyptian incitement....

...Israel does not intend to maintain its forces in the Gaza Strip, but the benefit of its inhabitants as well as of their neighbors across the border requires that the Strip remain in Israel's hands, on the basis of an arrangement which should be reached by Israel and the U.N. The Israel administration will maintain the internal security of the Strip by a police force, will continue to develop independent administration by the inhabitants in towns and villages and will assure the inhabitants of such public services as health, education, electricity, irrigation, transport, agriculture, trade and commerce, as is done now. Israel will also make every necessary and possible effort to save 60,000 of the permanent inhabitants of Gaza who are currently destitute from their miserable situation, and guarantee them a decent standard of living. The Israeli administration in Gaza will constitute an area of Israel-Arab cooperation, while maintaining contact with the U.N.

Israel does not ignore the problem of the refugees in Gaza, which is part of the general Arab refugee problem. The moral failure of the Arab countries in the last eight years is nowhere so evident as in their attitude to the Arab refugees. While little Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of refugees, half of them the survivors of the Nazi Holocaust and half of them refugees from Arab countries, in its barren and destroyed country, the Arab countries—even those with extensive areas and small populations—refused to settle the Arab refugees in order to exploit them as a political weapon against Israel. The Government of Israel appeals

to the U.N. to prepare a permanent solution for the refugee problem...and Israel will contribute to this to the best of its ability.

...Under Israeli rule...for the first time in eight years the Gaza Strip and the surrounding area is quiet...plans are being drawn up for its economic development...and the U.N. can set about finding a solution to the refugee problem. The return of Egyptian influence, whether directly through the entry of the Egyptian army or indirectly via the U.N. force, could put an end to all those hopes and chances, restoring the Strip to chaos, to its own detriment and that of the entire region.

After we have withdrawn from the entire Sinai desert, apart from a coastal strip along the Straits, it is our right and duty to ask the U.N. not to allow the Sinai to become a launching-pad for attacks once more...Egypt did nothing to settle the Sinai or accommodate the refugees there...and Israel calls on the U.N. to impose demilitarization in that area, thereby preventing future military clashes between Israel and Egypt.

The Government of Israel's position on these questions is dictated by its conscience, its right to exist and its future, as well as by its sense of justice and its ardent desire to ensure true peace in the region. The Government of Israel is convinced that all the members of the U.N. who study the problems we face will support our stand.

The Jewish people, the oldest nation in the Near East, which has given many of the nations of the world the basis of their faith and their spiritual culture, and which appreciates the original and ancient cultures of the other peoples of Asia, calls on the conscience of the world to do everything it can to prevent any possibility of a renewed conflagration in the Middle East and to bring about peace and justice there, so that the lands of the Bible may once again be a source of inspiration and blessing for the world, once there is peace and cooperation between its peoples.

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, for the sake of the future, we must judge the past. It is a fact that the Egyptian enemy was thrashed on the battlefield; but that military defeat was accompanied by political success. We were victorious on the battlefield, but this was followed by political defeat...How could this happen? The first step in this analysis must be to admit our failure, and I suggest that the Government, which denies this, refrain from relying on its majority...Having the support of a majority does not mean that one's decisions are right, as was proved not long ago by Chamberlain in England.

...The Government has acted most strangely. It issued a statement on November 7; it gave a midnight speech on November 8. And it claims that nothing changed between those two dates, and there is no discrepancy between what was said on those two occasions...I suggest that the Government abandon its haughty intransigence and tell us why it changed its tune so radically from one day to the next...Were we re-

ally threatened with being bombed and destroyed if we failed to retreat? Would such fierce economic pressure be exerted that we could not exist? No clarification has been made, and to this day no one in Israel knows what happened between November 7 and 8.

The various documents—Bulganin's letter with the phrase: "raises doubts about Israel's very existence as a state;" President Eisenhower's letter demanding a withdrawal in accordance with the U.N. resolution...; the U.N. Assembly's resolution demanding our withdrawal to the armistice lines—were all before the Government on November 7. What, then, happened between the two pronouncements?...We are not the only ones who oppose the withdrawal. Party groups and individuals within the Coalition have objected to it...

...To the best of our knowledge, the reason for our political defeat after our military success was political...Since October 1955 the Government of Israel has been conducting a political campaign against the military campaign upon which we embarked in October 1956, giving it all kinds of names: "preventive war," "initiated war," "aggression," "an escapade," "insane advice." We will never take that course, you said. From a study of the documents I can say that no Government in the world condemned the Sinai Campaign post factum as the Government of Israel did beforehand.

...Regarding Israel's situation vis-à-vis Egypt, Winston Churchill wrote: "If Israel decides to ward off the Egyptian attack," he did not say "to launch a preventive war," or "to attack" or "to start an aggressive war."...That great foreign statesman could see that our situation was untenable, and that any action we took to end it would constitute legitimate defense...The Government of Israel, however, stubbornly clung to its contention that it would never take "aggressive steps." But a party which is in Opposition, and which proposed that a campaign be launched in October 1955 for national defense, thought that in April 1956 the opportune moment had been missed and that we would have to wait until the enemy attacked us...

I know that the Government representative will shortly ascend this podium and, with feigned innocence, claim that if the Government had said the opposite of what it did say during the past year our situation would have been no better...I believe that if we had, it would...But in the final event it is policy which matters. And if policy means saying and doing foolish things, and then saying that even without those foolish things our situation would still have been bad, what does one need policy for? You have failed the nation, especially in the last year, you have placed it in the dock, calling the Sinai Campaign in advance "an escapade," "aggression," "initiated war." Do not think that these things do not have an adverse effect on policy...

We must draw conclusions about the future from these developments...Therefore, I say to you...our just and noble and righteous Gov-

ernment, do not say again: we will not fight unless we are attacked, in case you fight in order not to be attacked.

A second reason for Israel's current political defeat is connected with its commitment to withdraw unconditionally. Today the Prime Minister stood on this podium and appealed to the U.N. to make the Sinai a demilitarized zone...after Egypt filled it with its troops and weapons, after it intends to renew its attack on Israel, with the tacit agreement of the world, and with the aid of that "great lover of peace," tovarich Nikita Khrushchev, after all that does the Prime Minister ask the U.N. to demilitarize the Sinai Peninsula?...You did not make that demand in the letter to Bulganin, in the reply to President Eisenhower, in missives to the U.N., in talks with governments, in the press or from this podium when the IDF was still in the Sinai; only after it had withdrawn did you demand the demilitarization of the Sinai....Is that political realism? It is a mockery....

No condition was attached to the commitment to withdraw which was given to President Eisenhower....The objective of every war is peace. Our only reason for entering the Sinai Peninsula was to obtain peace. And because the enemy says that he will maintain the state of war, we cannot withdraw. When we discuss peace we will discuss the areas we control, that is the international practice....By holding onto the last vestiges of the fruit of the blood shed by the best of our sons we are contravening the resolutions of the U.N. and are subject to pressure from both West and East....

The third point is that we have lost precious time....Was it necessary only today to announce that we will not move until freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat is assured? For two months the Government has refused to say what the limit of its withdrawal will be. We withdraw, without saying either yes or no, and only when we are at the last stage do we say no, which in fact implies yes....

What would have happened if we had said that six weeks ago? The U.N. Assembly would have met, passed a resolution with a majority of 74 that we had to withdraw, and what would have happened? The Government would meanwhile have been able to mobilize counterpressure, world public opinion....You could have stood firm at A-Tur, allowing no U.N. force to enter without our agreement. And what would have happened? You have lost the most precious time. Now we are almost at the end....

We heard an extremely dangerous statement about Gaza today, when the Prime Minister announced that we would be willing to withdraw the IDF from Gaza, leaving a police force there....On November 8 the Prime Minister said on the radio, addressing the officers and soldiers of the IDF: the second aim of the Sinai Campaign was to liberate that part of the homeland which had been occupied by the Egyptian invader....The Minister of Justice knows the significance of those words

in international law....And if you withdraw from there is it still part of the homeland? Do you not see the danger in that? What is the difference between Nazareth and Gaza? Those two towns were liberated at different times. Both of them are inhabited by Arabs. We liberated Nazareth in opposition to the decision of the U.N. Are you sure that, on the basis of that statement, Israel will not be asked to withdraw its troops from Nazareth?...

You want to leave a police force in Gaza, in cooperation with the U.N. What kind of cooperation? Who will be in command of the police force?...You are placing our control of the Gaza Strip in very great danger....The whole plan is fictional. Either the status of Gaza will not be agreed upon by Mr. Hammerskjold and his colleagues, in which case the Army will remain there anyway, or you will reach some kind of agreement, in which case not even a police force will be permitted to be there....

As I have said before, the future is the main thing, and it is with that in mind that we must look east as well as south. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the break between Britain and the conquered area of our homeland east and west of the Jordan River known...as Jordan is to be welcomed....It paves the historic way for us, than which there is no other, to liberate the land of our fathers, to establish a state in which Arabs and Jews can live in peace and equality....After the agreement of the four countries in Cairo, the Arab Legion has become part of the Egyptian army. As to what our policy should be in view of this, I will permit myself to adopt the policy of Mapam, which is also part of the Coalition.

Is it not true, my friend and rival MK Rubin—the only representative of Mapam here now—that a few weeks ago your party group decided to include Gaza in the State of Israel?...This was done only post factum, after we had conquered it. But why did you do it...? Because it is part of the Land of Israel. Is not Hebron part of the Land of Israel? Both Gaza and Hebron are inhabited by Arabs....So who are you trying to fool?

The Prime Minister spoke of the liberated part of the homeland. Mapam demands that Gaza be included in the State of Israel. Ahdut Ha'Avodah did not want to leave El-Arish. And after that you will say that any idea of a campaign of liberation undertaken at the opportune moment, with good strategy, with intelligence, without endangering Israel's existence in any way, means "expansion," "aggression," "an escapade," and so on.

I. Ben-Aharon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): If the Coalition goes on this way it will be out of work.

M. Begin (Herut): MK Ben-Aharon, we hear you! I hope that the Government which you support will continue along the path I propose, and I will be willing to be out of work for the rest of my life—liberate Jerusalem and Hebron.

E. Habibi (Maki): That doesn't depend on MK Ben-Aharon or on you.
(MK M. Sneh ["bush" in Hebrew—translator] shouts from the floor.)

M. Begin (Herut): Will the bush that has been consumed kindly stop beating about itself.

M. Sneh (Maki): You'll get burned yet.

M. Begin (Herut): That is the basis—both moral and political: the right to liberation and national defense is justified not retroactively—because that would be a failure—but from the outset.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker...if the Government remains in the liberated part of the homeland...and if it keeps our soldiers along the Gulf of Eilat—which is the only guarantee of freedom of navigation, then, despite our resentment of the unnecessary withdrawal which has already been implemented...we, the members of the loyal Opposition, will call upon the nation to stand united....We will call upon the nation to withstand the economic pressure exerted by the U.S...because the liberation of Gaza is worth the sacrifice....After the Prime Minister's statement, however, I must say that there is no guarantee that we will stand firm. Let that be a warning.

...When you adopt the majority resolution and are sure that it is good and right, remember what our representative said at the U.N. that night. Facing a majority of 74, when only brave, friendly France voted with us...he said: the majority is not always right. On the eve of the Sinai Campaign, after the year which had preceded it, you knew that the majority had not been right. After this withdrawal, supporters of the Government, remember, the majority is not always right.

...

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): ...I also do not think that the Government is entirely blameless in this matter, because for the last year it has described action initiated by us in all kinds of ways, declaring that we would never undertake anything of that nature....I think, however, that above all we should express our surprise at the great organization which has seen fit to term our action aggressive and even draw far-reaching conclusions from it. All our political vicissitudes since the Campaign derive from the fact that we have been branded the aggressor.

I. Ben-Aharon (Ahdut Ha'avodah-Po'alei Zion): That is not true. There is no U.N. resolution branding us the aggressor.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I did not say...that the U.N. decided that we were the aggressor, but the resolution that we had to withdraw was justified on the grounds that we were the aggressor....That is the underlying assumption of the condemnation....Even though we may not have explained it well, it is evident to anyone familiar with the situation that we acted defensively, because our situation is unparalleled

anywhere in the world, and the rules which apply elsewhere cannot be applied to us. We are a small nation of one and a half million people surrounded by nations thirty or forty times our size who declare their intention of destroying us....And it cannot be denied that there is a very big gap between the U.N.'s noble principles and its actual deeds....

...The Prime Minister did not say that we would withdraw from Gaza...which does not constitute Egyptian territory....As to the threats which occasioned the Prime Minister's radio broadcast, I would like to say that, contrary to MK Begin's opinion, I considered them to be very serious....They were serious enough to justify the Prime Minister's broadcast. Post factum it is easy to say that it was a bluff. There was panic, both here and in the U.S., but because after all we did not open the package we do not know today whether it contained a bomb or a cake. It could be said that the Americans made use of the Russian threat, but that is not the point....Certain events were occurring elsewhere in the world at that time which gave us cause to believe that what was threatened would be implemented....What was unfortunate was that the chance of holding onto territory until a settlement—perhaps even peace—could be reached was missed....

The second disappointment is that the U.N. Force appears to be virtually under Egyptian control....In view of all this, the Government's demand for the demilitarization of the Sinai would seem to come a trifle late....I maintain, however, that we should remain permanently in the coastal strip of the Gulf of Eilat, and refuse to leave it on any account....The only purpose it served for the Egyptians was to prevent our ships from sailing there freely....We also maintain that the Army—not a police force—should remain in Gaza....

...I believe that we should flatly refuse to withdraw any further, no matter what sanctions are involved....It has always been my view and still is, that our political situation is far weaker than our military one, and now we are reaping the harvest of our weakness....

Despite the disappointments, we continue to admire the U.N., which is a great deal for us since that organization comprises countries which are hostile to us and one of which, even one of the most important ones, threatened quite explicitly to destroy us....We hope that the gap between the U.N.'s ideals and its deeds will be reduced...and that we will receive genuine help from it, eventually attaining true peace....We do not think peace can be gained through war, but we regarded the Sinai Campaign as a means of removing the threat of destruction from us, and in that, I believe, we succeeded.

But we want peace, and it would seem that we will not attain it without help from outside. Let us hope that we will obtain that honest and effective help from that organization.

...

I. Raphael (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): ...Although the world brands us as aggressors...we know that our sole desire is for peace. The first aim of the Sinai Campaign—ending our continual harassment by bands of murderers coming from across the border—was achieved....If that is what MK Begin regards as a failure, all we can do is pray for more such “failures.”...It is not to the U.N.'s credit that it has forced us to withdraw from Sinai, which we never intended to keep without reaching any agreement with Egypt....This has merely served to place peace further away from our region....

We also succeeded in opening the way for our ships in the Gulf of Eilat...and we hope that this right will also be accorded to us in the Suez Canal....Our Government is right to demand guarantees with regard to withdrawing from the desolate area of the Sinai...but the Gaza Strip is a very different matter...there there is no room for compromise there, for “Gaza with her towns and her villages” was given to the tribe of Judah because “Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof.” Because we took Gaza with its coast, the Strip is once again part of our homeland....No more will it serve as a fist raised against the heart of our country....We will no more give it up than we will give up part of Galilee, no matter how much we have to suffer....

Naturally, we cannot ignore the refugee problem which the restoration of the Strip to the state involves....We have good will as well as experience in resettling refugees and...with international help, we will undertake the humanitarian task of resolving that problem which has been shirked by the Arab countries till now....

...International public opinion is moving in our favor now....The U.N. must begin to treat us and the Arabs with the same impartiality, as was the intention of its founders....The nation in Zion, remaining faithful to its mission, will take upon itself a burden of debts and suffering for the sake of peace....We must unite in the face of what lies before us and prepare ourselves for the test. If we are firm in our resolve...the U.N. will recoil from taking steps which will harm us and the nations of the world will counteract pressure and threats, admiration for this ancient, brave nation will grow and the Lord of Hosts will guide our steps in the battles of the coming days.

I. Ben-Aharon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): ...The attempt made from this podium by MK Begin to describe our so-called political defeat in the wake of the Sinai Campaign is totally unfounded. Those who made that claim appear to have forgotten the stranglehold we were in ever since the Baghdad Pact, the Czech deal, the threat to push us back to the borders of 1947 and to subdue us by force of arms, with the aid of Soviet weapons and the world-imperialist oil conspiracies surrounding us....

The Sinai Campaign rent several tissues...creating new openings for Israel's political struggle. We had no alternative. The timing of the

battle had been under consideration for two years. No world Power was surprised, and their contentions that they were surprised are untrue....We must not be alarmed by the current parliamentary reality of the U.N....We are confronting policies determined by the Powers' own interests, which do not directly concern us....

The true picture of the situation is not reflected in the balance of parliamentary powers of 72 votes regarding our affair, or 62 regarding that of Hungary. There was no withdrawal from Hungary because of the 62 votes. It would be folly to think that we can disregard the U.N., but nor must we accept those parliamentary decisions as if they were international justice....

As the Knesset knows, my party maintains that we must entrench ourselves in a defensive line in Sinai as long as there is no peace, as long as we are threatened with renewed war, as long as the U.N. is unable to impose peace upon its members...which the U.N. is patently unable to do...Which country has allowed the U.N. to decide when it comes to its essential concerns? Have they disarmed? Have they stopped producing nuclear weapons? Have they withdrawn from territory?...The price of independence, of formulating our own policy, of making our own decisions, of our security, is a high one in the world we live in today....But we must not abandon the hopes we have put in that organization....

Our “political defeat,” as Mr. Begin terms it...would have been our lot even after our reactions at Kalkilya and Husan...but without the Sinai Campaign we would probably have been pushed back to the 1947 borders....In international relations today there is no way of avoiding serious crises with the Powers, regardless of the attitudes towards them of the various political parties....We are in conflict with mighty, selfish forces, concerned solely with their own interests, which they are attempting to further at our expense....The nation should be aware of the fact that the price of our independence and security is high, and will continue to rise...not because we oppose the so-called true interests of the Arab peoples, not because we do not further the so-called cause of progress, which is so deeply-rooted in this region, but because we are what we are, and no one has yet managed to buy us, and we have not abandoned our independence....

We are fighting this battle with the blood of our sons, with the labor and efforts of our workers and pioneers and with the unending loyalty of Jews throughout the world.

...We have gained some support in the world, from men of vision and conscience, and I believe that support for us will grow....Does MK Begin really think we went into this battle joyfully, out of a desire for conquest and territorial expansion? Why these crocodile tears at the withdrawal? Did we think that we would not withdraw after we had bro-

ken the enemy's outstretched arm? We broke it and did our work well....

We can and must disobey the parliamentary combination which tries to block our route to the nations of Asia and Africa in the Gulf of Eilat and the Suez Canal; we can and must disobey any international force which tries to revive the threat against us by turning three hundred thousand innocent Arabs into *fedayeen*, into murderers and terrorists, bringing disaster upon them and us. We must continue the political battle...for the demilitarization of Sinai...which would be as much for Egypt's defense as for Israel's....I know that the world learned something from the fact that Nasser's tissue of lies was exposed by the IDF's brave and pure arm.

...We call on the nation to see not only the glory of victory...but also the real gravity of entrenching ourselves in the last defensive line beyond which there is no withdrawal, paying the price through our struggle for life and our fighting and pioneering endeavor, as was evinced by our army....It is that which will carve Israel's independence among the nations which are faithful to our vision, which is also the vision of the U.N.

...
Y. Riftin (Mapam): ...We are discussing the resolutions of the U.N. Assembly with the respect that international institution deserves. We have not forgotten the U.N.'s failure to act when Israel was invaded by the neighboring countries as soon as it was established...or its failure to force Egypt to grant freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal to our ships....But nor have we forgotten the U.N.'s historic decisions which preceded the establishment of Israel....Our nation's history has sharpened our sense of self-preservation, and verbal assurances will not satisfy us where our fate is concerned....

The State of Israel cannot forego genuine guarantees of freedom of navigation on the way to Eilat, nor does it relinquish freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal. It cannot permit the Gaza Strip to revert to being a base of terrorist aggression directed against innocent civilians. As is known, our party has proposed a plan based on the inclusion of the Strip in the State of Israel while rehabilitating the Arab refugees there, with the help of the U.N. This will not only prevent the threat to Israel's security but will also make a considerable contribution to solving the malignant problem of the Arab refugees, which cries out for a solution.

Whatever one's opinion regarding the Sinai Campaign...it is obvious that such issues as freedom of navigation for Israeli shipping and the security of the inhabitants of Israel cannot be resolved by formalist gymnastics, and certainly not by placing pressure on Israel. Our historic undertaking of the ingathering of the exiles deserves not only the help of the entire Jewish people, but of all mankind....Threats will not bring us to our knees.

...The absence of any demand for peace...by the U.N. and the Powers increases the anxiety of our nation. Only reaction and alien forces which seek to rule the peoples of our region could be interested in the absence of peace. Our future is linked with the historic fate we share with the peoples of Asia in the struggle for national independence and social progress. Not even the Eisenhower Doctrine can put a stop to that....

We demand that our region be placed outside the sphere of the competition between the Powers; we demand that all the military alliances in the region be dissolved. We demand a policy of non-alignment, economic and political independence and true neutrality of Israel and all the countries of the region. We call on all those involved to make a supreme effort to attain peace....We must reject reckless pseudo-patriotic demagoguery...as expressed by Herut....Our people must be alert, we must be ready to make sacrifices, to act responsibly and to stand firm on the basic rights of the State of Israel.

...
S. Mikunis (Maki): ...The Prime Minister's statement that Israel will not withdraw from the strip along the Straits of Eilat and the Gaza Strip embodies additional dangers for Israel....There are few parallels to the lack of national responsibility, political blindness, absence of political understanding and unbounded recklessness as that evinced by the...Ben-Gurion Government....

The Government's decision to delay the withdrawal constitutes a severe provocation to the nations of the whole world, peace-loving world public opinion and all the peoples of Asia and Africa. Larger countries than Israel, such as Britain and France, have had to acknowledge the failure of their military escapades and withdraw from Egyptian territory. Is there anyone here who thinks that Israel will succeed where the colonialist Powers have failed? Is it not evident that the days when aggressors were rewarded have passed, that Israel will have to withdraw to the armistice lines? That being so, what is the point of acting in this arrogant manner?...

The Prime Minister...has tried to conceal his political failure. ...What was he thinking of when, in order to further the interests of British and French colonialism, he marched the IDF to the escapade on Egyptian soil? What is he thinking of now when his policy of delaying and evading a full withdrawal is endangering Israel's security and making us a laughing stock among the nations? We are not unaware of Israel's difficulties...but nor are we unaware of the basic fact that the Government's pro-imperialist and anti-Arab policy...is principally responsible for them....

The Prime Minister claims that leaving the IDF in the Gaza Strip and the coastal strip of the Gulf of Eilat will ensure freedom of navigation and aid Israel's security. If that is not political blindness, it is deceit. Our own experience has proved that failure to withdraw our troops

guarantees neither freedom of navigation nor security, merely the continuation of the state of war....Only a few days ago the Prime Minister...said that Herut's proposal not to leave El-Arish was insane. That was a good definition, which this House and the nation accepted....Then why should the decision not to leave Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip be any less insane?

Y. Kesse (Mapai): Only someone insane like you would ask that.

S. Mikunis (Maki): ...Tell the nation that you are gambling with its fate in the crumbling stock exchanges of Paris, London and Washington, and that your policy is a suicidal one....We know that you are too cowardly to do so...you do not even have the courage to resign...as anyone else in your position would do.

E. Ichilov (General Zionists): Like Khrushchev did after Hungary?

...
S. Mikunis (Maki): ...You seek guarantees for Israel...from the imperialist forces which have abandoned you before. You ignore the fact that the best guarantee for Israel is to change its policy from dependence on others to one of peace and neutrality. The tragedy is that you continue to rely on reactionary forces whose only interest in the Middle East is to steal oil and establish aggressive alliances, to make the nations subservient and restore the colonialist regimes....You have placed Israel in opposition to the trend of political development in the region....

All the signs in the world press...indicate that your delay of a full withdrawal is solely in the interests of the French, the British and the Americans, who wish to exert pressure on Egypt at Israel's expense while addressing it from a position of strength....You are also serving the Eisenhower Doctrine, which seeks to take over Britain's and France's positions in the Middle East....It is in our national interest to end the Israel-Arab conflict, but serving the imperialists will achieve the opposite....

D. Hacoheh (Mapai): What about Bulganin's doctrine concerning Israel?

S. Mikunis (Maki): Bulganin's doctrine will be victorious throughout the world. It is a doctrine of peace and the victory of socialism. It is in Israel's interest to withdraw fully from the occupied territories. The only Power which has worked for peace in the Middle East is the U.S.S.R.

(From the floor: Ho-ho-ho!)

H. Ariav (General Zionists): By sending arms!

S. Mikunis (Maki): That Power has made, and continues to make, efforts to secure peace in the region and end the Israel-Arab conflict....The Soviet statement of 17 April 1956 which you described at the

time as objective...stresses the U.S.S.R.'s support of the independence of the peoples of the region...and the necessity of solving the Israel-Arab conflict by peaceful means...recognizing the just national rights of both sides....That is the only way....

...
The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Three proposals have been submitted to sum up the debate. The Prime Minister apologizes for being unable to attend the conclusion of the debate because he is unwell. I give the floor to MK Meridor.

J. Meridor (Herut): On behalf of Herut I bring the following proposal before the Knesset:

A. The Knesset resolves that Israel will not agree to the entry of a foreign force, under any name, to Gaza and the Strip, which are, according to the nation's historic right, liberated parts of our homeland, or to place them in any way under foreign rule or supervision.

B. The Knesset resolves that the only way of assuring freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat, as long as peace has not been made with Egypt, is to maintain Israeli forces along the coast of the Gulf.

C. The Knesset resolves that the Government of Israel should not have withdrawn the IDF from the areas it controlled as long as a peace agreement with Egypt had not been made and complete freedom of navigation in the international waterway of the Suez Canal had not been assured.

D. The Knesset resolves that the recommendation by the U.N. that Israel withdraw beyond the armistice lines in the south, which means abandoning the liberated part of the Jewish homeland and returning to a situation of bloodshed, is morally invalid. This recommendation harms not only the State of Israel's right to exist and undertake legal self-defense, but also peace in the entire region, which is a vital interest of all nations. Consequently, it is Israel's right, as a sovereign member of the U.N., and in accordance with its Charter, to refrain from implementing that recommendation.

The Knesset expresses its gratitude to the French people and government for their support of Israel.

The Knesset states that in the battle for the remaining fruits of our army's victory the nation must stand united and accept with love any suffering entailed as a result of foreign pressure. Because our cause is just, we will eventually triumph.

E. Wilenska (Maki): On behalf of the Israel Communist Party I have the honor of submitting the following resolution:

For the sake of Israel's benefit and security, in order to extricate Israel from international isolation, to pave the way to peace with the neighboring countries, to eradicate the results of the war against Egypt and for the sake of peace in the Middle East and the world, the Knesset

resolves that the Israeli forces shall withdraw from all the territory conquered after 29 October 1956 and return to the armistice lines.

A. Govrin (Mapai): On behalf of the Coalition party groups: Mapai, Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion, Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi, Mapam, and the Progressives, and on behalf of the General Zionists, Agudat Yisrael-Po'alei Agudat Yisrael, Progress and Labor, the Democratic Arab List and Agriculture and Development, I have the honor of submitting the following proposals to the Knesset:

A. The Knesset notes that in its resolution of 19 January 1957 the U.N. Assembly does not only fail to advance the peace in the Middle East to which Israel aspires but also totally ignores the danger threatening Israel because of the declared refusal of the Egyptian government and the other Arab countries to recognize Israel's existence and make peace with it.

B. After having heard the Prime Minister's statement of 23 January 1957, the Knesset resolves:

1. Israel will remain in the Gaza Strip and will be responsible for internal and external security there; it will continue to maintain and develop independent administration by the inhabitants of the Strip in every town and village; it will enable UNWRA to continue with its work for the refugees and will continue to ensure that the inhabitants of the Strip receive public services.

2. The IDF will not withdraw from the coast of the Gulf of Eilat until Israeli and international freedom of navigation is ensured in the Straits of Eilat and the Red Sea, to and from Eilat, by genuine guarantees to which Israel will agree.

3. Israel demands the demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula.

4. Israel asks the U.N. to draw up a plan for a permanent settlement for the refugees, including those in the Gaza Strip. Israel will contribute to the best of its abilities to a settlement of this kind.

5. Israel will insist that in every settlement of the Suez Canal problem Israel's navigation will be assured without discrimination.

The Knesset and the nation will stand firm to defend Israel's rights and security.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now vote.

The Vote

Those in favor of MK J. Meridor's proposal 11

Those in favor of MK E. Wilenska's proposal 6

Those in favor of MK A. Govrin's proposal 54

(MK A. Govrin's proposal is adopted.)

Foreign Policy and Defense

Introduction

Once Great Britain and France had withdrawn their troops from Egyptian territory, thus complying with U.N. General Assembly resolutions, Israel stood alone in defiance of these resolutions. Although it had withdrawn from most of the Sinai Peninsula, it refused to withdraw any further before a satisfactory solution had been found for the problem of free navigation in the Gulf of Eilat, and to that of keeping the Gaza Strip clean of bases of forces hostile to Israel, in other words, preventing the return of Egypt to the Strip.

Now that Israel alone had to justify its case to public opinion it gained a great deal of public sympathy and understanding, much more so than in the past when it was judged in tandem with Great Britain and France. This change of climate was particularly noticeable in the U.S. and was manifested in Congress. On the other hand, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, although willing to concede that there was an Israeli case and to make certain vague promises concerning freedom of navigation, stood firm on the principle that the aggressor must not be rewarded. Since Israel was the aggressor according to the U.S. doctrine, this meant that a return to the status quo ante bellum should precede any measures designed to redress Israeli grievances. In February, utilizing the prestige of his office and his own personal standing as demonstrated by his reelection, and going over the head of Congress, President Eisenhower addressed the nation in that vein.

In a last attempt to sway the position of the U.S. government, Ben-Gurion initiated another political debate in the Knesset, which clearly demonstrated the almost unanimous support for the Government's position. The only party willing to accede to the U.N.—and U.S.—insistence on unconditional withdrawal was the Communist party, which was also the most vehement in condemning the U.S.

Sitting 249 of the Third Knesset

21 February 1957 (20 Adar 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, fate has decreed that our small, young state should be involved in a serious dispute with two world bodies, which are appreciated by no other country in the world as much as by Israel: the U.N. and the U.S. The dispute revolves around a grave moral aspect of international rela-

tions: will the U.N., with the aid of the U.S., act in an unevenhanded way with tyrannical Egypt on the one hand and democratic Israel on the other? Will those who seek to destroy us be permitted to deny every international assurance and commitment, violate the U.N. Charter and the resolutions of the Assembly and the Security Council and send murderers and terrorists to our country and impose an economic boycott and a blockade on us, while Israel will not be allowed to defend itself or protect its rights, its sovereign equality and its security? Will the U.N., with the help of the U.S., punish us because we do not accept the double standards of the Egyptian tyrant, who demands that others maintain what is in his interests and denies any bilateral settlement or international commitment which benefits others?...Any attempt to impose a perversion of law upon us will encounter the undaunted opposition of the Israeli nation. If the U.N. fails to treat all nations according to the same rules, its moral basis will be undermined.

But even in this tragic argument we will not indulge in generalizations....There is no doubt that the U.N. is still far from being perfect, and we have bitter complaints against it, not only regarding recent events. But we will not reject that world institution. The vision it embodies is that of our prophets. The principles upon which it is based are those of peace, justice and equality between nations; these are no less dear to us than they are to other nations. On the basis of its heritage, faith, needs and situation, the Jewish people must be devoted to those principles and do its modest best to preserve them and ensure that they govern international relations.

The fact that the U.N. also includes members who do not honor human rights and freedoms, and some who even countenance slavery and the slave trade, does not detract from the value and importance of the U.N.'s principles. We must realize that the fulfillment of the U.N.'s vision is an historic process which does not happen in one day or one year, and we must do our best to further this process and not abandon the hopes most of mankind has pinned on this organization.

Even during our painful quarrel with the U.S. we will not forget for a moment that in a few hundred years that nation has undertaken on a huge scale, in an immense and rich country, the pioneering work which we have been called upon to implement in a few years in a small, poor country—building up the country and making it flourish, absorbing immigrants from all over the world and integrating them into one nation, molding a democratic regime based on human freedom, respect and initiative, without coercion—and that there is a considerable common bond between us and the American people in our attachment to the Bible. We do not have to agree with everything the U.S. government does, and in opposing every negative proposal the U.S. government makes concerning us our feelings of friendship and admiration for the American people are in no way diminished....

In the past we had a tragic disagreement with the government of another great nation, Britain, which, as of 1939, openly denied its commitments and promises to the Jewish people. We did not accept that perversion of justice and, in opposition to the policy of the White Paper, we organized so-called "illegal" immigration with the intention of saving as many Jews as possible from the Nazis and building our nation's ancient homeland. This fierce and bitter opposition to the policy of the Mandate government did not prevent us from realizing the moral greatness of the British people when it stood alone with supreme heroism against the Nazi hangman. Tens of thousands of our sons and daughters volunteered to fight in Jewish units within the British army...even though at that time we were doing all we could to counteract the policy of the White Paper.

If a tragedy happens and world factors aid and abet the machinations of the Arab rulers and their allies against Israel, we will not accept our fate and will oppose it with all our moral force. I believe that we will not stand alone. In every country and nation there are people of conscience who will not tolerate...international discrimination against a small nation which is making superhuman efforts to build its country, absorb immigrants...and create a just and equal society....

The dispute between us and our neighbors...is based on their refusal to recognize our right to exist...thereby flouting the relevant U.N. resolution....The Armistice Agreements which were signed in 1949 were intended to serve as a...step towards a permanent peace settlement in the region...something which our neighbors have again refused to do....Egypt claims to be at war with Israel and has committed innumerable hostile acts against us...directly contravening the U.N. Charter and Security Council resolutions, which the U.N. has done nothing to implement. The question is, is it necessary only for a small, democratic country to obey the U.N. while a tyrannical regime is free to do as it pleases...? Egypt has prevented Israel from benefiting from the freedom of navigation which is its right under international law in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Eilat...and neither the U.N. nor the U.S. have taken any action to prevent this....

And now, after eight years, we have assured freedom of navigation for Israel and the world in the Straits of Eilat....We have stated our readiness to remove our troops from the area as soon as our freedom of navigation is guaranteed by the stationing of U.N. forces there, until peace is signed between Egypt and Israel or some other settlement is reached....Israel is entitled to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal in accordance with the Treaty of Constantinople...and the Security Council resolution....Its ships are entitled to sail through the Straits of Eilat in accordance with international law. Israeli ships sailed there three thousand years ago....Israel cannot withdraw without a guarantee of freedom of navigation there....

Gaza, which was never Egyptian territory, but a geographic and economic part of Palestine...was invaded and occupied by Egypt in 1948....No one ever said that Egypt should not be rewarded for its aggression, as is said today about Israel, even though Israel was acting in self-defense in the Sinai Campaign....During the past eight years Egypt has done nothing to develop the Gaza Strip, help its population or settle the refugees there....It has turned it into a base for murder and destruction....

The Egyptian tyrant has totally disregarded the Armistice Agreements, as he has all his international obligations and commitments. ...We cannot be expected to allow him to return to Gaza on the basis of an agreement which he has flouted....

In our view, there are three main problems in the Gaza Strip: a. The security of Israel and the settlements of the south and the Negev; b. The economic rehabilitation of the permanent residents; c. The resolution of the problem of the refugees. Israel wishes to cooperate with the U.N. in solving these three problems, and is prepared to withdraw its army from the Strip, as we have said before....

The unfortunate deadlock of recent weeks in settling the matter of the Gaza Strip and the Straits was resolved to some extent recently at the initiative of the U.S....The Government of Israel has given careful study to the memorandum issued on the subject by the U.S...it has expressed its appreciation of the efforts made by the U.S. President and Secretary of State in seeking a solution to the two problems and has welcomed the U.S. statement regarding the fact that the Straits are an international waterway....The Government also attached importance to the fact that the U.S. was prepared to send its ships to the Gulf and proposed that other countries do likewise. But Israel cannot ignore the severe and certain danger that Egypt will once again interfere with Israel's freedom of navigation, as it openly declares it will do....This is proved by the situation in Suez, where international navigation is permitted, but Israel's ships are prevented from sailing, in flagrant contravention of international law....

The Government of Israel therefore considers it essential that a U.N. force be stationed in the Straits to assure freedom of navigation for Israel....The U.S. delegate to the U.N. has expressed his country's agreement to this....

Egypt must not return to the Gaza Strip, either directly or indirectly; an arrangement must be found which will guarantee Israel's security...the rehabilitation of the permanent settlers, who were impoverished during Egypt's occupation, and the resolution of the refugee problem by the U.N. Israel is prepared to help in all this....

...Israel does not regard itself as being in a state of war with Egypt. It is prepared to sign a non-aggression pact, on a basis of mutuality. The Government has decided to make an additional effort to reach mutual

understanding with the U.S. government, via our ambassador, who returns to Washington tomorrow. We hope that the door is not closed to further clarifications.

Yesterday the U.S. President told the American nation that the U.N. must exert "pressure" on Israel to make it withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the coastal area along the Gulf of Eilat. With all my regret at hearing the President's words, I cannot forget that President Eisenhower is not only the elected representative of the American nation, but one of the greatest men of our generation, one who succeeded in defeating the Nazi beast....

When I received the letter from President Eisenhower two weeks ago...this constituted immense moral pressure on me, because I knew who the signatory was....And if I had to reply as I did, I did so out of even greater pressure—that of the Jewish and human conscience in me, that of the justice for which our people has fought, and the clear knowledge that justice is the source of our nation's strength and survival; a nation which is small and lowly in the family of nations, a nation which for hundreds of years was despised and persecuted because of its stubborn refusal to deny its faith, its past and the vision of its future....I answered as I did out of a sense of responsibility, a crushing, historic responsibility, as the representative of a small nation fighting for its existence....I tried to explain to the President that we have no intention of holding onto the coastal strip of the Gulf one moment longer than is necessary...to ensure our freedom of navigation there....

I also said that we were willing to withdraw our troops from the Gaza Strip without delay, and that we desired appropriate arrangements with the U.N. which will ensure security and stability there, as well as the rehabilitation of the residents...and the refugees....

I am sure that every Knesset member is aware of the significance of "pressure" on Israel...which the U.S. President mentioned in connection with loyalty to the U.N. Charter. With all the modesty which befits the representative of a small nation, I venture to say that nothing so contradicts the U.N. Charter as a regime of discrimination and the lack of fairness in the treatment meted out to us in comparison to Egypt because we are few, weak and perhaps isolated....

In his speech the President said that henceforth the U.N. should do more...to guarantee international justice and law, the obvious implication of this being...that this has not been the case till now, and the chief victim of this has been Israel. For eight years the U.N. tolerated acts of hostility perpetrated against Israel by Egypt. The conclusion to be drawn from the President's words is that henceforth this situation will not recur...and that the U.N. will ensure Israel peace and security on the land, at sea and in the air....

It is Israel's right to live in peace and security as much as it is Egypt's to destroy and wage war. Since the reestablishment of our state

we have demanded peace and cooperation with our neighbors on a basis of equality and mutuality.

Israel will not tolerate unfairness in international relations. We have always believed—and continue to believe—in the conscience of mankind. We appeal to the U.S. government and all those in the world who love peace and justice to stand by us and ensure Israel its international rights, sovereign equality, peace and security.

Sitting 250 of the Third Knesset

22 February 1957 (21 Adar A 5717)

J. Meridor (Herut): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we must examine the Prime Minister's speech...and see if there really was no alternative and we had to reach the point we reached....

I admire the fact that the Prime Minister had the courage to decide—albeit on an interim basis—to reject the ultimatum of the U.S. President. There are still gaps and cracks in the Government's plan, however...and these give rise to grave dangers....

The object of the Sinai Campaign was to save this nation, which had returned to Israel to rebuild its independence, from annihilation. Only after the Campaign did we discover what had been prepared in the Sinai desert to destroy us, with the help of Soviet arms....It is obvious that Israel stood in the way of Nasser's plan to gain control of all the Arab lands, including the oil of Saudi Arabia and Iraq....But after the Sinai Campaign had ended as it did, and we paid dearly for it, it was obvious that we possessed a means of attaining peace with Egypt. We thought that the Government of Israel would hold onto the Sinai Peninsula until a peace agreement was signed....We thought that the first objective would be to overthrow the tyrannical regime in Egypt...because in my view peace with Nasser is impossible. But events turned out otherwise....We promised the U.S. President to withdraw, and we have, albeit slowly....

In our view, the retreat from the El-Arish/Abu-Ageila/Kuseima line...constituted abandoning the security of our settlements in the south. If we had held on to that line, which constitutes the last point at which there is water, a huge desert would now separate us from Egypt and de facto peace would be possible. But we left without being guaranteed anything.

From this podium we representatives of Herut proposed a vote of no confidence in the Government because of that withdrawal. We did not do so lightly...but out of a sense of responsibility....Today the U.N. Force is in El-Arish, as well as in Gaza, in effect. The Egyptian army of sabotage is in its wake, laying mines on the roads, beneath our jeeps,

killing Israeli soldiers, and all we can do is protest to the U.N...which refers us to the Armistice Commission. If we had remained on that line we could at least claim to be doing something to attain peace and settle the refugees....Our party maintains that Gaza is part of Israel and should be liberated, but you did not say that unequivocally.

...According to the Prime Minister, the main difference between us and the U.S. President is that he demands that we withdraw unconditionally and we demand guarantees for our withdrawal....From whom? From the U.N.? The U.S. government...? Is that realistic? What are U.N. guarantees worth after Hammerskjold has assured Nasser that the U.N. force will withdraw from Egyptian territory whenever Egypt demands this...? In fact, there is no guarantee that if the U.N. force is stationed in the Straits of Eilat it will be able to assure freedom of navigation.

There are temptations...Mr. Dulles tells Eban that it makes no difference whether we are in Eilat or Sharm el-Sheikh, in either case we will have to fight, we will have to send convoys...and if we remain at Sharm el-Sheikh sanctions will be imposed upon us and no Asian country will trade with us....We refute this, and say that the countries of Africa, such as Ethiopia, the British and French areas and South Africa, will continue to trade with us. They are the great reservoir of raw materials for our industry, and the huge potential market for our industrial products....

Since its establishment, the Suez Canal has always been regarded as an international waterway. Today Nasser regards it as an internal Egyptian waterway....Nasser claims he is at war with us, and will not accord us our navigation rights there....Let us take him at his word. There is nothing easier than to block the Suez Canal. That is an effective counterweapon in our hands, which the whole world will take into consideration if we threaten to use it....Thus, the only guarantee of freedom of navigation for Israel is for our soldiers to remain at Sharm el-Sheikh, as long as there is no peace. If the U.S. sends the Sixth Fleet there to ensure our freedom of navigation it can easily threaten to remove it in order to put pressure on us to agree to any demands it might make, such as the Dulles Plan....

The Government...has made unclear statements about the possibility of withdrawing from Gaza...instead of claiming, as our party has, that Gaza has returned to the bosom of the homeland and that with international help we can solve the problems it poses. Our Government's approach was a negative one...saying that we would not allow the Egyptians to reestablish their bases there...and that we would be prepared to withdraw our forces....The obvious conclusion our friends will draw from this is that we want a U.N. force in Gaza....Nasser's achievement will be that he has pushed the U.N. force towards our borders....And that

step will be followed by a demand that we return to the Partition Plan borders, or, at best, what is known as the Dulles Plan....

That is why the problem of withdrawing from Gaza is so important and crucial for the nation, its future and its existence. If we reach that situation we will become a U.N. protectorate....The intention is to weaken us, tighten the stranglehold around us and bring us to our knees.

I do not think that what the Prime Minister said here yesterday prepares us to stand firm. Although we heard "no," it was linked to certain conditions, and conditions are open to interpretation. The door remains open for all kinds of discussions, proposals, compromises. That is the greatest danger of all. If we had heard an unequivocal "no" last night we would have been happy. But we did not even hear the demand for Israel's police to be stationed in Gaza or for there to be an Israeli administration there....What we heard was that our forces will be withdrawn.... How does the Prime Minister imagine maintaining Gaza without the IDF, when there is an Egyptian underground there...? I would be glad to hear the Prime Minister prove to me that I am mistaken....

The fact that the U.S. President had to appeal to the American nation above the heads of the leaders in Congress, who oppose imposing sanctions on Israel, is very important for us. It tells us that not all Americans identify with their government's policy, just as not all Israelis identify with theirs as reflected in the Prime Minister's midnight address of November 8. Not all our nation identifies with the withdrawal from Sinai....I would say that most of the nation was against that unconditional withdrawal, and the Government acted against the will of the people....The U.S. President is taking a similar path....General Eisenhower appears to be committed in some way to Ibn Saud and the Egyptian rulers...but do we have to be the victims of that? Never! That is what should have been said last night. Never! That is how the nation is prepared for war and self-defense.

I think that even if sanctions were to be imposed upon us...most of the nation would not flinch....Sanctions could even benefit us in the long run. We would become accustomed to a different life-style, get several thousand vehicles off the roads...increase productivity, reduce imports....We could become economically and politically independent....The nation is united...in one thing: to say "no" to Eisenhower's ultimatum and the command to withdraw. That is not enough, however. On behalf of my party I call on the Prime Minister and the Government...not to withdraw. It is against our interests to withdraw. If we succeed in this I am sure that a better future awaits us.

Z. Warhaftig (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, once again this morning we read in the papers about an attack by infiltrators on a driver on one of our roads....Once again we are reminded...of our security situation...and why we must seek

guarantees and assurances. This is not a question of luxuries or conquests, not even, to our regret, the sacred matter of restoring part of the Land of Israel to the bosom of the homeland....Our struggle now is for security, for the daily safety of our lives, the life of the worker in the field, the driver on the road, the lives of children in villages and on roads, the security of kibbutzim and agricultural villages, the settlements of immigrants who wish to work and earn their bread; it is a struggle to defend ourselves against murderers who are sent by those who love power. There is no higher moral precept than self-defense, to which we are irrevocably committed....

But it is not only for our own security that we fight, not only for justice for ourselves. We maintain control of the Gaza Strip and we are prepared to see to justice for the inhabitants and the Arab refugees there. Nine years have passed and the camps of the Gaza Strip are still full of refugees. Virtually nothing has been done to resolve the problem, by either the Egyptians, who have occupied the Strip for nine years, or the U.N., which has not acted to solve the problem....During that same period Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants...and still continues to do so....The only chance of solving the problem of the Arab refugees in the Gaza Strip is for the area to be annexed to Israel. If the U.N. is concerned to solve world problems rather than further complicating them, it should be the first to suggest that we hold on to the Gaza Strip and together find a solution to its problems.

In the Gulf of Solomon we are also fighting for world justice, not only our own war. Freedom of navigation is a principle which is sacred to the whole world, not only to one country. A great deal of blood has been shed throughout the world for that principle....World peace today is dependent to no small extent on the preservation of that principle, as the Suez affair proves....The Gulf of Solomon serves as a bridge between east and west, on the cultural as well as the economic levels....By holding the monopoly on that bridge...the Egyptians control part of the world....

We welcome the statement by the U.S. President...in which he recognizes that the Gulf of Eilat is an international waterway and states that he will send his ships there and will see to it that other countries do likewise....But after our failure, despite the U.N. resolution, to gain freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal...we are entitled to entrench ourselves and ensure freedom of navigation in a more practical way, because we are fighting for the whole world, not only for ourselves....

...The U.S. President also said something very important in his address...namely: "Peace and justice are two sides of the same coin, and perhaps the world has failed to pay sufficient attention to that truth."...This truth is drawn from our holy Bible....At this crucial hour before the fateful decisions of the U.N...we must remember the words our prophets spoke thousands of years ago and the President of America

repeated now: if you want world peace, make sure to observe both sides of the coin—peace and justice.

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Distinguished Speaker, Knesset Members, in view of the pressure and the economic and political difficulties which Israel has experienced since the Sinai Campaign, when once again we hear the words "we warned you," "that which we feared has come to pass," it may not be superfluous to stress once more that the Sinai Campaign did not only bring us no evil, it was essential for our self-defense, for Israel's continued existence....

All that was known prior to the Campaign, and especially what was revealed afterwards, proves irrevocably that the joint Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian command was about to attack Israel, with the help of "volunteers" from abroad. It is easy to imagine what the outcome would have been had the initiative been theirs. Not only would we have had to defend ourselves on three or four fronts simultaneously, but most of the battles—at least initially—would have been fought on our soil, with all that this involves.

The joint Arab initiative would have tried first of all to strike at our Air Force while it was on the ground. Centers of population and industry and traffic arteries would have served as targets for bombardment from the air, and although I have no doubt that victory would eventually have been ours, the cost would have been high....We were victorious not only because in quality and spirit we are superior...but primarily because the initiative was ours....

It is undoubtedly not pleasant to be the object of hostile resolutions from the U.N...but it is preferable that the discussions should be held while our army is in the Gulf of Solomon and Rafah than when the Egyptian army is in Rishon Letzion, God forbid. It is untrue to say that the Sinai Campaign has brought upon us the wrath of the two Great Powers....Have we forgotten the fact that the Suez Canal was closed to our ships...that the Straits of Eilat were shut for us...that vast amounts of arms—intended for use against Israel—were being accumulated in Sinai...that the Czech-Egyptian arms deal had played its part? Have we forgotten that prior to the Sinai Campaign political leaders of both the West and the East were demanding that Israel make territorial concessions to appease the Arab leaders?

I have no doubt that the U.N. would have discussed the Palestine problem even without that bold campaign, but instead of discussing our right to freedom of navigation it would have witnessed an attempt to impose the Partition Plan borders on us....No nation values the U.N. as we do; that is why it pains us to see its failure on this issue....The Assembly has assumed powers beyond those defined in the Charter, acting as a supreme court. This is an illusion, since those who should be in the dock sit in judgment. Our experience of the past eight years has proved that the Security Council has, regrettably, become the Insecurity Council.

The...competition between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., reflected in the huge shipments of arms sent to all the Arab countries, leaving Israel without modern defensive weapons, and the U.N.'s failure to do anything about the violations of the Armistice Agreements...made the Sinai Campaign inevitable.

For the moment the U.N., which should be the bastion of world peace, is merely another arena for the struggle between the Powers and the Blocs....Too often the values of law and international ethics are sacrificed on the altar of one-sided interests, at the expense of smaller countries. Consequently, the decisions of the majority in the U.N., which were guided by the selfish interests of the Great Powers, have no moral significance for Israel and are not binding upon us...They constitute abandoning Israel to its assailants. Our refusal to submit to a verdict of this kind...does not constitute a denial...of the basis of the U.N., being rather a struggle for its true content and mission....

If the U.N. fails to serve the needs of world peace and to defend the existence and independence of all countries, without discrimination, it will betray its mission and degenerate completely, to our great disappointment.

We have recently been apprised of two doctrines, one deriving from the U.S., the other from the U.S.S.R. Both of them imply a threat to draw our region—and hence the whole world—into the Cold War and the arms race, involving the fanning of national hatreds and the bribery of backward leaders which accompanies—

M. Wilner (Maki): Are you proposing that we cancel the arms race? How can you say that?

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): —the competition between the Blocs, and the danger of the renewed subservience of nations which have recently gained their independence from the yoke of foreign rule. Neither of the two doctrines can solve the real problem of the Middle East—the war against famine, sickness and ignorance—but lead to the exacerbation of relations and bring war nearer....

Israel did not stubbornly oppose the demands of the U.N. Most of the Sinai Peninsula was evacuated immediately, even too rapidly.

H. Landau (Herut): Why did you agree? You were in the Government?

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): We have heard enough from you. I will not enter into a shouting match with you.

We have withdrawn as far as was possible. We are now being asked to abandon the only guarantee for the existence of the state. The U.S. Secretary of State's proposals involve little more than a return to the situation prior to the Campaign, which cannot be tolerated again. Consequently...they cannot serve as a basis for resolving the problem, and cannot be accepted....Our demands for freedom of navigation derive

not from considerations of prestige, but constitute one of the main conditions of Israel's economic independence and growth....

Consequently, the fight for freedom of navigation is also a fight for our independence, as well as for our security and existence. In the long run, the paralysis of the port of Eilat involves greater economic losses than the economic sanctions with which we are being threatened.... Moscow Radio...has said that Israel has no navigation rights in the Red Sea Straits because they are "territorial waters." I wonder what their attitude will be when the question of the Straits of the Dardanelles is discussed....This attitude is shared by Egypt...which also claims to be at war with us....It is obvious, then, what will happen as soon as our troops leave the Gulf of Solomon without an acceptable settlement....Our freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal must also be assured....

A promise by the U.N. or one of the Powers is not enough to assure navigation in the Red Sea. The only guarantee is peace between Israel and Egypt. Because the Egyptian rulers refuse to make peace, there should at least be a limited settlement between the four Red Sea states—Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia—assuring freedom of navigation...under U.N. supervision.

The third eventuality, which is the lesser of the evils, is that the Straits will be controlled by U.N. forces, on the basis of a special decision, until a peace settlement is reached....Nothing else seems realistic. We must hold on to Sharm el-Sheikh and the islands until Israeli and international navigation is assured....

From the speech of the U.S. President and the statement of the Soviet government it is evident that they intend to restore Egyptian occupation in the Gaza Strip. Members of the Knesset—this must not come to pass! The Gaza Strip must not revert to being a base for incursions and Egyptian acts of terror. Our settlements there must no longer be open to constant harassment and attack....Our only oil fields at Heletz must not be within the range of their guns again....

We must be aware of the trap which the internationalization of the Strip involves....The international force would be stationed on both sides of the border...and would seriously impair our national sovereignty....It would be used in order to impose additional withdrawals upon us, not to mention the dangerous precedent of the internationalization of the historic Land of Israel. The plan to internationalize Jerusalem has not yet been shelved, and who knows what parts of our country they will want to internationalize next...?

...However good its intentions, the international force will be unable to prevent Egyptian-inspired *fedayeen* attacks on our population...although it will stop us from retaliating as we have in the past....There is no future for the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants unless it is attached to the right place—the State of Israel. We will continue to be endangered unless there is Israeli rule in the Strip. Consequently, the

Government must continue with its constructive policy there, fortifying the Israeli administration, enabling Israeli fishing settlements to be established along the coast...thereby making it impossible ever again to detach it from the body of the country....Despite the economic burden involved, our retaining control of the problem is better than our being the victims of it....That is the only way we can guarantee our security....

...We must not ignore the difficulties and dangers involved in opposing the demands of the Powers and the U.N., but it would be a great tragedy if that were to deter us. The hostile position of the Powers is not the result of their devotion to the principle of justice but the outcome of a policy of appeasing the Arab leaders at Israel's expense....The Government must not give in to the American dictate. We must not clutch at the straw of becoming part of one world Bloc rather than another.

M. Wilner (Maki): That's what you're doing.

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): If the Powers see that we are giving in to the economic and political pressure and agreeing to withdraw, they will exert the same pressure to obtain further withdrawals. By defending Rafah we are defending Beersheba. By remaining in the Gulf of Solomon we are ensuring the existence of Eilat. There is no limit to the withdrawals they will seek to impose upon us. The Partition Plan is not dead yet. So let us remain where we are today, and let us not give in to the plot hatched by the U.S. and the Arab leaders who control the oil fields....

There has been a shift in our favor in world public opinion, and in the U.S. This is evinced by the fact that the Secretary of State had to mobilize the immense prestige of the President in order to sway the public....The situation reminds me of the High Commissioner's advice to the Jews of Palestine to hand in their arms and trust in British protection. We all know where we would be now if we had listened to him then....

H. Landau (Herut): In whose name are you saying this?

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Not in yours, at any rate.

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

I'm sorry that the holders of the monopoly are so upset....

In his speech yesterday the Prime Minister protested on behalf of the entire nation at the unfair policy of the U.N. and the U.S. But to my regret...the Prime Minister left room for various interpretations...which do not conform with the Knesset's clear decisions of January 23...and which indicate our readiness to withdraw....It is still not too late. We have radio communication with our ambassador in Washington...and it is in our power to prevent our intentions being misinterpreted.

The guidelines of the present Government include assuring our freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. The world must be shown that the

Government does not have a mandate from the people to continue withdrawing and to waive its navigation rights .

Consequently, the Ahdut Ha'avodah-Po'alei Zion party group is unable to support the Government in decisions to withdraw further.

H. Landau (Herut): Why didn't you say that at El-Arish.

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): We must stop hesitating, and must organize our internal and economic life as if we were in a state of siege. Everyone must forego comfort, all must share in the sacrifice....We will increase production, reduce imports and increase exports, settle the desolate areas and stand firm until there is a change for the better, which will also bring about the peace we seek.

J. Hazan (Mapam): Distinguished Knesset, we have come to a time when we have no desire to stress the differences of opinion between us regarding the past. This is the time for the crucial political struggle for peace....We stand now with our backs to the wall, there is nothing more for us to give up. The political struggle threatens to destroy the just results of the great military battle.

We all know that we are fighting for something which is absolutely right. Our war does not harm the rights of others when it is a matter of life for us. We are fighting for justice here and in the whole world. It is a war against discrimination between large and small nations... against bargaining with the basic rights of a small country...to benefit aggressors and Great Powers....

The day will come when we will have to examine our deeds closely...but that will be done only after we have all made the maximum effort to repel the attack on our...just demands, namely: receiving genuine guarantees of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat...and the Suez Canal; assuring our southern borders by not allowing Gaza to revert to being a center of *fedayeen* and a bridgehead for surprise attacks on us, which cannot be obtained without liberating Gaza permanently from the Egyptian occupier and maintaining our civilian administration there.

I praise the Government for refraining from entering into unnecessary calculations of imaginary political prestige and not being deluded by false dreams of conquering areas which are not ours. We were right to leave the Sinai desert after destroying all Nasser's military installations, which continued to threaten us because he planned to wage war on us from them. By withdrawing we lost a desert which is not ours and won over world public opinion. Only those for whom oil is more important than the suffering of a small nation fighting for its right to live... could continue to ignore the justice of our war.

...We are now confronting the most crucial struggle since the establishment of the state, there is no knowing how much we will have to suffer....But I am sure that our nation, which has gathered here in order to

rebuild its life after thousands of years of wandering and suffering, will not recoil from that test....Opposition to sanctions against us is growing in the U.S.—and not only there...reflecting the sense of justice which still beats in people's breasts....The first fruits of that opposition...can be seen in the proposals of the U.S. Secretary of State....

Mr. Foster Dulles tried to prove the earnestness of his proposals to the world and us by saying that the U.S. would send ships to the Gulf of Eilat in order to stress the international nature of that waterway and set a precedent which...would determine Nasser's attitude in the future. We are prepared to assume that the U.S. ships will pass safely. But we are doubtful regarding the niceness of the Egyptian ruler's distinctions. Particularly when the U.S. Secretary of State announces with admirable honesty that America does not actually intend to assure the right of navigation for its own ships. Hence, it certainly will not undertake to do so for ours. And Nasser hears and learns. Which is what we must do. In brief, he is proposing that we withdraw without any real guarantees and return to the situation as it was before the Egyptian cannon were silenced....

We are promised even less than that with regard to Gaza. Mr. Foster Dulles contradicts himself, saying both...that Gaza is "occupied territory and Egyptian responsibility" and promising us that the subject of Gaza's future will be raised in the U.N. Assembly after we have withdrawn from there....One thing is clear, he is proposing that we withdraw unconditionally from land which was never Egyptian and accept its reversion to being a base from which *fedayeen* will be sent to rob us of our harvests and murder our citizens.

The Government of Israel has stated its readiness to withdraw its army from Gaza and to maintain civil rule there, in cooperation with the U.N. That is the uttermost limit of our concessions and I regret the fact that our Government has not declared from the outset our readiness to find a solution to the refugee problem in Gaza, within our country, with the help of the U.N., after Gaza reverts to being an integral part of Israel, as it always was....

The U.S. President appealed to his people and tried to prove the justice of his stand....He appealed once more to us to accept the verdict, but that speech proved to us that even the U.S. President realizes that that verdict is unjust. He does not ignore the fact that...the Sinai Campaign was preceded by incessant Egyptian provocations. But he does not tell us why the U.N. did not hasten to respond to them with the same energy and determination with which it reacts against us now. He does not say that Egypt openly flouted the Security Council resolution regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal for Israeli ships, while the U.N. did nothing. And after all that he proposes that we believe that when everything reverts to what it was before, the U.N. will defend us other than in the past.

In order for us to believe that, the U.S. President should simultaneously have directed a similar appeal...to Egypt to end the boycott, the blockade and the despicable attacks of the *fedayeen*....

We sincerely share the U.S. President's concern for the future of the U.N. No nation is as interested as we are that the U.N. should become an institution with moral and practical strength which maintains peace and justice in the world....But the U.N. will not do so by distorting justice where the weak are concerned and giving in to the strong....We accept the U.S. President's advice that we must rely on the help of "all those who truly seek justice in the world." We are sure that those seekers of justice will not abandon us in our just struggle...but we must prove to them that we are prepared to stand firm in the struggle for our survival....

I am sure that it will not be long before the U.S.S.R. also changes its position regarding the Middle East....The most recent speech of Shepilov, the former Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R., indicates the beginnings of a change...though as long as the attitude towards us continues to be unfair this cannot raise many hopes....Yet nevertheless, that change will also come about.

Y. Bader (Herut): Before or after the Messiah comes?

J. Hazan (Mapam): Our political situation is grave, but we hold our fate in our hands. We are no longer a nation which is helpless....The Jews of the diaspora are with us. If we fight bravely for justice, we shall surely be victorious....

M. Wilner (Maki): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, those who support the war should have the courage to admit that they have failed, that our situation today is far worse than it was before October 29. No problem has been solved, the problems have merely been exacerbated.

Withdrawing to the armistice lines does not mean giving in to Eisenhower...it means acting in accordance with our national interest, acting on the basis of independent considerations in order to open a way to resolve the problems, to a peace settlement....

There is a danger that if we do not withdraw from Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh fighting which could expand into a third World War will erupt again. Only irresponsible adventurers could play thus with the fate of the nation....

Yesterday the Prime Minister made several statements which were intended to deceive public opinion. He said, for example, that Israel does not regard itself as being in a state of war with Egypt. The Prime Minister appears to lack a sense of humor. To wage war against a neighboring country, occupy part of its territory and then assert that you are not in a state of war with it—that is just demagoguery.

Ben-Gurion is deluding himself if he still hopes that in our day and age aggression will succeed....If the principle of "might is right" will

prevail in the world there will be no alternative to a world war. That principle could one day be turned against Israel in order to justify depriving it of its right to exist.

Consequently, for the security of our nation, for the sake of our future in this part of the world, we must withdraw immediately and unconditionally. The resignation of the Government led by Ben-Gurion, the establishment of a government of peace, national independence...and neutrality—that is the best guarantee of freedom of navigation and the peaceful solution of all the problems between Israel and the Arab countries.

This is a matter of principle, because if the aggression initiated by the Government of Israel together with Britain and France pays off, we will soon see additional colonial wars of that kind, and there will be the danger of a third world war....All international disputes should be resolved solely by peaceful means and negotiations.

What the Prime Minister is proposing now is the conquest of the Straits of Eilat and the Gaza Strip by the U.S...either directly or indirectly via the U.N....He wishes to make Israel a protectorate of America...the Formosa of the Middle East. This is a cynical invitation to colonial conquest. It is the way to the loss of Israeli sovereignty, the provocation of the nations of Asia and Africa and a threat to their sovereignty; it is the way to make Israel hated by hundreds of millions of people in the Asian continent where we live....

The Ben-Gurion Government operates in accordance with the Eisenhower Doctrine, which is designed to obtain U.S. military and economic control of the Middle East....

Y. Bader (Herut): How can one distort things in this way?

M. Wilner (Maki): The authors of the Doctrine are interested in the continuation of tension in the Middle East. They wish to use Israel, by delaying the withdrawal from the occupied areas, to exert pressure on Egypt and the other Arab countries....The argument between Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion does not contradict the fact that the Government of Israel is serving the U.S. rulers by delaying the withdrawal....

Ben-Gurion is playing for time...in the hope that not only will the U.S. not demand our withdrawal from the occupied areas in the wake of the Arab countries' rejection of the Eisenhower Doctrine, but will itself wage war on Egypt, Syria and Jordan....It is a plan which counters our nation's interest in peace and security. It is a plan which will fail completely. It fails to take into account the collapse of the colonial system. There is a new balance of power in the world today. One must be realistic...and take the strength of the camp which favors world peace and justice into account....

The Prime Minister spoke a great deal yesterday about freedom of navigation, as if that was why he started the war. There is no doubt that

Israel has the right to freedom of navigation, just as it has the right to independent existence and recognition by the Arab countries. But in Palestine there are the just national rights of both Israel and the Palestinian Arab nation, and there is a serious problem of Arab refugees....Insisting on our just rights while depriving another nation of its just rights will not bring peace. It could endanger Israel's future....We must return to the Armistice Agreements and advance from them to a peace settlement.

There are immense forces in the world which are prepared to help us in this, though in his speech yesterday Ben-Gurion completely ignored the existence of the U.S.S.R...and the statements made by its leaders regarding a solution to the problems of our region...under the auspices of the four Powers....This plan comprises: the solution of all disputed issues by negotiations, non-intervention in the internal affairs of countries, abandoning attempts to include these countries in military blocs with foreign participation, the elimination of the military bases, the mutual cessation of the supply of arms to the Middle and Near East (i.e., ending the arms race) and cooperation between the Powers for the economic development of the region.

...We regard the plan...as being in the interests of the nations of this region....The policy of the U.S.S.R. is one which...works for the peace, security and independence of the peoples of the Middle East....In order to bring peace nearer it is necessary first of all to end the state of war in the Sinai and its consequences.

Ben-Gurion and his colleagues remain adamant because they fear that their fate will be like Eden's. But is it not a crime to endanger our entire future so that Ben-Gurion and his colleagues may retain their ministerial positions? Ben-Gurion and his Government must resign....For the lives of our sons and daughters, to prevent a grave economic crisis, to avert hunger from the toiling masses of Israel, to prevent the renewal of war, for the sake of peace with our neighbors, for the future of the nation and the homeland—Ben-Gurion must go.

B. Mintz (Agudat Israel and Po'alei Agudat Israel): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, first of all a few words about the previous speaker's tremendous sense of humor in talking of a plot between Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion. I wish it were true. But when he speaks of Israeli aggression, I cannot let that pass. It would be better had he directed his appeal to cease aggression to another country, one which is close to him. It would be better had he called on that country to conform with the U.N. resolution to leave certain territory. Israel was never the aggressor; it merely defends its life, its existence, the lives of its inhabitants and that of MK Wilner.

...There is little doubt as to what Nasser will do if we give in to the pressure and withdraw to the armistice lines....The Egyptian tyrant will be convinced that the course he took was the right one...and will act

accordingly. It is not clear what the Western countries, led by the U.S., will do.

There is something tragic in the dispute between us and the U.S. No nation in the world appreciates...the humane spirit which dominates personal relations there as much as we do....We are far from being ungrateful to the American people and government for its spiritual and physical generosity towards us....We are aware of the trend in Washington towards a closer connection with our Arab enemies, but the new U.S. government is not unfriendly towards us....

The number of Americans who believe in God, the Bible and our prophets...is increasing. The U.S. President, who has been a believer for a long time, knows that this land was promised to us...and that in our absence this country was a desert for many generations. That is no coincidence. We read in Leviticus: "And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it."...That prophecy has been fulfilled....The U.S. President, who believes in the Holy Scriptures, knows very well that the rulers of Egypt, whether tyrants or not, have no mandate for even the smallest part of this country....From the holy city of Jerusalem we ask the U.S. President whether he found any basis in his faith for the things he said to us two days ago and for the fact that he said nothing like that to our Egyptian enemy, who has no moral or legal right to our country.

...We must consider the moral character of the world if this hypocritical stance of freedom for the strong and repression for the weak prevails, God forbid....A leading article in a Swiss newspaper which has not been particularly friendly towards us in the past states that if we allow hypocrisy to prevail now mankind will decline towards a crisis like the one which led to the greatest disasters of the twentieth century....That is probably why various countries have recently stated their identification with us....Those countries realize that if the moral basis of the world disappears, the small countries will be the first to suffer, and in this day and age all countries but two are considered small.

Nevertheless, we do not put our trust in that development....We know that we are "a nation that dwells alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." We know that our only security is the God of our fathers....We are witnessing the general collapse of all the new superstitions which gained control of the world in the last century. There is no solidarity of either socialism or culture....The light of our ancient faith shines out once again....

When...enemies of various kinds base their calculations on breaking our spirit...they should realize that they will never win....The spirit of a nation which has this faith and this confidence, even though it lives like a single sheep among seventy wolves or more, will never be depressed, and its confidence will never be shaken. Our enemies had better know that. We had better know that....We trust in the God of our

fathers and the promises He gave us....We will stand firm. And God will be with us....

Sitting 252 of the Third Knesset

25 February 1957 (24 Adar A 5717)

...
The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I would like first of all to note with great satisfaction that the political debate on the serious matter before us was distinguished this time by a serious approach devoid of party pettiness by almost all the speakers, and what was revealed was...the firm unity of all the party groups, apart from one, on questions which are vital for Israel. The Knesset and the entire nation stands united in a struggle which may be the most serious we have known since the War of Independence.

...MK Meridor was right in saying that I rejected the ultimatum of the U.S. President, though I have not closed the door to further clarifications. I also agree with him that grave dangers threaten us, although not from the source he mentioned—the Government of Israel—but from the behavior of certain groups of countries at the U.N. which act contrary to the U.N. Charter and its principles in the dispute between us and Egypt.

...MK Meridor doubts whether we have gained time since...my reply of November 8 to the U.S. President. If he looks at the calendar and wants to know what has been done in the world during that time he will find that there has been a very important development in world public opinion, and that general understanding and support for our claims has grown....Who had ever heard of the Straits of Eilat before? How many countries had known anything of our security problems before?...MK Meridor seems to know as little about distances as he does about time, as is evinced by his unrealistic contention that by returning to El-Arish the U.N. Force has also returned to Gaza....

I would like to say in his praise, however, that he has acknowledged certain facts, and although he continues to oppose the Government fiercely, he noted that we did not give in to the U.S. President's demands to withdraw unconditionally. But for some reason he thinks that there is virtually no difference between what is said by the President of America and the Prime Minister of Israel. Israel's security of navigation in Eilat and preventing the Egyptians from returning to Gaza seem unimportant to him; these are things which we are fighting for, and because of which we find ourselves in a grave...dispute with the U.N., the U.S. and many countries....

He asked from whom we seek guarantees of freedom of navigation. The decision of the Government and the Knesset answered that ques-

tion. We demand that U.N. forces be stationed on the coast of the Straits until there is peace between Israel and Egypt, or that there be a four-sided agreement between the four countries whose borders are there...or that several countries guarantee freedom of navigation, or any other settlement satisfactory to the Government of Israel.

I was surprised to hear that MK Meridor welcomes sanctions because he thinks that they increase our chances. I do not welcome sanctions although I fear that they will come, but they should not deter us from standing firm on our just and essential demands....

I am sorry to note that several Knesset Members have confused ends with means....Stationing the IDF on the coast of the Straits was not and is not our aim, it is merely a means of assuring freedom of navigation. The Government and the Knesset have stated explicitly that as soon as our freedom of navigation is guaranteed our forces will leave the Straits of Eilat....I know that there is an emotional attachment—which I do not reject—to the Gulf of Solomon, and anyone who has seen that beautiful and deserted spot cannot help falling in love with it....The outlet to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean for which we are fighting is crucial for the future of the Negev. It will make Eilat an international port and could change Israel's geopolitical position....

...I cannot make public here everything that was said on the subject of Gaza in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....I will only say that if the Egyptians rule there our security problems will increase sevenfold. That is why, if we value our lives, we can on no account allow the Egyptians to return to the area they invaded seven years ago, in contravention of the U.N. Charter....We have our own plan for solving the various problems of the Gaza Strip which, though it may not be ideal, is the lesser of the evils....We must not turn down the proposal made by a country which is friendly towards us that a U.N. Commission be sent here to discuss these problems with us....

That is why I have not dwelt at length on the details of our plan for the Gaza Strip....I am not sure that the U.N. Commission will be sent, or whether we will find a common language with it if it is. We hope to be able to convince it that our solution to the problems of the Strip is the best, benefiting both Israel, the permanent inhabitants and the refugees there....We hope to cooperate in this with the U.N., but we stand firm on our insistence that Egypt must not return there....

...I believe, however, that the central issue is opening the Straits of Eilat to Israeli and international shipping; there may be nothing of greater significance to the development of the Negev and our economic independence....I agree with MK Meridor that Israeli defense of freedom of navigation is important and desirable. I do not agree, however, that this can be achieved only by stationing troops in the Gulf of Solomon....Even if our forces remain there, our ships can be attacked at other points....If we could obtain approval from the U.N. or the Powers

of our right to use force to protect our navigation in the Straits and the Red Sea...I would regard that as the best guarantee of our freedom of navigation....

...We are interested in harmonious relations with the U.N. and the U.S...but what is at stake here is something which is vital for our existence, and hence we have to stand firm, even if this means incurring the disapproval of others....

I regret the fact that MK Allon introduced an irrelevant issue into the debate, namely, to which world we "belong."...I must express my deep regret and astonishment at MK Allon's assertion that in certain conditions his party group will impose sanctions on the Government of Israel. With all my genuine respect for MK Allon and his party group, I must say...that if the threats of important persons and powerful world rulers do not intimidate me...those of MK Allon will not either. Only my Jewish and human conscience will determine my course, and I am sure that all the members of the Government will act in a similar fashion.

I agree with MK Hazan that...we have come to a time when we must put past differences of opinion behind us and stand together with our backs to the wall, because there are mighty forces opposing us. I think it will strengthen us if we and our friends in the world recognize that we are fighting not only for our just and basic rights, but...also against the continued violation of the U.N. Charter and international law by the Egyptian ruler and his allies; we are fighting against a system of discriminations which is endangering the U.N.'s moral existence....

Finally, I would like to express the sincere hope that, despite all the differences of opinion between us, which are natural and legitimate, we will be united and will rally the nation around our firm desire to stand firm on our security, peace and sovereign equality to the end.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Several motions have been tabled to conclude the debate on the Prime Minister's statement. I ask the proposers to read their motions out.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Herut's motion...reads as follows:

A. The Knesset rejects the demand of the U.S. government to abandon Gaza and its Strip and withdraw the IDF from the coast of the Gulf of Eilat. Gaza and its Strip are an integral, liberated part of the homeland. Abandoning them means ever-increasing bloodshed, a base for renewed aggression which will end in war on all fronts, and increased pressure for further withdrawals and concessions, leading to the undermining of the basis of our existence.

There is no other guarantee of freedom of navigation to Eilat than the retention of the Gulf of Solomon by the IDF as long as no peace agreement has been reached.

B. Israel regards the threat that sanctions will be imposed upon it as contravening the principles of justice and morality and as an invalid measure intended to advance the dubious interests of certain governments.

C. The Knesset is grateful to the government and people of France for supporting our just cause, and welcomes the declared support of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Holland and other countries, as well as the attitude of the representatives of the American people in the Congress against the abandonment of our people and our future.

D. The Knesset calls on all nations who love justice and freedom to support Israel in its battle for its life, for the sake of international justice and the right of small nations to life, independence and security.

E. The Knesset asserts that the nation is firm in its resolve to withstand any pressure intended to defeat us and force us to abandon the remaining fruits of our army's victory. The number of nations who recognize the justice of our cause is increasing, and if pressure is exerted upon us, we will rebut it.

...

S. Mikunis (Maki): On behalf of the Israel Communist Party, I have the honor of submitting the following motion:

A. The Knesset resolves to observe the U.N. resolutions regarding the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip—resolutions which accord with the interest of peace, as well as Israel's independence and security. Withdrawal from the occupied areas will create the prior conditions for a just solution of the disputed issues between Israel and Egypt and the other Arab countries.

B. The Knesset rejects the Government's plot with the rulers of the U.S., in the guise of guarantees of freedom of navigation, which invites U.S. military intervention in the Middle East in accordance with the Eisenhower Doctrine, intervention which will endanger Israel's sovereignty and peace as well as peace in the Middle East.

C. The Knesset condemns the Ben-Gurion Government for the political and economic disaster it has brought upon Israel by its attack on Egypt; for delaying the evacuation of the conquered areas and continuing its policy from a position of strength against the neighboring countries, in coordination with the imperialist Powers; for the policy of isolating Israel and endangering its security and future in the Middle East.

D. The Knesset resolves to act to end the grave results of the Sinai escapade, and to adopt a policy of peace, independence and neutrality, which alone can lead to the resolution of the Israel-Arab conflict and to the peaceful and agreed solution of all the disputed issues between Israel and the Arab countries, such as the problem of freedom of navigation, the refugee problem, etc., with mutual respect for the just national rights of the Jewish and Arab nations.

A. Govrin (Mapai): On behalf of the Coalition parties, Mapai, Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi, Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion, Mapam, the Progressives, and on behalf of Agudat Israel-Po'alei Agudat Israel, the Democratic List of Israeli Arabs, Progress and Labor, Agriculture and Development, I submit the following motion to the Knesset:

The Knesset notes the Prime Minister's statement of 21 February 1957, and transfers the continuation of the discussion to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the spirit of the Knesset's decisions of 23 January 1957.

The Vote

Those in favor of the Coalition's proposal	72
Those against	29

(The proposal is adopted.)

The Political Situation

Introduction

As a result of intensive negotiations in Washington, at the U.N. and elsewhere, the U.S. government expressed its willingness to support Israel if it exercised the right of self-defense against any renewal of the blockade in the Straits of Tiran or the resumption of *fedayeen* raids from Gaza. A number of maritime nations led by France similarly manifested their support for the doctrine of free navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf of Eilat.

On 1 March 1957, in a speech at the General Assembly of the U.N., the Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, announced Israel's willingness to complete the withdrawal of its forces from the remaining parts of the territories occupied in the course of the Sinai Campaign four months before, namely, the Gaza Strip and the western coast of the Gulf of Eilat. In her speech she voiced a series of "hopes and expectations," which included the prevention of the return of Egyptian forces to the Gaza Strip and the responsibility of the U.N. for the administration of the Strip until there was a peace settlement or a definitive agreement on its future. Withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh was premised on the confidence that there would be continued freedom of navigation for international and Israeli shipping in the Gulf.

It was clearly understood that, in his speech, Ambassador Cabot Lodge of the U.S. would confirm these hopes and expectations. However, last-minute changes were introduced into his speech, without the knowledge of Israel's delegation, which evidently weakened the U.S. commitment on certain points. Thus, Israel stood committed to the completion of the withdrawal without having obtained minimal guarantees. Under these circumstances the Knesset convened once more to debate the political situation. Ben-Gurion, hailed as the victor only a few months earlier, was now exposed to systematic, organized heckling from the rightwing Opposition benches and attacks even from within the Coalition itself.

In any event, the "understanding" concerning Gaza broke down a few days later, when the Egyptians sent their army and administration back into the Strip. The Straits of Tiran were kept open, and the assumptions and understandings on that point were subjected to an acid test only ten years later, on the eve of the Six Day War in 1967. Throughout the intervening years no violent clashes took place between Egyptian and Israeli forces along the Gaza Strip.

Sitting 256 of the Third Knesset

5 March 1957 (2 Adar II 5717)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: On the agenda is the Government's statement on the political situation. I give the floor to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members.

H. Landau (Herut): Members of Mapai, stand up for the victor.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: On March 1 the Foreign Minister informed the U.N. Assembly, with the Government's approval, of our withdrawal from the Gulf of Solomon and the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the Assembly's decision of February 2.

Before clarifying that statement, I would like to dwell on our reasons for being in those two places...and why we remained there for over four months. On the morning of October 28 I proposed the plan of the Sinai Campaign to the Government and, as I have noted elsewhere, I regarded it as a campaign of salvation, not of conquest.

Like many others, I viewed the Egyptian-Czech deal as a danger to our security, and we made desperate efforts to obtain a minimum of arms which would deter the enemy, as well as guarantees of our security. On the second subject we did not succeed at all. I reviewed the first subject in the Knesset on 15 October 1956. I said then that although we were not as defenseless as we had been at the beginning of the year...the Egyptians—not to mention the other Arab countries—had more and superior weapons than us at sea, on land and in the air....

At that time the tripartite military alliance between Egypt, Jordan and Syria was made, their armies were placed under Egyptian command and their rulers stated openly that they could now choose when to destroy Israel. We felt our existence threatened...and a look at the map of Israel will prove that a surprise attack by those three countries...could easily have split the country at its narrowest part near Netanya, enabling them to bomb our airfields and the two coastal towns of Tel Aviv and Haifa, where most of our population is located. That would have prevented the mobilization of our reserves, upon whom our defense rests.

...We would thus have been defenseless before our assailants had we not struck first. The Sinai Campaign was a defensive measure essential for our survival, in accordance with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

H. Landau (Herut): Have you suddenly discovered Article 51?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I am sure that any country in our position would have done likewise. In five days we defeated three Egyp-

tian divisions in the Sinai and the Gaza Strip, destroyed all the *fedayeen* bases and demolished or captured much of the Egyptian army's weapons....The Sinai Campaign was necessary, just and worthwhile only because of that; and I think that no army has ever achieved such impressive results—

H. Landau (Herut): Why did you defeat the Army?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Landau, I call you to order.

H. Landau (Herut): I'm asking a question and I would like an answer: why did they defeat the Army?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and I think that no army has ever achieved such impressive and important results with so few—although precious—casualties: 170 dead and one captured....It was a campaign of salvation because it saved Israel from direct and immediate danger, limited the enemy's aggressive capacity for quite some time and struck a crippling blow to the prestige of the Egyptian tyrant, who seeks to dominate the entire Middle East, and possibly Africa too. If the Sinai Campaign had achieved that alone, it would have been enough for us. The tension in which we lived for a whole year, while Egyptian strength increased from week to week, was reduced after the Sinai Campaign.

Even before the Campaign, when I brought this proposal to the Government, I was asked...what would become of the Gaza Strip, the islands of Yotvat and Snapir and the coast of the Straits. At that historic meeting of October 28 I said...that, in addition to our security, "we are interested in the coast of Eilat and the Straits," and "the main point is freedom of navigation." "We are emotionally attached to Yotvat, but that is not the main point...."

I said that the plan included driving the Egyptian invader out, but I added that "the Gaza Strip is an embarrassing objective." Even then I did not have any illusions about the enormous difficulties arising from the composition of the population of the Strip.

I do not need to go into the implementation of the Sinai Campaign. It is inscribed on the pages of world history. It involved both brilliant planning...and outstanding execution...on the battlefield. The whole world, both friends and enemies, acknowledge the IDF's ability and heroism—

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): But not the Government's.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and I doubt whether any army anywhere in the world has greater fame than the IDF, and that welcome result is not to be sneezed at either.

On 7 November I reviewed the Sinai Campaign in the Knesset, and concluded as follows: "We may be confronting a difficult political

struggle, and perhaps something more serious than that. We will not be infected by the insolence of the Arab rulers, but neither will we be discouraged by the bullies of the world. We will meet the days to come with fortitude and intelligence, recognizing the fact that right is on our side and that we are strong, without ignoring our natural and acknowledged association with the family of nations."

H. Landau (Herut): What about Gaza, sir?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: My grave misgivings were realized. While the Campaign was being waged the Security Council met in order to stop it and impose sanctions on us. The resolution was not passed because of a veto, but the U.N. Assembly was immediately summoned to an emergency meeting, and we were told...to withdraw from Egyptian territory to the armistice lines.

Y. Bader (Herut): That was on November 2.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The U.S. President sent us an emotional letter, and on November 8, with the agreement of all the party groups in the Knesset—

H. Landau (Herut): What did you say on November 4?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —except for Maki and Herut, we informed the President and the Secretary-General of the U.N. that we would withdraw from the Sinai—

T. Toubi (Maki): The new combination is Mapam and Herut.

Y. Bader (Herut): Today you're celebrating, today you've won, be quiet.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —when appropriate arrangements had been made with the U.N. Force. In a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General we defined the appropriate arrangements as those "which will guarantee Israel from acts of hostility at sea and on land," meaning two things: ensuring freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat, the Straits of Yotvat and the Red Sea, and removing the danger of the *fedayeen* and the Egyptian bases of aggression.

At that time our formal position was difficult. There was a resolution, which was repeated in the Assembly several times, demanding our immediate withdrawal to the armistice lines. The British and the French, who had seized part of the Canal and Port Said, withdrew at the U.N.'s demand without any further settlement.

E. Shostak (Herut): The English Prime Minister resigned too.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We needed time...to explain to world public opinion: a. That we had not acted aggressively but in self-defense, and that Egypt had committed acts of hostility against us for eight years—

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): Why were you so late in explaining this?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: b. About the danger of the *fedayeen* and the Egyptian tyrant's aggressive plans; c. The necessity of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and the Straits of Yotvat. I note with satisfaction that in the four months since the Sinai Campaign we have had maximal success in this....Four months ago few people...knew that the Straits existed. World public opinion has gradually learned how important they are for Israeli and international navigation, and our...right to freedom of navigation in that international waterway. That was the most successful information campaign on an international scale—

J. Shofman (Herut): It was the icing without the cake.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —undertaken by the Government of Israel and its representatives during those four months. Most of the democratic nations and the free press recognized our navigation rights and the importance of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and the Straits.

Apart from the fame of the IDF, I do not know if anything has received so much publicity in recent months....That is a valuable asset which was an incidental gain of the Sinai Campaign, in addition to the principal aim of saving Israel from the aggression of the Egyptian tyrant and his allies.

The second thing we achieved in those four months was to make world public opinion aware of the danger of the...*fedayeen*, who are trained and operated by Egypt, not necessarily in the Gaza Strip and the bases in the Sinai, but in the neighboring countries—Jordan, Syria, Lebanon—too. What was not achieved by seven years of the...*fedayeen*—

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): Why didn't you do it?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —with over three thousand incursions into Israel between 1949 and 1956, daily acts of sabotage and murder, which were not sufficiently sensational for the world press, was achieved by our information campaign of four months...

We cannot say that we have won over all world public opinion. Almost the entire Soviet Bloc persisted in its hostility towards Israel, regardless of the facts....The rulers of India have also evinced a strange and regrettable disregard for Israel's just demands. But in several Asian countries, even some Moslem countries, there was great and positive understanding for Israel's position, although for obvious reasons this was not expressed publicly.

After we withdrew from the entire Sinai desert, apart from the coastal strip of the Straits and the Gaza Strip, the dispute between us and the U.N., and particularly between us and the U.S. government, became more acute. In my political review in the Knesset on January 23 I said

that we had no interest in keeping the coastal strip, and wished to withdraw from it as soon as possible, when an effective guarantee was received that Israeli and international shipping would be able to pass unhindered through this international waterway. I also said that, in response to the Assembly's position, Israel had no intention of retaining forces in the Gaza Strip.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): We've heard that dozens of times.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: But for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Strip and their neighbors across the border Israel must retain the Strip, within an appropriate framework to be determined by the Israel administration and the U.N.

H. Landau (Herut): Where is the Israel administration in Gaza, Mr. Prime Minister?

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): There is no discrepancy between the various speeches. We hear the same things.

J. Shofman (Herut): There is no discrepancy between what was said on November 7, November 8, January 23 and March 5.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I ask you to treat the House with respect.

S. Yunichman (Herut): The Government does not treat the decisions of the House with respect.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Yunichman, I call you to order.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Why are you playing at being in Opposition? He did what you wanted. Why are you playing the Opposition now?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Were you waiting for help from MK Mikunis?

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): No. The Government helped him.

H. Landau (Herut): First they give in, then they convene the Knesset. First they sell Gaza and hand it over, then they convene the Knesset.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Landau, I ask you not to make me call you to order for the last time.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Since then our political struggle has focused on those two points: on assuring freedom of navigation in the Straits and on Israeli administration, in cooperation with the U.N., in the Gaza Strip in order to assure Israel's security...rehabilitate the permanent inhabitants of Gaza and solve the problem of the refugees there....

On February 2 the U.N. Assembly passed two resolutions: the first decried Israel's failure to withdraw completely to the armistice lines... while the second expressed the Assembly's recognition of the fact that Israel's withdrawal must be followed by action designed to further progress towards a peace settlement.

...On February 3 a letter was sent to me by the U.S. President. It was written in a friendly tone, but it contained a grave warning. The President noted that the resolution of the previous day had been proposed to the Assembly by the U.S...in order to lead to a peace settlement in the Middle East, but the first step had to be the completion of Israel's withdrawal to the armistice lines. In my reply to the President I noted that to our great regret the U.N. institutions had acted unfairly towards us in relation to Egypt. For eight years the Egyptian leaders had been violating the U.N. Charter and the Armistice Agreement, disobeying the Security Council, implementing acts of hostility against Israel, depriving us of freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and denying the assurance regarding freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat which they had given the U.S. in 1950—with the intention of destroying Israel by force, and all those with the power and authority to prevent these grave infringements of international assurances had done nothing. Despite its small size, Israel was entitled to security, freedom and equality in the family of nations. Like any other independent nation, we were free by virtue of our own rights, and we asked whether the U.N. discriminated between nations, and also whether the Egyptian leaders were prepared to stop the acts of hostility against us. Only thus, and not by reverting to the previous situation, would it be possible to ensure peace for our region; and that was why we could not complete the withdrawal without satisfactory prior arrangements.

At the U.N. Assembly it was proposed that sanctions be imposed on Israel, but our contention regarding the lack of impartiality was accepted by almost all the free countries, including the U.S.

H. Landau (Herut): Why did you give in then?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: And in the face of the threat of sanctions we announced that we would not flinch. On February 10 and 11 the Secretary of State...tried to resolve the deadlock and told our representative in Washington that the President had read my letter thoroughly and favorably, and their reply had been drawn up in the form of a memorandum which had been submitted to our ambassador and would be published two days later. The memorandum noted that Israel's position was: a. Israel would withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip provided an Israeli administration remained there, in coordination with the U.N.; b. Israel would withdraw from the Gulf of Solomon if freedom of navigation in the Straits were assured.

The opinion of the U.S. regarding the Strip is that the Assembly does not have the right to alter paragraphs of the Armistice Agreement, which gives the Egyptians "the right of responsibility and conquest," but that the future of the Strip should be decided via the U.N. The U.S. government recognizes the fact that the Strip was a source of armed incursions and reprisals...in contravention of the Armistice Agreement, and a source of great potential danger in view of the fact that there are some 200,000 refugees there. Consequently, it was necessary for a U.N. force to enter the Strip.

...The opinion of the U.S. is that the Gulf of Eilat is an international waterway and no country has the right to impede navigation there or in the Straits leading to it. In this connection the memorandum notes the assurance given the U.S. by the Egyptians in 1950 that there would be freedom of navigation in the Straits in accordance with international practice and the accepted principles of international law. In the view of the U.S. government, however, Israel was entitled to benefit from this freedom of navigation only after it had withdrawn to the armistice lines—

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): After you've appealed to the Hague.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—The memorandum adds that the U.S. is itself prepared to send ships through the Straits to the Gulf—

J. Shofman (Herut): Our ships or theirs?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: and, together with other countries, to guarantee general recognition of freedom of navigation.

The talks with the U.S. Secretary continued for several days to clarify various points in his memorandum, and we summed up our position in a written document, which was handed to the Secretary of State and later made public. In it we expressed our appreciation of the U.S.'s positive approach to the problem of the Gulf of Eilat and the Straits as an international waterway, and of the statement regarding U.S. use of the waterway and the cooperation with other countries in this process. We also praised the Secretary's statement that a U.N. force would be placed in the Gulf of Solomon, but we noted that recognition of freedom of navigation alone does not assure Israel's freedom of navigation, as occurred at the Suez Canal, and that the U.N. force had to remain there until a peace settlement was reached.

...We stressed that the Gaza Strip had never been Egyptian and that Egypt was not entitled to make any claim on the basis of the Armistice Agreement, since it had violated it all the years—

J. Shofman (Herut): Since November 7 it is part of the homeland.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and contrary to the decision of the Security Council there is in fact—

(MK Shofman shouts from the floor.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Shofman, I call you to order.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and contrary to the decision of the Security Council there is in fact a state of war against us; consequently, on no account should the Egyptians return to the Strip, which became a base for attacks on Israel under their rule.

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): Why did we have to leave?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: These talks led to the postponement of the Assembly. On the other hand, the demand by the Arab and Soviet Bloc that sanctions be imposed grew stronger.

On February 18, with the consent of the Government, we sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State proposing...that the debate in the Assembly be delayed and that a committee be sent here and, if necessary, to Egypt too, to try and reach a settlement regarding the problems of the Gulf of Solomon and the Gaza Strip. In that letter we stated that if the U.N., with U.S. support, imposed sanctions on us it would be creating an historic injustice which could undermine the moral basis of the U.N. In view of our recent talks we had reason to hope that...an agreed settlement would be reached, and the necessary delay would save Israel and the U.N. from a more tragic development.

I have not yet received a reply from the Secretary to this—

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): What will you give up when you do?

Y. Bader (Herut): Instead of Gaza, they could have waived a reply.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—but two days later, on February 20, I received a long message from the U.S. President...to the effect that, in accordance with my appeal to Mr. Dulles of February 18, the U.S. delegates had supported the proposal to delay the meeting of the Assembly, but that this delay could not be for long. In the absence of a positive decision on the part of the Government of Israel there was no guarantee that the discussions of the Assembly would not have grave results. The President hoped that we would immediately announce our decision to withdraw and rely on the firm resolve of all those who love justice to bring about a situation which would accord with the principles of justice and international law for the benefit of all the nations of the region....The President stated that after consulting with the leaders of Congress he was about to broadcast to the American nation on that subject.

The President spoke to the American people that very day. I assume you have all read what he said—

E. Raziel-Na'or (Herut): We've read that and more besides.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—but it will not be out of place if I note several points from it: A. The U.S. has no ambition or aspiration in the Middle East...but desires that each country shall be independent and live in peace....

M. Sneh (Maki): With Aramco.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: B. The U.S. recognizes that the military action against Egypt was the result of severe and repeated provocation. It also recognizes that the use of military force to solve international problems does not accord with the principles and aims of the U.N.

C. Israel has withdrawn from most of the areas it conquered, but its forces are still beyond the armistice lines. We are approaching the fateful moment when we will have to recognize one of the following two points: either the U.N. is unable to impose peace in this region, or the U.N. must make renewed and greater efforts to bring about the withdrawal of Israel's forces.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Eight years were sufficient proof.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: D. If Israel withdraws, the U.N. will have to ensure that there is greater justice and observation of international law in the Middle East than there was before the events of October and November.

E. The U.S. was among the initiators of the U.N. resolutions and wanted thereby to ensure that Israel would benefit in future from its rights deriving from the Armistice Agreements and international law.

F. Neither the U.S. nor the U.N. is authorized to impose a substantial change on the parties with regard to an agreement which was signed willingly by Israel and Egypt.

G. As a member of the U.N., the U.S. will see that appropriate arrangements are made so that the U.N. force ensures that the Gaza Strip no longer serves as a source of armed infiltration and reprisals.

H. The U.S. will demand some cooperation from the U.N. in the administration of the Strip, with Egypt's agreement.

I. The U.S. maintains that the Gulf of Eilat is an international waterway, that no country has the right to prevent innocent navigation there—

H. Landau (Herut): Who will check that it is innocent?

(From the floor: Hammerskjold.)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and that the U.N. force should remain in the Straits in order to prevent acts of hostility. The U.S. itself will use that right of navigation and, together with other countries, will guarantee general recognition of that right.

J. Peace and justice are two sides of the same coin. The family of nations may have erred in failing to pay sufficient attention to this truth. For its part, the U.S. will vigorously seek a solution to the problems of the region in accordance with justice and international law.

K. The U.N. must exert pressure on Israel to implement the decision to withdraw.

L. By accepting the six principles regarding Suez decided upon by the Security Council in October 1956, Egypt undertook to permit freedom of navigation in the Canal.

M. We must not assume that if Israel withdraws Egypt will prevent Israeli ships from using the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat. If, to our regret, Egypt then violates the Armistice Agreement and its international commitment, the society of nations will have to deal with it vigorously.

(From the floor: "By peaceful means.")

The following day, February 21, I replied to the President in the Knesset, and there is no need to repeat what I said.

J. Shofman (Herut): Which President? There is only one President here, the President of Israel.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Shofman, aren't you tired yet? I call you to order.

J. Shofman (Herut): I think my comment was timely. The President can only be the President of Israel.

S. Yunichman (Herut): Or at least the President of the Zionist Organization, but no other President.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We told our ambassador, who had returned for consultations, that he should try to separate the Straits from Gaza, and settle one or the other of them...he should also inform the U.S. and the other members of the U.N. that...we would withdraw from the Straits if Israel's freedom of navigation was assured (whether by placing a U.N. force there, by guarantees from various countries, an agreement between the four countries bordering on the Straits or any other arrangement which the Government of Israel found acceptable).

We maintained that on no account should the Egyptians be allowed back into Gaza. We proposed that a U.N. Commission come to discuss the three problems of the Strip—security, rehabilitation of the inhabitants and the refugee problem—with us.

That day, February 21, I informed the U.S. President that our ambassador was returning to Washington with instructions from the Government, and that we hoped we would find a common language.

In New York and Washington it was made clear that the two problems could not be separated. We were facing a complete deadlock, and both the Government and the nation in Israel were prepared to undergo

sanctions if the Arab Bloc, with or without the help of the U.S., succeeded in organizing a two-thirds majority for sanctions, even though extensive and intensive activity had been undertaken—not unsuccessfully—in several European capitals, America and the other continents to assure political opposition to this....Several countries promised to oppose the proposal, and others to abstain....

There were two proposals: the first, moved by several Arab countries, for sanctions; the other, an ultimatum for Israel to withdraw its forces within three or five days, otherwise steps would be taken.... Meanwhile the U.N. Assembly had been postponed for a few days, and the clarifications between us and the U.S. continued. Our friends in various countries and newspapers which supported us advised us to do all we could to reach a solution....

...Last week there was a shift, thanks to the participation of the Canadian and French representatives in the discussions....There appears to be virtually no chance that the Assembly will pass a favorable resolution with a two-thirds majority...and so the Government has authorized the Foreign Minister to inform the Assembly that Israel has decided to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Solomon—

H. Landau (Herut): Is that in accordance with the decision of the Knesset, sir? The Knesset has decided something on that subject.

T. Toubi (Maki): It's in accordance with the attack.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We have always said that we have no interest in the coastal strip of the Gulf of Solomon, our sole aim being to ensure freedom of navigation there after the withdrawal....That navigation is essential for Israel, as well as for other countries....World awareness of the fact that the Gulf of Eilat is an international waterway has recently increased.

S. Yunichman (Herut): Suez too.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The memorandum of February 11 from the Secretary of State...states the U.S.'s readiness to use freedom of navigation in the Straits and to cooperate with other countries in assuring this....Israel was later told that other maritime nations were prepared to commit themselves to the principles of the U.S. memorandum of February 11....The memorandum states that, in accordance with the U.N.'s second resolution of February 2, a U.N. force will enter the Gulf of Solomon after Israel has withdrawn, it being evident that the role of the force is to prevent acts of hostility....

The Government of Israel was concerned that the U.N. forces...would be removed in conditions which would enable free and innocent navigation to be hindered, thereby leading to the renewal of hostilities....Consequently, my Government demanded and received the promise contained in the Secretary-General's memorandum of 26

February 1957 that any proposal that the U.N. forces should move from the Straits must first be brought before the advisory committee which represents the Assembly in the implementation of the decision of 2 November 1956....

In view of the rules, policy lines and arrangements of the U.N. and maritime nations, my Government believes that Israeli and international free and innocent navigation will be maintained in full after Israel's withdrawal....Israel maintains that no country has the right to impede free and innocent navigation in the Bay and the Straits, in accordance with the definition of these concepts in maritime law....Israel will gladly grant the ships of all countries port and harbor services at Eilat. We heard with satisfaction that the principal maritime countries foresee the regular movement of their vessels in the Gulf of Eilat. Israel will not impede free and innocent navigation by Arab ships.

Israel will defend its ships in international waterways and seas. Any intervention by force in the movement of Israel's ships using the right to free and innocent navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and the Yotvat Straits will be regarded by Israel as an attack entitling it to use its natural right of self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter....This statement is made according to the accepted principles of international law, although my Government hopes it will not have to take those steps.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): That means that you won't use freedom of navigation.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: On February 20 President Eisenhower declared that it cannot be assumed that after Israel withdraws Egypt will impede Israeli navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat. That declaration played a significant part in determining our attitude today.

The Government of Israel states that it will withdraw from the Gaza Strip on the basis of the following assumptions: a. That only U.N. forces will take over military and civilian rule from Israel.

E. Raziell-Naor (Herut): What about the Israeli administration?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: b. That the U.N. forces will undertake the tasks mentioned in the Secretary-General's memorandum, i.e., maintaining the security of life and property in the area by providing protection—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Of the *fedayeen*.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —by the police which is effective and adequate, by assuring proper civil administration, by providing maximal aid to the U.N. plan regarding the refugees—

H. Landau (Herut): Is that what you call "security?"

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and by the economic development of the area and its inhabitants. c. The U.N.'s responsibility for the administration of Gaza will continue until there are peace settlements, which should be reached as soon as possible, or a final agreement concerning the future of the Gaza Strip.

Israel claims that if there are indications that the situation in the Gaza Strip is reverting to what it was before Israel's conquest of it, Israel reserves the right to act in order to protect its rights.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): More casualties!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: After the Foreign Minister's declaration statements were made by the representatives of the U.S., France, Costa Rica, Argentina and Panama, and these were supplemented yesterday by statements from Holland, Norway, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Denmark and others.

...The U.S. representative...mentioned President Eisenhower's speech of February 20 and the two resolutions of February 2....In the view of the U.S., the withdrawal was not contingent on anything. The declaration repeated not unacceptable points made by the Secretary-General in the Assembly. In juridical terms, the U.S. maintains that the future of the Gaza Strip should be planned within the framework of the Armistice Agreement—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): That means returning it to Egypt.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Nevertheless, the U.S. hopes that the U.N. will continue to control the Strip until a final settlement is reached between the sides....The U.S. has repeated that it regards the Gulf of Eilat as an international waterway and that no nation has the right to impede free and innocent navigation there or in the Straits leading to it. The U.S. itself will use the right of navigation there and will encourage other countries to ensure the general recognition of these rights. The U.N. force in the Straits will be stationed there on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's advisory committee, which will decide whether the matter should be brought before the Assembly or not.

There is no need to add that this speech caused us and our friends grave concern, and we did not conceal this from the American Administration....On March 2 President Eisenhower's letter to me, which you must all have read, was made public. I will cite only two sentences from it: "I know that the Israel Government's decision was not easy, but I believe that Israel will have no reason to regret it." "I believe that the hopes and expectations voiced by your Foreign Minister and others are reasonable, and I want you to know that the U.S., as the friend of all the

countries of the region and a loyal member of the U.N., will seek ways of fulfilling those hopes."

S. Yuniczman (Herut): Eisenhower's declaration is like Balfour's.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...The French and British delegates affirmed the international nature of the Gulf of Eilat and the Straits and expressed their intention of using their rights to free and innocent navigation there....They both stated that any interference with that right would legitimize the use of force as outlined in Article 51, i.e., as a means of self-defense....France claimed that any removal of the U.N. force from the Gaza Strip should be discussed by the Assembly...while Britain maintained that there should be international rule there...in coordination with the U.N. force....The representatives of Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Canada and other countries spoke in a similar vein....The representative of Iraq maintained that the Strip belongs to Egypt...and the Straits are its territorial waters—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): In effect, you have agreed to that.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Knesset Members, I will not deny that the Government's decision was not made lightly, not even unanimously this time. Naturally, the entire Government is responsible for its decisions....

S. Yuniczman (Herut): Why didn't you ask the nation?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: And although the responsibility rests equally on each member of the Government, each one may have his own reasons for his position, and I would like to explain mine....

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Do you want to convince the Knesset post factum?

Y. Shofman (Herut): They're preparing a withdrawal postmark in Gaza.

S. Yuniczman (Herut): There's an official announcement.

H. Landau (Herut): Mr. Speaker, I have a question, why didn't they come to the Knesset?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Yuniczman, I'm asking you for the last time.

S. Yuniczman (Herut): The nation will turn you out, not me.

E. Shostak (Herut): When will you issue a stamp to mark the Government's resignation?

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): That will be a great success.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Cohen-Maguri, you too?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...We announced that we were leaving Gaza on the assumption that U.N. rule there would continue until peace settlements were made, and we announced our freedom to act should the situation deteriorate and return to its previous state—

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Who will we be free to act against, the U.N.?

H. Landau (Herut): Who will we be free to act against? Who takes you seriously? What are these declarations worth? Now you come to the Knesset!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The U.S. President and the representatives of other countries have endorsed this view in various ways. But I must add...that there is no guarantee that the Egyptians will not return or be returned, as a civilian administration or conquering force—

I. Rokach (General Zionists): What for?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —supposedly relying on the Armistice Agreement. My heart bleeds for the border settlements in the south and the Negev which heard with anxiety of the decision to withdraw. But...the Gaza Strip was, is and will be a source of disruption, regardless of who rules there, as long as the refugees are not settled elsewhere. Anyone who fails to see the dangers involved in the composition of the population is living in a fool's paradise.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): That's a promotion.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I was never afraid of sanctions, although I did not belittle their severity...but I never ignored the grave dangers the Strip represents regarding the security of the population and Israel's standing in the world—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Were you thinking of withdrawal already then?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —even if we alone are responsible for the administration of the Strip. I always thought that the least dangerous regime was a joint Israel-U.N. one—

H. Landau (Herut): When did you discover that?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The worst regime is, of course, an Egyptian one. But even a solely Israeli or U.N. regime involves more dangers than a joint one, until the refugee problem is solved and there is a peace agreement with Egypt. But that is not feasible, nor does it seem to be in the offing, judging by the current situation in the U.N.

There is no explicit U.N. decision as to whether a U.N. force should remain in the Straits until there is a peace settlement assuring freedom

of navigation. Only the advisory committee can decide that without a specific decision by the U.N. the U.N. force cannot be moved and replaced by an Egyptian force.

On the other hand, there is a declaration by all the principal maritime nations that the Gulf and the Straits are an international waterway, that there is freedom of navigation for all countries, and that those countries will...send their ships to Eilat and have noted our statement that if we are denied freedom of navigation Israel can use force to defend itself in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter.

H. Landau (Herut): What's new in that?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Other countries have stated specifically that they recognize our right to do that. Maintaining our troops in the Gulf of Solomon assures freedom of navigation but not the navigation itself. In the present situation it is evident that foreign ships will not come to Eilat, even if sanctions are not imposed on us. Oil will not flow in the Eilat pipeline unless the great maritime countries wish it to.

H. Landau (Herut): Saudi-Arabian oil won't flow there anyway.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Our remaining in the Gulf of Solomon was not in vain, it did not assure us freedom of navigation...but it awoke world public opinion...to the significance of the Gulf of Eilat for both Israeli and international navigation.

H. Landau (Herut): A wonderful discovery. Now they've discovered its importance?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The maritime nations do not wish to be dependent solely on the Egyptian tyrant and the Suez Canal now, and if they keep their word...the Gulf of Eilat will really become an international waterway—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Does that mean that Israel is not sovereign?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —and Eilat will be an internationally important port—

H. Landau (Herut): When you resign it will be an international port.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —and once a wider pipe than the present one is laid from Eilat to Beersheba, and the railway to Eilat is built and the road is widened, Israel's entire geopolitical standing will change, and new horizons will open for the economic development of the Negev and Israel's economic independence and progress. I had another reason, however, perhaps the most important of all. The whole nation was prepared to accept sanctions—

H. Landau (Herut): Except the Government.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—and I am sure that this was sincere, although no one knew what the sanctions could be. In the four months since the Sinai Campaign we reached a peak in our dissemination of information and in understanding for us in public opinion in the free world—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): And a peak in being cut off.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion:—The arrangement reached at the end of last week was, in the opinion of our friends, the only one possible.

H. Landau (Herut): You have subjugated the nation against its will!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The problem of Israel's security has become one which affects the conscience of dozens of countries...and we must let the family of nations prove its commitment to preventing the renewal of the attacks and the blockade on Israel. Great statesmen have admitted in public that for eight years the U.N. has failed to do its duty by Israel. Israel cannot give in to external pressure, but nor can it disregard moral appeals directed to it.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Is that moral?

Y. Bader (Herut): Say that there was pressure; that's a reason. But don't say that it was moral!

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): That is "slave morality!"

Y. Bader (Herut): Say that the reason was the sanctions and the threats, but don't say that it was moral.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: And what will you say during the debate?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: There is no dogmatic, static policy, and one cannot ignore changes which occur in the world, in public opinion and in the positions of countries. Moreover, every responsible person must consider everything in the light of the three great tasks the Government of Israel faces: immigration, security and economic independence.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Three tasks: withdrawing from Gaza, withdrawing from the Sinai and withdrawing from Sharm-el-Sheikh!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...The general feeling in the nation these past four months was that as individuals we could withstand economic sanctions. I do not know if many people thought what would become of immigration. And although I regard immigration as our highest mission...I cannot ignore our security needs....I am at least as aware as anyone else of the IDF's ability, and I do not fear an attack upon us....But I am also aware of the IDF's needs....The possibility of

equipping our army depends on our relations with other countries...and I cannot disregard the fact that in certain conditions our supply of arms could be cut off....

H. Landau (Herut): We got the arms against the background of our action!

B. Azaniah (Mapai): MK Landau deserves to be reprimanded a third time.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We fought against the unfairness of the U.N.. Our struggle was not completely in vain. The President of the U.S. accepted moral responsibility vis-à-vis Israel. Several other...countries issued morally-binding declarations....At the end of October we emerged from darkness into the light.

J. Shofman (Herut): And returned to the darkness!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The situation will not revert to what it was before the Sinai Campaign. We have not attained our objective yet...there is still a long way to go. Only people who make pompous declarations get things easily.

J. Shofman (Herut): That was the Prime Minister's statement about himself.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I call you to order a second time!

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Our struggle for Gaza and the Gulf of Solomon should be regarded as stages in an extended process of entrenching our defense, our international position and our basic rights.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): By means of submission.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: The continuation of our course and our struggle is based first and foremost on our ability to stand firm...absorb immigrants and expand the bases of our economic existence. But it is also dependent on the moral recognition of the best nations and their readiness to support us. We are now at one of the most critical stages of that process, and out of far-reaching considerations we must take a path which is not entirely free of pitfalls but could lead us more safely to our goal.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Where is it?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: In our assessment, we also took into account the welcome chance...of navigation, not as an abstract right but through the implementation of the right to Israeli and international navigation to and from Eilat....In my considerations the decisive factor was defense needs—

H. Landau (Herut): Was the withdrawal because of defense needs?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —as well as immigration and the chance of developing the Negev and obtaining access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, although I am aware of the fears and apprehensions this arrangement involves. Consequently, I did not hesitate to advise my colleagues in the Government—

H. Landau (Herut): To resign.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —and I do not hesitate to advise the Members of the Knesset and the nation in Israel to accept this settlement.

S. Yulichman (Herut): Will you submit a proposal that this settlement be approved?

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Landau, you are in the Knesset now. You shouted like that at meetings in the street. You are not in the street now.

H. Landau (Herut): You should at least have the guts to ask the nation!

The Minister of Labor, M. Namir: Big mouth! Big mouth!

A. Govrin (Mapai): Why does the Speaker let MK Landau speak?

H. Landau (Herut): Why didn't you bring it before the Knesset for prior approval?

A. Govrin (Mapai): They shall not speak here!

The Speaker, I. Sprinzak: Knesset Members Landau, Cohen-Maguri, Yulichman, Raziell-Na'or and Bader—I have called you to order a third time! Knesset Member Bader, I will bring your behaviour and shouting, together with my call to order on three occasions, before the House Committee.

Y. Bader (Herut): What about Mr. Govrin? What about their threats?

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: I have said what I had to say, no argument with me will make any difference.

(Noise in the Chamber.)

All the Knesset Members whose names I have mentioned will be brought before the House Committee this evening.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): In fetters.

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: We will now proceed to the debate.

E. Shostak (Herut): What is the debate about?

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Member Yulichman, you are going too far. I call you to order for the past too. The House Committee has set a time for its discussion. Anyone who has anything to say can say it. Don't ask me any questions....I give the floor to MK Bader.

(Noise in the Chamber.)

A. Govrin (Mapai): Speak, speak! Big mouth!

J. Shofman (Herut): Mr. Speaker, call them before the House Committee.

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

Y. Bader (Herut): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, sorrow is sometimes expressed—

B. Azaniah (Mapai): There's nothing to hear.

Y. Bader (Herut): —out loud and sometimes even by shouting, and sometimes quietly.

The Minister of the Interior, I. Bar-Yehuda: By clowning.

Y. Bader (Herut): I prefer to speak quietly. We are very far today from November 7, when we all rose and sang Hatikva together. Then we were close to one another. We voted together. We stood together. Four months have passed since then. Today we do not congratulate the Government...which has displayed weakness...and cowardice.

I would like to speak about the history of this withdrawal. Not the military withdrawal...by unfortunate soldiers who are obeying orders, but your political withdrawal, in the wake of commander David Ben-Gurion. I know that at one point Mr. Ben-Gurion said that this withdrawal is progress. That fits in with the terminology of Orwell's 1984—war is peace; freedom is slavery; ignorance is strength; withdrawal is progress. What kind of progress is it?...It is something which is the result of submission....It is a tragedy.

B. Azaniah (Mapai): Haven't you got mixed up yet?

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

Y. Bader (Herut): Mr. Speaker, perhaps you should call the chairman of the House Committee before the House Committee too.

J. Shofman (Herut): We won't appear before that kind of chairman of the House Committee.

(Noise in the Chamber.)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Your colleagues are interrupting you....

Y. Bader (Herut): On November 6 Mrs. Meir said that Gaza and the Strip were part of the liberated homeland. In his letter to the soldiers at

Sharm el-Sheikh, Mr. Ben-Gurion said that Tiran is not Tiran but Yotvat, which was a Jewish state 1,400 years ago, and now returns to the third Jewish republic.

On November 7 the Knesset decided that the Armistice Agreement was dead and buried. Miracles happen in this country, and this does not seem to be the first time that the dead have come back to life. The armistice lines, which were also considered dead, have returned to life too. It was decided that Israel would on no account agree that any foreign force, under whatever name, even the U.N., would be stationed within the state or in territory the state controlled. Now things have been set right. We won't be in control of any territory. That was the Knesset's decision, it still exists and has never been annulled. And look where we are.

Mr. Ben-Gurion also said that we had made conquests but had not violated Egyptian territory, and that Egypt's army had fought on foreign soil. And again we heard that Tiran is Yotvat. We also heard about the Gulf of Solomon. But at the U.N. Mrs. Meir talked about the Gulf of Aqaba. There seems to be one language for the Knesset and the nation, for propaganda, and another there, in the U.N.

When we all sang *Hatikva* each one of us could ask himself whether it would ever be possible to erase what had been decided then. Only 24 hours passed, and by November 8 everything had been erased. Without any decision by the Knesset, without singing *Hatikva*, against the Knesset's decision, Mr. Ben-Gurion announced that we were withdrawing in accordance with the U.N. resolution of November 2. And the foreign force known as the U.N. Emergency Force entered the territory under our control.

What does one call that, breach of confidence, violating the decision of the Knesset, reneging on a solemn promise...? After that there was a month of silence...during which time Mr. Ben-Gurion refused to say beyond which point we would not withdraw. He spoke with a journalist, and from the foreign press we learned how his views were changing and how that moral retreat was continuing. We heard for the first time about a U.N. Governor-General in Gaza. We heard for the first time the phrase "tangible guarantees."

And so it went on, Mrs. Meir spoke to Mr. Hammerskjold, then something happened and only Mr. Eban spoke to Mr. Hammerskjold, who insisted on our withdrawing to the end. And each day and each week we made a more modest proposal, which was a proposal for a further withdrawal. It was a strange thing; they would say—withdraw completely, and we would say—we're withdrawing, but a little bit less. In that way we withdrew from our position, while they stood firm. Never was there greater political folly, greater stupidity, than that policy of diplomacy.

And so...we came to that bitter day when the withdrawal from the El-Arish/Abu-Geila line was on the agenda....Your party said that that was our main defense line from which we must not withdraw....But the Government did not bring that before the Knesset, and one day we heard: we have withdrawn.

...A French spokesman said that Israel had given up its cards too quickly. Today we read in a Government newspaper...that it was a mistake to negotiate when we were at the Suez Canal, but there's no point crying over spilt milk. Is that what you call milk? Who spilled it?...Our hopes have been spilled; our ability to negotiate has been annulled. That was the Government's policy.

On 23 January 1957 the Knesset decided that Israel would retain the Gaza Strip and would be responsible for its internal and external security; that the IDF would not leave the Straits of Eilat until freedom of navigation had been assured there;...and that we demanded the demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula and freedom of navigation in Suez.

In all Mr. Ben-Gurion's long...speech today we did not hear a single word about our right to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal. That is no coincidence. Today, of course, no one is talking about demilitarization, which may perhaps be logical. But what happened to the two Knesset decisions about Eilat and the Gaza Strip? They were never annulled, Mr. Speaker. Was greater harm ever done to the honor of this House...?

On February 21 or 22, after the Coalition had discussed getting out of the fact that in his speech Mr. Ben-Gurion had made no mention of Israeli rule in Gaza, it was decided that the discussion be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....That Committee neither discussed nor concluded anything, and the entire decision was as chaff in the wind. The majority was slighted by both those who demanded the withdrawal and by those who gave in to the demand....

It is very difficult to explain to the world why we want the Gaza Strip. Just because of defense considerations—that is too little; just because of the *fedayeen*—that is too little. After all, Arabs live there. This Government did not have the courage...to say clearly that Gaza is part of our homeland. Gaza is ours because it belongs to us....Only two weeks ago the Coalition organized demonstrations under the slogan: "No withdrawal from Gaza." And yesterday Israeli soldiers struck students who shouted that self-same slogan. And now we are about to witness the completion of the withdrawal.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when the situation changed in our favor. That began on February 2 when the U.N. Assembly decided to condemn us for our failure to withdraw...and threatened us with sanctions. After we did not withdraw the situation began to change in our favor. Each day another country said that it would vote against sanc-

tions....The members of both parties in the U.S. Congress...told the President that they opposed sanctions. This put the President and Dulles in a very difficult position....But the Government of Israel saved them. It agreed to withdraw without sanctions.

...First of all we were told, by the Government too, that we had to retain the Straits of Yotvat and the Gaza Strip. Then we heard about tangible guarantees, then about appropriate guarantees. Mrs. Meir spoke in the U.N. about assumptions, and now we are hearing about hopes and chances. That is a very logical line of withdrawal....

What deserves special examination is...that unfortunate session of the Assembly, when Mrs. Meir...said that the assumption is that the Egyptians will never return to the Gaza Strip, and that only the U.N. force will be there, while the American delegate, Mr. Lodge, said that the situation in the Gaza Strip would be settled within the framework of the Armistice Agreement, meaning that it would be Egypt's....

Gentlemen...how is it possible that a statement of that kind by the Government of Israel about complete and final withdrawal was made without knowing what the other side's response would be? There were rumors...that Mr. Eban had been overoptimistic and had misled the Government; it was said that Mr. Lodge had cheated Mrs. Meir....But today I read in an official White House statement...that Israel's representatives had known what was to be in Mr. Lodge's speech....

...Morrison of England told us that we should not forget how Dulles had behaved towards British and French friends at the London Conference after the nationalization of the Suez Canal...and how he had played a double game. This happened here too....Mr. Ben-Gurion's suspicions were aroused, and a meeting which had been arranged between Mr. Dayan and General Burns was cancelled....But then came President Eisenhower's seventh letter....This stated that the withdrawal was complete and unconditional...although the hopes were acceptable. The Mapai press stressed this progress...from hopes which were "not unacceptable" according to Mr. Cabot Lodge, to hopes which were "acceptable." What progress! What an achievement!

And what are those acceptable hopes? They are the hopes expressed in the U.N. Assembly by Israel's Foreign Minister and others. Who are those others? The representatives of France, the U.S. and Iraq....Mr. Eisenhower is once again using the tried and tested method of saying that both sides are right, because both have acceptable hopes....

While Mr. Ben-Gurion was speaking here in the tones of a victor and the style of an omniscient philosopher...we were informed of Mr. Dulles' meeting with the press...where he said that the Court at the Hague would decide about the freedom of navigation. It is debatable whether the Egyptians will agree to go to the Hague...whether the Court will reach any decision...and whether the Egyptians will honor its ver-

dict....Thus, whatever happens, until a verdict is reached we will not have freedom of navigation.

S. Yulichman (Herut): But we have the freedom to submit requests.

Y. Bader (Herut): Mr. Ben-Gurion says that many countries have recognized the right to freedom of navigation....That won't get us anywhere....

...Mr. Dulles also supported Mr. Cabot Lodge's view regarding the Gaza Strip....This means that the Egyptians will return there. That is what Mr. Ben-Gurion told us six months ago was the worst possibility. Mr. Ben-Gurion may tell us afterwards that we have been cheated...but for God's sake, why were these things done? Why did we withdraw? What happened?...Already on February 21, so it now transpires, Mr. Ben-Gurion spoke about withdrawing from Gaza so that the U.N., not Nasser, could enter it. Why does he say that we are withdrawing under moral pressure? How can one speak of moral pressure if our cause is just?...Two views are victorious here today—those of Mr. Sharett and of Maki.

But did we withdraw under the threat of sanctions? Gentlemen, it was not known whether sanctions would be imposed or not...nor what the nature of those sanctions would be....We had received assurances of help from great countries...and it was known that the sanctions could not continue for long, because a quick solution is needed, because there is the problem of renewing navigation in the Suez Canal....

...If sanctions were to be imposed on us...is that a reason to surrender without a struggle...? We all scoffed at the captain of the Egyptian warship who surrendered in the waters of Haifa. But at least that ship fought a little before surrendering. The Egyptian commander of Gaza was sentenced to death in Egypt for failing to fight...before he surrendered. Our military law also states that a commander must not surrender without fighting....What, then...can we say of a government such as this, which did not try to withstand sanctions, which gave in to a threat, a priori, and abandoned us...?

We are told that we now have assurances from the maritime nations that they recognize a right. They don't promise to help us, they undertake to recognize a right. What do we get from that? There was a Security Council resolution about freedom of navigation in Suez....Was it observed? In 1950 the Egyptians promised not to impede traffic in the Gulf of Eilat. Was it kept? In 1954 it was agreed with the Chairman of the Security Council that Egypt would not be allowed to stop us using Suez. Was that respected...?

What should we do? The withdrawal has almost begun, but there is still time, if the Knesset wishes it....I know that the majority in this House really opposes the withdrawal. But of course there is discipline, there is a Coalition...there are party considerations of various kinds,

and there is a calculated display, as it were, of opposition....I would like to believe that this is not merely a show....To the gentlemen of Ahdut Ha'Avodah and Mapam I say, if you will it there will be no withdrawal. Because when Mr. Ben-Gurion is forced to choose between the sanctions of the U.N. and the threat of Coalition sanctions, he will withdraw in the face of the will of the people. You are responsible for what happens....

There are hopes in Israel, of course. We have already read in the papers that taxes will not be increased....We are being sent milk powder—in exchange for blood! We are receiving a few million dollars. We are told that now there will be immigration. The Sinai Campaign is over, now there will be immigration. All this is a fiction, of course....The Knesset's decision of November 7 stated that there would be no return to the Armistice Agreement with Egypt....

There is another illusion, the illusion of Munich, that there will be "peace in our time." You said yourselves that if Egypt returns to the Gaza Strip there will be no peace but bloodshed and attacks upon us from Egypt, Jordan and Syria....There will be more pressure too, following the success of this approach. The unfortunate Mr. Eden once spoke of a "territorial compromise." In August Mr. Dulles said that Israel must make "territorial concessions." The U.N. resolution of 29 November 1947 is being mentioned again. Do you really think we will have peace and quiet now...?

...The moment was right. What we have learned is that if the Government is not prepared to grasp the opportunity, nothing will avail....We know that the main task today is to change the Government and bring a new spirit into Israel's ruling echelon. So that they will not withdraw and say that it is moral to do so, but will stand on our rights and look after our needs and our future. So that what happened that evening, when Mr. Ben-Gurion announced what he thought had been agreed upon and Mr. Dulles said that in his view "withdrawal" meant exactly what it meant for Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin, will not happen again. Let us go to the nation! We call upon you to hold elections....I know that England's Conservatives, who acted similarly to Mr. Ben-Gurion, are currently losing one seat after another. But it would be moral to have elections now!

Meanwhile, in this situation, when the gravity of your mistakes are so patently evident...when with his rough hand Mr. Dulles gives our shame his stamp of approval, all I can suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that the Knesset express its lack of confidence in the Government.

Sitting 257 of the Third Knesset

6 March 1957 (3 Adar II 5717)

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): ...I think that no one who heard the Prime Minister's speech yesterday could ignore the tragedy of the facts it revealed. The Prime Minister said that the Sinai Campaign and the IDF's victory were unparalleled in history. Perhaps the political defeat we have just witnessed is also unparalleled in history. The Government presented the Knesset with a fait accompli. Even the resolution to continue the debate was not implemented....

It is difficult to speak of the changes in the Prime Minister's... statements since the Sinai Campaign without using sarcasm....In his first proud—almost boastful—statement...he said that we would allow no foreign force onto Israel's territory or territory under Israel's control until some settlement was reached. But twenty four hours later we heard...that we were withdrawing our forces from Egyptian territory. That declaration was made under the threat of Russian cannon, not sanctions....But we remained in the Straits of Eilat and Gaza. That's when the second act of the tragedy began.

Y. Bader (Herut): It's also something of a comedy.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): ...The Government announced that we would not leave Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza until tangible guarantees were received of our navigation rights in the Straits of Eilat....We also said we would retain a police force in Gaza and would maintain civilian rule there....Then the Government, or Mapai...organized public demonstrations against any further withdrawal, regardless of whether sanctions would be imposed or not....This had a great effect on the world. That was when people began to understand our position....That constituted an additional reason for us not to withdraw.

Two weeks later, however, on February 21, came the Government's second announcement, which was like the first, only it omitted to say that we would retain Gaza and maintain civilian rule there....The Prime Minister later explained that this did not indicate our readiness to withdraw, but that for security reasons he had been unable to explain in detail the situation in Gaza....We did not know it at the time, but the decision to withdraw had already been made....

It was assumed that adequate guarantees would be given and the Egyptians would not return to Gaza. This appears to have been mistaken, as was made clear in the U.S. representative's reply to Mrs. Meir in the U.N....The same occurred regarding Sharm el-Sheikh. Mr. Lodge said that the U.S. recognized freedom of navigation...as

long as there was no decision from the International Court at the Hague to the contrary.

...But we received no answer to our question regarding the possibility of hindering freedom of navigation....We received no guarantees or assurances, not even immunity against renewed attacks by *fedayeen*....But the highlight of all the developments was our discovery of Article 51 of the U.N. Charter....It is regrettable that we had not discovered it before we withdrew from Sinai....We had grave disagreements with the Government of Israel on that subject....Prior to the Campaign the Government referred to military action on our part as "preventive war," stressing the *fedayeen* and failing to emphasize the blockade and the tripartite alliance to destroy us...thereby ignoring the defensive nature of our action...as sanctioned by Article 51....If the Egyptians return...and impede our freedom of navigation again, as they will, we will again have to go to war....That is the "freedom of navigation" which the submission agreement grants us.

As regards the *fedayeen*, nothing has changed....There is just a faint hope that if we react, the U.N. will not condemn us as aggressors....The Prime Minister told us yesterday that there is no absolute security....He seems to have been using typically British understatement. There is no security whatsoever....That was made clear by Mr. Dulles yesterday, when he told the Arabs that our surrender was unconditional....

I would say that small nations cannot withstand the pressure of the whole world...if their existence is threatened....But we were threatened only with unspecified sanctions....By giving in to that pressure today, we invite further similar pressure tomorrow....President Eisenhower wrote that he hoped that Israel would not regret its decision....We would like to believe that he hopes so....But let us not raise our hopes too high, because those factors which led him to force us to surrender continue to exist...and will influence any final "settlement" in the Middle East....Thus, the submission to the threat of sanctions may be of graver significance than the actual withdrawal. This was not unknown to the Prime Minister. He has a great talent for phrasing things clearly, and I heard him say that submission to the threat of sanctions means withdrawing to the armistice lines and further still, until there is nothing left to withdraw to....

The Prime Minister advised the Knesset and the nation to accept the arrangement....We advise the Knesset not to accept it, and although I realize that our position now is not easy, we propose that the Knesset ask the Government to stop the withdrawal now.

...

Z. Warhaftig (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): ...With a heavy heart and deep anxiety I come to give my party's view on the Prime Minister's statement....I think it is a mistake to limit...the debate solely to the

final stage of the Campaign, the withdrawal from the Gulf of Solomon and the Gaza Strip....The Campaign lasted four months...as a result of deliberate policy. The Egyptian delegate to the U.N. complained because the withdrawal was taking such a long time, much longer than the three days it took us to enter the Peninsula....

In assessing the final stage of the Campaign we must remember that it is the very same Government which conceived, initiated and implemented the Sinai Campaign which now wishes to conclude it in this way. The Prime Minister said here yesterday that the decision to withdraw was not made unanimously by the Government. Allow me to say that the decision to embark upon the Campaign was not made unanimously either.

Y. Bader (Herut): Who opposed it?

Z. Warhaftig (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): My party group is not looking for an alibi....We were in favor of the Campaign and voted unanimously for it. We are not looking for an alibi now either, when we have to accept responsibility for the end of the Campaign...although this time our decision was not unanimous....

...There were four major achievements to the Sinai Campaign....The first was the weakening of Egypt's military strength and removal of the danger of an attack on Israel....The second was the recognition of the Gulf of Eilat as an international waterway...and the assurance given by many maritime nations that they would use it....That also means that the port of Eilat, and the Haifa-Eilat route, will be used....I know that it is a long way from declarations to deeds, but declarations have a value of their own, and this is the way international politics are conducted....Someone said that this is another Balfour Declaration. Would that this declaration has the same results.

S. Yunchman (Herut): How was that Declaration interpreted and implemented? Now Hammerskjold will be the implementor.

J. Kesse (Mapai): The decisive factor is what will happen despite the interpretations.

...

Z. Warhaftig (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): I do not attribute the same importance to those declarations as I do to Balfour's. But I do not minimize their importance either. In international relations world recognition of the importance of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat is highly significant....The world is beginning to realize that the Suez Canal is losing its value as an international waterway...as Egypt dictates conditions for its use....We have won great friends who need to use that waterway...and in international relations that is the surest kind of friendship....

The third achievement and problem, although paradoxical...is that the Sinai Campaign has brought peace nearer than it ever was before.

Y. Bader (Herut): Are you being serious?

Z. Warhaftig (Hamizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): Yes, perfectly serious. The Sinai Campaign made the whole world aware of the...Israel-Arab problem and the need to make an effort to bring peace to this part of the world...We also served to make Egypt the creature of the U.N. It was saved from destruction and an overwhelming military defeat...by the U.N. As a result it will never again be able to ignore international forces, should they wish to intervene and bring about some kind of settlement....

The fourth problem is the undermining of Egypt's position as well as the possibility of its return to the Gaza Strip...I have been there and talked to a great many people....Four months of our rule there have undermined the possibility of Egypt's return. The local population, including the refugees, will not welcome the Egyptian rulers, who acted more as a force of occupation than anything else....

I admit that for me...the greatest problem is withdrawing from Gaza. It is not because of my interests there...but because I regard Gaza as part of the homeland, part of the Land of Israel. To our regret, though this may be for the best now, the Government did not announce that it was retaining the Gaza Strip because it was part of the homeland. It always stressed that it was doing so in order to solve a security problem. And security problems can always be solved in other ways....But if the integrity of the homeland can be impaired in one area, it can also be impaired in another....

During the last few days we have begun to fence in the Jewish cemetery in Gaza...and we had to make haste to complete it because tomorrow there might be international rule there. Nevertheless, our faith in God's promise to give us the whole land is not diminished in any way....I do earnestly hope, however, that the Government will find a way of solving the security problems of the settlements near the Gaza border....

...Our considerations were based on the view that neither the retention of nor the withdrawal from these territories could assure us of a solution without war....The only question, then, is which path increases the chances for peace or, if war breaks out, when will we be in a better position? I think we will be in a far better position if we have many friends in the world...I will say to MK Bernstein that even if one acts on the basis of Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, it is easier to do so in the appropriate international atmosphere....During the past four months we have been bitterly disappointed by the U.N., its lack of impartiality and its inability to solve problems. Nothing proves this more than its failure to solve the problem of the Arab refugees....Nevertheless, we will never belittle the U.N...both because it has refrained from condemning us as the ag-

gressor this time, and because it provides us with a forum for winning friends among the nations.

We have been disappointed by great nations...but we have also been encouraged by the support displayed for us by many countries and individuals...by the solidarity of Jews throughout the world and by the courage of the Israeli nation, which was prepared to withstand sanctions and which undoubtedly opposes the withdrawal to a greater extent than its Government does....We know that in all the political parties the rank and file oppose the withdrawal more than their leaders do....The task of the leaders now is to explain matters to the rank and file....I know that our faith and security are strengthened because of those three things, and with them we will face the future. At any rate, after four months of the Sinai Campaign we are far stronger than we were before it.

...

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha-Avodah-Po'alei Zion): ...Gloom descended upon Israel when we heard of the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Solomon....The decision to withdraw is a grave historical distortion, and those who voted for it have taken a great historical responsibility upon themselves. We are convinced that we could have withstood the pressure....We must not delude ourselves...and we must realize that all the promises do not amount to any genuine guarantee for Israeli navigation in the Straits. The Israeli army and administration will leave the Gaza Region, to be replaced sooner or later by the Egyptian army and administration.

By deciding to withdraw, the Government of Israel has agreed to an arrangement which contradicts the Knesset's decisions. We must not put our trust in this settlement....The U.S. is seeking to find favor with the Arabs by selling them our rights....We must rely only on ourselves, on the IDF, on the pioneers who are building the border settlements and on the entire nation....Then the day will come when the Gaza Strip will once again be an integral part of Israel, and Israeli ships will sail to and from Eilat, defended by our own strength and not by the specious promises of others. Then, too, peace will come to Israel, which will be characterized by work, settlement and pioneering.

In view of the struggles ahead, despite the decision to withdraw and without identifying with it, we will not accede to the demands of those who seek to strengthen themselves through the nation's troubles, to break the Histadrut (Labor Organization)—

Y. Bader (Herut): What hypocrisy.

E. Ichilov (General Zionists): Could the Government have decided without your support?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion):—and undermine the workers' participation in the Coalition.

Y. Bader (Herut): Shame.

E. Ichilov (General Zionists): Would the Government have been able to decide had it not been for your support and help?

Y. Bader (Herut): You're not doing it for nothing. What do you want?

S. Yunchman (Herut): The Government does not have a majority. The majority does not support the withdrawal.

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Member Yunchman, I have to call you to order.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): I appreciate the disappointment of the Knesset Members of Herut and the General Zionists at being unable to form a coalition—

I. Rokach (General Zionists): Your statement is completely unfounded. I told you that yesterday.

J. Shofman (Herut): With quiet sorrow.

E. Ichilov (General Zionists): Your colleagues won't accept that explanation.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion):—at being unable to form a coalition instead of the one headed by Mapai....

M. Olmert (Herut): You have lost all national feeling.

The Speaker, B. Idelson: I call you to order, Knesset Member Olmert.

The Minister of the Interior, I. Bar-Yehuda: Begin spoke like a submissive slave in New York, and here they shout.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): We won't be taught ethics by moneylenders and syncophants, who bow their heads there and speak impudently against the Government of Israel abroad.

H. Landau (Herut): When are you going to join Mapai? Why do you need a separate party?

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Member Landau, I call you to order.

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Knesset Member Landau, why are you so envious? Why don't you join the General Zionists?

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Member Allon, I call you to order.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): I was surprised to hear Knesset Members praising our achievements and relying on declarations. I respect those Knesset Members' reliance on Divine Providence, but I cannot see how they regard Mr. Dulles of all people as His representative. This morning we all read the U.S. Secretary of State's "clarifications" in the papers...and could perceive the cynicism with which the promises are on the way to being broken...I think that...this new declaration justifies making the switch....

H. Ariav (General Zionists): Bravo.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion):—and withdrawing from the decision to withdraw....

Z. Warhaftig (Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrahi): Why don't you propose it to the Knesset?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Knesset Member Warhaftig, you won't teach me what to propose. We embarked on the Sinai Campaign so that our country would not be subject to a surprise attack. From the revelation at Mount Sinai to the withdrawal agreement we were the victims of a conspiracy between the U.S. government and the Arab rulers. This Government...was cheated because it trusted American promises, which are already being denied....

By its actions in the Middle East the U.S. government is also aiding Soviet policy, and both Great Powers together rescued the Egyptian tyrant from his difficulties. The Powers which forced us to withdraw, veiling their own interests with such phrases as "the aggressor must not be rewarded," have been rewarding the aggressor for years. The U.S. President did not stop his game of golf when a young Israeli woman was murdered on her wedding night, and the Soviet Prime Minister did not cease supplying arms to the commander of the *fedayeen*, who threw his hand grenades onto the beds of infants....

The demand for withdrawal, with its accompanying pressures and threats, constitutes an infringement of sacred values. It disregards the rights of the victim and should on no account be regarded as a moral demand. The Government is deluding itself that the settlement is the least of the evils. I have no doubt of the sincerity of the Government's considerations...but neither do I doubt that they are wrong. We are amazed to find that there are those who praise the decision to withdraw, using the same arguments with which they opposed it at first. We fear that oil will outweigh blood and that the promises given to the Arab leaders will supersede those given to us....

So far...it has become evident that it will not be long before the Egyptians once again control Sharm el-Sheikh and Ras-Natzrani...with the imprimatur of the U.N. and the aid of the Secretary-General....

J. Serlin (General Zionists): We agree with you. What do you propose the Knesset do to prevent this?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): The U.S. government will not initiate the despatch of vessels to the Straits of Eilat. We were forced to withdraw but Nasser was not forced to abandon his position of hostility towards Israel. The U.N. forces...will not be able to stop murderers from infiltrating into Israel....Despite Israel's opposition, the settlement rests on the Armistice Agreement, which we said was dead and buried, and now Mr. Ralph Bunche, the architect of the Rhodes agreements, has been put in charge of the U.N. Force. This is a distortion. An agreement must be bilateral. The Government of Israel will naturally keep its commitments. But there is no guarantee that the other side will do likewise....

J. Serlin (General Zionists): What are you prepared to do to set matters straight?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): ...Some speakers have tried to depict the withdrawal as a success, using the most illogical arguments to do so, including the population of Gaza....The population of the Gaza Strip is a given factor which was known to everyone before the Sinai Campaign....It is folly to think that Israel can have the Strip but not its population. The Arab rulers and the Powers are not doing anything to solve the refugee problem....The U.N. knows that three hundred thousand Arabs are being kept there in poverty and misery so that their hatred may be inflamed and they can be sent on missions of murder against us....Only Israeli rule of the Strip can ensure its internal and external security and solve its population problems....U.N. rule there will simply be a stage on the way to Egyptian rule.

It is true that freedom of navigation can be impeded even if we remain at Sharm el-Sheikh; our ships can also be attacked in the open sea, but our right to self-defense was not reborn at the revelation on Mount Sinai, by the word of Mr. Dulles. The distinction is whether we use that right while we control the Straits or the Egyptians do; the distinction is between Israeli navigation in the Straits and promises recognizing our right to navigation and undertaking to bring the problem before the court in the Hague.

The Prime Minister said that the Government's decision to withdraw was not made lightly or unanimously. That is true....I am not unaware of the agonies undergone by the Prime Minister and those colleagues who voted in favor of the withdrawal. In the grave dispute in which we find ourselves let us not cast aspersions on his courage....But we must disagree with the Prime Minister regarding both the actual withdrawal and the responsibility for the decision. Those members of the Government who voted against it are not responsible for it.

S. Yunicman (Herut): What about collective responsibility?

H. Ariav (General Zionists): What about the Coalition?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Our responsibility...is our decision to maintain cooperation between the labor parties and their allies in the Government of Israel, so that Israel may be made stronger, so that it will not be abandoned to this Opposition which will lead it to chaos, and so that we may withstand the problems which confront us because of the decision to withdraw....

J. Serlin (General Zionists): Do you regard the danger of the Opposition as being greater than that of Nasser?

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): No. That is a misrepresentation....The nation is endangered by any weakening of the combination of the forces in this Government....

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Member Landau, I call you to order for the last time.

...

E. Ichilov (General Zionists): Shame!

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): I will not learn Jewish unity from someone who refers to the death sentence in the Knesset....The nation will curse anyone who brings elements of terrorism into our public life.

S. Persitz (General Zionists): The speaker should be called to order.

The Minister of the Interior, I. Bar-Yehuda: Yesterday MK Bader called for the renewal of terrorism in Israel from the podium of the Knesset.

S. Beba (General Zionists): He shall not speak.

S. Persitz (General Zionists): Such things cannot be said in the Knesset.

...

The Speaker, B. Idelson: ...I would like to inform you that this incessant shouting makes calm debate impossible....I will have to stop the debate if the interruptions continue.

J. Serlin (General Zionists): Provided the IDF doesn't withdraw meanwhile.

...

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): I repeat, I will not learn morality from profiteers and moneylenders. I did not say that with regard to any specific person....

H. Landau (Herut): He said "the representatives of the exploiters." Who did he mean?

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Member Landau, I call you to order. I am making every effort not to close the sitting. Perhaps that is what someone wants. I will not allow that to happen. I ask you to keep order. I propose that the words be removed from the record. I don't think they were directed at any particular person.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): I repeat: I will not learn morality from moneylenders and profiteers. I was not referring to anyone personally, and I have no desire to hurt anyone.

The Speaker, B. Idelson: Knesset Members, yesterday the Speaker said that he would ask the House Committee to clarify the behavior of certain Knesset Members during the Prime Minister's speech. I regret to say that the behavior of many Knesset Members today obliges me to announce that the Praesidium will have to decide what steps to take in order to put an end to the scene we are currently witnessing. I ask you not to interrupt and to permit the speaker to conclude.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): Knesset Members, I repeat that our decision may disappoint certain elements in the House. But it is not our custom to stop our ears to the sound of ships bringing immigrants to our ports, nor to the distress of those among us who are unemployed. We do not choose to level criticism in the public square without sharing the burden in order to create the alliance between the labor and pioneering forces...so that Israel may flourish.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Members, I declare a general amnesty. But I will start to keep a precise record; I don't remember the old one. So, Knesset Members, you have been warned. I ask you not to interrupt. Henceforth there will be silence in this House. I give the floor to MK Ya'ari.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): ...Mapam regrets to note that it disagrees with the decision of the majority in the Knesset to withdraw from Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip before minimal guarantees have been given in accordance with the Knesset's decision of 23 January 1957....We did not conceal the fact that we did not support the Sinai Campaign when the decision was made by the Government. Despite the provocations from the neighboring countries...we were sure that we could still maintain our security, absorb immigrants, develop the country and fight for stable peace without resorting to such desperate measures as an initiated war. In fact, most of the parties in the Government believed that...prior to the Sinai Campaign....I confess that the change came not because our enemies went too far but because we were tempted to think that a unique historical opportunity had presented itself.

As you know, the Sinai Campaign lasted only a few days, the ecstasy of optimism reaching a peak the day after the victory. But overnight we came face to face with cruel reality, with a hostile world almost wholly united against the Campaign....England and France abandoned their positions helter-skelter, unable to withstand the pressure and threats of the two Powers. The IDF also left the Sinai, though not helter-skelter.

As you know, we accepted full responsibility for the military campaign, once the decision had been made. Our character as a pioneering Zionist party obliged us to be with the nation at this crucial testing time. We knew that failure in battle endangered our very existence....After the withdrawal from the Sinai all the sections of the Government were once again united in the struggle to ensure our borders, guarantee freedom of navigation and restore peace between us and our neighbors....What are we demanding, after all? Are we demanding territory which is not ours?

T. Toubi (Maki): Is Gaza yours? It is the Arabs', not yours. You are betraying your people.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Toubi, I ask you to stop.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): All we ask is the freedom of navigation for our ships which has been promised us on several occasions...by the U.N...and the Powers. The Egyptian government has refused to honor our rights and has not been condemned or threatened with sanctions.... We demand that our borders be assured by removing the Egyptian conqueror from the Gaza Strip...which he has turned into a base for attacks upon us. To our regret, the representatives of the U.S.S.R. as well as of the U.S. stopped their ears to our demands at the U.N., and combined forces to oblige us to withdraw unconditionally and return to the dangerous situation which prevailed before the Sinai Campaign.... We reject the one-sided condemnation of Israel as the aggressor....

M. Wilner (Maki): But you also said that it was aggression.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): It is true that we were not happy...when the Government of Israel ignored the statement made by the former Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Shepilev...instead of giving it the same attention it gave the statements made in London and Paris...even though the Soviet statement contained merely words of condemnation for Israel....

...We do not regard every statement emanating from the U.S.S.R. as the embodiment of truth and justice....The Soviet record in the Middle East has not provided evidence of its pursuit of peace....We do not accept the dual morality which distinguishes between countries which are a law unto themselves because they are powerful and countries like ours which cannot provide political advantages or oil....

...Reality will teach the U.S.S.R. that it does not stand to gain anything from abandoning small countries....We have not ceased to hope that the day will come when the U.S.S.R. will recognize our nation's right to self-determination, will base its attitude to Israel on equality and will work consistently and sincerely for peace between Israel and the Arabs....

We opposed, and continue to oppose, initiated war. If we regarded Herut's bellicose philosophy as a danger to the nation's security and future, preferring to accumulate defensive strength while fighting for peace...we did so because that is the only way a small nation like ours can assure its security, deter enemies, save and absorb immigrants, strive for peace, advance towards economic and political independence and become part of the mighty family of Asian nations....The tragic political test which followed the Sinai Campaign proves the bankruptcy of the belief which Herut has tried to teach the masses, namely, that the cult of power will solve all problems—

E. Shostak (Herut): Was that the reason for the withdrawal?

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): ...We were obliged to disagree with the Government's decision to withdraw...though in a different way from those who...attempt to exploit political distress in order to create the legend of "a knife in our backs." That legend was used by the fascist movements in the period between the wars to establish regimes of socialist demagoguery and the repression of the masses....We do not wish to associate with those who seek to utilize this hasty withdrawal in order to pave the way for the rule of economic reaction, social repression and racial discrimination....We refuse to identify with this withdrawal because we believe in the justness of the fight for freedom of navigation and the security of our borders. We believe that the opportunity to rally unimagined forces around us was missed, as was evinced by public opinion against the sanctions in the U.S. and Europe...and in the workers' movements of the world....

We disagree with this hasty withdrawal because we did not utilize all the opportunities to obtain tangible guarantees, thereby bypassing the dictates of the Powers. The withdrawal has more or less returned us to where we were before the Sinai Campaign, with the same dangers plus some new ones....We are more exposed than ever to the vicissitudes of American policy. The Eisenhower Doctrine seeks to...obtain hegemony in the Middle East...thereby undermining our security, independence and future.

The guidelines of this Government focus on the aspiration to a pioneering regime, one of absorption and development, social justice, equal sharing of the burden, civil equality for the Arab minority and the search for peace and independence. This Government has not yet delivered the goods. We are proud of the fact that despite all the setbacks...we

are still absorbing immigrants. But the tasks this Government has taken upon itself are still waiting to be fulfilled....Mapam will not let the enemies of the worker and of progress exploit the error of the withdrawal for their own ends. This Government's success will be measured by its ability to accomplish its tasks.

S. Mikunis (Maki): ...If there is any party group in the Knesset which has the right and the political and moral duty to express no confidence in the Ben-Gurion Government, it is our Communist party group. We were the only ones...who rejected the war escapade against Egypt...undertaken in collusion with the French and British colonialists. We were the only ones who warned of the dangers it involved and foresaw its certain failure....Out of a sense of national responsibility and our devotion to peace...we demanded the IDF's withdrawal from all the occupied territory to the armistice lines. Israel gained nothing from the Sinai escapade because it was acting in the interests of British and French colonialism.

...Because of the war Israel's reputation has been sullied, its political position undermined, its economic situation worsened, and the relations with the Arab and socialist countries adversely affected. Israel has been forced to withdraw from all the occupied territory and its soldiers have fallen in vain. Even a blind man can see now that the course of war has failed....

All those who fear for Israel's welfare and future in this part of the world must combine forces to bring about a basic change in Israel's policy and establish a government of peace and national independence. The motions of no confidence proposed by Herut and the General Zionists are mere demagoguery and hypocrisy, because the Government acted in accordance with their disastrous policy....

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): We express no confidence in it and it goes together with you.

S. Mikunis (Maki): You'll still see how it goes together with us. Herut and the General Zionists are fully responsible, together with the Ben-Gurion Government, for the Sinai escapade and its bad results for Israel...in an attempt to bring colonialism back to this region. That plan failed and had to fail because of the deeprooted change in the balance of forces in the world in favor of the camp of peace and socialism....Together with Ben-Gurion, Knesset Members Begin and Bernstein swore not to withdraw, despite the fact that it was painfully obvious that, as we had predicted, withdrawal was inevitable.

(Shouts from the Herut benches.)

On November 7 we said that withdrawal was inevitable....The withdrawal is not the tragedy, however, as much as...the escapade of war and conquests....The deception and demagoguery of Herut and its satellites lies in the fact that they attempt to conceal the truth that the

withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip is an essential Israeli interest...in accordance with world public opinion and general practice, which even Powers like Britain and France could not resist—

Y. Harari (Progressives): Does that apply to Hungary?

S. Mikunis (Maki): —and certainly not Israel....The Ben-Gurion Government does not deserve our confidence not only because of its responsibility for the war and its disastrous consequences, but also because it has delayed withdrawing fully from all the occupied territories, with the encouragement of the imperialist Powers, especially the U.S., which seeks to increase its influence in the Middle East....The delays have helped the U.S. take on the role of principal mediator in the region, interfering in the internal affairs of countries in order to advance the Eisenhower Doctrine. All that time you disregarded the resolutions of the U.N., pinning your hopes on Dulles and abandoning Israel to American patronage.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Which patronage did you want?

S. Mikunis (Maki): I wanted Israeli patronage for Israel....The crime of the Ben-Gurion Government...lies also in the fact that it has placed Israel at the service of American imperialism, on the basis of a secret agreement....That is why the U.S. will send warships to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Eilat....That is why the U.S. wishes to impose so-called international rule on the Gaza Strip and the Straits of Aqaba, in fulfillment of the Eisenhower Doctrine. This Israel-U.S. agreement is intended to perpetuate tension in the region, endangering our security.

...The agreement to permit the U.S., in the guise of the U.N., to gain control of the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh completely ignores their real owners....The Foreign Minister clearly threatened to renew the war against Egypt regarding both navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and the Gaza Strip. This was done in cooperation with the U.S.—

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): Why don't you tell us about Nasser's agreements?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Cohen-Maguri, I cannot allow you to interrupt every minute.

S. Mikunis (Maki): —and is intended to provide the U.S. with an excuse for military intervention in the region....The vociferous argument about American "guarantees" for Israel, Ben-Gurion's enthusiasm over Eisenhower's declarations, the demands by the Mapam leaders, who supposedly represent a revolutionary socialist party, for better guarantees from Dulles—are all mere deception....Our own national interests are being subordinated to those of America....The only ones to have benefited from this tragic situation are the Americans and the bourgeois; the speculators have become

richer at the expense of the workers, utilizing the time of emergency, together with the Government, to impose sanctions on the toiling masses...proving once again that the policy of war harms the working man first and foremost, just as it hits primarily at Israel's national interest.

What is most surprising and regrettable is the stand adopted by Mapam...which advocates the continuation of the escapade...standing alongside Herut, the party of war and fascism....How does this agree with the slogan of peace, socialism and the brotherhood of nations...?

S. Yunichman (Herut): Why are you in the same league as them? Have you left it, then?

S. Mikunis (Maki): If you had the dubious courage to support the unfortunate decision to wage war on Egypt, why do you oppose withdrawing?...The Prime Minister spoke yesterday of the assurances he had received from Eisenhower. That was the most pathetic part of his speech....Ben-Gurion knows that we cannot rely on those assurances, since the U.S.'s position in the Middle East is as precarious as that of Britain and France....The Government of Israel is unable to ensure Israel's security and rights in the region...because it relies on imperialism, represses Israel's Arabs and relies on force of arms....Only by peaceful means and agreements, by recognizing the just national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, by annulling the Military Government [of Israel's Arabs] and according the Arab population equal rights will our nation be recognized as having equal rights in the Middle East. That is the only way to guarantee our security and future in this part of the world.

...Parts of the Israeli public are beginning to realize that things cannot go on this way, that there must be a change, and that it must come from within. Israel's policy must switch from dependence on imperialism to a policy of peace and neutrality....There are objective world factors, chief among them being the socialist camp, which enable even a small country like Israel to take a new course which will assure its national interests....The country's leaders...should take the new Soviet initiative on the Middle East seriously....This program, which was spelled out by Mr. Shepilev on February 12, appealed to the U.S., Britain and France to act jointly to...maintain peace in the region by solving disputes by peaceful means, not to intervene in the internal affairs of the countries of the region, to respect their sovereignty and independence, to refrain from any attempt to draw those countries into military alliances with the Blocs, to eliminate the military bases and remove the foreign army from the region, to cease supplying arms to the countries of the region and to help in the economic development of the countries without any prior conditions....This plan opens the way for a solution to the Israel-Arab dispute.

H. Rubin (Mapam): Is Maki in favor of freedom of navigation for Israel?

S. Mikunis (Maki): That's what we're talking about.

H. Rubin (Mapam): Say so clearly.

S. Mikunis (Maki): We support it. That is a known fact. I said that in the Knesset only two weeks ago. In view of all the foregoing...the Government must rid itself of any illusions concerning the assurances of the U.S. President, adopt a policy of political realism, cease the foolish and wicked campaign of incitement against the U.S.S.R., which harms Israel above all, and do everything necessary for the normalization and improvement of relations with the U.S.S.R.

Bitter experience has taught us that Ben-Gurion's Government will not and cannot make the necessary shift in Israeli policy. This has especially been proved in the last few months....Therefore, for the sake of Israel's honor, peace and security, in order to extricate our country from its isolation in the international and Middle East arenas, to ensure our independence and the lives of our sons and daughters, to pave the way for a just peace with the Arabs, to ensure that our people are free of a foreign yoke and that we can live as an equal member of the family of Arab nations of the East, we propose that the Knesset express no confidence in the Ben-Gurion Government....

We call on all the forces of patriotism...regardless of nationality and political opinion, to unite in order to strive for a basic change in Israel's policy from dependence on and service to imperialism to one of peace and neutrality by establishing a government of peace and national independence.

Sitting 258 of the Third Knesset

6 March 1957 (3 Adar II 5717)

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The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: ...When I spoke yesterday I did not say everything, I know, because certain subjects which are crucial for our security cannot be discussed in public....Yesterday the members of Herut conducted a collective, planned and organized debate with me. But...I will not argue with you. How can I, a member of a movement which has achieved nothing, dare to argue with a movement which has done so much, which built up Galilee when it was empty and the Jezreel Valley when it was desolate, which turned the Jordan Valley from a desert into a paradise, created Israel's Navy, laid the foundations for Eilat, built Tel Aviv and Haifa by the sweat of its brow, organized the

defense of the country, laid the foundations of the military industry, purchased arms, set up the Zionist Organization, fought for Jewish labor, bought planes, cannon and tanks before the establishment of the state knowing that we would have to fight for our independence....This fight was led by commanders Yunchman, Begin, Landau and Shostak. They brought hundreds of thousands of immigrants to this country, built houses for them, saw to it that they had work and that their children were educated. They established hundreds of settlements throughout Israel...they went to the immigrant settlements to teach the immigrants, they organized, equipped and trained the IDF, they initiated and implemented the raids on Gaza, Khan-Younis and Kalkilya, they founded the Paratroop Brigade and built up the Air Force and the Armored Corps, they were the first to reach Eilat and raise Israel's flag there, and many decades ago they were already telling the Jewish people about the importance of Eilat, they raised millions for the development of the country, they moved the Knesset and the Government to Jerusalem when the U.N. decided that it should be internationalized, they conceived the idea of the Sinai Campaign, initiated and planned it, and General Bader headed it.

But we have done nothing. For the past fifty years our movement has solely made bombastic speeches and pompous declarations, has organized useless demonstrations and scandals, throwing stones at this Knesset of the Israeli nation, shouting down speakers in this House. Because we do not have the strength to debate and convince others, all we can do is shout and interrupt when others speak. Who is like unto you, and who am I to argue with you? Do you want the Government to resign? It was not elected by you, does not seek your confidence, and does not even regret your lack of confidence....

H. Landau (Herut): What about the withdrawal, speak to the point.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Landau, I ask you not to interrupt the Prime Minister's speech.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I always rejected "easy Zionism," which is based on pompous declarations. A few decades ago it was sometimes tragic, now it is merely comic and pathetic. Yesterday's "concert" reminded me of another, far uglier "concert" in the Knesset, when the reparations from Germany were being debated. Thugs were brought in from the outside, stones were thrown at the people's representatives and the "commander" stood on this podium and, when the Speaker prevented him from saying words of vituperation, shouted: no one shall speak here if I may not, and was thrown out of the Knesset for several months. I consoled myself then with the knowledge that there was some progress after all.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): What do you mean thrown out, no Knesset Member was thrown out, what kind of expression is that?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Raziell-Na'or, I ask you not to interrupt.

H. Cohen-Maguri (Herut): But really what is that, was a Knesset Member thrown out?

H. Landau (Herut): What does that have to do with anything?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: It's not your concern whether it has to do with anything or not, that's my concern now.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): It's everyone's concern.

Y. Bader (Herut): Then make it your concern.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I'll do that, Knesset Member Bader.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I would like to say to MK Bernstein...that you cannot accuse me of taking matters of security lightly or of being ignorant of defense problems. You served with me in the Provisional Government when I had to conduct the War of Independence as well as afterwards...and you know perfectly well that I am not at liberty to speak explicitly about certain matters. You heard me speak of...opening the Gulf of Eilat to Israeli and non-Israeli ships...as well as of our immigration needs, but instead of conducting a serious debate on those weighty issues you...cited things said four, three and two months ago without...attempting to examine the political and international circumstances which had changed meanwhile.

We were in conflict with almost the whole world, and in your view we should straightaway have told the world what steps we were going to take. Would you have done that if you had been in my place? Of course different things were said during those months, because various events occurred. Do you think that policy is religious or mathematical dogma which cannot be altered as situations change?

After defeating the Egyptian army in the Sinai we regarded our major objective as assuring navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and the Straits, and we realized that the measures which were possible four months ago could no longer be employed. Rightly or not—I do not claim to be one of those people who never makes a mistake—I thought before the Sinai Campaign, and still think, that making Eilat an international port and assuring Israeli and general navigation to and from it...counter-balance the Gaza Strip...I also knew that our objective in the Gulf of Eilat would not be attained in one day or by a set formula, and would require considerable efforts...to build a harbor and other large undertakings...We weighed up the harm we could expect from having one regime rather than another in the Gaza Strip, and also assessed the risk

in Gaza as compared with the hope in Eilat, and it seemed that whatever settlement was reached regarding Gaza would be temporary...while there was a chance that Eilat would stand for many years, I don't want to say forever....It is possible to disagree with us...but that was not done in this debate....MK Bernstein preferred to make his work easier by quoting phrases...but to my regret he omitted to refer to the serious issues....

He accuses me of having miraculously discovered Article 51. I did not discover it. The Sinai Campaign was fought...because of our need to defend ourselves....The importance of Article 51 is that, as a result of our information campaign, other countries "discovered" it and realized that it applies to self-defense. We base our defense on knowing that we are right and strong, the IDF is our Article 51, and I discovered it long ago....I am perhaps less impressed than MK Bernstein by the declarations of others, but I do not deny their importance. They indicate a shift in world public opinion regarding Israel's security...though a great deal still remains to be done in this field, especially among the nations of Asia....They do not know of our deep roots here going back four thousand years, and of our cultural, religious and linguistic ties with this country....

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I don't disagree with that.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: We must value the shift in the world regarding Israel's rights and security....

M. Wilner (Maki): It's not a shift, it's a conspiracy.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Wilner, no one's arguing with you now.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I have no intention of arguing with you.

M. Wilner (Maki): Such arrogance after such a downfall!

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Knesset Member Wilner, I ask you to stop.

M. Wilner (Maki): At least Eden had more courage.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Go and learn from Eden.

M. Wilner (Maki): I didn't do what you did.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Of course not. Can you do what I do?

The Speaker, B. Mintz: I ask the Prime Minister to continue with his speech and MK Wilner to stop interrupting.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I would like to congratulate my colleagues from Ahdut Ha'Avodah for not acting in accordance with the

statement MK Allon made here a few weeks ago to the effect that you would leave the Government if your views were not accepted, and for believing that we should not disband this association, which is neither artificial nor temporary—

E. Raziell-Na'or (Herut): Which is completely innocent.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: —and which MK Allon and his colleagues disbanded eight years ago, benefiting neither themselves nor the state.

Y. Allon (Ahdut Ha'Avodah-Po'alei Zion): You disbanded it then.

...

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I am glad that the members of Ahdut Ha'Avodah realize now that despite the differences of opinion...there are deeper roots to our cooperation....I hope that the deepening of the cooperation between us will lead to fewer speeches directed at the street and more genuine unity and collegial responsibility.

For many years I have disagreed with Mapam regarding its view of the international situation, though I have always respected its pioneering dedication....I regret the fact that MK Ya'ari still considers it necessary to keep expressing his hope that the U.S.S.R. will mend its ways. I share that hope, as every Jew must...because there are more than two million Jews in Russia who are cut off from us...but its constant repetition by Ya'ari smacks of paying lip service to a belief or religion which has been undermined....

I would like to say a few words now for external consumption. Several statements were made in the U.N. by the representatives of various countries...and someone said here that that was a Balfour Declaration. I would like to say that declarations affirming Israel's right to freedom of navigation in an international waterway and of Israel's right to use force to defend this right as well as to act in Gaza do not assure us of our rights and cannot be relied upon. But there is a difference between the declarations made now and the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration was given to a nation in exile, without sovereign rights, with only potential strength and the desire for a state. Today...the declarations carry far greater weight, because we are no longer dependent solely on the good will of those who make them. There is sovereign Jewish independence, there is the IDF and there is the Jewish dispersion, which was never so solidly behind us as it is now....

I said yesterday that there is no absolute security in any of the declarations...but I do not belittle them, because they are based on world recognition of Israel's reality, importance, strength and justice on a scale unparalleled since the establishment of the state.

...Certain representatives...said that the Armistice Agreement determines the situation in the Gaza Strip. We completely reject that....

Everyone knows now that the Egyptians did not honor their signature and constantly violated the agreement...The U.N. knew it, and did nothing...Even now the Egyptian government declares that Israel's ships shall not pass through Suez or the Tiran Straits, and that there is still a state of war between us. That is why Israel does not consider itself bound by that agreement...and if steps are taken in Gaza on the basis of it which could lead to the renewal of the previous situation, Israel... reserves the right to act.

Y. Bader (Herut): Against the Indians?

M. Wilner (Maki): What irresponsible behavior.

I. Cohen (Progressives): Not everyone is as cowardly as you, MK Wilner.

M. Wilner (Maki): Why did you withdraw, are you such a hero?

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: I don't rely on international goodwill any more than anyone else here, but I do not advise the Knesset to dismiss it lightly. We are a lonely nation....We wish to keep our special and unique character...but we desire the friendship of the world... which was reflected in the shift in world public opinion towards us and the declarations made by certain countries in the Assembly. We appreciate the fact that certain friendly nations have accepted moral responsibility for our rights and security....The U.N. Assembly cannot impose binding decisions, and although the Security Council can, each of the five Powers there has the veto. So let us not dismiss lightly the friends we have acquired in recent weeks....

We have been promised moral and practical help in developing navigation in the Gulf of Eilat, and I do not know if it is within our power to make Eilat an international port by our own endeavors....The Straits will not be an international waterway solely on the strength of legal recognition. Unless the vessels of other nations come to Eilat our right of navigation will be abstract. It is not the right of navigation but the navigation itself which is the main point. That is something which is extremely crucial for our economic future, but I would also like to stress, MK Bernstein, that the friendship of other countries is vital for our security.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): I did not dispute that. I was talking about guarantees.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Even soldiers as wonderful and capable as those of the IDF need first-class tools. We are not yet able to manufacture them ourselves, and they are not easily purchased. We need special conditions which will assure that they are supplied....

J. Serlin (General Zionists): Mr. Bernstein just repeated what you said, Mr. Prime Minister.

I. Cohen (Progressives): Now he's repeating what Mr. Bernstein said.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Then how did he contradict me?

J. Serlin (General Zionists): No, you're contradicting yourself now.

The Speaker, B. Mintz: Analyze things afterwards, MK Serlin.

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: There is something else I would like to tell the world—the regime in Gaza will not be determined on the basis of the Armistice Agreement which was violated by Egypt....The desire for peace in this region expressed by several nations at the Assembly will be disappointed if the Egyptians return. Only if those countries' assurances to the Jewish people are kept is there a chance for peace. It will not come suddenly or soon...but the acts of hostility against us will cease if the nations which spoke in the U.N. are not deterred by the threats of the Egyptian tyrant....He says that he will not let us pass through the Straits, but if those countries, i.e., America, England, France, Holland, Australia, Belgium and others, keep their word and use their right to freedom of navigation together with us...there is a chance for peace in the region.

The Sinai Campaign taught the world that there is a factor here.... Israel, which does not remain confined within the strange borders of its small country but extends to the seas and cannot be ignored. We seek peace and progress in our country and the entire Middle East, and we hope that the maritime nations will keep their promise, that the U.N. will henceforth fulfill its commitments to us and that thereby peace in the Middle East will be reinforced and the Jewish people will dwell safely in its land.

...

The Speaker, B. Mintz: ...We will first vote on Herut's motion of no confidence in the Government.

The Vote

Those in favor 25

Those against 84

(The resolution is not adopted.)

The Speaker, B. Mintz: We will now vote on Maki's motion of no confidence in the Government.

The Vote

Those in favor 6

Those against 104

(The resolution is not adopted.)

The Speaker, B. Mintz: We will now vote on the General Zionists' motion of no confidence in the Government.

The Vote

Those in favor 25

Those against 85

(The resolution is not adopted.)

(From the floor: What is adopted?)

James de Rothschild's Bequest

Introduction

For eight years the Knesset had held its sittings in temporary quarters, first in Tel Aviv, then in Jerusalem, in the Froumine Building named after its owner, a biscuit manufacturer. Plans were being prepared for the establishment of a permanent Knesset building, on a hill in the west of Jerusalem, close to the Executive buildings and the Hebrew University, but the budget was lacking. The Knesset could not take it upon itself to vote a considerable sum for its own requirements, when many pressing needs of the rapidly-growing population had to be neglected for lack of funds. At this critical moment a way was found of financing the Knesset building from an outside source.

Sitting 331 of the Third Knesset

22 July 1957 (23 Tammuz 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I have been asked by the Speaker to read out to you a letter which was delivered to me yesterday by a special messenger from the widow of one of the noblest men of our time, a man who worked indefatigably for Israel and whose father also made an immense contribution to our cause—James de Rothschild, of blessed memory.

This letter, both because of its noble content, but primarily because it contains matters which pertain to the Knesset, deserves to be read out in the Knesset and preserved in the *Knesset Record*. It was written on 15 July 1957 by James de Rothschild's widow. It reads:

My dear Prime Minister, I have often read and reread the noble and generous words of your cable of condolence. They give me so much comfort in my sorrow.

Now I must turn from my grief and apply myself to the affairs of the PICA. My husband had, over the last few years, given much thought to the work of the PICA and its future. He had carefully considered every aspect of the problem and, shortly before his death, prepared a letter to you, in which he set out his conclusions. The letter read as follows:

My dear Prime Minister, My father began his colonization work in Israel 75 years ago. The work which was then begun has been continued to this day. When in 1924 my father set up the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association—PICA—he as-

signed to it the task of colonizing all his landholdings. It fell to me to preside over PICA ever since its inception.

In the years that followed, the marshes were drained; the rocky hills and barren wastes were turned into fertile soil. All these lands were then colonized by PICA. Today there is no cultivable land left to PICA for further colonization. The task set to PICA has been fulfilled.

As I cast my eyes back over our work, I think that I may fairly say that we have adhered to two principles which well bear restating: the first, that we did our work without regard to political considerations, and the second, that we endeavoured to give to Israel and her people all that we could, without seeking anything in return—neither profits, nor gratitude, nor anything else.

The colonizing task of PICA having been fulfilled, the question that lay before me was to decide on the future of PICA. The State of Israel has since been created and the national institutions have emerged to take over the major colonization effort in Israel.

Weighing all the elements, I have reached the conclusion that, with the completion of its task, the right course would be to terminate the activities of PICA, instead of duplicating the work which is done now, on a far larger scale, by the national institutions.

I look upon the termination of PICA's work as a mark of fulfillment, not as a withdrawal. I would like to underline this by a special act of identification with the aspirations of Israel and her people. We intend to provide the sum of IL 6 million for the construction of the new Knesset building in Jerusalem which, I understand, it is proposed to erect. Let the new Knesset building become a symbol, in the eyes of all men, of the permanence of the State of Israel.

With this done, PICA will withdraw from the scene of Israel in the knowledge that the work which was begun 75 years ago is being carried on by the state and the people, supported by world Jewry.

With this letter I meant to inform you of my decision. I do not intend, with this letter, to take leave of you or of Israel. My interest in the development of Israel is abiding. Even if PICA must cease to operate, I shall remain as close to you all as I have always been. Your cares will be my cares and your happiness will be my happiness.

Indeed, I shall want to examine whether I shall be able to make some modest contribution, in the future, towards the advancement of science, art and culture in Israel—all matters

which, I know, are near to your heart. However, these are but thoughts for the future. I am not yet fully decided on them but may revert to them as soon as these thoughts become crystallized in my own mind.

The foundations of the state have been well and truly laid. I am confident that, by the grace of the Almighty, the new chapter in the history of our people which began with the creation of the state, will be glorious and enduring. Yours sincerely.

Here James de Rothschild's letter ends. His widow continues:

Alas, with this letter, my husband took leave of you and of Israel and it has now fallen to me and the PICA Council to execute what he had resolved.

I need hardly say that the contribution of IL 6 million for the new Knesset building will be provided. Let me add that this was a project to which my husband attached special significance.

For myself I shall readily examine what contribution it will be possible to make in the fields of science, art and culture which are mentioned in the letter. I cannot say at the moment what will prove feasible but I can assure you that everything that can be done will be done.

Before concluding let me add that my husband always thought and spoke of you with the greatest affection and respect. In all his work for Israel, he was greatly inspired by your example and by the exertions of the whole people of Israel.

Believe me, my dear Prime Minister,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Dorothy de Rothschild

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Members, we have heard the elevated content and spirit of the letter, which stands as an exalted national, political, Jewish manifesto and as a lofty testament to the people.

In James de Rothschild's bequest concerning the Knesset building, the worthy successor to his great father revealed both his affection and loyalty to the country and the state, and a deep sense of understanding and appreciation of the Jewish legislature—the Knesset of the State of Israel.

Astonishingly, the letter arrived at the right moment. As you know, we have announced a competition for designs for the Knesset's permanent home. For that purpose, we have reached an agreement with the Association of Architects in Israel and appointed a committee of judges from among Israel's best architects. After months of work, the results of the competition will be published in two days' time, and it is hoped that we will have a plan which is accepted, agreed and appropriate.

It is clear now that the Knesset building will surely be erected, and both the work of construction and the entire building will be saturated with the precious memory of the generations of the Rothschilds, the home of Israel's national generosity.

With these words I express my gratitude to the widow and heiress of James de Rothschild and the President of PICA.

In Memory of Colonel Nehemia Argov

Introduction

Together with some of his colleagues, Ben-Gurion was wounded when a hand-grenade was tossed into the Knesset, by a madman, from the gallery above. While Ben-Gurion was recuperating, his loyal military aide, Colonel Nehemia Argov, ran over a girl with his car, on the road to Jerusalem. Believing—mistakenly—that he had killed the girl, Nehemia, in a moment of despair, took his life. Out of concern for Ben-Gurion's health, the news about the suicide was kept from him for several days.

Sitting 358 of the Third Knesset

18 November 1957 (24 Heshvan 5718)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I would like to thank the Speaker and all the friends and acquaintances who have sent get-well wishes to my colleagues and myself. I hope that the three members of the House who have not yet recovered will soon be with us.

Before proceeding to the political debate, allow me to say a few personal words. I deeply regret the fact that the terrible tragedy of Nehemia's death was concealed from me for two days. I regret it, but I do not resent it. I understand and respect the motives which led the doctors at the Hadassah Hospital and their assistants to arrange that, and I am full of admiration and esteem for both the morning and afternoon newspapers, which printed special editions for me on Monday making no mention of the terrible tragedy.

Nehemia and I worked together for about ten years. I doubt whether any two people ever worked together as we did. I do not know what my share was in the enterprise of those ten years. I know that it was the collective work of tens and hundreds of thousands and included wonderful stories which are no less wonderful than anything in our or anyone else's history. But if I had any share in that work it was the outcome of the partnership between myself and Nehemia, a partnership which was not limited, in which there were no divisions and petty accounts, no "mine and yours."

Like me, Nehemia was not perfect. No one is perfect. Even the Bible does not depict anyone as being perfect, as having no defects. Everyone has good and bad qualities, and even the good qualities are not usually perfect, do not reach their peak. What distinguished Nehemia—and I

say this in full consciousness and without any exaggeration—was that he had one perfect quality, and that was a quality which is one of man's most important ones, namely, devotion and loyalty. Nehemia was a man of dedication. In a tangible sense this seemed to be loyalty to a person, but essentially and morally it was devotion to a cause, the dual cause of the state and the IDF. Nehemia was blessed with a rare and precious gift from God, the gift of great love. That was a Divine fire which burned incessantly within Nehemia, and it was that fire which consumed him, with love and suffering.

Permit me to stand to attention alone here for a moment in his memory.

(The Knesset Members stand in his memory.)

Speaker's Address on the Knesset's Tenth Anniversary

Introduction

More than any other individual, Joseph Sprinzak, the first Knesset Speaker, had contributed to the formulation of the Knesset Procedural Code and the shaping of what were to become its customs and traditions. Already mortally ill, he addressed the Knesset, for the last time, on its tenth anniversary. Three days later he passed away.

Sitting 581 of the Third Knesset

26 January 1958 (17 Shevat 5719)

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: Knesset Members, we will conclude this short sitting with a few words in honor of our anniversary. On 15 Shevat (January 24) marked a decade since the Knesset, the Jewish legislature of the State of Israel, was founded.

In congratulating the Knesset on this unique event in Jewish history I see before me that momentous day ten years ago, in the World Zionist building, when we announced: "Elected representatives of Israel, today we have planted the first sapling at the behest of the generations which have gone before and for the benefit of those which are yet to come; we have planted the fine tree of Israel's independence."

In congratulating the Knesset on our anniversary I also see the ten years of the *Knesset Record*, which I regard as a new, secular Babylonian Talmud, secular yet sacred in its yearning for new Jewish life and in its efforts and enthusiasm to pave the way for the return to Zion and its defense.

In congratulating the Knesset I am still astir with James de Rothschild's wonderful phrase: "Let the Knesset building become a symbol, in the eyes of all men, of the permanence of the State of Israel."

I consider the establishment of our Knesset as one of the greatest and most original miracles, after the revival of the Hebrew language, among the signs and wonders which occurred during the process of Zionist fulfillment and the reestablishment of Israel's independence in the land of the prophets, the land of constructive and defensive pioneering.

The revival of Hebrew as the living language of the nation and the state is unique and unparalleled anywhere in the world, and consequently I esteem it very highly.

As you know, there is nothing originally Jewish about a parliament. Parliaments have existed for hundreds of years and have also been established in countries which have recently gained independence. But a legislature which is established while a state is in the process of being built, while its exiles are being gathered in and whose representatives come from very different cultural and political backgrounds, is a wonderful achievement for the Jewish people and a welcome miracle which enables 120 representatives to sit together. The Knesset conducts its legislative activity legally and in accordance with parliamentary procedure, giving rise to unusual stability in the administration of the country.

Recognizing the ways in which it was established and the continual processes of its activities, it is evident that the Knesset is a superior institution, one of the basic treasures of the nation which is being renewed in its land.

Whatever criticism is levelled against it, the Knesset is the expression of our democratic regime, of which we are as proud as we are of freedom of opinion and speech in our country.

I must also note the deviations which, to my regret, have also appeared on occasions in the processes of freedom of speech and opinions. I think that freedom of speech and opinion has occasionally been misused in the Knesset. Outside the Knesset there are also sometimes inappropriate instances of misuse by the press, the institution which benefits from freedom of speech and which has played a great role in the history of Zionism, the state and the Knesset. All those deviations affect me as if they were attacks on the honor and value of the Jewish parliament.

The honor of the Knesset, its educational value and the esteem for it of the diaspora require careful consideration, concern, manners and respect without restricting freedom of speech and opinion.

Within a very short time the Knesset has entrenched itself in its work and parliamentary procedures, being recognized as one of the parliaments par excellence. We have learned a great deal from others, although without imitating them, and we must admit that we took our initial traditions from our own institutions—the Zionist Congress and the Representative Assembly. I am not unaware of the fact that there may be room for further improvements, but meanwhile the Knesset has won a position of honor among the parliaments of the world.

The Knesset has been through stirring as well as difficult times in the ten years of its existence, but despite all the deviations and transient events, the Knesset lives and endures and is the supreme authority of the entire nation in its land.

I rejoice at the fact that I have lived to congratulate the nation and the Knesset on its tenth anniversary. My felicitations to the nation and the Knesset!