

Volume 5

MAJOR KNESSET DEBATES,
1948-1981

Seventh Knesset 1969-1973
Eighth Knesset 1974-1977

Edited by
Netanel Lorch

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

May they grow up, and understand.



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SEVENTH KNESSET 1969–1973

Motion of No-Confidence by Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash

Introduction

Oren Shalit was born in Israel. His father was a naval officer, his mother a Norwegian Gentile. His father asked the Ministry of the Interior—whose responsibilities included the Population Register—to register him on his birth certificate, and, subsequently, on his identity card, as a Jew by national affiliation, leaving blank the space set aside for religion. Following the instructions of the Minister of the Interior, Moshe Chaim Shapira, a member of the National Religious Party, the Ministry refused. Mr. Shalit appealed to the Supreme Court for an order *nisi* to compel the Government to show cause why it would not accede to his request.

Realizing the fundamental importance of this test case, the Supreme Court considered the subject in an exceptionally large forum—nine justices of the Supreme Court. At first the Court attempted to resolve the issue without having to pass judgment on what is basically a philosophical, historiosophical question—who is a Jew? Or, more precisely—what is the relationship between national affiliation and religion in this particular context? In an unprecedented step, it therefore advised the Government and the Knesset to do away with the “national affiliation” rubric altogether. When the Government demurred, the Supreme Court decided that, in accordance with existing legislation, which did not include a definition of the term “Jew” (nor, for that matter, of Arab, Moslem, Christian or Druse), the Minister had no choice but to accept the parents’ statement and register the child accordingly.

The Minister made it known that he could not in good conscience implement the instruction of the Court, and would rather resign. As far as he and the members of his party were concerned, for a Jew, national affiliation and religion were one and the same, both to be decided in accordance with Halacha, the age-old religious law. Against this background a motion of no confidence was tabled.

Sitting 35 of the Seventh Knesset

3 February 1970 (27 Shevat 5730)

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, Oren Shalit is the son of an officer in the IDF. All his life he will live as an Israeli, a Hebrew and a Jew, and if necessary he will

give his life as an Israeli, a Hebrew and a Jew. But the Minister of the Interior has refused to register Oren Shalit as a Hebrew or a Jew by national affiliation, because he was born to a mother who does not belong to the Jewish religion. Israeli law was about to oblige him to have an identity card which would distinguish between him and everyone else of this national affiliation, which would mark him as a foreigner, an alien, perhaps as a suspect. The same fate now awaits thousands, and, once the immigrants we are all hoping for arrive, perhaps even tens and hundreds of thousands.

That is the whole issue which is to be debated here. All the rest is formal, abstract and legalistic. It is not for formulae or abstract points that we are fighting, but against a system which makes people unhappy, which predestines them to an inferior and even outcast status.

What would we say if President Pompidou were to propose legislation distinguishing the Jewish citizens of France from the rest of the nation, or defining as non-French anyone not born to a Catholic father?...Would we not raise an international furor? Would we not hold impassioned debates in the Knesset to counter that vile plot? Would we not speak of new Nuremberg laws...of a modern version of the yellow star...?

But France is a modern country. In its identity card only one affiliation is recorded: French citizenship. No one would dream of recording a person's national or religious affiliation there. There is one country, however, where national affiliation appears in one's identity card—the U.S.S.R., and if a Jew tries to register himself as a Russian he will spend the rest of his life in the dreaded camps of the white desert. That is the epitome of anti-Semitism. We have protested against it from this podium...and will continue to sound the alarm against that instrument of repression and discrimination there.

The children of a Soviet Jew who marries a Christian woman will be registered as Jews and suffer all their lives from discrimination, while on arriving in Israel they will be registered as non-Jews, suffering all their lives here in consequence, unless they do as others have done and emigrate to a liberal country....

Our worldview, and that of the majority in this country, is based on the following principles: a person is free to pray or not as when and how he pleases, and no official institution has any right to intervene in this sphere....Religion is a subject for the individual, not the state....Any person may identify with whichever nation or religion he pleases...this being his private affair....What is the concern of the state is the subject of nationality or citizenship....It is a person's duty to serve in his country's army, pay his taxes, be a loyal citizen and fulfill all the other duties the political framework requires of him in the area of his civic duties....This is the situation which obtains in most civilized countries, in

the battle for which Jews have been in the forefront and without which all talk of equality regardless of religion or race is mere idle chatter.

We are proud that our Supreme Court holds the same view. The judges first suggested that the category of national affiliation be removed from the Population Register and identity cards, but the Government rejected that idea. We advocated that approach and even proposed a private bill to that end. The Government rejected our proposal and left the decision to the court. Now the court has decided...that if national affiliation is recorded it is solely for statistical purposes and is done on the basis of the individual's free will and subjective feeling....In response, the Government has decided to change the law...thereby upholding a medieval, theocratic regime and taking a big step backwards towards religious coercion.

This constitutes a violation of the status quo, a return to the dark ages...and a betrayal of the trust of the hundreds of thousands of voters who have just voted for the supposedly secular parties...as well as a cynical distortion of the guidelines on the basis of which the majority in the Knesset gave its confidence to the Government....For this reason we propose a vote of no confidence in the Government.

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, today the Government is bringing the amendment to the Law of Return before the Knesset...and for that MK Avneri's party group is proposing a vote of no confidence in the Government....The Government does not work in an underhanded way, it publishes its plans...and the debate should take place on the proposal, not on the no confidence motion....In effect, this is an attempt to express no confidence in the Government arising from the knowledge that the amendment will be adopted...and thereby to condemn the Government for acting democratically....I am not prepared to refer to MK Avneri's criticisms here and will do so at the appropriate time, next Monday, at the first reading of the amendment proposed by the Government....I therefore propose that the motion of no confidence be removed from the agenda.

The Speaker, R. Barkat: The House Committee has decided, in accordance with Article 56 of the Knesset Procedural Code, that instead of a debate party groups may make statements not exceeding ten minutes....

S. Lorincz (Aguda): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, we are not part of the Coalition because we cannot accept collective responsibility for the Government's deeds and misdeeds in religious and spiritual matters, and therefore we obviously have no confidence in the Government. But this time we will not vote for the motion of no confidence because, despite the fact that the Government's decision does not satisfy us, we do not wish to ignore the contribution made to restricting assimilation by the decision to register as a Jew only someone who was born to a Jewish mother or has converted....For if the decision of the Supreme

Court had remained in force, anyone—Jew or Gentile—could have been registered as a Jew...thereby encouraging assimilation and mixed marriages...and for preventing that we commend the Government....

We oppose the second part of the proposal, however, maintaining that extending all the rights of the Law of Return to the non-Jewish spouse and children of Jews will encourage mixed marriages....We particularly regret the fact that the religious Ministers have agreed to this compromise on something so basic....All this is the outcome of a long campaign to sever the Jewish people from its religion....It is hard to credit that a person in a position of importance in this country can say about the religious law pertaining to the definition of a Jew that it resembles the "biological or racist approach of the Nazis underlying the Nuremberg Laws...."

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): Precisely. I grew up in that country. They asked me who my grandmother was and who my mother was....I don't want to go back to that.

S. Lorincz (Aguda): ...Orthodox Jewry's great concern is not for ourselves, since obviously we are not threatened with assimilation....It is for the entire Jewish people, out of our great love for it and our concern for those who have moved away from Judaism in the diaspora....We have always accepted converts. King David and his heirs were the descendants of Ruth the Moabitess...but this is not a subject to be treated lightly....We will welcome Soviet Jewry, when it comes, with open arms....There will be no problems which cannot be solved. And people who deal with pornography should not seek to profit at the expense of Soviet Jewry....

M. Avizohar (National List): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, for over twenty years, since the establishment of the state, the leadership has had the sense to steer clear of the stormy waters of hard and fast rulings on matters of religion and belief, realizing that life is full of illogical contradictions...and that as a nation we must nonetheless remain united....But now the Government seems to have lost its sagacity...and abandoned that delicate balance....At the same time, by omitting for six whole days to implement the ruling of the Supreme Court, it has been guilty of contempt of court....

The religious parties...without batting an eye, upon the publication of the Supreme Court ruling, immediately announced their readiness to cause the collapse of the Coalition Government at this time of war, without any prior consultations in order to find a solution to the problem....

T. Sanhedrai (Mafdal): That is untrue. Where did you hear that?

M. Avizohar (National List): On the radio, on the day the Supreme Court ruling was handed down....The Jewish tradition contains elements of both fanaticism and tolerance. I think that I and my generation always

hoped that in the renewed Judaism we were forming together in the State of Israel we would reject fanaticism and adopt tolerance....The largest Jewish community lives in the U.S., and most of its younger generation receives a college education. Will we increase the unity of the nation if we permit the gap to grow between modern Judaism, which believes in tolerance and to which the younger generation in the U.S.—and in Israel too, I believe—adheres, and the tendency to minimize the content and tolerance of Judaism?

This brings me to the strange, self-contradictory document which has been brought before us and which will be debated next week....On the one hand it proposes making it easier for a couple to enter the country, while on the other it makes their residing here more difficult....What is the point of that? It is time we realized that in this day and age it is as easy to leave Israel as it is to come here....This is particularly the case if one comes from a country where there is economic and social prosperity, tolerance, the rule of law and respect for civil rights, as opposed to a homeland which...refuses to recognize everyone who regards himself as Jewish as such....

No one refutes the fact that most of the Jewish people acknowledges and identifies with the connection between national affiliation and religion in Judaism, and even observes its festivals and ceremonies...the minority doing so because of religious fanaticism, the majority because of belief, respect for parental or national tradition, the desire for historical continuity or simply a peaceful home life. What we have to decide, however, is how to treat the minority which does not subscribe to any of those opinions yet still wishes to be counted among the Jewish nation, for a variety of reasons....

That issue will have to be settled when the Government's bill is brought before the Knesset for debate, but at this stage we regard it as our duty to stand up for tolerance and oppose rejecting part of our nation....We condemn the action of the Government and the weakness of the ruling party in deviating from the status quo and the arrangements which have averted insoluble disputes....I support peace and harmony, but there can be no compromise with fanaticism....These are sad times for our young state as it seeks to mold its character as a country ruled by law and guided by tolerance....I see it as my national and human duty, particularly in this time of war, to stand up for Jewish pluralism, recognizing all streams within Judaism....Therefore I cannot support the Government, and our party group will abstain on the vote.

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, our party group will support the motion of no confidence in the Government for having decided to impose theocratic laws on Israel which are opposed by most of the nation....The Government seeks to force the religious laws of medieval times on the nation, compelling congruence between "Jewish national affiliation" and "Jewish religion," and thereby introducing

legal discrimination....Forced conversion according to religious law makes a mockery of the whole thing....Israel needs a democratic, secular constitution which separates national affiliation and the state from religion, and ensures freedom of conscience, equal rights for all citizens and freedom of religious worship, rather than another law of religious coercion.

Most of the nation opposes a Coalitionary deal which takes the State of Israel back into the dark ages...and even from within the Labor Party an appeal has gone forth to refrain from doing this....Hundreds of scientists, artists and intellectuals have called for a demonstration in front of the Knesset: "to respect the decision of the Supreme Court, prevent religious coercion, preserve civil rights and guarantee Israel's character as a democratic country ruled by law in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, which determines freedom of conscience and religion...."

Thus, our support for the motion of no confidence is an expression of the struggle to defend democratic and civil liberties, human and equal rights, the separation of national affiliation from religion and of religion from the state, as well as for freedom of conscience and the determination of a democratic secular constitution in the State of Israel....I do not identify with the proposer, and especially reject his attack on the U.S.S.R. and Communist ideology. He simply doesn't know what he's talking about. Each citizen there decides for himself what the national affiliation of his children shall be....

...
E. Shostak (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, my party group is in a permanent state of having no confidence in the Government because of its foreign and economic policies....But we cannot identify with the motion in this case, not because we are not tolerant and do not take the feelings of people who are not identified with traditional Judaism into account, but because the motion comes from people who are completely cut off from the problem...whose approach is nihilistic, atheistic and entirely cut off from our heritage....Worse, they are ignoramuses, not apostates...and this motion derives from a hostility towards Judaism rather than a general opposition to religion....

The Government could have avoided the present storm if it had not been so sure of itself before the Supreme Court verdict...and had acceded to the request of all the nine judges to resolve the problem...possibly by recording religion, rather than national affiliation, in people's identity cards....Since the founding of the state we have stated this affiliation to Judaism and the nation in identity cards. In how many other countries does one have to have an identity card? It is something like a driver's license, neither adding nor detracting anything, merely identifying a person's name and origin. This monster is of our own making, and now we don't know how to get rid of it. Do "religion" and "nationality"

really have to be recorded in an identity card? Later on, when one gets married or divorced, the identity card does not constitute sufficient evidence....

The Government is guilty in this. Is there any argument within Judaism—even among the most atheistic and anti-religious Jews—as to the identity between national affiliation and religion...? The Mafdal obliges the Knesset to pass laws connected with religious law from time to time....Today this is still possible, but what will happen in another five or ten years, when the composition of the Knesset is different...? Then the Knesset will be able to repeal laws, just as it passes them today....

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): We'll annul everything. Nothing will be left in another ten years.

E. Shostak (Free Center): I hope and pray that that will not come about, but the danger exists. Why should the Knesset pass laws based on religious law? The Knesset is a secular legislature, and those laws should remain in the domain of the religious authorities....

On the question of conversion, I know that the rabbinical authorities deliberately make this a long and difficult process...though in the ancient kingdom of Israel the opposite was the case....We would do well to adopt the latter approach today....Although we do not usually have confidence in the Government, on this subject we will not support the motion and will abstain.

M. Sneh (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the only person whose portrait adorns the Knesset's wall of honor, Dr. Herzl, expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: "If we had a state today...it would not be forbidden for a Jewish citizen, i.e., for a citizen of the Jewish state, to marry a non-Jewish woman, and by doing so she would automatically become Jewish—as would their children."

S. Lorincz (Aguda): What happened to Dr. Herzl's family?

M. Sneh (Maki): You never belonged to his association, and there is no call for you to intervene now....In 1959 MK Lorincz proposed the very amendment to the law which the Government is now bringing before the Knesset. The Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, in replying on behalf of the entire Government, including Mafdal, said then: "I have said on more than one occasion, on behalf of the Government, that this country is governed by the rule of law, not religious law."

The Minister of the Interior, H.M. Shapira: Not in our name, he couldn't have said that in our name.

M. Sneh (Maki): I am quoting from the *Knesset Record*....On the subject of the definition of a Jew, Ben-Gurion said: "The Government will not solve that problem, and I hope no Government will be so stupid as to

do so." I very much regret to say that Ben-Gurion's fears have been fulfilled....The problem is not that the Government has proposed a bill....The problem is that the Supreme Court has issued a ruling, and the Chief Rabbinate has stated that this may not be put into practice...indicating that in addition to the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive there is a fourth authority, the Chief Rabbinate....Why has the Minister of Justice not condemned this, as has the Minister of the Interior, who is a member of Mafdal...? Why has he not defended the Supreme Court...? What he has done is to propose a bill which means that the Supreme Court's ruling will have no validity...which may be legitimate formally but undermines the rule of law in this country....

As the Constituent Assembly, the First Knesset...was supposed to determine a constitution for Israel...but its members refrained from doing so because they did not want to make decisions on the relationship between religion and nationality and between religion and the state. But what is the Minister of Justice doing...?

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: You know that's not true....

M. Sneh (Maki): You keep telling me what I know, while I know the opposite of what you tell me I know. The reason for this was the endeavor to avoid a religious dispute...and a rift within the nation. Their intentions may have been good, but I did not agree then, and do not now, with the lack of a written constitution....Now, however, you seek to amend the Law of Return, which is one of the bases of our unwritten constitution. You are introducing theocratic legislation by the back door...in order to preserve the coalition....

The Rabbinate is ossified...and will not adjust religious law to fit present-day circumstances, being content to define the granddaughter of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, as a non-Jew, and Khrushchev's granddaughter as a Jew, because his son married a Jewess. If the rabbis regard the children of a captain in the Navy, Benjamin Shalit, as non-Jews, and the commander of the Fatah, the terrorist from east Jerusalem, Kamel Nameiry, as a Jew, because in their view religion and national affiliation are one and the same, I have no right to interfere in their considerations.

But I have the right to say something about the relations between religion and national affiliation. Those two concepts did not always overlap....The Jewish Orthodox establishment of the last two centuries distinguished between them, and the extremely Orthodox Jews of Frankfurt-on-Main defined themselves as Germans of the Mosaic persuasion. The same applied to Jews in Poland, France and elsewhere....

I am in favor of the continuity of the Jewish tradition and heritage, but I am also in favor of realizing that times change, and that continuity must be combined with change. Thus, I am not in agreement with either those who reject everything or those who accept everything....

In our generation six million Jews were killed. How many of them could not have been registered as Jews according to the Minister of Justice's amendment...? The tragedy of the Jewish people is unparalleled in any time or place...and if there are any remnants of our stricken family left, we must enfold them in our bosom, press them to our hearts. If you do not want them as part of your religion, let the reviving Jewish nation accept them, without obstacles and barriers....

The solution of laying down definitions regarding Jewish identity must be left for future generations, for the conclusion of an historical process. But if you ask "Who is a Jew?" there is only one correct answer today: "Every Jew is a Jew." No one who comes knocking at our gates should be turned away....But you are closing the gate to the children of a Jewish officer in the IDF. Maki's approach is very different from that of the party group which proposed the motion of no confidence in the Government, but we cannot help express our lack of confidence in the Government in view of the step it has taken.

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I had not intended to speak now, for the reasons I gave at the beginning of this debate....I must admit that I was glad to hear MK Sneh quoting Herzl and Ben-Gurion...but he is mistaken in claiming that I did nothing after the Supreme Court's ruling was not implemented... and this was published in several national newspapers....Neither is it true that the First Knesset failed to produce a constitution for religious reasons....One of the reasons was that it was not considered politically appropriate that 650,000 Jews should determine a constitution for the Jewish people as it gathered in Israel.

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeih-Ko'ah Hadash): How long are we going to wait?

...

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Secondly, those Jewish politicians who had legal training had obtained it in England, which has no constitution....

The Vote

Those in favor of the motion of no confidence in the Government	5
Those against	73
Abstentions	7

(The motion was not adopted.)

Who is a Jew?

Introduction

As promised, the Minister of Justice introduced an amendment to the Law of Return which—for the first time—included a statutory definition of the term “Jew.” Although the order *nisi* in which the Government's case had been rejected by the Supreme Court concerned the Population Registration Law and not the Law of Return, the definition was initially proposed for the latter law. Under this definition, a Jew is “someone born to a Jewish mother or someone who has converted and has no other religion.” This definition is based on that of the Halacha (religious law) which, ever since the Middle Ages, has adhered to a matrilineal criterion. The Halacha itself is not mentioned in the definition, however, and the Minister of Justice stated explicitly that persons converted by non-Orthodox rabbis would also be admitted into Israel under the Law of Return and, if they opted for Israeli citizenship, would be registered as Jews. This deliberate and agreed omission was to become a source of perennial friction and recurring debates, as well as of several Government crises. At the same time, the amendment states that the non-Jewish spouse, parents, children and grandchildren of a Jewish immigrant would enjoy all the privileges accorded under the Law of Return (although without being recognized and registered as Jews).

Sitting 37 of the Seventh Knesset

9 February 1970 (3 Adar 5730)

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the bill I bring before the House today comes as a result of the Supreme Court ruling regarding Benjamin Shalit and determining that the population registration clerk may not act in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of the Interior, which have been in effect since 10 January 1960, to the effect that only someone who was born to a Jewish mother and does not belong to another religion, or someone who has converted, may be registered as a Jew.

The history of the subject did not begin in 1960....In the early days of the state, in August 1948, Emergency Regulations were issued regarding the Population Register where it was determined that each individual would be asked as to his national affiliation and religion. This would appear to have been simple; the state had been established as a Jewish state, in deep acknowledgement of the existence of the Jewish

nation scattered throughout the world. The Declaration of Independence affirms the concentration of the entire Jewish people around the Jewish state and calls for their immigration and settlement there.

It was only natural, therefore, that the question of the individual's national affiliation should come up in the Population Register....No one questioned it at the time....The members of the Provisional Council did not imagine that the category of “national affiliation” would ever constitute a complex legal problem, apparently ignoring the subject of mixed marriages...one of the major problems of the Jewish people today....The policy of the Ministry of the Interior, whose task it is to register the population, has varied from time to time...and has not always been clear-cut....In March 1958 the late Minister of the Interior Bar-Yehuda issued clear instructions stating: “A person who declares in good faith that he is a Jew will be registered as such, and no further evidence will be required.” A public debate ensued...and the Government decided to amend the instructions. In June 1958 a directive was issued saying: “A person who declares in good faith that he is a Jew and is not of another religion will be registered as a Jew.” At the same time the Government decided that if both a child's parents declared that it was a Jew, it would be registered as such. The religious Ministers opposed this and resigned from the Government in July 1958.

Anyone who studies the newspapers of the period can see that the crisis was no mere trifle which could be overcome by some trick or consensus, but was a deeply-felt issue of principle. The Government sought a way out of the impasse, and decided in mid-July 1958 to appoint a Ministerial Committee comprising the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, the Minister of Justice, P. Rosenne, and the Minister of the Interior, I. Bar-Yehuda, to examine the subject of registering the children of mixed marriages as Jews....Thus, after that, every such case should have been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee...which also issued a directive cancelling all previous instructions on the subject...including those of Minister Bar-Yehuda....

The Ministerial Committee decided to consult the religious sages of every religious stream...meanwhile determining that the omission of the category of “national affiliation” was not to be considered....Replies were received from 45 religious sages, 37 of which stated unequivocally that no distinction should be made between the religious and national meaning of “Jew.” Two of the other eight maintained that the distinction could not be made in our generation....There is no doubt that the results of this survey paved the way for the radical change in the situation, and after the elections to the Fourth Knesset in December 1959 a Government headed by David Ben-Gurion was formed, with H.M. Shapira as Minister of the Interior, a position he has held to this day....In January 1960 the Minister of the Interior issued directives stating that someone born to a Jewish mother and not of another religion, or some-

one who had converted in accordance with religious law, should be registered as a Jew by national affiliation and religion....

Those directives were drawn up on the basis of the view expressed with astonishing unanimity by the vast majority of the Jewish sages, even though they reflected different viewpoints....This would seem to be explained by the historical fact of the place of Jewish law in the life of the Jewish people throughout its history.

In a case brought before the Supreme Court in the early 1950s the question arose of the place of Jewish law in the legal framework of the State of Israel....Amongst other things, Supreme Court Justice Agranat wrote: "It is virtually superfluous to explain that...even after being exiled from their country, the Jews never regarded themselves as just a religious cult, never ceased to consider themselves as a nation...whose absence from its land was temporary...and constantly adhered to its cultural heritage, part of which was its legal system....Because of the nature of their exile, and the fact that in the diaspora Jews were obliged to remain behind ghetto walls, the Jewish legal system took on an increasingly religious character, but it never ceased to constitute the Jews' national legal code, even though in recent times many Jews have rejected it...."

The majority ruling on the Shalit case was that Shalit's children were to be registered as Jews on the basis of the father's declaration, despite the fact that their mother is not a Jewess, does not have Israeli citizenship and the children have not been converted. This ruling seeks to alter the registration arrangements which have been in effect since January 1960...and oblige the population registration clerk to accept the father's declaration....The Government must accept the Supreme Court's ruling and act accordingly, as it has done, until the law is amended....The Government feels that the law should be changed if it can be interpreted as it has been by the Supreme Court....The courts cannot alter the law in order to clear up any absurdities it may contain. That is the task of the Legislature....

The Supreme Court sought to avert having the Shalit case brought before it. During the trial the President of the Court, supported by all the nine judges on the bench, asked the Attorney-General to suggest to the Government that it bring a bill before the Knesset proposing that the category of national affiliation be removed from the Population Register. The Government rejected this suggestion....In the ensuing public debate this proposal has been raised again, and rejected by the Government again....Two of the reasons for this were given by David Ben-Gurion in 1958, when he wrote that...security reasons precluded this...in view of our special situation and the fact that we cannot close our borders hermetically against infiltrators....That argument is at least as valid today as it was in 1958....

A completely different argument was given by MK David Ben-Gurion in an article which appeared in *Ma'ariv* in April 1970. He wrote: "The proposal to remove national affiliation from the Population Register may accord with the outlook of the Canaanites, if any still exist, but not with that of a Jewish citizen of the State of Israel. The Jewish people in Israel is still a part...of the Jewish nation, and removing national affiliation from the identity card of a Jew in Israel is the start of the process of detaching us from the Jewish people."

From the beginning of the Zionist movement, and even beforehand, there were arguments as to whether the Jews were a people, a nation, or just a religious group. The belief in the existence of the Jewish people as a nation which is scattered throughout the diaspora is the ideological basis of the entire Zionist movement....

The national affiliation of about half of the Jewish people is recorded in its identity cards today: two and a half million Jews in Israel and over four million in the U.S.S.R. and the countries of East Europe. Those who propose removing the entry from our identity cards are going to separate us from them. No Government in Israel can permit itself to propose that to the Knesset....In addition, for the purposes of the benefits conferred by the Law of Return—the right to immigrate to Israel and to receive Israeli citizenship—we must have a definition of who is a Jew....

We therefore have no alternative but to propose that the Legislature make it clear that the definition of a Jew in the Law of Return is "someone who was born to a Jewish mother or was converted and does not have another religion"...and that this should also apply with regard to the Population Registration Law....

In the article I have quoted, Ben-Gurion also mentioned conversion...and on this subject I do not agree with him. He wrote: "But what the majority in the current Government, under pressure from the Mafdal, is about to do is religious coercion which contradicts the character of our country and could bring Israel into bad light with diaspora Jewry, most of which is not Orthodox, just as the majority in Israel is not Orthodox."...I would like to point out that the Marriage and Divorce Law which has existed in this country since the establishment of the state represents a far higher level of coercion...but in 1960 Ben-Gurion assured the Minister of the Interior that the laws pertaining to marriage and divorce would remain in force....In 1970 Ben-Gurion adhered to the view that the children of mixed marriages, where the parents lived in Israel and wanted their children registered as Jews, should be registered as Jews. In 1959, however, he is on record as having said in the Knesset that the children of such marriages should undergo conversion....

The people and the Government know what harm mixed marriages have caused the Jewish nation...and also that the only remedy is immi-

gration to Israel....That is why the proposed amendment to the Law of Return makes it clear that the non-Jewish wife, children and grandchildren of a Jew who immigrates to Israel will be eligible to benefit from the same rights as Jews...as long as they are not Jews who have converted to another religion....I propose that the bill be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

Minister M. Begin: Mr. Speaker...only ignorance or misrepresentation could lead someone to claim that asking a person in a free and democratic country to state his national affiliation constituted a violation of his civil rights. It is even odder to claim that omitting to record national affiliation is a sign of progress....In a free and democratic country there can be citizens of different national affiliations, all of whom are equal before the law....We recognize the Arab national affiliation as well as the Jewish one. We recognize Druse national affiliation. We are prepared to recognize members of any nation who come to dwell among us by law....

A distinction must be made between national affiliation and religion, on the one hand, and citizenship, on the other. That is customary in free, democratic countries, though it is true that there have been different historical developments in different parts of the world. In a certain part of the world "nationality" is identical with "citizenship."...In others, where one country was conquered by another, the defeated nation sought to preserve its separate national identity....

As Jews and Zionists...we adhered to the second approach, which we regarded as progress. Otherwise we would have had to equate assimilation with progress. We maintained that assimilation was reaction, the deprivation of rights, the repudiation of the past and the future. That is why we were among the pioneers of the concept of the separate national identity of a minority, with equal rights, within the majority....Even in countries where citizenship and nationality are one and the same, the attempt to assimilate minorities is not succeeding. Thus, there is a strong demand within Britain to recognize separate Welsh and Scottish national affiliation, and the day is not far off when this will be granted....In the U.S., where history took a different turn in the creation of that new nation, one speaks of ethnic groups rather than national affiliation. That is merely a semantic difference, because it is human development and progress to recognize nations. The idea that a state should comprise only one nation is odious, and derives from Berlin....

As for the U.S.S.R...with all our criticism of that country for all the harm it has done our people and our country over the years...we must not attack it on mistaken grounds....It is erroneous to think that because the Jewish national affiliation of a Jew who is a Soviet citizen is marked in his identity card, this is equivalent to the J stamped by the hands which were stained with Jewish blood....Quite the contrary, the recognition of "Jewish national affiliation" in Lenin's time was re-

garded as a great achievement. It is true that the Communist rulers of Russia have emptied that concept of all content with regard to Jews, but such concepts as...justice, truth, honesty, freedom, aggression and national defense have all been emptied of content by that regime....Between 1917 and 1947 the U.S.S.R. recognized Jewish national affiliation, even though this was not linked with territory, as was the case with the dozens of other nationalities comprising the U.S.S.R. And in 1947 the U.S.S.R. recognized the Jewish state....Hence the Soviet authorities ought to permit its Jewish citizens to go to the Jewish state....

Only at a time of total confusion and the obfuscation of concepts and ideas, in a time of advanced anti-Semitism, when the New Left in Paris harasses Jewish students with age-old slogans...can one bewilder people by annulling the distinction between national affiliation and religion, on the one hand, and citizenship, on the other. In our country we can have people of different national affiliations and religions, but as regards citizenship they are all equal. That is our belief....

Most, if not all, nations include a variety of religions. Most, if not all, religions include a variety of nationalities. The Jewish nation has one religion. The Jewish religion has one nation. That is the truth, that is the history, that is the difference....The difference derives from historical circumstances. Most nations had their religion imposed upon them by an outside force, generally by the sword, sometimes by proselytization....Abraham, who lived in a pagan society, was seventy-five when he underwent a spiritual transformation and came to believe in one omnipotent, invisible deity...whereupon he arose and left Ur of the Chaldees in order to worship God....Likewise, when the Children of Israel left Egypt, they did so in order to worship their God....Their belief was not imposed upon them by force or proselytization. On the contrary, they left nations and countries in order to maintain their belief in the land which had been given to them....

That was how the history of the Jewish people began, almost four thousand years ago. For Jews there has never been a distinction between nation and religion, but this does not involve religious coercion....The proposal before us today simply seeks to maintain the continuity of the Jewish people throughout its history....Some people oppose defining a Jew on the basis of religious law...but it is that religious law which has sustained us through the vicissitudes of our history....Some people are even prepared to blaspheme and say that Jewish religious law is racist and is reminiscent of the Nazis. Woe to the ears that hear such things! What do those people want? That our children should be ashamed of being born Jews? That we should abandon our cultural heritage?...Have we come here in order to discard our Judaism and our age-old traditions or to continue them...? Is Jewish religious law racist? Not since the blood libels levelled against our nation has such a dreadful accusation been made against us. Racism abhors foreigners and converts. Does

Jewish religious law do this? The Bible contains sufficient injunctions to treat strangers and converts well to dispel that falsehood...and religious law condemns anyone who treats converts badly....

It is true that there is an age-old ban on marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Is that racism? If it is, then maybe the revival of our ancient language is racism....Would our nation still exist were it not for that ban...? As it is, mixed marriages have taken their toll of our people, and we would number many, many more had it not been for that as well as mass slaughter....Nonetheless, the child of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father is regarded as a Jew....Is that racism? For the racists even a single drop of Jewish blood was sufficient reason to lead someone to execution....

Where is the coercion? I propose that we follow the rule...of not forcing Judaism on anyone and not forcing anyone on Judaism....It is true that if the mother is not Jewish the child is not Jewish either. But if neither parent is Jewish and a person wishes to join the Jewish people he must be converted. That is religious law....If a person is recognized as a Jew without having been converted, would not that be coercion? It constitutes forcing something on all past, present and future generations of Jews...who have lived according to certain rules and definitions of who is a Jew....

There is no coercion. If someone does not wish to convert he need not. He will not be a Jew. If he does not wish to be registered as a member of the Jewish people, that is his right. The category in his identity card can be left blank. He can be a free and equal citizen....But why should the entire Jewish nation be coerced...?

It is true that conversion should be made easy. It is not for us to judge what has gone before. There are various interpretations regarding converts. Some people made it easier for them, others did not. There have been different periods. Today we are in a special period, and it is our right to appeal from this podium to our teachers and rabbis, in the name of the nation which put us here, asking that after the unparalleled destruction of our people in the last war, and in view of the help extended by certain righteous Gentiles, who now seek to convert and become Jews, their path should be made easier, for they have saved Jewish lives....In the U.S.S.R. conditions were created whereby mixed marriages were widespread. Now those people are coming here. We beseech you to make it easy for them to join our nation.

We have the same right to ask those who wish to join the Jewish people to make things easy for us. Is conversion coercion...? It is the rule by which our forefathers have lived for thousands of years. If you wish to join us, make things easy and convert....Thirteen years ago, in a debate on the same subject, I said: "For the sake of our people and our country, for the sake of our children and the future of the nation, which is merely the surviving remnant of the generations, let us not sever the

link which is simple and great, open and mysterious, abstract and concrete, exalted and deep, which is the basis and secret of our existence, which is eternity—the link between our people and the God of our fathers." Then I was in the Opposition. Today I am honored to be part of the Government of Israel which is proposing a law stating that for Jews there is no separation between national affiliation and religion...as the expression of our nation's earliest beginnings and continued existence....

M.Z. Neria (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset Members...we have been asked why we are so agitated and why we wish to impose our will on others....We are distressed because the Court has created a new situation, which it seeks to impose upon us as part of the society which we are building together....Children who are not Jews and with whom we must not marry, according to the religious law to which most of the nation in Israel adheres rigorously, are being termed Jews, appear in public as Jews and pretend to be Jews....This constitutes an act of coercion vis-à-vis the entire public. A new situation is being imposed upon it, with disastrous implications for the possibilities of marriage, and against which it will have to protect itself....

To date there have been political parties, differences of opinion, we disagree, we quarrel, but always within the family, within the confines of the nation. The bridges are open...and all sections of the nation are glad to meet in times of rejoicing and unite in times of sorrow....Our sons and daughters marry one another...whether they are from religious or secular homes, from kibbutzim or towns....But now, with the tendency for integration between the various ethnic backgrounds, the judges have created a new ethnic background, one which will not be accepted by most of the nation, one which will be a source of troubles....

Many people fail to see what will happen. They think that, at the most, there will be some inconvenience, one or two scandals before a few youngsters get married, and suggest crossing the bridge when we get to it. But that is a very superficial approach....In order to preserve the proprieties we will have to set limits already now and prevent meetings between our children. The more non-Jewish women with non-Jewish children who come to this country and are registered as Jews, the greater the distance we will have to put between us and them, destroying social ties, building ever higher walls....This will create a deep rift within the nation, which is deeply shocking to any feeling Jew....

The late Rabbi Kook said: "Because you are our brothers, our sons, because we are not prepared to relinquish you, we come to you with demands, claims and protests." We are not prepared to relinquish you, do not you be so ready to relinquish us. To those who protest against "religious coercion" we say, every Jew is responsible for his fellow-Jew. Yesterday I needed your help, tomorrow you will need mine. Let us not burn the bridges between us.

There is something deeper here, too. We must maintain the link with all the sections of the nation, even those who deny the heritage of their fathers, because we believe that in the final event they are all Jews....With all the uproar and all the claims of coercion and so on, no one has proposed annulling circumcision....Oren Shalit was circumcised, supposedly for purposes of convenience. I do not accept that feeble argument....In his stubbornness, Shalit is not considering the convenience of his children in the future...but he was not prepared to forego that aspect of Judaism, and wanted his son to belong to the Jewish people in the customary, age-old way....

In an article published last week, former Prime Minister Ben-Gurion attacked the bill and the religious coercion involved in conversion and ritual immersion, but in referring to the need to accept the children of mixed marriages into the bosom of the Jewish people he wrote: "they are circumcised." In other words, he regards that as a *sine qua non*. I wonder by what right he finds that condition more necessary than immersion, which is a far easier undertaking....

Someone who told the Peel Commission: "The Bible is my mandate," cannot say at a later date: "Our state is based on the rule of law, not of religious law." The state's entire right to exist is based on Jewish religious law, and those who founded the state cannot turn their backs on the nation's sources....One cannot pick and choose just what one wants from the Bible, nor can one ignore the Mishna and the Talmud....

We are told that these laws are "medieval." They go a great deal further back....They have accompanied us to this day since ancient times, as Minister Begin has pointed out, and it is by virtue of them that we survived the Middle Ages and modern times...and attained our own state, not because we would have remained in the diaspora but because there would have been no one left to come here....

It should be stressed that the Supreme Court ruling is particularly hard for those who have not yet immigrated to Israel....In the diaspora this ruling destroys all the fences. The surviving remnant in the diaspora is struggling valiantly against mixed marriages, which lead to assimilation. But now the Supreme Court of the State of Israel has sanctioned such marriages and children, causing sorrow and grief in many homes in Israel, Europe and the U.S....The marvel of the survival of the Jewish people is connected directly with normative Judaism....

The strength of religion, whose origin is Divine, is that it is above man, and hence its ability to exalt him. The moment it becomes subject to man's whims...it loses its uniqueness and its value. Men have been prepared to suffer and die for those values—in order to live for them too. They give content, purpose and stability to the life of both the individual and society....

I call on people of principle in every camp to unite...against the anarchy, decay and licentiousness which are endangering everything. Any society which demands much of itself is not open to everyone. Neither a kibbutz nor a moshav accepts just anyone who wants to join....How much more so is this the case with those who seek to join this nation, the people of the God of Abraham, those who received the Law at Sinai, those who have sanctified the holy name throughout the generations....

Our laws governing conversion prove that our approach is not racist and that we are prepared to receive into our midst people from other nations. They also prove that we are confident that we can assimilate those who seek to join our religion, and immediately grant them our national affiliation....It is not generally known, but the rabbinate in Israel does not make things difficult for converts, and those difficulties which arise derive from the inefficiency of the bureaucracy rather than the hardships imposed by religious law....We should try to remedy those difficulties...but it must be made clear that Reform conversion is of no value whatsoever....

Finally, the nation which has suffered so much and remained faithful...which has seen our modern-day redemption after the agony of the Holocaust...will not forego its unique sanctity, will not sever the chain of the generations....We must all preserve the unity, uniqueness and purity of the nation....

...
N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we progressives maintain that the Jewish religion and national affiliation are one and the same, as Minister Begin has said, and we reject the claim that the Jewish religion is racist. But we also object to the imposition of hidebound religious law as secular law on the State of Israel. For us, this means that Israel is the continuation of the diaspora and not the living, developing, thriving entity with wide horizons which it aspires to be....

I have heard what Minister Begin and other Knesset Members have said about the protective barrier religious law has constituted for the survival and uniqueness of the Jewish people. That is true. But there is a time for everything....Today, is Jewish culture and Judaism threatened with assimilation in the State of Israel as it was in the diaspora...? Today, in the State of Israel, the gates are open to all Jews, whether one parent was Jewish or not, if they regard themselves as Jews....

The debate is not about the greatness or honor of Jewish religious law, nor about the uniqueness of the Jewish nation. The debate is about ossified religious law, and is made doubly difficult when a free, progressive, open country with a modern society imposes ossified religious law on its citizens....The debate is about the fact that for twenty years citizens have been fighting for their honor, freedom and conscience....

Do you know what befalls a woman who has been abandoned by her husband, or a widow whose husband has a brother aged one and has to wait twelve years until she may remarry and have a family? Is that what you call the greatness of religious law? Religious law could be adapted to fit the needs of a free, progressive, national, civilized Jewish society.

We are told that we seek to impair Jewish unity. What is being proposed here will harm Jewish unity. Ignoring a situation never helps. Can we ignore developments in our society, among the younger generation growing up in this country...? The subject is complex and difficult, yet you wish to resolve it in six hours. By what right can we take that responsibility upon ourselves? Perhaps we should appoint a committee to examine the subject....

The Bible has been termed: "The tree of life for those who adhere to it." Nowhere is it written that it imposes suffering and hardship....If the religious leaders were attuned to the needs of modern society...and had the courage to respond accordingly...we would probably not be holding this debate now. But since this is not the case, what right do we have to perpetuate outdated religious law?

What the Supreme Court has ruled is, in effect, that if people say that their child is Jewish, namely, that they want him or her to grow up and identify himself or herself as a Jew, they may do so...but that does not make that child a Jew....In order to become a Jew a person must still undergo conversion....

I would like to remind Orthodox Jewry that the debate between those who adhere to form as opposed to content, ritual as opposed to values, is not new. The prophets were concerned with that too...and there has always been an argument between those who cleave to form and ritual and those who prefer the cultural, social, progressive aspect. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah preached against the former....I regret the fact that the representatives of pioneering Zionism, which sought to build a new society in the State of Israel...are supporting this amendment....I hope and pray that those who are not courageous enough to change religious law and adapt it to the needs of a modern society, those who afflicted us with whips yesterday, will not afflict us with scorpions tomorrow. We will not support this law.

M. Avizohar (National List): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, our party group decided to give each of its members the freedom to vote as he wished on this issue. It is interesting to note that each one of us decided independently to vote against the proposed amendments. This led me to think that if the other party groups were to act similarly...the outcome of the vote would be quite different....

How has it come about that the party which has forty-nine Knesset Members, the leading party in the country, none of whose members regards himself as being governed by religious law...has succumbed to the ultimatum of a party group of twelve members? How has it aban-

doned its independent Jewish consciousness and broken its promise to the electorate to maintain the status quo...? Since when has the party group on the right adopted the hard line in the interpretation of religious law? Did you learn it from that liberal and patriot, that leader and intellectual, that man of the pen and the sword, Zeev Jabotinsky?

Jabotinsky advocated the subjective definition of national affiliation, and predicted that in a multiethnic society—such as Israel is—the children of mixed marriages would receive the father's civil status....I am not seeking to advocate the subjective definition of national affiliation. I regard the nation, first and foremost, as a historic communality of fate, and I am not among those who contend that one may join the nation as one does a club and leave it on the whim of a moment. Nor am I one of those who say that in Judaism one can separate national affiliation from religion....But the question before us now is whether we should be ruled by rabbinical law, as interpreted by the Orthodox stream....

Attempts to introduce laws of this kind in the past have failed....I fear that something has gone seriously awry in the thinking of the two major parties in this House....Is national unity merely a framework of high-echelon positions or does it have content within the nation? Does agreement between Ministers necessarily lead to agreement between those who voted for those parties? Throughout the nation one can sense the displeasure, concern and anger at the attempt to restrict the definition of Jewish national affiliation....I doubt whether the threats made by certain Ministers to leave the Government had this bill not been proposed were genuine....Past crises of this kind did not end in the submission of the majority to the minority....But even if the Mafdal had left the Government, would it not have been preferable to restrict the Government rather than to restrict the concept of Jewish national affiliation? Is not a rift in the Government better than a rift in the nation?

The rapid acquiescence by most of the members of the major parties...is not coincidental. It is the result of the absence of a clear line, of ideological impoverishment, of combinations without psychological unity...which have given rise to the great conglomerates without heart or soul, the political bodies which occupy most of this Chamber....I would also like to remind the members of the religious parties that they do not have a monopoly on Judaism...and have not been granted a mandate to decide what Jewish national affiliation is today.

The social creation which distinguishes our state constitutes a whole which is no less Jewish than the world of those who study in religious seminaries....In the Knesset we have witnessed the incorporation of sections of religious law into our modern legislation...but the Judaism of the twentieth century, and especially the Judaism of Israel, is to a great extent a rebellion against the ossification which exists within certain parts of rabbinic Judaism....That kind of Judaism is open, not

closed. It is not so suspicious and apprehensive of strangers and has no feelings of inferiority regarding them. Nor do we have that same fear of foreign women displayed by our forefathers....

Canaanism and atheism have lost their attraction....Most of us have abandoned the anti-religious feelings of the childhood phase in our intellectual development. The vast majority of the nation does not want a culture-clash...but it is precisely for that reason that we must oppose any act of coercion, such as is contained in this law....The proposed law will deprive people of their nationality and bring them into conflict with the law....Even if this bill is adopted, I am convinced that a whole process of amendments and counter-amendments will begin, and the subject will remain on our public agenda henceforth. I call on the Knesset Members of every party group to vote in accordance with their conscience and against the amendments.

...
M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, it is tragic that the Knesset and the public are preoccupied with the issue of who is a Jew at a time when Israel's situation is politically grave, despite the boastful statements made by military and political leaders....If the parties in the Government which oppose the proposed law were prepared to fight against it the way the religious ones are fighting for it...they could prevent this religious coercion, this racial coercion, which is a disgrace to those who propose it....

The bill is a clear violation of Israel's Declaration of Independence, which guarantees complete equality to all its citizens, without distinction of creed, race or sex, which guarantees freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. Israel lacks a constitution, which should separate religion from state, religion from national affiliation, and guarantee freedom of conscience. What is being decided now is something basic and constitutional....

Some people say that the law should not be described as racist, while others support the law and admit that it is racist, contending that we have no other course. The discrimination against the Arab inhabitants of Israel as regards their citizenship has led us to determine principles of racial discrimination against all non-Jews. The historiography presented here today by MK Begin is scientifically and historically unfounded. The social, economic and political conditions in regimes of class oppression are what preserved the Jewish religion, and not vice versa....

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Ma'arach): Is it because of Communism?

M. Wilner (Rakah): Under Communism the situation is quite different. In debates here the situation in the U.S.S.R. is totally distorted. There, Jews are fully incorporated into Soviet life....There are exceptions, but Soviet society is characterized by the fact that Jews there are

full and equal citizens...and may live as they please, without coercion or interference....

The bill before us proposes that...only those who are Jews in accordance with the outdated religious law of the Middle Ages will be registered as Jews. That constitutes imposing religious law on the state, repudiating freedom of conscience, depriving partners in a mixed marriage of the right to define their children's national affiliation and in effect forcing people to convert....This does not bring any honor to Israel...Forcing hundreds and thousands of people to convert constitutes the degradation of human dignity....

Naturally, I concur with those who have condemned the shocking procedures of conversion and other processes which the religious parties have imposed on Israel....The issue smacks of political and economic interests, as well as hypocrisy....Those procedures are neither moral nor humane, and in opposing them our party is expressing the will of the majority of the public....The religious parties are in the minority in Israel....Even within the Government there are parties which oppose this bill, which is against life and against the majority within Israel....We are sure that this law will disappear from public and social life in Israel in time, and that all those who have fought and will fight against it are bringing credit to Israel....

Sitting 38 of the Seventh Knesset

10 February 1970 (4 Adar 5730)

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Sh. Abramov (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I would like to state, on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal section of Gahal, that the Liberal Party has always maintained that on matters of conscience—such as religion—our members should have the freedom to vote as they please....Many people in Israel and abroad...may find it surprising that at a time when our physical existence is threatened we are preoccupied with something as abstract as “who is a Jew,” something which may perhaps be more suited for a philosophical discussion....But perhaps the issue would be better defined as “what is a Jew,” which is a seminal point for a country whose Declaration of Independence defines it as a Jewish state.

I regard it as my civic duty to praise the responsibility displayed by the Supreme Court....All its judges felt that it was inappropriate that they should decide on this issue, even taking the unprecedented step of asking the Government to release them from the task imposed upon them and suggesting that the Population Registration Law be amended by omitting the category of “national affiliation” from identity cards.

Unfortunately, the Government did not accede to the judges' request....I also feel obliged to express regret at the Rabbinat's attempt to influence the court's decision....

I do not belong to the Orthodox camp, but I think that there is a close connection between Jewish national affiliation and the Jewish religion, and any attempt to separate them contradicts the spirit of Jewish history. For many generations religion played a central part in crystallizing our national life, and has left its imprint upon it, so much so that it is inconceivable that a Jew who has converted to another religion be regarded as a member of the Jewish people....

Nonetheless, the legislature has avoided defining the term "Jew"...despite the fact that it appears in various laws....This was a wise step, allowing the definition of the term to develop naturally, so that for the purposes of the Law of Return it has been defined by the Supreme Court in accordance with its popular definition rather than that laid down by religious law, while for the purposes of the Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law it has been defined in accordance with religious law, and both instances have gained general acceptance....

To date the State of Israel has managed to preserve the unity of the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora because of the principle that Israel is ruled by law, not religious law....The Orthodox camp maintains that only by adopting religious law will the unity of the nation be preserved, but this is far from according with the reality of our day and age...and the developments of the last two centuries have changed the relations between the Jewish people and the rest of the world....Religious law has not adapted to cope with contemporary developments and problems...while various secular and scholarly approaches evolved within Judaism....These latter—the most outstanding of which is Zionism—are now adhered to by the majority of the Jewish people....Moreover, precisely in the period when the preeminence of religious law was being overthrown, Hebrew language and literature flourished and the Jewish state was established...seeming to indicate an inverse causal relationship....

Of the 13 million Jews living in the world today, 11 million live in Israel, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R....In none of those places does the majority of the nation regard religious law as the be all and end all of their lives....Nonetheless, Jewish activity is increasing throughout the free world and particularly in the U.S., where Reform Judaism is taking on more traditional forms and contents....The problem confronting the six million Jews of the U.S. is how to maintain Jewish continuity outside the framework of Orthodox religious law, while formulating meaningful Jewish content which will also have a common denominator for all sections of the Jewish people.

Consequently, those who claim that religious law has preserved the Jewish people are in error, because what was true until 200 years ago

does not apply to the circumstances of today....Religious law no longer unites the Jewish people, merely reflecting the lifestyle of a small minority....This being so, the question arises whether the State of Israel is entitled to introduce legislation based on the norms of religious law when the population affected lives outside Israel and does not accept those norms. Is this the way to enhance the unity of the Jewish people...? I believe that under present conditions the answer must be in the negative....

The changes undergone by the Jewish people in the last 200 years have not yet come to an end...and therefore previous Governments acted wisely in refraining from adopting the controversial principles of religious law, leaving the solution of the problem of religion and the state for future generations. It is precisely the rule of law which enables Orthodoxy to enhance the status of religious law by adapting it to the spirit of the time, as was done by our forefathers....There have even been some progressive shifts on certain issues by the Orthodox authorities....

The question of "who is a Jew" has arisen only since religious law ceased to govern the life of the majority of the Jewish people....There are, in fact, two definitions of a Jew: one which goes in accordance with religious law and the other which follows the popular, broader definition. Between the two there is a wide gulf, and it is regrettable that the Government has seen fit to propose that we should choose between the two....An Arab terrorist born to a Jewish mother is a full Jew, according to religious law, while a Russian born to a Jewish father and an atheist mother, and who elects to be defined as a Jew by the Soviet authorities despite the hardships this entails, will be required to undergo conversion upon reaching the shores of the country he regards as his spiritual homeland...as if the suffering he has undergone is not equivalent to a thousand conversion rituals....According to the popular definition, he is a Jew....Religious law is not concerned with the spiritual affiliation of the child of a mixed marriage, merely with his biological affiliation with his mother....The popular definition regards a person's spiritual affiliation as being the salient factor in determining whether a person belongs to the Jewish people or not....

The Orthodox definition of a Jew derives from the rabbinical tradition, not from the Bible...and the former is not held in the highest esteem by the majority of the Jewish people today....In our generation the Jewish people has experienced trials and tribulations which are unparalleled in human history....Orthodoxy's attitude to the children of mixed marriages is simply inappropriate today...yet an attempt is being made by the Mafdal to impose this approach on us today....I doubt whether this legislation will be an achievement for Orthodoxy....Most of the Knesset's legislation is political...but this law seeks the Knesset's imprimatur for something which is regarded as a moral issue....The

majority of the Knesset Members are not Orthodox, and if they vote in favor of this law they are doing so in order to avoid a Government crisis, not because they believe in the sanctity of the principle involved.... That is legitimate, but does it add to the moral weight of the law...? It will be a cause of great disappointment to the secular majority of the nation...and may well bring Orthodoxy into bad light with them.... Would it not have been better for Orthodox circles to accept the recommendation to omit the category of "national affiliation" from identity cards, and thereby avert a split within the nation...?

I fear, however, that this argument will carry no weight with the Orthodox camp, which regards it as its mission to impose religious legislation at all costs....I therefore appeal to my colleagues from the religious parties with an argument based on parliamentary, rather than moral, considerations. Till now we have all, Orthodox and secular alike, refrained from introducing legislation which upholds the principles of either religious or anti-religious views. Now, with this legislation, you have acknowledged the Knesset's authority to deal with these subjects, thereby depriving yourselves in the future of any moral justification for opposing legislation which is contrary to the principles of religious law. As you know, legislation adopted by the Knesset may be amended, annulled or even replaced. In the future there may be a different Coalition, in which case a majority may easily be found which will vote against you. You have, therefore, created a potentially dangerous precedent.

Once it is adopted, the proposed bill will give us no rest, because conversion in Israel will be the sole authority of Orthodox rabbis, of whom the Minister of the Interior, H.M. Shapira, has said: "The Chief Rabbinate does not understand that we are not living in a village in Europe. We have a state and we have problems....For thousands of years we were able to find solutions and be flexible, but now whoever wishes to interpret religious law strictly does so....The Chief Rabbinate is ruled by extreme rabbis, who also influence the rabbis of the Mafdal. With a Rabbinate like this I am sure that the problem will remain on our agenda...."

In the context of the three religious streams within Jewry today—Orthodoxy, Conservative and Reform Judaism—as well as of the proposed bill, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice whether someone who has been converted by a Reform rabbi in the U.S. will be recognized as a Jew for the purposes of the Law of Return...? I would like to conclude by saying that I am concerned for Jewish tradition. I feel that the state will not be Jewish in character unless a Jewish tradition which is appropriate for our times develops here organically. If I thought that giving a legislative imprimatur to religious law would help us in that direction I would gladly vote for it. But I am convinced that the standing of religion will be improved only in a state which is subject to the rule of law,

whereas coercion, of any kind, will impair the moral character of the Jewish state.

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset...to the best of my knowledge, this law is essentially illegal because it negates both Israel's Declaration of Independence and the basic civil rights granted by every democratic regime in the enlightened world....Does this bill ensure the freedom of conscience which the Declaration of Independence assures the citizens of Israel? Does it guarantee freedom of religion? Does it assure social equality between all Israel's citizens...?

This Government initiative derives from a conspiracy, was formulated by trickery and is brought before us through coercion. Even before the Government was formed a secret agreement was reached between the two Ministers Shapira...to bring this law before the Knesset if the courts decided to define the status quo in a way which was unfavorable to religious groups....

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: You're a liar.

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): You truly set a good example of respect for the House.

The Speaker, Z. Zimmerman: I ask the Minister of Justice to rephrase his interjection in some other way, e.g., that is not correct, that is not the truth, etc.

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: You are disseminating information which, in accordance with the Knesset constitution, must be termed untrue.

(From the floor: That's better.)

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): From your lips, sir, I take that as a compliment. When the Government's guidelines, which assured the maintenance of the status quo on matters of religion, were brought before the Knesset, they were untrue, and the confidence placed in the Government by the majority of the Knesset was given on the basis of that untruth. You members of the supposedly secular parties did not tell your voters that you intended to introduce legislation involving religious coercion in this Knesset. It was not on that basis that the electorate voted for you....Thus, this constitutes a triple breach of confidence, violating the principles of the rule of law, democracy and the mandate you have received.

The formulation of this law is based on trickery, since it purports to pertain to the Law of Return, whereas in actual fact it will affect the Population Registration Law...to which it will constitute a bad, theocratic and completely anti-democratic amendment. The Law of Return refers to the right to immigrate to Israel and receive citizenship. The Popula-

tion Registration Law refers to something completely different, the definition of national affiliation in a person's identity card....

Amending the Population Registration Law means...that in a country which defines itself as a Jewish state...you are putting certain people beyond the pale of the national affiliation which rules in this country, and thereby depriving them of their equality and their rights....You are placing them outside your camp while they are alive, just as you bury them outside the fence after their death...as was the case with so-called "foreign" soldiers of the IDF, who fell in the defense of this country. Students at religious seminaries, who did not see fit to defend this country, are buried inside the perimeter, however. Is that equality? Is that the equality promised by the Declaration of Independence?

(From the floor: Demagoguery!)

Any registration of national affiliation is discrimination. And its purpose is discriminatory....Its purpose is to make the other, the foreigner, instantly identifiable to anyone who looks at his identity card.

This law is brought before the Knesset by coercion. There is no freedom to vote on a subject which is so basic, so much a matter of conscience, so essential to our self-definition, as a nation and a country. There is no freedom to vote, no secret ballot. The entire machinery of the pressure of the ruling parties is brought to bear, and this coercion brings more in its wake....

This Knesset was elected on the basis of political parties. Its members are political functionaries, not historians, historiosophists or theologians. In this sphere they understand no more or less than anyone else in the country...and by conducting this debate they are making themselves ridiculous. This is not the place for debates and decisions of this kind. Any decision here on the historiosophic issue of who is a Jew, who is a Hebrew and who is an Israeli, what is religion, what is national affiliation and what is a nation—is ridiculous. That is why we proposed something which does not involve coercing the Orthodox in any way, namely, that the category of "national affiliation" be removed from the Population Register and identity cards....

It has been claimed here that for Jews religion and national affiliation are one and the same, but both must be recorded in the Population Register. If they are the same thing, why have two separate entries...? Throughout the course of this debate, no rational argument has been put forward to justify recording "national affiliation" in people's identity cards....The Minister of Justice and his associates...are imposing a decision on the nation and the Knesset on a subject which requires no decision, and is both irrelevant and unacceptable....

M. Sneh (Maki): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, anyone who is eager for a religious war in Israel will have my pity, but not my partnership.

The dispute between us revolves around whether the law of the land should be based on religious law, especially when this contradicts the lifestyle of the individual and the nation. First of all, the religious law under discussion in connection with the bill should not be confused with the ban on mixed marriages. The Bible expressly forbids mixed marriages, whereas this bill seeks to sanction a certain kind of mixed marriage, by accepting as Jews the children of a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man....Hence all the pathos employed by Minister Begin in accusing us of seeking to sanction mixed marriages has nothing to do with the case.

Furthermore, this ban is not eternal....Our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Moses and Solomon, and especially the last-named, do not seem to have heeded it....As a rabbinical injunction, the subject is finite, with an end just as it had a beginning....The ruling was introduced in the second century, at a time when polygamy was rife, and...sought to guarantee the rights of the children of the Jewish wives....During the Middle Ages, at a time of pillage and rape, the acceptance as Jews of the children of Jewish women served to preserve the unity of the nation and assure its future....This constituted unprecedented spiritual and moral exaltation....But today that ruling is inappropriate...driving a wedge between sections of the Jewish people.... Even within the Talmud opinions are divided, some authorities advocating acceptance of any person who identifies himself as being part of the Jewish people...others claiming that one must be more careful on this point in the diaspora than in Israel....

S. Lorincz (Aguda): You don't understand what you're quoting.

S. Tamir (Free Center): But Rabbi Lorincz, if the Knesset legislates religious law, MK Sneh will become Rabbi Moshe Sneh. You are creating this situation.

M. Sneh (Maki): I don't know why, but when one cites the sources which are so dear to you, you object.

S. Lorincz (Aguda): One has to understand what one is reading. It says there that....

M. Sneh (Maki): The difference between us is that as a Knesset Member you understand things and I do not. Are you satisfied now?

(Shouting in the Chamber.)

In ancient times our sages issued rulings in according with the needs and spirit of the times...but unfortunately that is not the case today...Minister Begin maintains that "those progressivists" seek to "humiliate and insult religious law."...But perhaps the truth is that religious law contains various—and sometimes contradictory—elements, and the progressivist finds what suits him in it, while the reactionary finds what suits him....Minister Begin would have us think

that all those who have harassed our people have adhered to the ideology of the left...I reject all those who harass our people and who assume the ideology of the left, but for the sake of historical truth...I would like to point out that not all those who were ideologically on the right have treated the Jewish people well....In citing history one should quote all the facts, not only those which suit one's argument....

I would like to tell Minister Begin that the identity between religion and national affiliation is also an historical category. There was a time when it was appropriate, but that was in the past. You say that...people should convert if they wish to join us, and you ask the rabbis to make the conversion process easier....But what if people wish to join our nation but do not have faith? Are you advocating hypocrisy...? This is coercion, by means of a secular law, on both he who converts and he who is converted....Not every Jew has faith or keeps all the commandments....I cited the rabbinical sources to show that you do not adhere to every word written there, and I do not reject every word written there....I am in favor of the continuity of Jewish tradition and its continual renovation....

I suggest that the Government refrain from acting hastily....A subject can be brought before the House for debate several times....One should know what one is doing, what the next steps will be, and one should also realize that if one wants to impose rabbinical rulings on the entire Jewish population of Israel one must enable that population to decide who the rabbis should be. You of the religious parties do not comprise more than 15 percent of the electorate. I do not want the state to interfere in religious matters, but neither do I want religion to interfere in matters of state....

I would like to conclude by suggesting that the proposal be returned to the Government....What has been done here has been done hastily, without thinking things through to the end....What you are about to do is not good....If the parties were to give their members freedom to vote as they pleased, the bill would not have a majority.

M. Nissim (Gahal): That's not correct.

M. Sneh (Maki): Well, hold a secret ballot, and then we'll see. I am sure. But the Government can and should take the bill back and review it...particularly as regards the inconsistencies between the various clauses...which I do not have time to go into now....A person will enter the country as a Jew but will not be registered as a Jew. Amazing! I therefore propose that the bill be returned to the Government for further review....

...

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, there is really no need for me to speak after the opening address by the Minister of Justice and the various other speeches which have been

made here. But I have asked for the floor for two reasons, the first egoistical—I simply wanted a share of the Minister of Justice's honor in submitting this bill, namely, of the criticism levelled at him because he believes in the need for this bill and because he is fulfilling a mission for the Government....I also wanted to take this opportunity of saying what I believe from this podium. Various interesting and important things have been said from this podium, even by those Knesset Members with whom I disagree....Above everything else in the world, for me—and, I am sure, for many, though not all, Knesset Members—is the existence of the Jewish people. For me this comes before the State of Israel and Judaism....

The second reason is because of my love of Jews as such, whether they are Orthodox or secular. I hope the Orthodox Knesset Members will forgive me if I say that one sometimes feels that your love is great, very great, but greater for Orthodox Jews. From you one can and must demand that you love Jews as such...even if they are not as you would have them be.

In almost every period in history the existence of the Jewish people has been threatened...and this reached a shocking peak at the time of the Second World War and Nazism. At every time, in almost every country, a Jew could save his life or, as in Czarist Russia, save what he regarded as his children's future career and studies, by doing one small thing, converting to Christianity. Some did this. But we are fortunate in that the vast majority of Jews, who also withstood the horrors of the Inquisition, resisted the temptation which offered them easy access to the great world and its unlimited possibilities.

None of us...has a rational explanation for the enigma of our survival. It has no parallel, under those conditions, a few against many. Yet here we are, and we exist in Israel's Knesset, in an independent state, free....As the spearhead of the nation...we cannot be complacent and say that at the present time the continued existence of the Jewish people is not in danger....It is true that it is not threatened physically at present...but there is a very serious threat of assimilation through intermarriage....This is the case in the two largest Jewish communities in the world, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S....The statistics of intermarriage in the U.S. are alarming...and although these vary between 18 percent and 25 percent—anyone can sit down with paper and pencil and calculate how long it will take for the Jewish people to disappear with an intermarriage rate of "only" 18 percent....

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazei-Ko'ah Hadash): Perhaps it'll be the other way round and we'll bring them closer, bring them here.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: This gives me no rest, as, I am sure, is the case with many of us. As someone who has visited America frequently, I used to see the occasional family which had been stricken by

disaster. What is threatening now? That it is almost no longer a disaster. Why? Not that the families are not upset, but it is so widespread, it happens to one's neighbor, one's sister, one's friends. What can one do?

I think that anyone who says that this is not the concern of the State of Israel is wrong. It may well be our primary task, after defense. And it is worth...paying any price for the State of Israel and its defense if one recognizes at the same time that it is our task to preserve the Jewish people. I know that there is no guarantee that a person will remain Jewish, and that his children and grandchildren will remain Jewish, if they are not in Israel. But until he comes, and so that we will be able to talk when he comes, he and his children must remain Jewish. I regard this as the most important thing, without which nothing else matters.

I am not an observant Jew. But no one can eradicate this from my heart and my mind: for generations, had it not been for religion, we would have been like all the other nations which existed once and have disappeared. In 1948, when I spent New Year and the Day of Atonement in the synagogue in Moscow, and on the Day of Atonement I spent the whole day there, I thought to myself: if I were to remain in the service for a long time I would go to synagogue not in order to discharge my duty as the representative of the State of Israel, but I would go to synagogue, I, Golda Meir, would have to be in synagogue, among Jews.

(From the floor: You can do it in Tel Aviv too.)

Please give me the address of the synagogue. Anyone who does not understand what it is to be in a synagogue in Moscow, does not understand the point. So when we hear about thousands of boys and girls dancing around the synagogue on the festival of the Rejoicing of the Law (Simhat Torah), I know, as you probably do, that they do not know what it is. All I think is: where in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Odessa and other places, where there is not a single Jewish club, can Jews gather as Jews? And I thought: how lucky we are that there is a synagogue and there is the Rejoicing of the Law, as a focal point around which thousands of boys and girls can gather to sing and dance, without even knowing what the festival is.

I know that we have been told from this podium that these are new times, modern times. That is true. And that we must advance. That is also true....One of yesterday's demonstrators said "We are twentieth century Jews." That is a fact which cannot be denied. And I know where the majority of the excellent youngsters who are building the Jewish state comes from. But anyone who says "we are twentieth century Jews" must be fully aware of the long thread which ties him to Jews of previous centuries....And we have to make sure that there will also be Jews in the twenty-first century.

Each one of us has his own views and conscience...and should respect those of others....We have managed, by wisdom and mutual concessions, to live together. I read somewhere that a miracle happened and

part of religious Jewry (and this cannot have been easy for them) elected to regard itself as part of the Zionist movement, together with other parts of the nation, and to help in building our country. Sections within the Labor movement opposed this, refusing to be associated with people who were bourgeois or religious. We are fortunate that a different section within the Labor movement said that we must approach the task of building our country together with the whole nation. Joining forces leads to common interests and mutual concessions. There are "heroes" who never compromise because they are alone, and have no one to compromise with. We are all fortunate in that we are part of a great nation, each one of us, and we cannot live alone. When there is one great, common objective which unites us all, we must make peace. And that is what we did. My colleagues did it. We are not ashamed of it. I am sure that the religious parties also feel that they have made compromises. I hope that they do not regret that either. And we have reached where we are, together.

One of the basic things is marriage and divorce, and the registration of Jews in Israel. It is a libel against the state, against the Jews in the state, to say that the object of the exercise is to discriminate against others, and the person who made that statement knows that....The Supreme Court judges suggested that the category of "national affiliation" be omitted....I disagree with that suggestion and do not accept it. But that's enough about the judges. Members of the Knesset, what do you propose? In Germany assimilationist Jews called themselves Germans of the Mosaic persuasion. In America there was the Council for Judaism, Americans of the Jewish faith. And probably in other countries too. Are you proposing that, in the twenty-second year of the Jewish state, we should throw away the prayer-shawls and phylacteries? Is it a mere trifle to remove "national affiliation"...thereby giving the Jewish people the impression that they are separate and we are Hebrews, Canaanites, Jebusites, I don't know what else—only not Jews? That they are Jews, but we are not.

As for Russian Jewry, there, what is written in their passports is not "religion—Jewish" but "Ebrei," meaning a person of the Jewish people, the Jewish national entity....And I am not at all sure that the dancers, the boys and girls, and perhaps their parents too, did not grow up in homes where, because of fear or assimilation, they did not hear anything about Jews. And that sign, "Ebrei," may have been the first thing they began to ask about. And I am sure that when they started explaining it to them the Jewish people was mentioned, as has been borne out by the touching letters they have written to Kosygin. What did they write? They wrote: every nation has a homeland, my nation has a homeland too, and I wish to go to my nation and my homeland....That is why we will not remove "national affiliation" from our identity cards!...

Some people cannot abide the fact that we have introduced other important amendments at the same time. That morning, when the Minister of Justice phoned me and told me about the ruling, I thought about two things: first about the fact that it could be interpreted in the diaspora as a permit from Israel for mixed marriages, and secondly, and principally, about Russian Jewry. But this also applies to the children of mixed marriages in the West who want to immigrate to Israel, as I hope they will, and here I will not have to worry about them not being Jewish.

It is true that we tried to find ways, the Government looked for ways, after what happened, of solving both problems simultaneously. The solutions are not complete. There are perfectionists among us who, if something is not complete, are not prepared to accept it. There is a certain amount of compromise here, but that enables us first of all to return to the previous situation...and, secondly, to introduce an important, much-needed amendment to the Law of Return. When mixed families came to Israel, the husband—if he was Jewish—came through an open gate, while his wife and children did not have the same status....That is now being amended....

As regards conversion—as has already been said from this podium—it has been decided that there should be a Ministerial Committee to make the conversion process simpler and faster. That is to everyone's benefit. We want the families to be in Israel. They have not come here on a visit. They should live here. The processes should be speeded up so that problems within the families are minimized. That is necessary....I can imagine that a non-Jewish woman may find conversion distasteful. I can understand that. But she has, first, married a Jewish man, and, second, gone with him to live in the Jewish state, leaving her family, her environment, her relatives, her language, her faith—if she had any—and come to live among Jews. She knew that here her children would be Jews, fulfilling all the duties of Jews. To my mind she is making a great sacrifice. She does so because of her love for her husband, and perhaps also because of her love for the Jewish people. But it is a sacrifice. Also for purely Jewish families. We see what mass immigration is coming from the West. I hope that mass immigration will yet come, freely, not because of persecution, heaven forbid. But we see what it is for a non-Jewish woman to immigrate to Israel with her Jewish husband. But when she comes here with her children, she obviously wants the welfare of her children. That goes without saying. She has to make a sacrifice. That is true....

She has to make another sacrifice. I know no normal mother who is not prepared to make any sacrifice for her children. And that woman has already done a great deal for the unity of her family, for the benefit of her family. She has to do one more thing. I am not saying that it is a simple matter for everyone....

I am completely in favor of this law. Not for the sake of the religious parties. Not in order to maintain the unity of the Government, though that is no mere trifle. I would not be ashamed if that were the reason....I see the main point of consisting of the two reasons I have given. I cannot promise that if we adopt this law intermarriage in the diaspora will stop. But it might constitute a slight discouragement. In any event, they will know that there is no permit for it from here. Secondly...it will enable this nation to continue living here together, as we did until the Supreme Court ruling...which obliged us to take action.

People have asked why we have been so hasty. I will tell you quite frankly that if the Government, or the majority of the Government, had been against the law, the question of haste would not have arisen. But if the Government supports this, and the overwhelming majority does, in order to avoid torments and crises it is better to do it quickly. What is the point of postponing it for a month or two...?

I hope that the majority in the House will adopt the proposed amendment and decide to transfer it to the constitution, Law and Justice Committee. I hope that we will have many other problems to discuss arising from the mass immigration of Jews from both the U.S.S.R. and the West.

...

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, before embarking on my reply in the debate, I would like to say something about the way I work in the Knesset, and have done since the very beginning of my career....Despite all the differences of opinion and the impossibility of finding a sensible, logical point of contact with MK Avneri, I have always listened to what he said and answered him honorably....Today MK Avneri said something here in which there is not a grain of truth—about a so-called agreement made by myself and the Minister of the Interior before the new Government was formed....That is completely untrue....I say this in the presence of the Minister of the Interior and in the knowledge that a Minister who does not speak the truth from the Knesset podium cannot retain his post.

The Minister of the Interior, H.M. Shapira: I can verify that.

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: And now, as to the subject under debate...I will be brief, partly because several of the points I wished to make have been put across in a better way by the Prime Minister and several other speakers....The Minister of Justice is not responsible for the Law of Return, the Population Registration Law, the Entry into Israel Law or the Citizenship Law. But I am a member of the Government...and for the last two years I have regarded it as my duty to deal with the subject of the bill now before you....

We always ask...what will happen when the mass immigration comes? And reply, we'll cross the bridge when we get to it. Well, we

have to start trying to cross the bridge....The amendment to the Law of Return seeks to solve a problem which has arisen in every diaspora....I know of cases where the child of a Russian-Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother has—for whatever reason—been brought up as a non-Jew, yet as an adult has regarded himself as a Jew....I think that that person is not a Jew, but I think that if he wants to immigrate to Israel—if they let him go, and I know that he wants to go, and wants to come and live here—I want him to come here by right, in accordance with the Law of Return, and to have citizenship. Of course, he will not be registered as a Jew in his identity card because he is not yet a Jew....

It has been claimed that the amendment, which defines a Jew, for the purposes of the Law of Return, as “a person who was born to a Jewish mother or has converted, and does not belong to another faith,” is identical with the directives issued by the Minister of the Interior in January 1960. That is true, but not entirely true, because there it said “and has converted in accordance with religious law.”...The reasoning is simple. There are many Jewish communities...and we do not intend to limit the conversion process to any particular stream within Judaism....Anyone who comes with a certificate of conversion from any Jewish community, provided he is not a member of another faith, will be accepted as a Jew. This means...that he will have all the rights bestowed by the Law of Return, will be registered as a Jew, and will be married as a Jew...in accordance with the Marriage and Divorce Law, to which all our Ministers have agreed.

Some speakers accused us of seeking to interfere, God forbid, in the conversion process, which is the sole domain of the rabbis....Nothing could be further from the truth. We have no desire to intervene in the rabbis' authority. But we are the Government of Israel and are responsible for what happens in the State of Israel, and are very interested in having the conversion process made as efficient and convenient as possible. The Government of Israel is entitled to ask of the rabbis what the head of the Slotzk community was entitled to ask of the rabbis of Slotzk, and perhaps a bit more than that....After all, Rabbi Neria himself admitted that there are imperfections in the conversion process, and other members of the Orthodox establishment have said that the process could be made easier....

MK Eliad asked why we have to introduce legislation which will apply to the entire Jewish people when we in Israel are only a minority of it. There is nothing in this law that concerns Jews living outside Israel...though, of course, anything done here has some effect on world Jewry, because this is, at the very least, its spiritual center....

A certain Arab terrorist was mentioned again, as was the question of why the children of a Jewish mother are recognized as Jews but not those of a Jewish father....In most parts of the world, among most nations, both the mother and the father belong to the same nation. We say:

no. We go one step further. We say that it is enough for only one parent to be Jewish for the child to be a Jew. Then people ask: why not the father? Just imagine, in our society, if it would have been the other way round, there would have been an outcry about equal rights for women.

I know of boys whose mother and father are Jewish, who have not converted and who serve the PLO no less than any Arab terrorist. By doing so have they ceased to be Jews? During the War of Independence people who were not associated with the Jewish people came, merely because of their love or sympathy for us...and fought alongside us....Did this make them Jews?...

There are people who become incensed when they hear the words “religious law.” I admit that I am not among them....In my present concern with civil law I often have cause to study Jewish law, with the help of my learned and expert aides, to see if there is anything there which is appropriate for our life. Not long ago I brought a bill of this kind before the House. I do not know how many other peoples and nations have an ancient set of laws which is so subtle and interesting, despite its antiquity....

I would like to tell MK Sneh that one does not need to make a tremendous effort to explain to a forum like the Knesset that there have been changes in Jewish history with regard to what is now known as religious law. But why does one have to pick a bad example? With regard to the example of King Solomon, let us all take a look at what the Bible says: “But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites. Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” So, what have you proved?

J. Hazan (Ma'arach): But he had a thousand wives!

The Minister of Justice, J.S. Shapira: Anyone who envies those thousand wives, I wish it upon him....The only Knesset Member who has published something on the question of national consciousness, and has tried to apply this to the Jewish people, is MK Sneh. His book, *Conclusions on the National Question in the Light of Marxism-Leninism*, quotes extensively from such Marxist luminaries as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Meir Wilner....He writes that any reference to the Jewish people as being “international and extraterritorial is sheer nonsense. To refer to the entire Jewish nation today as being one nation is a bitter mockery of reality, truth and common sense.” I will not read any

more, but that is the conception....I would not be citing this had MK Sneh not preached at the members of Aguda as regards their attitude to Zionism or Jewish nationalism before the Second World War....

And so, on the whole, we are a small, scattered, divided nation, and are truly glad whenever anyone joins us. We rejoiced when the Aguda joined in our demand for the establishment of a Jewish state....I am very glad that Dr. Sneh would not write today what he wrote then, but I object to his preaching at people because of their attitude before the Second World War, while his book was written in 1954, i.e., a year and a half after Stalin's death and a year and a half before it transpired that Stalin had not been such a light unto the nations....

Various speakers proposed omitting the category of "national affiliation," many of them basing their argument, I do not know why, on Soviet Jewry. I do not wish to dwell at length on this painful subject, but I will permit myself to tell the Knesset about my last conversation with Zubakhnin, before he left. He tried to persuade me, as well as the other Ministers, to stop nagging them about Russian Jewry. Because the relations between us were cordial, he called me Jacob Davidovitch and I called him Dimitri Stefanovitch, and then he said to me: You are a jurist. How can you fail to understand...that you are the Israeli nation while the Jews in the U.S.S.R. belong to the Soviet nation? There is no connection between the two nations. I replied: In logical terms you are right, but there is a technical aspect which I find hard to understand....My parents had a son and three daughters. The son—myself—and two of my sisters live in Tel Aviv, while our eldest sister lives in Moscow. How could the same parents produce three children who belong to one nation and one child who belongs to another? To that he replied: Those are legal niceties.

I propose that the bill be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

...

The Vote

Those in favor	69
Those against	15
Abstentions	23

(The proposal to transfer the Law of Return [Amendment No. 2], 5730-1970 to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is adopted.)

...

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Independent Liberals have abstained on the vote...because of the Coalitionary constraints imposed on us and the need to maintain national unity at a time when we are fighting for our survival. My party

group opposes this law, regarding affiliation with the Jewish nation as being something which cannot be defined by law. National affiliation is a constant, wonderful and crucial fact of life which has nothing to do with identity cards deriving from British Emergency Regulations legislation.

We do not agree with the definition laid down by religious law which, to our regret, has not moved with the times and is not accepted by the majority of the nation. The distinguishing characteristics of national affiliation are not a subject for legislation, and this Knesset has no mandate or moral authority to decide on this matter of principle and ideology. The Coalition does not have the authority to change the status quo....We acknowledge the historic role played by the Jewish religion in preserving the existence and unity of the Jewish people. But the criteria of Orthodoxy are inappropriate for today's reality. We do not ignore the positive aspect of extending the application of the Law of Return to the spouse and children of a Jew, and note with satisfaction that conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis are included within the terms of the law, but this will apply only to conversions undertaken abroad. In the Committee we will propose that this condition be extended to persons seeking conversion in Israel. We will also propose that Jewish affiliation will derive from the father as well as from the mother.

To our regret, even if those changes are adopted, the law will still be imperfect. The registering clerk is entitled to examine a person's origin. Immigrants may enter the country as Jews and be regarded as non-Jews once here....The decision to institutionalize the Orthodox definition of a Jew is a mistake....Israel is a country ruled by law, not religious law. This will not guarantee the unity of the nation, but will heighten divisions and discord. We were therefore unable to vote for it.

M. Porush (Aguda): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, there is no doubt that we appreciate the good will, efforts and understanding displayed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice in bringing this law before the Knesset....But in view of the Minister of Justice's explanation...that the law will recognize any conversion and that the qualifying condition "conversion in accordance with religious law" will be omitted from the amended law, my party group cannot vote for it. The recognition of Conservative and Reform conversions goes against the very foundations of religious law and is a very grave matter....

We should really have voted against this bill, but we abstained and my party group will fight to have the matter set right in the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. If we do not succeed in this, we will obviously vote against this bill at the second and third readings....With regard to the Prime Minister's impassioned speech about her concern at the increase in mixed marriages, if that is really the case, how has she allowed this travesty of our religious law to be included in the bill before us...?

Break-up of the National Unity Government

Introduction

The War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel intensified and escalated during the winter of 1969/70. In order to deter Egypt from further attacks across the Suez Canal, Israel undertook raids against strategic objectives deep inside Egypt. Egypt's air defense proved inadequate. In a desperate move, President Nasser went to Moscow to ask the U.S.S.R. not only for more Soviet ground-to-air SAM missiles and Mig fighter planes, but also for Soviet crews to man them during an interim period, until such time as Egyptian crews were adequately trained. Unless he obtained these, Nasser declared, he would have no choice but to resign, telling his people and the entire Third World that the U.S.S.R. was an unreliable ally. Taking an unprecedented step, the Supreme Soviet acceded to the request, and soon Israeli pilots were confronted on the ground and in the air, for the first and to date only time, with Soviet fighting personnel. In one—at the time unpublicized—instance, they downed a number of Soviet-piloted MiG aircraft. Concerned at the escalation and the concomitant risk of a Big Power confrontation, the U.S. Government stepped up its efforts to halt the fighting and bring about a peaceful settlement, leaning heavily on Israel in the process.

On 19 June 1970, Secretary of State William Rogers formally approached the Governments of Israel, Jordan, Syria and the United Arab Republic (still Egypt's official name, although the union with Syria had broken down long before) with a three-point proposal: the appointment of representatives to confer through Ambassador Jarring on the establishment of a just and lasting peace, indication of their acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967, and observation of a ceasefire for at least ninety days. Whilst Syria remained intransigent, President Nasser accepted. His War of Attrition and siege strategy had failed. He had not been able to persuade the U.S. to impose an arms embargo on Israel while arms from the U.S.S.R. continued to flow to the Arab countries. For Israel the acceptance of the American initiative was difficult, involving a compromise of the principles which had been adhered to till then. The proposed negotiations would be indirect, at least initially, the ceasefire would be temporary, and any prolongation might have to be bought through additional concessions.

However, the majority of the Cabinet found it urgently necessary to start a dialogue, and not less important to preserve a U.S. commitment to maintain Israel's strength and deter external, i.e., Soviet, intervention. On August 4 the Israel Government accepted the Rogers initiative.

The implication that thereby Israel accepted the principle of withdrawal, albeit partial, from occupied territories, without any evident return, brought about the breakup of the National Unity Government. Menachem Begin, leader of the center-right Gahal list, led his six Ministers out of the Coalition. The National Unity Government had been in existence, in various forms, for just over three years, since just before the Six Day War. It had been the first time that Mr. Begin had held a share of power.

Sitting 101 of the Seventh Knesset

12 August 1970 (10 Av 5730)

...

The Speaker, R. Barkat: Knesset members, we now proceed to item 31 on the agenda: the Government's announcement of the resignation of Ministers, under Clause 40 (A) (4) of the Basic Law: the Government....In accordance with article 50 of the Procedural Code I now give the floor to the resigning Ministers....

M. Begin (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, let us look not only at where we stand, but primarily at where we are going. Look and see, Knesset Members of every party group, what happens when a nation conceived in resistance to servitude and born in the conquest of freedom takes the first step of retreat towards submission.

A week ago the Prime Minister made an important political statement in the Knesset. A debate was held. I participated in it. I claimed that the Jarring document...regarding talks and a settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242 between Egypt, Jordan and Israel...had been prepared by the Americans in consultation with the Russians and the Egyptians, and that we would be obliged to sign it but would be unable to change a single word of it. In his reply, the Foreign Minister claimed that there was no proof to substantiate my contention. Today that fact is clear to all. The Prime Minister claimed that I had misquoted the document, and that it referred to..."agreed, secure and recognized borders, to be determined in a peace agreement." It has since transpired that the version I cited was the one adopted by the U.N....

I do not think that anything like this has ever happened in international relations. The wording of the document was hammered out...the Government discussed it and the Knesset approved it...and then the U.N. intermediary announces that it is not the Israeli document which will constitute the basis of his renewed mission but one determined for Israel by the Americans, the Russians and the Egyptians....

Washington's claim that Israel signed the document is false....It is true that Nasser and Hussein signed it, but we did not. We refused to sign it. We prepared another document. Nevertheless, on behalf of the Government of Israel, Dr. Jarring informed the U.N. Secretary-General...that that would be the basis of Dr. Jarring's mission.

The Prime Minister's statement of last week is extremely grave as far as we are concerned. It contained an explicit undertaking to repartition the western Land of Israel and give most of Judea and Samaria to Hussein. That decision is the reason for our resignation. Who would have conceived that I and my erstwhile colleagues would discuss how to partition the Land of Israel...? There is nothing graver than that statement as far as we are concerned. But what has happened...to the Government of Israel and the Jewish state? How have we become pawns in the hands of others? I remember that when the four Powers met for the first time the Government issued a statement—which I had the honor of helping to compose—saying, amongst other things: "Israel will not be an object of Power politics or inter-Power politics." That important phrase aroused respect throughout the world....

Today we are an object of Power or inter-Power politics. We are not even asked or consulted. We are given a document to sign. The Government refuses, amends it, adds its reservations, but then the original document serves as the basis....This constitutes deception by Washington and by "Government circles" in Israel....The Egyptians maintain that they have received an assurance from the U.S. that Israel will withdraw to the borders of June 4, but Israel claims that this is not the case because it is not American policy....Our nation is entitled to know the truth, however. America says: basically the borders of June 4, with minor adjustments. That is what America told us in December 1969, and it is repeating that now....What is that if not misleading the public...?

I. Ben-Aharon (Ma'arach): Has all that happened since you resigned, sir?

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): They have been misleading the public for three years.

I. Ben-Aharon (Ma'arach): You were in the Government for three years.

M. Begin (Gahal): ...What I am saying is true, and it was said on more than one occasion during the three years....After the document was signed the Foreign Ministry said that Dr. Jarring had omitted the sentence which had appeared in the Prime Minister's statement. What a strange thing to say. Are you accusing Dr. Jarring of falsifying an official document...? He did not omit anything. He consulted the Americans and the Russians, who told him to go ahead because the Govern-

ment of Israel had accepted the Rogers initiative...which includes the Jarring document....

Is there anything more serious as regards the question of where we are going? And what good will it do if the Prime Minister repeats her statement of last week...if the U.N. has a document in Israel's name which endorses what was dictated to us...? And, as everyone knows, until the Government of Israel announces the cancellation of its signature on the Jarring document, no one will take any notice of our reservations....

In view of these grave developments various people appeal to us to encourage the nation instead of worrying it. What wouldn't we do to encourage the nation if we could? When have we not encouraged the nation? Members from every party group who have been in this House for some time remember the era of Bevin, the siege, the expulsion of the refugees to Germany, the rule of an empire which placed 130,000 soldiers and policemen here in order to repress us and establish a Palestinian state. At that time we constantly encouraged the nation, imbuing it with the faith that we would be redeemed, fight and emerge from bondage to freedom. We will encourage the nation today too. We still believe that we have a good chance of emerging from the trap into which we have been led. But I refuse to encourage the nation by means of L.S.D. For although this might encourage the nation for a short while, once it awakes the nation will ask: where are we going?

On Saturday morning the nation was informed that there might be a chance of peace. I disagree with that. I speak with as much responsibility as anyone in Israel can when I inform the Knesset and the nation, after all that we have undergone in the generation of the Holocaust and our national revival, that we are going towards neither peace nor security. What we have before us in the foreseeable future is either a settlement with war or war without a settlement....

Nobody is offering us a peace agreement. We are being offered a peaceful settlement. What will be its basis? Our enemies say, June 4. The Russians and the French say June 4. And the Americans say, basically June 4, with minor adjustments....We will soon be required to submit a map in reply to theirs. We all know what map that will be. We heard about it on television from the Minister of Defense. It will be based on the Ma'arach's unwritten guidelines. It will be a map of enclaves: In the south—Sharm el-Sheikh and north to Eilat. Our Army will be stationed on the River Jordan. From across the Jordan Hussein will leapfrog into Judea and Samaria. Gaza will be ours....And we have already been told that that map of enclaves may be subject to changes....And when that map is submitted, it will be called "expansionist" and "annexationist" by the Arabs and everyone else....

The Secretary-General of the Labor Party has said that we must insist on the map based on the Ma'arach's unwritten guidelines, and if

our demands are not met we will walk out of the negotiations....Will we walk out on the U.S.? Will we clash head-on with the U.S...and the rest of the world? But if we do not insist on our map we will decline still further. In other words, there is every possibility of reaching a settlement which will lead to war. Everyone in Israel knows that. If we approach the borders of June 4 constant and increasing bloodshed is inevitable... as is an all-out war for our survival. But what will happen if there is no settlement...?

If there is no settlement there will be war. Nasser has proclaimed that if no settlement—as he understands the term—is reached within the next 90 days...he will renew the firing and there will be war....Thus, it is perfectly clear to me that what we are heading towards is neither war nor security, but either a settlement with war or war without a settlement.

If the western Land of Israel is divided in accordance with any plan...heaven forbid, almost all the towns and inhabitants of Israel will be endangered. It is evident to us all that even if our Army is stationed along the River Jordan, Hussein will enter Judea and Samaria, not with his soldiers but with his policemen, and the PLO will come in his wake. That goes without saying. Hussein has already announced that he will not impose the ceasefire on the PLO...and that it may shoot Jews even when there is a ceasefire....If he says that today, imagine what will happen when he gets to Judea and Samaria. Whether he wants to stop the PLO or not, whether he will be able to do so or not, the PLO will be in Judea and Samaria. And what will happen then? The PLO has katyushas of various kinds with ranges of between six and sixteen miles.

It is with the gravest forebodings that I feel it my duty to tell the Knesset and the entire nation that if, God forbid, the PLO should be in any part of Judea and Samaria, the following towns and cities will come within the range of the PLO's rockets: Jerusalem, Beersheba, Afula, Pardes Hannah, Hadera, Netanya, Herzliya, Kfar Saba, Hod Hasharon, Rosh Ha'ayin, Petah Tikva, Bnei Brak, Ramat Gan, Givatayim, Rishon Letzion, Rehovoth and Tel Aviv....

H. Grossman (Ma'arach): Some places are within the range of a bazooka shell.

M. Begin (Gahal): My sister-in-arms, Haya Grossman, do you want to tell me that you have forgotten that Beisan is within range of the katyushas, or Kiryat Shmona, or Gesher? I am trying to explain that, in addition to those, all the towns of the Land of Israel which are inhabited by women, men and children will be within the range of the rockets. Why do you have to interrupt me at this moment?

A. Ofer (Ma'arach): But there's always some border....

M. Begin (Gahal): MK Ofer, do you think that by that interjection you will silence me? What injustice have I done you, my teachers and leaders, my opponents of the Ma'arach, by explaining the incontrovertible facts to you? For I have them from the most reliable sources....What would we do? First we would return fire. That could be the cruellest and bloodiest war in the history of mankind. Our towns could become heaps of ruins, heaven forbid. The same applies to the towns of Judea and Samaria, which are populated by Arabs. We do not want that. We have never wanted that....

I am not speaking of events which might happen in theory. I am speaking on the basis of experience. There is nothing to stop them attacking Kiryat Shmona and Beisan. What will stop the PLO from attacking our towns? On the contrary, they will be encouraged by the Arab countries, which have all said that the PLO is entitled to attack us today, when there is a ceasefire....That is the danger confronting us from any partition of the western Land of Israel....This may not have been the situation six months ago. But then the katyushas with a range of sixteen miles were not here. Today they are in the hands of our foes, and of the PLO.

In the light of this danger, I appeal to the Prime Minister...to inform the House as to what is happening regarding the undertaking given by the Egyptians to freeze the situation on the other side of the Suez Canal in the area of the 50th kilometer. I have certain information on this subject, but in the national interest I prefer not to bring it before the House and the public. Nonetheless, I have good reason to ask the Prime Minister to address the House on this subject....

In view of the dreadful danger which would threaten us if, God forbid, Judea and Samaria were to be in foreign hands, we have been asked what we propose doing...? Our first obligation today is to tell U.S. Jewry the truth about the dangers arising from the Rogers plan and initiative, and ask it to send a delegation to President Nixon to seek his intervention, reminding him of the statement made by his predecessor, President Johnson: "It is natural that American Jews should feel that they have a special interest in the fate of Israel. Your fathers and grandfathers kept their Jewish identity and their connections with the Land of Israel." We should also point out to the U.S. President that Russia is seeking to impose a solution on the Middle East, with the cooperation of the U.S., in its own best interests and at Israel's expense....We must remind him that in this generation six million Jews perished, and the U.S. did not save a single one of them. Now the surviving remnant of the Jewish people is in danger, because of the katyushas, and he is prepared to reach an agreement with the Russians in order to push Israel back to the borders of June 4 with minor modifications....We must appeal to the U.S. President not to act thus unjustly towards the Jewish peo-

ple, whose blood has been spilled like water throughout the generations, and especially in this one.

U.S. Jewry must take to the streets. That will be to its credit. It did not do that in the 1940s. And it knows that it failed then. By doing this it will prove its concern for Israel's future and security....Our experience of 1969...when the Government of Israel, backed by world Jewry, foiled the Rogers initiative, has proved that there is a chance of escaping from the trap....

I would like to ask my colleagues in the House who represent Orthodox Jewry...how they have remained silent when a week ago it was decided that the Land of Israel should be partitioned and part of it given to foreigners and enemies? The Land of Israel is part of our eternal faith. Every inch of it is sacred to us and makes us sacred. How can you remain silent?

Finally, I would like to read out a dialogue which took place on 22 September 1968.

Question: "When Jews prayed 'Next year in Jerusalem,' they were referring to the entire Land of Israel, not only Jerusalem. On the day of Jerusalem's liberation, when you swore at the Western Wall, 'We will never leave you,' were you referring to more than just Jerusalem too?"

Answer: "Yes, to more than just Jerusalem."

And then came the following words: "We have returned to the mountains, to the cradle of our nation's history, to the heritage of our fathers, the land of the Judges and David's kingdom, we have returned to Hebron and Shechem, to Bethlehem and Anatot, to Jericho and the Jordan passes. I cannot conceive that we will leave them."

The redoubted Mrs. Geula Cohen asked and my good friend, the Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, answered. I will only add: I cannot conceive that we will leave them. In the name of our eternal right, in the name of the lives of men, women and children in Israel, whose very existence and lives will be in danger if we leave those places, I fully believe, despite what has happened, that we will not leave them.

Advance of Egyptian Missiles Towards the Suez Canal

Introduction

The events of the first few days after the ceasefire-standstill agreement came into effect on 7 August 1970 seemed to bear out Mr. Begin's premonitions. Under its terms both sides undertook, inter alia, "to refrain from changing the military status quo within zones extending 50 kilometers to the east and west of the ceasefire lines," and, specifically, from introducing or constructing any new military installations in these zones. However, obviously with Soviet connivance, Egypt took advantage of the first hours of the ceasefire to establish a complete system of anti-aircraft missiles along the Suez Canal, something it had been unable to do during the preceding weeks and months. Three years later, in the first crucial hours of the Yom Kippur War, those missiles were to play an important role in facilitating the crossing of the Canal by Egyptian forces. For a while the U.S. denied the facts, and a public debate ensued between the U.S. and Israel. However, the evidence proved too clear to be ignored.

Sitting 102 of the Seventh Knesset

13 August 1970 (11 Av 5730)

...

B. Halevy (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on Saturday night we were told that there was a ceasefire on the Egyptian front, and that it would take effect at midnight that night....Within less than a day or two...we heard that the Egyptians and the Russians had violated the ceasefire in the gravest possible way, on just that delicate subject on which all our fears were based...on the subject of the missiles, whose position along the Canal ceasefire line is crucial for our control of the skies and our strength on the ground. Using surprise and stealth and exploiting the fact that Israel had adhered to its commitment to cease the heavy bombardments on that strip, the object of which had been to prevent just such a move, the Egyptians and Russians entered the most

tary detail than has appeared in the press—in such a dangerous position that those rockets can reach beyond the eastern side of the Canal.

Naturally, there is no need to describe the consequences here. Anyone can tell what it means in military terms if the acts of hostility and warfare are renewed. These things were done not only by stealth and cunning but also brazenly, for it was obvious that each side would discover any violation of the ceasefire by the other....

In legal terms, there are two ceasefires, one which has been in effect since 10 June 1967, and which was proposed by the U.N. and served to put an end to the fighting but comprised no commitments as regards military installations and equipment....It is the Egyptians, not Israel, who have constantly violated that ceasefire, waging what is known as the "War of Attrition" against us for the last year and a half....The second ceasefire, which was proposed to Egypt and Israel by the U.S., contains detailed restrictions on each side, one of them being the undertaking not to place missile bases within five miles of the Canal....

Naturally, Israel insisted on that condition from the outset throughout the negotiations with the U.S. Our fears were allayed by the U.S.'s assurances that it had received the undertaking of the other side—whether the Egyptians or the Russians—to maintain the standstill ceasefire. But it was just that condition, the most important one, which they violated immediately, under cover of night and by virtue of the cessation of our activities....In defense terms it is patently clear what the outcome of this could be....

The U.S. initiated this agreement, and is responsible to us for the implementation of the clauses of the ceasefire....The U.S. informed us that it had received assurances from the Egyptians and the Russians that the ceasefire would be observed....We learned today that four days after we informed the U.S. of that grave violation it is still examining the facts and the reliability of the information we submitted to it. It has generally had very good experience with the reliability of our information...and there is no reason to believe that this will not be the case now too....But it is to be feared that for political reasons the U.S. will hesitate to do something, and will therefore evade its responsibility on one pretext or another....If this is indeed the case, it will harm its own position as well as our security interests....That, in fact, is the game the U.S.S.R. is playing—to wait and see what the U.S. will do.

In accordance with international law, the U.S. and we are entitled to demand the removal of those missiles from their new positions after the ceasefire...We must make this demand on the U.S., which has an agreement with Egypt parallel to the one with us. We are fully within

ones of this kind, seizing something and then something else, and waiting to see if the other side reacts or not....And we certainly have the right to delay the Rogers initiative and the Jarring talks, of which the ceasefire is a part, until this matter is settled to our satisfaction....

It is also our right under international law to renew hostilities in view of the grave violation of the ceasefire by the other side....Naturally, the Government and the Minister of Defense must consider the advantages and disadvantages of each step very carefully. But I want to warn against one thing in particular: not only must we not pass over this matter in silence—and we have not—on no account must we accept it. If we tolerate this open and disgraceful violation at the beginning of the ceasefire, similar violations will follow, and the entire structure of the agreement between us and the U.S., and between the U.S. and the other side, will collapse and work solely to our detriment....We must therefore, ensure that those missiles are moved back and the former situation restored.

...

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I submitted motion for the agenda on this subject primarily in order to enable the Government to confirm or deny the actual fact, because the parliament cannot be nourished on items from the press. If the information is correct, and Egypt placed SAM2 and SAM3 missiles along the Canal as soon as the ceasefire came into effect, this is a very serious development. It is not only a breach of faith, it is also preparation for aggression, because it is intended to deprive Israel of its aerial defense should there be an Egyptian artillery attack on the ceasefire lines. It also casts a shadow over the intentions of the other side in the peace talks....

I would like the Minister of Defense to tell us whether it is just his personal impression or whether there is any basis for regarding the terms "ceasefire" and "standstill" as being linked, for that is what allayed the public's apprehensions about a temporary ceasefire lasting only three months, the principal fear being that it would be used to gain an advantage over us....The lack of response by the U.S. to the breach of the ceasefire by the Egyptians is also worrying....This tends to bear out what I have said in the past from this podium, namely, that it is difficult to tell what the U.S. values more at present—support for Israel or talk with the Egyptian-Soviet front.

I am not saying that Israel should not consider what is happening in the world at large, the balance of forces and the positions of the Powers but in the final event our attitude must be an independent one, based on

view our response should be firm and assertive, intended to put an end to the violation, and at least to create the political-international and security-regional conditions which will prevent the other side from using deceit to violate the ceasefire again....Israel's reaction must be independent, considered and firm, because the whole issue of the violation of the ceasefire is merely part of the overall problem of talks in preparation for peace....

Together with the news about the missiles, we have all read and heard what Egypt's Minister of National Guidance, Mohammed Hasnan Heikal, has said, namely, that Egypt will never be prepared to sit down at the negotiating table with Israel or sign a peace treaty with us. This shows, once again, that the path is still strewn with obstacles, and we must not foster illusions among the general public that peace is just around the corner....On the other hand, neither must we foster panic or discouragement. We must be firm in adhering to our aim—a peace agreement; an agreement, not a dictate; peace, and no substitute. We know that the path will not be easy, but we must persevere in striving for our aim....

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, last night...the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which represents the Knesset in matters of this kind...met at the Prime Minister's initiative and heard a report on this subject....Thus, the House was apprised of the matter by the Government, through the appropriate representatives...and I have come here today to reply to the motions for the agenda.

I would first like to read out the ceasefire agreement between us and Egypt...:

A. Israel and the U.A.R. will observe the ceasefire, which will go into effect at 22:00 G.M.T., Friday, August 7.

B. Both sides will stop all incursions and all firing, on the ground and in the air, across the ceasefire line.

C. Both sides will refrain from changing the military status quo within zones extending 50 kilometers to the east and the west of the ceasefire line. Neither side will introduce or construct any new military installations in these zones. Activities within the zones will be limited to the maintenance of existing installations at their present sites and positions and to the rotation and supply of forces presently within the zones.

D. For purposes of verifying observance of the ceasefire, each side will rely on its own national means, including reconnaissance aircraft, which will be free to operate without interference up to 10 kilometers from the ceasefire line on its own side of that line.

E. Each side may avail itself as appropriate of all U.N. machinery in reporting alleged violations to each other of the ceasefire and of the military standstill.

F. Both sides will abide by the Geneva Convention of 1949 pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war and will accept the assistance of the I.C.R.C. (International Committee of the Red Cross) in carrying out their obligations under that convention."

That, then, is the agreement, which was initiated and mediated by the U.S. Government. First we were given a draft. We made our comments, and then received this version, to which, we were informed, Egypt had agreed. That was the part played by the representatives of the U.S. Government in reaching this agreement. We did not speak directly to the Egyptian representatives, but the procedure was as I have just described it....Section C, which is of central importance, refers to the standstill. On the first night of the ceasefire and subsequently the ceasefire was violated with regard to the standstill by bringing the missiles forward on the western, Egyptian, side of the Canal....This deployment is of military significance....We cannot and must not ignore the fact that...the entire agreement is of great importance within the framework of the American peace initiative....

Thus, the three points I wish to stress here on behalf of the Government are: that the violation is significant, that the clause which was violated is significant, and that this agreement is significant within the framework of the U.S. peace initiative.

When we learned of this violation we appealed to the U.S. We will also act on the basis of clause E about submitting a complaint to the U.N. But first and foremost we informed the U.S. Government of the facts, of the violation, and demanded that it act to restore the previous situation....That is where we stand at present, and the subject is currently being discussed by the U.S. and us....

The subject is at present before the Government of Israel for discussion...though this is no substitute for our appeal to the U.S., which we regard as an interested party and the patron of the agreement. In initiating the agreement, the U.S. Government assured us that it was acceptable to the U.S.S.R., which has no small part in the Egyptian ground-to-air missile systems....

I would like to propose that the Knesset transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, because despite the fact that the subject has already been discussed by the Committee...questions have been raised here as to how Israel should react in military and other terms, and I am sure that everyone here understands that this is not the appropriate forum for those considerations....

The Vote

Those in favor	49
Those against	2
Abstentions	6

(The proposal to transfer the motion to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

Expanding and Intensifying Jewish Education in the Diaspora

Introduction

The state of education in Israel is reviewed annually within the framework of the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, Jewish education in the diaspora, which evidently is not a Government responsibility, was discussed for the first time in 1971, at the initiative of a private Knesset Member. Israel's role was emphasized in the title and content of the debate, though at the same time discrepancies between different "world-views" were brought out.

Sitting 104 of the Seventh Knesset

1 February 1971 (6 Shevat 5731)

I. Coren (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the Knesset's decision of December 2 to hold a debate in the plenum on Jewish education in the diaspora proves how serious and crucial this subject is in the life of the nation....The fact is that a million Jewish children of school age in the free world are not receiving a Jewish education, while ignorance and the neglect of Jewish values are spreading....The very existence of the Jewish people throughout its dispersion, and particularly among the younger generation, is in danger....

Let it suffice to remind ourselves of the fact that in the largest concentration of Jews in the diaspora, the U.S., recent studies have shown that almost 70 percent of Jewish children of school age receive no Jewish education, and more than half of the remaining 30 percent—those who do receive some Jewish education—get only one or two hours a week. Only 15 percent of the children receive six hours of Jewish instruction a week....If we remind ourselves that there is an all-out general assault on the children from the wider culture...it will be clear that the younger generation of Jews is at a clear disadvantage.

It should also be remembered that U.S. Jewry, which numbers six million persons, suffers from a tremendous dearth of teachers of Jewish subjects....Talented young people seek other ways of fitting into the advanced economy, and the manpower needed to prepare new cadres of teachers is missing....The situation is very bad...and borders on a national disaster. The situation in other diaspora centers is very similar....

The fact is that our nation, which is known as the people of the book and of education, is facing complete failure in the free and open society, and is unable to withstand the waves of assimilation and alienation which are sweeping away the best of our youngsters in the diaspora. The small minority which continues the heritage of its parents and absorbs Jewish values cannot conceal the grave situation of most of the younger generation in the diaspora. The terrible blow which our nation suffered in the 1940s, during the Holocaust, namely, the annihilation of East European Jewry and the destruction of other Jewish centers, led to the shift of the center of diaspora Jewry from Eastern Europe to the U.S.

Those changes have accounted for the weakening of Jewish national resistance to the waves of assimilation and alienation. U.S. Jewry is unable to take it upon itself to educate the younger generation in the diaspora and create the conditions for providing a Jewish way of life and Jewish education for a child who identifies with the Jewish people.

In the free world there has been another serious tragedy. The family, which once played an important part in educating the younger generation for Jewish national values, has been emptied of all content. It is with regret that I must say that not even most of the Zionists in the diaspora...have managed to maintain homes imbued with Jewish values....We are greatly influenced by the material aid and deep-seated support of large sections of the Jewish nation in the diaspora for the State of Israel, and this aid is essential for us....But the fact cannot be obscured that a younger generation is growing up, most of which is moving away from us as regards both the state and Jewish tradition....The question we must ask is, where is the younger generation of the diaspora heading?

The second major event in our lives is, without a doubt, the establishment of the State of Israel. From the very outset, the state led to an awakening among the Jews of the diaspora. The Jewish state must now reassess its position and responsibility vis-à-vis the nation.

The Zionist Organization, which is directly involved in the diaspora, has made an effort to improve the situation of Jewish education there....The endeavors of the Jewish Agency's Education and Culture Department...must be reinforced by the State of Israel. Israel cannot be absolved of responsibility for the spiritual and educational character of the younger generation in the diaspora. If the content and spirit of the nation is weakened, its ability to help Israel will be impaired. If the majority of the Jewish people assimilates, the stability and development of the entire country will be endangered. Consequently, it seems natural

tance....I think the time has come to hold a world conference to discuss and work out a detailed plan for the expansion of Jewish education in the diaspora. Naturally this should be done in conjunction with the Zionist Organization....Despite all the internal difficulties, Israel should make a special effort to send some of its best pedagogues and teachers to work in education in the diaspora. Help must be extended in preparing new cadres of teachers in the diaspora and bringing them in their thousands to Israel for training, so that they can return and teach in the diaspora. Israel is the only place where many thousands of pupils from all over the diaspora can be adopted by various schools, receiving spiritual inspiration and absorbing social and cultural values....

The subject of Jewish education in the diaspora must become the focal point of the nation's life. The conditions under which we function in the diaspora are not to our advantage, and we must take every step possible to avoid the kiss of death which threatens most of the younger generation in the diaspora. It is our duty to see the situation as it really is, not to obscure it....We must also take it upon ourselves to be a central factor in the just struggle of Soviet Jewry, which has embarked on a valiant battle to save that Jewish tribe from oblivion. Despite everything, we must not underestimate the gravity of the situation as regards Jewish education, which symbolizes the national future of the nation in the diaspora....It will be to the credit of this Knesset if, in the prevailing conditions, it helps to further Jewish education in the diaspora. I am sure that the Ministry of Education and Culture, together with the World Zionist Organization, will regard it as one of its most important missions at this time.

E. Raziell-Na'or (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, when the axe fell on European Jewry, the extensive and glorious network of Jewish culture and education, comprising kindergartens, elementary and high schools, religious and rabbinical seminaries, Hebrew and Jewish newspapers and publishing enterprises, ceased to exist....Jewish cultural autonomy must be brought back to life, not as an end but as a means towards an end: as a means of educating and preparing the Jews of the diaspora for the return to Zion, for immigration, for activity on behalf of the state....

The figures which are published from time to time by the American Jewish Congress regarding assimilation and mixed marriages, among both U.S. and European Jewry, teach us one thing: that the less tension there is, the easier social and material life becomes and the less sharp the distinction is between the Jew and his environment. Things

warm heart and conscience which refuses to countenance injustice and discrimination, they become deeply involved in the struggles taking place around them. But their own culture, nation and homeland receive very little attention, with the exception of those who, because of circumstances created by time and politics, are prevented from speaking the language of their nation and learning its culture and history.

A great miracle has taken place before our eyes in the U.S.S.R. where, despite over fifty years of the "revolution" which sought to eradicate the Jewish heart and culture, a Jewish national revival has taken place, emerging from the depths and aspiring to return to its sources, learn its language, revive its culture and go back to its homeland. That is one of the greatest miracles in human history. But not only there. We were all shocked and shaken recently to hear of the persecution of Jews in Arab countries, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, where attempts to suppress Jewish culture have met with the same resistance as has always been the case in our long history....

As a sovereign state, we must pave the way for Jewish education in the diaspora, which should also be undertaken in normal political and cultural conditions...and without ignoring the needs of the younger generation growing up all over the world without Jewish culture or history. It is difficult for Sunday schools and afternoon classes in the U.S. to make Hebrew and Jewish culture attractive to Jewish children, when they want to run and play with the other children and do all the other things children like to do, not to mention the drawing-power of television and other technological devices...Consequently, the State of Israel must find the way to establish the bridgehead and bring the best of Jewish youth across it for as long a stay in Israel as possible, so that they may learn the language, absorb the nature of life here, assimilate the revived culture and renew their roots. Thus, Jewish education in the diaspora must be not only an end in itself...but a bridgehead, educating towards rapid immigration and the return to Israel.

...

B. Shahor (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the subject on the agenda...is a serious aspect of the problem of the Jewish people's continued existence in the diaspora. This is not something which can be postponed for another day...for every delay brings lasting damage in its wake...and precious youngsters are lost....It is difficult to obtain accurate figures...but there seem to be about two million youngsters who are not within the framework of a Jewish school and who may attend Hebrew classes once or twice a week, if that....

I do not agree with Minister Allon, who has said that before the war, before the Holocaust, there was no problem of Jewish education....There was a section of the population which tended to assimilate, severing its ties not only with Jewish life, but also with Israel and Zionism. Un-

doubtedly, the problem is graver today and is of a different magnitude, but it existed in the past, too....

In his motion for the agenda, MK Coren has made some useful suggestions, e.g., that a certain proportion of teachers should go abroad, their rights being guaranteed until they return; that training colleges in Israel intended for teachers abroad should be expanded; that a world conference on Jewish education should be held; that textbooks should be published which are designed specifically for the diaspora and which contain Jewish values and the Israeli spirit...serving to enhance the sense of national unity, with Israel at the center. I do not think that these suggestions are sufficient to amend the situation, however....I would like to take this opportunity to commend the splendid work done by the various departments of the Zionist Organization...but there is no doubt that their efforts do not encompass all Jewish youth....

A special problem is presented by the hundreds of thousands of Jewish students scattered throughout hundreds of different colleges and universities, especially in the U.S., where the majority of the Jewish people is to be found and is going through a crisis of assimilation....The problem here is not one of sending emissaries and teachers....In dealing with students and teenagers what is needed are special measures and people of a special kind who are able to...bring those Jewish youngsters closer to Judaism, Zionism and Israel. I have seen Jewish youth at the universities which is hostile to our enterprise....Preventive measures must be taken to avert the spread of this attitude....

I would not wish to ignore a completely different aspect of this special problem: ultra-Orthodox Jews who live abroad and seek justification for their actions in various theories and ideologies which oppose the State of Israel and the undertaking we are building here. I have met youngsters of that kind. Here we must return to teaching religious Zionism in the traditional sense of the term...for the task is to draw people closer to Zionism, not to establish a link with Judaism....The task is one for leading members of the Orthodox-Zionist community, rabbis, students and teachers at religious seminaries....

In conclusion, I would like to mention one problem which is not directly connected with the subject on the agenda, but indirectly has a great many implications for the character of Jewish youth, the unity of the Jewish people and the future of the younger generation in the U.S., namely, the problem of marriage and divorce within the various streams within Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Israel, which is interested in one nation, not disparate communities, must do something to open the lines of communication between the various streams, because the problem is destroying large sections of U.S. Jewry, and as a nation we should be interested in solving this problem abroad, thereby preventing disunity within the nation...and, eventually, within Israel....An effort must be made to unite all the streams of U.S. Jewry,

at least as regards marriage and divorce...in order to overcome a problem which, with increasing immigration, will only become more acute....We are interested in having a united nation in Israel that will build its land, not a series of disconnected communities.

...

S. Lorincz (Aguda): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, our colleague MK Coren should be congratulated for initiating today's debate. As for the difficult diagnosis, I think there is complete agreement amongst us all. There is no need for me to go into figures....As regards the solution, however, there is a chasm between us...arising from our different interpretations of our national history....

The fact of the matter is...that solely by virtue of our Holy Bible and our belief in God and the coming of the Messiah...we have endured to this day. Nothing is left of all the movements which erred from the path given to Moses at Mount Sinai apart from crumbling scrolls or other archaeological remains....This applies to the Essenes, the Karaites, the Shabtai Zvi movement, the Enlightenment and various reform movements....If we have been privileged to remain Jews...it is because we have managed to maintain at least a few basic religious precepts, such as circumcision....

What would we not be prepared to do to succeed in preventing mixed marriages in the diaspora? I am sure that everyone in this House feels the same as we do on this subject....But we are unsuccessful. Why? Because circumcision is done when the child is small and in his parents' custody, but marriage is undertaken after he has grown up without receiving any Jewish education....Then the danger of assimilation becomes a fact....If we cared about the future of the Jewish people...we would have made sure that Jewish education in the diaspora and in Israel was of the fundamental kind, because that is the only kind which can assure the future of the Jewish people...as is proven by the historical facts I have mentioned....

Zionism is not a substitute for traditional Judaism....There is no proof that it is a long-term solution, as is the case with traditional Judaism....What happened to the children of Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism? We know what became of them. And what about the children of another Zionist leader, Max Nordau, who did not marry a Gentile?

B. Shahor (Mafdal): They say that the same has happened to the children of great rabbis.

S. Lorincz (Aguda): I am surprised that you, MK Shahor, can say

were learned in Jewish subjects....Did that help them when it came to their children?...Should that not fill us with anxiety? If it has not helped even in the short period of Zionism's existence, what will be the effect in the long run...?

Where does the revival of Soviet Jewry come from? Where do they gather? On what day? They gather on the day of the Rejoicing of the Law. On no other day. They gather next to the synagogue, not next to the Jewish theater....There is no other remedy or solution. Why should we endanger something which has been good and effective for two thousand years and replace it with something new? It has been proposed that we send teachers to the diaspora. But perhaps we should ask which teachers?...If the teacher is not well-versed in Jewish subjects, can he teach and influence others?...The law which should go forth from Israel is the law of Moses, the Holy Bible, that is the solution and the only answer to the difficult problem of assimilation....

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset perhaps the members of the religious parties, and especially the previous speaker, should have proposed a debate on the place of Orthodox education in Jewish education in the diaspora....We might then have convinced our colleagues from those circles that they do not have a monopoly on the truth...showing to what extent they are responsible for the fact that very many youngsters have been lost....

One of the phenomena which we are currently witnessing is Jewish intellectualism which is detached from the Jewish wellsprings...and seeks inspiration in foreign fields...such as the New Left, which has regrettably attracted many of the best of Jewish youth to its ranks, turning their Jewish creativity into aimless nihilism....Another phenomenon, perhaps the most wonderful...is the Jewish revival in the U.S.S.R. Youngsters who were brought up in the best Communist tradition...have, for whatever reason, felt impelled to identify themselves as Jews, seeking out its culture, language and heritage and expressing their desire to immigrate to Israel....This latter phenomenon must refresh us and restore our belief in the enduring value of Jewish education....

What conclusions should we draw from this situation? On the one hand...it would seem that despite being cut off from Jewish roots and the rest of the nation...the wellsprings of Judaism bubble up anew. It is a fact, however, that each year the Jewish people loses some of its best youngsters....In my opinion, this problem is no less important than any other milestone in the long battlefront of Israel's wars. We must ensure that Jewish youth in the diaspora receives independent Jewish education

here in Israel and turning them into teachers who can fulfill their mission....

I have read in the proposal that the onus of financing this undertaking is to be placed on the World Zionist Organization....It is clear to me that it is the State of Israel which must head the campaign and lend the teachers and the inspectors....I would like to conclude by proposing that a savings scheme be introduced for diaspora Jewry whereby they can put money aside for their children's Jewish education in Israel....

M. Avizohar (National List): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I gladly concur with those speakers who commended MK Coren, although I do not agree with the pessimistic diagnosis. I am very sceptical about the institutionalized arrangements and the recognized prescriptions.... It is doubtful whether it is possible to categorize and resolve problems which, by their nature, are the results of mighty historical events.

Was it decided by the Knesset, the Ministry of Education or a department of the Jewish Agency that Hebrew lessons should be conducted in neo-Stalinist Leningrad? Was it any Zionist party or Jewish Congress which caused a Jewish student at Albany University in the U.S. to return to Jewish consciousness via involvement with the struggle for civil rights for blacks...?

How many times have we mourned the imminent demise of U.S. Jewry by the kiss of death, and of Soviet Jewry by strangulation...? Nonetheless, not only does the Jewish people live, it is restoring its vitality in unimagined places. Despite all the pessimistic diagnoses, a powerful process of spiritual awakening is taking place before our eyes. Compare the response of U.S. Jewry to the persecution of Jews in Russia today with what happened during the Holocaust. I think that hardly a single young American Jew stood up then and protested while millions, their own flesh and blood, were led to the charnel-house....But since then genuine, informal Jewish education has functioned, and the slogan which U.S. Jewish youth has adopted is "never again." I would like to point out that I am opposed to acts of terror and violence as a weapon in the present struggle to free Soviet Jewry...but the response itself indicates that something has happened in the sphere of Jewish identity in the U.S. as well as in the U.S.S.R. and other parts of the dispersion, despite the statistical decline in the extent of Jewish education in the diaspora.

I am not sure what contributes more to Jewish education. Is it adding on extra hours of tuition to the Jewish Sunday Schools which do not always interest the youngsters and are not always given by the most able teachers? Or is it a different, informal contact with the tremendous national events whose focal point is Israel? The first condition for the success of Jewish education is that Jewish youngsters should want it, and they will want it when they are proud of their Jewishness, which will come about if they are proud of Israel.

The sense of pride which was aroused in every Jew in 1948 and grew in the June war, the anxiety followed by the tears of gratitude with the conquest of the Wall, the awakening of deep, atavistic feelings which caused Jews in Israel to feel connected with Jews all over the world as well as with our ancient history and the eternity of the nation—all these constituted a shock, a revival of Jewish experience, unlike anything any education system could aspire to attain. But this shock may decline and even disappear if Jewish consciousness is not nourished in thousands of ways—through literature and the press, through family relationships and friendships, and of course through teachers and schools—and by inspiring content. The purpose of the education system is not to create that genuine content, but simply to transmit it from one generation to another....

Consequently, I believe that the fact that the awakening of the nation in our time is the result of the establishment of the state and its victories oblige us to ensure that our later deeds reach the heights of our former ones. In other words, we must make our contribution to Jewish education in the diaspora regarding ourselves as being obliged, in the sense of *noblesse oblige*, to maintain a social-moral and spiritual-cultural level in Israel which will radiate naturally, and not by virtue of teachers, emissaries institutions, conferences and resolutions, although those are also needed.

...

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, this is not the first time that we express the view from this podium that the elected institutions of Israel should not be mixed up with the World Zionist Organization...and we naturally oppose the proposal for greater cooperation between the two....In our view, Israel must be a sovereign state and should not share its sovereignty with any world political body which is not supervised by the Knesset. But what we have here is another issue, Jewish education. Jewish education and Zionist education are very different—sometimes even opposing—concepts.

J. Yifrah (Ma'arach): Would you say you were a good Jew?

M. Wilner (Rakah): I think I am a very good Jew.

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): But a bad Zionist.

M. Wilner (Rakah): I am not a Zionist at all. There are differences of opinion in this House, even between the various religious factions, as to what constitutes Jewish education....The truly serious approach to the question says that among the Jewish population of Israel, in every Jewish community in countries where capital rules, there are various, conflicting classes and political and social trends. Thus, there is a class struggle among the Jews of Israel, America and the other capitalist countries.

There are Jews of various kinds. There were Jews who were prepared to cooperate even with the Nazis, and there are those who are prepared to cooperate today with former Nazis in the struggle against communism and socialism. And there are very many who fought against Nazism.

(From the floor: There are some who would cooperate with the Soviet regime against the Jewish people....)

The Soviet regime is not against the Jewish people, quite the contrary. There are Jews who fight alongside the workers and all the progressive forces in the materialist countries against fascism and war....There are those, like us, who educate their youth on the basis of the shining tradition of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt, while there are those who educate them on the vile tradition of Kaestner.

We favor education on the basis of the progressive, democratic tradition of the Jewish people. Bar-Kochba and the Maccabees did not cooperate with the alien, repressive rule of a great power against the neighboring peoples, but fought against it together with all the nations of the region....That is why our slogan is not "with the imperialists against the Arabs," but "with the Arabs against the imperialists."...An important aspect of education should be learning the lessons of the Holocaust...perpetrated by the cruel, terrorist dictatorship of German finance....That was class rule in which the elimination of the Jews was part of the overall class plan to take over the world, diverting attention from the class struggle and exploitation of German monopolists and focusing it on the Jews, Slavs and other peoples.

D. Milman (Gahal): Who made that agreement?

M. Wilner (Rakah): The people at Munich. In our education we must teach the younger generation about the liberating role played by the U.S.S.R., which saved millions of Jews from destruction and mankind from Nazi barbarism. Immediately after the October Revolution it saved Russia's Jews from the pogroms and made them equal citizens. That is also a class matter....The Russian stand at Stalingrad prevented the Axis armies from invading Palestine, averted the destruction of the Jewish population there and enabled the State of Israel to be established.

It is incorrect to educate the younger generation on the basis of false facts. The Jewish community of Palestine was not saved because it was here, for if the Nazis had got here its fate would have been the same as that of European Jewry. Jews were saved in America too. Is someone going to draw ideological conclusions from that...?

Those Jews in Israel—of whom I have the honor to be one—who are fighting for peace and against occupation, for Jewish-Arab equality and fraternity, and for social and socialist progress, are continuing the democratic tradition of the Jewish people; they are Israeli patriots who

are serving the true interests of the workers and of Jews everywhere. The younger generation must be educated on the basis of historical experience, which teaches that fascism and wars, the forces of imperialism and reaction, are the enemies of the Jewish people, while its saviors are the forces of peace, democracy and socialism.

We must not forget that still today the danger of a third world war exists, with the concomitant rise of fascism in America and the danger this would represent for the Jews and other minorities there. No Jewish interest or education is more important than the struggle against the American, West German and other monopoly which could push mankind to a new holocaust....Only imperialism and capitalism give rise to anti-Semitism. Only the victory of socialism throughout the world will create the conditions for the eradication of racism and anti-Semitism. The 22 years of Israel's existence have proved that it cannot solve the problem of world Jewry, because its salvation, security and future are connected with the struggle of all the progressive, socialist forces in the world to uproot fascism, racism and anti-Semitism....

...

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazeh-Ko'ah Hadash): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset...what is wrong with the subject before us is that it is unclearly defined. I doubt whether any two Knesset Members would agree on a definition of "Jewish education."...Earlier today, while participating in a demonstration by Israeli Jews against the behavior of some of our soldiers in Gaza, we found ourselves confronted by a counter-demonstration by supporters of the Jewish Defense League. Against the background of this debate, I ask myself which of the two groups are the real Jews? Those who pursue justice...or those who attack the former with their fists and knuckle-dusters imported from the U.S.?

I must express a fear here which could be prophetic. After today's experience I fear that we are about to see an intensification of the methods used in internal struggles brought over here by Jewish-American fascists....I hope that those of you on the Gahal benches, who may have some influence over them, will use it to point out to them that this is not Harlem or Brooklyn, and that violence will not be tolerated in this country....

This brings me back to the question—what is Jewish education...and who are the true carriers of Jewish culture...? The two value systems embodied in the two groups of demonstrators I have described obviously derive from different kinds of education....I would like to point out to the speakers from the religious parties who denigrated secular Judaism that it is that stream which constitutes the majority of Jews in Israel and the world today....

So what is Judaism? Is it a tribal ritual with commandments which are three thousand years old and are based on the reality and morals of three thousand years ago?

The Minister of Education and Culture, Y. Allon: The commandment "thou shalt not kill" is old, but it is still very good.

U. Avneri (Ha'Olam Hazei-Ko'ah Hadash): I have nothing against that commandment...provided it applies to everyone...and does not merely prohibit the killing of Jews. There is a lively argument among the scientists as to what the significance of that commandment was when it was first formulated in view of the injunction to slay all the inhabitants of Canaan, including women, old people and children. Jewish morals have developed since then, they have not remained static. Over three thousand years Judaism has changed and developed...adapting itself to the changing situation of mankind...Judaism is sometimes even at the forefront of these changes....

I speak in the name of Jewish optimism....I believe that Judaism, the Jewish morals and values on which we were educated, will not only not disappear from the world but, on the contrary, will continue to lead the march of mankind....I do not wish to embark on a discussion of Zionism now. I think that the Zionist Organization, as a body and an instrument, has outlived its use, is an anachronism and has no place either in Israel or the diaspora....I do not agree with Ben-Gurion's views on Zionism, but I agree with him that the Zionist Organization was the scaffolding on which the state was erected, and once the state was established it should have been dismantled....

We live in the Jewish state and almost all of us acknowledge Jewish solidarity and the fact that Israel has certain duties and missions vis-à-vis the diaspora. The question is, who will implement them? I maintain that it should not be the fictitious body known as the Zionist Organization....I have long demanded that the Cabinet should contain a Minister for Middle Eastern Affairs. I also believe that there should be a Minister for Diaspora Affairs...with all the attendant officials and representatives in our embassies and consulates abroad....All those functions should be taken away from the Zionist Organization, which is responsible to no one and is subject to no democratic control....Then we will finally have an address for all our complaints and criticisms regarding our relations with the diaspora....

E. Shostak (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we are now discussing one of the problems which the visionaries of Zionism and the state foresaw....MK Avneri may argue about Jewish morality today and three thousand years ago, but the problem is whether the Jewish people will endure. Will the connection between the state and the Jewish people in the diaspora grow stronger? Will Israel have a spiritual-cultural-national influence on the preservation of the Jewish people or not? I envy those Knesset Members who think they have simple solutions to every problem. Would the existence of a Minister for Diaspora Affairs solve the problem?

We seem to have got into a routine of denigrating the Jewish Agency. I am the last person to defend it...but in speaking of educational and cultural activities in the diaspora we must not disparage what has been done and is being done by the Zionist movement....If there are Jewish schools, extension courses, teachers and youth movements...they are the work of the Zionist movement's various departments....But that is not the problem. The fact is that the younger generation is moving further away. It does not have the Jewish home that previous generations had. It is not merely a question of spiritual teachers. It needs to have parents who want to continue, and that is not the case in the diaspora. The diaspora we lived in was one which forced us to be Jews, and we received a Jewish education within Jewish frameworks....But in free countries which bestow so many cultural and educational benefits on their citizens it is hardly surprising that Jewish youngsters want to be like everyone else....

What is important is our national continuation and the spirit of Judaism, and on that score there is a growing danger among Jewish youth....As the representatives of Israel, we bear a responsibility because diaspora Jewry is not very eager to accept our lead in educational matters....It is not eager to have its youngsters educated towards immigration to Israel...and parts of it feel that our society is not sufficiently Orthodox....I think that our object should be to provide Jewish education for diaspora youth, regardless of whether immigration to Israel is advocated or not....One would have to be blind not to see that what is happening among the younger generation today derives from a desire for ideals, for values, for something better....Consequently, if we could only present the Jewish youth of the world with challenges and ideals...it would be far easier for us to succeed in education. I see that as Israel's central task today.

M. Sneh (Maki): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset...tremendous historical events have caused and are still causing the national identification and aroused Jewish consciousness of diaspora Jewry....In one sweep the Holocaust wiped out one hundred and fifty years of assimilation...reminding every Jew who remained alive that he was a condemned man whose sentence had not been implemented....The establishment of the State of Israel built a living bridge between the distant past of the kings of Judah and Israel, the present of the Jewish people in this generation and its future in generations to come.

The establishment of the state was a revolutionary event in the life of the Jewish individual as well as of the group. Israel's wars for its survival, security and sovereignty...have forced Jews everywhere to decide which side they are on, that of Israel or of those who oppose it....The positive effect of the factors I have listed here is offset by the powerful force of assimilation, the attraction of the environment....That is a

natural phenomenon, and by talking we will not change it. The only weapon we have against it is what we call Jewish education.

The function of Jewish education is to enable the Jews of the diaspora to feel that they are Jews, not as a burden, not as an unavoidable sentence, not as an aspect of their split personality, but as something natural and precious, a source of pride and inspiration and spiritual completeness. This education should aspire to achieve three objectives:

1. Every Jew should know about the greatness of his nation, the splendid history of the Jewish people, the elevated values of the ancient Hebrew heritage and the cultural treasures of modern Jewish culture;

2. Every Jew should know about his belonging to the Jewish people in general, and should be aware of the link between his Jewish community in his place of residence and Jewish communities elsewhere, of his national association with them despite the geographical distance between them;

3. Last but not least, we must strengthen the link between the Jews of the diaspora and the State of Israel, which has a three-fold significance: the homeland of all its citizens and inhabitants, irrespective of nation affiliation, religion or race; a haven for every Jew in need of a home and a homeland; a workshop for the process of the national revival of the Jewish people.

...After the annihilation of Eastern European Jewry, the focal point of the nation shifted to the renewed homeland. The Jewish experience is unique in being both religious and national as well as ethnogenetic. Different Jews stress different aspects, whether religion, national affiliation or origin, though these emphases may shift from one generation to another...but all Jews share the attachment to the Land of Israel...That is why the historic and unseverable link between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel must be placed at the center of Jewish education.

The Jewish and world Left has inherited an unfortunate legacy—the identification of Jewish emancipation with assimilation for the last two hundred years, i.e., since the French Revolution, from the old Left to the New Left. The loyal Israeli Jew must embark on a campaign against that false distortion. The entire course of history has refuted the falsehood that assimilation constitutes a realistic and progressive solution to the Jewish problem...Left-leaning Jewish youth must be given the truth about the progressive, humanitarian and universal content and values of the Jewish heritage...Freedom-fighters amongst Jewish youth...should be shown that the most advanced ideas about social jus-

Turkish oppressors...and in the Second World War the Jewish Brigade and Jewish volunteer troops fought to keep Nazi imperialism at bay. This was followed by the struggle to free all of the Land of Israel, both the Jewish and the Arab parts, from British imperialism. All these lessons must be taught in the diaspora....

...

The Minister of Education and Culture, Y. Allon: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, if I am not mistaken, not since the founding of the Knesset 21 years ago has a special debate on education in the diaspora been held...and I welcome MK Coren's initiative in raising this subject here today....

We do not divide up our educational activities by means and ends. I regard education as both an end in itself and a means of attaining an end...One learns because one is thirsty for knowledge...and I would venture to say that Judaism without learning is almost meaningless...We are proud of the many and varied aspects of Jewish culture...and are sure that by encouraging young people to study everything Jewish culture can give, we are opening new vistas for them....

In the West there is hardly a single schoolchild who does not learn a second, and sometimes a third, language, in addition to his mother-tongue. In most cases the second language is an ancient one and the third a modern one. I know of Jewish children, alongside many non-Jewish children, who invest many years in Latin and Greek. I do not know Latin or Greek, but I understand that it is well worth learning those languages. A Jewish child in the diaspora who learns Hebrew will acquire a language which is both ancient and modern, the language of the best of classical and modern literature, and one which may help him communicate with other Jews...I am convinced that by encouraging the communities of the diaspora to focus their efforts on teaching Hebrew we are doing something good and cultural, which is an end in itself.

I concur completely with MK Raziell-Na'or that by disseminating Jewish culture among the Jews of Israel and the world we are also using an important means of attaining our objective, i.e., the continued existence and ascent of the nation...and possibly the unity of the nation in the generations to come....

I would like to remind those critics who contend that the Zionist idea and movement led the Jewish people astray...that secularization existed within the Jewish nation in East Europe and the Western world before Zionism, being evinced by complete assimilation or the search for a dif-

rejoice at the fact that within the Orthodox camp there were Jews who supported the Zionist vision and took an active part in its fulfillment....

I agree with almost every word MK Sneh said, but with regard to his thesis about teaching Jewish history...I must add that it should not be merely a chronology, or what is known as political history, but the study of Jewish history in the round, as it is reflected in every aspect of human and national life. Through the study of history we can teach children Jewish values...but I must admit that I was shocked to hear MK Avneri dismiss the values of three thousand years ago so lightly. Not everything which is old is necessarily outdated, nor is everything which is new—even if it is the New Left—inevitably innovative....I think that what is most wonderful about the Jewish people is the fact that it has remained faithful to its roots and retained its heritage under conditions which no other nation has known....

What is Judaism and who is to determine what will be taught and how? The Jewish nation was never monolithic. Nor was it always united, though it nonetheless endured as a nation. In ancient times we were divided into tribes. Later there were two kingdoms. After that, during our protracted dispersion, we were scattered among seventy nations and languages. The Jewish nation is incomparably pluralistic, with hundreds of nuances and interpretations, yet nonetheless with adherence to the common denominator and its myriad explications. A great many routes lead to Judaism....

What we are talking about here are not the youngsters who are in religious seminaries or day schools of various kinds...it is those who are not in any framework of Jewish education, have not accepted Zionism as a national idea and are in real danger of assimilating....We want to help them to help themselves. Consequently, we are not going to engage in investigations of what Judaism is and how it should be taught. It will be taught as the parents wish it to be or the teachers are able to....That is why I do not support the proposal to deprive the Zionist Organization of responsibility for Jewish education in the diaspora. To my regret, there are many Jewish communities in the diaspora which want to get rid of the Zionist Organization—because of its Zionism, i.e., because it is linked to the State of Israel....On the other hand, there are schools which seek to bypass the Zionist Organization because of internal disputes, preferring to maintain direct contact with the Ministry of Education and Culture....The approach adopted by the Zionist Organization—which is a commendable one—is not rigid and centralist, but takes the wishes of the communities into account....Thus, Jewish education in the diaspora is in the hands of the Zionist Organization, and

appeal for funds for social purposes, including education. The state is entitled to sell bonds. It cannot hold a fundraising drive. Nor is it allowed to sell bonds in every country. What is wrong with this association? It is true that it is not an ideal framework....Jews care if other Jews are permitted to organize without harming their loyalty to the country in which they live....One may be a proud Jew, one who identifies with Israel, and remain loyal to the country in which one lives, because there is no clash between Israel's interests and those of any country in which Jews live, including the U.S.S.R....

I do not recommend mentioning Jews and Nazis in the same breath even if there were a few who cooperated under the terrible conditions of Nazism. The Jews never signed a treaty with the Nazi state which paved the way for the Second World War and brought disaster on the U.S.S.R....It is true that the Soviets fought bravely to defend their country, and we all identified with them. There were Jews in the ranks of their army, as well as with the partisans in the forests, and in the ghettos. There were Jews in all the Allied armies....We fought. We did our share....

There are no grounds for fearing that recruiting teachers to be sent abroad will be done at the expense of education in our developing towns....We will need thousands of teachers, and will not be able to recruit them all from our ranks. Many of them will come from the diaspora. We can help them—and have already done so—in various spheres and subjects....We will make use of our veteran teachers to train cadres of teachers abroad....We are trying to persuade Israeli students who are going abroad...to work as teachers while they are studying....There are thousands of Israeli students abroad, many of them at universities in the heart of large Jewish communities...who are capable of teaching Hebrew and Jewish subjects, provided they receive some minimal training....

Naturally, the significant positive and negative events which befall the Jewish nation also affect Jewish consciousness....MK Avizohar exaggerated in claiming that the Six Day War or the Leningrad trial were equal to a thousand teachers. Striking events like the War of Independence, the establishment of the state, the elections to the Knesset, the draining of swamps, the founding of a town on the Red Sea coast and the Six Day War may increase Jews' pride, afford them encouragement and heighten their consciousness, but I would not want the future of the Jewish people to rely solely on victories or disasters. There is no contradiction between the two, of course. We must be able to interpret great

against Zionism and the State of Israel. Everything they know about Jewish history has been given to them in a distorted form....But in the specific historical circumstances prevailing in the U.S.S.R., and by virtue of the existence of Israel, with the light which emanates from it rather than the shadows, large numbers of Soviet youngsters, who do not know a word of Hebrew, are seized by a pure Zionist awakening....The youth of the U.S.S.R. does not act violently, it studies Hebrew...that is the weapon of the Soviet Jew in his endeavor to identify with his people and his homeland....And so we see that sometimes education produces good Jews and sometimes good Jews, who have not received Jewish education, seek to educate themselves in things Jewish....

We are not dealing here with a Jewish nation which is concentrated in one place, headed by a government, benefiting from a Ministry of Education, with which one can sign an agreement....Naturally, together with the Zionist Organization, we will plan whatever we can. But we will have to improvise....Not every diaspora community requires the same treatment and approach....There are various streams and opinions. But I believe that through textbooks in their own languages we will succeed....That will increase their curiosity to study Hebrew too....The translation of Hebrew literature and poetry into the various foreign languages will establish an additional connection with Israel....

We have an arrangement with the Jewish Agency about increasing the number of youngsters who are to come to Israel for long summer vacations at summer camps together with Israeli youngsters. That is also an important encounter, for both sides....We are at an advanced stage of making financial and administrative arrangements to enable youngsters of a certain age who are participants in a savings scheme to come to Israel for a year or two of studies, or even a three-month camp....Naturally, this agreement with the Zionist Organization will not lead to an immediate turnaround in Jewish education in the diaspora....Joint committees have been set up and they will prepare detailed plans....We must endeavor to avoid duplicating the activities of the Jewish Agency, and to this effect we have appointed a small team. We will not establish a Ministry for Education in the Diaspora. We will all serve education in the diaspora by means of the Zionist Organization.

There are, undoubtedly, a variety of ways of cultivating Jewish identity in the diaspora. I believe that there is no substitute for education. Education begins at an early age. We want to develop methods of education for children and adults. Technological innovations will help

erals, Progress and Development, and Cooperation and Amity par groups, I would like to propose the following concluding resolution:

1. The Knesset regards Jewish education in the diaspora, the dissemination of the Jewish heritage and national values, teaching the Hebrew language and culture, and the pioneering education of the younger generation as missions of the highest importance in which the State of Israel should play an active role;

2. The Knesset notes the statement made by the Minister of Education and Culture regarding the coordination of activities between the Government and the Jewish Agency Executive and the agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Zionist Organization about expanding Jewish education in the diaspora and enhancing it by various means....

...
(MK Coren's proposal is adopted.)

Debate on Proposed Basic Law: Human and Civil Rights

Introduction

Pursuant to the decision adopted by the First Knesset, then called the Constituent Assembly, a subcommittee of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, headed by a former Supreme Court Justice, had been working diligently for three years on a draft of a Bill of Rights. The fruit of its labors did not come up for debate in the plenum before the Seventh Knesset officially concluded its term. At the request of thirty Knesset Members a Special Session of the Knesset was convened to discuss the draft. Although it was obvious that the Seventh Knesset would not be able to complete the legislation of such a fundamental and important law, it was believed by some that even a first step in the plenary would be useful as an indication of intent, thereby imposing at least a moral obligation on the following Knesset. In line with the campaign being waged at the time, others were inclined to judge the initiative less kindly. Both sides believed, however, that this Special Session would probably be the last before the forthcoming elections. Little did they realize that the most fateful days of the Seventh Knesset were yet to come.

Sitting 458 of the Seventh Knesset

17 September 1973 (20 Elul 5733)

B. Halevy (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...on 14 May 1948 the Jewish state, the State of Israel, was established. The Proclamation of Independence stated: "We resolve that from the moment the Mandate ends, at midnight on the Sabbath, the sixth of Iyar 5708, the fifteenth day of May 1948, until the establishment of the duly elected authorities of the state in accordance with a Constitution to be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than 1 October 1948, the National Council shall act."...Further on the Proclamation states: "The State of Israel...will maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, without difference of creed, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture." That is the subject which I am proposing that the House debate today, before the conclusion of the term of the Seventh Knesset.

In accordance with the Proclamation of Independence, the Constituent Assembly was elected, though somewhat belatedly, in January 1949....Only at a later stage, by means of the Transition Act, did it de-

cide to call itself the First Knesset, and it was determined that the subject of the Constitution should be discussed....The parties constituting the majority in the First Knesset opposed introducing a Constitution, while the minority demanded that the Constituent Assembly complete the work which it had been elected to do before transforming itself into the Legislature...regarding the formulation of a Constitution as its principal task....A compromise solution was found, and in 1950 the majority supported the proposal that the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee be given the task of preparing a proposal for a Constitution....

Thus, the constitutional authority of the Constituent Assembly was transferred to the First Knesset, and thence, by virtue of the Transition Law, to subsequent Knessets, including the Seventh, which is therefore authorized to introduce a Constitution....The Committee was instructed to prepare the Constitution in separate chapters, and for this purpose a subcommittee was appointed....This subcommittee has prepared the proposal for the Basic Law: Human and Civil Rights, and this has been reviewed and approved by the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee....This is one of the rare cases in which legislation is initiated by one of the Knesset's committees, rather than by the Government or a Knesset Member....It is significant that the State of Israel should fulfill the declared intention of the Constituent Assembly and the Knesset....

Bills of rights are known to be particularly difficult and delicate, requiring the widest possible agreement, across party lines if possible...and this is what the committee aspired to attain....We did this in a spirit of friendly cooperation, basing our work on an extensive comparative study of human and civil rights legislation undertaken for us by the Faculty of Law of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem....The work took us three years...and the process of review by the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee was unnecessarily protracted because the subject was not given sufficient priority, so that discussions ended only one week before the conclusion of the final sitting of the Seventh Knesset, and hence the present Special Session....The President of the Supreme Court and four Supreme Court justices were kind enough to appear before us and give their views on the constitutional aspect of the bill, most of them approving the course we had taken....In order to avert possible problems where a conflict might arise between the Basic Law and other legislation, the final clause of the bill contains the following sentence: "This Basic Law does not detract from the validity of a law passed before its enactment." Any laws passed after the Basic Law which are contradictory to it will be invalid....In the final event, the courts—and particularly the Supreme Court—will decide....

The difficulty in preparing a bill of rights is a basic one, in that whereas we did not want it to be solely a declaration of principles, like the Proclamation of Independence...the human rights we are defining

Debate

Introduction

Pursuing the Constitution Committee's work, the fruit of its eighth Knesset Member's draft, the law, it was useful as an obligation, waged at a kindly. It probably indicates that the

Sitting 4

B. Halevy (1948): The Mandate for the Elected Council of Israel... for all its antediluvian culture." Today, before the constituent in 1949... Or

should essentially be assured vis-à-vis both the government and the Knesset.... Thus, once the Knesset has passed this law it cannot harm the human rights guaranteed in it.... This Basic Law determines that certain freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, association, unionization, are subject to law. Other rights, such as freedom of religion and the right of every Israeli citizen to enter the country... are limited, and cannot be restricted by law.

One of the more important sections of the law deals with the protection of individual privacy, and forbids entry to a person's house in search of his person or possessions unless this is done by authorized law.... This law pertains particularly to wiretapping.... Another controversial section of the law deals with equality before the law and prohibits discrimination... thereby implementing the passage in the Declaration of Independence I referred to previously.... The relevant section of the bill reads as follows: "A. Everyone is equal before the law. B. There may be no discrimination between individuals on the basis of race, sex, national affiliation, ethnic group, country of origin, religion, outlook, social status, organizational or political affiliation." These aspects are generally adhered to in Israel.... What this law achieves is to limit the Legislature, so that it will not in future be able to pass laws denying these civil liberties to any particular group or person....

H. Tzadok (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset... in MK Halevy said one could detect a note of criticism directed at the chairman of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.... As a member of the Committee I feel that this does MK Goldschmidt an injustice.... The Committee had a great many pressing subjects on its agenda, and MK Halevy can surely not find fault with the fact that the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee saw fit to treat his very thorough proposal with the thoroughness it deserved.... This, inevitably, took time... and, as MK Halevy has himself said, the bill deals with a difficult and delicate subject....

I suggest that MK Halevy's proposal be transferred to the Committee for consideration. I feel that the undue haste with which it has been brought before the plenum for a first reading so soon before the election has been done with the intention of gaining an electoral advantage for Gahal.... I propose that the two majority parties guarantee to bring this proposal before the Eighth Knesset.... This will appear in the Ma'arach's election platform....

J. Nehushtan (Gahal): Why are you opposing it now?

H. Tzadok (Ma'arach): I know that there are phrases and sections which should be amended....

Hechterman (Gahal): For that there are the second and third readings.

Tzadok (Ma'arach): I think that these issues can be clarified during the first reading in the next Knesset, in the serious atmosphere it deserves, rather than in one of elections....

Toubi (Rakah): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, during the past five years of its existence, our party group has often demanded the introduction of a Constitution, which would establish human and civil rights. The Labor Party—today the Ma'arach—together with the religious parties is responsible for the fact that this has not been done to date... and Gahal also had a share in the parliamentary maneuvering which prevented it... Gahal's transparent demonstration of today is a death contempt... being obviously intended for use as election propaganda.... The Ma'arach's proposal is equally meaningless.... Rakah therefore suggests that MK Halevy's proposal be removed from the agenda, not because we oppose the law but because we object to transparent election ploys....

The Vote

Those in favor	47
Those against	36

(MK Tzadok's proposal to transfer the bill to the Committee is rejected.)

Lorincz (Aguda): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, my party group abstained on the vote... because the proposal before us contains a great many blemishes, particularly concerning our continued existence as the people of the Bible, a special people.... We feel that there was no justification in calling a Special Knesset Session... particularly since a bill of this kind should not be debated under pressure of time....

Halevy (Gahal): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the Gahal, the National List and Free Center party groups abstained on the vote because we regard the decision to transfer the proposal back to the Committee from which it originated as illogical and inappropriate.... This is obviously a stratagem for sidestepping the issue and burying it in committee... so that it never comes before the plenum.... The arrangements for holding a debate on the proposal in the course of the week had already been finalized with the Knesset Presidium....

I would also like to make it clear that by bringing this proposal before the Knesset today our intention was not to make electoral capital out of it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Knesset Speaker

and all my colleagues on the Committee know how hard we worked to prevent the proposal coming before the Knesset during the recess, and that the subject was already on the agenda beforehand....MK Tzadok's gentlemanly proposal that the subject be brought before the Eighth Knesset has no basis in law, and cannot be enforced....

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we abstained from voting on MK Tzadok's proposal to transfer the bill to the Committee because we regard this as tantamount to a general rejection of the entire subject at this stage....Our party group feels that this important subject should be discussed in the plenum at the earliest opportunity....

In its guidelines, the Government undertook to bring a bill of rights before the Knesset, a fact which none of today's speakers mentioned.... Today's opportunity to advance the treatment of this subject should have been utilized, despite the fact that the elections are approaching.... Since our party group supports the idea of a Constitution in which human rights are guaranteed, we prefer not to see the subject buried in committee....

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...how can a party group bring a supposedly constitutional law before the Knesset at the last minute before the elections...? We did not vote against something which was intended to pay lip service to a Constitution—something which is very dear to our hearts—but neither would we support an election ploy, a parliamentary farce, and therefore abstained.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Distinguished Speaker, Knesset Members, this Special Knesset Session is, in effect, pointless...and is obviously geared towards the elections....I must say, however, that former Justice MK Halevy does not regard it as an election ploy, has taken and is taking it seriously, and has made a decisive contribution to it....The bill contains several internal contradictions, for example in permitting civil liberties to be violated by law when national security or the benefit of the state is involved....We have seen this kind of law used to the detriment of both Arabs and Jews in this country...but especially against Arabs in the occupied territories....I abstained on the vote because this law mixes up morals and conscience, on the one hand...and denies civil liberties in the name of national security, on the other....

Kidnaping of Soviet Jewish Immigrants in Austria

Introduction

On 25 July 1973 the Speaker, Israel Yeshayahu, summed up the work of the Seventh Knesset, recounting its achievements and shortcomings and ending with good wishes for "a life of peace, tranquillity and security for us, the peoples of the region and the world; redemption soon for our brethren suffering in their countries of exile, and prosperity for the State of Israel as a home for its citizens and the Jewish people." He expressed the hope that the campaign for the elections scheduled to take place on 30 October 1973 would be restrained, "maintaining appropriate relations and mutual respect." He considered it possible that there might be one or two Special Sessions, but that basically the work of the Seventh Knesset was completed. Little did he or anyone else divine the fateful events which were yet in store—the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath.

However, the first Special Session called during the pre-election recess was devoted to a different subject, the kidnaping of Soviet Jews en route to Vienna and thence Israel on 28 September 1973 by Palestinians—who had boarded the train concerned in Czechoslovakia—and the subsequent decision of the Austrian Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, to restrict the transit rights of Jewish refugees in Austria and close down the Schoenau camp. E-Saiqa, a terrorist organization known to be closely linked with Syrian Army Intelligence, took "credit" for the kidnaping. Indeed, some years later one of its commanders boasted that it had been a deliberate diversion, intended to deflect Israeli attention from the preparations for the Egyptian-Syrian offensive, which were well under way at that time.

Since the Prime Minister, Golda Meir, had travelled to Vienna in order to prevail upon Kreisky to revoke his decision, her Deputy delivered the Government statement.

Sitting 460 of the Seventh Knesset

1 October 1973 (5 Tishrei 5734)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, our New Year rejoicing has been cruelly marred, first by the despicable kidnaping of immigrants on their way to their only true homeland, and then by the Austrian Government's decision to restrict

the humanitarian services it afforded them. As a result, the Government has requested that the Knesset assemble in order to register our protest and make it clear to the Austrian Government and the enlightened world that there must be no submission to terrorism and extortion.

For years Austria has done a great deal to help the immigrants on their way to our country....But this humanitarian gesture is a basic human duty, not an act of charity, and is extended by Austria to the nationals of many countries. It is inconceivable that Austria should deprive the Jewish people of this help now....Chancellor Kreisky has said that the reason for his decision is the violence displayed by the two armed sides on Austrian territory. I would like to make it clear that Israel maintains no secret, armed organizations in Austria....We therefore reject his statement, which seeks to create a strange and false balance in order to justify an unjust decision....

The Austrian Chancellor maintains that there has been no capitulation...but this is the inevitable conclusion which has to be drawn....The wider implications of this decision are that for the first time an act of terrorism and violence has been crowned with political success, thereby serving to encourage further terrorism, and that additional obstacles have been placed in the already difficult path of those Soviet Jews who seek to immigrate to Israel. We cannot accept with equanimity a step whose ultimate repercussions will harm not only Jews but the whole democratic world and its humanitarian values. Terrorism is no longer a marginal phenomenon and the battle against it must not be an incidental affair, especially after the vile attacks in Lod, Munich and Athens and the shocking attempt to employ missiles against civil aircraft in Rome. The weak response to terrorism of certain Governments has merely emboldened the terrorists, and they are doubly encouraged by the recent decision in Vienna. It goes without saying that Israel will continue to strike at the Arab terrorist organizations wherever it can.

The fact that armed terrorists came across the border from Czechoslovakia, from a country where a close check is kept on everyone, raises the question whether certain bodies are not in fact encouraging, or at least sanctioning, terrorism....We understand that the Austrian Government's chief concern was to save the lives of the kidnaped refugees, and it was for this reason that the kidnapers were permitted to go free....But that is a far cry from accepting the political dictates of criminals and their henchmen, and adhering to an assurance given under pressure....

From the Knesset podium we appeal to the Austrian Government to revoke its decision....Public opinion throughout the enlightened world endorses this moral and political appeal....The shadow of the terrible events which darkened Europe thirty years ago, and in which Austria took part, when Jews whose lives were threatened could find no refuge anywhere, has not yet passed....Today Austria has a liberal regime

and enlightened rulers. The disagreement between Austria and Israel today is one between two friendly countries. We hope that the Austrian Government will continue to fulfill the humanitarian duty which geography and history have imposed upon it. The Jewish people and the State of Israel will continue to do everything they can to ensure that immigration to Israel continues from every country and continent....

S.Z. Abramov (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we are used to shocks, fate has not been gentle with us...yet of the many shocking events which have befallen us few have had as painful an impact on us, as Jews and members of the free world, as the action taken by the Austrian Government. On the surface this is just another instance of capitulation to terrorism and extortion, like others we have witnessed in Western Europe in recent years....But the Austrian Government went further than the others...establishing an extremely dangerous precedent....In the previous cases hostages were generally set free in return for the release of terrorists who had committed crimes...but the Austrian Government has given a long-term undertaking to alter its policy and refrain from helping immigrants on their way from the U.S.S.R. to their homeland....

It was particularly distressing to hear Chancellor Kreisky's claim that it is up to the rest of the world and the U.S. to solve the problem. If he thinks that a transit camp can be set up in the U.S., this is geographically impossible. It should be pointed out, however, that the U.S. can be proud of its humanitarian aid to Soviet Jewry in its struggle to return to its homeland....It is not to the U.S. that Chancellor Kreisky should preach and moralize. The Austrian Chancellor claims that his country has no desire to be involved in the Middle East conflict. What involvement is there in providing free passage for refugees fleeing from a regime of repression? Isn't that rather fulfilling a basic human duty? Mr. Kreisky has made it clear, in effect, that he prefers not to risk incurring Arab displeasure, as he has proved in the past....

The Austrian Chancellor has dealt a blow not only to the Jewish people but to the entire free world which is fighting for human rights...one of these being the freedom to leave one country for another. It is about this principle that the East and the West are in disagreement today. As a result of the pressure of enlightened public opinion the U.S.S.R. agreed to allow a few Jews to realize this right and go to their homeland. By changing its policy, the Austrian Government has harmed the struggle of the free world, making it more difficult for people to realize their right to leave one country and go to another. Or does the Austrian Chancellor wish to be neutral in the conflict between...those who demand that basic right and those who deny it?

Had this been the appropriate moment, we could have noted with satisfaction the help accorded by the Austrian authorities to thousands of Jewish refugees on their way through that country to their homeland, as

well as to the refugees from Hungary in 1956 and from Czechoslovakia in 1968....But this is not the appropriate moment, and as Jews we must see our relations with Austria in a wider perspective, going back at least to 1938....Be that as it may, we could have expected greater sensitivity on the subject from Mr. Kreisky's Government....Mr. Kreisky's announcement that armed Israelis were captured and then released by the police was intended to offset the release of the Arab terrorists....What he omitted to mention, however, was the fact that the Israelis were in Austria with its Government's approval, their task being to board the train when it reached the Austrian border in order to protect the Jewish passengers....

We hope that the Austrian Government will revoke its decision and restore the previous situation, thereby salvaging its honor before its people and the whole world....If it does not, a situation has been created which places us at a turning-point...paving the way for unending pressures, extortion and capitulation. The European jungle will become a no-man's-land of immense political dangers....We have no desire to quarrel with the Austrian Government or nation. Our concern is to bring about the release of our brethren from the U.S.S.R. and enable them to immigrate to Israel....But we cannot accept the Kreisky Government's statement and capitulation to terrorism. There is no room for compromise here. Naturally, transit procedures can always be altered, by mutual agreement, but not now, when this would be interpreted as signifying our acceptance of Austria's new policy....I would like to take this opportunity to express surprise at our Prime Minister's initiative in seeking to meet with Chancellor Kreisky. After his recent statements there is no justification for this....The speedy return to his post of our ambassador in Vienna is also surprising....

I am convinced that just as the Austrian Government cannot ignore our demand, we cannot compromise with it. The Chancellor's statement means placing further difficulties in the immigrants' way and helping those who wish to harm the Jewish people, whether they are the Soviet authorities or the Arab leaders. I doubt that the Austrian Government can withstand the pressure of enlightened public opinion throughout the world as well as the massive objection of the Jewish world....The Austrian Government must restore the previous situation and refrain from surrendering to brutal kidnapers....

...

J. Goldschmidt (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the popular saying: "God protect me from my friends, I can take care of my enemies myself," seems to apply to the Austrian Government's despicable decision, which strikes a blow at a long-standing friendship with the State of Israel as well as at human rights....In the past Austria has extended a helping hand to the immigrants from the U.S.S.R. in their flight from a repressive regime to the land of their fathers....This was

not the first time that terrorists took hostages....Were the Government and the Security Services totally unprepared for an event of this kind? Governments and bodies which have capitulated to terror in the past have learned that this exposes them to further extortion. But Austria has gone further in its capitulation than any other country, having agreed to a long-term change in its policy....Those murderers received more from the Austrian Government than they had imagined in their wildest dreams...for not only did Austria agree to close its gates to the imprisoned and afflicted Soviet Jews, it adhered to its agreement with the terrorists, thereby legitimizing them as partners in an agreement, whatever the circumstances....

From Israel's parliament we must protest against this decision and the policy of weakness it represents. We must express the hope that sense and humane sensitivity will prevail, and that the Austrian Government will shake off its weakness and adopt the path of honor and adherence to firm principles of truth and justice. This House must express the firm resolve of the Jewish people, whether in Israel or abroad, to continue to work for the immigration of Russian Jewry to Israel, their homeland...come what may.

The Austrian rulers appear to have a short memory. This generation has known people whose hearts were open to the suffering of others, as well as people who hardened their hearts and closed their borders.... In us, the Jewish people, are fulfilled the words of the prophet Obadiah, who said to hostile Edom two thousand years ago: "Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossways, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst 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." Mankind remembers very well today which countries and people acted in accordance with Obadiah's injunction and which did not. We have not yet abandoned the hope that the Austrian Government will see the error of its way and set matters right, returning to the path we know and esteem from the past.

J. Hazan (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, what happened in Austria, with Chancellor Kreisky's capitulation to two Arab terrorists who threatened to kill a group of defenseless Jews, goes beyond all human morality and political logic. Chancellor Kreisky said that he wished to avoid a repetition of what happened in Munich in 1972, but he did something far more serious. He repeated what happened in Munich in 1938....His decision was not merely another in a series of capitulations to the terrorism of Arab gangs by various governments. It inaugurated a new era in the relations between unprincipled gunmen and sovereign governments...showing that the latter may alter their entire policy under the threat of terrorism. Henceforth there will be no need for any political struggle or the mobilization of public opinion.

Unprincipled gunmen will determine the policies of sovereign states....

Ours is a nation with a historical memory which gives us no rest. A shadow as heavy and bitter as death hovers over post-Anschluss Austria, although it in no way impairs our gratitude to and appreciation of the Austrian nation and Government after the overthrow of the Nazi regime for their help to the Jewish immigrants from the U.S.S.R. We know that they owe us this. But in our world there are many who do not pay their debts....The Austrians also fulfilled their duty to humanity during the Hungarian uprising and when the Czechoslovakian spring was stifled....But by one action Chancellor Kreisky has erased this entire splendid tradition, the new, democratic Austrian tradition, and everyone opposes him. As a socialist, I am ashamed of this action of his. As a Jew, I am frightened by it. He, as a Jew, aided an attempt to injure his brethren who are fighting for their national freedom. By so doing he has struck a heavy blow to all freedom fighters in the world.

I do not believe that the Austrian Chancellor did what he did in the cool and calculated way statesmen weave new policies for their countries. I would like to believe that it was a moment of weakness on the part of a brave and intelligent statesman. But Chancellor Kreisky and his Government must be made aware of the fact that the struggle for our right as a nation and for free immigration from the U.S.S.R. constitutes our struggle to live as a free nation. There can be no compromise on our part. The situation must revert to what it was before the shameful capitulation to the terrorists.

Chancellor Kreisky is known to be a brave man. Even brave men stumble and fall sometimes. He is known to be an intelligent statesman, but even intelligent people can err on occasion. He can regain respect for himself, his Government and his nation...only if he displays the courage to change his decision....Agreements made under the pressure and threats of terrorism are revocable under every system of law....The criticism which has been levelled against our Prime Minister for wanting to go to Austria and meet with Chancellor Kreisky is unjustified, in my view....The battle is for something as fundamental as the right of Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel, and whoever can help must do so. It is a fight for our very existence....I think her action is a courageous one, and I can only hope that it proves successful....

...

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, this is an historic occasion and one cannot avoid historical associations. The Jewish people's relations with Austria have had their ups and downs. Vienna inspired Theodor Herzl with the Zionist vision of our national redemption. It was there that the Zionist Congress met, but it was also there that the greatest enemy of the Jewish people, Adolf Hitler, hatched his schemes....In 1937 Austria succumbed to Nazi terror-

ism....Today the pendulum of history has brought Austria from the darkness of Nazism into the light of civilization. The physical and emotional ravages of Nazism have been repaired...and Austria has once more begun to take a leading role in world culture. The victims of the Holocaust have forgiven and forgotten Austria, perhaps too quickly.

The Austrian Government helped the refugees and the former inmates of the concentration camps after the war, and thereby Austria atoned to some extent for its black past, it being only natural that that country, whose geographical position made this possible, should help the surviving remnant of the Jews....Austria began to rebuild itself, but great achievements can be lost in a moment. The Austrian Chancellor is shaking off his humanitarian duty now because, he maintains, it has become dangerous. Let others endanger themselves now, he says.... Will Austria once again be the first to succumb to terrorism? Other governments have also made shameful deals with terrorists...but none has yet changed its policy line....This time the world will not let Austria capitulate....

Naturally, there is no moral validity to an assurance given under pressure and at gunpoint....Anyone who adheres to an assurance given in those conditions indicates that he wanted to be forced to take that action....Chancellor Kreisky has struck two serious blows at the Jewish people...first by possibly blocking the path of those remnants of the nation who are struggling to survive, and secondly by granting terrorism a great achievement just when the whole world is trying to find a way to fight and restrict terrorism....We appeal to the Austrian people to let us pass through their country...and not to put obstacles in the way of the great national effort of this century, namely, the Jewish nation's endeavor to rehabilitate itself and gather in its exiles. The shameful decision should be revoked and the Austrian Government should annul the steps it has taken and intends to take, returning to the fold of civilized countries....

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the recent events in Austria have proved once again that the absence of peace in the Middle East causes Israel's growing isolation in the international arena and that everything must be done to attain a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab countries. As long as the Government occupies Arab land and deprives the Palestinian Arab nation of its rights...it undermines the chances of peace....The 74 nations which met in Algiers resolved that Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories so that a just peace may be achieved in the Middle East....They also stated that the existing situation is intolerable and that the African countries should draw the obvious conclusions. Several African countries have already cut off ties with Israel. Israel is becoming increasingly isolated in Europe too....

Attempts by Government circles to claim that the recent incident was Soviet-inspired or engineered...merely indicates their affinity with the most extreme war-mongering circles of the U.S. We reject this anti-Soviet incitement utterly....It is evident to any thinking person that the entire attack on the immigrants was an anti-Soviet provocation engineered by those extreme circles in the Western world...whose actions merely damage the cause they claim to represent and harm the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab people for its just national rights....The truth is that the U.S.S.R. is the best friend of both the Arab and the Israeli nations, but it opposes occupation and the negation of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people. It should be noted that the Palestinian organizations expressed their reservations about the kidnaping, as they have in other cases when planes were hijacked by extremist elements....

We realize that prior to the Knesset elections the Ma'arach and the Likud are in competition as to who is more anti-Soviet. But there is little sense in it all. This policy does not serve Israel's true national interests. There is no other solution to the problems confronting Israel than a change of current policy to one of peace.

...
S. Tamir (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, we must examine the nature of the action, the character of the person who took it and the Jewish-Israeli response. The action is an attempt...to stifle Soviet Jewry in its endeavor to attain freedom and the State of Israel, as well as to stifle Israel, which needs Soviet Jews as much as they need it. We experienced similar attempts to block the free passage of our people between 1941 and 1944...making countries like Turkey, which refused to permit this, as responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands as the countries of Europe and the free world, which refused to take in people who had managed to escape. It is not at all clear whether the step taken by the Austrian Government...was demanded by the two murderers in the train or initiated by the Austrian Government itself....Nor do we know what was the U.S.S.R.'s precise role in all this....

Our relations with Austria go back quite a long way....Austria was annexed to Germany without a hint of opposition. It has enthusiastically accepted annexation by totalitarian, fascist and Nazi regimes, evincing anti-Semitism on the popular as well as the government level...and it is perhaps no coincidence that Satan himself, the father of all evil, Hitler, was Austrian, as were several of his henchmen....But the action that was taken today was taken by Social-Democratic Austria, not by Nazi Austria....The humane, social-democratic Austria of Kreisky—Mrs. Golda Meir's colleague in the Socialist International—is a party to conferences and declarations about the brotherhood of man and humanitarian values....But where relations with Israel are concerned it

seems that one of the most dangerous regimes is one headed by a complex-ridden Jewish socialist....

The facts of the situation are not as grave as they seem, however. There is anger at supposedly neutral Austria's decision throughout the free world....The step Israel should take now is to sever all ties with Austria immediately...which would oblige it to give in to world public opinion...and the pressure of the U.S. Congress....Instead, however, we despatch our ambassador back to Austria post haste, and Golda Meir, our Prime Minister, being in another country, has to interrupt her mission and ask Kreisky to receive her....I fear that the Prime Minister and her colleagues are unable to see the situation clearly. Israel's obligation today is to speak clearly...being fully aware of the power it commands....Anyone who fails to do so is evidently cowardly, weak and vacillating....

(Shouts from the floor.)

What we must do now is recall our ambassador, unilaterally cut off relations with Austria and demand the immediate restoration of our basic rights, for if we do not we will be jointly responsible with Austria for the grave effects on immigration from the U.S.S.R., with their resultant impact on Israel and our struggle against murderous gangs in the future....

(Shouts from the floor.)

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the capitulation of the Austrian Government to the two terrorists is so shameful, so ridiculous and so fantastic that it is unbelievable. I do not believe that the Austrian Government gave in to someone. I believe that it gave in to itself. I think that for a long time it has wanted to rid itself of the need to supply services to the immigrants and guarantee their safety. It used this incident as an excuse. Austria was granted the historic right of being the country through which immigrants passed on their way to their new homeland, of being able to help people realize the basic human right of going to the country where they wished to live. The fact that those people are Jews merely heightens Austria's duty and right.

Let us state quite clearly that our historical account with Austria has not been settled....Like East Germany, Austria has not paid reparations to the victims of Nazism, despite its active role in their suffering....Yet Israel's Government has ignored that aspect of Austria's policy.... When Adolf Hitler returned to his Austrian homeland in the spring of 1936 he was greeted with tears of joy and public demonstrations of support....There was some opposition to Hitler in Germany. There was none in Austria....Austrians served in the Wehrmacht and the S.S. How did we agree to ignore all that for reasons of political expediency? How could we let Austria evade its moral and material responsibility?

Today the Austrians are asking why they should be the ones to extend aid to the immigrants from the U.S.S.R....Our answer should be that...by a brave humanitarian gesture, despite dangers and unpleasantness, they could do something to eventually wipe out that stain. The fact that a different Austria exists today, headed by someone who really was a victim of the Nazis, does not cancel out the past....Even a small country must act in accordance with humanitarian principles, must firmly and proudly adhere to sacred values....

The capitulation of the European countries to terrorism supposedly undertaken in the name of the Palestinian nation would not be possible were there not growing support among them for the unfortunate Palestinian nation. The Israel Government's unwillingness to provide a reasonable solution to the Palestinian national problem or to agree to the formation of a responsible Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories helps the extremist terrorist organizations to represent themselves as the sole spokesmen of the Palestinians. In that situation it is easy for them to win support, gain exoneration for their acts of barbarism and obtain moral and practical aid from a wide variety of European bodies.

We continue killing mosquitoes instead of draining the swamp, conducting an unending war against small groups of terrorists. That is a necessary and unavoidable war, but it will not end unless we solve the problem by finding a reasonable basis for coexistence between the State of Israel and a responsible Palestinian entity. At the same time, we cannot leave the defense of the immigrants in the hands of others, and must rely on ourselves....The moment someone decides to immigrate to Israel he is potentially an Israeli citizen and must be protected by the State of Israel...openly, no matter in what country he is....We must, therefore, demand that the Austrians fulfill their obligations without any evasiveness or compromise, we must protect our potential immigrants and we must cut terrorism's political pipeline by solving the Palestinian problem.

...

A. Eliav (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker, Knesset Members, mention has been made here of our long, complicated and bitter account with Austria....I endorse the sentiments expressed here by the Deputy Prime Minister, Yigal Allon, about the two murderers and their route to the Austrian border. I say this as someone who has travelled that route many times....Even in the past there were several security checks along the route...all of them thorough, in which the carriages were separated from one another....It seems highly unlikely that armed terrorists could have been on that train without official knowledge....

We do have an account to settle with Austria, as it does with itself.... This does not begin with the Holocaust. The history of persecution and anti-Semitism in Austria is very long, dating from even before the

Middle Ages. There was a different Austria, though, the one of "His Imperial Majesty," which was the first country in Europe to grant the Jews civil rights. But that was followed by an Austria which was an integral part of the Nazi machine....The Jewish people cannot forget that. That was followed by yet another Austria, one which aided Jewish refugees and the illegal immigration to Palestine. This was followed by the Austria of the 1950s, which aided Jewish refugees from other Eastern European countries, not the U.S.S.R....In my personal contacts with the Austrian man in the street I have seen people who wish to fulfill their basic humanitarian duty...even today....But the demand that the decision be revoked must come first and foremost from the Austrian people themselves....

We have an account to settle with the Austrian Government, which comprises social-democratic and socialist parties. At this point I would like to say that I am proud to be together with the Austrian socialist party in the Socialist International...and what MK Tamir has said is a distortion of the facts....Austrian socialists were in the forefront of the long and difficult struggle to enable Soviet Jewry to leave the U.S.S.R. and immigrate to Israel....And now we have an account to settle with Kreisky. How did that man, as a Prime Minister, an Austrian and a Jew...dare to sign that decision, which, I fear, he initiated...against his own people? Bruno Kreisky is not a religious person, but the day will come when he will have to account for his sins....

M. Baram (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Ma'arach (Labor-Mapam), Gahal, Mafdal, Aguda, Independent Liberal, National List, Progress and Development, Po'alei Aguda, Cooperation and Amity, Free Center, Israel Radicals, Moked, Maki and Blue-Red party groups, I hereby submit the following concluding resolution regarding the Government's statement on the Austrian Government's decision following the kidnaping of the immigrants from the U.S.S.R.:

A. With outrage and anxiety the Knesset has heard the Austrian Government's decision to end transit services previously provided to groups of Jews immigrating from the U.S.S.R. to Israel.

B. The Knesset affirms that the assurance to cease providing those services was given as a result of the threat made by the emissaries of an Arab terrorist organization to murder four innocent people whom they had kidnaped. An assurance given in those conditions is null and void. Its implementation would not only lead to capitulation to extortionist violence but would also strike a mortal blow at the bases of human morality and international justice. It is an urgent moral duty to revoke an assurance of that nature unequivocally.

C. Accordingly, the Knesset appeals to the Austrian Government to maintain in full all the transit services previously accorded to groups of

Jews returning from the U.S.S.R. to the historic homeland of the Jewish people.

D. The Knesset expresses its deep appreciation of enlightened public opinion, as well as of scientists and statesmen in many countries, who repeatedly expressed their support for the right of Soviet Jewry to return to Zion freely and called for the revocation of the hasty decision which could impair the fulfillment of that human right.

E. The Knesset notes the Government's statement, which was made by Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon on 1 October 1973—5 Tishrei 5734.

This Knesset resolution will be conveyed to parliaments and governments.

...

(MK Baram's concluding resolution is adopted.)

The Yom Kippur War

Introduction

At 2 p.m. on 6 October 1973, the Jewish Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur—the combined forces of Egypt and Syria attacked Israel simultaneously. In the south the Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal, in the north the Syrians invaded the Golan Heights. The Government of Israel was taken by almost complete surprise—only in the early hours of that day had the imminence of war been recognized, and only at 9 a.m. had the order to mobilize the reserves, the bulk of Israel's forces, been issued. Evidently, this did not allow sufficient time for mobilization and transportation to the front.

Both the Egyptians and the Syrians had initial successes, gaining territory and inflicting grievous losses, particularly on the Armored Corps and the Air Force. After a few days, on October 9, a successful counter-attack was launched in the north. A parallel counter-attack in the south, aimed at "transferring the war to enemy territory," failed conspicuously, however.

It was only during the night of October 15/16 that the first Israeli troops were able to establish a bridgehead west of the Canal. On the afternoon of October 16 the Knesset, recalled from recess, met for its first sitting since the outbreak of the war. The beginning of the sitting was delayed for a few minutes, until Golda Meir felt absolutely certain that it would not be detrimental to the safety of the troops west of the Canal if she were to mention them in her statement.

Sitting 461 of the Seventh Knesset

16 October 1973 (20 Tishrei 5734)

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: I hereby open this special Knesset Session....Let us all stand in silence and recall with broken hearts the hundreds of our heroic soldiers who fell in the bitter battle against the enemy who forced this bloody war—which is still continuing—upon us, stealthily and deviously initiating it on the sacred Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

Our casualties, like those who preceded them in Israel's other wars since the establishment of the state and beforehand, sacrificed themselves so that others might live and the freedom and independence of our people and state continue. We bow our heads in sorrow and pain in the face of their undaunted courage and supreme sacrifice. On behalf of the Knesset and the Israeli nation we extend our condolences to the bereaved families.

(The Knesset Members stand in memory of the fallen soldiers.)

We pray for the recovery of the wounded...and hope that our prisoners of war will return to their homes and families speedily and in good health. To our soldiers who are still fighting, on land, sea and air, we send our warmest wishes for fortitude, for the sake of our nation and our people. The eyes of all Israel everywhere...turn to you in trust and hope. The hearts of all of us trust that the Rock of Israel will scatter before you the enemy that has risen up against us, in the words of the prophet: "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."

The Government's Statement on the Situation

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, since the Day of Atonement, for the past eleven days, we have been engaged in a cruel war. This war was forced upon us on two fronts simultaneously. Fierce battles were fought in which the IDF displayed the full force of its strength and courage. Showing both ignorance and viciousness, the enemy chose to launch his attack on the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year for Jews, knowing that many of our people were engaged in prayer in synagogues then. Because of his ignorance, the enemy did not know that when lives are at stake laws may be broken. We will not forget the wonderful and stirring sight of thousands of young men leaving the synagogues quietly, still wrapped in their prayer-shawls, and soon afterwards setting off with their military packs on their backs. They went to their units at the fronts accompanied by prayers for the welfare of all our soldiers and a deep faith in the victory of the IDF and the future of the Jewish people. Our soldiers fought like lions. The nefarious attack was checked. The enemy received heavy blows, but the war is still continuing. There is not a day without fighting. And every soldier who falls in battle is precious not only to his family but to us all. The effort to check the enemy has caused many precious losses.

I will not go into details about the situation on the various fronts now. I will only say that on the Syrian front we have overcome the aggressors, pushing them back to behind the ceasefire lines. The Syrian army has taken a beating and our forces have crossed the ceasefire lines. An Iraqi division which participated in the fighting suffered heavy losses at our hands. The IDF struck at Syria's strategic infrastructure. But the fighting on the Egyptian front is still continuing.

On the southern front the war is still in full swing. After the initial battles our forces succeeded in the defensive stage. Two days ago there were extensive tank battles and the Egyptian offensive was checked. There are indications that the enemy's initiative has been stopped. As

we speak, IDF forces are also operating on the western side of the Suez Canal. You do not expect to receive a detailed account of the IDF's battle plans from me...The nation sends its best wishes to the IDF, its soldiers and officers.

Our people have fought and are fighting with the utmost courage. Fighting of that kind can be grasped only if one remembers the nature of our youngsters, only if one understands that our people know that they are fulfilling an historic Jewish mission as the continuers of a Jewish tradition of defending their homes, families and country. The IDF units in the fray are displaying not only first-rate fighting ability, resourcefulness and courage...but also the highest level of comradeship and devotion; our defenders are convinced of the justice of their war.

The IDF is not only the army of the people in the deepest sense of the term. Every home in Israel is intimately linked with the entire IDF as well as with one or several of its close relatives serving in our Army. At the same time, not only the family of fighting men, but the rear, the entire nation, is one loving, concerned family. Hundreds of families whose loved ones went out to defend the nation and the country have received the bitterest news of all, that their son, husband, father or brother will never return. I do not have the courage to try to comfort them. I will only repeat our truth: they are all the sons of all of us. The pain is felt by us all. Some of our soldiers have been captured by the enemy. I would like to make it clear that we will not accept any ceasefire agreement which does not include the return of all our prisoners of war. Some of our soldiers are missing. We must not lose hope that they will be found alive. To the wounded we send heartfelt wishes for a full and speedy recovery. Dear families, the assurance of our nation's existence is still subject to the painful fact that our wonderful, brave and pure sons must serve as its defense wall. When peace comes, it will be because of them. May we all be worthy of them.

Knesset Members, who can dare deny the fact that Egypt and Syria launched the vicious attack on Israel? Will there once again be those who would dare deny the truth that the responsibility for the terrible war in which we are currently engaged rests on the Governments of Egypt and Syria? I repeat this fact because even in the midst of the fighting we are concerned about the moral dilemmas and the ethical, human and political responsibilities which governments accept when they decide to embark on war and bloodshed. The Governments of Egypt and Syria will not be cleansed of the shame and consequences of this responsibility.

The Arab countries massed immense forces for the attack. I will give you the main figures for the Arab armies up until October 15. Egypt had 650,000 soldiers, 650 planes and 2,500 tanks. Syria had 150,000 soldiers, 330 planes and 2,000 tanks. Iraq (only as regards its part in the war) had 230 tanks and 3 fighter-plane formations. Jordan (as regards

its part in the war) had 80 tanks. Morocco (as regards its part in the war) had 1,500 soldiers with armored vehicles. In the area of ground-to-air missiles, Egypt had 150 SAM2, SAM3 and SAM6 batteries, Syria had 35 SAM2, SAM3 and SAM6 batteries. Egypt had 2,000 cannon of 120 mm. or more, and Syria had 1,300. We have received information indicating that additional Arab countries are about to send forces of various sizes to join in the war against Israel.

One does not need a vivid imagination to assess what Israel's situation would have been had our borders been those of 4 June 1967. Anyone who cannot imagine such a shocking situation is invited to turn their attention to what happened on the northern border in the Golan Heights during the first days of this war. Syria's aspirations were not limited to liberating a given area, but including reinstating the batteries of guns directed against the settlements in Galilee as well as putting anti-aircraft missiles in position so that its forces could invade the center of Israel. Neither does one need a vivid imagination to assess what would have happened to Israel if Egypt's army had defeated the IDF in the Sinai and advanced towards Israel's borders. I will not waste the Knesset's time by quoting the statements made by the Arab leaders and their spokesmen regarding the objectives of the despicable attack they initiated. We have no doubt that this is a war for Israel's very existence....

The forces of Egypt and Syria, supported by other countries...set out to reach the borders of 4 June 1967 and thence to destroy the State of Israel. The Arab rulers claim that they merely wished to reach the borders of 4 June 1967, but we know what their true intentions were...and must make this clear to the world....

The U.S.S.R. seeks to benefit from the war against Israel. We still recall the ignoble part it played in creating the conditions which led to the Six Day War...and the ensuing developments. The Soviets rehabilitated, trained and equipped the Egyptian and Syrian armies....In early 1970 the U.S.S.R. established fighter-plane squadrons and batteries of ground-to-air missiles in Egypt. In August 1970 it advanced them to the Canal area. In addition, the U.S.S.R. trained and prepared the Arab armies to attack...giving them extensive aid as well as a constant flow of materiel during the actual fighting....The U.S.S.R.'s policy has not been merely unfriendly, it is irresponsible as regards Israel, the region and the world.

A great deal has been said about a ceasefire....To date no such proposal has been made to Israel...probably because the Egyptians and Syrians have not yet taken a sufficient beating....When this happens, "volunteers" will doubtless rush forward to rescue them by proposing a ceasefire, accompanied by frenetic activity at the U.N. and the Security Council. As in the past, however, the ceasefire will depend on the strength of the IDF.

On the ninth day of the war we learned that an elite Jordanian armored brigade comprising 80 tanks had been sent from Jordan to Syria and placed at the disposal of the Iraqi command. I think it is superfluous to stress that we have no desire to clash with Jordan, and are still convinced that it is in Jordan's interests not to engage in another war with Israel. Jordan has announced that it is "tying Israel's forces up along the border in order to aid the Syrians," and we have drawn the attention of certain political circles to the gravity of statements of this kind, which could lead to unforeseen developments....

As in times of danger in the past, once again an embargo has been imposed on arms shipments to Israel....France is adhering to its embargo, despite the fact that Libya's Mirage planes are being used against Israel, as we predicted would happen....Britain has also held up supplies which we urgently need. All this gives rise to thoughts about the cynicism and hypocrisy of the world's policy when a small, besieged and embattled country is involved. As always, and particularly now, the friendship and aid of the U.S. is dear to us....We have no doubt that the U.S. Administration is concerned by recent developments, committed as it is to a policy of peace....We are convinced that the U.S. desires Israel's good and that its friendship for us is not at the expense of the just interests of other countries, including the Arabs. We are trying to make our needs and policy clear to the U.S. As always, we appreciate the warm identification and the help of U.S. Jewry in this difficult time. On behalf of the Israeli nation, I express our gratitude to the U.S. President and people who, in accordance with the American tradition, have helped a country which is battling against aggression.

In view of the massive quantities of weapons reaching the Arab countries from the U.S.S.R...the U.S. has responded to our requests for arms....We do not want anyone to fight for us, but we are entitled to aid in our self-defense....Taking into account the huge forces confronting us, we must make a supreme effort to finance the costs of the war....We have therefore decided on a war loan which will be imposed on everyone by law, in accordance with the principles of social justice, i.e., persons with higher incomes will pay more than those with lower incomes....We have also appealed for war bonds to be purchased in amounts over and above those required by law...and I am pleased to note that there has been an encouraging response from the entire nation. All the money thus collected will be used for the war effort....

As far as this is possible, we do not wish to neglect vital aspects of our economy. World Jewry has helped us in this...once more showing its solidarity with us in times of need...and undertaking to fund our social and development budgets....I would like to note the display of identification with the state of its Arab citizens, expressions of volunteering being found in every sector of the population, from remote villages in the north to Beduin encampments in the Negev....Ours is a democratic

country. Freedom of speech and criticism are embedded in Israeli society. In the situation in which we find ourselves questions are inevitable. There is always room for criticism....The day is not far off when we will be free to deal with that in the Knesset and elsewhere, but I hope that we all—Government and Opposition alike—will not divert our attention now from the main national effort, and that in everything we do and say we will adhere to the central point, our national existence and unity....

Our aim in this war, which unites the entire nation, is, simply, to repel the enemy's forces on both fronts. By virtue of the wonderful strength and spirit of the IDF, and the Jewish people's identification with Israel, we will attain our aim....We have never regarded war as a way of solving problems in our region. Since the establishment of the state, we have been convinced that negotiations are the only, the shortest and the most efficient way of attaining peace. Now, while the fighting is continuing, we will not go into debates about policy aims and problems. The defeat of the enemy is the precondition for guaranteeing our future. We will concentrate our efforts on repelling and crushing the enemy. For that purpose let us strengthen our unity. When people ask me: "When will it end?" I reply: "When we defeat the enemy." For our part, we will do everything, I repeat, everything, to succeed in the shortest possible time, and our spirits shall not fall. That is the true and responsible answer at this time.

M. Begin (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, leaders and Knesset Members, our first thoughts are for our sacred, heroic fighting boys. Some people say that the regular Army blocked the aggressor, stopped the enemy, averted the danger. What is the regular Army? It is our children, the boys whose lives have just begun, the youngsters who have not known exile, have not tasted servitude in foreign lands, who were born in freedom. They fought off a cruel foe who sought to kill them and their people, until reinforcements arrived. They are all holy, all heroes, all lustrous with the brightness of the horizon.

Our hearts are with the families of the fallen. We turn to you, our brothers and sisters, in fear and trembling. What value is there in words, even if they come from the heart, in the face of the sacrifice you have made for our people and our country? May God comfort you. The memory of your sons will endure forever in the history of our nation. They, together with their comrades in arms, went out to a war of salvation and redemption. From their sacred blood will spring Israel's deliverance. Their heroism and readiness to sacrifice themselves will serve as an example for Jewish youth not only in this generation but also in those to come. Because of sons such as these did our nation go forth from slavery to freedom; because of them it lives and will live. That is our consolation.

The battle is a difficult one. We must tell our people the truth. The war has not yet ended. We are facing a fateful trial in the history of our people. With God's help we will stand firm, repel the enemy, crush his aggressive strength, destroy his war machine, give Israel security and peace to our people.

Since the third watch of the night our soldiers have been operating on both sides of the Canal. We offer up a heartfelt prayer to the God of our fathers to guard our sons, the splendor of Israel, the highest expression of the renewed heroism of the Maccabees, and that the cry which echoes from generation to generation, ever since Israel went out of the house of bondage to its own land, shall be heard: "Rise up, O Lord, and thine enemies shall be scattered, and they that hate thee shall flee before thee."

In the house of representatives of a free, democratic country, the Opposition expresses a different view, assessment and conclusion. That is its national task and responsibility. There is a time, however, when the Opposition expresses national unity. Now is that time. From noontime on the Day of Atonement, when we recited the prayer of remembrance and joined in our hearts with those who are no longer, who were murdered and slaughtered and burned alive and drowned and slain by an evil enemy while the whole world, both East and West, remained indifferent in the face of all the strange deaths in the heart of Europe; when we recited that prayer, than which there is none holier, on the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, and were told by the Prime Minister and Minister Galili of the enemy's intention to attack us in the south and the north and try to reach the heart of the country by an armored assault, from that moment on we were resolved in our minds to defer all the questions, and there are questions, about what happened in the period prior to the Day of Atonement, until after the victory, until it has become evident to all that Israel has once again defeated its enemies. During the ten days of the war we have not budged from that position. We shall not budge from it.

What did, and do, our enemies and their supporters want...? On 12 October 1973, Heikal wrote: "I have not seen anyone as happy this week as Vinogradov, the Soviet ambassador to Cairo....On hearing that Soviet weapons aided the Egyptian troops to cross the Canal he said that he regarded this moment as the peak of his term in Egypt." Hundreds of tanks are crossing the Suez Canal, thousands of cannon are spouting fire, soon hundreds or thousands of people will die, and the Soviet ambassador is happier than he has been at any time during his term in Egypt....He knows that Soviet weapons will enable the invading armies to cross Israel's borders and penetrate to its very heart...there to kill, slaughter and destroy....So he is happy....On 23 August 1939, another Soviet ambassador was happy when a secret pact was signed to divide Europe and the world up between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. After so many years, such terrible Holocausts and such dreadful

wars, the episode in Cairo once again repeats the intrigue directed against the Jewish people....

The destruction of our forces...leaving the way open for such other objectives as land and political gains...is the foremost aim of Egypt, its supporters and its allies. Had they been successful, what would have become of this brave little nation? What would have become of the surviving remnant of a devastated people? There is no longer any doubt: all that stands between our destruction and the objective of our enemies is our forces. But if, in a holy, defensive war, we destroy our enemies' war machines, no harm will befall the Egyptian and Syrian peoples. They will live, and in peace. No one in Israel seeks to hurt a single man, woman or child in any Arab country. That is the moral, fateful, historic difference between us....

Against the background of this war of salvation and redemption...there have been splendid displays of heroism, aid and humanity, as well as of shame and perfidy. Britain violated its contracts with Israel, refusing to send the equipment needed to prevent those armies from destroying our forces and the surviving remnant of our people....Because England refused to honor the Balfour Declaration and closed the gates to this country in the years prior to the Second World War six million Jews paid with their lives....And now England is withholding equipment which is essential for the defense of the surviving remnant....

The period prior to the Second World War will not recur. A new Jew has arisen here who will fight and, with God's help, be victorious. But for Britain it is another dark period in the history of its relations with the Jewish people....It is a repetition of the policy of appeasement adopted at Munich....The withholding of equipment from a small, embattled country which is facing its enemies as well as the world Power which supports them is a disgrace! I hope that the British people will persuade its Government to change its policy....

France, which we have loved, which is the birthplace of the great revolution, of Jewish emancipation, of Emile Zola, which was our ally only fifteen years ago, not only placed an embargo on weapons for Israel but at this very time continues to send destructive weapons to our enemies, for materialistic reasons....I hope that those Frenchmen who are loyal to the truth, to friendship with Israel and to the love of freedom will convince their Government to alter this disgraceful policy....The policy of appeasement was and remains contemptible when the abandonment of a small country is involved....Do not England and France realize that behind this aggressive policy stands a Power which is interested in breaking through the Suez Canal, linking its navies in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, extending itself throughout the Persian Gulf, gaining control of Somalia and Aden and completely

changing the balance of power between the enslaved and the free worlds...?

In view of these developments we must express our admiration for and gratitude to the U.S...which has grasped that the survival of Israel is at stake....But behind this struggle is the issue of freedom or slavery, progress or bondage, perpetual war or the hope of peace for all nations, great and small. That is the common interest of the U.S. and this small nation. That is also our mutual understanding and aid....We thank the U.S. President, the Secretary of State, our friend Senator Jackson, the overwhelming majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives, and public opinion throughout the U.S., not only among our coreligionists but also among the vast majority of Christians, which has united around this small, brave, embattled nation which is fighting for the highest human ideals....

Our policy is to win the war...and this view is shared by everyone within the nation and in this parliament....We must be united behind our fighting forces. We must be brave in our pain and sorrow....We must make sure that we intensify our firepower, increase by two- three- and four-fold the number of our tanks and their crews, of our cannon and planes, of our personal equipment, so that we can overcome the quantitative disproportion between the enemy and us which has been created by the U.S.S.R. during the last six years....Further, let it be known that aggression annuls any borders which have been crossed, whether as ceasefire or as armistice lines, whether with consent or without it....Once an international agreement has been violated by the enemy and lines have been crossed...they need no longer be honored by the side which has been attacked....This is an established principle in international law...for aggressors must be punished....The fateful battle for our future is still continuing. With the help of the Lord of Hosts we will be victorious and salvation will be achieved through the devotion of the best of our sons....

...

I. Raphael (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, eternal honor and glory are the lot of our sons and our younger brothers, who were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions, who gave their lives and died the deaths of sacred heroes in repelling and smashing the enemies' assaults....Our hearts are with the bereaved families, the broken parents, the unfortunate widows, the orphaned children, the brothers and sisters, whose homes have become places of mourning. Today, the sorrow of the individual is shared by each one of us, by the entire nation. We extend wishes for a speedy recovery to our dear soldiers who have been wounded in battle and are fighting suffering and pain. Oh God, our king, faithful and merciful healer, heal them of all their wounds and afflictions, and grant them a full recovery.

It will not be long before the annals of the splendid heroism, sacrifice and resourcefulness of our fighting boys, who foiled the wicked schemes of those who sought to surprise us by great force on our holy day, when our people were in the synagogues in prayer and fasting, seeking forgiveness for ourselves and the nations of the world, are written. Much will yet be said, but for the moment silence is golden, for there are questions to be asked....But these must wait for the appropriate moment, after our victory, with God's help....The time will also come for drawing conclusions....For the present, we must close ranks and be united in our attempt to gain victory....

Now, as in the battle for our independence, our slogan must be that the whole country is the front....Throughout the nation, at home and abroad, there have been heartening exhibitions of the volunteering spirit which distinguishes us in our hour of need....In a trice the barriers between left and right, Orthodox and secular, extremists and moderates, fell....Our rabbis have sanctioned fighting on our holiest day when the existence of our people and our state is imperiled. Please take care not to give rise to additional and unnecessary transgressions of our holy law. Israel's Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Goren, the scroll of the law in his arms, is at the front with the soldiers, strengthening and encouraging them. This is a holy war for us....The Lord is surely with us....

We will yet settle our account with an obdurate and cynical world, most of which has once again refused to acknowledge facts and recognize the aggressor as such. We are weary of pointing an accusatory finger at the Soviet Power, which alone is responsible for the absence of peace in our region, having turned it into a huge arsenal...and making use of inferior nations in its own intrigues and disputes....It is responsible for the shedding of the blood of our sons. How can the supposedly enlightened countries of Europe, which witnessed the terrible Nazi Holocaust of our nation in their midst, ignore a fresh attempt to destroy the remnant of our nation by the incited Arab nations and withhold the means of defense from us? We will remember those countries' treacherous behavior to us in our hour of need, just as we will always remember the aid extended by the great American nation and its noble President, one of the righteous amongst the nations.

Men of conscience throughout the world know that we had no intention of launching an attack and renewing the war. We were waiting for peace negotiations, knowing that these would require us to pay a price....This vicious and sudden attack on us must oblige us to think once again about the nature of safe borders. Our obvious intention in this war is to push the assailant back across the lines and smash his aggressive power....In our prayers tomorrow morning we will, appropriately enough, beseech the Lord to save us for the sake of our martyrs and heroes....

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the nation is confused and astounded. Many families are mourning the death of their loved ones. A great deal of Jewish and Arab blood has been shed. We share in the grief of the widows, the orphans and the bereaved parents. We wish the wounded a speedy recovery. The nation has paid for the resumption of the war in blood and is now being asked to pay in coin. The first thing that the general public...wants is for this bloody war to end....We Communists, as well as many others, believe that the renewal of the war could have been averted, that there were many opportunities for establishing peace between Israel and the Arab countries, but the Government rejected all the various peace initiatives which were mooted in recent years...preferring to perpetuate the status quo of occupation, its intractable aim being to annex the occupied Arab land to the State of Israel and destroy the rights of the Palestinian Arab nation.

This policy...was expressed in systematic activities designed to create facts in the occupied territories. The "Galili Document"...contained no peace plan, merely the intensified colonization of the occupied territories...and constituted a new peak in blocking every path to a political solution of the conflict....The Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, has said on several occasions that a peace agreement can be reached with the Arab countries provided Israel agrees to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967, adding: "I prefer the absence of peace while retaining Sharm el-Sheikh to peace without it." Other Ministers have expressed similar sentiments...while at the same time the neighboring Arab countries voiced their readiness for peace with Israel in return for its withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967.

The Government stopped its ears to every peace proposal, relying on Israel's military superiority and American backing. Consequently, the Government is responsible for the fact that Israel has not attained peace and security...and for the deterioration into war...as we Communists warned would happen....The situation has proved that the Government erred in all its calculations. It has been proved that extensive territories do not provide security, that continued occupation leads merely to continued bloodshed and that the Arab peoples do not accept the occupation of their land. It has been proved that the Government was completely cut off from international developments and revolutionary processes in the Arab world. The Government abandoned Israel's security on the altar of its aspiration to territorial expansion and in order to serve the interests of Washington's rulers, which are those of greedy billionaires, not of Israel. The U.S.S.R., on the other hand, has repeatedly proposed a political solution, seeking to establish a just and lasting peace which will assure the sovereign existence, security and rights of both the State of Israel and the Arab countries....

The Government's policy has led to the dangerous isolation of Israel. Even after the resumption of fighting additional countries severed

their diplomatic ties with Israel...The Government thought it could disregard the resolutions of the U.N...but it has been proved wrong in this, thereby bringing disaster on Israel...We Communists are always ready to defend Israel's existence and security and our nation's just rights...But is the present war really one of survival for us, as the Prime Minister has claimed? That is not true. Even now the neighboring Arab countries are prepared to reach a peace agreement with Israel on the basis of justice and the implementation of the Security Council decision...The major world bodies are prepared to guarantee the sovereign existence and security of Israel and all the countries of the region...Thus, the war is to maintain Israel's control of territory belonging to Syria, Egypt and Jordan...

We oppose sacrificing our young men to retain control of occupied territory...and by doing so we are expressing Israel's true national interests. Israeli patriotism is not expressed in the call for incessant wars, for the conquest of Damascus and Cairo and for bringing the Arab nations to their knees with the aid of American imperialists. That summons is one which jeopardizes Israel's entire existence. Let us decide to stop the fighting and establish peace on the basis of the full implementation of U.N. Resolution 242, including withdrawing from the territories occupied in 1967 and recognition of Israel's sovereign rights as well as the legal national rights of the Palestinian Arab people...Only peace will bring security...Let us put an end to the bloodshed and turn over a new leaf in the history of Israel and its relations with the Arab nations. That is Israel's interest, for which we will work incessantly.

...

S. Tamir (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...all we have, our entire essence, is concentrated now in the war which has been imposed on us by Moscow via Cairo and Damascus, the darkest, most destructive forces known to mankind since Nazism...Around and among us there is bereavement, the affliction of orphans and widows, the suffering of the wounded, the pain of the prisoners of war; while over against us is the danger no other nation has known as we have: to be or not to be. The recognition that this is the true state of things is the source of our spiritual strength, which has been turned into our might in war...United behind its army and adhering to it in love, hope and prayer, the nation is firm in its resolve to be victorious in order to live and maintain our national unity and heritage...

At this fateful hour we have decided to defer the questions which clamor to be asked and the inevitable clarifications which must be undertaken...We call on the Government to do likewise, until victory is ours...and to refrain from responding to queries which we have refrained from asking. Our unity in battle does not absolve us of our basic duty to define for ourselves, the nation and the whole world what our

aim is in the war which has been forced upon us. In three wars we repelled the enemy and smashed his military strength, gaining an interim ceasefire. Our objective in the Yom Kippur War must be to make peace. And when faced with an enemy who refuses any compromise...making peace means dictating peace.

There is no nation on this earth which yearns for peace as Israel does...and no nation deserves peace as Israel does. The lessons of the past, our obligations to the soldiers, the nation and our national future oblige us to strive for a situation in which Egypt and Syria ask the IDF for a ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War, and that Israel determines its conditions, which will be such as to assure a true and stable peace for our nation.

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the cruel war is still continuing. Our brethren in the north and the south are ready to fight, and at any moment may be called on to give their lives. Hundreds of families have just received the terrible news that their loved ones have fallen. Mothers and fathers, wives and children, fear for the fate of their dear ones. This is not the moment for arguments, although there are great and weighty questions...Israelis of all political views stand side by side facing danger now...they have the right to know that the nation is united behind them...Let the nation, the enemy and the whole world know that we are one people, that we will defend our state, that we are strong and that morale at the rear is high, as high as it is at the fronts...Let the world and the Arab peoples know that Israel's soldiers on both fronts are not imbued with a desire for vengeance...or the conquest of additional territory, though they are confident of their eventual victory. Their sole aspiration—as it is of all of us—is that this should be the last war...Above all, they, and we, aspire to peace, a peace in which we can live in security and justice.

We checked two mighty offensives deploying large quantities of the most up-to-date Soviet weaponry. On both fronts we still stand firm. Once again it has been proved that no geographical lines, mountains, water courses or fortifications...are a substitute for the courage, resourcefulness and fighting ability of our soldiers. The only true security border is the IDF... It is still too early to learn all the lessons of this war...The discussion of the last six years as to ideal security borders, peace and the annexation of territory will be resumed the day after this war ends, but we will not conduct it now. We will only say that there is no substitute for peace...The last ceasefire was the shortest of all, lasting only six and a quarter years...and the ceasefire lines...did not prevent war or bring peace.

Now we must fight and smash the forces attacking us. But even during the war we must remember that our principal aim is not to gain another barren military victory but to achieve one which will be linked to a peace plan initiated by us, particularly with regard to peace with the

Palestinian people....One cannot dictate peace. The very phrase is absurd. Peace must stem from the desire of two peoples to live in peace. The brilliant victory of the Six Day War...did not bring us peace. Let us ensure that when this war ends there will be peace. It does not depend on us alone, but it depends on us too. Let us do everything we can to ensure that this fourth war is our last....

...

M. Baram (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Ma'arach, Gahal, Mafdal, Aguda, Independent Liberal, National List, Progress and Development, Po'alei Aguda, Cooperation and Amity, Free Center, Israel Radicals and Moked party groups, as well as Knesset Members Shalom Cohen and Shaki, I hereby propose the following concluding resolution to the debate on the Government's statement regarding the situation:

The Knesset has heard the Prime Minister's statement, discussed it and resolved as follows:

A. In sorrow and love, the Knesset commemorates the heroic soldiers of the IDF, who gave their lives in defense of the nation and the state facing the aggressive forces of the enemy on the southern and northern fronts.

B. The Knesset extends the condolences of the entire nation to the bereaved families. The memory of the sacred heroes will live forever in the heart of the nation.

C. The Knesset extends wishes for a speedy and full recovery to the soldiers who have been wounded in battle and hopes that the prisoners of war may soon return to their homes.

D. The Knesset calls on the entire nation to stand united behind the Army, which is fighting to repel the aggressive forces of the enemy, in order to give Israel victory, security and peace.

A. Verdiger (Po'alei Aguda): With the help of the Lord, God of Israel.

M. Baram (Ma'arach): E. The Knesset expresses its esteem for all the free nations which stood behind embattled Israel and are helping it in its fight for its freedom and its future.

F. The Knesset condemns the withholding of equipment from Israel, which is defending itself against the aggression of its enemies, by Britain and France, while the enemy receives an ever-increasing flow of arms and equipment from the U.S.S.R.

G. The Knesset expresses its gratitude to the U.S.A., its nation, President, Government and Congress, for their support for Israel and the justice of its war against aggression and attempts to destroy it.

H. The Knesset applauds the stand taken by the Jewish people throughout the world, once again proving its identification with the Israeli nation in this testing time.

...

The Vote

Those in favor of MK Baram's proposal 84

Those against 3

(MK Baram's concluding proposal is adopted.)

Response to U.S. Appeal for a Ceasefire

Introduction

When, a week later, the Knesset convened once more, the fortunes of war had undergone a fundamental change. In the north Israeli troops had advanced beyond the pre-war ceasefire lines to within forty kilometers (approximately 30 miles) of Damascus. In the south three divisions were engaged west of the Canal in a wide-sweeping, out-flanking movement designed to cut off—and ultimately destroy—the Egyptian Third Army, deployed east of the Canal from Ismailia in the north to Suez in the south. The Soviet Union, concerned at the prospect of its proteges' total collapse, invited the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to Moscow for urgent talks. There, without consulting Israel, Kissinger agreed with the U.S.S.R. on the text of Resolution 338, to be submitted to the Security Council by the mutual agreement of the Powers.

Sitting 462 of the Seventh Knesset

23 October 1973 (27 Tishrei 5734)

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, first of all I apologize for the delay. On my way to Jerusalem I received an urgent call and had to make a detour.

On October 22 the Government of Israel decided unanimously to respond to the appeal issued by the U.S. Government and President Nixon, and declared its readiness to agree to a ceasefire in accordance with the U.N. resolution arising from the joint American-Soviet proposal, namely...that the military forces will remain where they are when the ceasefire comes into effect. The implementation of the ceasefire depends on mutuality. Our decision has been brought before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and is now being brought before the Knesset. The Security Council resolution...reads as follows:

“1. The Security Council calls on all the sides involved in the battles currently being fought to cease their fire and end all military activities forthwith and not later than 12 hours after the adoption of this resolution, in the positions which they are holding now;

2. The Security Council calls on the combatants to begin implementing Security Council Resolution 242 in its entirety immediately after the ceasefire.

3. The Security Council resolves that immediately and simultaneously with the ceasefire, negotiations will begin between the parties in-

involved, under the appropriate auspices, with the object of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

With regard to Section 2 of the proposal, the Government has decided to instruct Israel's representative at the U.N. to include in his speech at the Security Council a passage making it clear that our agreement to that Section is given in accordance with Israel's interpretation of it when it decided to respond to the U.S. Government's initiative regarding the ceasefire in August 1970. A statement to this effect was submitted to the U.N. on 4 August 1970...Israel's agreement to a ceasefire with Egypt is dependent upon Egypt's agreement but not on Syria's, and vice versa....

The Government also decided to clarify to the U.S. Government a series of topics which are closely connected with the Security Council resolution and its ensuing processes. It is our intention to clarify and ensure, for example, that the ceasefire will apply to all the regular forces within the territory of the country which accepts it, including the forces of another country, such as those of Iraq and Jordan in Syria, as well as the forces of other Arab countries which have participated or are participating in the war. The ceasefire will also apply to the activities of irregular forces operating against Israel from the territory of the countries which have accepted the ceasefire. The ceasefire will ensure that there is no interference with the freedom of navigation of ships, including oil tankers, on their way to Eilat and passing through the Bab-el-Mandab Straits. It is also our intention to ensure that the negotiations between the sides are defined as direct. We must also ensure that there is agreement on the procedures, mapping and subjects to be supervised within the framework of the ceasefire.

A significant subject, one which is close to our hearts, is the freeing of the prisoners of war. The Government of Israel has decided to demand an immediate exchange of prisoners. We have discussed this with the U.S. Government, which participated in initiating the ceasefire. I spoke about it with Secretary Kissinger yesterday, and we will insist on an immediate exchange of prisoners...regarding it as one of the principal tests of the ceasefire....

I will now say a few words about our military position on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts prior to the ceasefire. On the Syrian front we are in a better position today than we were on October 6....Not only have we repossessed the area we controlled before, but...we now have positions on the Hermon Ridge as well as on the border to the east, improving the former ceasefire line....On the Egyptian front, although the Egyptians gained a military advantage by crossing the Canal, the IDF's brave counter-attack enabled our forces to regain part of the eastern side of the Canal and a large portion of the western side, providing us with both defensive and offensive possibilities, should these be needed. This situation deprives the Egyptian Army of the possibility of launching an at-

tack on Israel and the Sinai and of threatening essential installations or territory of ours. The IDF forces to the west of the Canal constitute a new military basis for initiating operational activities, should these be required.

In connection with the ceasefire, the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, and his aides visited us on their way from Moscow to Washington. The visit provided an opportunity for clarifying questions arising in connection with the ceasefire as well as for exchanging views in a friendly fashion about what is to happen and the implications of Israel's response to the U.S. Government's appeal for a ceasefire. During this visit we continued and intensified the contacts which preceded the Security Council resolution.

All our contacts with the U.S. have taught me that not only has the U.S. no plan as regards the borders and the other components of peace, but it is also of the opinion that bodies with "good offices" should bring the parties involved, and them alone, to make proposals and draw up plans for the future. I should stress that according to reliable information which has reached us, nothing was agreed at the Moscow talks beyond what is contained in the Security Council resolution.

To date, the Syrian Government has not yet responded to the ceasefire resolution. Fighting continues on that front and the IDF will act in accordance with its plans. Our forces on the Egyptian front are still being fired upon and the IDF has had to act accordingly....At this stage all I can say is that we are monitoring the Egyptians' behavior and maintaining military and political alertness. If Egypt continues to fight we will regard ourselves as being free to take whatever action is required....We were not the ones who asked for the ceasefire, our situation on the fronts giving us no cause to do so. We did not initiate the Security Council resolution. Our forces were not in an inferior position on the fronts. We responded to the appeal made by the U.S. and its President because: A. By its nature, the State of Israel does not want war or the loss of human life. All Israel's governments have been convinced that wars would not bring peace. B. The ceasefire proposal came when our situation on both fronts was stable and we had made substantial gains...despite the enemy's achievement to the east of the Canal. C. We responded to the appeal of the U.S. and its President because of our esteem and gratitude for their positive policy in the Middle East at this time.

Our response has great significance for Israel's continued reinforcement, and especially for the continuation of military and political aid in the war which has been forced on us....The Arab rulers have been put to the test by the Security Council resolution. The world is watching while they decide whether to choose peace or the continuation of the war. The attitude of the Egyptian rulers to war and the loss of human life is different from ours. We remember what the Egyptian President said

about being ready to sacrifice millions of his people. On October 16, after the IDF had managed to establish a bridgehead on the west side of the Canal, the Egyptian President made a public speech mocking the ceasefire and demanding Israel's withdrawal to the borders prior to 5 June 1967....Not many days later Egypt agreed to the ceasefire. None of the conditions Sadat demanded in his speech were included in the Security Council resolution....

According to the official American interpretation of Section 3 of the Security Council resolution...the negotiations between Israel and its neighbors for a just and lasting peace should be direct. No such passage was included in Security Council Resolution 242. The present resolution even determines when these negotiations should begin, i.e., immediately and simultaneously with the ceasefire. It goes without saying that we attach great importance to that Section.

The start of direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt, which has agreed to a ceasefire, should also be regarded as conforming with Section 2 of the recent Security Council resolution regarding the ceasefire. It has always been the view of Israel's Government...that Resolution 242 will be implemented after there have been negotiations and agreement between the parties....Sections 2 and 3 of the Security Council resolution cannot be separated from one another...as has been recognized by the U.S....Israel attaches the greatest importance to the recent Security Council resolution. The ceasefire between Israel and the countries which have accepted it...and the start of direct peace negotiations could constitute an historic turning-point in the development of the Middle East, a turning-point from war to peace....

Thus, we agreed to the ceasefire from a position of strength, not weakness. In agreeing to the Security Council resolution we felt it was our duty to help introduce the change the region needs so urgently and which Israel has wanted for many years. This change is possible and necessary, and all it requires is a genuine willingness on the part of our neighbors. Unfortunately, however, I cannot tell you that there are signs that the Egyptian Government is ready to fulfill the obligations it accepted in agreeing to the ceasefire. Consequently, the Government of Israel will act as the situation requires....The Arab rulers supposedly advocate the implementation of Resolution 242, but foil any attempt to advance towards attaining its principal aim, peace, by their stubborn refusal to negotiate with us without any preconditions, and by their distorted interpretation of its original content and meaning. The Government of Israel has stated its position regarding Security Council Resolution 242 on various occasions....

In 1970 I said...that by virtue of Israel's right to secure and defensible borders it would never return to the borders of 4 June 1967, which exposed the country to...aggression and accorded decisive advantages to the aggressor. Our position was then and is now that without peace we

will maintain the situation which existed when the ceasefire was declared. The ceasefire lines can be exchanged only for secure and recognized borders which will be determined in a peace treaty....We also made it clear that we stand firm on the issue of united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel....The terrible war that has been forced on us now strengthens our resolve regarding the need for defensible borders, for which we will fight unremittingly.

It should be noted that since the start of the war extensive terrorist activities have also been resumed from the Lebanese border....The residents of the border areas may rest assured that the IDF is aware of the situation. Despite our defensive deployment on this front, it has once again been proved that defensive actions alone are insufficient for ending terrorism.

The war in which we are engaged began with an attack on two fronts. The aggressive initiative brought our enemies initial achievements, but thanks to the strength and spirit of the IDF, which rests on the entire nation, the attack was smashed. The aggressors were pushed back, large portions of their forces were destroyed and the IDF penetrated beyond the ceasefire lines. From holding actions our forces went over to the attack, gaining brilliant victories. On both fronts our forces are now beyond the ceasefire lines, in firm positions and with unbroken spirit. The nation is united around its Army.

Israel wants a ceasefire...which it will honor on the basis of mutuality, but only on that basis. With all its heart, Israel wants negotiations leading to peace to begin together with the ceasefire. Israel can find in itself the strength required to advance to a peace embodying respect for defensible borders. We would be glad if this readiness were also to be displayed by the people and Government of Egypt. But if the Egyptian rulers want to renew the war they will find Israel armed, ready and resolute.

On my way from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem I learned that Egypt has asked for a meeting of the Security Council. It apparently seeks to charge Israel with the crime which Egypt has committed. This indicates that the ceasefire was violated deliberately. Egypt is reminding us that we are at war. Not only peace, but also the preservation of the ceasefire, depends on the willingness of both sides. We still hope that Egypt will fulfill the undertaking it accepted only yesterday, but if it continues fighting, Israel will not remain quiet.

E. Rimalt (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Government's surprising and hasty decision to respond to the American-Russian proposal in the Security Council arouses serious concern and anxiety for the future of our nation in the hearts of many people, many Jews, of every camp, every group, every view.

For over a week, from the day the vast Arab armies fell on Israel from the north and the south, armed with fantastic quantities of modern,

lethal weapons, the U.S.S.R. did not evince any anxiety, impatience or particular interest in using diplomacy to attain a ceasefire. Only when the IDF repelled the enemy, checked him, broke his lines and penetrated into Egypt in the south and onto the approach roads to Damascus in the north, did the U.S.S.R. suddenly see an urgent need to deal with the ceasefire. Because beforehand it had expected its arms and allies to defeat Israel. But after seeing the way the battle was going it began to exert increasing pressure on the U.S. to achieve a ceasefire immediately as well as to impose a political framework which would benefit its Arab allies. The IDF was prevented from gaining complete victory, which would also mean a political victory.

Who does not wish to applaud the ceasefire, the end to killing and bloodshed? After all, the whole country is mobilized, and who does not have a son, husband or brother among the soldiers? But proposing a ceasefire which is linked with Security Council Resolution 242...means a temporary interruption in the fighting, not the end of bloodshed....We cannot stand this periodic letting of blood whenever the Arabs, our enemies, think that they are ready to try and destroy the Jewish state again....That is why we must strive for nothing less than a stable peace, and that is why we must have borders which give us security and the ability to defend and preserve our rights.

I do not wish to criticize and argue today, because we are discussing a ceasefire which has not yet come into effect. It is a strange situation. Twenty-four hours after the ceasefire was to have come into effect our enemies violate it, continuing to rain bullets and shells on our soldiers. Our debate tonight has something of a Kafkaesque quality. But what did we achieve by the Security Council resolution and why did we agree to it? We have undertaken to begin implementing a resolution which says that Israel must withdraw. The Knesset is familiar with the semantic argument about "territories" and "all the territories," but about withdrawal there is no debate....The most liberal interpretation of Resolution 242, that of the Rogers Plan...refers to withdrawal from all the territories with some slight border changes....With all my respect for the Government—and even as a member of the Opposition my first allegiance is always to my Government—when there are differences of opinion in the interpretation of the U.N. resolution between Israel and the two Powers, ours is irrelevant....

As for the connection between Sections 2 and 3...what guarantee do we have that the Arabs and the U.S.S.R. will regard this in the same light as we do, even though the Americans have told us that they do?...There have been instances in the past when assurances given to us by the Americans on behalf of the Russians were not fulfilled...as in 1970, when we were told that the missiles would not be moved. Those missiles cost us many precious lives in this war....We should not have agreed to Section 2, and I do not accept the view...that had we not done so

we would have found ourselves at odds with our American friends.... Altogether, our agreement was given too hastily...especially in view of the fact that this war has brought home to us the crucial importance of territory and defensive depth....I am not trying to convince you to accept our view regarding the Land of Israel and our right to it in its entirety. I am speaking in the simple language of security. What would Israel's fate have been had the masses of the Egyptian and Syrian armies launched their assaults on us from points nearer to concentrations of population, and we were taken by surprise, as we were...? It is both wicked and naive to claim that the events of the war indicate that even natural barriers do not constitute defensible borders, because we were taken by surprise, we were not ready....I personally do not repudiate the Government's decision not to fire the first shot...but I deplore the fact that we were not deployed and ready in time....

One cannot lightly dismiss our renewed commitment to Resolution 242...and we will not be able to break up talks held under the auspices of the two Powers if a plan similar to the Rogers Plan is proposed....In addition, I believe that in accordance with international and every other kind of law, if one of the sides to an agreement attacks the other side, the injured party is released from all obligations arising from that agreement....I think that we were forced to accept the U.S. proposal...as was indicated by the alacrity with which this was done....This is merely a sign of what is to come, namely, an imposed settlement...and that is why we oppose the Government's position. The IDF was victorious, but the State of Israel did not gain a political victory.

No human language...can adequately express the splendid heroism of our soldiers, some of them mere striplings, during the first two days in particular. With their young bodies they checked the torrents of steel and the infernos of firepower, overcoming the terror and dread of being few against many and so ill-equipped....Their heroism surpasses any other in our entire history. Our sons who fell vanquished death before it defeated them. Perhaps that is some consolation to the bereaved families and parents.

The IDF gained a brilliant victory, but was prevented from completing the battle and gaining a decisive conquest. In political terms we have achieved a draw. This may serve to encourage...the Arabs' basic approach in the dispute between us...What they want is to attack the Jewish state every few years in an attempt to destroy it...for even defeat or partial success is turned into a political achievement by them, with the help of the U.N., their friends and the Powers....I regard the Government's hasty acceptance of the U.S. dictate...as a prize for aggression....

We all know that our neighbors' deep-seated hostility towards the sovereign Jewish nation constitutes a tragic human aspect of the dispute. But it exists, and a long period of adaptation, of acceptance of a

strong Israel by our enemies and despair of ever being able to destroy it, is needed. The dispute cannot be resolved immediately, by a dictate.... True peace, genuine coexistence, which we all want, cannot be attained overnight. It is a process which takes years, and may have to be done in stages....I think that our living with the inhabitants and citizens of the Land of Israel is one of the approaches to mutual adaptation, to getting to know and live with one another. But in order to attain this in the future we must maintain our strength and our defensive depth...not rely on guarantees from the U.N., European "friends" or any U.N. force. I know that the majority within the Government...does not regard Resolution 242 as the Magna Carta of peace and security for Israel. But there are also those who maintain that it holds the solution to all our problems....We cannot depend on ingenious interpretations of Resolution 242 to protect our interests.

Our nation is a great and wonderful one, particularly in times of danger and distress. Would that we could preserve some of that exaltation for grayer times when danger is less apparent. I think, however, that I am not exaggerating when I say that there is an ever-growing gap and a deepening lack of understanding between this nation and its political leaders.

...
Z. Hammer (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, as we gather here on the eighteenth day of the war, it is our duty to express something of what we feel for the bereaved families, the wounded and those who are still fighting. Many of our sons and brothers fell in this war, and it is to them...that the Jewish people in Israel owes its life. Their sacred and precious memory will always be with us. May God remember their souls....We share the pain of the widows, orphans and bereaved parents....May they be consoled by the knowledge that their sacrifice was not in vain....We pray that God will give the wounded a full and speedy recovery....

The battle is not yet over. We give praise to our soldiers and officers and our deepest gratitude to the IDF, to those who withstood the onslaught of the enemy, few against many, holding and repelling him, striking at those who sought to destroy us and taking the war into the enemy's territory...thereby giving us a military advantage. The God of Israel was with us, and neither the soldiers nor the officers doubt this. The Bibles, prayer books and books of psalms with which every soldier is equipped, the prayers prior to the battle, the scrolls of the law in the units and the role of Israel's Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Goren, in the battle all prove this. But our wonderful boys, those doing their regular military service as well as the reservists, senior and junior officers, in every force, all did their work with dedication. They deserve everything from our nation, and the nation will never forget this. May God protect and strengthen them.

While we debate the ceasefire the fighting continues, and with great intensity. I hope my friends the politicians and representatives of the people here, whose deep concern, patriotism and good intentions are not disputed, whether they are in the Government or the Opposition, will not be angry with me if I say what is in my heart and also as the representative of citizens whose dear ones have been involved in heavy fighting for a long time. We have been told that the time has not yet come for entering into a discussion about the past, not because there is nothing to discuss, there is, and we will doubtless all have our say, but what is needed at present is the complete unity of the nation, and a discussion of this kind could cause harm.

I think our soldiers would find it difficult to understand it if we were to start examining what happened before the war while they were still being shelled and fired at, were summoning up the last vestiges of their physical and emotional strength to strike the enemy, and their blood was still being shed. The time has not yet come for the wars of the Jews. It is still too early for that. I genuinely am not referring to any side, neither Coalition nor Opposition. I ask this of myself, of us all. There are questions, difficult questions, and they will be raised...but please, let us postpone them until after victory is secured, after all is quiet on the fronts. Believe me, the entire nation is withholding its questions while the enemy continues to shed our blood...It is the Israeli nation, not the Government, the Opposition or the parties, which is conducting the war....

The day will come when we will have to examine the nature of our society, its objectives and vision, criticize its faults and put an end to those negative aspects which may have affected us here and there. We will all have something to say about beliefs and views, about way of life and behavior, about preferences and priorities, etc. I hope and believe that then we will take a fresh look at many aspects of our lives....But now we need our finest, most sublime, most exalted hour...We need national unity in order to smash the enemy, because there is still a crucial battle ahead of us. We must discuss the appropriate political action to be taken, but we must not debate the recent past in relation to the actual war.

Today's debate has focused on the ceasefire...We did not initiate this war...and even today we have no desire to conquer and annex Cairo and Damascus. Our basic aspiration was and is to live in our land in peace and security. The Arabs started the war against the Jews, demanding the return of territory and seeking to destroy us, cause us heavy losses and annihilate our state. With God's help—and I know that even the Minister of Defense feels the same—and the IDF we prevented the enemy from attaining his aim...and struck back at him....Today we are in a military position which permits us to accept a ceasefire. It is true that if the fighting were to continue for another two or

three days we would be in a still better position, but...on both fronts we have a clear military advantage. That is undoubtedly why the Arabs and the Russians want the ceasefire.

The enlightened world in Europe, Asia and Africa does not appear to have been unduly perturbed by the Arabs' intention of destroying Israel....That may be a subject for debate after the war....Many Asian and African countries severed their ties with us during the war or acted against us, each one in their own way. A superpower before which virtually the whole world trembles was in almost direct confrontation with us. Another superpower, America, was the only country to support us openly....It is true that we do not like pressure and dictates in matters which concern our very existence...but the relations between the U.S. and Israel are of a special nature....We must admit that our relations with the U.S. during this war are of the utmost security importance to us. But they are by no means one-sided or devoid of freedom....There are issues on which we may find ourselves completely alone against the world. We must do our utmost to ensure that this does not happen. The spirit of Massada is not to be assumed lightly. But there are issues which concern our very essence, our rights and our security, which must be decided by us and by us alone.

But we agreed to a ceasefire without any conditions which we are not prepared to meet because our military position enabled us to accept the advice and initiative of friends and give peace a chance, because a ceasefire could be a first step in that direction, and also in order to stop the killing. There is no need to stress here how concerned we all are, unlike the enemy, to preserve human life. Every soldier, every family, every officer—of this I am sure—is prepared to make every effort which will reduce the number of our casualties, and a ceasefire might achieve that. The nation wants direct peace negotiations. The Americans assure us that this is what is involved. We all want the immediate release of our prisoners of war...and we are told that this will indeed happen.

It is my belief that the Government neither could nor should have rejected a ceasefire, despite the problems and dangers it arouses. That is why the members of my party group approved it, not in order to waste it and enter a fool's paradise, but in order to utilize it in every respect and to strengthen and improve our position for whatever the future may bring....In our view, however, the ceasefire is in no way connected with an Israeli withdrawal. We are not enamored of Resolution 242, and have our own interpretation of it....Its implementation is connected with peace negotiations, not with the ceasefire. But the main subject is the borders, particularly in the situation created by this massive and aggressive war....

I am familiar with the attitudes of some of our national leaders, the decisions of our movement and my own views on the subject....These have been strengthened, not weakened by the war....I know that politi-

cans have not changed their minds, but I know what the nation, the soldiers and the officers are saying...Those who thought once that territory had no military value now hold the opposite view. They know very well what would have happened to us had that territory not stood between us and that tremendous force...and if King Hussein had joined the fray....A small regular army like ours, based on reserves and needing time to deploy itself against an army as huge as that of the Arabs, needs that depth. On no account can we agree to Israel's returning our Land of Israel to the King of Jordan. It is not his country. It is an operative and unequivocal matter of principle for our movement not to support a decision of that kind.

Our movement has not yet spoken clearly on the issue of the Sinai. But it is clear to me now, as it is to the entire nation, I think, that we must study the subject very closely and reassess it. Even in a peace treaty with Egypt, and certainly until there are genuine peace relations, we can on no account accept the fact that the aggressor who is constantly threatening us with renewed war should be close to us. In order to protect ourselves from his attacks and also to repel him it is our moral duty to our nation as well as essential for our security that we remain well within secure and defensible borders.

Our only understanding of Resolution 242 is in accordance with our interpretation of it, namely, that it does not commit us to withdrawal, as the Arabs and their supporters imagine, and when the time comes for the political struggle about it that, I believe, will be Israel's position, even if we remain alone against the rest of the world as a result. These are fateful days for our nation and our country...and we must do everything to prepare for them and endure them. We must all be worthy of our nation at the front and the rear, we must prepare ourselves for the period ahead, and...may He who maketh peace above, give us and all Israel peace.

J. Hazan (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, never in my life have I felt the burden of responsibility weighing upon me as heavily as it does now, as I ascend this podium....I know that I am addressing our nation whose nerves are stretched beyond endurance. I am addressing our nation which has made a terrible sacrifice in this war and is silently weeping for its dear ones. I am addressing the soldiers at the front, who had victory in their hands and stand proudly and sadly on every front...exhausted yet ready to continue to make an effort.... The living hold fast to their weapons and weep angrily but silently for their fallen comrades. They know that they saved the nation from the gravest danger.

This nation fought as it did because it wanted this war to be its last, because it yearned for peace. And now we have the ceasefire. It came in the thick of the decisive battles, and the nation wants to know if this ceasefire was necessary, if it brought us nearer to the goal we seek, and whether, if the fighting is resumed, we will be in a better position than

before....I am a party man, a member of Mapam and the Ma'arach, and believe in my party's vision. But I speak today as a Jew who, if his conscience had clashed with his party's position, would not have ascended this podium today....

If I had been a member of the Government I would have voted for the ceasefire, not because of obligation or discipline but because of moral responsibility. I would have voted for it with an anxious heart...knowing that the decision was fateful and crucial for the future of the battle in which we are engaged and whose ultimate objective is peace, and knowing that this step was at least as crucial as the Government's decision on the eve of the Day of Atonement not to launch a preemptive strike even though the war was almost certain then. We accepted that terrible danger in order to assure ourselves of the necessary aid in this fateful battle. It has been proved that that decision was the correct one, and I am convinced that for the same reason this decision is also the correct one....

Only irresponsible people can attack the Government's decision today. Despite the vicious attack by Egypt and Syria on the Day of Atonement, we were on the verge of a crushing victory, first of all because of the almost superhuman fighting spirit of the soldiers of the IDF...and because of the firm resolve of the entire nation which, though anxious, trusted in its sons as they fought on every front. We were on the verge of victory also because of the aid, the weapons, we received during the fighting in the form of the American airlift which was organized when it became clear to the U.S. that the U.S.S.R. was conducting an enormous airlift of weapons and ammunition to the Arab countries, which let the U.S.S.R. down once again....

The U.S.S.R. did not only prepare the war by equipping the Arab countries with unparalleled quantities of arms...it also continued to do so during the fighting. It was responsible for the outbreak of war as well as for the continuation of the killing. The help of the U.S.—albeit somewhat belated—confronted the U.S.S.R. with a new situation...its proteges being on the point of collapse....Our Government's decision, which was a bold and terrible one...was proved to be the correct one. I hope the same will apply to its decision regarding the ceasefire. The U.S.S.R. faced yet another failure, constituting a threat to its position as a world Power and to the reliability of its weapons...which had been bestowed liberally on those whose sole aim was the destruction of Israel.

I remember that when Prime Minister Golda Meir was Foreign Minister I asked for her permission to meet the Soviet Ambassador and speak to him—not solely in my personal capacity—about the U.S.S.R.'s one-sided policy in supplying arms to the Middle East, one which would inevitably lead to war in the region and the increased hostility of the Jews for the U.S.S.R. She agreed, and I asked him why they adhered to this policy....He replied: Why do you need arms? What good will it do

you? There are two million of you and a hundred million Arabs. You are doomed. You have no hope of winning. What good will our arms do you? I asked him what he advised us to do. He replied: Pray to God. Anyone who knows Russian knows that that is the advice given to condemned men on the battlefield. I answered: I accept your advice, but remember, when we start praying the echoes will reach the walls of the Kremlin. And so they did, for the third time, and this time more than ever.

At the beginning of the fighting the U.S.S.R. rejected any compromise initiated by the U.S. with the intention of ending hostilities...but now it is ready for an unconditional ceasefire, and was the one to propose it. What has happened here...is that we have ceased to be an "aggressor" who must withdraw before the other side agrees to negotiate with us....For the first time the U.S.S.R. is not demanding that we undertake to withdraw to the 1967 boundaries as a precondition for peace. For the first time it has agreed that the way to peace is by direct negotiations between the sides. The U.S. could not entertain rejecting those Soviet proposals....I must say quite frankly that I am not altogether convinced that this is the path to peace, but one thing is clear, in the circumstances, we had no alternative but to accept the U.S.'s advice. We had to take all the risks involved in an attempt to attain peace without further bloodshed. We had to do it in order to assure continued aid from the U.S.

We must remember in what kind of a world we are living. Only today we heard that the Lion of Judah, the king of Ethiopia, has severed his ties with us. Is that what we get for our friendship and help? He did it because he is afraid of the Arab world. Fear and selfish interests rule the world....Worse still, Pontius Pilate has been resurrected, under new names...one of them being Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and is once more washing his hands....We must look the truth in the face and be ready for everything. The U.S.S.R. is continuing to send a stream of arms to the Arab countries. Our response to the U.S. proposal is justified...on condition it continues giving us aid and does not revert to its vacillating policy...which sought to maintain the "delicate balance" in the region. I hope it learned a lesson from the military and political developments of the last few weeks...and that the flow of arms to us will not only not be reduced, but will be increased. We are grateful to the U.S. for its aid...but we wish it would rely less on the qualitative superiority of Israel's soldiers and offset the mighty flow of arms reaching the Arab countries from the U.S.S.R. That alone would lead the U.S.S.R. to realize that it will not be able to attain its objectives in the region at the expense of Israel's existence.

This ceasefire affords Egypt the opportunity of entering negotiations with us not as a defeated country. Sadat doubtless knows today...that Egypt was on the verge of an overwhelming defeat, but today it can still claim to have fought and, while not having achieved its aim, not to have

been beaten....If Sadat does not take this opportunity, another war will be inevitable, with obvious results. But we do not want military victories. We want peace. This ceasefire could lead to the beginnings of peace negotiations...which will be a long and difficult process....But the entire nation would never forgive itself if we did not try to take this opportunity, with all its attendant dangers....Only the Government's courageous and responsible decision guarantees that if the fighting is resumed the U.S. will fulfill its obligation to itself as a Power in this region as well as to us...

We must be ready for everything, and we are. We know that there will not be peace without painful compromises by both sides. The Government will have to be as brave here as in the military campaign. There will be no peace which is not based on exploiting all the possibilities so that it is fair to both sides and both nations residing in the Greater Land of Israel on both sides of the Jordan. Nor will there be peace unless we are assured secure and defensible borders. If someone failed to realize that before this war, perhaps they realize it now....We were saved by the heroism of our brothers and sons, and even our grandsons. But we were also saved by virtue of the borders, which made it easier for us to check the enemy, and by virtue of the distances, which enabled us to deploy our forces effectively....

The new borders must be determined through direct negotiations with our neighbors. We do not need to occupy territory, but without secure borders we will not have a stable and enduring peace. As I said last week, this war has destroyed many beliefs and illusions...forcing us to rethink our views about secure borders....Because this war must be the last in our time. All our strength must be devoted to attaining that objective—peace.

...

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, yesterday the Government of Israel took a highly responsible decision involving a calculated risk for an important result. The risk is in the military sphere. The ceasefire line is a convoluted one which crosses the Suez Canal. We have not managed to dislodge the Egyptians from the eastern side of the Canal. The Egyptians can make use of the absence of a clearcut ceasefire line to undermine the basis of the ceasefire. They could also build military installations facing our troops, making the entire ceasefire a temporary truce. This is a very real threat, as they tricked us in August 1970, when they moved their missiles forward...thereby causing us heavy losses in this war.

The Government must give its full attention to the grave risk and make the situation clear to the U.S. Government....We accepted the ceasefire at America's urging, and the U.S. should do everything necessary to ensure that this is not to our detriment. We are entitled to expect an American statement to the effect that Israel will be strengthened

in the future, not merely in order to replace weapons that were destroyed in the war but also to enable us to deter the enemy from turning the ceasefire into a trap. We should also be able to expect increased political support from the U.S. now that we have put our trust in it...thereby converting the risk into a chance of progress towards peace.

We have been told that the U.S. will insist on linking the implementation of the two Security Council resolutions with direct negotiations between the two sides....Direct talks, however long and arduous, would constitute a significant step towards a settlement. But once the ice is broken there is also a chance that feelings of hostility will melt....In the hope of attaining that result the Government of Israel accepted responsibility for the ceasefire. We will retain our new military positions until a political settlement is reached, and will have to discuss and decide on the borders among ourselves. Once the talks begin there will be a penetrating internal debate. Naturally, we need borders within which we may dwell in safety. We must not agree to borders which will make it easier for the aggressor and tempt him to attack. This war has proved to us the necessity of having territory which can absorb the enemy's attack and within which the Army can deploy itself....But it has also proved that the actual retention of territory does not prevent the outbreak of war....

Far-reaching and imaginative political thinking will be needed now to raise new possibilities of attaining peace and security. Over and above all, this should be through negotiations. Gahal claims that what occurred was because we were not ready on the borders. Can we be certain that we will always be aware of possible attacks in the future...? In this painful war we had only one powerful ally, the U.S., which has helped us reach this point....This unwritten alliance was strengthened three years ago, when we responded to the American peace initiative. The three years in which the IDF received American arms and equipment were of the utmost importance. In 1970 we acted against Gahal's advice that we reject the initiative....We need America's support today more than ever. We must not delude ourselves that Israel can fight without the aid of weapons, our only source of which is America. The Arab armies which attacked us were equipped with vast amounts of the most sophisticated Soviet arms. Given these conditions, the Government could not have jeopardized our relations with the U.S. We did not ask for the ceasefire, but when we were asked by the Americans to accept it, and we were already in a superior position on the fronts, the Government could not refuse.

The old argument about the Government's acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242 has been raised here. The Knesset approved this in the wake of the U.S. initiative three years ago. Yesterday's Security Council resolution is infinitely preferable to Resolution 242, because it refers to direct negotiations, this being the immediate and most impor-

tant benefit accruing from the IDF's magnificent military achievement. Israel must believe that there will one day be a turning-point in Israel-Arab relations, and that is why it responds to every possibility of a shift. The Jewish people exists by virtue of its faith and its historic optimism....That is the spirit which guides us in accepting the ceasefire. We must not ignore the risks it embodies, but we must reinforce our hope that it will eventually lead to peace.

Some people have made grave accusations in public about security lapses....It is true that the public has some weighty questions about the beginning of the war and our unpreparedness. The time will come to raise them. But now, today, they must be deferred....There is still fighting at the fronts, soldiers are still being killed and wounded, bereaved families are still mourning their sons. This is a time for closing ranks. I hope that all the parties in this House will realize that this is what is needed now. One of the Government's cardinal considerations in reaching its decision yesterday was to prevent further bloodshed.... Would anyone like to accept responsibility for the unnecessary loss of more lives...? The entire nation is united in honoring its heroic sons, who fought in the splendid tradition of Israel's heroes....For their sakes we must spare no effort to prevent the shedding of another drop of their blood superfluously. Consequently, it was necessary to accept the ceasefire.

Y. Hurwitz (National List): Madam Speaker, Knesset Members, today and in the days to come we will mourn our losses on the battlefield. We will be proud of the heroism of our soldiers....What I have to say now I say with a very heavy heart, but with a great sense of responsibility. Sometimes it seems that this is not the right time for this, the casualty lists have not yet been published...the IDF is still fighting on the fronts...yet the rapid succession of political and military events obliges us to undertake a careful and thorough assessment now rather than later....

Who among us does not want a ceasefire...? But we must learn the lessons of the ceasefire of the end of the War of Attrition...when the Egyptians and the Russians advanced sophisticated anti-aircraft missile batteries to the Canal zone and for three years prepared the highly-advanced dispositions which enabled them to invade the Sinai Peninsula....We have paid a heavy price in blood, the blood of pilots, the blood of soldiers, for that violation of the ceasefire....This ceasefire, which we all want, will be of value only if it leads to a settlement....The Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense have said that this war will end only with the attainment of peace. The ceasefire must lead to a peace settlement and permanent borders which provide Israel with security. The entire nation must be clear-sighted today, weighing up the situation carefully in order not to be tempted by empty assurances....Although American interests forced a draw on the battlefield upon the Govern-

ment, and although the IDF was at the peak of its momentum and the Egyptian army on the verge of collapse...we must not permit the ceasefire to enable Egypt to rehabilitate its army prior to a renewed attack. Israel must definitely not accept a ceasefire today, thereby enabling the aggressor to recover and reestablish his military positions in order to attack us once more at the earliest opportunity.

I had hoped that this war would lead us all to reassess the situation, but in Israel people do not want to learn from history, as is proved by their stubborn adherence to their former positions. There is still the hope that the war will shake the nation's calm, exaggerated self-confidence, lack of alertness, tendency to accept false remedies...and national masochism.

What happened to us in October 1973? A month ago we were engaged in an election campaign, in the pursuit of prosperity, in addition to false political remedies. We all told ourselves that in the three years since the ceasefire Israel had become stronger. All at once, almost, the situation was reversed, and on the Day of Atonement and the days which followed we were in a situation where official spokesmen spoke of miracles, critical dangers and the need for a supreme effort in order to repel the dreadful dangers. Our Army did indeed display tremendous self-sacrifice, fighting ability and emotional readiness which words cannot describe. But the splendor of the IDF cannot and must not cover up the Government's blunders.

Those people who are always telling us that they are the only ones who know how to do things say that the nation is divided into two: those who know how to do things, how to build things, and those who know how to carp and criticize, who are always wise after the event....I am aware of the gravity of what I am saying. I would not say it, or would defer saying it, if I believed that this Government has and will have the courage to realize that there is cause for anxiety, cause for criticism of mistakes, to realize that we need to reappraise things, that our former assessments were wrong, perhaps not only in the past but in the present too.

Questions have been asked, indicating the clear-sightedness of the nation even now....While it fought bravely, with clenched teeth, it constantly asked bothersome questions about both the past and the future. At first we refrained from asking those questions, but we started to receive answers before the questions had been asked, which leaves us no choice but to clarify our questions....I am referring primarily to the soldiers who asked everyone they met why events took this turn, why we moved in the twinkling of an eye from a sense of self-satisfaction to one of depression and powerlessness. How strange it is to hear the Ma'arach representatives speaking even today about satisfaction, without any hint at the need to draw conclusions, to express regret, to rethink matters, to feel less confident....This is not the place for clarifying such key questions as how did it happen that we were surprised on several levels and were

deprived of our ability to react swiftly? That will doubtless be discussed, but I would suggest that we all, especially those responsible, refrain from looking for excuses and scapegoats. For I do not believe that the nation will accept them easily after this terrible and bitter war....

It was a surprise to hear and read criticism of the secure borders and strategic depth which the Six Day War gave us. Some people think that this war proved that the borders of June 1967 were worthless and therefore we could have relinquished them over the last six years. There were people who said that borders and territory are of no value in modern warfare, but this war revealed how stubborn and bloody a war waged over only a few square miles can be. This war proved how essential strategic depth is by enabling the IDF to refrain from making a preemptive strike, and I accept that it was logical that we were not the ones to strike first. Today we are told that this was not done for political reasons...but I say that this depth protects our centers of population and enables us to refrain from making the first move....

We are told that the IDF, not the borders, gave us security. That is true, of course. The IDF is Israel's security border. But it has become patently clear that the borders along which the IDF is deployed are of crucial importance....The borders of June 1967 gave the IDF the essential and irreplaceable benefits of time and space....That is the most important lesson of this war. Another is that no borders permit complacency and exaggerated self-confidence. A canal provides defense only if the defending force is ready to defend it in a timely and efficient way.

...

M. Wilner (Rakah): Madam Speaker, Knesset Members, the Security Council resolution, as proposed by the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., concerning a ceasefire and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, was received with relief and satisfaction by the vast majority in Israel. It is good that the dreadful bloodshed should at last come to an end, that the way to peace should be found, that was the general feeling....This was the bloodiest war in Israel's history. Thousands of Jewish and Arab youngsters were killed or wounded. The nation wants not only a ceasefire but an enduring peace, so that the threat of war may at long last be removed from it....The Security Council resolution may constitute the start of an historic turning-point. But there are people who have mixed feelings, even anger, about Security Council Resolution 338...and who wish to continue the war...in order to smash the Arab armies to smithereens and conquer Cairo and Damascus, as they put it. Even official circles do not deny that yesterday's Security Council resolution did not suit their plans...and that they needed a few more days of fighting....

We are very concerned about what we have heard regarding the continued fighting at the fronts. Even after the Security Council decided on a ceasefire it was regarded as necessary to sacrifice the lives of Jews

and Arabs in a battle of prestige to conquer another strip of land, the position on Mount Hermon, which we will anyway have to return to Syria. Does that not contradict the declaration about concern for human life?

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: The positions on Mount Hermon were taken before the Security Council decided on a ceasefire and for defense reasons. Syria has not yet accepted the Security Council resolution. And take care in speaking of feelings connected with blood....Do not compare the Arab aggressor and the Israeli defender in allocating responsibility for the war. Watch your tongue.

M. Wilner (Rakah): Someone who occupies the territory of other countries should not speak as you do.

H. Landau (Gahal): You are a foreign agent, and speak as one.

M. Wilner (Rakah): I have already said in the previous debate that this war could have been avoided...but you insisted on annexations, you foiled every peace initiative. Consequently, at least keep quiet on that score. You did not prevent a war which could have been avoided, thereby saving the lives of our dear boys....The public is asking a great many questions. The public is not what it was before the war. Not only the Communists, but the public at large, rejects your policy....People want to know what will happen in the future, and whether future wars will be avoided....

M. Yedid (Gahal): You are an anti-Semite.

M. Wilner (Rakah): You did not prevent this war, this anti-Israel war, against the Israeli nation.

Y. Hurwitz (National List): Your weapons killed our boys. You had better keep quiet, you bastard. The U.S.S.R. caused this slaughter.

M. Wilner (Rakah): If you had listened to me, to everything I have constantly been saying in the Knesset, boys would not have been killed. You want annexation instead of peace. That is what caused the renewal of the war.

Avner Shaki: Liar! Were there annexations before 1967?

M. Wilner (Rakah): Instead of peace you wanted annexations. Is the Galili Plan a peace plan?

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: Do you justify the Soviet-supported Arab aggression?

M. Wilner (Rakah): I oppose your policy. Leave the territories outside Israel and then Israel will dwell in peace. Who says that we have to control Nablus, Hebron and the Sinai? I am prepared to devote every-

thing to protecting Israel's security, but I am not prepared to rule other people.

H. Landau (Gahal): You are a foreign agent here. You speak and act like a foreign agent.

M. Wilner (Rakah): You want to rule other people.

H. Landau (Gahal): You don't belong here.

M. Wilner (Rakah): You are a warmonger. Because of you boys are killed. What did you tell our youngsters? You members of Herut, of Gahal, are the reason why our boys' blood was shed. I want to protect Israeli youngsters from these warmongers....

M. Begin (Gahal): Madam Speaker...such hooligan-like statements cannot be permitted....

H. Landau (Gahal): There is no place for foreign agents here. They shall not speak here. You will not speak here, you foreign agent!

E. Raziell-Na'or (Gahal): He must step down! Such things cannot be said here!

(MKs Keshet and Drobles ascend the podium and attempt to remove MK Wilner from it.)

The Speaker, T. Sanhedrai: Knesset Members, let us maintain the dignity of the Knesset. I declare a five-minute recess.

(Other MKs approach the podium.)

M. Begin (Gahal): He shall not say that we are guilty of bloodshed!

H. Landau (Gahal): Those agents shall not ascend the podium! He may speak in Moscow, not in Israel. Go to Moscow....

...

Saif Aldin Alzuabi (Progress and Development): Madam Speaker, what I am about to say this evening comes from the depths of my heart. I hope it will not be misinterpreted. The Six Day War ended with a minimum of casualties. Large quantities of enemy weapons fell into Israel's hands as booty after Arab land was conquered. That could have been the last war, but if we want to draw up an account of losses and gains as regards territory—and especially life—today, the conclusion is that the losses outweigh the gains by far. Life is immeasurably more precious than land, even land which is saturated with oil and gold and every precious metal. The truth is, however, that that land is saturated only with evil and hatred. We have suffered greatly through the cruelty of war, as have the Arab peoples.

On more than one occasion I have expressed my sense of oppression as regards this situation, being a loyal citizen of Israel who wishes to see Arabs and Jews living together in peace and cooperation, and being

a son of the Arab nation, which I hope will prosper....That is why my heart grieves when I look at the situation, at the blood which has been shed and the casualties which have fallen on both sides. I have often...expressed the view that we must leave the territories in order to avoid problems and dangers which could arise from retaining them. I expressed this view especially when I felt that, despite the economic prosperity enjoyed by the residents of the territories as well as their hatred of the Jordanian regime and their dissatisfaction with the attitude evinced by the regime and the army, they nevertheless preferred that life to that of today, and secretly wished they had a chance of harming Israel in return for the benefit it has brought them.

I was also convinced that the retention of the territories bore within it the seed of evil and destruction. The Arab countries always said that they were ready to come to terms with Israel and sit down at the negotiating table provided their territories were returned to them....Many Israel leaders and citizens were ready to return the territories on certain conditions in order to prevent what might happen in the future in view of the large numbers of inhabitants there and the heavy responsibility which weighs on Israel. Those attempts failed and the chances of returning the territories vanished. The Arab leaders, incited by an external element, decided to regain the territories at all costs and despite the unlikelihood of succeeding in this...thereby proving to their people that they had fulfilled their promises of the last six years.

It is not the outcome of the war which is important to the Arab peoples. They wanted to prove to the world that they could fight, if only for a few days or weeks. For example, Anwar Sadat was regarded as a hero when he crossed the Suez Canal, because no one imagined that an Arab army—or even all the Arab armies together—could achieve that....I do not think that Sadat's position in Egypt is in danger today. The Arab peoples will doubtless admire Sadat's decision for many years to come, even if the entire Egyptian army is destroyed.

I had no doubt that in the final event Israel would be victorious in the war...but I think that the outcome indicates that no one was the true victor. The war broke out despite Israel's firm stand and the glorious acts of bravery of the officers and soldiers of the IDF. Israel fought well, even though taken by surprise. But the Arabs also surprised the world...with their unity and their ability to withstand the IDF....No one believed that the Arabs would use oil as a weapon, it being their prime source of income...but they did, proving that they were prepared to make every sacrifice. The Arabs also embarked on this war in order to regain their honor and their pride....

I have always thought that Anwar Sadat was an intelligent and cautious man, and admired him as such...though his most recent speech in the Egyptian National Council, in which he claimed victory for the Egyptian army and addressed the U.S. while ignoring Israel,

does not bear this out....By doing this Sadat missed an opportunity for starting a dialogue with Israel which could eventually have had beneficial results....

Israel has not implemented Security Council Resolution 242, claiming that it does not guarantee the safe and recognized borders it seeks....King Hussein has stated that...safe borders derive from peace and security rather than from land or rockets, rivers or wadis. But Israel's leaders and citizens were not convinced, perhaps because of their lack of trust in the Arab leaders with their internal disagreements. In Israel's view, a leader who signs an agreement today may be overthrown by a coup tomorrow and the agreement revoked....This claim has no validity when the Arab leaders are in agreement with one another...and when the two Powers back the settlements which are reached....Then talk of secure borders becomes meaningless. I am sure that the two world Powers are prepared to guarantee an agreement of that kind...in addition to the steps which the U.N. will take to that end....And above all, the IDF is the best deterrent against aggression directed against Israel....

The last war...was fought far away from Israel's centers of population and near or on Arab territory. I was convinced from the outset that Israel would win. I have abandoned the view I held previously as to peace being attainable solely by force....It is now my opinion that the greater the use of force, the less attainable peace becomes. The longer the Arab peoples live with a sense of shame and humiliation, the firmer will be their resolve to expunge this by declaring war as soon as they feel strong enough. For the Arabs of today are not those of yesterday. They are rich materially and in terms of manpower. In addition, there is the element which incites and equips them for war....The Arabs will be persuaded to abandon the idea of war and accept the concept of negotiations only if they feel that their honor has been restored....

It is known that the Arabs have changed their thinking and no longer intend to commit atrocities on any part of Israel's territory prior to 1967. They are convinced now that Israel is here to stay, and one day they will recognize it....I am convinced that the Arabs are ready to make peace with Israel...once Israel recognizes the rights of the Palestinian refugees....As a result of this war there will be great sadness among the Jewish and Arab families which lost their dear ones....Those families are concealing their pain, so as not to harm public morale. But they will not respond to another call to war, preferring to live with their sons and daughters and neighbors in security, peace and mutual respect....

The loss of life will be felt more acutely in Israel than in the Arab countries because of the difference between the Israel and Arab armies in quantity and quality. When the fiery furnace consumed both the nations of the region, who are linked by blood and race more than other

nations, two other sides sat far away in Moscow to discuss the dispute and find a solution for it in accordance with their interests in the region...eventually reaching the proposal later approved by the U.N. regarding the ceasefire and the implementation of Resolution 242 which dates from 1967. Cannot the Arabs and the Jews reach an agreement as to the interpretation of the resolution so that there may be peace between them? Haven't they learned a lesson from their bitter experience...? I pray to God to grant understanding to both Arabs and Jews so that they may act for the benefit of their people and their countries in just and absolute peace, may it come speedily, with God's will.

...

S. Tamir (Free Center): Madam Speaker, Knesset Members, the bitter battles are still continuing. Our dead lie before us. Thousands of families fear for their loved ones. There is, therefore, a reluctance to debate and certainly to disagree. But while the war is being waged...fateful political decisions are being taken, and there is consequently no alternative but to engage in clarifications, even if these involve dissent. One's initial reaction to the ceasefire...is a sigh of relief...which is echoed all across the nation....Nonetheless...a heavy cloud of anxiety weighs on the nation since hearing...that the Government has undertaken to implement Security Council Resolution 242, which requires Israel to withdraw from the territories, or territories, occupied in the Six Day War....

Let us just imagine that the two thousand Syrian tanks launch a surprise attack on Israel from the shores of Lake Tiberias rather than the Syrian Heights, that the two thousand Egyptian tanks storm across the border near Ashkelon, not from the other side of the Canal, that the hundreds of tanks in the east are massed in Kalkilya, Tulkarm and Ramallah, rather than on the other side of the Jordan River...and that the missiles which prevent our aircraft flying freely in our airspace and are aimed at our centers of population and industry are situated on those lines too—would the independent State of Israel still exist...? Madam Prime Minister, only a week ago...you yourself said that no borders are safe, but what would happen if we withdrew and were then attacked...? Now, after saying that, you have undertaken to withdraw....

Our deep gratitude and esteem for the U.S. and the military aid it has granted us does not constitute total dependence....It is in America's interest that Israel should exist, constituting the basis of the U.S.'s position in the entire region....We have the ability as well as the right to negotiate with our allies....Israel's tragedy is that its political leadership belittled the importance for our security of the wide expanses of territory and adopted Security Council Resolution 242 as its political line. Now it has to defray the bond....It is disingenuous, Madam Prime Minister...to tell the Knesset and the nation, as you did this evening, that you know for sure that other than what was decided in the Security Council

nothing was agreed between the Russians and the Americans....Only a few days ago the Foreign Minister said that he saw no chance of a ceasefire being imposed....The Foreign Minister was obviously unaware of the feverish talks which were being held as he spoke, and with whose outcome we were confronted the very next day. Whence, then, comes the Prime Minister's confidence as to what political decisions were and were not made by the Russian and American representatives in Moscow, and what awaits us in the coming weeks? After the painful lessons of the last two weeks, which derived from illusion, complacency, self-satisfaction and a negligent and inaccurate assessment of the situation, will you not at least endeavor not to delude this good nation...?

The bitter truth is that a series of governmental blunders, chief among them being the failure to call up the reserves between New Year and the Day of Atonement, deprived the IDF of the ability to check the enemy at the gate and strike him a crushing blow in the first few days, prolonged the war and led to the ceasefire, which wrested victory from us....The truth which cannot now be concealed from the nation is that we are on the threshold of a difficult and dangerous period. It is true that the IDF is still strong and the nation still resolute...but no responsible government will be able to send the reserves home for a very long time, our military situation being what it is....Those are only some of the circumstances attending our entry into difficult and bitter political negotiations on the future of the State of Israel. All I will say at this stage is that after the Government's shocking failure...in both the military and the political spheres...we can and should demand that it show at least a modicum of remorse and self-examination, and evince maximum caution in taking decisions which will determine Israel's fate....

A. Eliav (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset Members, before I speak about the subject on the agenda, I would like to refer to the incident concerning MK Wilner which I witnessed in part. Since becoming a Member of this Knesset, and even beforehand, when I served in Israel's embassy in Moscow, I have come to the conclusion that the Knesset comprises 117 members who serve the state loyally, each one in his fashion, Jews and Arabs, with a wide variety of views....And there is, unfortunately, a party group of three Knesset Members which serves a foreign country, not the State of Israel...and somehow we have to live with that situation....Perhaps it would have been best to have let that man, Wilner, say what he had to say while we all left the Chamber....

I fully support the Government's decision regarding the ceasefire....Even if it is only a temporary truce...the decision was still correct....In many respects this war resembles the War of Independence, when, too, we fought in between truces, eventually attaining victory.... Even if there is no switch in the Arab position, i.e., there is no readiness to engage in direct peace negotiations, we will use the truce to strengthen

ourselves....It may be, however, that the long, dark war between the Arabs and us contains a spark of hope for peace negotiations as a result of this ceasefire....The Government owes it to the nation to try to explore this possibility....

...I have said these things since the Six Day War...and I still believe in them fervently. First of all, we have been guilty of underestimating the enemy....The IDF had to fight a cruel war against a harsh, embittered enemy, who is by no means lacking in courage and resourcefulness. Some of us despise the Arabs....We must fight against this ugly trait with all the educational means at our disposal. We may be proud of ourselves without despising the enemy. Contempt is a dangerous weapon which has a boomerang effect, as has been proved throughout history. What right do we Jews have to despise the Arabs, our enemies today and our neighbors tomorrow? One of the lessons we must learn is that contempt breeds complacency....

As for our relations with the U.S., I am amazed by MK Rimalt's statement that we should not rely on guarantees or the U.N. or friends. What friends do we have...? We have only one friend...and MK Rimalt and his colleagues is as aware of our dependence on it as I am. The tanks and cannon cannot be fuelled by fancy phrases....Israel's survival, aid for its economic, social, military and technological development, are of the utmost importance for any American administration. U.S. Jewry's identification with Israel also plays a leading role in this...though the non-Jewish American public has also displayed support for Israel....America's global and Middle East interests also require the U.S. to keep Israel strong....America will do a great deal—short of becoming actively involved in hostilities—to maintain our position in the Middle East...but we must not expect it to do more than it is prepared to do....

As for our objectives: is there any point talking about peace objectives during wartime? I think there is, and I believe that the nature of peace objectives determines a nation's capacity to fight and endure....The secret of our strength in all the wars imposed on us by our enemies-neighbors has been our moral superiority. Throughout the dispute with the Arabs we have been prepared to accept a solution and a territorial compromise which would enable our two nations to live in peace, but they would not even recognize our right to exist....Our attitude gave us strength and won us the support of most of the world. We must not lose that moral advantage now....I think that even in this cruel war Israel must reiterate its genuine desire for peace, based on a territorial compromise with all our enemies—Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians and Syrians....

The Arab leaders have not yet displayed any genuine intention of making peace with Israel. Consequently, for us this war, like the previous ones, is one of life or death....If necessary we may have to go beyond

the ceasefire lines of June 1967...though positions thus gained are negotiable once a peace process gets underway....We must not despair of attaining peace one day, though it seems unlikely to come in our time....This approach to war and peace has molded the character of the fighting nation in modern times....We do not want war, we love life and peace, we do not rejoice in cruelty, but when we have to fight we are damned good at it....That is how we must continue to educate our youngsters...in the hope that peace will come....

...

M. Begin (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, leaders and Knesset Members, Israel's soldiers are still fighting....We will stand behind them, with united hearts, great love and a pure prayer....The Secretary General of the Ma'arach, MK Yadlin, has said...that the time has not yet come to clarify certain considerations in public. There are things which are generally known today, however. Dr. Kissinger, the American Secretary of State, said that a week before the war the intelligence services of both Israel and the U.S. assessed that there would be no war....This aroused grave concern in my mind....How did it happen that Israel's intelligence services were so seriously mistaken in their estimation of the situation...? I maintain that the responsibility is the Government's. The intelligence services are a governmental branch....A responsible government examines intelligence assessments critically, and does not simply accept them unquestioningly.... That is the duty of a statesman....This was irresponsible....The enemy was massing his forces along the borders...and the Government persuaded not only itself but also the Americans that there was no danger of war....I will refrain from pursuing this argument further at this stage....

With regard to Security Council Resolution 338 and its acceptance by the Government...it must be made clear that what is under review is not a ceasefire....There may be differences of opinion as to the tactical benefit to be obtained from accepting a ceasefire at one stage of the fighting or another....No one here would seek to divide the House into those who wish to prevent further casualties and those who do not, I am sure....The entire nation has someone at the front now, and if not, are not my neighbor's sons my own, and vice versa...? The consideration to be taken into account is whether further casualties can be avoided or not....But what is under review here is not a ceasefire but a political step with implications for the nation's future, security, welfare and country. This ceasefire, in the military and strategic conditions created after 16 days of fighting, involves an undertaking to embark immediately on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967. Don't you realize that?

We have been told that the Americans are committed to linking this ceasefire with direct peace negotiations....Let us say that this is

so....But you must ask yourselves first whether the enemy accepts this link....The crucial question is...will undertaking to implement Resolution 242, to repartition part of the Land of Israel, to withdraw, bring peace, a peace agreement, or not...? I say that there is no chance that this will happen....The enemy stated yesterday that he did not accept any connection between the sections, demanding first that 242 be implemented....This means that the enemy does not have to do anything...since the implementation begins with Israel's withdrawal....I assume that, despite all our disagreements, the Government will not agree to that today, demanding first that negotiations under some kind of auspices begin. Where is the agreement, then? Where is peace? If the Government agrees, heaven forbid, there will be withdrawal, but there will be no peace, because, as you have said, there will be no withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967....

In August 1970 the Government undertook to implement Resolution 242, to withdraw, though the reservations it expressed were rejected by the Americans....Did we get a peace agreement? It is true, there was a ceasefire for three years, thank God, and meanwhile Nasser died. The enemy wanted to be better-equipped, as has now been proved, and then came this bloody war, the hardest Israel has known. This, then, is our experience, and we speak with the logic of experience....How will we get from this undertaking to a peace agreement with the enemy? That is the problem and that is why we are worried. The undertaking is very bitter....Are we to withdraw and repartition the Land of Israel without a chance of peace? Should this not worry us? Everyone in Israel is worried by it....

The situation is that...we have a force on the western side of the Canal, while the Egyptians are on the eastern side. That is not good....A few days ago all the official spokesmen said that our object was to dislodge the enemy, smash his war machine and remove him from all the territory that was under Israel's control. What happened? We all regret it. We have a force inside Egypt. Let's assume that the ceasefire comes into effect tomorrow...and the enemy demands the implementation of the agreement and this is not done. What will happen? Will the enemy sit idly by...? He can surround our force. He is constantly receiving fresh arms and equipment....There is nothing in the latest Security Council resolution, which the Government accepted so hastily, against the movement of troops and weapons....All it involves is a ceasefire within twelve hours, the implementation of Resolution 242 and the start of negotiations under somebody's auspices....

Now I want to say something serious, but it is my duty to do so. We must all beware of a sudden strike by the enemy....We cannot allow ourselves to be lulled—and to lull the Americans—into a sense of false security, with its concomitant irresponsibility, again....That is the analysis, and that is our concern, Madam Prime Minister. At least, do

not try to create the impression that something good has happened to us since yesterday....Our concern is for our nation, and the future and security of its sons....Why did the Government not consult the Knesset? Why did it conceal from us the events leading to the acceptance of Resolution 338...? We are currently engaged in a bloody war. We are making sacrifices, fighting for our existence and our future. We are told that the free world wants our victory, which is in its interest....Should Communism rule the entire region? Nonetheless, we were not consulted about this document....Perhaps we would not have accepted it. Could anything be more serious than that?

You keep saying that there will be no imposed settlement. We all hope so. I must tell the nation that this settlement is imposed....The representatives of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. drew up a resolution for the Security Council...and then told Israel to accept it....This must give us all cause to be worried, Madam Prime Minister. One cannot change anything by saying that we did not propose anything or ask for the ceasefire....The resolution was imposed on us, without us, without our advice, without our comments....

If it is true, as was reported this morning, that Dr. Kissinger said: "Two adults can remain friends even if their children quarrel," I ask the Knesset to record that this statement elicited a protest here....Does he mean to say that we are children, that we are engaging in infantile quarrels...? This is a battlefield, with all the grave consequences this has for people, for families....That expression is a very unfortunate one indeed....More than anyone else, he should know that this nation has displayed unparalleled maturity....He undoubtedly also said on a certain night in his parents' house: "That not one alone rose up to destroy us, but that in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us, and the Holy One, blessed be He, redeems us from their hand."

We, the surviving remnant, are fighting for our existence, because once again they have risen up against us to destroy us. And they still will. And they still want to. They continue to want to. And anyone who deludes himself—as certain Knesset Members have done tonight, I cannot even wish them the best of luck, God forbid—should remember in the light of experience that it is an illusion. The U.S.S.R. consulted Egypt about the Security Council resolution....Nothing was said to us before this dictate was formulated. We must protest at this, and if the Government has not done so, the Opposition will fulfill its national duty and speak in the name of the people....

An attempt has been made by the Ma'arach to divert attention from the main point by citing speeches made by the members of my party, myself included, in 1970....Is there anyone in this chamber who has not been mistaken in something he has said from this podium...? But in August 1970 I warned the Knesset that we were headed for war...noting that the Egyptians had violated the ceasefire in a way which seriously

threatened our security and future...moving highly sophisticated missiles forward...and adding new missile batteries....I demanded that the Government of Israel refuse to accept this new situation...and warned of the heavy price we would ultimately have to pay....Mr. Speaker, we must learn the lessons of the past and apply them to the ceasefire and all that it implies. We will bear the responsibility and continue to explain to the nation that it is essential to maintain the territorial integrity of the Land of Israel, because one must take what happened into account and know what strategic depth means for the defense of the nation. That is the path to the peace and security which we all desire.

...

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...in last week's debate several Knesset Members said that it was not yet time to raise questions. A week has passed, and there is progress, questions have been raised. In a few more days questions will be asked and answers given....In last week's debate I said that it would be almost unnatural if an intelligent nation did not think and was not worried. This is not a matter for party groups. No Knesset Member, no citizen in the state, can say that he is not worried....As long as there is no peace...we are all worried. There is nothing exclusive in that.

But something strange happened. A Knesset Member, the head of a large party group, the leader of the Opposition, doubtless goes to elections in order to obtain at least as much as his party group has now. But a good Jew, a patriot, a Zionist, sits on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and there is a problem which is by no means simple—is it not natural that that worried person should at least not hold the initial clarification before the media? I think it is. I think that that would have been the natural, simple and correct thing to do. But we are not only in a time of war, in a time of discussing the acceptance of the ceasefire proposal, on which opinions may certainly be divided, and I do not accept MK Tamir's prophetic tone....The fact that we heard tonight from MK Begin that even he can sometimes be wrong is already an achievement....

When the proposal was brought before us, the Gahal representatives in the Government also said yes to the ceasefire and no to its accompanying conditions...rejecting negotiations under Jarring's auspices.... They claimed that we would be forced to submit a map showing territorial concessions we were prepared to make...but we submitted no such map...and eventually the process came to an end....We did not say that we would not withdraw from one inch of the greater Land of Israel, we said that we were not prepared to accept his proposals. The proof is that there are no negotiations under Jarring's auspices.

What happened? One can make a mistake. Anyone can make a mistake...but to speak on the same subject once more and with the same confidence is more than a mistake....MK Begin...stubbornly refuses to

see what will happen if we don't accept it, but does not cease to point out how dangerous it is if we do....The Government accepted the proposal of 1970. For three years we had quiet. Three years were utilized to strengthen the IDF. MK Begin and his colleagues cannot prove that if we had said no then we would still have received the equipment ...because they were in the Government for several years and they saw that it is no easy matter to obtain arms....I congratulate them for their restraint on this subject, but they omit to tell the public how difficult—almost impossible—it is. And MK Tamir's view is that the U.S. should come to us and ask for things, is dependent on us. A very nice view....

But we accepted the plan. For three years there was no firing and for three years we received arms. And MK Begin says that we have now been through a bloody war. In factual terms that is correct. But what connection is there between the two? Had we not accepted that proposal, had we not received arms for the IDF, is there any guarantee that we would have had three years of quiet, or that we would have averted war now? Where is the connection, the simple, logical connection, between those two things...?

I would like MK Rimalt to explain what he means by the phrase: the IDF was victorious, the state was not? What was he driving at? What is the source of that new distinction, the like of which we have not heard for twenty-five years? The IDF belongs to us all. There is no IDF without the state. What does that mean, that the IDF was victorious but the state was not? Is the IDF something separate from the state? I would understand it if you were to say that the Government failed. But there's nothing new in your saying that. Now, suddenly, the state too. That's something new. That could lead us to something which I hope you don't want either.

Like everyone else in the country, in the Government, I have had terrible days and nights. In general, maybe it's not nice, but as long as there is firing anywhere—and there is hardly a day without firing somewhere, whether of terrorists or war—there is room for concern. But during this war the Government has made fateful decisions. I'm not talking about approving various things which, though not insignificant, are fairly usual. During those three or four days the Government made at least two decisions which, without exaggeration, are fateful. Of course the IDF implemented them. But did it do them by itself? On its own authority? One of our great qualities, and that is an integral aspect of a democratic regime, is that the IDF, with all its fine characteristics, does not decide as regards its policy. Is the state one thing and the IDF another, then? We are fortunate in that when policy is decided the IDF goes and implements it. But what is this distinction?

I know that the elections are approaching, and none of us is a saint and will praise the rival party at his party meetings. That hasn't happened yet. But one has to know the limits....MK Tamir wants to claim

that accepting the proposal now means withdrawing to the borders of 1967. He can say that if that is what pleases him. There's only one thing wrong with it, it has nothing to do with the truth....

I don't think it comes as a surprise to anyone here that countries which could supply us with what we need are not standing in line to do so. I am not in the least sorry that in the relations between the U.S. and Israel there is also the element that the U.S. Government thinks is good for it too. If that is the case I'm glad. I had not heard that altruism dominates international relations today. But it is a long way from that to the view that we don't need to take anything into consideration. In order to be able to say no, as we have in the past, even to the friendly Government of the U.S...one has to have the ability to do so. The condition for that is that you stop and think before you say no....My complaint to the members of the Opposition is that they do not justify their views, do not say what is the benefit or the danger in saying yes, or the benefit and danger in saying no. Perhaps they did this in their internal discussions.

I do not have the slightest doubt that a responsible government had no alternative but to accept those proposals. I don't even know if what the Egyptians accepted will be implemented or not. For the moment it isn't. I am not happy about it....But one thing must be made clear to everyone...we accepted the ceasefire on the explicit condition that it had to be mutual. The ceasefire will not be one-sided. We cannot have a situation in which the Egyptians continue shooting and we run away or sit and watch....The ceasefire will be maintained if it is mutual. If it is not, the same law applies to both sides. We accepted it. We wanted a ceasefire.

Unfortunately, I am not one of those—perhaps it would be better for me if I were—who think that there is an instant way to peace. I wish there were. I have never despaired to the extent of thinking that there will never be peace. When? I don't know. Does the ceasefire lead straight to peace? I'm not prepared to promise this....I would be very happy were direct talks, people talking with people, to begin in the wake of these decisions....

I don't know why MK Begin had to issue such dire warnings. I don't know of any Knesset Member who can be suspected of not caring....If there is a ceasefire and the shooting really stops we will all be glad. There are things of which one must beware. There are things which we must guard. We are experienced, we know what can happen. We must try—insofar as this depends on us—to reach negotiations somehow. I say that the three sections of the proposal are interconnected, not separate entities, though I could live very well without Section 2....I don't see why we have to try so hard, use so much emotion and pathos, to convince the U.S. and the U.N. of our way of seeing things....Why does MK Rimalt have to say that the argument about Resolution 242 regarding "territories" or "the territories" is a semantic one? What is semantic here? There is a fundamental, essential difference between those who

read "all the territories" and those who read "territories." I know you don't like that, that's alright, but that's a completely different argument.

As I said, there are still more arguments ahead. With all the questions which exist, and questions exist, I do not imagine that we will not sit down and draw conclusions. I wish we could do so and in a businesslike way. Whatever happens, no argument is terrible. I hope that we get to the end of the war, even not on the basis of this proposal, but on the basis of the Jewish people's extraordinary right. And we of this generation are privileged to see a younger generation such as this, boys such as these, and I might add, fathers and mothers such as these. We see these families, and that is our basic wealth, our asset. If we are victorious in war it is because of them; if we advance it is because of them; and if we attain peace it is because of them...and I wish it would be soon.

I am convinced, the entire Government is convinced, that this proposal, even if it does not automatically bring peace, contains an element—just as the 1970 proposal did, and perhaps more, because three years have passed and needs have grown—which could make it easier for us to strengthen ourselves. Of that there is no doubt.

M. Baram (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Ma'arach, Mafdal, Independent Liberal, Progress and Development, and Cooperation and Amity party groups I propose the following concluding resolution:

The Knesset notes the Government's statement as made by the Prime Minister today, 23 October 1973, 27 Tishrei 5734, as well as her reply to the participants in the debate.

...
(MK Baram's concluding resolution is adopted.)

Elections to the Eighth Knesset and Local Authorities (Temporary Provision) Law, 5734-1973

Introduction

Elections for the Eighth Knesset had been scheduled to take place on 30 October 1973. With the war barely ended and large sections of the population still mobilized, it was generally agreed that—for the only time in Israel's history—elections would have to be postponed. In order to avoid an unduly prolonged delay, the major parties agreed amongst themselves that the lists of candidates would not be reopened, so that elections would be held on the basis of the lists which had been submitted prior to “the cataclysm”—the Yom Kippur War. The new date for the elections was set for 11 December 1973. In the event, because of the relatively lengthy legislative procedure, they were held on 31 December 1973.

Sitting 463 of the Seventh Knesset

24 October 1973 (28 Tishrei 5734)

A. Ofer (Ma'arach): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, during the recess...the Knesset has dealt with fateful problems which will determine the future of the State of Israel. And because of the war waged against us by Egypt and Syria we cannot fulfill one of the sections of Israel's basic constitution, the Basic Law: the Knesset, and hold the elections at the appointed time, October 30, next Tuesday. There is hardly any disagreement as to the impossibility of holding the elections on October 30 in appropriate conditions and without harming the war effort.

We must remember that our basic constitution in reference to the Knesset elections is unique and very strict...making provision for bringing the elections forward but not for postponing them...Consultations have been held...and various reasons put forward for postponing the elections, among them the contention that the present time is inappropriate, not only because of the state of war...but also because it is evident to us all that after this war Israel will not be the same as it was beforehand, and that we will all have to do some inner soul-searching about what has happened and our future path....

At present it is still not clear what the outcome of this war will be...though we are wiser today than we were last week....There is a ceasefire, which the Syrians have accepted too...but it is only a cease-

fire...not the peace we hope for....The Knesset Members who participated in the consultations and are submitting the proposal before you represent 110 Members of the Knesset....The committee was also obliged to take into account the fact that in effect the term of office of the Seventh Knesset has come to an end. The Basic Law: the Knesset states explicitly when the Knesset's term ends, though adding that it continues to exist until the new Knesset has met....The Seventh Knesset was elected for four years, however, and its mandate ends on October 30....

Especially today, as we face a new situation arising from the war, with the debate about its results and the lessons to be learned so that Israel may emerge stronger and a permanent peace settlement reached, the public must be given the opportunity to express its opinion....This would hold true even if elections were not due to be held now....The overwhelming majority of the House, i.e., the representatives of 112 Knesset Members—

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): What was the justification for making agreements among some of the party groups and not all the party groups, holding consultations under the Speaker's auspices without inviting all the Members?

A. Ofer (Ma'arach): First of all, this bill is brought for its preliminary reading. After it is approved by the Knesset it will be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and will then be brought for its first reading, when every Member may express his opinion....In matters of this kind one tries to reach agreement among the majority of the Knesset Members, which in this instance has not been easy, there being differences of opinion within as well as between party groups....There are still aspects of the proposal upon which agreement has not been reached, and changes may yet be made in it. One thing is certain, however: we must approve the proposal at its third reading this week, for it is not enough for the Knesset to pass the law. The law must be published in the *Official Gazette* before October 30, otherwise the elections will have to be held on that date.

The bill before you proposes postponing the elections which have already been prepared, and for which the electoral register has been drawn up, to 11 December 1973....I admit that the proposal has two deficiencies: anyone turning 18 between now and December 11 will not be able to vote, but I ask the Knesset Members not to overdo things and talk about vast numbers of 18-year-olds deprived of the right to vote...since those involved were born in the three months between October and December....Much as we would like to enable all those who have reached the age of 18 by December 11 to vote, the procedural arrangements are somewhat complicated...and would involve postponing the elections to an even later date....The other deficiency is that additional political parties might want to stand for election...though I attach less impor-

tance to this problem than to the previous one since the major blocs have crystallized and the 21 parties registered cover virtually all the possibilities....We know that the public debate has begun...and will doubtless continue....

The actual proposal is based on the assumption that the elections which we are postponing are to be held, i.e., that everything we have done still holds good, but that Election Day with all its attendant procedures is simply held over till December 11....In order to avoid any violation of the Basic Law, which states explicitly that the outgoing Knesset remains in office until the incoming Knesset meets, but makes no provision for cases like the present, when the elections are postponed and the Knesset's term is longer than four years, we propose making it clear that the term of office of the Seventh Knesset is extended until the Eighth Knesset meets....

Clause 2 of the bill states that all the arrangements made for the elections which were to have been held on October 30 remain in effect for the later date....I know that there are arguments against this, but if this arrangement is not accepted we will not be able to hold the elections this year....We also propose that the time-slots already used by the parties for their TV and radio campaigns not be counted as constituting part of the fresh election campaign, since the issues have changed....As the elections approach I trust that it will be possible to debate every issue, however important and crucial, in a responsible and concise manner. We are accustomed to a very long election campaign, and I think we should learn from other democratic countries and shorten it....As it is, all the party groups are sceptical as to the effectiveness of election campaigns...and I am convinced that even within two or three weeks we will all be able to say everything we want to the electorate, which is intelligent and understands things even before being subjected to an election campaign.

Z. Zimmerman (Gahal): It doesn't understand things even after the election campaign.

A. Ofer (Ma'arach): I think that that is one of the reasons for holding the elections in December....If the campaign starts two or three weeks before the elections we will have enough time to learn the lessons of the war and will also know what our political situation is, so that we can bring matters before the public in an orderly and responsible way.

The fifth clause connects the local elections with the elections to the Eighth Knesset. As I have said, this proposal is a preliminary one....I think that at this stage there are no differences of opinion among us about it and it can be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee for consideration, since time is of the essence....

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I realize that there is an urgent need for the new law to be passed. If I never-

theless make the gesture of suggesting that the proposal be removed from the agenda it is first of all to protest at the way it was brought before the Knesset. The Speaker called a meeting of certain party groups...an unprecedented step in the Knesset's history....From that consultation—to which we were not invited—this proposal grew....

It is my view that the elections should be held at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably in November....First of all, the Government is facing several crucial decisions which will determine the country's fate for many years. There is an international decision regarding peace negotiations, and for this we need a reliable Government with a clear mandate....Secondly, in my view, the present Government and Knesset are responsible to a great extent for the political and other blunders of recent years. The public must be given a chance to elect a new Government and Knesset at the earliest possible opportunity.... Thirdly...while the parties of the right feel that support for annexation has grown as a result of the war, I maintain that the reverse is true....

The Vote

Those in favor of MK Ofer's proposal	62
Those in favor of removing the proposal from the agenda	1

(MK Ofer's proposal is adopted.)

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: The Knesset requests the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee to meet immediately to discuss the proposal....

Demand for Immediate Release of Israeli Prisoners of War in Egypt

Introduction

One of the most agonizing questions arising in the wake of the Yom Kippur War was that of prisoners. Even though—as twice before—prisoners of war in Israel's hands vastly outnumbered Israeli soldiers taken captive by Egypt and Syria, the issue became a trump card in Arab—particularly Syrian—hands. Whether because they were confident that Israel—by its nature an open, democratic society—was bound to respect the Geneva Convention, with or without reciprocity, or because of inferior sensitivity of their Governments to the fate of prisoners and their families, Egypt, and much more so Syria, cynically used prisoners of war in order to extract concessions from Israel. The U.S., which had agreed to make the ceasefire dependent on adherence to the Geneva Convention, was unwilling—or unable—to induce the Governments concerned to change their attitude.

Sitting 465 of the Seventh Knesset

30 October 1973 (4 Heshvan 5734)

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: The Knesset has been summoned at the request of thirty Knesset Members to debate an urgent motion for the agenda on our demand for the immediate release of our prisoners of war. I give the floor to MK Begin....

M. Begin (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, my teachers and leaders, Knesset Members, today we speak for humanity against bestiality, for pain against sadism, for culture against barbarism, for the rules of war against war criminals. At noon on the Day of Atonement Egypt and Syria launched a war of aggression against Israel. We know that their soldiers killed in cold blood as well as in the heat of battle, and captured hundreds of our soldiers. According to the Geneva Convention, which seeks to humanize the cruelty of war to some extent, every country must immediately submit a list of its prisoners of war. Till now neither Egypt nor Syria has done this, apart from the 47 names which reached the Red Cross in Cairo.

This constitutes the unprecedented torturing of hundreds of Israeli families, which...are living between hope and anxiety. If they find out that their sons have been taken prisoner, they will be very sorry. We have experience with the Syrians, and with the Egyptians, and know how they treat prisoners of war—but at least they will know that their

sons are alive and, with God's help, will eventually return to their families....This comfort is sadistically being withheld from hundreds of families, that is, thousands of Israel's citizens....

On the subject of the return of our prisoners of war...we received a solemn undertaking from the U.S. on the same night that U.N. Resolution 338 was dictated to us....We were told that as soon as the ceasefire went into effect the exchange of prisoners would be dealt with. Dr. Kissinger even told the Prime Minister that he had obtained a promise from the U.S.S.R. that the exchange of prisoners would follow immediately on the ceasefire. That promise was broken. That undertaking was not fulfilled....We must ask the U.S. President how this situation can be tolerated....Israel has suffered greatly because of cruel aggression....To this do we have to add the pain of not knowing whether one's son, father or brother is alive or dead...?

The American President and people should know that in the last two and a half weeks we have suffered many casualties—boys wounded as well as killed—which, if they had occurred in the U.S., would have amounted to hundreds of thousands. After bloodletting of this kind, is this viciously cruel, wicked and inhuman torture to be permitted? It is true, we fought for our nation, our freedom, our independence, but the historical fact is that we have also done something for the free world, despite the fact that part of it still does not acknowledge that, especially ungrateful West Europe. Consequently, we have the moral right to ask other countries to intervene so that our prisoners may be released....The U.S. was prepared to bomb North Vietnam mercilessly in order to secure the release of its prisoners of war....

How can the encircled Third Army be provided with food? By a flanking movement the IDF cut it off...and could have destroyed it utterly...then proceeding to demolish the Second Army and alter the balance of forces between Israel and Egypt, thereby guaranteeing peace for many years to come....But we were not permitted to do that. We should at least have made the passage of provisions contingent on the release of our prisoners....Otherwise, I find this act inexplicable....Fighting units I have visited have expressed their surprise at this....

I demand, therefore, that the Government refuse to permit any further passage of provisions to the Third Army...until our prisoners of war are released by both Egypt and Syria....Our experience with Syria as regards prisoners of war has been very bitter. Our brothers and sons returned to us after months of captivity in Syria. We saw them. I will say no more. No distinction must be made between our prisoners in Egypt and Syria. Sadat is Assad's ally in aggression, and must therefore demand the release of prisoners there so that his Third Army may live....That is what we are demanding of the Government today, and I hope that the whole House will support us....This demand is just, humane and the only way of getting our boys back home speedily....We

request that the subject be debated in the plenum, not referred to a committee, as this debate should be public....

To the Minister of Defense I say, we all know that in this House there are several Members who know what it is to lead those who are prepared to risk their lives for their people. We know what it is to love those people and be anxious for their return. That is the tradition of the generation which founded the state—the brotherhood of comrades in arms. One does everything for one's comrade in arms, one never abandons him in the field, one does everything one can to save him. The brotherhood of comrades in arms in Israel, in the generation of its renewed heroism, is the source of our nation's ability to withstand the enemy's forces....

Consequently, I ask the Minister of Defense to request a special, urgent Cabinet meeting in the name of that brotherhood. And I ask you to propose, as you have heard in the Knesset, that the Government decide to withhold supplies from the Third Army until all Israel's prisoners of war are released from both Egypt and Syria. Till then there will be no peace and quiet in any home in Israel....May it be His will that by virtue of our love, concern and efforts the sons will speedily return to their parents, husbands to their wives and fathers to their children, for they are all waiting for them.

...

S. Tamir (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, many Israeli soldiers are being held by the Egyptians and the Syrians. Hundreds of families whose sons are missing cling to the hope that they are not dead but are prisoners of war. Other families, who have identified their sons as prisoners of war, are racked by grave anxiety regarding the fate of their sons, who are being held by cruel captors. The entire nation, which is, perhaps, more sensitive than others to the life and welfare of its fighting men, is united in the firm demand that our prisoners of war be located and identified immediately, thereby ensuring their welfare and release.

It is the absolute and unequivocal duty of the State of Israel to fight for the welfare and release of those who risked their lives to defend the state and the lives of its inhabitants....The Prime Minister has told us that the U.S. gave its assurance that the matter would be dealt with concomitantly with the ceasefire....Now it transpires that not only are we up against a blank wall comprising the Syrians, the Egyptians and the Russians...but that pressure is being exerted on us by America to give up our hard-won achievements one by one, thereby endangering our positions and relinquishing our bargaining card....

And so we have reached an absurd situation in which an encircled enemy who refuses to divulge the names of our prisoners of war and allow the Red Cross access to them...is at the same time receiving not only medical aid but food and water from us....We are embarking on a pe-

riod when every other day we will be asked to make agreements and settlements with Egypt, Syria and others. A joint appeal must go forth from here to those who are about to make proposals of various kinds...to realize that if Egypt and Syria do not honor international conventions which they have signed now, when their armies are surrounded...what value will any other agreements they sign have...?

The main question is, however...where do we stop? The Prime Minister and the Government told the nation and this House that the war would end when the enemy was defeated...and the Bab el-Mandeb Straits opened. The Bab el-Mandeb Straits are closed. We go round the back way. Then you said that no supplies would be allowed through till our prisoners of war were released. Supplies go through, our prisoners have not been released. We continue to withdraw in accordance with the timetable set out by Egypt and Syria together with the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. We are no longer consulted. We receive dictates and act according to them. That is the tragic truth, and we cannot hide it from ourselves....Because of the severe beating we took in the first two days of the war, for whatever reason, and I will not go into that now, the fighting was prolonged, we were deprived of complete victory and our ability to maneuver vis-à-vis our great American friend was limited....

I would be the last to say...that we are free to veto any request coming from Washington. That is not the case. But it is a catastrophe when we have to accept each and every request coming from Washington....Today we stand before one of the greatest trials—how far are we prepared to go. We have become an anvil which is struck over and over again...waiting for the next blow, without any initiative....That is how the world sees us now....Israel's credibility is being put to the test....It was you, Madam Prime Minister, who said that that subject is one of the principal criteria of the ceasefire. You said that it was a test of the enemy, but now it is a test of our friends, of ourselves.

To the same extent as you determined that it was a test, they are testing us now, testing the value of Israel's "no," of Israel's precondition, knowing that this nation is perhaps more sensitive to saving every Jewish life, every Israeli soldier, than any other....At this moment that subject is central and crucial, both as regards saving lives and our obligation to our fighting men, but also as regards the fate of the negotiations in which we will eventually be involved, or the dictates, should there be no negotiations, in other words, the fate of the country and its citizens. Surrender on this point is not merely at the expense of the prisoners of war and their families, it is at the expense of the state. That being so, since this is the test, I call on the Government of Israel, for the sake of our great and crucial common cause, to stand firm, and to do so immediately.

...

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I thank the Members who initiated this debate. The prisoners of war and their families deserve it...particularly in view of the criminal behavior of the Arab countries on this subject....It would be incorrect, however, to regard the subject of the prisoners of war as being separate from the war as a whole....They were captured within the framework of the war, and the efforts to release them are being undertaken within the framework of war....MK Begin said that fighting units had expressed surprise at the fact that supplies were being allowed through to the Third Army while the prisoners of war had not yet been released. I don't know if they know, but MK Begin certainly knows, that the shells they are firing today were not available a week ago. One cannot wage war without shells. And without the shells we will be unable to release the prisoners of war. Supplies were allowed through to the Third Army not as a humanitarian gesture but because we had no choice....

The arena of this war extends as far as Bab el-Mandeb. The focal points of the parties participating in it are Washington and Moscow. Israel cannot fight the Arab countries and their allies and the massive aid they give on its own....There is only one country which is prepared to give us weapons, namely, the U.S. Anyone who proposes that we should conduct this war while breaking away from the U.S. is proposing, to the best of my judgment, that we cannot win this war....

M. Begin (Gahal): Who proposed that we conduct the war while breaking away from the U.S.? No one proposed this. The issue is one of evaluations. I disagree with your evaluation.

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: If you agreed with my evaluation I wouldn't be here on the podium answering you now. I would like to tell MK Begin that the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee exists for clarifying which evaluation is correct....The demand to conduct that clarification here astonishes me....There are certain things which cannot be explained in the plenum, as MK Begin and his colleagues know....The demand to clarify the validity of our evaluations here strikes me as being more for show than for the sake of the thing itself....

M. Begin (Gahal): About the future, about tomorrow, not about yesterday.

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: About the future, and about tomorrow and about the other elements we regard as essential for conducting the war....Members of the Opposition, who are members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, know that we do not withhold any information. No one here or outside thinks that one can seriously debate the subject here.

H. Landau (Gahal): We have heard two conflicting versions regarding that information, and I say this publicly.

U. Avneri (Israel Radicals): What secrets are still kept in Israel? The public knows everything, wants to know and has the right to know.

H. Landau (Gahal): Two conflicting versions.

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: MK Landau, if the Speaker asks you to calm down, you have to calm down....

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: Since that was an interjection, although a very emotional one, I will say only that even if it is a question of clarifying which of two conflicting versions is correct, one still has to go to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Can things be clarified here?

M. Yedid (Gahal): There should have been a united appeal from the entire nation to the world and Jewry...as well as to Israel and the U.N.

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: A united appeal can be made. ...But the question is whether the Government's present war policy is correct or not, not whether we demand that the enlightened world impose the Geneva Convention...and that has to be clarified in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. If the question was merely a demonstrative one, as happens occasionally in the Knesset, no one would find fault with it, but the crux of the matter has to be discussed in committee....If the appeal is directed at the Arabs and the Red Cross, that is sufficient. If the question is whether we should agree to the U.S. demand or not, that is a subject for committee.

We linked the supplies convoy with the release of the prisoners of war and the implementation of the Geneva Convention. We also made the ceasefire contingent upon it...and that is still the Government's position....And since the American bombing of Vietnam has been mentioned, I would like to point out that the U.S. prisoners of war were released only once the war was over...despite all the U.S.'s power, and that there was no Red Cross supervision of its prisoners of war....One has to face the bitter facts of war, even if one is a mighty Power....

To my great regret, Syria has not responded to requests from the Red Cross, world leaders or anyone else to date. At present there does not seem to be any shift in the Syrian stand on this subject. I repeat, for the benefit of all concerned, that as far as we are concerned the ceasefire is contingent on implementation of the Geneva Convention. The situation is different as regards Egypt, which has agreed to release wounded prisoners of war first, immediately....Yesterday we received a list of 45 names. We estimate that of the 82 Israeli prisoners of war whose names we have received so far from Egypt about 60 are wounded, and Egypt has agreed to release them immediately, in return for our release of

wounded Egyptian prisoners of war, the evacuation of 75 badly-wounded soldiers of the Third Army by the Red Cross and the passage of medical aid to the Third Army.

There have been no negotiations with Syria, but we have submitted the following demands to Egypt regarding the prisoners of war: first, the immediate return of the wounded prisoners of war; second, the provision of a list of all the Israeli prisoners of war held by Egypt; third, access to all the prisoners of war held by Egypt; fourth, the release of all the prisoners of war. As I have said, the Egyptians have agreed to the immediate release of the wounded men, as well as prisoners of war who have been held since the Six Day War....The Egyptians have promised that within a few days we will receive the names of all Israeli prisoners of war in Egypt and that the Red Cross will be permitted to visit them....At present I am assuming that they will keep their word....To date our experience of negotiations with them has not been bad....

We have declared all those missing as prisoners of war...these include 320 men on the Egyptian front, 127 on the Syrian front and 2 in Lebanon, a total of 449. We are currently holding 6,995 Egyptian prisoners of war....I hope that this situation will enable us to reach agreement on the exchange of all the prisoners of war soon....The subject of the prisoners of war is a weighty one, perhaps even more so than that of those who fell in this war....There is no disagreement between us about the need to discuss it or to appeal to whoever possible, everyone in the world, to ensure the speedy release of the prisoners of war and guarantee that they are treated properly. But we must do so within the context of the war, not in order to delay their return but in order to employ the methods which will secure their release. Speeches and appeals here are not enough. It is the means of war which will secure their release. We are at war. We have not ended it yet. We have not yet begun the grave political struggle. Not only are we still at war, but we are in the throes of a struggle with those elements for which Moscow and Washington are the focal points.

I hope that we can break through the Syrian wall within that framework, that warlike framework. I hope we do not have to wait until the end of the war, but will succeed in ensuring adequate treatment and the release of the prisoners within the framework of this stage of the cease-fire. I propose that we transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, where it will be possible to speak more freely and fully about the various aspects of this subject.

(The motion to debate the subject in the plenum is defeated.)

(The motion to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

In Honor of the Late David Ben-Gurion

Introduction

On 2 December 1973, at the age of 86, David Ben-Gurion died. He was buried next to his late wife, Paula, near Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev, which he loved and where he had made his home since retiring from the post of Prime Minister. In order to avoid controversy, the House Committee decided that, in addition to the Speaker, the floor be given only to the Prime Minister, Golda Meir, whose relations with Ben-Gurion had undergone considerable changes over the years.

Sitting 475 of the Seventh Knesset

10 December 1973 (15 Kislev 5734)

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: I hereby open the Knesset sitting devoted to honoring the memory, personality and work of the late David Ben-Gurion.

(The Knesset Members stand in honor of the late David Ben-Gurion, whose recorded voice reading the Declaration of Independence is broadcast in the Chamber.)

Distinguished President, Knesset Members, the seven days of mourning appointed by Jewish law for the late David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel, have elapsed, but the pain is still great and it will be a long time before the shadows of grief and sorrow for the death of the beloved and admired old man, who was the father-figure, family head and glory of the State of Israel and its people, will pass.

And we, the representatives of the mourning nation, many of whom were his pupils and friends, have assembled today for this special Knesset sitting not in order to eulogize him, for he spurned eulogies, but in order to commune with his memory, to move aside slightly the curtain of mourning from him, so that we may once again see his special charm, greatness and brilliance, and also in order to assess—inasmuch as this is possible—what he was to us, what we have lost with his death and how great was the inheritance he bequeathed us and our children.

But first we should note four things:

A. Ben-Gurion's life was rich and his actions manifold, as was his philosophy, some of which has already appeared in his various books, while some has not yet been published. Thus, anyone who seeks to evaluate him, relate the story of his life or describe his deeds, not to mention his rich and extensive philosophy...will have a problem deciding where

to begin, how to continue and with what to end...Consequently, whatever is said about him...on this or other occasions will necessarily be incomplete....

B. In his lifetime Ben-Gurion received a great deal of praise from all quarters for the great things he had achieved by virtue of his leadership, instructions or vision...which changed the fate of the nation and the land....But "his heart was not haughty, nor his eyes lofty." He rejected praise with true humility and directed it towards the nation, saying: "The great deed which was done in our time could have been achieved only by the entire Jewish nation...and each one of us should be glad and proud to belong to this wonderful nation whose great and eternal spirit has overcome all obstacles and brought us to this point." Nonetheless, in his life and, especially, after his death, we feel the need to tell his praises, as a source of inspiration, as an example for our generation and those to come, so that they may follow in his footsteps and perhaps even be endowed with his spirit, in fulfillment of the verse: "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

C. Any attempt to draw parallels and compare Ben-Gurion with any other figure in ancient or modern history will fail because his biography, deeds, character, personality, thinking and way of expressing himself, whether generally accepted or not, were uniquely and independently his. The same applies to the external circumstances and conditions in which he acted.

D. Ben-Gurion had friends and adversaries, in some case the friendship or rivalry was two-way, in others it was only one-way....It is easy to see that a man of Ben-Gurion's stature and thinking could not help but fight for his views...and argue—and he was a fierce disputant—with those who disagreed with him. Ben-Gurion was an authority and proclaimed his opinions openly, forcefully and clearly, but he also took heed of the thinking of others, whether of his own generation or from ancient times, and made no effort to conceal it when he disagreed with someone. Consequently, he had as many rivals and adversaries as he had friends and supporters.

In his last few years, however, after he had retired from public life and devoted himself to writing what he thought was essential for the coming generations, we saw how all the old enmities died away and he became everyone's friend, while everyone, without exception, harbored only feelings of friendship, affection and admiration for him. Thus, his end reflected his beginning, and it was evident that all the rivalries were merely for the sake of the cause in which he believed so fervently....Indeed, his old age merely increased the reverence and respect in which we all held him.

In his personal relations Ben-Gurion was easygoing, courteous and sincere...as has been revealed in the book about him recently published by his assistant and disciple, MK Yitzhak Navon....David Ben-Gurion

was one of those personalities with which history provides mankind every now and again in order to fulfill an historic mission and forge a new path. Such personalities have been known in Jewish history. Joseph told his brothers: "For God did send me before you to preserve life," and the Prophet Isaiah said: "Here am I, send me."

The Zionist revival was fortunate in being blessed with people who were guided by a supreme spiritual inspiration and an inner command which impelled them to take the historical mission upon themselves, however difficult and complicated the path. David Ben-Gurion was unique among those who fulfilled the historical mission of the Zionist revival. From childhood he was imbued with a sense of mission, which began with the innocence of youth, continued with pioneering work which laid foundations and sowed in tears, and reached its peak in inspired and activist leadership.

Herzl's death was a terrible blow for the eighteen-year-old Ben-Gurion. In his memoirs he wrote: "I was extremely depressed, as if my whole world had crumbled."...In a letter sent to one of his friends he wrote: "The seeds of the revival which Herzl sowed in our hearts will never shrivel....The ardent desire to work for the revival which he imparted to us will live within us until we have fulfilled the noble task for which the great leader gave his life....Formerly we did not fully realize what we had, while now we know what we lack....Only once in thousands of years is so wonderful a man born....Our loss is so great.... And yet today more than ever I believe in our victory and am confident of it."

A sense of mission accompanied Ben-Gurion from his youth to his old age. In his book, *The Eternity of Israel*, he wrote: "A divine voice speaks to modern man as it did three thousand years ago. Some people believe it comes from heaven, others that it comes from the heart. What is important is the voice, not the argument about where it comes from. And anyone can hear that voice, often or infrequently, in clear or muffled tones, if his ear is attentive to the truth."...

At the age of twenty, two years after Herzl's death, Ben-Gurion immigrated to Palestine and worked as an agricultural laborer first in Petah Tikva, and then in the Rishon Letzion vineyards and at Sejera. It was there that he undertook guard duty and learned about the security problems of the Jewish population...which eventually led to his defense awareness and perhaps even to his future strategy. The first chapter in that strategy was his volunteering for the Jewish Legion and his activity in recruiting volunteers, together with his friend, the late Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. From the history of the Yishuv and the Labor movement we know that from the very outset Ben-Gurion revealed unusual powers of leadership. His pioneering colleagues recognized his attributes, acknowledged the spark in his vision and accepted his leadership.

In the book, *Hashomer*, Israel Shohat wrote: "In Elul 1905 David Green arrived. He was a young man full of energy, dedication and a deep belief in the revival of the nation. He was ready to do any pioneering work. He spoke Hebrew and had read a great deal about Zionism before his arrival....His entry into the Workers of Zion Party strengthened the Zionist foundations. The comrades from Palestine, including myself, regarded him as an additional force in our war. We were akin to him in faith and supported him in his first steps."...

At a later stage he headed the Jewish Federation of Labor soon after its foundation, since no one was better suited for that task than he. The Jewish workers were the anvil to his hammer. For fifteen years he molded and formed the working camp as one of pioneers with the mission of fulfilling Zionism, defining it as "an organization of founders of a kingdom." All through his life Ben-Gurion regarded labor, the Jewish working man, the pioneering and settlement enterprises, the creative initiative of Jews and the use of science and technology as the essential components for fulfilling the tasks of building the country and bringing about national revival, which he defined already in 1929 as: "ingathering the exiles, massing the Jewish people in its land and cultivating national steadfastness."...

While leading the workers of the country, Ben-Gurion forged their path in the Zionist movement, regarding them as: "the solid foundation of the Zionist movement, the workshop, the driving force of Zionism in its implementation."...He fulfilled their mission through the institutions of the Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency, until he became head of the Executive, serving as the political spokesman and leader of the Zionist movement under the presidency of the late Chaim Weizmann.

In the late 1940s, at the darkest hour in Jewish history, with the Holocaust in Europe, the surviving remnant desperately in need of aid and redemption, the anxiety of the Jews of Arab countries in view of the evil winds beginning to blow around them, the treachery and collapse of British Mandatory rule in Palestine and the tremendous changes taking place as a result of the Second World War, when the very existence of the Jewish people and the chances of fulfilling Zionism had reached a frightening turning-point, David Ben-Gurion stood before the Jewish people and was revealed as a courageous and farsighted leader, the right man in the right place at the right time and, while struggling against hesitations and doubters, stood in the forefront of the War of Independence and gave the sign to start diverting the course of Jewish history to the revolutionary channel of the renewal of our sovereign existence.

The establishment of the State of Israel is neither the work of one man nor the result of a solitary effort; a tremendous agglomeration of the yearnings of generations as well as the hard work of pioneers and

fighters and people who forced issues—together with the combination of circumstances in the world and among the Jews—are what brought the crucial moment near. But when the time for decisions came, a man of immense resourcefulness and greatness of spirit was needed to utilize it immediately and to the full, and this was David Ben-Gurion. Had it not been for his audacity, deftness at maneuvering and leadership ability, who knows whether the establishment of the state would have come to pass then.

Once the state had come into existence it was Ben-Gurion's most beloved child. He concentrated on cultivating it with infinite love and tremendous energy, while being cognizant of all its horizons, both behind and ahead of it. In building its layers and molding its form he focused the best of his vision and aspirations as well as his Jewish and human world-outlook. The formation of the IDF while assuring its unity and independence of internal political factors, the strengthening of the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, with the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court situated there, together with the institutions of science and culture, while standing firm and proud as Jews in the face of international elements which schemed and plotted to remove Jerusalem—in full or in part—from Israel's sovereignty, and the revolution he sought to introduce in the education system by cancelling the separate streams—all these are jewels in the crown of his life and work.

Some people have described Ben-Gurion as a prophet with a sword, i.e., a man of war. The truth is that he regarded war as unavoidable, but he pursued peace amongst Jews and Arabs in various ways, some of them known, others as yet unpublished, both before the establishment of the state and afterwards. To our regret, neither he nor we attained the desired peace.

Ben-Gurion was an avowed democrat and a first-rate parliamentarian. He adhered to and treasured the principles of democracy, but the fact that on the whole his opinions and proposals were accepted led to unjust gossip about his attitude to democracy. But when we look back on his life, deeds and words, as well as on his complete withdrawal from office, we see Ben-Gurion in all his democratic belief. He was, indeed, a first-rate parliamentarian. Those were the days of the Knesset's brilliance when, upon Ben-Gurion's entry into the chamber, the House seemed to be electrified. He contributed to the Knesset's debates, not only in the cut and thrust of argument but also by deep, philosophical, far-ranging thinking. When he described in detail the tremendous difficulties facing the nation and the state he also encouraged and comforted those who were lagging with the fervor of his vision and his belief that in the end our just cause would triumph and we would yet attain a life of prosperity and peace.

Ben-Gurion was a philosopher, and in that respect fitted Plato's description of the ideal ruler—a philosopher-statesman....But Ben-Gurion himself held a different philosophy, which...he felt accorded with the view of the prophets, writing: "It is not by the rule of one man that the ideal of good, justice and charity will be fulfilled, but by the entire nation becoming a special nation. It is not exceptional people who will bring redemption but the nation." I will conclude with the phrase he chose: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Distinguished President, Speaker and Knesset Members, there are no bounds to what can be said about Ben-Gurion and his tremendous achievement in the history of our nation since his immigration to this country at the beginning of the century. His spheres of interest were almost unlimited; his spiritual concerns included not only the sources, the Bible and the vicissitudes of the history and heritage of the Jewish people, but also the philosophical, social and religious thinking of other peoples and ancient and modern cultures. I am not going to speak about his philosophy, and will restrict myself to saying a few words about his activities in the Jewish, Zionist and Israeli sphere, and that only in brief.

In reviewing historical acts in which Ben-Gurion was the driving force I have tried to choose only a few, but those which I think were crucial. There were things which other people thought about and even advocated, but it was he who, at the right moment, put the thought or idea into practice, doing so with all his authority, persuasiveness and decisiveness.

We were all against the White Paper and saw the dangers embodied in it, but without a doubt it was Ben-Gurion who turned the Yishuv and the Zionist movement into an uncompromising force in this struggle.

During the Second World War and the Holocaust, when the nations of the world involved in the war defined their peace aims, there were some within the Zionist movement who thought that the Jewish nation should also define its war aims, but it was David Ben-Gurion who could define his concept and aspiration in clear and operative terms, placing the demand for "a Jewish state immediately" as the peace aim of the Jewish people on the world's agenda. This is known in Zionist history as the Biltmore Plan. And once his concept was crystallized he focused all the spiritual and physical efforts of the nation here and abroad on fulfilling that aim, leading the nation through the War of Independence to the valiance of the proclamation of the Jewish state.

One of the outstanding features of Ben-Gurion's character was his amazing ability to select from a miscellany of problems confronting us, some of them crucial and weighty, the main, vital and decisive issue of the time. And after he had chosen and decided, he deferred acting on anything else, concentrating only on the one main point. This some-

times caused dissatisfaction among the colleagues who worked with him, but after Ben-Gurion had decided what the main point was there was no turning him aside from it.

That is what happened in 1946, for example, when he was Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and decided that he had to make a thorough and detailed study of everything connected with defensive action. He decided that our military preparedness was the main thing, and it was virtually impossible to discuss anything else with him then. At that time he went to the U.S., gathered together dozens of Jews from all over America, and described the situation at the end of the Second World War to them. He told them that we needed arms and an arms industry, and prepared them for the help we would need less than three years later. This wonderful chapter has not yet been recounted in full and the almost crucial importance of that initiative for the War of Independence has not yet been evaluated.

But that is only one example. Thus, in the course of the mass immigration in the first few years of the establishment of the state, Ben-Gurion decided to concentrate on settling and populating the Negev. We all remember his call for volunteers from the second generation of the established population to come to the help of the immigrant farming villages. And not long after that he retired from office and went to Sde Boker, seeking, as if by virtue of his personal example, to arouse the younger generation and increase the numbers of those going to the Negev. When we see today how those settlements have flourished, making parts of the Negev bloom and turning people with no agricultural background into successful farmers, and when we see the sons of these settlers as firmly-rooted farmers, we know how great was his vision and action in this sphere.

In our bitter and varied battles, and primarily in leading the struggle against the White Paper, on the path to independence, Ben-Gurion did not underestimate the strength of the enemy. He did not delude the Yishuv, but realized how great the danger would be if, God forbid, we were to abandon the struggle.

In the course of every national struggle at whose center he stood he had the wonderful ability to foresee what would happen and draw the necessary conclusions. During the struggle against the White Paper authorities, and in order to prepare for the great fight ahead, he did not recoil from easing the struggle in order to gather strength for the impending invasion by the Arab armies.

During the War of Independence he made difficult decisions, as, for example, when he determined—in the arduous conditions prevailing then—to mass forces from all over the country in order to open the road to Jerusalem. To those who expressed anxiety about other fronts he replied: "There is only one Jerusalem."

In December 1949 the U.N. decided to implement its resolution of 1947 regarding international rule in Jerusalem and its environs. Ben-Gurion was the man who decided, despite the political dangers, to transfer the Knesset and the Government to Jerusalem, thereby establishing it as the capital of Israel.

The close connection between the continued existence of the Jewish people and the Jewish state was no mere meaningless article in his Zionist program. He was imbued with a fierce awareness, based on his knowledge of history, that the Jewish state was the guarantee of the existence of the Jewish people wherever it might be, not as a separate center but as a drawing point for the nation, with the object of assuring the future of the state as well as the existence of the nation. He taught that complete Jewish existence could be fully expressed only in the historic homeland, in the independent and sovereign state. That was why he demanded immigration to Israel first and foremost by Zionist leaders. For him Zionism meant immigration. It is true that people were not always overjoyed with these definitions of his, including leading Zionists in the diaspora, but he did not flinch from repeating his ideas over and over again.

It was David Ben-Gurion more than anyone else who inculcated the concepts and patterns of etatism in the nation, regarding this as a national need and educational value of the highest order. For two thousand years our people lived without a state, without Jewish sovereignty, and then the State of Israel was established. Ben-Gurion saw the necessity of teaching the nation to make the revolutionary shift to existence as a democratic, independent state. We all underwent the transition from the conditions of the Yishuv, subject to foreign rule, to an independent state under Ben-Gurion's guidance. In that tremendous endeavor he sought to include all the pioneering and creative elements which had made independence and the state possible.

The awareness of renewed Jewish etatism came to full expression in the establishment of the IDF as the army of the whole nation, an army which was controlled by the democratically-elected representatives. In these problems he invested all the fervor and persuasiveness with which he was blessed. Many of those who hesitated or disagreed with him admitted eventually that he had been right.

In the international arena...Ben-Gurion was among the first to see the intrinsic and crucial importance of the link with the U.S. He felt that the large Jewish community there, in the democratic regime of the U.S., could help the State of Israel. He also understood the character of the U.S. itself, with its democratic values, and the chance of forming friendly relations with it.

Ben-Gurion's actions and written and spoken ideas about the relations between us and the Arabs have been a source of guidance and inspiration since the appearance of his book, *Our Neighbors and Us*, and

to this day. His thinking and policy on the subject focused on two principles: the aspiration for peace and relations of equality and mutual respect, on the one hand, and the realization that as long as there is no peace defensive strength is a precondition for peace, on the other. Ben-Gurion knew that peace did not depend on us alone, and in 1962 he said: "The basic condition for bringing peace between us and the Arabs nearer, and this depends on us, is creating the conditions which will rid our neighbors of the delusion that it is possible to destroy Israel. That is why I regard strengthening the IDF as the fulfillment of a mission of peace. The strength of the IDF alone is not sufficient, however. Peace will come nearer if we increase our numbers in Israel by greater immigration from countries of poverty as well as of prosperity, if we settle the Negev and Galilee, if we ensure the friendship and aid of the countries which can supply the IDF with the equipment it needs, and if we seek the welfare of all the countries of the world."

As I said, there are written records, and anyone who looks through the books and documents he left can find wonderful things. With your permission, I will read something out. After the Black Sabbath, Ben-Gurion, who was on his way back from the U.S., remained in Paris, at the request of his colleagues on the Zionist Executive. At that time the Mapai Conference was being held, and on its agenda was: The Struggle. Ben-Gurion sent it the following letter:

Do not be afraid and do not despair; but do not harbor illusions either! Our way from affliction and dispersion to the homeland, independence, freedom and a state is neither easy nor strewn with roses, and without failures, difficulties and efforts we will not attain our objective. If old friends have denied us, we must not delude ourselves that loyal helpers will arise in their stead simply because that is our desire. As was the case a year ago, five years ago, twenty-five years ago and forty years ago, we must first of all and last of all rely on ourselves, our needs, our ability and our strength. This belief in our own strength has never let us down and is the source of all that we have achieved in our land, and we have achieved a great deal since we began three generations ago. And when we act and struggle and stand courageously and resolutely, gathering strength, our old friends will return to us and new ones will join them, because it will be worth their while. Even those who have supposedly sworn their undying hatred and enmity for us will give us their hand. But all these good things will come about not by virtue of impassioned words and formulae but as the result of our continual and unceasing efforts, which will reveal our strength as an independent factor.

I do not know what awaits us in the days to come—a deterioration in the situation and relations or a turn for the better. Either possibility is almost equally likely, and we must be ready for every-

thing, for every eventuality, and hence our motto must be: neither Massada nor Vichy!

During the difficult struggle ahead of us we must remember that we are not preparing for the final battle and have no desire "to die with the Philistines," nor are we on the verge of despair and suicide. We will fight without panic or weakness, doing our utmost to hold our existing positions, the sources of our strength and creation, and making a supreme effort to entrench the basis of our existence. For political circumstances change and pass, and there is no basis or justification for feeling or assuming that all hope is lost. At the same time, however, we must realize that the moment we accept things and bow our heads and are unable or unwilling to withstand the pressure, the moment we lull ourselves with such empty and idle phrases as "what are we and what is our strength," we begin the descent down the slope which leads to the abyss!

...I would like to conclude by saying a few personal words. It fell to my lot to be acquainted with Ben-Gurion in 1917, when he and his good friend, the late Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, came to the U.S. after having been expelled from this country by the Turks "forever." The arrival of Ben-Gurion and his colleague was the most important event in the life of U.S. Jewry then. He founded Hehalutz and brought the news of Palestine almost for the first time to American Jewry. Throughout most of my life in Israel I was fated to work with him, in the Executive of the Federation of Labor, in the Zionist Executive, upon the establishment of the state. There was great friendship and there was a brief and bitter period, and I thank God that in recent years we were fully reconciled. Of all the things which I hold to Ben-Gurion's credit, perhaps one of the greatest of all is the fact that after acrimonious disagreement we were once again good friends.

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: The sitting in honor of the late David Ben-Gurion...is concluded.

Government's Decision to Participate in the Geneva Conference

Introduction

At the 101st kilometer on the road from Cairo to Suez negotiations on a military level took place between Egypt and Israel. Israel made far-reaching proposals involving a "switch" withdrawal of Israeli forces from the west bank of the Suez Canal in return for Egypt's withdrawal from the east bank. The results were much more modest, and on 11 November 1973 a six-point agreement was signed in the U.N. tent at the 101st kilometer in which both sides agreed to honor the ceasefire, begin negotiations forthwith on the question of withdrawal to the positions of 22 October 1973 within the framework of a disengagement of forces agreement under U.N. auspices, allow the supply of water, food and medications to the besieged city of Suez and of non-military supplies to the Third Egyptian Army, cut off on the east bank of the Canal, in the southern sector, establish U.N. control points on the Suez-Cairo road and—most important from the Israeli viewpoint—in spite of the huge numerical discrepancy, to begin a total exchange of prisoners of war forthwith.

This purely military agreement was quite obviously a stop-gap measure. It was agreed between the Governments of Egypt and Israel, however, largely as the result of the endeavors of the U.S. Secretary of State, that a Peace Conference be convened at Geneva. Because of the desire to open the Conference before the end of the year, on the one hand, and the proximity of Christmas, on the other, the Conference was scheduled to begin ceremonially on Friday, 20 December 1973 and continue on Saturday, December 22, the Jewish Sabbath.

Meanwhile, although Egypt had agreed to an exchange of prisoners of war, Syria was adamant in its refusal to even submit a list of prisoners. Information was received from various sources concerning the torture and even killing of prisoners of war in Syrian hands.

At the request of the Cabinet, a Commission of Inquiry was appointed and chaired by the President of the Supreme Court, and comprised two former Chiefs of the General Staff, the State Comptroller and a Justice of the Supreme Court, to ascertain the chain of events immediately before and after the outbreak of war and determine who was responsible for the almost total surprise achieved by Egypt and Syria. Although formally this issue was under quasi-judicial consideration, it played a major role in the course of the election campaign. It was also reflected in the last political debate held, at the Government's initiative, before the elections, and in which the Prime Minister advised the Knesset of the Government's decision to participate in the Geneva Confer-

ence. The issue, composition and terms of reference of an international conference to resolve the Israel-Arab conflict was to recur on several occasions, constituting a subject of heated debate in Israel, the Arab countries and various capitals throughout the world.

Sitting 479 of the Seventh Knesset

20 December 1973 (25 Kislev 5734)

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on November 13 I informed the Knesset that at their talks at the 101st kilometer, the Egyptian and Israeli representatives had signed the six-point agreement. After this, detailed talks continued between the two representatives...and agreement was reached on various additional points, including the exchange of the prisoners of war and the wounded men. The encounter with our dear ones who were released from captivity in Egypt and returned to us was an emotional experience for everyone in Israel. On November 13 I also said that the preservation of the ceasefire and the reduction of tension was an important objective in preventing the renewed outbreak of war...and that we would make every effort to bring our goal of attaining peace near.

This is also what motivated us at the talks at the 101st kilometer. Our representative, Brigadier Aharon Yariv, made proposals, on the Government's behalf, regarding the disengagement of forces, but these were rejected by the Egyptians. Proposals made by the Egyptians were unacceptable to us...On November 29 the Egyptians decided to stop the talks, unfortunately, even though the need to stabilize the ceasefire by separating the forces still exists. We expressed our readiness to discuss this again, once the Peace Conference meets, in the hopes of reaching an agreement. The Egyptians' decision to end the talks requires renewed vigilance on the military level for our part...Regrettably...almost every day there are violations of the ceasefire by the Egyptian forces...Hundreds of shooting incidents were noted on October 24, and there were also casualties. I would like to appeal to the Egyptian authorities to adhere to their undertaking to observe the ceasefire....

All this time the activity of the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, has continued, with the object of attaining the agreement of the parties involved to participate in a Peace Conference....In our talks with the Secretary of State we examined various important topics such as under whose auspices the Conference will be held, which countries will be invited to participate, the stages of the discussions, etc. We also discussed in detail the disengagement of forces, a subject which Dr. Kissinger is studying closely....The initiators of the Conference, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., wanted to convene it on December 18, but this was

delayed because of their endeavors to obtain the U.N.'s agreement to convene the Conference....

The U.S. Secretary of State attached a great deal of importance to holding the Conference already in December. I think that he feared that any delay would lead to further obstacles and perhaps even renewed hostilities. We did not want any delay either, for the same reasons. Our forces are ready to check any aggression by Egypt or Syria, but we do not want any further outbreak of fighting. Consequently, Israel agreed that the Conference should begin in December, provided the substantive issues regarding peace were discussed at a later date, after the elections to the Eighth Knesset, and were conducted by the new Government which will have the confidence of the new Knesset. I am glad to note that that condition of ours was accepted. The Conference will start tomorrow, 21 December 1973, before the elections to the Knesset, but the first stage will be brief and ceremonial and will last two days. The opening session will be addressed by the Foreign Ministers of the countries participating as well as those of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and the U.N. Secretary-General. Then there will be a recess, and the Conference will be resumed in January.

The Conference starts tomorrow, then, and unfortunately, despite all our efforts to ensure that there would be no meeting on the Sabbath, no way was found of changing the timetable, it will continue on Saturday, December 22. The opening stage will last only two days, but in that short time the organizational arrangements which will determine the course of the rest of the Conference will be decided, and I do not think that we can allow ourselves to be absent from half of the deliberations. The Foreign Minister has stated that those Israeli representatives who will be participating in discussions held on the Sabbath will take every step to ensure that they do not violate the sanctity of the day.

It is almost certain that the first topic to be discussed at the Conference in January 1974 will be the disengagement of forces, which is part of the ceasefire agreement....I have noticed that even President Sadat has said in public that he is also prepared for progress on this subject in discussions, and we will be prepared to participate in these discussions even before the new Government is formed. As I have said, however, the main stage of the Conference will begin and continue in accordance with the instructions of the new Government....In our discussions with President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, the role of the U.N. has been defined...as convening the Conference and chairing its opening session...at the request of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

On December 15 the Security Council passed a resolution regarding the Peace Conference which arouses our concern. Four of its regular members, including the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., abstained. Israel does not have diplomatic relations with five of the ten countries which voted for the resolution. I must make it clear that any attempt to include the

topics of the discussions at the Peace Conference in the activities and authority of the Security Council will be a dangerous contradiction of the basis and purpose of the Conference and will encounter opposition from us. It is inconceivable that the U.S. should accept this violation of the agreed undertakings....

The Arab countries which have been invited to take part in the Conference are: Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Lebanon has not been invited yet, though I have no doubt that it will be at a later stage. Egypt and Jordan have accepted the invitation while Syria has rejected it. It is with great regret that I must inform the House that Syria continues to refuse to release our prisoners of war. We have made various generous offers to it, but to no avail. International bodies of great importance have appealed to the Syrian rulers, but to no avail. The Syrian President...has said that the humanitarian aspect associated with the prisoners of war is of no particular interest. Now the Syrians have announced that they will not come to Geneva...I do not know on what grounds. We have stated that we will not sit with the Syrians at Geneva or anywhere else until we receive a list of our prisoners of war and the Red Cross is enabled to visit them.

We tried to communicate with the Syrians via the U.S. and the Red Cross...and they proposed that we permit the return of 15,000 Syrian citizens to the areas conquered by the IDF in the Yom Kippur War and give back two Syrian positions on Mount Hermon in return for the release of our prisoners of war. We agreed that the Syrian citizens could return and that U.N. troops could occupy the two positions on Mount Hermon... and also proposed that senior Syrian and Israeli officers should meet... but the Syrians did not agree. I know what the families of the men currently being held by Syria are going through, and we are all agitated by the disturbing news and rumors....We will continue to do everything we can to ensure the release of our soldiers. The Syrian rulers are taking a heavy responsibility upon themselves from which we will not release them.

The negotiations on peace in the Middle East must encompass the countries concerned, i.e., Israel and its neighbors—Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. There is no reason to invite any other country or body, apart from the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., under whose auspices the Conference is being held....It is only natural that we have objected to inviting the terrorist organizations at any stage. We will not agree to participate in a conference to which the representatives of those organizations have been invited, and we will certainly not negotiate with the representatives of those bodies, whose declared object is the destruction of the State of Israel....

We do not ignore the disturbing fact that one of the Powers under whose auspices the Conference is being held severed its diplomatic ties with Israel in the past. That Power played a crucial role in developing

Arab military strength and in Egypt's and Syria's preparations for war. Only during the course of the Conference will it become clear whether that Power will indeed act in accordance with the objectives of the Peace Conference. I am sure that the policy of the U.S. at the Peace Conference will be guided by sincere good will, and that it will extend every aid to the sides in order to ensure the success of the negotiations and the attainment of a peace treaty.

The role played by the U.S. since October 6, and the indefatigable efforts of the Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, in Cairo, Amman and other Arab capitals, helped considerably in bringing hostilities to a close and attaining the six-point agreement, which constitutes the logical continuation of the Security Council resolution on the ceasefire. We derive encouragement from the clear stand taken by the U.S. regarding direct negotiations between the sides....With the help of that policy we hope to reach significant and direct negotiations with each of the Arab countries which borders on Israel and advance towards settling the problems between us.

We attach the highest importance to that section of Resolution 338 which refers explicitly to negotiations between the parties....To date there has been no lack of attempts to mediate and provide good offices, but not to attain direct negotiations. Israel will be on its guard to ensure that this interpretation of Resolution 338, which constitutes its significant and positive innovation, is not distorted.

The Government of Israel will send its representatives to the Peace Conference with express instructions to spare no effort to attain peace. Substantive directives will be given by the new Government which will, I hope...express the nation's desire for peace and defensible borders. At this juncture, prior to the Conference, I will not examine the approach of the Arab countries....The influence of the Algiers Conference...cannot help but cause concern, but we will not cease to hope for a switch, for the abandoning of extremist positions which are completely detached from reality. I hope that the Arab countries will go to the Peace Conference with the same sincere hope for peace as the people and Government of Israel. Then the path to peace will be clear, on both sides.

The Seventh Knesset is concluding its term after the difficult period and important victory of the Yom Kippur War. The Peace Conference will begin during its term. No effort must be spared to ensure that during the term of the Eighth Knesset the State of Israel reaches an agreement for the disengagement of forces and even our principal aim—permanent peace. The new Government will doubtless issue directives to its representatives at the Peace Conference regarding peace and defensible borders in accordance with its guidelines....

Israel's participation in the Conference is without prior conditions. Israel is not demanding that the other sides accept its positions in advance, and vice versa....Each side will be free to propose subjects for

discussion. We are aware of the difficulties and struggles ahead of us. We are sensible of the dangers, yet nevertheless, Israel's representatives will go to the Peace Conference in a spirit of sobriety, composure and courage. We will not let anyone speak vainly in the name of peace. We shall not cease to aspire for the complete peace which will put an end to war and open exciting possibilities for the undisturbed development of a productive and progressive life for all the nations and countries of the Middle East.

M. Begin (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, my teachers and colleagues, Knesset Members, on the first day of the Festival of Lights (Hannuka) we praised the Lord for the wonders and miracles He performed for our forefathers in those days and for our nation at this time. And as we remembered our heroes who have continued the chain of heroism from the Maccabees to the present day...we said to ourselves: we pray and long for peace, but if the enemy ever raises his hand against our people we will fight and win, as the Maccabees did....

Against the background of this renewed tradition of our forefathers, I ask the Prime Minister to instruct our delegation to request the cancellation of the Geneva Conference discussions on the Sabbath, and if our request is not met, to instruct our delegation to absent itself from the talks throughout that entire day. The Sabbath is not a matter solely of religious belief; it is one of our national and eternal historical status. We cannot participate in discussions in Geneva on the Sabbath. It is Israel's pride and we must demonstrate it. Nothing untoward will happen if the speeches—whose content we know in advance in view of the Algiers decisions and Fahmi's statement—are postponed for another day, or the evening...I would like to point out to Mrs. Meir that members of many party groups represented in the Knesset—probably the majority—support this demand.

The Prime Minister spoke first about the Geneva Conference and then about the Geneva Convention. Permit me to reverse the order....What about our prisoners of war in Syria...? To our deep regret, despite our admonitions, the Government decided—when food had not yet been supplied to the Third Army and it was on the verge of surrender—to separate the agreement to supply its needs from the demand to release our prisoners of war in Syria. Then we had a powerful instrument of pressure and had every right to demand the release of our prisoners of war in the north as well as the south, because Egypt and Syria conspired together to plan and implement this aggression....Our prisoners of war, or at least those who had not been murdered, have returned from Egypt. But what about those in Syria? Dr. Kissinger asked Assad for the list, but was turned away empty-handed. The U.S. President made a promise on this score, but it was not kept....The U.S.S.R. was supposed to have exerted its influence in Damascus, whether it has or not we do not know, but there has been no result. How long will this tor-

ture of hundreds of families continue? How long will barbarism continue to vaunt itself in the face of the civilized world? How long will that world remain silent...? This topic should be the first on the agenda of the Geneva Conference....In addition, the Red Cross, whose headquarters are in Geneva, should be asked to intervene in this...supported by all the countries which have signed the Geneva Convention....

On what terms has this Government, the transition Government, gone to the Geneva Conference. This Government has a unique diplomatic approach: first it climbs high up into some tower, then tries to find the staircase which will take it down. It lays down rules for itself, then adds a dramatic sentence like: on no account will we agree, etc. This is gradually whittled away, until all that is left is...the need to find a staircase down from the high tower, a way of explaining the new surrender to the public....For example, it was agreed that the Conference would be held under the auspices of the Powers. The chairman for the U.S.S.R., the man who will be running the meetings, will apparently be Vinogradov, the Soviet ambassador to Egypt, the man who was the happiest of men the day after the Day of Atonement, who regarded the Yom Kippur War as the high point of his diplomatic career....Fahmi and Gromyko met in Geneva yesterday. Fahmi stated that the Egyptian delegation would act in accordance with the decisions of the summit conference at Algiers, while Gromyko said that he identified completely with the just Arab struggle. Those are the patrons. That is their neutrality....

We do not yet know what the other patron—the U.S., Israel's good friend—will say, but we do know certain facts....A few weeks ago the U.S. Secretary of State visited Peking, where he said that Israel's withdrawal was necessary for the success of the Geneva Conference. If Israel withdraws in order to attain an agreement it will be confronted with a serious defense problem, as he well knows, and in return for this it will be offered international guarantees....

As for the Arab delegations...I doubt whether there is anyone in this House who cannot predict what their speeches will contain: Israel was the aggressor in June 1967, when it conquered Arab land, it must withdraw completely, hand over the Old City of Jerusalem and solve the problem of the just national rights of the Palestinian people....

In addition to all these highly predictable declarations by patrons A and B, not to mention the Arab statements based on the Algiers resolutions, we get the auspices of the U.N., which the Government has said in the past it would on no account accept...and is now attempting to conceal, but to no avail....We are told that Dr. Waldheim will act as chairman only at the opening session. What difference does that make? If the Conference is held under the auspices of the U.N. that means that at any moment the Security Council can meet, supervise the deliberations and also pass certain resolutions....We have no guarantee that the

U.S. will veto resolutions which are intended to harm us...it recently allowed a certain resolution to pass by abstaining....

Furthermore, why did you not flatly refuse to allow the first item for discussion at the Conference to be the participation of other parties from the Middle East? Who is meant if not those known as Palestinians...? Who are these Palestinians? The summit conference at Algiers decided that they are the terrorist organizations....And to that you could not say no, but had to agree that that problem would be raised at Geneva...? The Government went even further in this, seeking to reach a separate accord with the U.S. stating that each side would have the right to express its views regarding the participation of other parties, adding the phrase: "organizations or groups," no more, no less. That is the lofty principle of negotiating only with governments from which the Government has said it will never budge....What organizations and what groups from the Middle East could be meant? The PLO? Black September?

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: Are "organizations or groups" mentioned in the document?

M. Begin (Gahal): Yes, sir. I suggest, Deputy Prime Minister, that you do not continue to follow the path you have taken since the Day of Atonement. You have tried to conceal the truth, but to no avail. The truth will out. The Prime Minister, who did not wish to admit the fatal mistake in the debate of November 13, was forced to do so two weeks ago over the radio.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: The truth is not always on your side....

M. Begin (Gahal): I am sorry that the Government has long since rescinded its monopoly on the truth.

S. Ehrlich (Gahal): The Government has abandoned only half the truth.

M. Begin (Gahal): ...It is unparalleled irresponsibility to agree to the term "organizations or groups." There are people who say: how can negotiations with freedom fighters be unacceptable? But are we dealing with freedom fighters? In my view, what we have here are hostile organizations in the sense of the Nuremberg Convention, for they are fighting to destroy a nation, not to liberate one; they are fighting against a just and legitimate rule, not against an illegal one; they are fighting to take someone's homeland away, not to redeem their own. Their objective is destruction, therefore their method is Nazism. They should long since have been expelled from every civilized forum. They are the representatives or instigators of the blood orgies from Rome to Athens, from Munich to Lod.

Have you agreed to discuss the possibility of negotiating with them? From the outset you should have said absolutely not. By saying "on no

account," which is gradually whittled away, what do you achieve? The erosion of our credibility. Nowadays, when this Government says "no," no one is particularly impressed....When it says "yes," no one takes it seriously. After a while influence is exerted, the no becomes yes, and the yes becomes no. Therefore, take heed! We are confronting fateful battles for our homeland. And without credibility you will lead this nation from bad to worse, as we have already seen....You have tried to split the nation into two...those who want peace and those who want war. I have come here today to say that that is a blood libel...against thousands of Jews, far worse than any other of which our nation has been accused in its long history....

M. Carmel (Ma'arach): That's not true either.

M. Begin (Gahal): It is true.

M. Carmel (Ma'arach): Who says that you want war...?

Z. Shuval (National List): Yossi Sarid and Yehiel Leket.

M. Carmel (Ma'arach): That is a policy which leads to war.

M. Yedid (Gahal): To date Mapai and the Ma'arach have led the nation to war five times....

(Shouts)

Y. Ben-Aharon (Ma'arach): I ask the Speaker to disallow a term such as "blood libel."...

M. Begin (Gahal): I spoke the truth and on no account will I retract it.

The Minister of Health, V. Shemtov: The truth is that you are leading us to war....

M. Begin (Gahal): Who led us to the Yom Kippur War?
(Shouts.)

H. Grossman (Ma'arach): Isn't what you're saying now a blood libel?

J. Nehushtan (Gahal): It's a fact, madam.

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: I suggest that you withdraw the phrase "blood libel."

M. Begin (Gahal): On no account will I withdraw the phrase, because it is the truth....
(Shouts.)

I. Kargman (Ma'arach): This is demagoguery.

J. Landau (Gahal): In twenty-five years you led us to five wars and you have the nerve to talk of peace. Have you brought peace...?

M. Begin (Gahal): If we were like you and followed your example, we would ask you such questions as: You are the party of peace, how many wars has Israel fought since the party of peace has been running things...? Isn't it true that after every war you promise peace, and after every such promise there is another war...?

A. Feinberg-Sereni (Ma'arach): Will you bring peace?

M. Begin (Gahal): We admit that all Jews want peace with all their hearts...and hate bloodshed and wish there to be no more orphans and widows and bereaved parents, for in this generation our blood has been shed like water. Do not divide this nation up into the peace camp and the war camp. That is one of the worst sins in this nation's history. You are speaking to the Arabs, the Russians and the Americans too....It will have a boomerang effect. It already has, particularly with regard to what happened before and after the Day of Atonement.

The building of peace has many storeys, at least four. The first is peaceful relations, with no more bloodshed, no more killing. If there is no peace treaty, there must at least be peaceful relations. The second storey is the free passage of goods and people across borders....The third is the exchange of representatives...and the fourth is a peace treaty....I have taken these rules from international reality...as represented by the relations between Japan and the U.S.S.R., which to this day have no peace treaty following the war in the Far East in 1945, but have peaceful relations, the free passage of goods and people and the exchange of diplomatic representatives....

As in every building, the foundation is the most important. Nothing can come without that, and that is, security for Israel and the assurance of its freedom and independence. But your policy leads to the undermining of the foundation. Anyone who countenances the repartition of the western part of the Land of Israel—if that unfortunate policy is ever implemented—must realize that then all Israel, with the possible exception of Haifa, will come within the range of the enemy's cannon. Six and a half years ago the enemy did not have the powerful weapons he has today....If you look at the map you will see that by handing Judea and Samaria over to the enemy—whether it is Hussein or the perpetrators of the blood orgy at Rome—all Israel's centers of population will be at risk....

By your policy of the repartition of the Land of Israel you are destroying in advance the foundation of the entire building of peace. Take note of this warning. You have been too arrogant, you have closed your eyes and shut your ears, and so the terrible Yom Kippur came upon us, because of a fatal mistake, Madam Prime Minister, because of a disaster. And I cannot agree with your claim that Intelligence erred. Intelligence gave you all the information. Its assessment cannot influence that of the political echelon. You are responsible for the disaster which

occurred, for the fatal mistake which was made, for the first 48 hours of that terrible war, for the fact that this country was at the edge of the abyss, as you yourself said, and for the grave political consequences which we are still feeling, and will yet feel.

The Minister of Health, V. Shemtov: MK Begin, for six years you were one of the foremost of those who closed people's eyes. In the orchestra of delusions and illusions you played first violin....

M. Begin (Gahal): The kibbutz movement has already decided to depose Dayan, be content with that.

The Minister of Health, V. Shemtov: Do you support "not one inch" or not?

M. Begin (Gahal): Your hysterical shouting will not help you. I suggest that you heal yourself first, sir.

The Minister of Health, V. Shemtov: "Not one inch."...

M. Begin (Gahal): I began by mentioning the first night of the Festival of Lights. I will conclude by saying that 2,116 years ago a document was signed, which I will read to the House. Antiochus sent Athenobius to Simon the Hasmonean with the following message: "Ye withhold Joppe and Gazara, with the tower that is in Jerusalem, which are cities of my realm....And ye have done great hurt in the land, and got the dominion of many places within my kingdom. Now therefore deliver the cities which ye have taken, and the tributes of the places, whereof ye have gotten dominion without the borders of Judea....If not, we will come and fight against you. Then answered Simon,"—

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: This is all well and good, but you must finish now....

M. Begin (Gahal): Sir, I have only three more verses. Please let me finish...."Then answered Simon, and said unto him, We have neither taken other men's land, nor holden that which appertaineth to others, but the inheritance of our fathers, which our enemies had wrongfully in possession a certain time. Wherefore we, having opportunity, hold the inheritance of our fathers." Would that the head of Israel's delegation at Geneva were to open his address with that document, because it pertains not only to the past, which is as eternity, but primarily to the future, which is eternity.

...

I. Raphael (Mafdal): Knesset Members, the entire nation extends its good wishes to the delegation which will participate in the opening ceremony of the Peace Conference at Geneva. The nation which for twenty-five years has yearned for good relations and peace with its neighbors hopes that this will be a good beginning to talks which will bring true

peace and an end to wars. Although there are many doubts concerning the intentions of the other side...we must seize every chance, even the faintest hope....All sections of the nation want peace, therefore everyone wants a Peace Conference. The difference is that some believe in its success more than others. It would be wrong to try to divide the nation into two, the peace camp and the other camp....

I would like to remind the Knesset Members that this is not an election meeting, and I will therefore speak to the point. Although the extremist statements constantly made by the Arab leaders are somewhat discouraging...our Government has consistently asserted that we are going to the Conference without any prior conditions...and that any subject may be placed on the agenda. What has been made clear by us is that no outside party may be invited to participate without the consent of all the parties attending the first stage. This will prevent undesirable developments and close the door to the terrorist organizations as the representative of the Arab population in the liberated parts of the Land of Israel....It is a good thing that Israel has made its position clear on this point...despite Professor Kissinger's attempts to persuade us to change our mind...which in itself indicates a worrying erosion in the understanding between us and the U.S....With all our gratitude and esteem for President Nixon and his Administration, I think that on a subject as crucial as the Peace Conference we should have made greater efforts to ensure American understanding of and support for our position....

It is quite clear that Israel is going to a Peace Conference, not, God forbid, a Withdrawal Conference. The present Government agreed to go to the Conference on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242 which, according to our understanding and interpretation of it, involves territorial concessions in reference to Egypt and not as regards the ancient Land of Israel, the inheritance of our fathers....The dispute between us and Egypt can be resolved by the withdrawal of our troops from certain parts of the Sinai, because we never sought to conquer foreign lands and dispossess others. All we ask is that in a true peace with Egypt the parts of the Sinai from which we withdraw are not turned once again into a base for renewed aggression against us...and that we have freedom of navigation....If we are convinced at the Conference that Egypt genuinely wants peace...we believe that understanding can be reached and the security dispute between us ended.

But the dispute between us and the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan is very different. Israel did not embark on a war to liberate those parts of the Land of Israel which had been wrested from us. Even our yearning for historic Jerusalem did not cause us to take up arms. The forces of the conqueror, who has no right to that part of our land, attacked us, together with the enemies in the south and the north. By the grace of God and the might of the IDF we liberated additional parts of our land, returning to them to redeem their dust and stones. This is another stage

on the path to redemption, and we have no right to relinquish any part of our land at the negotiating table....Security reasons also require us to make the River Jordan the permanent border between the two countries, and to those who are concerned about maintaining the Jewish character of our country with the addition of a non-Jewish population we will in due course propose better solutions than relinquishing the inheritance of our fathers...for not only Jerusalem is holy for us. Hebron, Jericho and Beth-El are sacred too.

But we also have a great deal to offer Jordan...apart from parts of the Land of Israel....And if our neighbor in the north relents and agrees to come to the conference table, after implementing the Geneva Convention as regards our prisoners of war, our dispute with it is of a completely different kind....Therefore, we think that the Government of Israel should aspire to separate negotiations with each country, Egypt being first and foremost, reaching a settlement which will pave the way for others with the neighboring countries.

I respectfully beg to differ with the Prime Minister with regard to the preparations for the Conference. I fail to understand why no one with a viewpoint different to that of the majority party in the Government was permitted to meet the Secretary of State....It is customary for the Leader of the Opposition to be involved in discussions of this kind in other democratic countries....You even neglect and forget your partners in the Government. Various study groups and brains trusts were set up to prepare for the Conference...but I have not heard of any Orthodox person rooted in Jewish tradition being included in them....This seems to me to be a serious omission....

I have no doubt that Israel's representative at the Peace Conference will speak wisely and well. He will appear as the representative of the nation, standing upright and fearless, believing in the justice of his cause....The new, proud, fighting Jew, bearing the heritage of his ancestors, will appear before the world. It is inconceivable that the representative of our country will appear at the Israel-Arab Peace Conference on our holy Sabbath day, our day of rest. We will never agree to that. Our refusal to attend the conference on Saturday and our proposal to defer those deliberations for another day will undoubtedly be understood by civilized people....The trouble is that of those on our side who are dealing with the subject there is no one who is concerned about the Sabbath....As befits the season, I will conclude with the words of Matathias: "Now therefore, my sons, be ye zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. Call to remembrance what acts our fathers did in their time; so shall ye receive great honor and an everlasting name."

...

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, whenever discussions were held concerning our fate...there were

risks, we heard threats from our external enemies and gloomy predictions from opponents among us. We went to those historic meetings convinced of the justice of our cause, adhering to our national vision and resolved to attain what was essential for us....The Geneva Conference may be another milestone in our history....Once again there are risks, the forces ranged against us are manifold, and the world is largely indifferent to our fate, the fate of the surviving remnant of the Holocaust....Once again there are gloomy predictions from within as to what we may expect if we agree to compromise with our neighbors. Nonetheless, we will go to Geneva...trusting in our strength to overcome dangers and attain our aim.

As the Prime Minister said, Israel's representatives will go to Geneva in a spirit of sobriety....The Arab representatives will be in the same frame of mind...after having failed in the last war, which was started under optimal conditions for them, to defeat and destroy us... and must draw the conclusion that they will be unable to achieve that in the future either. That is why they are going to Geneva, which is defined as a Peace Conference, to attain a just and lasting peace.

Nor will our representatives be laboring under the delusion that a political impasse is preferable to a settlement and that there is no need for an agreement with the Arab countries. I very much hope that, as the Prime Minister said, we have realized that by hanging onto territory we cannot avoid war. We must ensure that every Minister in Israel's next government shares that realization. The object of the Geneva Conference is to reach a compromise and, eventually, an agreement which will prevent additional wars. If that is not assured there is no point in making any concessions. That is why we must redraw our boundaries with our neighbors so that we may dwell in peace and do not have too large an Arab population within our borders....

We must not give the U.N. any special status at the Geneva Conference because in the present circumstances, regrettably, the U.N. is controlled by the Soviet-Arab Bloc and is a negative factor which purports to be objective....The U.N. did nothing when the war broke out. Let it not seek to act now in forming the peace. It will only disturb matters....

The problem of the Arab—so-called Palestinian—population living in Israel will doubtless come up at the Conference. That problem, which is the main one, cannot be avoided or ignored....Our dispute began with that population four generations ago, when we began settling this country. The Arab countries came into the picture only much later. There will be no end to the dispute unless the Palestinian issue is tackled appropriately. Israel has various proposals for assuring the just rights of the Palestinian Arab people within the appropriate framework. Today we may regret the fact that the proposal put forward by my party group three years ago to permit the leaders in Judea and Samaria to elect rep-

resentatives was rejected, for if they had, they—rather than the terrorist organizations—would now be able to speak on their behalf.

The Opposition must, indeed, give a clear and unequivocal reply. Geneva means compromise; compromise means our giving up something to each Arab side which is prepared to reach an agreement with us—Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Are you for it or against it...?

M. Drobles (Gahal): You're not saying anything new.

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): You haven't exactly revealed anything new today. You repeat your old slogan, then disappear....You were against the ceasefire agreement a few weeks ago; you were against the six-point agreement. What are you for? You have given the Liberals permission to say that they agree to a compromise in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, but what about the West Bank? Tell us, so that we may know what your intentions are....

(Shouts.)

The negotiations at Geneva will doubtless be long and hard, because the way to peace is harder than the way to war. We will have to keep our reserves mobilized on the borders...and the situation will not be easy for the civilian population either...though the difficulties of the two groups cannot be compared....The hundreds of thousands of men who have not been mobilized must carry their share of the burden....A labor service should be set up, channelling people to essential jobs, e.g., girls who have been exempted from military service on religious grounds, as well as students at universities...and at religious seminaries....Only if the entire nation carries the burden equally can we contend with the difficult time ahead of us.

Finally, MK Begin spoke of the inheritance of our fathers and mentioned the Hasmoneans. We cherish the inheritance of our fathers, although they, our fathers, did not manage to bequeath it to us. But the inheritance of our sons, which we seek to bequeath to them, is no less important to us. So that it may not be an ephemeral inheritance, one which is here today and gone tomorrow...we are going to Geneva, to assure this country of its greatest achievement—peace.

Y. Hurwitz (National List): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Israel must go to the Geneva Conference. Both for ourselves and for our friends we must not cause the Conference to fail...but we must not go in fear and trembling, as if resolving the dispute concerns only us, and the other side has no interest in it whatsoever.

We do not need to seek new ceasefire agreements because, as we have learned, they lead to another war, not to a settlement. We must aspire to a broad political agreement which covers such topics as the nature of the political and economic relations, recognition of our sovereignty and the right of the Jewish people to immigrate to Israel. ...Unless the Arab countries...recognize the legitimacy of the sovereign

Jewish state, all the agreements which have been reached hang by a hairsbreadth, because Egypt or any other Arab country can always claim that they were part of their war strategy, not of a peace process, having been made with a country which, in their view, has no right to exist.

At the Geneva Conference we must not reach anything less than a stable and comprehensive settlement...as the outcome of a war like the one we have just been through. Despite the Egyptian statements it is known—especially to the Egyptians—that the encirclement of the Third Army and the fact that the IDF has gained positions on the west bank of the Suez Canal give Israel a stronger bargaining card than it has ever had. It would be a waste of a hard-won military achievement and a great historic opportunity if all the Geneva Conference produces is Israel's withdrawal from the west side of the Canal into the Sinai, as you proposed at the 101st kilometer. That will be almost as great a waste as was losing the bargaining card we held until October 6, i.e., Israel's sole occupancy of the eastern side of the Suez Canal....

Regrettably, the Israel Government is acting weakly. I understand its apprehensions. It does not want to...be responsible for the failure of the Conference. But there is a difference between going to the Conference in order to ascertain what Egypt's intentions are and going in order to abandon declared positions one after another. Not long ago the Government said we would not go to a conference held under the auspices of the U.N. The Conference will be opened under the auspices of the U.N. and we are going to it.

I must also say, quite frankly, that there is no reason to regret Syria's absence from the Conference....There is no chance of reaching a settlement with it, nor do I think that Israel should be eager to attain one with that wild and brutal country on our northern border....We said we would not sit with the Syrians unless they returned our prisoners of war, and then we settled for a list, which the Syrians also refused to give....We have nothing to discuss with the Syrians, who will doubtless want the Golan Heights back. The Golan Heights must be under Israel's sovereignty, not returned to Syria or demilitarized....

We must go to the Conference without any illusions. Its main and only value is in the public meeting with the representatives of Egypt in order to clarify whether Sadat's intentions are to use the opportunity to get the IDF out of Egypt and the Sinai or to attain a political settlement between our two countries....The Foreign Minister said that we are going to the Conference ready to make territorial concessions in return for genuine peace. The Egyptians are demanding Israel's withdrawal from all of the Sinai, not "territorial concessions"...and not necessarily in return for peace....There is no doubt that Israel's presence in the Sinai is connected with our security, though I am not ashamed to say

that it has other benefits too, at a time when the Arab countries are terrorizing the Western world through the oil embargo.

But before saying what it is prepared to give Egypt, the Government of Israel should ask what Egypt is prepared to give us....Does Egypt intend to return to the borders of 4 June 1967 and the Armistice Agreements...? That may give us peace for a few years, but not a settlement, and possibly another war....Or does Egypt intend to reach an overall political settlement involving, first, recognition of Israel as an independent, sovereign state, the right of the Jewish people to immigrate to it and the open acknowledgement of the legitimacy of its existence...? Does Egypt envisage a settlement which grants us freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal, ends its support of the terrorists, halts the Arab boycott, etc? Even the doves among us...are not prepared to have the Egyptian Second Army in the Sinai, with its hundreds of tanks, while the IDF withdraws to the borders of June 4....

When the disengagement of forces is discussed, Egypt must make it clear what this involves. Egypt must clarify what is meant by the resolutions of the Algiers Conference regarding "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." It must first recognize the legitimate rights of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and its independent state. Recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people means the destruction of Israel and its replacement by a Palestinian state. A settlement can be reached with Egypt only if it represents itself and not the entire Arab world and the Palestinians.

For the sake of the nation we must go to Geneva without illusions and without promising peace. Although the Ma'arach's propaganda makes the Conference out to be its achievement, this does not deceive anyone. Because of one fatal mistake and a series of blunders we are going to the Conference divided among ourselves, weak vis-à-vis the outside, and with a leadership which is in disarray and is haunted by the trauma of its failure....It seeks to cover up for this by representing itself as the "party of peace"...and going to the Conference ready to make territorial concessions....But it is in error, for Resolution 242 does not guarantee peace negotiations, just as it did not prevent war.... The Government accepted Resolution 242, claiming that it would bring peace nearer and prevent our political isolation. The result was the reverse. There was war. Our political isolation was completed. The Arabs are going to Geneva with their interpretation of Resolution 242, namely, Israel's withdrawal from all the territories. If that is the case, there is nothing to discuss there. The chances of peace would not be harmed if we were to hold a conference with Egypt while rejecting Resolution 242 and preferring to speak first about the nature of the settlement and only afterwards about borders and the map. Then we would be sitting at the bargaining table as two equals, and not immediately abandoning our

cards and enabling the other side to get what it wanted and represent us as being responsible for the failure or the crisis....

Judea and Samaria must remain in our hands, otherwise the entire country will be within the range of rockets and cannon. If we withdraw it is not Hussein who will rule Jenin, Shechem and Tulkarm but Arafat and his henchmen...and possibly they will rule Jordan too....All Israel's air-space will be controlled by the terrorists....It is possible to reach an agreement with the Egyptians as regards the Sinai which will not jeopardize Israel's towns and villages, and in every possible development borders must be fixed which will assure the welfare of the citizens of Israel.

...

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, we want first of all to welcome the actual convening of the Geneva Conference...which, as all its participants agree, is a peace conference designed to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is being held...in accordance with Security Council Resolution 338...and could serve as an historic turning-point in the development of the relations between Israel and the Arab countries....Consequently, the attitude of the Israel Government must be quite different to what it has been to date....The object of the Conference is to resolve basic problems, not only temporary difficulties....

The basic problems...have, regrettably, been ignored by the speakers for both the Coalition and the Opposition....In order to solve them we must adopt an approach which contains both realism and justice...as are embodied in the resolutions of the Security Council. We are proposing a permanent peace plan which contains both realism and justice...and guarantees the rights and security of all the peoples and countries of our region, namely: withdrawal from the territories conquered in 1967, the guarantee of sovereignty and territorial integrity for Israel and all the countries of the region and respect for the national rights of the Palestinian Arab nation.

For Israel this means recognizing the rights of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with the principle determined by the U.N.—the right to choose between returning to their homeland and receiving compensation. It also means that Israel must recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the establishment of a Palestinian state, if it wants. This does not harm Israel's rights, once secure and recognized borders are determined within the framework of a peace settlement. In its election platform, the Ma'arach has unfortunately denied the Palestinians' right to establish a state, and this is the attitude with which it will probably go to Geneva....It is true that there are extremists. Those who perpetrated the terrible crime at Rome and Athens are criminals. They were condemned by the Palestinian organizations, including the PLO, and by all the Arab countries....

We will not solve the problem by arguing. First of all, there is a Palestinian nation. Formerly, the ruling circles preferred not to acknowledge this fact, while now they acknowledge it but seek to dictate the terms....In our view, only the Palestinian people can determine its own fate, though not at Israel's expense....In our history we have known what it is to have our fate decided by others....We do not have to agree to everything the PLO says...but it is not for us to determine who will represent the Palestinians....

I am saying all this in order to distinguish between going to Geneva to make peace or to propose annexing territory, depriving the Palestinians of their rights and rejecting their representatives. We should be interested in getting the PLO to participate in the Peace Conference together with Israel's representatives...though we do not have to agree with everything they say. Even I don't agree with everything they say....

It should be noted that even though Syria is not participating in the opening of the Conference, it has undergone a positive political development recently in that it has agreed to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338...and there is consequently a chance that it may participate in it at a later stage...and even reach a peace agreement with us. I'm not saying that this is easy. But the demands put forward by the Likud are not even worthy of consideration. No one with any sense in their head can take MK Begin's plan for peace seriously. The trouble is, he doesn't believe in it either....He is totally divorced from reality...though he is right in claiming that the Ma'arach's peace plan which involves territorial annexation won't bring peace either....

The Government must change its policy, therefore. The Yom Kippur War must lead to a more far-reaching conclusion. The nation has undergone a trauma, and I think that the overwhelming majority of the nation...wants the Government to go to Geneva and say: no more wars, no more bloodshed, no more widows, no more orphans, no more bereaved parents, no more prisoners of war and soldiers who are missing in action. It can be achieved....Tremendous forces in the world and the region want peace. The Middle East crisis causes harm to many countries and peoples and endangers world peace....

The Government must come round to the realization that the only borders which are defensible and safe are the borders of peace. After the last war can one still say that a kilometer more or less determines security? Not in modern warfare. Only borders recognized in a peace agreement with the Arab countries, with international guarantees from the Great Powers, with demilitarized areas and defense arrangements, will bring security....Territorial annexation and peace do not go together. The choice is not between continued occupation and peace. It is between peace and abandoning the occupied territories, on the one hand, and war on the other. We must prevent war and make peace at Geneva,

even if it is complicated and difficult. A change of policy and the mutual recognition of rights are the key to peace.

...

S. Tamir (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the Geneva Conference begins tomorrow, and what we can expect from the other side has been best expressed by an American senator, who said: "Sadat will demand Sinai; Assad will demand the Golan; Hussein will demand the West Bank; Feisal will demand Jerusalem and the Palestinians will come to take the rest." Nevertheless, knowing this, with a sense of caution and realism, we must go to this Conference, utilizing even the faintest opportunity to start a process which may lead to peace...or at least improve Israel's international position...especially vis-à-vis the U.S.

Israel's delegation to the Conference must make it clear...what kind of peace we want...one of open borders, the exchange of ambassadors, the free passage of goods and people, one of ties between peoples, not just a treaty between Governments. If the other side is not prepared to give us that kind of peace, what we will be getting is merely a ceasefire plus withdrawal, with the probability of further aggression at a later date; in brief, the destruction of Israel by stages....We must also press the other side for a clear-cut definition of what is meant by "the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian nation."...If the phrase is a code—as was agreed upon at Algiers—to denote the destruction of Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state in its stead, this must be made clear at the Conference. Totalitarian regimes often make use of codewords. "The final solution" was a codeword. The term "murder" was never used....

But we are going to this Conference with several unnecessary weaknesses. The first and most apparent one is the situation in which we find ourselves as a result of the war which lasted 17 days and did not end with a definite victory, because of the terrible blunders and what preceded them. That is one weakness, which was caused by this Government...and every future government will have to bear that burden....Israel will consequently have to fight for time and breathing space. The second point is that Israel has agreed to leave the question of inviting additional parties to participate in the Conference open....The U.N. is convening the Conference, and may well decide tomorrow to invite whom it wants...in which case Israel will be represented as having caused the breakdown of the Conference if the terrorist organizations are invited. The participants in a peace conference have to be determined before discussions begin, not while they are in progress...or at least it must be made clear that the agreement of all the participants to invite outside parties to the discussions is required....

The third weakness is, of course, the fact that the Conference is being held under the auspices of the U.N., and the Prime Minister should

not try to gloss over the gravity of this. Anyone who accepts the U.N.'s authority accepts all the resolutions of the Assembly and the Security Council as well as all the other institutions of the U.N....The compromise regarding the Sabbath is very characteristic....What the Prime Minister told us here before was, in effect, that even in determining the procedures and timetable of the Conference, Israel has accepted the dictate of others...and has not fought to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath, a national, religious and moral treasure of the utmost importance, for both the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox. "It was decided," "it has been determined," everything is in the passive, even in a framework of this kind....It is frightening as regards the future of this Conference, and Israel's behavior there....The fourth weakness is that the Ma'arach has even gone so far as to relinquish parts of Security Council Resolution 242, substituting "defensible boundaries" for "recognized and secure boundaries."...

In its election program the Ma'arach claims that it will not relinquish sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, Sharm el-Sheikh and the corridor from it to Israel, and will retain control of the Gaza Strip....Why have you not committed yourselves to that program as regards the Geneva Conference...? Finally, the prisoners of war. Naturally, all of us here are united...in our desire to see our soldiers return...but during the last two weeks, when there has been contact between Syria and the U.S., and after the coordination between Egypt and Syria has been proved...we have not utilized every channel and possibility of securing their release. I am choosing my words carefully. There is still the Third Army, which is receiving supplies daily because of Israel's agreement, there are additional channels through which, as it goes to the Conference, Israel...must guarantee the safety of every Israeli soldier. If it is the bitter fate of one of our fighting men to fall into the hands of those wicked and barbaric beasts, the state must do more than its utmost to ensure him of the minimum he deserves.

...

S. Mikunis (Moked): Distinguished Speaker, Knesset Members, it is a good thing that Israel's delegation is going to Geneva. It is a good thing that Egypt and Jordan are participating in the Conference and, according to all the hints from Cairo and Washington, Syria will also come to Geneva at a certain stage. It may even lead to solving the painful problem of the release of our prisoners of war from Syria. The Geneva Conference is a peace conference, according to the definition of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko as well as of Israel's broadcasting services. And it will indeed be a peace conference if all the sides involved in the dispute display good will as well as readiness to understand one another and recognize one another's legal rights.

Those who criticize the auspices under which the Conference is being held should ask themselves...why they have done nothing to resolve

the dispute and attain a direct Israel-Arab dialogue since the Six Day War....We see nothing wrong in holding the Conference under the auspices of the U.N...and welcome the participation of any country which can make a constructive contribution to it....

It is with regret that I note that the Prime Minister, not to mention the Head of the Likud, Menahem Begin, expressed so many reservations about the Conference that the overall impression one gained was one of fear—fear of discussions...and fear of assuring Israel's legitimate rights without impairing the legitimate rights of our Arab neighbors, and primarily the Palestinian Arab nation....

The Arab side has learned that it cannot defeat Israel in battle, while Israel has learned again that the tragic Israel-Arab dispute cannot be solved by force, but by the political acceptance of our country's objective situation in the region and the international arena. I sincerely believe that the entire nation—including the parties in this House—wants peace. But, quite frankly, those who advocate the "Greater Land of Israel" are consciously leading us to the continuation of war. Those who preach territorial annexations of one kind or another of Arab land occupied since the Six Day War are also leading us to continued war. The truth is that the rightist Likud and its allies in the Ma'arach have reservations about the Geneva Conference because they are afraid...that peace will require them to abandon territory....The truth is that they are inviting the nation to live by the sword.

I think that there is a chance of a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arabs, and a future of cooperation...if Israel's Government evinces...readiness to put Security Council Resolution 242 into effect and declare that in return for peace our forces will withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, while reaching an agreement with the Arabs as to Israel's borders. There is a chance of a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arabs if the Government recognizes the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arab nation, and if—and it is still not too late—it creates the democratic conditions in the occupied territories whereby the million Arabs there may elect their representatives, who will participate in the Conference on the logical basis of peaceful coexistence with Israel.

We regard a peace agreement of that kind as guaranteeing Israel's security and ensuring that our grandchildren will not have to shed their blood in war. We also support guarantees of peace through the demilitarization of areas under effective supervision and the assurance of freedom of navigation in the waterways....The Government's use of the term "defensible boundaries" merely denotes territorial annexation. The impression in Israel and abroad is that both the Ma'arach and the Likud...have dulled the nation's senses with illusions, ignoring the reality around us....It is absurd to think that the whole world is evil and stupid, and all truth and justice is concentrated in Jerusalem. How long

can we adhere to the notion of "a nation that dwells alone"? How long can we hold out against the evergrowing numbers of the Arabs and the gradual improvement in their technical and technological ability...?

Our nation is gripped by a crisis of confidence after 25 years of organized brainwashing intended to distract its attention from the main point—the need for peace and a society based on justice and the democratic principles of our Labor movement. A great deal has been said about the grave breach of the Geneva Convention by Syria as regards our prisoners of war, and we are all united in fighting against that, but how can the Government of Israel...decide to violate that Convention as well as Jewish ethics by banishing eight Arab public figures from their homes and homeland, from the territories temporarily occupied by us...?

Are the 14 sections of the Ma'arach's election platform, which are identical with the Galili document and are tantamount to annexatory colonization, going far beyond the June 1967 borders in an era of decolonization, likely to help us in our struggle for Israel's just rights...? They constitute further proof of the fact that the Ma'arach has neither learned anything nor forgotten anything, to the satisfaction of the rightist Likud, not even after the disaster of the Yom Kippur War. They provide additional proof of the fact that there is no thinking about an independent Israeli line regarding internal and foreign policy amongst either the Coalition or the loyal Opposition....

Because of the Feast of Lights, several speakers have mentioned the war of the Maccabees....That was a just war against the imperialist Greek occupation, and constitutes a beacon in the history of the ancient world in general as well as of the Jewish people. But the "inheritance of our fathers" of that time comprised an area of about five square miles, roughly from Bethlehem to Jerusalem....I have no wish to see our country shrunk to that size....The historical lesson is that the late Ben-Gurion was right when he said a year and a half ago that we had rather be a smaller Israel with peace than a greater Israel without peace. That is what should be engraved on the hearts and minds of Israel's representatives at the Geneva Conference. Realistic security and political readiness should guide the Government at this time, when there is a real chance that the era of Israel-Arab peace could begin.

M. Shahal (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, a precondition for wise policy in the future is learning from current reality as well as from the mistakes of the past. The participants in the debate who adhered to positions they held before the Yom Kippur War would do well to examine themselves and their views...as well as current reality....If we are told that a certain concept has failed, that does not mean that every other concept is correct....We must take care not to labor under delusions, and beware of making facts fit a given concept....

In approaching political discussions we must avoid the dogmatism which takes a stand based on principles or assumptions, which constitutes the idealization of data in order to justify a position, instead of examining the facts carefully. It is more convenient to dream that the Arabs have changed their positions than to examine whether those positions merely constitute a change of tactics. Nor must people continue to disseminate slogans as if nothing has happened and as if our fate is in our hands alone and we can dictate terms to the Great Powers. They must not forget our great responsibility and duty to utilize any possibility of reaching a settlement of any kind, for our own sakes and those of our children....

There are two camps here, with the Government in the middle. One camp says "not one inch," and this will inevitably lead to war; the other camp says "not one inch," meaning that we must give everything back unconditionally, and this will lead to our extinction. The Palestinian Covenant...states that recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people means recognition of its right to liberate the entire homeland...The Arabs have never said that they have annulled the three noes of Khartoum.

Sadat...has taken very great care not to use terms which could be interpreted as contradicting the three noes of Khartoum. The Arab language is very rich....The Khartoum Conference produced the dictum: "No peace, no negotiations, no recognition." In speaking of a peace conference, Sadat used the term "participation in talks" rather than "negotiations," since these had been banned by the Khartoum Conference....The expression he used for peace denoted a peace which is very different from the peace we want—which comprises full relations between countries—and referred to a state of non-war....

We are going to the Geneva Conference, and I believe we are doing so with the intention of utilizing every opportunity which comes our way....In the Arab world different tones and approaches can also be discerned....Sadat's speech contained an aggressive note, but for the first time we heard of agreement to go to a peace conference, a great achievement in the Arab world, which still claims that we are an alien element, a cancer in the body of the Arab world, something which must be destroyed....Nevertheless, we are going to the Peace Conference with the sincere desire and a sense of responsibility to the whole nation...to utilize every opportunity....

We must not forget that we are in the Middle East...and I do not think I am offending any Arab when I say that...anyone who has had experience of Arabs knows that in the negotiating process they derive great pleasure from bargaining. What bargaining process is possible when whoever is ready to renounce more is regarded as being nobler? What chance will the Government have of reaching certain borders...if we state outright that we are prepared to forego everything...? And over

against this we have the noes of the Likud...which seeks to disguise its slogans in such a way as to deceive the public. We all meet the public. Each party has its own public. I think that Israel's citizens are intelligent enough to distinguish between slogans and content.

I suggest that we go to the Conference without either exaggerated optimism or extreme pessimism. We must go as realists, seeking to utilize every possibility of maintaining our existence within defensible borders. In the give and take of negotiations we must not be set on only giving or taking....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Distinguished Knesset...on the subject of the Sabbath, there can be no doubt in the heart of any Jew, whether Orthodox or not, that we would have preferred it had the Conference been held on a weekday....The Conference was originally to have been held on the Tuesday and Wednesday, but was postponed largely because of us...because we first had to meet with the Secretary of State to discuss important topics....After he had persuaded the Arab countries to change the original date, he found it impossible to ask them to agree to yet another change, despite our repeated requests....This is something which pains us all, and I am surprised that the situation has been represented as if certain people seek to preserve the honor of the Sabbath...while the Government does not. That is not true. If the alternative is not being present at part of the Conference, I think we cannot accept that. This is not the first time we have felt obliged to attend international debates on the Sabbath. We have done so on more than one occasion at the U.N. Assembly, though we absolutely refuse to participate on discussions held on the New Year (Rosh Hashana) or the Day of Atonement....

With regard to the prisoners of war being held by the Syrians, to date there has been one proposal—to link their fate with that of our prisoners of war in Egypt. On the face of it that would seem to be reasonable, since both countries cooperated in the war...but we did that once in the past...during the War of Attrition, when our pilots were held by the Syrians and we held Syrian prisoners of war while at the same time Egypt had Israeli prisoners of war and we had Egyptians...and as usual the numbers in our hands far exceeded those held by the others....When we linked the two sets of prisoners, to our regret our boys remained in Syria for a year or two, and our ten prisoners of war in Egypt were released only now....

I asked the families of the prisoners in Syria if they would prefer it if our prisoners remained in Egypt too. Naturally, they said that they would not. In view of the experience of the past, we had no desire to go through that again. We believe that we did the right thing. At least the prisoners from Egypt are home. Now we are told that we have not done enough. When the ceasefire agreement was worked out by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R...Brezhnev gave his word of honor that everything would be done to help release the prisoners. The U.S. President has asked Brezh-

nev about this personally on more than one occasion...I know that Kissinger has spoken to Dobrynin about it too...and that similar demands have even been made by Arab sources, not to mention the U.N. and the Red Cross. And Assad gives his usual reply.

When I was in Washington the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister was there and he made a proposal about what we would give for the release of our prisoners of war. We agreed. When Dr. Waldheim's deputy was in Damascus Assad turned it into an Israel proposal which he rejected....Assad's reply is that he knows very well how much the return of the prisoners of war means for Israel and that is why he does not want to release them.

I imagine that what MK Begin said about mentioning the Palestinians and other parties he learned from the documents submitted to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. If that is so...he knows that they were not mentioned.

M. Begin (Gahal): I don't know. I'm hearing it now....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: No document submitted to us makes mention of the Palestinians.

M. Begin (Gahal): I said "organizations and groups."

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: There were only a few documents....One of the reasons for the postponement of the Conference was that we did not agree to the reference to that subject. Not only did we say that on no account would we participate in a conference in which they participated... we even demanded that the reference to them be removed, and it was.

Now we have seen...that not only the terrorist organizations want to get to the Conference, but countries—including those which call themselves neutral and which actively helped the Arabs in the war in various ways—want to participate in it. This also applies to European countries with which we have relations and whose positions on basic issues are known to us. We see no reason why they should participate in this Conference, which could easily become a kind of U.N. conference to which anyone who wants to can come and have their say. The fact that the participation of other parties from the Middle East will be discussed at least ensures that elements from outside the region are not allowed in. The phrase "Palestinians and other groups" was removed from the document.

As for the question of the auspices...the Conference is being convened under the auspices of the U.N., which means in this case that the U.N.'s role is limited to acting as host at the official opening....I don't know where MK Raphael got his information about Dr. Kissinger trying to persuade us to agree to the participation of the Palestinians in the Conference. There was no such thing.

M. Begin (Gahal): I got the impression that MK Raphael was correct.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I can't help that.

M. Begin (Gahal): You were given a document which said those things.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: That's not true....Does the document say that the sides have agreed to the participation of the Palestinians?

M. Begin (Gahal): Not to their participation, but to discussing it.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Correct....But we have not agreed to it, and Dr. Kissinger did not try to persuade us to agree to it....MK Raphael has various contentions. That is his right. But to claim that only the representatives of one party met with Dr. Kissinger, as if that does not belong to the work they are doing, is a misrepresentation of the situation.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): It's a fact....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Between six p.m. and 1 a.m., and between 9 a.m. and I don't remember when, there weren't five minutes of social meetings. The people who participated in the talks were the people whose positions required them to be involved in the negotiations with Dr. Kissinger.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): It's a new version of the "kitchen." And we're against that where security is concerned.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: MK Raphael, that "kitchen" is clean.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): That "kitchen" produced the blunder....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I see that MK Raphael is already preparing himself a path to a new kitchen. Good luck to him.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): At any rate, we won't accept the previous kitchen. There will be no more kitchen. Not with us. If you want us, there'll be no kitchen. There will be a Government.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Sir, you are at liberty to go wherever you wish.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): You too. We'll see what the voters want.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Of course, of course.

I. Raphael (Mafdal): Everyone will go to whom they want. We're not in anyone's pocket.

A. Zilberberg (Ma'arach): For four years you ate in that kitchen with pleasure....

The Speaker, M. Bibi: Knesset Members, please be quiet....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: There are twenty days to go till the elections....We should not get upset about the fact that people think that the

election campaign should be conducted from this House....But I would like to say one thing. The Ma'arach's election platform is set out clearly, and anyone who can read may do so and make up his mind accordingly.

M. Begin (Gahal): Does the Galili document exist or not?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: All I want to know is—what does the Likud mean by its slogan: "Give us the possibility of forming a Likud (united) Government"?

M. Begin (Gahal): The words are "authority" and "national government."

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Who are the candidates for this wonderful thing? And what will the guidelines be...?

E. Shostak (Free Center): Why doesn't the Ma'arach tell us who will be in its government...?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: We have a program....Everything is set down and published.

S. Tamir (Free Center): Are you prepared to state unequivocally...that there will be no withdrawal from Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh...?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: To you I'm not prepared to state anything.

S. Tamir (Free Center): Go to the nation. Those methods will not help you, they died long ago. Inform the nation.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: The nation is informed morning, noon and night, on the radio, on television and at meetings, and the audience asks questions too. We never evade them. But I haven't heard or read of any guidelines on the basis of which certain Knesset Members are going to the nation....

J. Nechushtan (Gahal): Has the Government asked for this debate to deal with the Ma'arach's elections...?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Really....

J. Nechushtan (Gahal): We didn't call for this debate. You did so by virtue of your position, in order to make a political statement. Is that your political statement?

S. Tamir (Free Center): It is the statement of the head of a party, not a Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I am deeply shocked by that assertion.

The Speaker, M. Bibi: MK Tamir, the Prime Minister is also the head of a party, and there is no contradiction in that.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: What is the basic difference? It is not only a question of a political program....Why did the Opposition leave the Government, and how did that Government function? We were not afraid to try something which might help to resolve our problems, as is demonstrated by the fact that we had contacts with Jarring, we accepted the American proposal and there was a ceasefire....As for the blunder, the Government is to blame...just as it was responsible for the fact that the IDF was equipped, and is better equipped today than ever before.

E. Shostak (Free Center): The IDF was and is equipped, but not because of you....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: And if the Government had accepted your position in 1970, no one in this country believes that that equipment would have come....

M. Begin (Gahal): No one believes that.

S. Tamir (Free Center): By what you are saying you are simply giving the Americans excuses for not helping Israel if it adheres to its positions....

M. Begin (Gahal): On the eve of the Day of Atonement you brought disaster on this nation. Isn't the Government responsible? Isn't it?

E. Shostak (Free Center): Does America support Israel only because of the Ma'arach?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: MK Shostak...to this day, even without Gahal, the Government consists of three parties. And its policy was accepted by all the parties remaining in the Government.

E. Shostak (Free Center): You want to say that it is only because of you that the U.S. supports Israel. All your propaganda is based on that.
(Shouts.)

The Speaker, M. Bibi: Knesset Members, kindly restrain yourselves....

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I understand the Knesset Members from Gahal. It is not pleasant. They, as well as MK Tamir, predicted all kinds of terrible things for us.

M. Begin (Gahal): They happened, on the Day of Atonement.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: The fact is that we haven't budged an inch from the ceasefire lines.

M. Begin (Gahal): Where are the Egyptian tanks today, and what caused that if not your blunder?

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I understand that it is uncomfortable for MK Begin to explain why he acted as he did in 1970. That is why he attacks in 1973. But what can one do?

M. Begin (Gahal): That's the result.

The Speaker, M. Bibi: Knesset Members, this is impossible. There is a limit to interjections....No one else would remain on the podium and allow such frequent interruption.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: It happens when there is no other way of convincing people. And the fact is that none of those prophecies has been fulfilled. All that has happened is that we have not relinquished anything. We have never been able to equip and strengthen the IDF as we have now—not without arguments and efforts, but there are results, and without severing our ties with that Power in both the political and the economic spheres....The sum total is positive, and this would not have been the case had we followed Gahal's line in 1970.

M. Baram (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Ma'arach, Independent Liberals, Progress and Development and Cooperation and Amity party groups I submit our concluding resolution regarding the Government's statement on its decision to participate in the Geneva Conference:

The Knesset takes note of the Government's statement to the Knesset, as submitted by the Prime Minister, and her reply today....

E. Raziell-Na'or (Gahal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the concluding proposal of the Likud party group, comprising Gahal, the National List and the Free Center, is:

A. The Knesset approves of direct negotiations at the Peace Conference and the signing of peace treaties with the Arab countries.

B. The Knesset instructs the Government to inform Israel's delegation to the Geneva Conference to raise the problem of our prisoners of war in Syria at the opening ceremony.

C. Since Israel's proposal not to hold the Geneva Conference on the Sabbath has been rejected, the Knesset instructs the Government to inform Israel's delegation to renew its participation in the deliberations only after the conclusion of the Sabbath.

...

The Vote

Those in favor of MK Raziell-Na'or's resolution 18

Those against 52

(MK Raziell-Na'or's resolution is not adopted.)

Those in favor of MK Baram's resolution 50

Those against 19

Abstentions 9

(MK Baram's resolution is adopted.)

Z. Hammer (Mafdal): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Mafdal approves of our participation in the Geneva Conference, not because we delude ourselves and the nation that the Arabs are coming to the Conference in order to revolutionize the relations between us, but because we earnestly desire that every effort should be made to prevent bloodshed, avert war and bring peace nearer, and also because we believe...that no Government of Israel should go there in order to make concessions which would imperil our national rights and our defense borders. That approach prevented us from voting against the resolution....

We abstained from voting because we disapprove of going to the Conference without standing firm on a national and religious issue—the Sabbath. It is inconceivable that Christmas should be an acceptable reason for concluding the Conference while the Sabbath is not taken into consideration, at our Conference, one which has no justification without us. This is not purely a religious issue. It has a national significance which we must not neglect....We welcome the Prime Minister's statement that our representatives will not violate the Sabbath, but our demand has an intrinsic and symbolic significance far beyond that, namely, our very presence on the Sabbath.

The Knesset knows that in order to save lives the Jewish people may fight on the Sabbath, and even on the holiest day of the year. But the peace would not be harmed if the Conference were to begin on Friday, stop on Saturday and continue on Saturday night. The speeches could be a few hours shorter, or, alternatively, the ceremonial part of the Conference could be extended. We believe that if we had insisted on this from the outset...this would have been taken for granted....Just because we hope that this is an important historical event...respect for us will increase if we take a firm stand and refuse to participate in the deliberations on the Sabbath. It is still not too late to do so...and perhaps by virtue of the Sabbath and the preservation of Israel's honor, the Conference will be even more successful and will bring peace speedily....

EIGHTH KNESSET 1974-1977

Basic Law: the Knesset (Amendment); Knesset Elections Law (Consolidated Version) (Amendment), 5734-1974

Introduction

The election of the Eighth Knesset, which had been postponed on account of the Yom Kippur War, took place, as scheduled, on 31 December 1973, on the basis of lists of candidates which had been submitted prior to the war. 78.6 percent of all those entitled to vote participated. In spite of the tremendous upheaval of the war, the Alignment (Ma'arach) once more emerged as the largest faction, albeit with a reduced majority—49 seats as opposed to 56 in the previous elections. The Likud, based on the Herut-Liberals alliance, which by now had been joined by three additional groups, including two composed primarily of former Labor adherents supporting the non-partition of the Land of Israel, came second, with 38 seats, up from 26. Once more Golda Meir was charged by the President with forming a Government. After several weeks, on 10 March 1974, she presented the result of her efforts to the Knesset. This was a 22-member Cabinet based on three party groups—Ma'arach, the National Religious Party and the Independent Liberals—and supported by a narrow coalition of 62 Knesset Members—a bare majority. The key positions of Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs remained unchanged, and Moshe Dayan and Abba Eban retained their posts. While negotiations for disengagement agreements in the north and the south were pursued, with the active participation of the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, and his intensive shuttle diplomacy, a high-level Commission of Inquiry, chaired by the President of the Supreme Court, Shimon Agranat, was engaged in investigating the facts concerning events immediately before and after the outbreak of the war.

The perennial debate concerning Israel's electoral system came to the fore in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, with its concomitant dissonance and dissatisfaction not with a leader or a group of leaders but with the entire political system. A few weeks after the presentation of the new Government four private member's bills were submitted for amending the relevant laws. They differed in important details (number of constituencies, method of calculating votes) but had in common a desire to abandon the purely proportional system of representation in favor of a mixed proportional-regional one. One of the proposals obtained an absolute majority of 61 at its preliminary reading and was

transferred to committee. It failed to overcome subsequent hurdles, however, as did its successors in the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Knessets, so that Israel's electoral system has remained the undiluted proportional one adopted ad hoc in 1948 for electing the Constituent Assembly.

Sitting 36 of the Eighth Knesset

3 April 1974 (11 Nissan 5734)

...

B. Mo'av (Citizens' Rights Movement): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, during the last few years, together with many others, in a non-party, public movement, I have worked for changing the electoral system for the Knesset and the local authorities....One of the basic freedoms of a citizen in a democratic country is the right to elect and be elected. The Citizens' Rights Movement was established in protest against the fact that this elementary right had been taken away from citizens and handed over to party machinery and appointments committees. Thus, the first and main section of my party's program deals with changing the current electoral system to one which will ensure direct election by the voter....The law we propose is based on the following criteria:

A. The system must encourage the possibility of maintaining a stable government, on the one hand, and an opposition which is capable of establishing an alternative government, on the other. In a country which has no constitution and where strict emergency regulations exist, the system must not give one bloc or party a permanent advantage in elections.

B. On election day the electoral system must express the public's sensibilities and changes in public opinion.

C. The system must ensure that a minority of the voters cannot gain a majority in the Knesset, and the Government must be based on a majority not only in the Knesset but also among the voters.

D. The election system must facilitate a direct connection between the voter and his representatives in the Knesset and allow the voters the greatest possible influence in choosing candidates.

E. The system must ensure that candidates with appropriate skills and abilities are elected to the Knesset.

F. The system should be simple, so that the voter is aware of the significance of his vote, and the voters' participation in the elections is encouraged.

G. The new system must guarantee a smooth and gradual transition from the existing system, enabling the public to study the new situation and its possibilities.

The system we are proposing is based on the foregoing principles and the electoral systems of Ireland, Belgium and other countries.

Under the system we are proposing, each party submits to the Central Elections Committee a national list of 120 candidates arranged in 24 regional lists of 5 candidates per constituency. The vote will be undertaken on the basis of a voting slip with the letter and name of the party and the list of the five candidates in the order determined by the party. The voter may alter the order of the names by writing the numbers one to five beside the names in his order of preference....

The votes will be counted by party in each constituency separately. The national outcome of the votes will determine the quota per seat, as in the current system. In each constituency the number of seats accorded a specific party will be based on the national quota.

The identity of the candidates elected in accordance with the voters' preferences in the various constituencies will be determined in accordance with a counting method known as "the mobile vote method," in which full expression is given to the wishes of the voters in ranking the various candidates in each party. Popular candidates who have been ranked first by the voter will be elected....If the voter has not utilized his right to rank the candidates, the order is as determined on the voting slip by the party....

Votes from the constituencies which are in excess of the national quota will be transferred to a national reservoir of votes. Votes from the reservoir will be used to supplement seats in constituencies where there is an excess which is greater than half a seat. All the remaining excess votes in each party will be used to elect candidates from the national list.

In the large parties most of the candidates will be elected in the constituencies, and the minority will be from the national list, while in the smaller parties most of the candidates will come from the national list....In any event the total seats given to a party in the Knesset will be determined in accordance with the overall number of votes that party's candidates received throughout the country. We propose that the national list should serve to supplement the seats the party has won in accordance with its relative strength. If candidates have been elected in the constituencies their names should be removed from the national list for the purpose of allocating seats from the excess votes.

In conclusion, our proposal for a combined regional-proportional electoral system will make it possible to preserve a proportional and just distribution of seats, without distortions, while preserving the parties' rights to exist and also according maximal influence to the voters themselves in choosing candidates within the parties.

We are submitting two proposals: 1. an amendment to the Basic Law: the Knesset, which is the framework, and 2. an amendment to the Elections Law. We wish to put the overall framework to the vote and transfer the detailed proposal for the Elections Law to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee....We believe that our proposal is the best, the fairest and the most democratic approach.

A. Abuhatzira (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, MK Mo'av's proposal and the three which are to follow it...are all bad from my point of view, as well as from that of most of the public....I regret the fact that the House has not been given sufficient time to study the proposals and that the request to postpone the debate was rejected....Why this haste, only a few months after the elections? Why this urgency in bringing the new proposal for regional elections and the other proposals before us? My impression is—and this is the impression gained by the public—that because there is general unrest as a result of what happened immediately before and after the war, several experts thought that the idea of regional elections would calm the unrest and constitute the panacea for Israeli democracy. I regret to say that these proposals are far from constituting the best democratic system....

Amongst Jews, even in the diaspora, the sense of independent rule and freedom...was highly developed. Independent government was not something which originated with the State of Israel. In the Jewish communities to which I am referring the rule was that the government should represent the majority. When the Jewish community chose its representatives to conduct its affairs it chose them from among the majority, each member of the community participating in person in the process....Will the regional elections give the public and the individual the decision-making power that they have under the prevailing system?

It has also been claimed that the new system will bring us greater stability....How often has the Coalition been in danger of collapse since the state was established?...The proposal to introduce regional elections may be good for parties which are not run on democratic lines. The intention may be to conceal this lack of internal democracy. But if there is democracy within a party neither the country nor the citizen requires the system of regional elections....Furthermore, if the object is to get rid of ten parties and leave only two, the next step may be to get rid of one of those two, leaving one party in sole power....

Y. Be'eri (Likud): Does that mean that in America, England and Australia there is no democracy?

A. Abuhatzira (National Religious Front): We are not being offered the electoral system of America, England or Australia. What we are being offered is the English system, which has not proved itself. Without go-

ing into the details of the proposal, I propose that MK Mo'av's proposal be removed from the agenda.

B. Mo'av (Citizens' Rights Movement): I am surprised that MK Abuhatzira, who is a mayor, opposes personal elections. Most mayors are elected on a personal basis, despite the prevailing system...and MK Abuhatzira has even submitted a proposal for personal elections for mayors....The principal element of our proposal to change the electoral system is the introduction of direct and personal elections....

The Speaker, M. Porat: We will now vote on the two proposals.

The Vote

Those in favor of removing the proposal from the agenda	14
Those in favor of transferring the proposal to committee	30
Abstentions	4

(Because the number of supporters is less than 61, the proposal has been rejected and will not be transferred to committee.)

The Basic Law: the Knesset (Amendment No. 5)

G. Ya'acobi (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, in July 1972 the Knesset decided by an absolute majority to transfer to committee an amendment to the Basic Law: the Knesset for replacing the existing national-proportional electoral system with a combined one in which "the majority of the Knesset Members will be elected by proportional-regional elections in constituencies, and the minority by proportional-national elections. The constituencies will be as equal as possible in the number of their voters, and the number of Knesset Members who will be elected in each constituency will be equal." The other aspects of the electoral system, such as delimiting the constituencies, their number and the relationship between the number of Knesset Members elected by the regional and the national system, were left for a later stage....

Because the legislative procedure was not completed in the previous Knesset, this proposal is brought before the House today by several members of the Labor party....For the first time since the establishment of the state, there seems to be a real chance of changing the electoral system to one which is better suited to the needs of the society and the country, will lead to a closer link between the voters and the representatives, will

bring about the choice of candidates who are better able to represent the public and gain its confidence and will enable a more meaningful selection between political alternatives to be made.

Throughout the state's existence attempts have been made to change the electoral system....Now, especially after the war, but also because of social processes and public and political maturity, there is greater public readiness to take an active part in public and political life. There is a growing aspiration to participate in molding our future...and an increased acknowledgement of the need to create a political system which is more open and sensitive....

The object of elections in a democratic parliamentary regime is to facilitate the greatest and most direct representation of the voters by the election of a Knesset which allows the formation of a stable Government and a responsible, alternative Opposition, effective parliamentary control and an interdependent relationship between voter and representative. The principal objectives of our proposal are:

A. The candidates will be elected with maximal consideration of the wishes and expectations of the public. A Member of Knesset will know who has elected him, and his voters will have a clearer knowledge of who represents them.

(From the floor: Illusions.)

This system will increase and define public responsibility more clearly, heighten confidence in the Knesset and bring about a greater level of grassroots participation in political life...eventually leading to the enrichment of political leadership levels....The expansion of public involvement through regional representation could reduce social and ethnic tension, bring about greater and more direct cooperation and the representation in parliament of the younger generation and the inhabitants of development areas, as well as of academics and veteran settlers....The parties will still play a significant role in determining their candidates, but they will have to pay more attention to the wishes of the public when doing so, because candidates' personal qualities and skills will play a greater role in the voters' considerations when a shorter, regional list of candidates is involved...although the views of the parties on whose lists they appear will also be taken into account.

B. The Knesset's ability to maintain effective parliamentary control will be increased. Appropriate parliamentary control of the Executive is an essential condition for maintaining the principle of checks and balances necessary for proper democratic government....

C. The proposed system will concentrate the political trends within the nation. Excessive variety and splintering are barren and undesirable for proper democratic government. Only by crystallizing the political structure will the public be presented with more significant alternatives....

D. This process of crystallization will not lead to the establishment of a two-party system in Israel. It will not turn a minority into a majority or vice versa. The combination and balance between regional-proportional representation and national representation will ensure this. In this way the proposed system is different from the one obtaining in Britain, for example....The system suggested here will prevent a minority from imposing its will on the majority, which has in the past caused the Government to invest a great deal of its energies in maintaining the existence of the Coalition...rather than in molding and implementing national policy....

Israel is the only country in the Western-democratic world which has a completely national-proportional system. That method was decided on by the Provisional Council of State so that elections could be held quickly....Regrettably, too many people today believe that a Knesset elected under the prevailing system will not be able to change it. The proposed system is not a panacea for Israeli democracy and society. Even if the Knesset decides to transfer the proposal to the committee stage, that is only the first step in a long and complex legislative process, but we must take that step, revealing sensitivity to the wishes of the public and attentiveness to the needs of the country....

...
The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: We will now vote.

The Vote

Those in favor of transferring the proposal to committee	61
Those against	33

(The proposal to transfer Amendment No. 5 to the Basic Law: the Knesset for preliminary discussion by committee is adopted....)

The Basic Law: the Knesset (Amendment)

Y. Hurwitz (Likud): Members of the Knesset, we voted for MK Ya'acobi's proposal because we regarded it as a compromise proposal, though it is not the one we would have wished for, one which divides the country up into 120 constituencies, each of which sends a representative to the Knesset....I realize that my proposal has no chance of being adopted by the Knesset...though I hope that one day it will.

The four proposals...for changing the electoral system brought before the Knesset today differ in content and technical detail...but are all characterized by the awareness of the urgent need to change the existing

electoral system, which has been in effect for twenty-five years and is merely a continuation of the system prevailing during the Mandate....

Naturally, I am glad that one of the four proposals was adopted a few minutes ago, and I hope it will not be destroyed piecemeal in the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee....To date the Knesset has not responded to the spontaneous, deeply-felt, widespread and intensive demand prevalent throughout the country for a change in our democratic-parliamentary regime....

It should be stressed that the proposed change is both technical and one of essence, facets which are intertwined in politics. The historic demand for the secret ballot, for example, was a demand for a technical change which became one of essence...ensuring the existence of democracy....The same applies in this case....Naturally, it is neither a magic formula nor an ideal solution....

The suggestion to change the electoral system raised by David Ben-Gurion, and by others in his wake, derived from the aspiration to change something basic in the structure of the parties in Israel as well as in the connection between voters and representatives, to revive the vanished concepts of public morality and electoral responsibility, to do away with a regime of anonymous representatives selected by the party machinery and graft....It has been suggested, not entirely disingenuously, that the parties should increase their internal level of democracy, but that is easier said than done....I am convinced that a change in the electoral system will ultimately lead to changes within the parties....

I must be frank and say that there is no party in which there is not something to amend in this sphere....If we do not want the public to completely lose confidence in the political system, this change must be introduced urgently....Furthermore, it is wrong to assume that the switch to regional elections spells death for ideology and the parties which uphold it....Even small parties represent a conglomeration of groups and ideas....The regional representatives will not represent interest groups, they and their views will be known to the voters and they will not be selected by those who control the party machinery. The candidates will appear before the public they wish to represent and will have to win it over by virtue of their ideas on a variety of national subjects as well as their skill in presenting themselves....The system is by no means perfect, but as we have all learned, the prevailing proportional system is the worst one possible....

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...an electoral system is not an end in itself. We, the Independent Liberal Party, favor a system intended to tighten the link between the voters and the representatives...but if the object of electoral reform is to distort the will of the voters...we are against it....We support the transition to regional elections provided the seats are allocated proportionately on the basis of the national results and the representatives come

from the areas where they received the majority of the votes....Our proposal which, due to a technical hitch, is not on today's agenda, proves that there is no substantive contradiction between regional and proportional elections....The country can be divided into constituencies and the election results can be determined by the national-proportional results. Everyone will get what he deserves on the basis of the national calculation....

The system proposed by MK Hurwitz has proved to be a failure in England...where the votes given to smaller parties are lost...and where not only is the representation unfairly weighted in favor of the larger parties...but a party which receives a larger number of votes need not necessarily have a majority in parliament....The system proposed is intended to bring about a two-party system, but our sociological, political and ideological reality is more complex than one in which there is simply Right and Left....You wish to leave the various special groups out in the cold. I think that is very dangerous....

Y. Hurwitz (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...it is strange to hear the representative of the Independent Liberals opposing the idea of a minority ruling the country, since with the aid of his party a minority is ruling Israel at the moment....I think that the situation in the sphere of elections for the position of mayor—where individuals are elected on the basis of their personal ability rather than their party affiliation—provides a pretty clear picture of what will happen once regional elections are introduced....

The Vote

Those in favor of transferring the proposal to committee	18
Those against	6

The Knesset Elections Law (Consolidated Version) (Amendment) (Personal-Regional Elections), 5734-1974

E. Shostak (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, my proposal is based on changing the electoral system to one in which 90 Knesset Members are elected in 90 constituencies and 30 Knesset Members on a national list. That is the first component. The second is that the constituencies will be determined solely by the entire Supreme Court....Naturally, the constituencies will have to be more or less equal....

Even those Knesset Members who oppose changing the electoral system must be aware of the fact that they were not elected to the Knesset on a personal basis....We call ourselves "the representatives of the people," but that is not quite the case....The system whereby the voters vote

for parties but not people is unparalleled anywhere else in the world...It is time we considered whether this system is appropriate and honorable for Israel.

One of the previous speakers asked why this should be done now, only three or four months after the elections. I maintain that now is the right time, both because there are three or four years until the elections and because...the last elections taught us that wherever someone stood as a local candidate, even without the backing of a party, he received the vast majority of the votes in that area...I think that throughout Israel there is a desire for change, despite the attempts to frighten us with threats of majority party rule rather than a coalition—something which I do not think is so reprehensible, since the minority should not rule.... The example of England—where millions of votes for the Liberal party were “wasted”—is also brandished at us, but in every electoral system votes are lost...The losing side has to suffer, that is inevitable.

We wish to avoid what happened in England, however. We must ensure that a party which has not received a majority does not govern....Only a few weeks ago we all witnessed the disgraceful exhibition whereby the formation of the Government was dependent on a splinter group, a fragmentary party, one with two, three or four seats in the Knesset....And once we reach a healthy situation in the country, with all the suffering which will be involved when someone else rules and not I, at least we will know that he deserves it because he received the majority of the votes in the contest....

A representative elected in personal elections speaks with greater authority, responsibility and integrity than one who is merely a party appointee....I know that a party is a framework which demands discipline, but there are subjects on which one should express an independent opinion, even in opposition to one's party....That is something which can never happen here, because it is sure to result in sanctions and the drawing of conclusions....Our current system in effect reduces the position of Knesset Member to one of party cypher....The activity and conduct of a Knesset Member who has been elected on a personal basis is entirely different....We see that in countries such as France, England, America and others, where at least some representatives are elected on a regional basis, each representative is concerned about his constituency but neither does he forget subjects of national interest....

That is why we propose that 90 Knesset Members be elected on a regional-personal basis and 30 on a national basis...thereby ensuring that both regional and national interests are attended to...and that votes are not lost....It is preferable that this law should be discussed now and not as the elections approach....Anyone who opposes this law today, whatever his declared reasons, is going against the wishes of the nation, because the entire nation wants its representatives to emerge from

their anonymity and attendant lack of accountability....I therefore suggest that we transfer the proposal to committee.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, my party group opposes MK Shostak's proposal to change the electoral system, as it opposes those of MKs Mo'av, Hurwitz and Ya'acobi....We do not favor the existing regime in this country—

Z. Shoval (Likud): What electoral system do they have in the U.S.S.R.? Is it regional or proportional?

T. Toubi (Rakah): There the regime is different, the society is different, being without classes or exploitation. The situation there is very different. When there is a regime without class exploitation here we can discuss it....The existing bourgeois regime, even when based on a system of direct, proportional and general elections, is far from being the true democracy to which the working class and the masses aspire...but the introduction of a regional and personal electoral system constitutes a grievous blow to the existing parliamentary democracy, a reactionary step which could, in certain circumstances, give a minority the majority in the Knesset....

All the methods and combinations of methods proposed here...are mere sleight of hand...the eventual outcome of which will be to put an end to most of the parties currently represented in the House, depriving hundreds of thousands of voters of representation....It will effectively put an end to all opposition within the Knesset, leaving only the two main blocs, both of which are the mainstays of the regime and policy which oppose peace and the interests of the masses. Who of the leaders of the Alignment will guarantee that the electoral change they desire so much will not bring the reactionary, even more dangerous Likud into power? It is a hazardous risk for any workers' party to take in the prevailing situation....

S. Tamir (Likud): There are many more workers in the Likud than in all Rakah.

T. Toubi (Rakah): And with what miserable representatives....The recent elections in England have proven that even in a system of regional elections the outcome may preclude stable government. The public is, justifiably, dissatisfied with the existing leadership in this country, which has brought disaster on the nation and the tragedy of the Yom Kippur War....The public demands that an end be put to corruption, inept bureaucracy and disregard for the citizen and that an endeavor be made to attain a just and stable peace. There is also a demand to replace leaders who have erred and have failed to solve any of the country's basic political, economic or social problems....The current campaign to placate the public by changing the electoral system is merely a ruse to divert attention from the country's real problems....What is needed is a

fundamental change in policy, not an electoral facelift, in order to assuage the general unrest and dissatisfaction throughout the nation... We therefore propose that MK Shostak's proposal be rejected.

The Vote

Those in favor of transferring the proposal to committee	19
Those against	6
Abstentions	1

Prime Minister's Resignation; Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Yom Kippur War

Introduction

Soon after the Yom Kippur War, Moshe Dayan offered his resignation to the Prime Minister but Golda Meir turned it down, preferring to defer any personnel changes until after the Agranat Commission had presented its findings. That Commission—composed of two Justices of the Supreme Court, two former Chiefs of Staff and the State Comptroller—presented its interim report on 1 April 1974. It made clear-cut recommendations with regard to the highest military echelon, as a result of which the Chief of Staff, David Elazar, and the Chief of Military Intelligence were forced to resign. On the other hand, the members of the Commission opined that they “did not feel free to reach conclusions regarding the responsibility of Ministers for acts they had personally committed or omitted.”...The Commission did not consider it its task to express an opinion on the implications of their parliamentary responsibility, defining that as “essentially a political issue.”

Concerning the personal conduct of Golda Meir, the Commission enumerated a number of appropriate decisions she had taken once the matter had been brought to her attention by the Minister of Defense. Although she had been cleared personally, Golda Meir felt that in view of her responsibility as Prime Minister, it was incumbent upon her to resign, and thus bring about the resignation of the entire Cabinet, less than three months after its formation. Some people believed at the time that her resignation was a ruse, but it soon became evident that Golda Meir had decided to terminate her career—as Prime Minister and as a Member of the Knesset.

Sitting 37 of the Eighth Knesset

11 April 1974 (19 Nissan 5734)

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The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I hereby inform the Knesset, in accordance with paragraph 40(A)(3) of the Basic Law: the Government, that today I submitted my resignation to the President. By law, the resignation of the Prime Minister is tantamount to the resignation of the Government.

On March 10 I presented the Government to the Knesset, which expressed its confidence in it. The whole nation participated in the elections to the Eighth Knesset, which were held on December 31. Everyone praised the public's sense of involvement and responsibility...and the Government to which the newly-elected Knesset gave its confidence should have continued serving until the conclusion of the Eighth Knesset. Nonetheless, I have decided to resign.

Since the elections I have followed public feeling closely and have reached the conclusion that in Israel's public bodies, both party-political ones whose representatives are in the Government or the Opposition and other public sectors, there is an unrest which cannot be ignored. This unrest, which may be natural and is certainly legitimate, is evinced in many ways. It contains elements which are both positive and negative. Be that as it may, after having thought the matter over very carefully I have come to the decision that we must let the public decide once more who should represent it, so that a new, stable Government may be elected.

Israel is a democratic society and the procedures whereby changes are made in the composition of its elected offices do not undermine the functioning of the institutions of Government. By law, the Government continues to function with full authority until a new Government is formed, whether by the Eighth Knesset or after new elections are held. Our embassies have been instructed to make this clear to all concerned. The Government will continue as before in its political efforts to attain peace between Israel and the Arabs. I would like to make it perfectly clear to the Arab Governments that the IDF is ready, as always, to fulfill its function, and Israel's Government will act as it should, with full authority.

On April 1 I received an Interim Report from the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into the Yom Kippur War....The Government is still in the process of discussing the Report. The Government's decisions following the Commission's recommendations concerning senior military officials, as well as what the Chief of Staff told the Cabinet, have been published. The Commission has also issued the following conclusions and recommendations in the moral sphere:

A. The need for a clear definition of the division of authority, duties and responsibility in defense matters between the three bodies involved, i.e., the Cabinet and the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, and the Chief of Staff.

B. The establishment of a Ministerial Defense Committee.

C. The need to enforce the legal restrictions designed to ensure that the Government's defense discussions remain confidential.

D. The authorization of the Prime Minister in times of war to appoint a limited Ministerial Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, to

make crucial decisions on urgent subjects connected with the conduct of the war.

E. A series of recommendations regarding the Intelligence Service which are intended to ensure that pluralism is maintained within the evaluative system and that the Prime Minister has the necessary tools for assessing the efficiency of the functioning, warning system and analysis of the Intelligence Service.

The Government has begun to discuss these recommendations and the ways of implementing them. Its decisions will be brought before the Knesset in due course, if they can be made public, and before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee if they should remain secret.

Section 30 of the Report deals with "Personal Responsibility on the Governmental Level" and states...that the Commission did not regard it as its task to express an opinion on the implications of the parliamentary responsibility of Ministers. The Commission affirmed that "The question of the possible resignation of a member of the Government in circumstances of this kind is essentially a purely political issue, and hence it is our view that we should not deal with it."

The Minister of Justice, Haim Tzadok, submitted a legal opinion on the subject of parliamentary responsibility to the Government. This has been published and I will not quote from it. I believe there can be no doubt that in Israel the principle of ministerial responsibility obtains...as part of the constitutional basis of the relationship between the Executive and Parliament. Thus, the subject is on the Government's agenda....I would like to conclude by calling on the nation to act...as a country with a sure future ahead of it. There are struggles and challenges ahead of us. We can contend with them.

...

M. Begin (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, about the slaughter in Kiryat Shmona. In this generation one and a half million Jewish children were murdered by the German Nazis. This morning another eight Jewish children were added to their number in Kiryat Shmona. For years our mourning mind's eye has seen the massacre of infants on alien soil which is soaked in our blood. Today, on Israel's soil, our mourning mind's eye saw our children thrown out of top-storey windows so that their bones were smashed, their heads crushed, as the German Nazis did in Europe. Two-legged beasts, Arab Nazis, perpetrated this abomination. Who is responsible for it? We must say unequivocally that the Arab Governments which provide a haven for these base murderers bear the full responsibility for these acts of bloody violence....

We will continue to discuss this terrible subject....An examination of security measures in the border township of Kiryat Shmona is required. The lesson must be learned for every town in Israel. For if, heaven forbid, Western Israel were to be repartitioned...those mur-

derers would also come to Petah Tikva, Ramat Gan, Jerusalem and elsewhere. We must ensure...that the cruel enemy will not be able to throw Jewish children from the third floor. We must all do this for the sake of our children and God....

Mr. Speaker, on the agenda today is the Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry and the Prime Minister's announcement of her and the Government's resignation. The Agranat Commission's Report defines the nature of the blunder, delineates the consequences of the blunder and determines who is responsible for the blunder.

What is the nature of the blunder? Permit me to quote...: "The attack launched by Egypt and Syria on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) 1973 at approximately 14:00 hours surprised the IDF to the extent that until the early hours of that morning the Supreme Command and the political leadership had not foreseen that there would be a full-scale war." The Report goes on to say that not only were mistakes made in the assessment of information by Intelligence, there were also deficiencies in the readiness of the IDF. First, there was an unjustified delay in the mobilization of the reserves. On the basis of the information available to him, the Chief of Staff should have recommended the partial mobilization of the land forces at the beginning of the week before the war....On the basis of the information which reached him about the enemy's troops, he should have done this no later than the morning of Friday, October 5.

This time Israel's soldiers were exposed at the fronts....The nature of the blunder is that while the nation possessed all the strength necessary to crush the enemy's attack in its early stages, on the crucial day it was not deployed as it should have been....

As for the consequences, the Report continues: "Despite the grave situation in which the IDF began the war, and despite the errors made at that stage, while it mobilized the IDF stemmed a massive invasion by enemy forces which had planned and practiced this campaign for years and benefited from all the advantages of surprise at the beginning." Lines. Words....How much sorrow, pain, mourning, suffering incurred by individuals, by families, by the nation, by the entire Jewish nation is expressed in those few words: "the grave situation in which the IDF began."

The responsibility for the blunder...is defined as follows by the Report: "At the initiative of the Minister of Defense, after returning from Strasbourg and Vienna the Prime Minister decided to hold a military-political meeting on October 3 with Ministers Allon, Galili and Dayan. The Chief of Staff and the Deputy Head of Intelligence, Colonel Shalev, standing in for the Head of Intelligence who was sick that day, also attended the meeting. At that consultation views were exchanged regarding the situation on the borders, and especially in the Golan Heights. Colonel Shalev gave an Intelligence report which concluded with the

assessment that a joint Egyptian-Syrian war did not seem likely. None of those present disagreed with him. At the end of the meeting the Prime Minister decided to bring the situation on the borders to the Government for discussion after the Day of Atonement, at the usual Cabinet meeting, which was set for Sunday, October 7." The day of that meeting should be entered in the calendar of the Jewish people as a day of mourning, a day which brought our nation to the brink of destruction, the fifth such instance since the destruction of the First Temple, the destruction of the Second Temple, the fall of Beitar and the European Holocaust, from which we were miraculously saved by virtue of renewed Jewish heroism.

All the facts were before the four Ministers who held that military-political meeting. Not one of them disagreed with the Intelligence assessment that there would be no Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel. You made a tragic mistake. The evaluation of Intelligence assessments is the task of the politician. Otherwise the Intelligence Service would run the country. But on October 3 you did not decide to take the customary, simple precautionary measures—the mobilization of our forces, their disposition along the borders in an intelligent, logical, non-provocative way. Madam Prime Minister, you could have summoned a Cabinet meeting for that same day, October 3, and brought the facts and the assessment before it. There was a meeting of that kind on that day. Not even by a hint was anything conveyed to the members of the Cabinet. The whole meeting was devoted to Kreisky and current events. You could have convened a meeting the next day, October 4, in order to submit all the facts to the Cabinet....But you and the three Ministers decided at that military-political meeting to hold the usual Cabinet meeting on Sunday morning, October 7 which, as we know today...was twenty hours after the enemy had stormed our almost unguarded fronts.

A former military man told me that even if we had mobilized our forces on Friday morning there would have been an historic turning-point in the Middle East and we would have crushed the enemy on both fronts. Had that been the case our nation would have had peace, at least for this generation. The Egyptians would not have crossed the Canal. The Syrians would not have pushed us back on the Golan Heights. They would not even have dared think about another attack on Israel for many years. If there would not have been peace de jure, there would at least have been peace de facto. Or, possibly, there would have been no war on the Day of Atonement, because someone would have told the Syrians and the Egyptians: the Jews are ready.

Who, then, is responsible for that blunder? The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Allon, has said that there was no limited forum which discussed those matters. There was no "kitchen." Everything went through the agreed forums. That is what the Minister of Education said. Against

this we have the word of the Commission of Inquiry, which comprises two Justices of the Supreme Court, two former Chiefs of Staff and the State Comptroller....With all due respect to the Deputy Prime Minister, I prefer to believe the five citizens, and I am sure that that is what the general public will do.

A military-political meeting of only four Ministers is held, and a fateful decision is made: there is no need to rush; there is no need to mobilize; there is no need to recommend mobilizing and there is no need to call a special meeting. The whole affair can wait until ten a.m. on Sunday, October 7.

Some people say that the Chief of Staff was asked to resign, and has in fact resigned, while the person above him, the Minister of Defense, should remain. Others say that the Minister of Defense is a Super-Chief of Staff....Should the Minister of Defense resign and the person above him remain? The Prime Minister was a Super-Minister of Defense. That was proved by this military-political meeting....

Madam Prime Minister, when I was your colleague in the Government, and also when I was in Opposition, you told me more than once that the Minister of Defense's loyalty to you was total and that he did nothing without your knowledge and consent. Is the Minister of Defense the only one who should go? Is that public morality? Is that responsibility...? The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education maintains that one should know who is more responsible and who is less. And did he not participate in the military-political meeting, the fateful "kitchen" meeting which, with unimaginable foolishness, decided to wait another five days until the Cabinet meeting? And can Minister without Portfolio Galili claim innocence and say that if the Minister of Defense does not resign, he, Mr. Galili, will not resign? Where was he until October 3? I know from experience that he is accustomed to giving advice to the Prime Minister. Where was the distinguished advisor on October 3? He did not disagree with the assessment of the Intelligence representative. He also said that there was time to wait until October 7 to discuss the topic. That is the written, clear responsibility, but it is not restricted to these four Ministers. There is a Cabinet....For three whole years the Ministers knew that a small group of Ministers made crucial decisions on political and military subjects. They accepted that situation....Cabinet members who accept the usurpation of their lawful authority by a small group of Ministers have absolutely no grounds for claiming that because they did not know they are not responsible. The entire Government is responsible.

How many times have we all said that there is a great democratic rule by which the nation's elected representatives are above the armed forces of the state? Will you claim superiority without accepting responsibility? What happened until the Yom Kippur War? Was there a military dictatorship? Did the Chief of Staff make the decisions? Only a few

weeks ago the whole Government identified totally—through the Prime Minister—with the Chief of Staff. From experience I can also say that the Chief of Staff accepts the Government's decisions and implements them....You would not claim that the true, genuine, moral, political and parliamentary responsibility is not the Government's....Even when Mrs. Meir resigned she explained this as being due to "public unrest" in her party and the Opposition. Is that the reason for her resignation, and not the Agranat Report...? Is that what you are telling the public, the younger generation? Is that parliamentary democracy? Is that Governmental responsibility? Is that the supremacy of the elected representatives over the Army? Against the background of those terrible events and the usurpation of power by a small group of Ministers let us look towards the future.

I believe that if there is a large Government it is advisable to have what is known as an inner Cabinet. That exists in a democratic country like England....In a parliamentary regime the Prime Minister is first among equals, but you, Madam Prime Minister, did not act as *primus inter pares*. Some of your Ministers were above others when it came to making decisions on important national subjects....

We must all think how to prevent a disaster of this kind occurring in future. A restricted Cabinet can be set up, given an appropriate name...and authorized to discuss and decide on political and military matters, legally, officially, on the basis of a Government decision. A committee of that kind should have met every Sunday morning and the entire Cabinet on Monday morning, so that the latter could hear the recommendations of the former and authorize their implementation, or not, as the case may be....That would have put the entire arrangement on a firm and fair footing....But that kitchen, that closed, locked military-political meeting from which all the other Ministers were excluded...is that the way to run a country?

I would like my colleagues from the Alignment to consider this proposal too. Before your eyes is the disaster which has befallen our nation because of that inappropriate procedure. We must consider together how to avoid such disasters in the future. I propose that fresh elections be held.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: What about the meeting on Friday morning? Isn't that in your notes?

M. Begin (Likud): On Friday morning? Madam, yes, I thank you for that reminder. Neither on Friday morning did you summon the Government, you merely consulted a few Ministers—

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: That's not true.

M. Begin (Likud): Forgive me, Madam. I remember that document almost by heart, and I will prove it to you. You summoned the few Minis-

ters you happened to find and consulted them. The Agranat Committee Report remarks—I will not use the word reprimands—that you should not have refrained from bothering Ministers on the eve of the Day of Atonement and should have called a meeting of the Government that day.

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: That was a meeting of the Government.

M. Begin (Likud): Madam, I'll tell you after I have finished speaking, and we'll see if I was wrong—

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: You were going to forget it.

M. Begin (Likud): Forget? I? I did not need it to prove that you ran a very clean kitchen in which national principles were broken....I propose that fresh elections be held....We must go to the nation. It is true that during the election campaign we spoke of the tragic, terrible blunder. But you denied it for a long time, saying there had been no blunder.... Now there is this document and the entire nation should read it...so that it may learn who did what and who is responsible....But we must discuss what is to happen in the interim period until the new elections are held and a Government formed. Can the current Government continue in office for several months once the Prime Minister—and it—has resigned?

The day will come, after the Prime Minister has relieved herself of the burden which she said yesterday she could bear no longer, when in this House I will evaluate her contribution to the country—

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: I'm prepared to do without it.

M. Begin (Likud): But I am not, Madam. And even after that remark I will say that I respected you before, when we sat in the same Government, and I continue to respect you today....But today I wish to note the fact that yesterday Mrs. Meir informed the Government that she could bear the burden no longer. In view of that statement, should we allow Mrs. Meir to continue bearing that burden for many more months? I propose that the Knesset note the Prime Minister's statement and make a genuine effort to relieve Mrs. Meir of the burden she can no longer bear.

That is not the only reason. The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. G'vati, has said that the Government's image is at its lowest point ever. Can the Knesset leave in its position a Government which, according to one of its members, is at its lowest point ever? The Minister of Police, Mr. Hillel, has echoed that sentiment....The Agranat Commission has determined that there were security leaks from the Government...thereby violating the oath its members swore to be loyal to the State of Israel and its laws. Can we go on with a Government which has systematical-

ly broken the law of the land...? It is illogical. It is a danger to the nation.

The conclusion is that the entire Knesset must make an effort until the new elections...to establish an interim, transition Government, but one whose composition is different from the present Government of the blunder, the leaks and the kitchen. It is essential for us in the next few months, when crucial decisions will have to be made, also concerning the Golan Heights and Judea and Samaria, settlement in the Land of Israel, the war against our enemies, our defense against our assailants. After this experience, after this proof, it is our national duty...to ensure that a different Government to the existing one is established, if only for a few months....

The Alignment has refused to establish a National Unity Government....A Government of that kind existed in the past, and the Members of this House know that it was able to make positive historic decisions....No one can say today what the composition of the interim Government should be. Let us sit down and work it out together. These are no ordinary times. The nation is wounded and bleeding, the younger generation demands it of us, our concern for our future requires it.... Together we must all ensure that neither in this generation nor in the next can any ruffian raise a murderous hand against a Jewish child. Are not our enemies preparing a new war? Do not all our enemies say that we must withdraw to the borders of June 4 and resolve the problem of the Palestinian people, i.e., destroy the State of Israel...? We call on you to sit down together with us to decide how to set up a new, better, beneficial Government, one which is loyal to the state and its laws, will heal our nation's wounds, lead it out of its confusion, overcome the tragedy of the Jewish people and assure its future and freedom in the Land of Israel.

...

K. Cahane (Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, in Lamentations the prophet Jeremiah mourns: "The Lord hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men." For our many sins, that prophecy has been fulfilled in us....We have no solace to give except our prayers....It is in this atmosphere of mourning that we must apply ourselves to the subjects of the moment. Permit me to remind the House that as soon as the fierce battles of the Yom Kippur War were over and we all concerned ourselves with the elections, my party group advocated postponing the elections for a year, because we were all still in a state of shock and needed time to compose ourselves once again....But no one took any notice of us and I blame our leaders for imposing elections on us then...for their own internal reasons....

Would it not have been better to have held elections after the Agranat Committee had submitted its Report? If we had gone to the nation after the problems had been thrashed out we would not be in the difficult, even

chaotic, political situation we are in today....But the lust for power made people insane....When discussions were held prior to the formation of the new Government, my party group was told that this was not the time to raise such issues as who is a Jew, the mobilization of women into the Army, the desecration of the Sabbath, etc. We were told to display a sense of national responsibility...which we did. We did nothing to harm the stability of the Government.

Unfortunately, our trust was betrayed. The Government has collapsed today because of matters of prestige...and this at a time when the nation is threatened from without and divided from within....When we saw the extent of the irresponsibility, the petty concern with trivial issues at this crucial hour, we said quite clearly that we would express no confidence in this Government....Furthermore, when the time came for passing judgment, the one true judiciary—that which adheres to religious law—was bypassed and insulted....

When the Government was suddenly formed, supposedly because of the threat of a Syrian attack, was that time more dangerous than today? Is there any need to describe our political and military situation? Where is the responsibility of this wise nation? Where are its leaders? How have the reins of power been placed in the hands of those who are unable to rise above petty personal intrigue...? The Agranat Report makes it perfectly clear that we were overcome by hubris, arrogance, overweening pride....And this is still evident today....

All this has come upon us because we worshipped our military strength. because we abandoned our values and our God. We have known great vicissitudes within a short span of time, and are being called on to meditate and repent and return to our ancient, holy sources....If it were possible to establish a stable Government today, one which could take matters in hand, one which was concerned for ministerial positions without ignoring ministerial responsibility...we would give it our confidence and spare the nation the upheaval of another election campaign....In view of the problems threatening us from our enemies, now is the time to seek ways of establishing a stable, responsible Government...but that is possible only if each group and faction acts responsibly and unselfishly, rising above purely party considerations....

We are going through a difficult time. Nonetheless, I am full of hope and faith, not in our military strength...but in our God, who has not abandoned us in our darkest hours. Trust in God is better than trust in man. This is something which should be transmitted to the entire nation. We must all contemplate the error of our ways, repent our sins and adhere to the path of the Lord, which is the only course by which the nation may be defended and saved. I will conclude with the words of the prophet of consolation, Isaiah: "In all your affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved you; in his love and pity he redeemed you and he bare you and carried you all the days of old."

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Prime Minister's resignation is not merely "the end of the road" for Golda Meir, to use her phrase, but the end of an era, the pioneering, heroic era of the founders of the state, of those who laid its foundations, settled arid land, expanded borders and fulfilled a sublime national mission in a spirit of sacrifice and dedication, attaining achievements which are unparalleled in Jewish and human history. It is the conclusion of a chapter, and it is sad that Golda Meir, who will go down in the history of our time as a great person, as a leader who was noted for firmness and wisdom, perseverance and the ability to make decisions, who endured the difficult, stormy period of the Yom Kippur War like a firm rock and steered the ship of state to the haven of victory, and who deserves our gratitude, should end in this way....

We have reached a time of crisis...because we failed to discern the enormous changes and the depths of the shock to our society in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. Historians may one day note the Yom Kippur War as marking the end of our first republic and the start of the second, very different one. Those who did not perceive this and wanted to carry on with "business as usual" are the cause of the recent dramatic developments. The Yom Kippur War constitutes a watershed in the history of our young state. What was revealed was not merely a mistaken Intelligence assessment but also improper governmental and defense procedures, in whose crystallization the leader of the Opposition played an important part. It transpires that it is also necessary to reform administrative procedures, social dispositions and the structure of the economy. Above all, there is an urgent need to reorganize the Army and the defense network, because the credibility of the leadership and the trust of the nation have been undermined.

In order to overcome all these we need a new beginning. In that respect the elections of December 1973 were premature, because it was impossible to reorganize political forces and reassess problems and solutions. At the time we asked that the elections be deferred for a year, so that the smoke of war could disperse and the nation could form its views, but we were ignored. We also demanded that the lists be opened so that they could be adapted to the new situation. We were ignored. We have now reached a situation in which the nation is wounded and it is impossible to conceal the wound, it must be healed. Reforms from within prevent revolution from without. If the principal party had been prepared to do this, that would have been the way. Those responsible for the blunder and the erroneous military and political conception...first and foremost the Minister of Defense, should have drawn the necessary conclusions. Then we would have been spared the severe Government crisis at this critical stage for our country as regards both the political negotiations...and our defense situation....

The national crisis has come upon us together with a crisis in the Labor party and its leadership. If there is no change within the ruling party...I see nothing for it but to clear the air and rectify the situation by holding fresh elections. Elections generally cause unrest and high feelings, but in the present state of tumult they will have a soothing effect and give rise to groups with clear-cut ideologies....Let it be clear to all those who have raised their voices in protest, both inside and outside the parties, that there will be a decision, a rearrangement of political forces, and there will be an opportunity to form a new leadership and representation. Every political and public body...will have to define itself and its views...because interim solutions will no longer suffice. There will be no more papering over cracks, we must go back to the source of our authority, the nation, and draw strength, inspiration and authority from it.

We cannot escape from the past, but we must look to the future....We must deal with the problems of the past, because they are the source of many of our present problems. First and foremost, we must implement the Agranat Committee's recommendations....The principal issue arising from the Report is that of ministerial and parliamentary responsibility, but the Report has also pointed out several defects in our governmental procedures and decision-making processes, as well as the failure to define authority and the maintenance of imperfectly-defined institutions....My party group has pointed these defects out on more than one occasion in the past....The Report has been unjustly criticized for blaming the higher military echelons rather than the political leadership....We must not fall into the trap of undermining the authority of yet another national institution, and one which has proved itself bravely in these trying times. It has explicitly refrained from going into the subject of parliamentary responsibility, an area which is left to the Government, the Knesset and the public to discuss....

The collective responsibility which is anchored in the law does not replace individual ministerial responsibility which is also anchored in law, but more than that, it is the very breath of democracy. Collective responsibility may function in addition to individual responsibility, if there is a need or desire for it. Such things have been known even in our short history. Minister of Defense Lavon drew the necessary conclusions from "The Affair."...It is unfortunate that those concerned have not drawn the necessary conclusions themselves now. It is inconceivable that the military leaders should be found accountable while their superiors are not responsible for those blunders as well as their own. It is inconceivable that no political level is responsible for the fact that the Army was not ready for war. There can be no authority without accountability, and if there is civil authority for the Army there is also responsibility for that authority....

Because of the failure to accept responsibility...there is no alternative but to hold fresh elections. We need a kind of catharsis, a spiritual release of tension and clearing of the air....But the elections should be held after the full Report of the Agranat Commission has appeared, so that the public will have the full picture and there will be no further crises....If there is no alternative but to hold elections we will go before the public with a demand for a clear peace policy based on readiness for territorial compromise while taking security needs into account.... There is also a need for far-reaching reforms on the internal level too. We will aspire towards establishing a wide liberal center which will comprise various groups, so that it may receive a clear mandate from the nation to introduce these reforms.

The Yom Kippur War is behind us and we do not know what battles and wars lie before us. At this time of mourning and anger at the terrorists' act of barbarism in Kiryat Shmona, when our hearts are with the families of the casualties and our warning is sent out to the murderous movements to tell them that the lives of our women, children and citizens will not go unavenged, we must be ready for every eventuality. And in order to be able to withstand the trials ahead we must undergo national rehabilitation and a brave new beginning.

...

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker...the cause of the war was the policy of the Likud at least as much as that of the Government....That is the main point of the political debate, and the representatives of the Likud seek to conceal this from the public. The resignation of the Prime Minister, Golda Meir, symbolizes the collapse of the Government's political conceptions which led to the October War, with all its disasters and political and social implications. The political crisis in Israel, the Government and the Labor party are merely a reflection and a result of the traditional policies which stand in direct contradiction to the new international situation, the new development in our region and Israel's true national interests. The crisis is the reflection and result of the failure of the policy of "positions of strength," of annexation, of the maintenance of the status quo, of occupation, and of nationalistic arrogance which disdains the Arab peoples and world public opinion, basing itself on the assumption that "we will always win," that...every generation will expand the borders and that American backing will solve everything. Thus, the crisis is the outcome of the abortive, unrealistic policy which we have warned against on many occasions, both inside the Knesset and outside it.

There is only one way out of the crisis...the abandonment of the demand for territorial annexation and the recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Only on that basis can just and enduring peace be established between Israel and the Arab countries.... The recurring wars hang over our lives like a cloud, causing innu-

merable deaths, a sea of blood and tears and immense military expenditure which destroy Israel's economy and bring down the standard of living of the majority of the nation.

The resignation of the Meir-Dayan Government...constitutes the resignation of the Government which has deprived Israel of peace, continuing with the policy which has kept Israel at war for twenty-five years....The resignation of the Meir-Dayan Government constitutes the resignation of the Government for whose policy a heavy price has been paid not only in precious lives but also in billions of dollars spent on materiel, placing a heavy burden on the working classes, with rising prices, inflation and the highest level of taxation in the world....

The demand for the resignation of Minister of Defense Dayan and Prime Minister Meir is widespread throughout the nation. But changes in personnel without a change in policy will merely deepen the crisis rather than ending it. It could lead to a new war and the rise to power of the extremist, right-wing Likud, which might destroy democratic freedoms and harm the workers even more....In order to prevent that development there must be a change in Israel's policy. The perpetuation of the occupation is, in effect, the policy of the Likud. We warned that this would serve to strengthen the Likud, and this has in fact happened....

In view of this, we appeal to the Labor party...to reappraise and change its policies as well as its personnel, so that it will be possible to reach a disengagement of forces agreement with Syria, the reconvening of the Geneva Conference and the establishment of a just and enduring peace. If forces within the Labor party are more consistent in demanding this, realizing that annexation and peace are mutually contradictory...they will be making a contribution to Israel's peace and security and helping to prevent the Likud's rise to power....

Now, more than ever, we must oppose the establishment of a National Unity or Emergency Government with the Likud. Anyone proposing this is acting, whether knowingly or not, against peace, democracy and the workers. We must not let the extreme right benefit from the political confusion and the Government crisis. We must not forget that the Likud voted in the Knesset against the disengagement of forces agreement with Egypt and opposes any step liable to lead to peace.

We extend our hand to all those individuals and groups in the Alignment and other parties and movements who realize that the root of the evil is the prevailing policy and that in order to attain peace and security and prevent the Likud attaining power this must be changed.... One of the first steps the new Government will have to take in order to stop the bloodshed in the north is to sign a disengagement of forces agreement with Syria. This has been prevented till now by the intransigence of the resigning Government, which argues over every inch in the Golan Heights—which will anyway have to be returned in its en-

tirety within the framework of a peace agreement, as will all the territory conquered in the 1967 war....

M. Drobles (Likud): You won't live to see that.

M. Wilner (Rakah): I don't argue with fascists.

M. Drobles (Likud): You are a traitor to the Jewish people. For shame!

M. Wilner (Rakah): That is the style of fascists, of the enemies of peace.

M. Drobles (Likud): You are exploiting democracy, you are given too much liberty in being allowed to speak in this House....

M. Wilner (Rakah): The Interim Report of the Agranat Commission has not clarified anything. It has caused still greater confusion within the nation and has intensified the crisis. The Commission's basic assumption that it is possible to separate the military disaster from the Government's policy of annexation and the maintenance of the political status quo is false....By taking this supposedly apolitical stand, which is in fact very political, the Agranat Commission is covering up for political ministerial responsibility and heaping praise on the architects of an abortive policy—the Minister of Defense and the Prime Minister. The public, especially that of the Alignment, has not accepted that approach of the Commission and it is this which has led to the Government's resignation.

We regard the Prime Minister's resignation not as a passing crisis but as an indication of the overall failure of the policy of the last twenty-five years which has brought disaster on Israel. Our path has been proven correct by life itself...and we call on all those concerned to learn the lesson of the failure and take a fresh political course which leads to peace and welfare for Israel and its neighbors....

S. Aloni (Citizens Rights Movement): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the Prime Minister was correct in concluding her speech here today with the words: "There are challenges and struggles ahead of us. We can contend with them." That is very true. Even though there is no Government, no Minister of Defense, no Chief of Staff, despite today's wicked murder in Kiryat Shmona, which serves as a warning signal and reminder of the situation in which we are living, and I think that in this House we have not been sufficiently aware of the warning and the responsibility it brings, the nation which lives in this country will withstand the tests and trials.

In a mature, responsible, democratic society...there will not be a vacuum. We have great reserves of talented and capable people. Even in this House there are people who could carry the burden of office provided they had the courage to defy conventions, frameworks and traditional factional loyalties. But this important change which is required

for our rehabilitation depends on the total removal of the Government which is resigning today, because even as a Transition Government it cannot continue in its present form. A Government which did not see fit to resign the day after the Day of Atonement, whose Ministers apparently fail to perceive their responsibility for what they have done to this nation by their sins of omission and commission, has long since failed to represent the public....

The Government had no means of supervision or control over the one source on which it relied for its information....It did not bring in other experts in the field or consult other intelligence-gathering agencies....I have never thought that the Minister of Defense alone is responsible for what happened. The system is responsible, the system of "trust me," of intuition, of the old boy network and the kitchen, of the disregard for checks and balances, for control and supervision as well as for appropriate procedures, rules and clearly defined modes of operation.

Nonetheless...the behavior of the Minister of Defense appears to be indefensible. Someone who can make decisions and is prepared to accept responsibility should, in my opinion, have dismissed whoever should have been dismissed immediately after the war and then submitted his own resignation because of what happened....There can be no excuses, such as: "I couldn't resign, it wasn't my fault, my resignation wasn't accepted, etc." After all, the man is officially in charge of the implementation of the Defense Service Law and the activities of the IDF. The Minister of Defense did not do that. Maybe after the publication of the Agranat Report he felt that he had been totally exonerated...that is arguable, but as a human being he missed a golden opportunity to display a sense of responsibility for what happened in his Ministry...and thereby gain the respect of us all....

He did not do that. The Government, which said "we were not taken by surprise," did not take the right step at the right time, before the elections. The nation was forced to participate in elections which were rigged by involving parties from before the war. Both the major parties—and the Likud is not blameless in this—paid no attention to the mood of the nation. Everyone was concerned for his position and his power....The Likud claims to blame the entire Government but hints very broadly that it would be prepared to forgive the Rafi faction within it if it was prepared to come over to its camp....

The nation has sensed the enormity of the blunder and has united to amend the situation. The Government's resignation is the result of the healthy reaction of the public, not of the large Opposition in this House. Not even of the small party groups. But resignation is not enough. The Transition Government must not be a carbon copy of the existing one without there being any possibility of expressing no confidence in it....A date must be set for fresh elections. The electoral system must be

changed. The President must be informed of the need to form a new Government until the elections are held, but the Transition Government must be headed by a member of the largest party in this House, someone who will head a small, new team, one which will not be appointed on the basis of internal factional considerations....All of us, both inside and outside the House, must devote our best efforts to setting matters to rights, especially where the Army is concerned, for the Army deserves all our attention, love and devotion.

Z. Hammer (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...the bloody murders in Kiryat Shmona today oblige us to rehabilitate, unite and refresh our leadership, for the sake of the nation and the state....It is not the dispute within the Labor party which led to the resignation of the Prime Minister and the Government....The reason is, above all, the disaster of the Yom Kippur War and its consequences...as well as the Government's imperviousness to the wishes of the people for unity among its leaders. If the Alignment had accepted our demand for an Emergency Unity Government three months ago everything would be very different today....Another reason for the Government's downfall appears to be the need for a change of guard within the Alignment....

We have forgotten the way we lived before the war, cut off from our traditions and roots, our mission and reality. We were lulled into thinking that we were a nation as all others, that we had attained peace and security. The Yom Kippur War revealed various deficiencies in our society, such as our failure to inculcate faith and values into our younger generation...to make adequate provision for young couples...to close social and economic gaps....I am convinced that superficiality in education, detachment from our Jewish roots...and social injustice oblige us to embark on a thorough reassessment of ourselves and our existence here....

The way this Government and this Prime Minister is leaving is tragic. I admit that I have long been an admirer of the Prime Minister, still respect her greatly and identify with many of her proud political views. I am also cognizant of the tremendous achievements of the Labor movement in laying the foundations for this country. Nonetheless, I think that what happened was a good thing, though it would have been better had it happened earlier or differently, because I think that because of this Government's long position of supremacy and involvement in the war it would not have been able to bring us out of the turmoil in which we currently find ourselves.

The elections of three months ago were held after the war, but the voters were still in a state of shock caused by the war...and both the results of the elections and the state of the voters were unclear....We are all wiser now. The soldiers have returned, feelings have become thoughts, views have changed...people want to influence events. If elections were

to be held now they would lead to changes....I believe that the new leadership will respect the nation, will not be entrenched in hidebound conceptions and will be able to contend with all the new situations which are confronting us both internally and externally.

What has happened in the nation to date is the tip of the iceberg indicating the collapse of the old regime, in all the parties. The nation is crying out for far-reaching changes. I believe that, despite the difficulties involved, it is necessary to dissolve the Knesset and hold elections at the earliest possible opportunity. Any idea of reshuffling posts among the present incumbents is anathema and will do nothing to alleviate the situation or restore public confidence. A National Emergency Government comprising members of all the parties as well as non-political persons would indicate unity and be a possible and desirable solution. Failing that, elections should be held soon, possibly within three months.

Just as the Agranat Commission's Report states that the Army is strong enough to cope with a change of leadership, we are strong enough to be able to cope with elections and emerge from them healthier, united and more realistic....

M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, nothing is more regrettable than the need to discuss the current Government crisis...against the background of the foul massacre which took place in Kiryat Shmona this morning....The Yom Kippur War is a rare example of a military victory, albeit dearly won...followed by a political failure. The political failure was the outcome not of the military mistakes made prior to the war but of the fact that the Government's policy was based on a mistaken conception...which was shared by all the leaders of the Likud and almost all those of the Mafdal...namely, that time is on our side in strengthening our hold on the occupied territories...in creating *faits accomplis*, and this will eventually obtain the recognition of the world....

Far from bearing this conception out, events proved that the policy of "creeping annexation" only served to alienate world public opinion and heighten the enmity of the Arabs....Our international position has never been worse....It prevented us from reaping the benefits of our military victory over Egypt in the war—and that is what is important in war—and now the U.S. is exerting greater pressure on us than ever before....The political constellation—which all our leaders failed to realize—was that whereas our eventual military victory was certain, this could not be followed by political triumph.

Thus, the principal blunder was a political one, a breakdown in political understanding in adhering to the belief that we would be able to retain the territories. The secondary, military blunder was to a large extent a function of the conception of political and security equanimity, of the feeling that time was on our side, and that led to our military vic-

tory taking 18 days instead of five or six. For that we paid a high price in blood and money. Unfortunately, the Agranat Commission's Report deals only with the second blunder...but without having intended this, as a result of the pressure of public opinion, it has led to the resignation of the Government....

The essence of the crisis in the Labor party is the faction known as Rafi which, although it grew from within the Labor party, has cultivated an ideology of "doing" and of hero-worship. At first this was directed towards Ben-Gurion, which is understandable, but then it was transferred to the current Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, which is totally incomprehensible. The Minister of Defense is ultimately responsible for the defense network, and if it was found to contain such serious defects he should have displayed greatness of spirit and resigned together with the Chief of Staff. There is not one blunder or mistake that was attributed to the Chief of Staff which was not also the preserve of the Minister of Defense....Moshe Dayan has failed to display a single iota of public responsibility, not to mention loyalty to his party, which could perhaps have rehabilitated its public standing without him....His sole concern is to hang on to his position, epitomizing the Rafi faction's ideology....

Both the Alignment and the Likud are responsible for the original sin of failing to open the lists after the Yom Kippur War. I am saying this for the benefit of all the protest movements....The Labor party could conceivably form a Government within the present Knesset, provided it based this on fresh, younger people from among its ranks...adopting a fresh political conception, both externally and internally...and realizing that it is necessary to adopt a new approach, to open its eyes and acknowledge that there is a Palestinian problem and that concessions will have to be made in order to attain peace....

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...I know that the current crisis and argument in our parliamentary life could create the impression that Israel is divided...but we are not weakened and even in a time of crisis a democracy can cope with difficulties and attacks from the outside....It must be made clear to all and sundry that Israel has a Government, which is empowered to act and decide as it sees fit....

In reviewing this crisis I hope I may be permitted to introduce a personal note, which I know is not customary coming from me. This evening Golda Meir announced her resignation from the position of Prime Minister, which she has held for the last five years. All through my term in office I have refrained from speaking words of praise to and about the Prime Minister, for aesthetic reasons. Today I am free to speak my mind, and I know that I am speaking on behalf of colleagues and rivals, and the majority of the House, if not the entire House, I

think, when I say that the Prime Minister is a great woman, a proud leader of her nation, someone who has aroused respect and has brought and still brings honor to the State of Israel.

During those five years Israel has been through some very trying times, both militarily and politically. In the wake of the Six Day War came the War of Attrition, which was followed by the war by means of terrorism, which gave rise to the Yom Kippur War, and who knows whether what happened in Kiryat Shmona today does not signify the start of a new assault on Israel by the Arabs. Could it have been possible to run the country during those five years without making a single mistake...? I am saying this because I think that the Knesset Members who have spoken in this debate have made a grave error...Just as one should not ascribe superhuman powers to the leadership...neither should one blame it for all our problems....No one can seriously claim that by a change in our leadership all our problems will disappear in the twinkling of an eye...and no more mistakes will ever be made.

I am not saying that one may not criticize the leadership. I would be very surprised if the Opposition did not. That is its duty...and I have nothing against it. The issue is one of exaggeration and education, however. I think that people are trying to say that the entire extent of Israel's problems is its leadership. Anyone who says that, who promises that there will always be rain, forgets that there are also droughts, invites criticism and casts doubts on the workings of democracy....MK Begin has criticized the fact that not all the members of the Government participated in all the defense discussions. The Agranat Commission's Report recommends that no more than five Ministers should deal with current defense issues—

M. Begin (Likud): Excuse me, that's the recommendation. What it means is that there should be an authorized and recognized institution, not a kitchen.

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: MK Begin, I have read a great deal of literature on the subject, and I have not come across a single country where the Prime Minister does not discuss certain matters with the Ministers he or she thinks appropriate....That does not break any law, whether you like it or not....

I would like to tell the House that I live in this country and I am fully aware of the fact that large sections of the public are dissatisfied, even angry....The questions to be asked are what is the source of those feelings and how should we deal with them? One source is undeniable, and that is the war and the casualties. There is grief in many homes.... About that there is no argument. But there is a point at which the dissatisfaction has swelled to worrying proportions, and that is when it is directed at the leadership. Not that one may not criticize the leadership...but in doing so one must act responsibly.

I know a great many ways of enhancing a Government's popularity. I know that the services do not receive sufficient funds, that not enough help is extended to young couples, that there are too few schools, that the roads are overcrowded, that there is a dearth of telephones, and so on. If the Government wants to make itself popular it can spend less of the national budget on defense....I am not ignoring the lack of popularity, but I am proud of the reason for it....

M. Yedid (Likud): The reason is the blunder.

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: My dear friend, the blunder has to be examined on three counts....First, whether the Army was prepared in terms of weapons, training and men. Second, whether we lost the war.

H. Landau (Likud): The question is where was the Army when it was needed and who is responsible for that?

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: In order to clarify that question...a Commission of Inquiry was set up. It has published its views.

M. Begin (Likud): The forces were not mobilized and were not at the fronts at the time of the attack.

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: The Commission...determined that the Minister of Defense was not negligent in fulfilling his duty and that at the crucial moment the Prime Minister made a wise decision....

A. Nof (Likud): Was there or was there not a blunder? Who is to blame?

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: Anyone who tries to sum a war up in one word imperils words....In a democracy there is hardly any war which is not waged twice, first on the battlefield with results and then on the battlefield of political life....My answer is that not everything was alright. Moreover, there are no wars in which everything is alright. There is no such thing....

I know that in order to be popular the Government should play down its doubts concerning the political process and adopt a harder line on territorial issues. I read with interest that there is a debate as to whether Egypt wants peace or not. I ask myself that question too....My reply is that there are at present the weak, hesitant beginnings of a trend towards negotiations with Israel. I cannot guarantee that this will endure, but if anyone wishes to nurture this trend he must do so by taking steps which are not simple or painless for Israel....

I am aware of the debate which is constantly being conducted within the nation...and ask myself how to placate the feelings of dissatisfaction, which are in part justified, in part not....It can be done by reducing taxes, by adopting a more vigorous tone, by making more promises, by assuring perfection in the leadership....The problem is, however, how to

navigate Israel's policy in the face of insuperable difficulties—a great enemy with modern technology and considerable international support, the indiscriminate shooting of our women and children—in the belief that we can endure all this, though, unfortunately, not without sacrifices....

Are those who advocate changing the leadership basing their statement on tried and tested facts? Criticize the Government by all means, but on matters of defense the House is united and there is no Opposition and Government. We are all as one man. There may be differences of opinion, but in God's name, don't exaggerate. Give democracy its due. It is a regime which is full of arguments, disagreements and crises, it does not conceal its mistakes, as another regime does. Nonetheless, it can endure....I look back twenty-five years—things have happened which no one believed could happen to this nation and this country, tremendous things. I look at the price we have paid, the most precious price of all, once in the partition of the country and often with a great deal of blood. Nevertheless, the sum total is great and uplifting....I look twenty-five years ahead, and am sure that more great things will be achieved, though not without sacrifices or difficulties or dilemmas. The decisions are made by human beings doing their best, during long, sleepless nights...primarily by the defense leadership....

Some people here think that we are afraid of elections. What we have said in this House we will say to the youngsters too. There is nothing to fear, neither from the nation nor from the elections, and we will go in the name of noted achievements, considerable difficulties and, primarily, our basic faith that essentially we are more united than our debates would indicate us to be, and no one will undermine our power to endure.

...

U. Feinerman (Alignment): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I hereby submit the concluding resolution on behalf of the Alignment, National Religious Front and Independent Liberal party groups: The Knesset notes the Government's statement as submitted by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, in the Knesset on 11 April 1974.

...

(MK U. Feinerman's concluding resolution is adopted.)

Terrorist Attack in Ma'alot

Introduction

Terrorist outrages against Israeli citizens, or, indeed, Jewish persons and institutions in Israel and abroad, have punctuated the history of the state from its inception. They had become a perennial phenomenon already in the decades preceding 1948, recurring with varying intensity. Debates in the course of which such acts and their perpetrators are condemned, condolences are extended to the bereaved families and the Government is criticized for lack of vigilance, for laxity in the area of security and defense and—depending on the outlook of the speaker—for political weakness vis-à-vis the Arabs, on the one hand, or for stiff-necked rigidity, on the other, abound in the annals of the Knesset. A particularly poignant debate took place following an especially outrageous action, the killing of twenty-two schoolchildren who had been taken hostage in the school of Ma'alot, a mixed Jewish-Arab township in Galilee.

Sitting 47 of the Eighth Knesset

20 May 1974 (28 Iyar 5734)

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, residents of Ma'alot, not a month has passed since the bloodshed in Kiryat Shmona, and now we have undergone the terrible massacre in Ma'alot. Three terrorists sent by Satan cold-bloodedly and calculatedly killed infants, schoolchildren and adults. We have incurred twenty-four precious casualties. Many more have been wounded. The rescue efforts took a long time, and had it not been for the IDF all our loved ones might have been crushed in the ruins of the building.

The massacre at Ma'alot reminds us of the dreadful chain of acts of terrorism: the car bomb in the middle of Jerusalem's crowded market; the explosion of the Swissair plane in midair; the murder of the children of Avivim in their schoolbus; the slaughter at Lod Airport; the bloodshed at Munich. Now our innocent children, who set out from Safad on a hike through the countryside, have been added to the list, as have an innocent Arab woman on her way home from work and a sleeping family....

The martyrs of Ma'alot were killed for all of us. They were murdered for our crime of coming to this country. For the offense of establishing our state, of aspiring to live as a free, sovereign nation. That is Arab terrorism's reply to our desire for peace. That is the testimony and

moral portrait of the anti-Israel terror organizations. The blood of our children at Ma'alot calls to us to heighten our war on terrorism, to improve our methods of action...and to strike at the heart of terrorist activities, wherever it may be. In addition, we must increase our alertness and do everything we can to obtain prior information and undertake preventive measures.

The blood of the victims of Ma'alot challenges the world to abandon its forgiving attitude to the terrorist organizations, their bases and patrons, and to wake up to the danger of the ideology and actions of anti-Israel terrorism. It is a danger which can be ignored by no nation which respects human life. This challenge is especially valid in view of the biased nature of the Security Council resolution passed after the murders at Kiryat Shmona.

I have appointed a public commission to reconstruct the events of that bitter day, May 15, gather the information and draw conclusions....Consequently, I will not reconstruct the events of that day now, but will simply restrict myself to noting certain facts.

The entire Government was aware of the situation and followed the course of events. The Minister of Police and the Chief of Staff were at the site of the incident at Ma'alot. According to information brought before the Government, the terrorists who had gained control of the school had explosives in their possession and had placed them throughout the building in such a way as to enable them to blow it up, with the hostages trapped inside.

Our concern was to save our children. In order to attain that objective the Government decided to agree to the terrorists' demand for the release of 20 terrorists imprisoned in Israel....We reached this decision with heavy hearts, knowing its grave significance....We were glad to make use of the good offices of the ambassadors of France and Romania, and we thank them....In order to show our readiness to release the terrorists as demanded, we brought the three prisoners at the top of the list to the Ma'alot area. Attempts were made—unsuccessfully—to negotiate with the three terrorists for the release of our children in exchange for the release of the prisoners.

The terrorists threatened to kill the French ambassador if he came near them without knowing the password, and stated that they would not treat with anyone who did not know the password. The password was supposed to be given to the French or Romanian ambassadors by their governments, but no password was given in Paris or Bucharest. The Ma'alot murderers announced that the password would be given only after the released terrorists had reached Damascus.

At some stage the Romanian ambassador received information from Bucharest that...the terrorists proposed that the 23 terrorists be flown to Damascus or Nicosia where, after the password had been received, half of the children would be released, the other half flying on

with them to an unknown Arab country, where they would be released....That was at five minutes past five. Not a single member of the Government or the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee agreed to that terrible demand.

We informed the terrorists that the Syrian Government was ready to allow a plane to land with the released terrorists, that a U.N. plane had been obtained for the purpose, and that the French and Romanian ambassadors were endeavoring to obtain the password. The terrorists were asked to delay the deadline of six p.m., the hour for which their ultimatum to blow the building up had been issued. They refused once, twice and three times. None of our efforts to persuade them to agree to the terms we were offering, namely, the release of the children in return for the release of the terrorists, were successful.

The time of the threatened explosion was coming nearer. The ambassadors were unable to exert any influence. All the indications were that at six p.m. the terrorists would implement their threat and blow the building up with the schoolchildren inside. Time was pressing. Our assessment was that we would not be able to attain the release of our hostages through negotiations. The Government discussed the situation again and decided to accept the recommendation of the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff to undertake military action in order to gain control of the building and secure the release of the hostages.

The IDF's assault on the building and the process of gaining control of it took a few minutes. The terrorist who was supposed to detonate the explosives was hurt. The first soldier who got into the building managed to disconnect the wires, thereby preventing the explosives from blowing up. It is not for me to recount the details of the battle. The terrorists used children as cover. Our soldiers killed the terrorists but could not prevent them from murdering a large number of children.

The Government's deliberations before agreeing to the recommendation of the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff were lengthy and exhaustive. It should be noted that the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee also supported the Government's position of being prepared to secure the release of our hostages even at the price of releasing terrorists. But even our readiness to agree to the terrorists' blackmail did not attain our aim....

We did not think it appropriate to wait idly for the explosion which might have led to the loss of the hostages. When no alternative was left we preferred to approve the action, despite our apprehensions, hoping that the lives of the schoolchildren could be saved....The commission I have appointed...has been asked to examine the following points:

1. The state of alertness of the various factors in the Ma'alot area in view of information regarding possible terrorist actions planned for May 15.
2. The approval, route and security of the Safad school's class trip.

3. The attacks in the northern region on May 15 and the actions taken subsequently.

4. The endeavors to rescue the children trapped inside the school, including those undertaken in conjunction with bodies from abroad.

...The commission will not deal with the military action to rescue the children, which is the sphere of the General Staff. The Chief of Staff will give a report to the Ministerial Defense Committee and the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. I am confident that the commission will be able to get to the bottom of the facts and will point to any lacunae there may have been in the defense system or the actions undertaken by the police or the Ministry of Education. The commission's conclusions will help the Government in the continuation of its battle against the terrorist organizations. The report will be brought before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and I intend making the main points public.

Terrorist actions have accompanied every step of our enterprise... becoming increasingly cruel and inhumane. Those responsible for them have clear political aims, seeking to overthrow the Jewish state and establish a Palestinian state in the greater Land of Israel. There can be no compromise between us and the terrorist organizations. They heighten their activities whenever there is a chance of peace in the region. There are clear indications that the action at Ma'alot was intended amongst other things to thwart the efforts to reach a disengagement of forces agreement with Syria....There is also no doubt that terrorism against us is aided and abetted by factors which cynically exploit hostility towards Israel to serve the interests of the Powers. In this context we must condemn the fact that in reporting on the events in Ma'alot, the Soviet media have placed the blame on Israel's shoulders... referring to the terrorists as "Palestinian partisans" whose cause is legitimate. On the other hand, I must praise the statements made by nations and statesmen throughout the world in condemning terrorism.

We must fight terrorism. The attacks we have witnessed in Israel and abroad are only some of those planned. Many attacks are foiled, although we do not usually make this public. We must work systematically, continuously and courageously against terrorism. Our people are constantly acquiring experience and knowhow, and must continue to do so....I believe that it is in our power to strike the terrorist organizations hard, but we must be realistic and accept the fact that we cannot destroy them by a single assault. We will increase and improve the forces authorized to act against terrorism, but...we must also depend to a certain extent on voluntary efforts....I believe that we will succeed in our preventative and punitive actions and will not permit the terrorists to change the way we live.

There is no doubt that the acts of terrorism are also intended to destroy the mutual understanding between us and the Arab citizens of Is-

rael and the inhabitants of the territories. Displays of aggression directed against Arabs in the wake of the acts of terrorism cause me grave concern. These displays do not typify the majority, but they are very dangerous, first of all to ourselves....We must control ourselves and prevent the expression of irresponsible impulses. We must not act as our enemies would have us act. No one may take the law into his own hands....

The cruel attacks in Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot have brought the situation and problems of the development towns of Galilee to the fore once more....These must be dealt with by all the Ministries, even though till now they have not been neglected, and there have been considerable achievements in the spheres of economics, education, the absorption of immigrants and housing....

Sometimes the attacks are directed at one area, sometimes at another. They underline Israel's unity beyond its internal differences. Terrorism will not deter us and we must do everything we can to prevent future attacks. There is nothing I can say that will console the bereaved families, the residents of the area or ourselves. The whole nation grieves for the pure souls who were murdered by wolves in human form.

M. Begin (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members...one act of horror follows another, one kind of neglect leads to another, blunders continue, innocent blood is shed and pogroms are conducted—not abroad but in our homeland, where the nation is not defenseless—in our own sovereign state which controls the mightiest force in the region, the like of which the Jewish people has not had since the days of the Maccabees. It is hardly surprising, then, that there are many questions in people's minds of late. I heard the questions at Hazor, as two sixteen-year-old girls were being lowered into their graves, and they are still resounding in my ears—they were asked with respect and pain: How long? Till when? What will happen? Very difficult questions. In order to try and answer them we must be aware first of all of what we are confronting.

...We are confronting a continuous attack on the Jewish people by renewed Nazism....The terrorists have vowed: "To disembowel and kill every Jewish man, woman and child."...That is what those Nazi murderers did at Ma'alot. In the house of the Cohen family they killed the father, a boy of four and the mother, with the child in her womb. In the school at Ma'alot they made our children lie on the floor and fired into their bodies....

This blind hatred of the Jewish people has been expressed diabolically throughout the generations by harming Jewish children. It is a human instinct to protect a defenseless child. So we have read and learned. In our day and age participants in pogroms would enter a Jewish home, rape and torture Jewish women, kill the men and, for good measure, bayonet the heads of the children or throw them from a high

window. The Nazis led almost one and a half million children to the gas chambers and other awful deaths, sometimes together with their parents. Generally they tore the little children out of their mothers' arms. There is an unforgettable picture of a small boy being led through the ghetto, together with his mother, guarded by an armed Nazi soldier. Till our dying day we will see his raised arms, his face turned towards the soldier and the fear in his eyes.

And now the Arab Nazis come with the clear intention of killing our children....Do not tell me that the analogy with Nazism is not justified....There are countries behind those murderers. Foreign newspapers sometimes call them "guerrillas." That is an unparalleled insult to anyone who ever fought a guerrilla war. No freedom fighters would deliberately hurt a woman or a child. Quite the contrary. In this country an underground war was fought for many years against a powerful nation. Not a single English child or woman was hurt. That was no coincidence. Behind those murderers is a mighty Power, which supplies them with arms and equipment....

We should note the fact that no word of condemnation of the murder of our children appeared in any Arab newspaper. On the contrary, the papers of Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, Amman, Baghdad, Algiers and Morocco praised the "heroism" of those killers.

In confronting a murderous attack by renewed Nazism on our inhabitants, men, women and children, we must know how to overcome it. It is by being constantly on the attack. Several times we have said from this podium that we must free ourselves of the philosophy of retaliation. They kill us and we respond. That is no longer the course to take....We should not wait passively for them to kill innocent people before we take action...thereby enabling them to reorganize, acquire fresh stocks of weapons and form new terrorist groups....

A mere four weeks passed between the attacks on Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot. We made a retaliatory attack in southern Lebanon, and we see what the consequence is. We therefore ask those in charge of defense to abandon the philosophy of retaliation and to wage an incessant war on those murderers at all times and everywhere. We can reach them. We have a mighty force, which merely has to be used correctly to ensure that there is never another terrorist attack like the ones we have recently witnessed....

Presidents, Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers have offered us condolences for the murder of our children. We value their statements, but it is our duty to tell them: We wish you had not passed foolish resolutions in the Security Council whereby you encouraged the murderers and indicated your support for them....The leaders of the world should realize and accept the necessity of the steps we take to prevent the murder of our children. Then they would not need to offer us their condolences.

We also need internal defense measures. It is true that private citizens should have weapons and receive training in their use, but we cannot tolerate a situation in which there are pogroms in Israel and private citizens have to stand guard. We have hundreds of thousands of private citizens trained in the use of arms....In addition, a special, national organization, not a private group, is needed to fight those murderers. The historic turning-point in the annals of our nation was the establishment of our state and the renewal of our independence. Since then the Jewish state has been obligated to protect every Jew....The state must set up and maintain this special organization, so that every Nazi will know that he can no longer shed the blood of Jewish children with impunity.

We have people who are experienced in a special kind of warfare, one which requires greater cunning than any war in the field....Why do you not wish to make use of them? From the Haganah, the IZL, the Lehi and the defense services, people of outstanding ability and great resourcefulness. Make use of them without delay, and we will give no rest to those who seek to kill our children....

Those murderers must be given the death penalty, which exists under law. I am fully aware of the gravity of what I am saying...but we have no time to lose. The existing law, which prevents the prosecution from demanding the death penalty, should be amended....Murderers such as these should not benefit from life imprisonment. The public will not stand for it.

An inquiry must be held....The terrorists entered Israel from Lebanon three days before they launched their attack. The defense forces knew about them, pursued them but were unable to catch them. Was it necessary to send dozens of children on hikes during that period in the area where the terrorists were known to be...? There were one or two weapons with which to defend the children. They were left in the vehicle. The children were taken into the school and left unguarded....I have it on good authority that those responsible for the school trip knew that there were terrorists in the area....The chief of police in Ma'alot maintains that he was not informed that the children were coming....How are such blunders possible...? An inquiry must be held.

Mrs. Meir has appointed a commission of inquiry. Why should there be a Government-appointed commission of inquiry? It is the Government's blunders which need to be investigated. The actions of the authorities controlled by the Government should be investigated....We demand a parliamentary committee of inquiry. This is no political issue which may be influenced by political views....We should revive Clause 22 of the Basic Law: the Knesset, whereby the Knesset is entitled to set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry whose members may be drawn from all parts of the House....Everyone here will agree that the children in Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot are ours, all of ours. We want

to know. We have no confidence in a Governmental commission, whatever its composition....

I appeal to the Prime Minister to retract her statement. I appeal to all the members of the House to support the appointment of a parliamentary committee of inquiry....You have also decided to bar your commission from investigating what happened when our soldiers burst into the building in order to rescue our children. Why...? I would like to know what happened with the French ambassador. We heard between ten and eleven o'clock that the murderers were demanding that the French and Romanian ambassadors appear. The French ambassador turned up in Ma'alot at five in the afternoon. Why did he not get there earlier?

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: You know that the terrorists said that he would be shot if he did not know the password....

M. Begin (Likud): Shimon, my friend, that is no answer....I propose a committee of inquiry. The ambassador went without the password at five. I am not accusing anyone....I am just asking that the matter be investigated....On television I watched our soldiers bringing the children out of the smoking building. They carried them in their arms and put them in trucks. Why were there no stretchers ready, not to mention ambulances...? The chaos was evident to everyone....

The Minister of Information, S. Peres: MK Begin, there is a limit to differences of opinion. Children who had been killed or were badly wounded were deliberately not shown on television, they were taken out on stretchers and transferred to ambulances and helicopters.

M. Begin (Likud): That is no answer either. Why was there chaos and why were the children evacuated in a disorderly fashion...? I think the incident should be investigated so that there is no repetition in the future....I would also like to ask the Government to release the persons detained in the Russian Compound. Great sorrow was caused to many people throughout the country by the unjustified use of force against peaceful demonstrators by the police....

Today is the anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem, a great day in Jewish history....Let us hope that our nation will, by its love of our country...overcome the deep crisis currently affecting it and that we will all affirm our right to Jerusalem and the Land of Israel.

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I asked for the floor when I heard what MK Begin was saying and the questions he was asking, not because I care what committee of inquiry there is....The subject must be clarified, but I am not overenthusiastic about living in an atmosphere of commissions of inquiry, demonstrations, shouting and screaming....Even before we dealt with the terrorists people began attacking police and army vehicles....They are the easiest target. Why not? I am not a party to that public enthusi-

asm. But questions must be answered. The subject must be investigated. What requires correction must be corrected. And the responsibility must be direct, firstly of the Police, the Army, the Minister of Defense....

I am talking about the way the investigation is undertaken. The emphasis does not have to be on commissions of inquiry. What was the problem in Ma'alot, both before and after the event? The first question was, was information noted and security increased accordingly? In my view, this was done far in excess of what was required. I'm talking about the action taken by the Army, the patrols and their intensity in the Northern Command. Any commission of inquiry can check that. Of course, security can be increased to a greater extent, that is a question of criteria. I don't think that information was disregarded....We received information about children, both in Israel and abroad, about targets of various kinds. There was no lack of information. That is not the question. That is something else.

The second point is, what level of security do we wish to maintain? I'm speaking about the present, not the past. I was very displeased to see a large picture of fully-armed soldiers guarding a school in Safad in this morning's paper. I was seized by fear. That is the terrorists' greatest achievement, that in Safad the IDF has to take up positions on the roof of a school. We'll all stand on the roofs. A platoon will guard each school....We can envelop ourselves in a certain atmosphere, which is not difficult to do....I am constantly being told to enhance security.... Nothing is sufficiently protected, neither school trips, supermarkets, nor hospitals. We can all mobilize and stand guard with guns. That will be the biggest victory of the terrorists and the Arab countries....

I regret the fact that the Government agreed to the terrorists' demand to release prisoners. I very much regret the fact that it wasn't implemented....As far as I'm concerned, the moment the decision was made, the damage was done....I have never advocated exchanging a single terrorist for hostages...this time the decision was made against my advice. I think that this approach will have very grave repercussions for us....

It is evident that we do not want to conduct this war at the expense of our children. But where's the limit? Supposing the terrorists come to the house of a family with six children a day after we have released terrorists because of pressure. Will we tell that family that for them we will not release terrorists? The terrorists of Ma'alot had already murdered an innocent family when they negotiated with us for their release.... Once we start on that course, there is no end....We will have to accept every demand where children are concerned. And on what number will we stand firm? And on what ages? And don't we care about old people? Women? Will we have to start determining criteria of various kinds? Can we live like that...?

The only sure way of dealing with terrorism is to make it clear that they won't get what they want and they won't leave here alive. We must do that the best way we can, as a matter of principle. So that the terrorists, whether they be Japanese, Arabs or whatever, will know that they are coming to kill themselves and will receive nothing in return. If they know that they will leave here alive and get what they want, we will lose ultimately....To my regret, in England or Germany this is a passing episode. For us it is our daily bread....

Throughout the day and until the six o'clock deadline the terrorists did not alter their demand that the imprisoned terrorists be released and flown to Damascus, whence they would broadcast the password—El-Aksa—over the radio, whereupon the terrorists here would be prepared to negotiate with the French and/or Romanian ambassadors about releasing half of the children while flying the other half—together with them—to Cyprus or Damascus....They were not prepared to speak to or see anyone till then....There was no point in either the French or the Romanian ambassador's coming, since they did not have the password....The Romanian ambassador was in constant contact with Bucharest in order to obtain the password...which he failed to receive and without which the terrorists would not speak to him....

I'm saying this because the Government did its utmost to exchange the children for the terrorists. What we were supposed to do was to send a planeload of released terrorists to Damascus and then send half the children to Damascus with the remaining three terrorists. Who knows what further demands would have been made once our children had reached Damascus? They were not prepared to release all the children in return for the terrorists....

Z. Warhaftig (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...every nation accuses us. A dreadful crime, the murder of children, was committed on the soil of our country by a cruel enemy.... We were sure that the whole world would be shocked. How naive I was. I thought that the Arab countries and the U.S.S.R. would also be shocked....I hoped that the whole world would repent its failure to react to the massacre in Kiryat Shmona and realize that it had in effect encouraged terrorism by so doing....

But even now the Arab countries, the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries maintain that we are to blame for not having given in to the terrorists' demands...even though we had no reason for trusting people whose first action on entering Ma'alot was to murder a family. And when we react to the murder by attacking the terrorists' headquarters... there is a general outcry against us...so that we hardly know what to do anymore. Perhaps the solution is to appeal to all the children of the world to unite against the people who murder them.

I do not wish to go into what happened on that dreadful day when we endeavored to save the children....I know that the Government's deci-

sion to accede to the terrorists' demands could have been potentially disastrous for our future safety...but the decision was made, and also had the support of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....And if there was no other way, and the Army took the action it did in order to save at least some of the children, and even though twenty-two children were killed, I have no wish to argue the point. I do not think it appropriate for us to start debating military actions. I know that the IDF endangers itself to save children on numerous occasions, and that difficult and dangerous decisions often have to be made on the spot....

I would like to make a few remarks about what preceded that day....The doubt which gnaws at my mind—and at the minds of all of us, I think—is whether we did everything we could to prevent tragedies of that kind? Were we really constantly on our guard...? The nation does tend to return to “business as usual” rather quickly after incidents of this kind, which may not be entirely a bad thing....Not long ago the nation underwent the trauma of the murder of children in Kiryat Shmona. Warnings were issued about a certain date, about a terrorist gang being in the area, and yet the school trip went ahead regardless and as planned....

I was very concerned when I heard that the school trip was held in accordance with the regulations and arrangements of the police and the Ministry of Education without any attention being paid to the special date and events in the area....Things cannot go ahead as usual in times of emergency. We must make sure that incidents of this kind do not recur in future. Forgive me for adding, in passing, that if there were greater alertness in the nation there would be less jockeying for positions and power, the police might be less preoccupied with trivial matters and could pay greater attention to really pressing issues....In particular I am referring to the treatment meted out to the settlers, whose peaceful demonstration was attacked and whose leaders were thrown into jail....That is no way to treat pioneering heroes....It merely leads to unnecessary bitterness....Let those people return to their holy work, it is a shame to waste manpower on that....We have sufficient enemies outside, there is no need for us to intensify internal differences....

The main problem confronting us is how to plan the war on terrorism. Considerable resources and resourcefulness are required....We cannot adopt a routine approach. I do not think that the death penalty is the most effective weapon in this war. The most effective weapon is for the public to be united, calm, alert and brave. Our youngsters must be prepared for that eventuality and be able to defend themselves, if need be....Permit me to conclude with a prayer, one which is most suitable for these times:

“I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,

then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."

...

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...thirty days after the massacre in Kiryat Shmona the citizens of Israel were shaken by one of the most dreadful events which has ever occurred on our soil. How can we console the bereaved families, and how can we comfort ourselves...? Our anger rises at such base murderers, but we must first direct our questions inward, to those who are responsible for internal security. And the questions are many and searching. By voicing them out loud we hope that this may enable lessons to be learned and similar occurrences prevented in the future....

The first question is what is the significance of the police permit issued to the school trip? Is it a rubber stamp or does it involve awareness by the responsible authorities and constant attendance and supervision by a police vehicle...? We did not hear that a single policeman was posted in that village. How did that happen? I would like to ask the Government, of which I am part, whether, after what happened in Kiryat Shmona, any efforts were made to increase security in and around the villages on the northern border...? What was the defense plan, if such existed, immediately after the massacre at Kiryat Shmona? Did those in charge of Israel's security fail to see what was coming...? I know that the security forces had given due warning that something might happen on that date....Why did the Director-General of the Ministry of Education approve the school trip under those circumstances...?

...I am not satisfied by what the Minister of Defense said here...indicating that all is well...I was distressed to read in the papers that two days before May 15 the Army unit charged with defending the township left it. I would like to have an answer on that point from the Minister of Defense....And if his reply to that question is in the affirmative, we cannot fail to ask, what has happened to us and our alertness?

We have raised the question of who is responsible for our internal security from this podium in the past. Is there one authority which is directly responsible, for whom internal security is the be-all and end-all of its existence...? It is essential to establish a command whose sole responsibility is the war against terrorism. It will have to have three branches: one in charge of internal security, one in charge of waging war on the terrorists in their bases and camps, and one assuring the se-

curity of the citizens of Israel, its institutions abroad and its highways and byways.

The thirst for blood has always characterized the terrorists' fight against Israel. But the ultimate object of their war...is the denial of the right of the Jewish people to live a free, independent and sovereign life in its state. That was the purpose of seizing hostages. The principal object is not to obtain the release of the terrorists but to undermine Israel's sovereignty in the eyes of the world....

I do not accept explanations along lines that attacks of this kind can happen anywhere and cannot be prevented, just as I do not accept the approach that life must go on as usual in Israel. That is totally divorced from reality. Obviously, no place can be sealed hermetically, but that argument cannot be used to justify negligence....That kind of argument in fact impairs our ability to learn the appropriate lessons from events of this kind....

The world hastens to react when Israel tries to defend its youngsters. We have already heard the voices of those hypocrites who condemned Israel's reaction to the deaths of its schoolchildren....But we have not heard Israel's reply to them, challenging the U.N. and the world's religious, spiritual and intellectual leaders to appeal to all those concerned to leave women and children out of things, and asking them whether they expect Israel's population to rejoice when its children are murdered...?

I would like to know whether we have brought those facts before the world press with sufficient forcefulness....It is something which should constantly be at the forefront of world public opinion, forcing it once and for all to take a stand and decide whether it is prepared to tolerate the slaughter of innocent, defenseless citizens....Whatever its answer, it must recognize Israel's right to defend itself as it sees fit. Israel is entitled to demand the full price of the blood of its children.

The Jewish people and the State of Israel can face this cruel battle. But it is incumbent upon us to reduce the price we pay to a minimum....I pray that we never again have to pay a price for the alertness that is required of us today....

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, together with the entire public, we were shocked to hear the terrible news from Ma'alot. Attacking innocent citizens, taking children as hostages and endangering their lives is a base deed which deserves our condemnation. No objective justifies attacking innocent people....The Marxist-Leninists have always opposed inhuman and unacceptable courses of action. Attacks on innocent people merely do harm to the causes they seek to further, in this case the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab nation for its legitimate rights. We condemn the crime, participate in the grief of the families and wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

Nonetheless, we must not forget that tragedies of this kind grow against the background of the continued occupation of the Arab lands and the ongoing tragedy of the Palestinian Arab nation, which has been trapped in its refugee status, without rights and a homeland, for over a generation. In order to end the bloodshed once and for all we must immediately reach a just and lasting peace on the basis of respect for the rights of all the peoples and countries of the region, including the Palestinian Arab people and the State of Israel, in accordance with the wellknown Security Council resolutions.

While condemning the action, we demand the establishment of a parliamentary committee of inquiry, with the participation of all the Knesset factions, to examine the Government's actions in connection with the events in Ma'alot....The question everyone is asking is: was everything done to save the children? The representatives of France and Romania have publicly denied the version put out by the Government of Israel regarding the events at Ma'alot on the bitter day of May 15....The Prime Minister said in this House today that the Government had agreed to release twenty terrorists in order to save the children, but because of what she called a technical hitch regarding the password, this was not implemented....The Minister of Defense, on the other hand, has said that we must not give in to terrorist blackmail and must make it clear to them that they will not leave Israel alive or get what they want....He has also said that the Government reached its decision against his advice....

Thus, a committee of inquiry must be set up to investigate all this, but it must be wider and more representative, not the one appointed by the Prime Minister....While we condemn the attack in Ma'alot, we are against double standards. Hurting innocent men, women and children is a crime anywhere. The recent bombardment by the Air Force and the Navy of villages and refugee camps in Lebanon—

The Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: Those were raids on terrorist bases.

M. Wilner (Rakah): You know that isn't so. —which caused many casualties among innocent civilians, including women and children, and inflicted extensive damage, are criminal acts which must be condemned and eschewed by anyone to whom the cause of peace and security is dear....Everything must be done to put an end to the bloodshed, and there is no surer way than through a just and lasting peace. The experience of the last twenty-six years has taught us that Mr. Dayan's method...does not constitute a solution, and merely exacerbates the situation and endangers Israel....The territories which Israel controls not only do not increase Israel's security but undermine it....From this podium we call for renewed efforts to attain a disengagement agreement with Syria as a step towards the speedy convening of the Geneva

Conference and the establishment of a just and lasting peace which will end the bloodshed once and for all.

The Prime Minister's "love" for the U.S.S.R. is well-known, but there must be a limit to the distortion of facts. What are Mrs. Meir's political considerations in attacking the U.S.S.R. in this debate too? The press and the media in Israel have simply distorted the Tass communique on the tragic events in Ma'alot, quoting half a sentence. The U.S.S.R. condemned the crime of seizing children as hostages and attacking the school....

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to two dangerous side-effects: first...harming Arab citizens of Israel. Many people have expressed their reservations, but there are those who would fan the flames of emotion, seeking political gain even in issues of this kind. Secondly, I would like to censure the violence against the President of the State and the Deputy Prime Minister by ruffians in Safad during the funeral....

A. Lin (Likud): Why did you hit someone in your club in Haifa? Why was somebody's leg broken...?

M. Wilner (Rakah): It is very strange that MK Lin...defends ruffians who attacked the President and the Deputy Prime Minister....

A. Lin (Likud): Why did you beat him?

T. Toubi (Rakah): He burst in.

A. Lin (Likud): Did one person burst in?

T. Toubi (Rakah): He burst in together with a whole gang in order to disrupt the meeting with the Soviet delegation....Did you send the ruffians and now seek to defend them?

A. Lin (Likud): Did I send a single person?

T. Toubi (Rakah): You sent a great many to create provocation....

M. Wilner (Rakah): In conclusion, I would also like to warn against exploiting the tragic events at Ma'alot for dubious political ends such as disseminating such slogans as "a Unity Government," "Judaizing Galilee," "preventing Arab citizens from working in Safad," etc. These should be a cause for concern not only to us Communists but to other circles too. On this score I would like to point out that the media are too much controlled by members of the Likud party, and this represents a danger to the entire Labor movement....All the forces which perceive the danger must form a united front against the danger of the Likud, which is inciting the masses. We must foresee the disaster this can bring on the State of Israel.

...

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we have learned to argue and debate with rivals, even antagonists, provided they are human beings. I confess, I have neither the tools nor the talent for putting into words the horrors of the style adopted by the terrorist opponents who came to Ma'alot and Kiryat Shmona and who have lost their human face and acted in a way which is not espoused even by wild beasts. The Prime Minister said that they acted like wolves. That is a compliment. Wolves do not prey on other wolves....Those murderers are worse than wolves. By their deeds they have put themselves beyond the pale of human society. While our hearts are still bleeding for the families who have lost their children, we must apply our minds...to ascertaining how to mete out to evil the recompense it deserves and how to foil its plans....

The wisest of men asked God to give him an understanding heart with which to judge his people and distinguish between good and evil. Do we have an understanding heart today...? Do we distinguish between good and evil? Are the grief and the sounds of anger which we are hearing from beyond the Knesset gates completely new to us? Not only are they demanding death for the terrorists with a dreadful hatred...they are also turning their collective animosity against the Arab citizens of Israel....I have no wish to judge people in their hour of grief, but has the voice of wisdom, calmness and the assurance of protection for everyone left this House...?

Regrettably, that is not what one could understand from your speech, MK Begin....The emphasis was on Jewish children, Jewish blood, Jews, not on human beings per se. Arabs were murdered too....When grieving, shocked people shout with a terrible hatred, demanding Arab blood, I ask MK Begin how will his party, which wants a binational state by means of annexation, live in peace with those people?

M. Begin (Likud): You don't know what you're talking about....You had better not preach at me.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I'm not preaching. I asked a question....When you advocate annexing the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip...and claim that you will give those people full rights, is that not a binational state...?

M. Begin (Likud): A Jewish state, a Jewish majority, equal rights for the Arab minority—that has always been Zionism, as advocated by Herzl, Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion, Tabenkin.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): At any event, I assume that when you propose full rights you are also offering complete protection to every citizen of this country, but I did not hear that. Today one should calm the public, not inflame its passions.

M. Begin (Likud): I make no distinction between blood, but the fact is that twenty Jewish children were killed. I regret the murder of the Christian woman and I seek to avoid harm befalling any man or woman in Israel, but the fact is that they come to kill Jewish children.

M. Pa'il (Moked): The Arab woman.

M. Begin (Likud): Correct. A Christian Arab. The same applies to a Moslem and a Druse.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): It is a pity that was not said from this podium the day you and your people went out to the raging crowd outside and added oil to the flames, inciting them....You have no monopoly on preaching, sir, which you did here today at great length and with inordinate passion....

In these stormy times it is our duty as public representatives to soothe the nation's nerves, not exacerbate them. We must call on the nation to be alert...to cease relying blindly on those at the top, on the system of improvisation and intuition....It is time we learned to read rules and instructions correctly and learn to obey them, and also teach others to do so. We must realize that we are all one body, that the right hand must know what the left is doing, and that both must act as directed by the thinking, guiding, initiating head....

Do we need a commission of inquiry today to tell us once again that instructions were not fulfilled, that there was a lack of coordination, and that people were sure that nothing would happen and that the ability to improvise would succeed...? Most things are known. What is clear to me is that...we need a committee to examine the existing regulations and the coordination between the various services, as well as to ensure that there is appropriate control, alertness and supervision....

The time has come for us to rid ourselves of the charming negligence of our dear little "Sabras" and of the confidence that our agile officers will always find a quick solution to problems and that the Government will come up with an answer to unexpected situations with amazing rapidity. All those estimable qualities are all well and good, but they should come after planning, consideration, wisdom, the examination of all the options, the transfer of precise and known orders and the assurance of their full and precise implementation.

Changing procedures of consultation and implementation, and thinking before acting, is not solely the concern of the Government. It is a task for all of us, all Israel's public representatives and private citizens....If we act immediately...we will rebuild our self-confidence and belief in our actions and strength. We must rid ourselves of the bad feeling which has been our lot since the Yom Kippur War and strengthen our nerves for the long and difficult trials ahead of us. The period is one of great activity, hovering between the faint hope of a first peace settle-

ment and the black anger and pain which lead to despair and violence and the fear of unending war. I think that, as public representatives, we must be more careful, more cautious, and begin strengthening the nation.

...

M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, for a person like myself it is doubly painful to speak of the murder in Ma'alot from this podium. There is no need to condemn the crime any more than has already been done, and I endorse that condemnation wholeheartedly. In addition to that I bear an extra burden of regret because stupid, criminal murderers on the Palestinian Arab side are making every effort to destroy any faint chance of communication....

It is difficult for me to disregard my military training, and I think it would be a mistake for us to gloss over the military aspect....A letter sent to the Knesset's Education Committee by a group of teachers who were on a school trip with their pupils in the Ma'alot area on the day of the attack...relates how the local police force, which knew of their movements, did nothing to warn them of the immediate danger...and how their request for armed protection or at least weapons was denied....I suggest that the commission, the Minister of Police and the Minister of Defense investigate how all this could have happened....

The most painful thing, apart from the actual slaughter, is what has happened to us since then. In my view there have been two devastating developments during the last week. It appears that someone is encouraging an atmosphere of panic, as exemplified by threats by parents committees to bring the schools out on strike, the cancellation of school trips and proposals by certain Likud leaders...to stop the disengagement talks with Syria. That is exactly what Hawatmeh wants. In addition, there is the attempt to equate what happened at Ma'alot and Kiryat Shmona with the various pogroms....And those people who seek to sow panic have the audacity to claim to speak in the name of security....

There is another, no less serious, general development, a tendency to lose the moral criteria which we have held dear for years, and woe betide us if we abandon them, for then we will become Levantine. The grave incidents of attacks, even violence, against Druse in Ma'alot and Kiryat Shmona...are very serious. A panacea has been found for the problem of terrorism: demanding the death penalty for the terrorists...and inciting the public. The third serious example is the proposal made by certain elements to separate Jewish Ma'alot from Arab Tarshiha.

I am very concerned about the fact that this protracted dispute and the standards of our enemies—I have no other explanation—have found a way to the minds and hearts of our people....Woe betide us if we descend to the level of our enemies....I appeal to everyone who has influence in this country to speak out against this atmosphere....

It is not for me to suggest how to combat terrorism...but I think that it was a regrettable political error to use the Air Force and missile ships in a retaliatory action against terrorist bases. I know that when bombs are dropped from planes they do not always hit the target. I am distressed at the fact that the Government gave in to the brutal, primitive pressures which I have mentioned and which came from certain circles....

MK Tamir's suggestion that we conquer land which will constitute a military barrier in south Lebanon is a good idea in military terms, but terrible in political terms. Do we need to provide the Americans with another reason to exert pressure on us? There is only one military way of combating those methods: using guerrilla tactics against guerrilla tactics. Here I agree with MK Begin....

S. Tamir (Likud): Don't think that that method will be freer of international opprobrium than a land barrier in Lebanon.

M. Pa'il (Moked): But it's far more effective. Members of the Likud have made suggestions. I know of far more professional experts....Finally, the problem is essentially a political one. The most effective military methods are merely a palliative....Without peace with the Arab world and without an independent political entity for the Palestinians there will be nothing....Israel must aspire to that future, despite the members of the large minority here in the Knesset which will do everything it can to thwart it.

...

The Minister of Police, S. Hillel: Distinguished Speaker, Knesset Members, this debate is being held while the hearts of us all are still bleeding and we are all feeling grief and pain. And I believe that the expressions we have been hearing, whether at the sites of the attacks, at home, in the streets and even in this House, are reflections of grief and pain....I propose that we adopt the policy of not judging a person in his sorrow...even though as a general rule I would say that those expressions are inappropriate. The pain is felt by all of us...and the search is also that of us all.

When tragedy strikes several steps should be taken. First of all, there must be an investigation, of ourselves, and in the most efficient way...not necessarily in accordance with party group representation in this House....The investigation must be conducted in depth, so that we may draw the necessary conclusions and learn the lessons. There must be an investigation because the incident ended in a terrible tragedy. We must investigate ourselves and the methods which have stood us in good stead all the years. This is not our first encounter with terrorism. Every war inflicts casualties. I propose that we examine ourselves honestly, thoroughly and penetratingly, but also with the knowledge that our war against terrorism has been successful on the whole....We have suffered casualties, but our way of life has not been impaired, and that was our

main aim....We have continued to grow and develop, to build houses and absorb immigrants, to encourage tourism to this country....

We must look for our weak points on this subject and find ways of preparing ourselves for what lies ahead...for it is obvious that, whatever happens, terrorism will not cease....I would like to tell all the Knesset Members quite frankly that the nation will not be prepared by creating an atmosphere and expectations which assume that terrorism can be stopped completely....We must prepare ourselves to cope with the situation realistically...not cultivate illusions, as if our situation were the outcome of negligence or a blunder of some kind. I am not saying that there was no negligence, that must be examined. But it is no solution to lead the nation to think that by dismissing one person or finding one mistake we will be able to avert all future disasters. We must prepare the nation for the fact that this is a long and difficult war, and I am very concerned at the general atmosphere, which—

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): Was there a police vehicle or not? Would it have solved the problem...?

The Minister of Police, S. Hillel: You asked those questions in your speech....We must prepare ourselves—

M. Begin (Likud): There shall be no monologues here. Not only the Minister may speak. They pretend to have the monopoly on wisdom, after all the failures....

The Minister of Police, S. Hillel: The question has been asked here whether it was or was not known that there was a terrorist group and that it had a target. I would like to say in all seriousness that not a day or minute passes without information being received about terrorist groups here or there, and targets of one kind or another. We are standing to. We may have erred, and we must examine ourselves. To the best of my knowledge, we are standing to the best of our ability. But that is not the question. I have been asked on more than one occasion how that school trip was permitted to go ahead....This question means if there is a terrorist group in the Jerusalem area, for example, whether we will hold all our planned activities there or not, including school trips, tourist activities, walks around the walls of the Old City, and so on, or whether we should stop them?

The question is not whether it was known that there was a terrorist group in the area or not...we may have to investigate that question, but the answer is very difficult to give, because we receive so much information....There are over 8,000 educational institutions in Israel, I believe....There are thousands of trips and hikes, tens of thousands of visits to one site or another, and so when there is information we must stand to. But the question is whether hikes should be cancelled, and if so, why just that hike? Perhaps we should cancel all tourism and close the

convalescent homes in the north of the country. We are standing to to the best of our ability. We must ascertain whether we did in fact do all we could in that particular instance, but we must try and combat terrorism without paralyzing our life. Consequently, in my view, we must continue to hold hikes and trips and visits.

A question was asked about that specific trip. When we heard that there was a group of terrorists in the area the hikers were forbidden to sleep in the open. As far as sleeping in the school was concerned, the assumption was that it was in a township, surrounded by children and people, and guarded....Nonetheless, a tragedy occurred, and we must investigate the reasons for that....

We are looking for ways of reinforcing the defense forces, including the police, by recruiting extra manpower and establishing a civil guard, also based on volunteers. I appreciate the fact that the general public is attempting to do what it can...to increase security and help us combat terrorism without paralyzing or altering life....The war against terrorism cannot be conducted solely by our increasing security everywhere. That is also important and must be done...but we must also keep a closer guard on our borders, and although this is constantly being done, it is not enough....

MK Pa'il has doubted the legitimacy and logic of our striking at the terrorists across the borders. It is inconceivable that we should deprive ourselves of the right to hit the terrorists in the bases from which they come to attack us. We cannot simply erect another fence and place another guard there. We must also fight those terrorists in the bases in which they organize themselves and from which they operate. We will strike at those bases in every way we can.

M. Pa'il (Moked): The main thing is to do so intelligently.

The Minister of Police, S. Hillel: On which you have no monopoly. I do not believe that the terrorists came to release prisoners, since the prisoners are here because of terrorism. I do not believe they came to liberate territory, as MK Pa'il contends. Terrorism led to the Six Day War, which had such far-reaching results. What we have here is a war which is being waged on us by the neighboring Arab countries, Libya, Syria and all the countries which encourage terrorism. Even Egypt should recall that it has not yet annulled the Cairo Agreement, which sanctions terrorism. Consequently, we shall not refrain from striking at those terrorists in their bases....Our war on terrorism must be a combined operation: striking at the bases so that they cannot organize themselves there and also so that the host nations cannot have the best of both worlds. We must increase our deterrent capacity by adding manpower and by heightening volunteer activities....

I believe that if we do all these things and learn from our mistakes, if we tell the public that we will continue to combat this plague and try to

keep casualties down to a minimum, though without upsetting the fabric of our life, we will succeed. I believe that we have succeeded till now. The fact that neither before nor after the Six Day War have we cancelled anything proves that we have combatted terrorism, even if there have been setbacks. And we must learn from this. We are doing our best to withstand terrorism, and we appeal to the public not to be downcast but, on the contrary, to keep its spirits up and do its utmost to wage this war. I believe that we shall be victorious, do what we want to do and also keep casualties down to a minimum.

...

A. Jaffe (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Alignment, National Religious Front, Independent Liberal and Moked party groups I submit the following concluding resolution:

A. The Knesset mourns the shocking murder at Ma'alot, conveys its condolences to the bereaved families and extends wishes for a speedy recovery to the wounded.

B. The Knesset notes the Government's statement as submitted by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, today....

...

The Vote

Those in favor of MK Jaffe's resolution 50

Those against 31

(The concluding resolution proposed by MK Jaffe is adopted.)

Implementing the Death Penalty for Terrorists

Introduction

Since its inception Israel, as opposed to the British Mandatory Government which preceded it, has in effect abolished capital punishment. The death penalty did, however, remain on the statute books for two kinds of crime: genocide and Nazi crimes, and crimes against the security of the state in time of war. The only case in which the penalty was applied—that of Adolf Eichmann—belonged to the first category. As for the second, although formally and actually a state of war had been in existence in Israel throughout, the Government voided the law in practice by an executive order of the Attorney-General, in his capacity as head of the Public Prosecution, not to ask for the imposition of the maximum penalty, thus relieving the courts of the burden of deciding on the matter. A similar injunction was issued to the Judge Advocate-General of the IDF. Following the Six Day War, the same practice was applied in the Administered Territories, still under Jordanian and Egyptian law in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip respectively, both of which provided for capital punishment.

From time to time, after especially dastardly terrorist acts, proposals for the introduction of the death penalty were voiced in the Knesset. This would not involve the lengthy procedure of amending the law but the relatively simple one of rescinding an executive order. Although such proposals have sometimes been transferred to committee, in the end all have been rejected.

Sitting 49 of the Eighth Knesset

22 May 1974 (1 Sivan 5734)

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I am proposing this motion for the agenda on a personal basis, not on behalf of my party group....It is with a heavy heart and despondent spirit, after a great deal of soul-searching, that I propose that a change be introduced in the current policy of the Government and the Attorney-General's office. This involves not demanding the death penalty even in the gravest cases of the base and barbaric murder, with forethought and in cold blood, of innocent, defenseless citizens, men, women and children, namely, crimes for which the law permits the imposition of the death penalty. My outlook is a humanitarian one of respect for

life...but I am obliged to demand this because of that outlook, in order to protect human life. The life of someone who murders deliberately cannot be more sacred and protected than that of his victims.

Terror is not new. It was rejected in the past by revolutionary movements because of its inherent injustice and inefficiency, but even in times of violence terror was never deliberately and cruelly directed against children. How can someone who murders a child in cold blood be called a freedom fighter? Only Nazis adopted those methods against the Jewish people...and that is why our law includes the death penalty for the perpetrators of those crimes, as was implemented in the case of Eichmann. In what way are the acts of terrorism perpetrated in Kiryat Shmona, Ma'alot and Avivim, and the blowing up of a plane in the air, different from what the Nazis did? Did we not execute the terrorist leaders in Beirut? The methods currently being used by the terrorists undermine the very basis of civilization. Even in open warfare certain rules are kept....Let it be made clear to the terrorists and the world that no entity will arise on the graves of children. Their blood will not oil the wheels of the Arab revolution.

I think that even those people who have strong moral reasons for advocating the abolition of the death penalty—and I am not far removed from them—must agree that there are exceptions to the rule and that now is the time to reexamine existing policy with regard to serious instances in which murderers have descended to depths of bestiality. The opponents of the death penalty maintain that it will not have a deterrent effect, that we will create martyrs and that the same coin will be used against us. I disagree. Deterrence is one of the foundations of punishment. If the death penalty does not act as a deterrent it is merely an act of revenge. Even if the death penalty deters only some murderers, thereby saving the life of one child...it is worthwhile. Murderers like Okomoto deserve the death penalty several times over....Thus, it is for humanitarian reasons that I propose that the death penalty be reinstated, for this will lead to the saving of lives....

As for the claim that we will be creating martyrs—do they not already have martyrs, such as the terrorists who were killed in Beirut and Ma'alot? And do they not make use of the death penalty where we are concerned, with or without a trial? Have not Jews been hanged in Baghdad...? Consequently, I think that it is a question of justice, self-defense and the avoidance of blackmail. A new dimension of murder is developing. Hostages are taken—no difficult feat—and used to obtain the release of murderers who are eligible for the death penalty under Israeli law...With our own hands we are creating the temptation to commit greater crimes....Those who commit vile, inhuman murders are not punished by death if they fall into our hands, but we have seen what fate befalls those who fall into theirs. It is dangerous to keep those people in prison, since this invites further outrages against innocent people.

I am not demanding that the punishment be made more severe, merely that it be imposed. The death penalty must be imposed on those who deserve it, in accordance with the due process of the law....By doing this we would be upholding justice and humane standards, preventing additional victims and averting blackmail and extortion....I therefore regard it as necessary that the existing policy of the Government and the Attorney-General's office be reexamined....

Y. Shamir (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, in the wake of yesterday's debate on the despicable attack by so-called Palestinian terrorists in Ma'alot, I propose that the Government cancel the instructions given in the past to the Attorney-General's office not to demand the death penalty in cases where the law permits this....With all our pain, anger and injury, and with the sense of certainty that for a long time we will still bear the marks of the blow we have just received and continue to face the challenge to our ability to live in our homeland, we must nonetheless decide that at this moment what is important is not to assess the past...but to prevent any future recurrences of similar tragedies. I hope no one in Israel will be misled by the "soothing words" spoken by the chief murderer, Naif Hawatmeh. In this, too, the terrorist leaders prove that they are faithful students of the Nazi murderers. While one arm kills, the other is extended to calm the next victims, dulling their alertness and assuring them that there will be no more murders. We know that ploy well. It will not succeed again. We are in our homeland today, not in Nazi Europe.

Hawatmeh, the strategist of the Arab revolution, asserts that he is against "individual terror." This appears to be expressed in the fact that his thirst for Jewish blood is not assuaged by single victims. He needs dozens and hundreds of victims in one fell swoop....There is a danger that the success of the Nazi monsters in Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot will encourage their organizations to continue with that line which, from their point of view, has been a roaring success....

I would like to state that in my humble opinion it is not appropriate for the Minister of Defense, the Chief of Staff and their aides to appear wherever there is an act of terrorism, because that war should not be conducted by the IDF. We must not forget that the real danger to our existence comes from the activities and preparations of the Arab armies, which are continually increasing their strength....The IDF's main task is to avert the danger of attacks from them, and the principal task of the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff is to prepare and strengthen Israel's army, making it a wall of iron against which Arab military strength will be smashed....They must not be distracted from their task by terrorist activities which, however grave, are of secondary importance. That mistake was made before the Yom Kippur War, and I do not know how high a price was paid as a result.

A special and dedicated organization must deal with combatting the Nazi terrorist organizations of the Palestinians. It must work continually, not under the TV lights, and must express the Jewish will to survive, be equipped with the best weapons, have the best intelligence...find alternative solutions and, above all, take the initiative away from the enemy.

In addition to all this, we must take deterrent steps for dealing with those who murder our children. It is intolerable that when murderers like Okomoto or those who killed indiscriminately in Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot fall into our hands, they are tried and sentenced to imprisonment not because we do not have an appropriate law on our books, but because of an instruction given to the Attorney-General's office at another time and in different circumstances. This Government line can be altered immediately without legislative action.

If the Knesset were to instruct the Government to cancel its previous instruction not to demand the death penalty in particularly brutal murders, this would provide justice for the events of the recent past and also deter potential murderers....The emergency in which we find ourselves requires and justifies taking this step against those who seek to destroy us.

The Minister of Justice, H. Tzadok: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, if there is one subject on which the entire Israeli public is united...it is our firm resolve to combat terrorism in every way possible....It is from that viewpoint that we must discuss imposing the death penalty on terrorists. I will start by giving a brief review of the existing legal situation. The Knesset abolished the death penalty for murder in 1954, determining life imprisonment as the sole punishment for murder. There are laws which enable the death penalty to be imposed as the maximum punishment, such as the Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law, 5710-1949....It was on the basis of this law that Eichmann was convicted and executed, constituting the only instance of capital punishment in Israel since the establishment of the state. Capital punishment is also the maximum penalty for the crime of genocide...as it is for crimes against the security of the state which are committed in times of war....

After the Six Day War we imposed our penal policy on the territories occupied by the IDF, abolishing capital punishment for murder and replacing it with life imprisonment....On 29 October 1967 the Government decided not to change the existing law but to instruct the Attorney-General and the military courts not to demand the death penalty for defendants....The only court empowered to impose capital punishment in the occupied territories was one in which the bench comprised two jurists....

The reasons for the Government's decision were that...it was generally thought that the imposition of the death penalty would not have a deterrent effect on the terrorists, and could even have the reverse effect.

It was also thought that the death penalty would reduce the terrorists' readiness to surrender, while abolishing it would tend to save the lives of our soldiers. It was also feared that executions would provide the terrorist organizations with martyrs and "educational ideals," as it were, as well as increasing the chance that hostages would be taken in Israel and abroad during the course of trials in which the death penalty could be imposed or before a convicted terrorist had been executed....There was also a desire to avoid placing a heavier burden on our relations with the inhabitants of the territories....

The Government will discuss capital punishment for terrorists in the near future in order to reassess it in the light of recent developments. I am opposed to the imposition of capital punishment, whether in practice or in theory, as has been proposed in the past, without implementing it at once...so that this may serve as a threat if terrorists capture hostages at some future date....I am not convinced that this would be an effective approach, but even if I were, I would reject it because it makes a person's execution conditional on the actions of someone else...and would mean that we were holding those condemned terrorists as hostages. That is something which no law-abiding country may do and would bring us down to the moral level of the terrorists.

I am not opposed to the death penalty for terrorists in principle and in all circumstances. In discussing this subject, however, we must not be guided by the understandable desire to give vent to our emotions, anger and desire for revenge, but by clear thinking about the possible effect of capital punishment on our war on the Arab terrorist organizations and on the weighty political campaigns in which we are involved....I propose that both proposals be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I know that there are members of the House who share my view and realize that the proposal to impose capital punishment is not the answer to the problem and that we must not abandon the humane principle which has been maintained in Israel till now of not imposing the death penalty...and I therefore suggest that the two proposals we have heard today be removed from the agenda....

We have always opposed the imposition of the death penalty in Israel, and still continue to do so. Our attitude towards terrorism and violence directed against civilians is clear and we have expressed it on several occasions. We have always condemned the vile attacks on innocent people by Palestinian extremists....We have always maintained that no end justifies those means, which cause harm to the just cause of the Palestinian Arab people....

An ever-increasing number of people realize today that Israel's continued occupation of the Arab territories, the deprivation of the Palestinian Arab nation of its rights...and the policy of power and vio-

lence towards the Arab peoples constitutes the soil which has given rise to these tragedies and the unfortunate vicious circle of bloodshed and the murder of innocent civilians. It is not by collective punishment, such as the cruel and repeated bombardment of the refugee camps in Lebanon and the murder of women and children there too, that an end will be put to tragedies like those in Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot. The Air Force's attacks merely increase hatred and hostility...and we therefore condemn them too.

We share in the pain of the bereaved families of the innocent civilians killed in Ma'alot. No one is as eager as we are to end tragedies of that kind, which have for years been alienating the two nations which live in this country, but it will not be achieved by acts of punishment and vengeance, nor by lynching the Arab inhabitants of Israel...We regard the demand which has been made here today to bring back capital punishment in reaction to the chain of bloodshed as a way of diverting attention from the path which experience has proved should be taken, namely, the aspiration to...attain a just peace for the two nations, taking the rights of the Palestinian Arab nation into consideration, withdrawing from the occupied territories and shifting from the disengagement of forces to a just and lasting peace by means of the Geneva Conference. There is no other way, and those forces which oppose it and demand the reimposition of the death penalty are those which oppose any step towards peace, the disengagement of forces and any change in the unfortunate situation in which we find ourselves today....We therefore propose that the two proposals made here today be removed from the agenda.

...
(The proposal to transfer the subject to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is adopted.)

Disengagement of Forces Agreement with Syria

Introduction

After several months of simultaneous fighting and negotiations, culminating in one month of intensive shuttle diplomacy by Dr. Kissinger between Damascus and Jerusalem, the Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Syria and Israel was at last ready for signature at Geneva. In accordance with established precedent, and although under no constitutional obligation to do so, Golda Meir presented it to the Knesset for approval on 30 May 1974, prior to its signature on the following day.

It was Golda Meir's last speech to the Knesset as Prime Minister. By a majority of 298 to 254 the Alignment Central Committee had chosen Yitzhak Rabin over Shimon Peres as Golda Meir's successor-designate. He had completed the formation of the Government and was ready to present it to the Knesset. Golda Meir, however, regarded it as incumbent upon her to complete the agreement with Syria, which, taken together with a similar one entered into with Egypt four months earlier, formally put an end to the Yom Kippur War.

Sitting 52 of the Eighth Knesset

30 May 1974 (9 Sivan 5734)

The Prime Minister, G. Meir: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on May 29 the Government of Israel decided to sign the agreement on the disengagement of forces with Syria, reached with the aid of the good offices of Dr. Kissinger, the U.S. Secretary of State. On behalf of the Government, I would like to express our gratitude to the President of America, the Secretary of State and their assistants for their ceaseless efforts to attain the agreement. The document will be signed in Geneva tomorrow. The text is in front of you and there is no need to read it out, though I request that it be appended to the *Knesset Record*. Additional documents and clarifications have been and will be brought before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. I ask the Knesset to endorse the Government's decision to sign the disengagement agreement with Syria.

As the House will recall, on January 18 this year Israel's Chief of Staff, Major-General David Elazar, signed the agreement regarding the disengagement of forces with Egypt. The Government of Israel was prepared to sign a similar agreement with Syria, but the Syrians raised

numerous difficulties....It is more than seven months since the Security Council decided on a ceasefire, but the Syrian front has not been quiet. Despite the benefits promised to the Syrians as a result of the disengagement, they continued their aggressive activities in the Golan Heights area and hardly a day passed without casualties....

Our forces in the Golan Heights, the enclave and on Mount Hermon defended themselves and the surrounding settlements, repelling the Syrian attempts to conquer positions and maintaining control of the area and positions captured in the October War. From time to time it was necessary to deploy the Air Force. We do not have precise information about Syria's losses. They are greater than ours, though that offers us no consolation.

The Syrians adopted throughout a tough and aggressive policy, refusing to release our prisoners of war or participate in the Geneva Conference. In March this year there were persistent rumors of an impending Syrian attack, and we prepared ourselves accordingly. Ever since the ceasefire decision, the U.S. Secretary of State has worked intensively through his contacts with the Syrian leaders to bring about a change in the dangerous development caused by their policy.

In addressing the Knesset in January this year, I expressed my regret at the fact that there had been no progress in our contact with the Syrian Government as regards the prisoners of war and the disengagement of forces. I mentioned Syria's refusal to release the prisoners of war, or even give us a list of their names, and permit the Red Cross to visit them. On behalf of the Government I made it clear that we would not discuss the disengagement of forces with Syria or participate in the Geneva Conference with it until it gave us the names of our prisoners of war. Dr. Kissinger invested great efforts in breaking the deadlock. On February 27 we received the list of prisoners of war from him and on March 11 they were visited for the first time by Red Cross representatives. These visits are now continuing on a regular basis....These developments enabled the process leading to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement to be set in motion.

The Agreement comprises: a mutual undertaking to maintain the ceasefire on land, sea and air and refrain from all military activity; the separation of forces by a demilitarized buffer zone in which there will be a U.N. presence; the removal from one another of the principal military forces on either side of the buffer zone, within which an area will be determined where only reduced forces and arms will be permitted; the shifting further back of long-range artillery and missiles; the supervision of the observance of the Agreement, the buffer zone and the reduction of forces by the U.N. The U.N. Force will be recruited from countries which are not permanent members of the Security Council; Israel will withdraw from the enclave it conquered during the Yom Kippur War; there will be Syrian civilian rule in the buffer zone; the pris-

oners of war will be exchanged after the Agreement has been signed and before the implementation of the stages has begun; the bodies of the missing soldiers will be returned. The inhabitants of the villages in the enclave and the buffer zone will be allowed to return to their homes.

In the area occupied by Israel the disengagement line corresponds with the border established after the Six Day War for the most part, except for the town of Kuneitra and Pithat Rafia. The town will be within the U.N. buffer zone, the inhabitants will return and Syrian civil rule will be restored. The positions on Mount Hermon which were conquered in October 1973 and are within the buffer zone will be controlled by the U.N. The Mount Hermon position we have retained since 1967 will remain in our hands. On the whole, the military line which was in effect prior to the Yom Kippur War remains as it was. That line ensures the defense of the Golan Heights. It is our belief that it is in the interests of both sides to reach a disengagement agreement, and we hope that quiet will reign in the north so that IDF forces there may be reduced.

In accordance with the Agreement, all the wounded prisoners of war held by both sides will be returned within twenty-four hours after the signing in Geneva...the rest to be returned one week later. The day is approaching when the suffering and isolation of our prisoners of war will end and they will all return to their families and the nation, which is concerned for their welfare....

The Government of Israel attaches supreme importance not only to the prevention of aggressive military actions but also to the complete cessation of terrorist infiltration and attacks coming from Syria. It should be noted that terrorist activity leads to bloodshed and could bring about developments which are not merely reactions. Terrorism could lead to a dangerous deterioration of the situation, as it undoubtedly aspires to do....The U.S. has expressed its recognition of Israel's right to take appropriate action to protect itself from acts of terrorism originating from across the Syrian border....The Government will submit additional clarifications on the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

The Agreement contains the following sentence: "This Agreement is not a peace agreement; it constitutes a step towards a just and lasting peace." There are no secret clauses on any subject....In determining the disengagement line we acted on the basis of the advice of the Chief of Staff, Major-General Mordechai Gur. We took care to secure our military line and the safety and continued development of our settlements in the Golan Heights....

The Syrian attack of October 1973 forced us to fight back, advance into Syria and reach the outskirts of Damascus. Israel has made it clear that it has no desire to remain permanently in its military positions in the enclave, which we are now relinquishing in accordance with the Agreement. The Syrians are attaining a great achievement thanks to

our aspiration for peace....The Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria resembles that between Israel and Egypt, but differs from it in the nature of the U.N. forces on each border. The U.N. Emergency Force, UNEF, functions on the Sinai border, whereas the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force, UNDOF, has been established especially for the purpose of supervising the Syrian border....

I am glad to be able to say that the Disengagement Agreement with Egypt is being maintained....We have recently heard statements from the Egyptian leaders of their desire to develop and rehabilitate their country, and the Suez Canal area in particular. Just as we must be careful not to be misled by delusions, we must take genuinely encouraging signs into consideration. We hope that a similar process will take place on our northern border. Our Disengagement Agreement with Syria can serve to reinforce the Agreement with Egypt, since the absence of hostilities on one front has a positive effect on the other....

We are conscious of every expression of willingness to strengthen peace in the region and are especially sensitive to tendencies on the part of any country to attain stability at Israel's expense....We rejoice at any encounter or shared interests between us and other countries or peoples, as are reflected in the Disengagement Agreement and the stabilization of the ceasefire. We greatly appreciate the fact that hostilities have ceased and the process towards peace begun, and in order to attain that objective we were prepared to forego our military advantage of maintaining the Syrian enclave. Our hold on the Golan Heights is firm. The Agreement does not deprive us of the basic conditions for defending ourselves and overcoming any possible assaults on us should hostilities be resumed....

Our acceptance of the Disengagement Agreement was based on our confidence in the IDF's ability to emerge victorious in future outbreaks of fighting, should there be any...and also on our response to the demands made by countries which are friendly towards Israel and are particularly interested in stability and peace in the region.

Israel's stable existence depends first and foremost on its own strength, unity, creativity and association with the Jewish people in the diaspora. Israel's ability to withstand trials, tribulations and wars depends above all on its internal strength, the readiness of all its citizens and the willingness of the younger generation to bear the burden and risk their lives in the defense of the country. But Israel is a country which needs and deserves help. We have been under siege for twenty-six years and must make every effort to win the understanding and support of our allies. That essential interest must influence our considerations and actions. I will not deny that in deciding on the disengagement we also took account of the advice and policy of the U.S., which has been positively involved in attaining tranquillity and peace in the region. That policy of the U.S. accords with the needs of the peo-

ples of the region. The deterrent strength of the U.S. was revealed during the Yom Kippur War, and its services assisted greatly in attaining the ceasefire and the Disengagement Agreements on the various fronts. Particularly commendable is the phenomenal effort made by the Secretary of State, who did not rest and worked night and day to achieve tranquillity and the disengagement of forces.

In January I told the House that Israel had increased its strength as a result of that policy and that I had every reason to believe that the U.S. would continue to be aware of Israel's defense needs....Now that Dr. Kissinger is in the region we have spoken about the vital issues concerning our two countries and I can assure the House that what I said in January has been borne out and U.S. aid to Israel is assured....

Knesset Members, knowing that this is the last time I will address the House on behalf of this Government, I would like to say that I offer sincere good wishes to the next Prime Minister....In leaving the position I have been privileged to fill I would like to say that at this moment I have never for a moment forgotten the unbearably hard days and nights when there were battles in the north and the south, and I am glad that I can leave my task knowing that the Government and my colleagues have succeeded, by dint of tremendous efforts and without illusions, in bringing this Agreement before the Knesset today...meaning that both the Egyptian and the Syrian fronts will be quiet from now on. I hope and pray that this will indeed be the case and that the next Government will be able to announce not merely disengagement agreements from this podium but true and lasting peace agreements.

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: We thank the Prime Minister. The time will come for us to tell you what is in our hearts, personally, as regards your leadership of the country.

...

E. Rimalt (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Disengagement Agreement which the Prime Minister had brought before the House today is a source of concern to many but is characteristic of the interim agreements signed with Israel's neighbors and enemies since the establishment of the state. A tremendous amount of physical and psychological energy is invested, every concession Israel is asked to make is represented as being the pivot on which the longed-for peace hinges, hopes and expectations are aroused and disseminated...but the outcome is an interim agreement which does not deal with the roots of the dispute between us and the Arabs and which does not pave the way to peace, understanding and coexistence, serving merely to defer decisions, bridge awkward gaps and permit matters to revert to the previous situation.

Moreover, no sooner has an interim agreement been signed than differing and contradictory interpretations of it arise...so that rather

than having a calming influence it bears within it the seeds of renewed conflicts....No one can or wants to oppose the stabilization of the ceasefire, the end of war, of hostilities, of killing. The question is whether the ceasefire will last. Who does not share in the joy of our wounded soldiers and prisoners of war who will return to the homeland? In accordance with the international convention, Syria should have returned the wounded and the prisoners of war once the fighting was over, but it seems that international conventions are not binding for Syria. The same will apply to the ceasefire we wish to achieve now via the Disengagement Agreement, and by which Syria has been bound since October but has refused to honor....

Who will not rejoice with the parents who have received their sons from the Syrian captivity? We all will, together. Nevertheless, beyond the mist of the international sensation, the excitement and the anxiety in everyone's heart, we must see reality as it really is....Israel has agreed to make far-reaching concessions, to withdraw not only from the enclave—to that we have all agreed—but also to relinquish positions, territory, places of strategic importance, in return for...another Syrian undertaking to keep the ceasefire and to accept the disengagement of forces, i.e., the IDF's withdrawal.

We must ask ourselves and the Government...whether this Agreement does or does not give the Syrians clear-cut strategic advantages should they decide to renew hostilities...? If the Syrians attack us, will they be in a better position to do so or not...? Do our settlements on the Golan Heights remain within range of the Syrian tanks and cannon or not...? Our distinguished opponents in the Government tell us that our questions are inappropriate in the context of a disengagement agreement...for peace is just around the corner....But we are not talking about a peace agreement or even about a settlement involving a declaration of the cessation of hostilities, nor even an armistice agreement. All this is is a ceasefire agreement in which the armed forces remain on either side, albeit in new dispositions...and there is no way of knowing how long our enemies will honor this ceasefire.

Let me tell you about a general national consensus which once existed but no longer does. There are differences of opinion within the nation as regards secure borders in the Sinai and the western Land of Israel. But there is one issue on which there was general assent, namely that the Golan Heights are an integral part of the country, that there was to be no withdrawal from the border. The Alignment's representatives stressed this even after the Yom Kippur War. A few weeks ago the Prime Minister said as much to the nation on television.

There was widespread agreement throughout the nation, to which we subscribed, but it no longer exists. We added a proviso: saving Syrian Jewry. And at this very moment, as glasses are raised, we should remember our afflicted, persecuted and humiliated brethren in Syria.

Their rescue was not made a condition for the Agreement. Would that it were near. The border is not sacred for me, but the saving of lives and Zionist values whose protection that border facilitates are, and I am one of those who makes a distinction between Kuneitra, on the one hand, and Hebron and Jericho, on the other, for example. But if the border is disregarded and the national consensus demolished...all the lines have been obscured, including all the maps and territorial trickery that you in the Alignment have been engaged in, and that also applies to all the proposals for peace borders. Everything is open, everything is open to negotiation, to concession. Where will you stop? Where is the thin red line at which you will say: thus far, and no further? Will it be possible to believe that you will stop before reaching Jerusalem and the Erez barrier...?

Furthermore, do you really think that this is the only stage in the negotiations with Syria? What will happen at the second stage? What is there left to concede apart from maintaining the Golan Heights....And what will happen if and when there are peace negotiations, when territorial compromises will also be discussed...? Does anyone really believe that Assad will sit in idleness waiting, together with Sadat in the Sinai, for the next round...? It is easy to understand why all the inhabitants of the Golan Heights, the Etzion Bloc, Hebron, the Jordan Valley and the Sinai are in a state of uproar...because it has been brought home to them that everything is negotiable, no settlement is secure....

I suppose the inevitable question the Alignment will pose is: what alternative did we have...? Would you have preferred us to go to war...? That threat of war will accompany us throughout the long and winding road to peace negotiations....Will there not be instances when, seeing that that threat works, the Arabs will exert endless pressure and blackmail...? Was not that threat in the air during the current disengagement negotiations...? No one will convince me that the disengagement could not have been achieved on better terms...What concessions are there left to make at the second and third stages? And they will come, even though, regrettably, the Geneva Conference is not a peace conference, merely one at which Israel makes concessions, because the subject of peace has not yet been discussed there.

I hear the Alignment pointing out that my party also opposed the Disengagement Agreement in the Sinai which has brought the desired tranquillity....But how many months have passed? Have the Egyptians fulfilled all their obligations? We are not unhappy that our apprehensions have not been realized. Our contention is, however, that we, a nation of traumas, not only of the Holocaust but also of 1947/48 and the period before the Six Day War, must be careful...and not overconfident....What guarantee do you have that the threat of war will not arise again during further negotiations with any of the neighboring Arab countries...? My friends of the Alignment, do not make the same mis-

take you made before the elections and before the Yom Kippur War. You said that we were pessimists and always predicted the worst...but I say that it is better to be pessimistic than to risk another Yom Kippur War, heaven forbid.

The Syrians managed to turn an unequivocal military defeat into a tremendous political victory over the Zionist state. They know that they have broken the national consensus about not abandoning the border created by the Six Day War...and they hope that the spirit of the settlers in the Golan Heights will be broken. But they are wrong. They will not break the spirit of the pioneering settlers of Israel, from every political stream, although the danger exists...The Government of Israel has paid a heavy price for the temporary respite. The Agreement before us does not bring peace with Syria closer, for Assad does not want peace.... He wants the IDF and the settlements off the Golan Heights. He wants to help in achieving the rights of the Palestinian people....Would that I were wrong, but it is my belief that this Agreement will bring us harm, now and in the future, and we will therefore oppose it.

...

Z. Warhaftig (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, the Prime Minister concluded her speech with words of farewell and I would like to begin mine by expressing my appreciation and admiration for her. I have served as a Minister under her leadership and esteem her dedication and responsibility to the State of Israel and its people.

The Agreement before us had long and difficult birth pangs. The Secretary of State of the leading world Power has been travelling back and forth between Jerusalem and Damascus for 33 days, something unprecedented in diplomatic history....We are full of admiration for Dr. Henry Kissinger and his achievements....The Agreement, which was to have been a virtual copy of the agreement between us and Egypt, is tougher and less convincing as regards the intentions of the other side. Although it is not my intention to point out its weak points, I will merely note some of its positive and less positive aspects. First, I welcome the fact that the Agreement seeks to restore normal life to the Israel-Syria border. Normalization, albeit partial, is beneficial in maintaining tranquillity and constitutes a step towards peace...each side gaining from the absence of hostilities....

On the Egypt-Israel border, too, normalization, or the start of the normalization of the return to civilian life, is one of the most important features of the Agreement. The return of the refugees to the towns along the Suez Canal and the rehabilitation of these towns constitutes a guarantee of sorts of the Egyptians' intentions of going towards peace. It is true that the return of refugees to Kuneitra and villages on the border also contains an element of danger and the possibility of terror-

ism...but the intention behind it cannot be solely belligerent....The two disengagement agreements will, I hope, reinforce one another....

Secondly...with all our reservations, based on past experience, about the efficacy of U.N. forces...they do have some value in preventing clashes and hostilities on a larger scale....They also provide warning of surprise attacks...and after our experience in the Yom Kippur War we are able to appreciate the value of that....The U.N. forces are also able to indicate clearly which side is the aggressor and has violated the ceasefire and disengagement agreement....This is no light matter in our day and age, and has extensive political and military repercussions....We have no intention of attacking....

Syria's refusal to include a section about preventing terrorist activities from its territory, paralleling the section in the agreement with Egypt, is suspect and requires us to be on our guard...though the U.S. undertaking to provide political support for our right to protect ourselves against terrorists is encouraging....

My heart goes out to the settlers, those heroes of the nation, who have given the best years of their youth to settling our land....Many of them have large families, and their children have grown up in the shelters. I share their anxiety. I am sure that we all esteem their sacred work and will preserve their and our right to maintain their settlements and, above all, their daily safety...for they are the emissaries of us all. We must be firmly resolved to engage in no further negotiations for a partial arrangement with Syria, except for a peace agreement.

My party group participated via its representative in the Government in the negotiations and formulation of the Agreement. We will vote for it while being aware of both its dangers and its potential. We must beware of complacency and of overreliance on a friendly country...adhering to the precept: if I am not for myself, who is for me. We must do everything we can to maintain a regime of defense, responsibility and friendship between people, as well as focusing our inner economic, cultural and spiritual forces on taking a firm and independent stand....We must all put our shoulders to the wheel in fulfilling the great missions ahead of us...."May God make his face to shine upon you and give you peace."

...

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, today we have to choose between continuing the process of endless wars deriving from the lengthy Israel-Arab conflict and cultivating the process of political agreements which began with the Geneva Conference and the disengagement of forces with Egypt and has been continued in the Disengagement Agreement with Syria, Israel's most intransigent enemy....Both paths involve dangers. We had no alternative but to take the dangerous path of war, but if there is a chance of a shift we should try the path of political agreements which could bring us nearer

to peace, even though what is involved is a step towards peace, not an unequivocal act of peace, and even if we do not always attain everything we wanted.

MK Rimalt has criticized the Agreement with Syria attained with the help of Dr. Kissinger's unflinching efforts. The Likud always wants better terms and is sure that it could get them....It is true that this Agreement, as is always the case, is the outcome of compromises and mutual concessions. When it is evaluated as a whole...taking into account our relations with our neighbors and the U.S...it will be seen that, despite a few disadvantages, it is positive and constitutes a step towards bringing quiet to the region and settling the conflict.

The Agreement has several positive aspects...guaranteeing us tranquillity in the north and the cessation of the daily bloodshed there....The thinning of the forces, determination of the buffer zone and the placing there of a U.N. force will prevent a surprise attack like the one which began the Yom Kippur War. The Agreement will bring our prisoners of war home, and our acceptance of a new border will not endanger our defense and the reason for our presence in the Golan Heights, namely, ensuring the security of Galilee and the north....

The Likud always maintains that there should be a better border and that we must not move from the border established in the Six Day War....It is true that in strategic and military terms there is always a better border...but even when we had good borders we discovered that there was always something better....Topography is important, but it is only part of the security problem, for there must also be readiness to maintain the ceasefire. The weapons in our possession are important too. That is why the Disengagement Agreement with Egypt, which was criticized so vehemently by the Likud, has endured, and I am sure that all sections of the population are pleased with it....

The concessions we have made on the Syrian border involve a certain risk, but also give Syria motivation for maintaining the peace, following a similar pattern to that of Egypt's return to normal civilian life in the towns along the Suez Canal....The Six Day War border is not sacred and Kuneitra is not the heritage of our forefathers. The object of our being and remaining on the Golan Heights is to defend the north of the country and the sources of water....

More important than the political and general implications of the Disengagement Agreement with Syria is the fact that this does not stand alone in our political and security landscape....It constitutes the continuation of the process which began with the disengagement with Egypt and improves our situation in the region and the world. It will contribute to strengthening and stabilizing the Agreement with Egypt...and there is a feeling that Egypt wants to concentrate on building up its country, preferring political arrangements to another war...but is uncomfortable being alone in having reached an agreement with us....

The Agreement makes it possible for us to attain closer cooperation with the U.S. and receive increased aid from it, enhancing the "entente cordiale" between our two countries...which is a cornerstone of our policy....Our security is dependent on our receiving additional arms, not only on establishing new settlements....We should be glad that the influence of the U.S.S.R. in the region is on the decline while that of the U.S. is increasing. The Agreement is important to the U.S. as regards both the supply of fuel and the relations between the two Powers, and in my view, if the U.S. is strong, we are too....No one can guarantee how long the Agreement will last or whether it will be a step towards peace or not...but I hope that we will benefit from the period of peace, utilizing it to reorganize the IDF as well as to review our internal political, economic and social situation. A great many problems need to be dealt with....

I am not ignoring the grave problem of terrorism, which may well increase with the quiet on the northern and southern borders, because the Palestinian organizations will want to disrupt the peace....We will have to respond firmly to every terrorist attack, and have always made it clear that we regard the governments of the countries from which attacks are launched as being responsible for them....

In choosing between the process of ongoing war and that of political settlements we must choose the second course. Both involve dangers...but the promise of the latter is greater than the threat of the former....We cannot always be forced into decisions because of the threat of war....The price we are being asked to pay for this Agreement is worthwhile....It is the last act of the outgoing Government and Prime Minister...and I regard it as a valuable achievement and a chance for the future. I am sure that the nation will appreciate the efforts of the Government and the U.S. Secretary of State. To quote an important philosopher: "Peace does not always progress along a straight line, but sometimes goes in zigzags." Before us now lies the possibility of progress, unity and increased strength, and we will do better by taking that path with the Disengagement Agreement than without it. Let us take advantage of this opportunity.

...

T. Toubi (Rakah): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, my party group, together with all those who desire peace, welcomes the Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria as a step towards the desired aim of a just and stable peace between Israel and the Arab countries, assuring the just rights of all the countries and peoples of our region, including Israel and the Palestinian Arab people. We congratulate the Israeli and Arab prisoners of war on their return to their families as a result of this Agreement and share in the joy of the families....We welcome the return of the Syrian refugees to their villages, towns, land and homes and hope that from here we will march rapidly to a just and stable peace

agreement which will put a permanent end to bloodshed...and bring liberty, justice and peace to all the nations of the region.

The importance of this Agreement in the history of Israel-Arab relations...will be determined not by any particular detail, however important, but by the fact that it is a genuine step towards a just and lasting peace, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 338....The Likud is resorting to cheap and unfounded demagoguery in maintaining that Syria's objective is to destroy Israel. Everyone knows that Syria, Egypt and other Arab countries seek to attain a peace agreement with Israel based on the full implementation of the Security Council resolution.

Y. Moda'i (Likud): Assad mentioned Galilee.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Because of our aspiration to move from a disengagement agreement to a just and stable peace agreement, we issue a warning against tendencies and influences within the Government of Israel...which seek to turn the disengagement agreements into a new status quo, assuring Israel's continued occupation of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and perpetuating the disregard for the just rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

The statement made by the Minister of Defense on television last week to the effect that he assumes that this Agreement with Syria will be the last was a provocation calculated to foil the Agreement....Anyone who is interested in peace...must act to revive the Geneva Conference, so that there may be a just and stable peace in the region....The Likud, which irresponsibly opposes the Disengagement Agreement because it opposes peace, is trying to alarm the public by saying that the Syrians are already demanding Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Y. Moda'i (Likud): Isn't that true?

T. Toubi (Rakah): It's true, but who did not know in Israel, before signing the Agreement and during the negotiations, that not only the Arab countries but also the U.N. and the whole world demanded Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied in the June 1967 war, in accordance with the Security Council resolution, and the assurance of the just rights of the Palestinian Arab people, as the basis for a just and stable peace which would guarantee the rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of an Israel without annexation?

We appeal to the new Government which is about to be formed, to all the realists in the leadership of the Labor party...to realize that anyone who is earnest in his pursuit of peace with the Arab countries must say openly that we must withdraw from all the Arab lands which have been occupied since June 1967 and recognize the just rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Stop avoiding the issue and arguing about this hill or that. It is an illusion to think that Israel can attain peace while gaining territory...as has been proved by the October War....If the leaders of the

Alignment do not take a firm stand they will be aiding and abetting the Likud's rise to power...preventing Israel from attaining peace and bringing the country nearer to the next war....

The Disengagement Agreements are not the end of the process. It is necessary to dismantle the mines on the road to peace: the illusions of annexation and new plans for settlements in the Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank. It is necessary to shake off the Galili documents and other obstacles to peace. It is necessary to tell the nation openly that there is no alternative to withdrawal and courageous participation in the Geneva Conference, with all that it implies. Every other path leads to war and destruction....

There are those who would give all the credit for the new opening to peace to Kissinger's magic touch. Nothing is further from the truth. The U.S. Secretary of State's activities should not be ignored, but Kissinger and Nixon existed beforehand too. They acted to perpetuate the crisis in the region, seeking to further American imperialist ends through Israel's policy of force. The failure of that policy, as revealed by the October War, forced the U.S. leaders to change their approach, but not their objective. It is not the American imperialists who have brought peace but the aspirations of nations to implement the Security Council resolutions....

Israel must not continue to labor under the delusion that American imperialism is a firm and omnipotent support. Why should Israel's acceptance of the decision of the world be exploited for its own ends by American imperialism...? Israel would be better advised to deal directly with the Arab countries at Geneva...as it will have to do sooner or later....It is time all those with any political realism stopped attacking the U.S.S.R. and distorting its true role in the quest for peace and the rights of all the peoples of the region, including Israel. The U.S.S.R. played an important role in attaining the Agreement with Syria...and opening the path to peace....It is therefore in the interests of Israel and all the nations of the region that the U.S.S.R. should be involved in all the efforts to attain a just and stable peace....My party group will support the Agreement....

The Minister of Defense, M. Dayan: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members...on the subject of the disengagement of forces...there is almost complete agreement throughout the House...even though there is hardly anyone—at least not in the Government nor, I imagine, in the Likud—who believes that Syria has abandoned its aspiration to remove us from the Golan Heights....There is also a basic accord between the Government and the Likud regarding the need for this Agreement...though there is no foundation for the Likud's contention that we have relinquished our most important card for attaining peace, since no one in this House, least of all the Likud, thought of linking the Agreement with a peace accord....

I am prepared to concede that the Likud honestly believed that within the framework of this Agreement, which not only makes no mention of peace but does not even serve to end the state of belligerency, the release of the Jews of Syria could be secured. Although efforts were made in that direction, that could not be achieved within this framework. Possibly the negotiations were conducted unsuccessfully...though I personally doubt whether more could have been achieved....I am sure that it will be easier to obtain the release of the Syrian Jews under conditions of tranquillity than of war....

There were also no differences between the two principal parties in this House regarding the necessity of entering into negotiations with Syria. I don't know whether the Likud accepts our position of negotiations without prior conditions, but negotiations with conditions and restrictions are meaningless....It indicates either ignorance or disingenuousness if one expects the other side to accept one's terms without any give and take....Naturally, the border we drew in our initial proposal is not the one of the Agreement, though to speak of our abandoning strategic positions, as MK Rimalt did today, is quite ridiculous....Furthermore, the return of the civilian population to Kuneitra and the villages of the enclave—as was the case with the resettlement of the towns along the Suez Canal—promotes peace, facilitates a dialogue at a future date...and constitutes no more of a strategic threat to Israel's existence...than does the withdrawal of our troops to a line which is ten, twenty or even thirty miles further back....

To be more precise...there has been a basic change in the Arab attitude, not the Israeli one....Until the Yom Kippur War Egypt was not prepared to negotiate with us in any way, did not want to get the Suez Canal working and was not ready to make any interim arrangement whatsoever without our undertaking in advance to withdraw from the whole of the Sinai and return to the 1967 border....With Syria there were no contacts of any kind beforehand.

In my view, the main question regarding Syria prior to the negotiations with it was whether the Disengagement Agreement would not be made contingent on a timetable involving further withdrawals on our part. That had always been Syria's position in the past, and it was relinquished within the framework of this Agreement....

We have had four wars with the Arabs, and only at the conclusion of two of them—this one and the War of Independence—did we reach an agreement with them....I believe that the two principal elements—our withdrawal from the enclave and our granting permission for the Syrian refugees to return to their homes, as well as our withdrawal from the Suez Canal—are constructive. Not only are they worth the price we have paid for them, they augur well for the future....No one can claim that the enclave is part of our ancient national heritage...and I see no point in our remaining 30 miles outside Damascus, whereas there is a point in

the disengagement of forces...however imperfect and temporary this may be....

There are three points which are not in the Agreement. First of all, regarding the terrorists, it is not only Israel's position that the transition or implementation of terrorism from the Syrian border negates the Disengagement Agreement, and if someone does this it constitutes a violation....The Agreement with Syria, unlike that with Egypt, does not include a clause stating that neither side will place weapons within firing range of the other. This would have been desirable, but could not be attained....Nonetheless, some diminution of the forces on either side of the border was achieved....

As regards the future...there is one thing that depends on the Syrians. I imagine that we are all agreed that they have not abandoned their desire to regain the Golan Heights. But if they wanted to renew hostilities immediately they would not have made an Agreement, indicating that it has a certain lifetime....The return of the civilian population to its homes, provided this does not lead to the settlement of terrorists there, could well contribute to maintaining tranquillity on the border for an extended period of time....The agreement with Syria may have a positive effect on the agreement with Egypt. At any event, its absence would have had an adverse effect....

There is, however, a very serious problem with the terrorists operating from Lebanon....Those activities may cease or be weakened, on the other hand they may increase...eventually inflaming the Syrian border....That cannot be ignored. This brings me to my last point, our relations with the U.S. I would like to make it perfectly clear...that the Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, did not use threats or pressure or attempt to extort things from us for the benefit of the U.S., neither in the Agreement and negotiations with Egypt nor in those with Syria....

As far as I can see there are two fundamental trends going on around us at present. One of them, which is very negative, is the Arab trend. Even now, after having obtained an Agreement, I don't think that the Arab trend of a military and political campaign against Israel has come to an end....This involves Egypt's struggle to obtain all of the Sinai, Syria's to regain the Golan Heights, Jordan's to get the West Bank, and that of the Palestinians and the terrorists. That trend exists actively in all those countries, backed by a great deal of economic, political and military strength. We are living in that process of warlike initiative—as exemplified by the Yom Kippur War—and which is aided and abetted by the U.S.S.R....We must be fully aware of that and all that it implies....The second trend is that of the U.S.'s policy of improving its position in the Middle East and getting closer to the Arab countries.

In my view, what we should do is try to avert a rift with the U.S. In order to be able to combat whatever the Arab countries have in store for us we must attain maximal understanding with the U.S. in terms of po-

litical, economic and military aid...bearing in mind the two trends I have mentioned....I would like to conclude by saying that in these two Agreements I believe that Dr. Kissinger has found the golden path of a constructive compromise...between the interests of Egypt and Syria, of America and of Israel in terms of the disengagement of forces. I think that this Agreement is good in and of itself...and I hope that the Knesset will give it its approval.

...
S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, there are no differences of opinion in the House regarding the fact that we disagree. Nevertheless, we all share a common aim: the welfare and security of this country....But if the Knesset Members think that civil rights constitute inviting demonstrators to the House to shout, cheer, disturb and interrupt the Government in conveying information required for the debate, that is very far from the truth.... Those who violate the law must be tried and punished....

It has been said here that an attempt is being made by the Government to mislead the public as regards the Disengagement Agreement with Syria....Who is misleading the public, I wonder? How can one tell the public that we are giving in, that we are withdrawing in the north and the south? Was the IDF ever an army of conquest? Was it not established and educated to be an army of defense...? The object of the recent war and conquest in Syria was not so that we could remain in the enclave....We embarked on this terrible war knowing that the military campaign would be followed by a political one....That has now begun. For thirty days and nights people have sat and worked in order to achieve an agreement, so that the bloodshed in the north might cease.... But you do not say what the alternative to an agreement would be.... Would you want us to be at war once more...?

The present Agreement may not be very long-lived. But there is no doubt that it represents the first attempt to take a different course. The initial attempt has been made to divert the focus from the Syrian arena, which is an arena of blood, to that of the conference chambers of Geneva....The people who took that course, responsibly and dedicatedly, are to be congratulated. We hope that the Agreement will endure. It is unfair to say—as the demonstrators outside have done—what did our children die for? The IDF's policy is to fight on the enemy's territory. Are we going to make every inch of enemy territory sacred and settle there? Is every attempt at a dialogue a withdrawal...?

It can be claimed that you would have conducted the negotiations and reached the Agreement differently....But it cannot be claimed that this means that everything is going to be returned...and that it is merely a matter of time until we give up Jerusalem....I think we should give one another more credit than that and realize that no steps are taken in an unconsidered way....I think that the Agreement before us,

taking the general situation and the alternatives into account, is to be welcomed....We will vote with the Government.

...
The Foreign Minister, A. Eban: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, there are only four months between the Agreement signed with Egypt and the one due to be signed with Syria tomorrow. There are points of departure between them as regards their conditions and circumstances, but upon hearing the anxious cries of the Likud we may recall its earlier anxiety. What was not said about the dreadful fate which awaited us as a result of the Egyptian Agreement? I quote: "The reduction of our security." "Beware lest you bring additional disaster on the nation." "Our enemies and their mighty supporters have conspired against us and you intend to deprive our children of their homeland."...

I am not saying that the existence of the Disengagement Agreement with Egypt...is a hard and fast guarantee for the future, but the experience of the past four months...is not negligible. I doubt that there are many inhabitants of Israel who regret that Agreement today, even though it was castigated so vehemently in this House and the media. That Agreement did indeed embody a risk of being violated, but it also offered a hope of tranquillity....The Government invested something in the hope, in full awareness of the hazard. It was not a blind investment. We refused to compromise to the extent of endangering our security. We insisted on instructions, balances, reductions and political support in order to ensure that even if the Agreement was violated the security of the state would not be impaired....

I am not making any commitment as regards the future, but four months of quiet on the Egyptian front can create an additional dynamic regarding the next four months. At all events, it has been proved that the disaster which the Likud prophesied does not necessarily have to come to pass. I am not proposing that this young precedent should be regarded as annulling all the apprehensions voiced by the Likud, but it should encourage a certain restraint in expressing them with regard to the Agreement with Syria....What you should have done was ask yourselves whether the situation created by accepting the Agreement would be preferable to that created by turning it down. In other words, what is the practical alternative you are proposing? What is the sole real alternative? Our remaining on the eastern line of the enclave accompanied by a continual war of attrition, daily casualties, the constant threat of war with the possibility of the increased involvement of a hostile Power, the continued captivity of our prisoners of war...the inability to deal with any other aspect of the system, dialogue and coexistence, the continued bombardment of our settlements and the omission of an opportunity to strengthen our ties with the U.S....

How is it possible to speak of the dangers of the Agreement while ignoring the greater risks of refusing to approve it? The Government went

into these negotiations with its eyes open. I recall that in the initial stages our doubts were greater than our hopes, but we would have been failing in our responsibility had we not made the effort. We decided to try, asking the U.S. Secretary of State to use the good offices of his country, in addition to his own outstanding ability....How then can his coming here be described as that of someone who sought to impose his will on us? The effort began on April 28. After that the sequence of events is known. It is known in general by the House, and in detail by the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. And now the Agreement is before us, after having been approved unanimously by the Government, which is no light matter. Tomorrow the Agreement is to be signed, and the day after that the prisoners of war will begin arriving. By the end of the week they should all be here. Within twenty days the fresh disposition of forces along the new border should be completed and there will be a new balance of arms. We are not guaranteeing that the Agreement will be kept, and certainly not that peace will be attained. But none of the dangers you have listed will exist....

There is nothing easier than to look at the map and reach the simple conclusion that all the advantage is now Syria's, since the aims of Israel and Syria were not identical or even symmetrical. Syria's objectives in the negotiations were solely territorial, while Israel's were not, since the IDF's victory in the war of October 1973 ensured that the areas to be negotiated would be those of Syria and not of the Land of Israel. Kuneitra came into our hands not because of our desire to attach it to Jewish history but because of our defensive action in 1967.

The Zionist drama was never supposed to take place in those parts of the country. Our criterion regarding them is perfectly simple: what our defense needs demand and prohibit. Woe betide us if there ever were negotiations which did not refer to Arab lands. Consequently, it was clear from the outset that in any negotiations on the disengagement of forces only Syria would expand its territorial control, not Israel...and that the advantages sought by Israel would be in another sphere....We sought tranquillity instead of a war of attrition; we sought an end to the hostilities and the casualties; we sought to prevent a surprise attack rather than all-out war; we sought the release of the prisoners of war and the return of the bodies of the fallen; we sought the reinforcement of the chance that the atmosphere of an agreement would give us to struggle with greater success and with the support of a world Power for the redemption of Syrian Jewry. We saw that there was a chance of strengthening the influence of a friendly Power and weakening the monopoly of a hostile one. We sought the removal of a stumbling block to any continuation of a dialogue; we sought the reinforcement of the Agreement with Egypt by advancing the impetus of rapprochement; we sought the assurance of our overall security in the long and short term by the additional strengthening of our ties with the U.S. In other words, we sought

advantages in the area of general security as well as in the political and personal spheres. None of these advantages appear on the geographical map, but they are deeply engraved in the map of future history.

Some of these objectives have been guaranteed. Others have a chance....But that chance would not be fulfilled were it not for the Agreement. I sense a feeling of relief throughout the country, and the gloom of the Likud's representatives in the House does not represent the general mood....What makes matters worse is the Likud's inconsistency in adhering blindly to the arbitrary borders of the Six Day War, countenancing our withdrawal to a line 20 miles back, but regarding a withdrawal of 22 miles as endangering Israel's security....

I call on the Knesset to refrain from supporting the totally unfounded claim that Israel's security is endangered....We have enhanced Israel's security by signing this Agreement without imperiling our settlements...and have maintained a realistic view of its limitations....In that the Government is united, and the majority of the Knesset and the nation is behind it, realizing that we have gone forward, not backward, to the chance of dialogue and coexistence. Even if the Agreement is violated, we will be able to prevent this from harming us.

All those who participated in the negotiations were inspired by the example of the Prime Minister, and had the highest appreciation for her ability to decide. For that is the essence of leadership: deciding between real alternatives rather than between reality and vision. We must thank our lucky stars, or rather our historical justice, which has enabled us to bring this Agreement to fruition during the term of the outgoing Government, the Government of recovery, of victory, rapprochement and dialogue....I reject the claim that Syrian Jewry has been abandoned. Is the chance of saving them greater in an atmosphere of peace or in one of tension as a result of the failure of the negotiations?

In conclusion, I hope I may be allowed to share with the House some thoughts about the political horizons opened up by this Agreement. MK Rimalt cast aspersions on the very concept of interim agreements which involve an element of withdrawal in exchange for situations which do not constitute peace....The Government, in its experience and responsibility, thinks that there was no alternative to taking this course. In effect, this debate has been about the basic concept of interim agreements. At the Geneva Conference all the participants agreed to give priority to negotiations on disengagement agreements. For the last five months we have been acting in accordance with that national and international decision. What are the alternatives before us? There are only three: negotiating for an overall peace, perpetuating the current situation until peace is attained, or making interim agreements which constitute a partial thawing of the conflict....Does anyone think there is a realistic chance that Syria will agree to make peace with us...? As far as perpetuating the existing situation is concerned, I regard it as my bound duty

to issue a repeated warning against the dangerous illusion that it is possible to maintain a stable ceasefire in that kind of situation, without continual political activity of the kind we have been engaged in since December....As I told the Knesset a year ago, our policy must be designed to thaw the situation, not perpetuate it....That is the only way to progress towards gradually eroding the hostility towards us and erecting the building of peace....

The perpetuation of the political situation inevitably leads to the renewal of war. That is why the action taken by the Government this month is not an isolated step and should not be viewed separately from the overall political situation caused by the times and the circumstances. That is the logic, one which has been tried and tested, which will guide our representatives at the signing ceremony in Geneva tomorrow. It is the right step at the right time and in the right direction. And it is in that spirit that we will welcome our prisoners of war and bow our heads before the coffins of our fallen as they return home. I therefore appeal to every citizen, even if he is consumed by doubt, to trust the hope embodied in our work of the past month, the hope of escaping from the vicious circle of tension and hostility. The road is hard, but it is one which starts with rapprochement and may well end in peace.

...

A. Yaffe (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Alignment, National Religious Front, Independent Liberals and Citizens' Rights Movement party groups, I propose the following concluding resolution:

The Knesset endorses the Separation of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria, as brought before the Knesset by the Prime Minister today, 30 May 1974.

The Vote

Those in favor	76
Those against	36
Abstentions	3

(MK A. Jaffe's concluding resolution is adopted.)

Torture of Israeli Prisoners of War in Syria

Introduction

On June 3, Yitzhak Rabin presented his Government to the Knesset. It was similar to its predecessor, which had served for less than three months, including almost two as a caretaker Government after the Prime Minister's resignation. The main difference between the two was the replacement of two key Ministers, in addition to the Prime Minister: Moshe Dayan relinquished the post of Minister of Defense, which he had held ever since the eve of the Six Day War in June 1967, and was replaced by Shimon Peres; Abba Eban, Foreign Minister since 1966, was succeeded by Yigal Allon, who also became Deputy Prime Minister. At the beginning the Government was based on a narrow coalition—the result of the vote of confidence was 61 for and 51 against—with the small Citizens' Rights Movement, headed by Shulamit Aloni, replacing the National Religious Party at the Cabinet table. After a few weeks the National Religious Party joined the Government, and Shulamit Aloni, opposing concessions to that party, resigned. One of the first statements delivered by the new Minister of Defense concerned the torture of prisoners of war by Syria. Rumors concerning their torture had abounded in the preceding months, and had been sadly confirmed by the prisoners of war returning in the wake of the Disengagement Agreement.

Sitting 58 of the Eighth Knesset

12 June 1974 (22 Sivan 5734)

The Minister of Defense, S. Peres: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...Syria has not only violated the Geneva Convention in its treatment of our prisoners of war, it has contravened every basic human standard....In several cases Syrian soldiers fired at our unarmed pilots as they parachuted to the ground. For over four months the Syrian authorities refused to give the names or even the numbers of the prisoners of war...or allow the Red Cross authorities to visit them....From objective reports, we know that the prisoners were kept in severely overcrowded conditions. 30 privates were held in a small cell with only 21 mattresses on the floor, virtually no ventilation and not even the minimum of sanitary conveniences. The food they were given, even those wounded prisoners who were kept together with the rest, was meager. The medi-

cal care they received was irregular and bad and they were deprived of reading matter and religious appurtenances.

The interrogation of the prisoners was particularly grave. The Syrians used every measure, fair or foul, to exert pressure on the men, applying electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body; tearing out fingernails—in one case they drilled a hole in a fingernail and, by means of a hook attached to string, pulled the nail out; striking various parts of the body, including the soles of the feet; whipping; giving blows on open wounds. At this stage it is known that at least five soldiers were injured as a result of this maltreatment after being captured. It would appear that two prisoners died as a result of torture....

All ranks participated in meting out this cruel, inhumane treatment, ranging from the soldiers and guards who shot at unarmed prisoners of war to those responsible for the terrible torture and the heads of state who refused even to divulge the names of the prisoners, as is customary....The work was done by the Syrians—there is no evidence that any Power was actively involved in the interrogation—and is not unprecedented, for that has been the fate of our prisoners of war in the past. At the end of 1973 the Government of Israel drew the attention of the International Red Cross Organization to the grave violations of the Geneva Convention by the Syrian Government and to the fact that when the IDF entered areas in the Golan Heights which had been held by the Syrians they discovered shocking cases of the murder of our prisoners of war, including those captured in the enclave and the Mount Hermon position.

These crimes cannot pass unnoticed. The enlightened world, every man within whose breast a human heart beats, cannot let this pass. Those responsible must be punished, incidents of this kind must not recur and the Red Cross must be enabled to fulfill its function in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

68 Israeli citizens—our sons—officers and privates, infantrymen and pilots, who set out to defend their country after Syria's surprise attack on the Day of Atonement, have returned home to their families and country. Despite what they have been through they were not broken. On the contrary, when we heard what they had been through and saw how they comported themselves...how they had contended with isolation, torture and sickness and become richer in sensitivity, knowledge and understanding, we were enriched ourselves....We welcome them back to the bosom of their families and of their homeland....

Visit to Israel of U.S. President Nixon

Introduction

In spite of the close relations existing between the U.S. and Israel, and although most of the Presidential hopefuls or candidates had visited Israel at one time or another, no incumbent President had done so. Thus, the visit of President Richard Nixon, in June 1974, constituted a milestone in the relationship. He did not address the Knesset, presumably in order to avoid embarrassment to himself and to his hosts in neighboring countries which did not have a democratically-elected parliament, but delivered a major speech in the course of a banquet in the Chagall Hall of the Knesset, and the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, reported to the Knesset on the outcome of the visit. Nixon was received enthusiastically, both in Egypt and in Israel. The visit coincided with the culmination of the Watergate investigation, and several weeks later Nixon felt obliged to resign.

Sitting 61 of the Eighth Knesset

19 June 1974 (29 Sivan 5734)

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, it is my pleasant duty to report to the Knesset on the visit to Israel of the President of the U.S., Richard Nixon, and his wife. The Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, and a party comprising some of their senior aides, also participated in the visit. We were happy to welcome President Nixon to Israel. This was the first visit to Israel by an American President for talks with the Government of Israel. I am glad to note that the visit was fruitful and successful...and that a joint statement was issued at its conclusion.

This is not the first joint Israel-U.S. statement...but it is of particular importance since it reviews all the principal topics in the relations between our two countries and concludes the visit of an American President who has supported Israel throughout his term of office, particularly through the difficult days of the Yom Kippur War....We attach particular importance to President Nixon's visit to Jerusalem, our eternal capital, and to our Legislature....

In our discussions with the President and the Secretary of State we were able to hear at first hand about the U.S.'s global policy and its efforts to attain peace in our region. President Nixon has come here after U.S. policy has gained significant achievements, the foremost being the Disengagement Agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and

Syria. We lay Israel's objectives and needs before the President and also our basic policy of attaining true peace with the neighboring countries....President Nixon displayed interest in and understanding of Israel's needs in the various fields, headed by defense and economics. He reiterated the U.S.'s commitment to Israel's long-term security, stressing the underlying principle of Israel's right to secure borders and repeating that a strong Israel which can defend itself is essential for preventing acts of hostility and creating the conditions in which progress towards peace negotiations is possible....

President Nixon stressed once again the long-term nature of the association in the sphere of military supplies between our two countries....A Defense Ministry delegation will go to the U.S. shortly to work out the practical details of the promised military supplies with the Americans....The U.S. President displayed understanding for the heavy financial burden Israel's military purchases imposes on us and hence the importance of his assurance that the U.S. will continue to extend substantial economic aid....The U.S. will also help Israel to find sources of oil and other essential raw materials....

The U.S. President and the Government of Israel are in agreement about the obligation of all countries not to organize or encourage terrorism from their territory, in accordance with the international convention....The subjects of releasing Syrian Jewry and helping Russian Jews to come to Israel were also discussed...and President Nixon reiterated the U.S.'s commitment to upholding the principle of free immigration for the members of all nations....

President Nixon's visit to Israel was made within the framework of his trip to four Arab countries...pursuant to the U.S. policy of improving its relations with the Arab countries and establishing economic ties with them....We hope that the Arab countries will apply their energies and resources to tackling their genuine problems in a constructive way....The U.S. Government has made it clear to us that there is no contradiction between its friendship for Israel and the rehabilitation of its relations with the Arab countries....We believe that closer ties between the U.S. and the Arab countries will serve to enhance processes of moderation and political progress towards a genuine and agreed peace.

During President Nixon's visit we expressed our concern at the fact that the U.S. has undertaken to assist Egypt in the construction of a nuclear-powered electricity plant, requiring the training of professional scientific personnel whose skills may easily be exploited for military purposes....In their reply, the Americans made it clear that in supplying the nuclear reactor to Egypt they would be taking every precaution to ensure that it was used only for the purpose for which it was built....I have consulted experts in this field and after receiving their answer we will discuss this with the U.S. representatives....

We assured the U.S. that we regard the Disengagement Agreements as steps towards peace...and reiterated our requirement of defensible borders....In view of the talks with President Nixon, I can say that I feel that the friendship and cooperation between the U.S. and Israel has not only not been weakened, but has become stronger....

Basic Law: the Army; Military Justice (Amendment No. 9) Law, 5735-1975

Introduction

One of the recommendations of the Agranat Commission, appointed in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, pointed to the need to further clarify the precise constitutional relationship between the three tiers of authority responsible for defense within the executive branch of government, i.e., the Government, the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff. The principle of civilian authority over the armed forces was never in doubt in Israel as long as the Prime Minister served simultaneously as the Minister of Defense, as was the case during Ben-Gurion's tenure as Prime Minister, and subsequently, during the first years of Eshkol's premiership, and the differentiation between the functions of the two was of theoretical interest. Similarly, whenever the Minister of Defense was a civilian the distinction between the political and professional levels regarding control of the military was inherent in the personal characteristics of those occupying the respective posts. Before and during the Yom Kippur War the Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, was himself a former Chief of the General Staff, and even though some of his guidelines concerning military operations were described by himself as "ministerial advice," to those at the receiving end their operative impact was always clear.

This particular situation underlined the need, which would in any case have arisen somewhere along the line in the course of constitution-making, to prepare a Basic Law: the Army which would regulate a precise chain of command and division of responsibility, including the manner of the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff.

Sitting 207 of the Eighth Knesset

30 July 1975 (22 Av 5735)

The Minister of Justice, H. Tzadok: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the principle of civil authority over the IDF was determined in the Law and Administration Ordinance of 1948, which constituted a mini-constitution for Israel...The IDF Ordinance of 1948 placed the responsibility for establishing the IDF on the Minister of Defense and created the basis for the compulsory draft and the IDF's exclusivity as an armed force. Throughout the years the IDF Ordinance was regarded not only as the legal basis for the establishment of the Army but also as the long-

term determination of the authority of the person responsible for implementing the Ordinance, i.e., the Minister of Defense.

It should be added that in Israel, which has no full constitution, our constitutional law derives not only from the written law but also from the constitutional principles underlying it, the tendency being to translate abstract concepts which are basic legal tenets into the language of the written law. One of the concepts which has been with us since our inception is the principle that the Army is the executive arm of the Executive, and is subject to it. This relationship has adopted various forms. The Minister of Defense was authorized to promulgate Emergency Regulations, and the Defense Service Law, 5709-1949, put genuine content into the IDF Ordinance regarding the compulsory draft, making military service and reserve duty a characteristic feature of Israeli life. The entire system of mobilization in Israel is under the authority of the Minister of Defense. In addition to the mobilization of manpower in accordance with the Defense Service Law, there are Emergency Regulations regarding the registration of equipment and its mobilization for the purpose of providing logistic resources.

Of course, we must not forget the Jurisdiction Regulations of 1948, by virtue of which the dimension of criminal and disciplinary sanctions was added to the obligation of military service and the acceptance of authority which, in accordance with international law, characterize a person within a military framework....These Regulations were replaced, expanded and extended by the Military Justice Law, 5715-1955, for whose implementation the Minister of Defense is also responsible. To this day there are no legal instructions as to how the IDF's Chief of the General Staff is to be appointed. A tradition has developed, a constitutional convention, as it were, expressing the fact that the Minister of Defense is directly in charge of the Army. Whereas, in accordance with this tradition, the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff is in the hands of the entire Government...it is customary for this to be done as the Minister of Defense recommends...The existing legal situation must also be examined in the light of the constitutional arrangements which already exist in written law. I am referring to the Basic Law: the Government, which determines that there is a division of labor among the Ministers which is approved by the Knesset when the Government is presented to it...and that this does not detract from the collective responsibility of the Government....On the basis of the existing constitutional norms, each Minister's responsibility is determined by the sphere for which he has authority under the allocation of tasks among the Ministers and his accountability for the implementation of specific laws...The Minister of Defense has authority over the IDF on both these counts.

For several years the Government has been working to fill the gap and prepare a series of Basic Laws which will combine to form a constitution. It is only natural, therefore, that the subject of the Army, which is

dealt with in every written constitution, should be referred to in a Basic Law....In preparing this Basic Law the Government has paid special attention to the comments and recommendations contained in the report of the Agranat Commission...in particular those concerning the absence of clear-cut definitions of responsibility for defense between the three authorities dealing with this sphere, i.e., the Government and the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff....The Agranat Commission Report notes that clause 29 of the Basic Law: the Government ensures the authority of the civil sphere over the military system of the IDF....

With the passage of the Basic Law before you it will be possible to annul the IDF Ordinance of 1948, part of which has been incorporated in the Basic Law while part will be included in other legislation. It should be noted that, by its nature, a Basic Law cannot and need not give a full and detailed answer to all the questions which arise with regard to the allocation of tasks between the various authorities dealing with defense. All it can and needs to determine is the framework of the constitutional norms governing the IDF which must be further elaborated in other legislation....

The Basic Law does the following: it determines unequivocally the principle of civil authority over the IDF and the IDF's subordination to the authority of the Government, as well as the Minister of Defense's responsibility, as representative of the Government, for the IDF. The Minister of Defense is the medium whereby the Government and the IDF communicate and, while being the supreme level of command within the Army, is subject to civil authority, i.e., that of the Government.... The law settles the appointment of the Chief of Staff, adopting the constitutional procedure accepted to date of having the Government approve the Minister of Defense's recommendation. Both experience and logic indicate that this assures not only efficient control by the Government and the Minister of Defense over the Chief of Staff and the IDF, but also harmonious activity, which is essential in this sensitive sphere....

It should be mentioned that the Defense Service Law (Consolidated Version) empowers the Minister of Defense to issue an order drafting all the reserves, if he thinks that the defense of the country requires this....To be extended, this order requires the authorization of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee within fourteen days. The proposed Basic Law determines that the establishment of any armed force outside the IDF requires a basis in written law which has been approved by the Knesset. This restricts both the Government and the populace....The Basic Law does not determine which authorities are entitled to issue orders and instructions to the IDF, and that question will be settled by the Military Justice Law, which addresses that issue today....

The Military Justice Law also seeks to settle the question of who is responsible for issuing military orders, determining that the General Staff's orders are issued by the Chief of the General Staff...with the approval of the Minister of Defense....It cancels the separate reference to orders issued by the Air Force and the Navy in the Military Justice Law, since those are merely another kind of General Staff Orders issued by the Army...to be known as orders issued by the Supreme Command....I propose that both laws be transferred to committee, the Basic Law: the Army to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee and the amendment to the Military Justice Law to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

M. Begin (Likud): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, Members of the Knesset, the law is brief, the phrases simple, the paragraphs dry. Nonetheless, I shall not discuss the Basic Law: the Army from a legal viewpoint. For in these letters are engraved, and from them bursts forth, a tale of heroism, sacrifice, and dedication, accounts of redemption, liberation and defense, and tremendous victories which are virtually unparalleled in the annals of mankind.

This law expresses the vision of the revival of Jewish strength. It is undoubtedly one of the wonders of the world. Something was created from nothing. Ever since we were sent into exile, we were the only nation which was disarmed for over 1,800 years. Every other nation except the Jews became practiced in the use of arms. What a high price we paid for that! But now we have attained the renewal of Jewish strength—a precondition for the renewal of our independence—and that was the greatest day in Jewish history since the time of the Maccabees. Today, too, we must offer up a prayer of thanks for the renewal of our strength. We do not admire power. We believe in our right. But we have learned that if our rights are not backed by strength, not even our right to exist will be respected....

Our military might stands between us and the threat to our existence. Consequently, in recalling its development since the Jewish battalions of Trumpeldor and Jabotinsky in the First World War, and the Jewish Brigade and other units in the Second World War, by way of the Haganah, the IZL and Lehi, the use of Jewish arms in a revolt of liberation, a war of defense and salvation from those who rose up against us to destroy us, the Sinai Campaign, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, and all the various campaigns between those wars, we must love our Army, developing and cultivating its strength. We must give our Army the best and the maximal weapons.

I think that it is time we freed ourselves of the school of thought which has prevailed among us for many years, namely, quality vis-à-vis quantity. It is no longer relevant. In modern warfare, as we learned particularly in the Yom Kippur War, the firepower of arms is so immense that a certain quantity becomes a new quality. Whereas in the

past certain numerical proportions seemed tolerable, this is no longer the case today or tomorrow....The nation must make an effort to change the proportions between us and our enemies, so that our soldiers' lives may be saved....They must be given the best and the maximal training.

We were horrified to hear that because of cuts in the defense budget certain of our Army's activities might be affected....I appeal to the entire House...to set this matter straight forthwith, as regards both weapons and training....Our Army must be guaranteed the best defense line. The enemy has revealed his schemes and intentions. The Egyptian leader has said that Israel is a dagger in the heart of the Arab people...the implications being obvious. That description is false, of course. We have returned to the land of our fathers. We never sought to harm the Arab people. The truth is that our enemies have constantly endeavored to put a dagger into our heart....The same enemy also said that one of the principles of Egyptian policy is to isolate Israel in the world. If there were illusions as to a certain respite...that public statement has shattered them....

Sadat has given a new cast to Clausewitz's famous militaristic Prussian statement, namely, that war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means. That is a false definition. Mankind has paid an unimaginably high price in blood because of it. No war is a continuation of anything. A war exists as such, with all its terror, loss of life, orphanhood and bereavement. But Sadat has gone too far, not merely adopting Clausewitz's phrase, but even reversing it to mean that politics are the continuation of war....He has stated openly that he seeks to push Israel back to the 1947 borders and enable Arafat and his henchmen to rule Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip...i.e., to endanger the existence of the Jewish state.

In those circumstances...is it wise to give the enemy such vital positions...? Does it not constitute unprecedented foolhardiness? I appeal to the Government to consider this development once more....The Army is the defender of the nation. The Knesset and the Government, by making wise decisions, must defend the Army. I therefore appeal to you to think once again about the policy of continual withdrawal from political and defense positions after every Egyptian utterance. A new Israeli line—the fourth or fifth—is not sufficient, and the enemy demands an additional withdrawal further east, leaving us without a good defense line....

We have heard of late, particularly since the Yom Kippur War, that the IDF no longer functions as a deterrent force, and can at best, in the event of an enemy attack, fight back, defeat and drive back the enemy. We must not accept that theory. Our army can deter the enemy from renewing his attacks. That is its main task. We do not want war and we have learned...that when we were not ready there was no deterrence, and when we were, there was. That must be our line of thinking for the

future too. If we are ready, if we give our Army the best and the maximal weapons and training, and if we maintain the best defense line, we will be able to deter the enemy and silence all those threats to defeat us....

I ask the Knesset...to remember the great humane and national values which distinguish our Army, a popular force, one whose principal basis is volunteering, one which defends men, women and children, one which knows what the ethics of war are. To those great and lofty values of which we are so proud I would like to add another one, which we believe to be essential: we must teach our Army to love the Land of Israel. It is my view that one cannot tell a Jewish soldier that Jaffa is our homeland but Jericho is a pawn, that Nazareth is Israel but Bethlehem is Palestine....We must tell our soldiers the simple, historical truth, as their fathers and forefathers were taught, as Zionism—the national liberation movement than which none has been more justified—preached....

Our Army is a fighting, not a saluting one. And that is as it should be. But there is no need to jump from one extreme to another. Order, discipline, good taste or, in one word, splendor, are very good for the Army and the individual soldier. External appearance is also important for our nation and others....A pride in one's appearance brings pride in the Army and the entire nation.

I propose that the clause: "The Government shall appoint the Chief of the General Staff in accordance with the recommendation of the Minister of Defense," be replaced by: "The President of Israel shall appoint the Chief of the General Staff in accordance with the decision of the Government, as brought before him by the Minister of Defense." In certain countries the President is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces....I am not proposing that today, but I think that it will bring honor to the Army and the nation if the Chief of the General Staff is officially appointed by the President....The President appoints the judges, although they are chosen by an appointments committee....The same applies to the State Comptroller....

We support the Minister of Justice's motion to transfer the proposal for the Basic Law: the Army to committee, where we will suggest this and possibly other changes. This is a great day for the House...and on the basis of our experience of the past and belief in the future, knowing that the Army will continue to defend the country for generations to come...we take off our hats to the IDF.

...

A. Melamed (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the Basic Law: the Army, whose object is to settle the legal basis of the IDF, our principal defense arm which, with God's help, maintains the existence of the state and the nation, comes before us just as a huge and hostile effort is being made to isolate Israel from the rest of the world and discriminate against it....I would like to remind the House

that almost fifty years ago a law was passed in a European country which put the Jews outside the law. The Secretary-General of the U.N. has appealed to the U.S. not to leave the U.N. should it decide to expel Israel. The Secretary-General comes from the country whence that evil whose name I will not mention here emerged, which passed that law. He is a member of the nation which gave birth to that arch-murderer whom we had the right to judge for his crimes in implementing that law. From that country—and I am speaking from personal experience—issued forth the worst butchers, whose cruelty surpassed even that of the Germans. And that country did not see fit even to compensate us, if compensation is possible, as the Germans did. Consequently, the distinguished Secretary-General should think long and hard before abetting the isolation of Israel, wherein the surviving remnant of the slaughter perpetrated by his countrymen has found refuge....

I agree with MK Begin that this is a great day for us...and that we take off our hats to the IDF....But we must also take spiritual stock....

The nation's attitude to the IDF has been extremely unbalanced. At times we have all but idolized it, while after the difficult days of the Yom Kippur War we went to the other extreme....We must beware of exaggerating the importance of strength and being made haughty by our military prowess, as happened to us after the Six Day War....We have made many mistakes in every sphere—social, spiritual, moral and political. The IDF is the principal component of our strength, but not the only one. The nation's spiritual and moral strength may be even more important still....We must learn from the Yom Kippur War, which served as a sign from God....

We recommend that the proposed law be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee....

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we welcome the proposal before us today, and this is indeed a great day. I think that the Basic Law: the Army, should contain a clause determining the IDF's non-involvement in political matters....I am also of the opinion that the subject of emergency mobilization should be settled in the law...so that time need not be wasted in deciding on it, as happened in the Yom Kippur War...and that the subject of General Staff Orders should be defined more clearly....

I think it would be appropriate to use this opportunity to say a few words about the concept of "strength" in the life of the Jewish people. The Jewish people paid a dreadful price in order to learn the difference between reality and aspirations. The nation which, two thousand and six hundred years ago, promulgated the greatest human social vision: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation and they shall study war no more," lost countless lives to learn that without strength it cannot have peace.

I would like to remind the House, and especially the leader of the Opposition, that just as we must learn the lesson that there will be no peace without strength, our nation has had a history of tremendous strength. We fought the Greek and Roman empires, often defeating our enemies and displaying supreme physical heroism and spiritual strength, as has been recorded with admiration in the annals of mankind....But, unfortunately, that was not enough to assure our national existence....Thus, we must realize that without strength there will be no peace, but strength is not enough if it is not guided by political wisdom which is able to consider reality as well as aspirations and realize that the benefit of strength lies in its ability to bring this nation peace....

...

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the fact that it was necessary to propose a law making the Army subject to the Government and the Chief of the General Staff to the civil authorities indicates that in reality this was not the case until now, despite the existence of the IDF Ordinance, 5708-1948, which determined the Army's subordination to the Government. In reality, the Government and the Ministry of Defense created an atmosphere of mystery and secrecy around the activities of the Ministry of Defense. This enabled the Minister of Defense and his aides...to do as they pleased in the Ministry, without public control. This also set the scene for all kinds of corruption, deception and bribery, which have been going on for years but have only recently come to light.

The most serious thing, however, is the Government's militaristic policy, a policy of force, which has existed since the establishment of the state. This policy created a feeling in the country that the Army was above everything and all-powerful. It also granted a special status to the Minister of Defense and the Ministry of Defense...enabling him to dictate policy to the entire Government, particularly with regard to relations with the neighboring countries and the Palestinian Arab nation....This gave rise, particularly after the Six Day War, to the well-known concept regarding ideal borders and the indestructibility of the IDF...leading eventually to the Yom Kippur War.

General Meir Amit (Res.) has been quoted in the press as maintaining that Israel has erred in being too haughty, overestimating its own strength and underestimating that of the Arabs...and that this attitude was cultivated and encouraged by the political leadership....Regrettably, even after the October War, which proved the failure of that concept, the Government and the Minister of Defense continue with the same policy....Thus, it is not merely the law—which we oppose—which is at fault. We would approve a law which stressed that the IDF was one of the state's national institutions, that the Army was subject to civil authority, which defined the status of the Chief of the General Staff and his

subordination to civil authority, but that alone would not be enough. What is needed is a basic change in the Government's policy.

What more has to happen in our region? How much more blood has to be shed? How many casualties, how many widows and orphans, are needed to open the eyes of those responsible for this policy of Israel's Government and lead it away from the policy of force to the paths of peace? Today, when most of the world is going towards a policy of detente and peaceful coexistence, the Government is continuing with its policy of force....Detente could prevail in our region too and a peaceful solution could be found to the Middle East conflict. Resolutions have been passed by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the U.N. The Government of Israel must declare its readiness to implement those resolutions and then it will be possible to progress towards a just and peaceful solution in the region....A change in the mere form of the law will not alter anything....What is needed is a change in the Government's policy from one of war to one of peace.

...
M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I agree with those who suggest transferring this proposal to committee. But I would like to express my disappointment with the law from this podium. I think that what has been brought before us is a rather superficial attempt to implement the recommendations of the Agranat Commission, while what should have been done was to formulate a law which crystallized a basic structure for the defense network that would prevent future mishaps....

Accordingly, I propose...adding to Clause 2: "In order to avoid having strategic decision of political significance made by individual leaders, a National Security Council, consisting of the Prime Minister and public figures, should be set up in one of the following forms:

1. The entire Government can serve as the National Security Council;
2. A group of Ministers can be appointed as the National Security Council;
3. The Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee can function as the National Security Council....

Any form is acceptable, but the Prime Minister must inform the Knesset of its composition not later than two months after it has begun to function....Strategic decisions of political significance are, for example, declaring war, mobilizing all the reserves, the settlement policy in the occupied territories, etc...and these cannot be left solely to the discretion of the Minister of Defense, the Prime Minister or the Chief of Staff....

I also propose that the phrase: "The Chief of the General Staff shall be the senior military adviser to the Government of Israel," be added to Clause 3. This should prevent any private or general advisers from rep-

resenting themselves as military advisers....The law should also make it clear that the Chief of the General Staff commands the land forces as well as the heads of the Air Force and the Navy....I am speaking from extensive personal experience when I say that this hierarchy must be clarified in order to avoid problems....I do not think that the Government needs automatically to accept the Minister of Defense's recommendation as to the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff, and I therefore propose that the law read: "The Government shall appoint the Chief of Staff."...

Since this is a golden opportunity to define what the IDF is, I propose replacing Clause 6 with the following passage: "A. The social basis of the IDF is the idea of a popular army based on the principle of national service and reserve duty. B. Methods of mobilization to the IDF; age of mobilization, term of service for men and women soldiers, the various kinds of service, etc. should be determined by law. C. Ways of undertaking reserve duty: the age-span for men and women, kinds of service, methods of mobilization in an emergency and at other times, period of service in an emergency and at other times, etc. should be determined by law. D. In order to maintain an adequate level of organization and professionalism in the IDF, the Minister of Defense, in consultation with the Chief of the General Staff, is entitled to determine the number of persons serving permanently in the IDF, in accordance with objective needs and the budget."...

...
The Minister of Justice, H. Tzadok: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the object of these two proposals was to settle certain legal questions pertaining to the IDF. In my innocence, I believed that the debate would focus on the subject on the agenda...but be that as it may...I am glad that I found unqualified agreement throughout the House for the principle of the supremacy of the civil authority over the Army....MK Begin proposed that the Chief of Staff should be appointed by the President, like judges, the State Comptroller, etc....The reason for having these and other officials appointed by the President is to stress their independent status....

If there is one position in Israel where the officeholder's dependence on the Government and the Minister of Defense has to be stressed, it is that of the Chief of the General Staff. The Government must have full control over the IDF and the person who heads its command structure. Whether one is appointed by the President has nothing to do with the importance of the position....The Minister of Defense is empowered to mobilize the reserves in an emergency, in accordance with Clause 26 of the Defense Service Law, if he is convinced that the security of the country requires this....He may do this in consultation with the Prime Minister, by virtue of the authority invested in him by the Government....

The Chief of the General Staff is subordinate to the Minister of Defense in everything. Naturally, the Minister of Defense will not interfere in everything, and will uphold the authority of the IDF, the Chief of the General Staff and the commanders in their operative fields....I am perfectly content with the opening phrase of the proposal: "The IDF is the Army of the State of Israel." I would say that this expresses the concept which we hear in various military contexts, namely, that Israel is a state which has an army, rather than the IDF being an army which has a state....The proposal makes no innovation in stating that the IDF is subordinate to the civil authorities. That has always been the case.... What is true is that the timing of the proposal and part of its content have been influenced by the recommendations of the Agranat Commission, and it is important that this principle should be fixed in a normative, constitutional form....

I think that the practical implication of MK Pa'il's proposal that the Chief of the General Staff be appointed by the Government is the politicization of the position....I do not agree that every Minister should have the right to propose a candidate for the post....I do agree that care must be taken to ensure that the IDF and its commanders on active service are not involved in politics....I think that this should be expressed, as it is, in the orders of the Supreme Command and the General Staff's instructions. Whether this principle should appear in the Basic Law is another question. I think that the structure we have determined in the Basic Law regarding the IDF's non-intervention in politics derives from that. I think that the commanders of the IDF must refrain from making public pronouncements on controversial public issues and political subjects....

I do not think that the topic of the National Security Council should be included in the Basic Law. The National Security Council is a tool which the Government may set up in one form or another in order to assist the Government and the Minister of Defense in accomplishing their work. It is something for the Government and the Knesset to decide...but the Government cannot divest itself of responsibility....I propose that the Basic Law: the Army, like every Basic Law, be discussed by the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, while the other proposal, the Military Justice (Amendment No. 9) Law, 5735-1975, be discussed by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

(The Motion to transfer the two proposals to the appropriate committees is adopted.)

Interim Agreement between Israel and Egypt

Introduction

After prolonged shuttle talks conducted by Secretary of State Kissinger, which were deadlocked in March 1975 and resumed in August of that year, an additional Interim Agreement between Israel and Egypt was ready for initialling in Geneva on 3 September 1975. Israel undertook to return to Egyptian civilian control the important oil fields at Abu Rodeis, which, since 1967, had supplied about 60 percent of Israel's petroleum requirements. It also agreed to withdraw from the strategic Mitla and Gidi passes and from territory further north, which from then on would become a buffer zone under U.N. supervision. Israel would maintain its electronic early warning system at Um Hashiba, to the west of the passes, a position from which a wide area reaching well into the heartland of Egypt could be electronically surveyed; Egypt would be permitted to establish a parallel station to the east, giving electronic access to a large area under Israel's control. For the first time in the history of the conflict—an innovation widely discussed in the U.S. and elsewhere—an American presence would be established, 200 technicians manning an independent electronic surveillance facility, whose findings would be reported to both sides. The former U.N. belt was now to be occupied by Egyptian troops, with another, wider U.N. belt being established further east. In return for Israel's concessions Egypt joined Israel in an undertaking that they would not resort to the threat or use of force or military blockade against each other; Egypt also committed itself to permitting the passage through the Suez Canal of non-military cargoes to and from Israel. (The question as to who is the attacker has always been a difficult one to decide. It will be remembered that even in October 1973 the first Egyptian and Syrian communiques referred to an Israeli attack repulsed by Arab forces.) The agreement was to remain in force until superseded by another one. In a separate document the Egyptian government undertook to agree to automatic renewal of the mandate of the U.N. forces for a period of three years. Egypt also pledged to moderate its political propaganda and boycott warfare against Israel.

To make up for the imbalance between Israel's strategic, territorial and economic concessions, and the Egyptian *quid pro quo*, which was a far cry from the non-belligerence which had earlier been stipulated as a *conditio sine qua non* for withdrawal from the passes, the U.S. government made certain commitments to Israel, including guarantees for oil supplies in case of embargo and their financing, as well as arms sup-

plies and political consultations in the future. These commitments demonstrated the U.S. interest in attaining the agreement, as part of a strategy designed to displace the Soviet Union in Egypt and assert U.S. primacy in the Middle East. In the course of subsequent Congressional hearings it was made clear that, barring the first mentioned undertaking, the one concerning oil, the remaining commitments were not to be considered "legally binding." The agreement was signed by both military and diplomatic representatives. By the end of February 1976 all the military and civilian dispositions resulting from the agreement had been accomplished.

Sitting 210 of the Eighth Knesset

3 September 1975 (27 Elul 5735)

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, today the Government is bringing before the Knesset the agreement between Israel and Egypt...after it has approved and initialled it...The agreement with Egypt is the product of the continuous political efforts of the Government, in accordance with the basic guidelines of the Government headed by Golda Meir in March 1974 and of the Government headed by myself, as approved by the Knesset in June 1974.

Our main objective was...to attain peace with each of the neighboring countries....In the absence of peace, because of the refusal of the Arab leaders to reach a genuine peace with us along defensible borders, and considering the alternatives the continuation of the situation involved, we decided to aim for an interim settlement with Egypt, the principal Arab country, as a step towards a lasting peace.

The agreement we have initialled with Egypt is a document which embodies great hopes. Its principal significance is political; its main content is that agreement is reached regarding the fact that neither force nor weapons shall characterize the relations between Israel and Egypt; that we will not use force against one another; and that contractual and public agreement has been reached that our two countries are resolved to reach a final and just peace agreement through negotiations.

Similar positive Egyptian expressions were included in various documents in the past, but they cited and relied on U.N. papers and resolutions. To date, no agreement between Israel and Egypt has said in a categorical, contractual and public way, and without reference to the U.N., that the dispute between us and Egypt will be resolved by peace, not war....I attach considerable political importance to the fact that the Egyptian President found it possible for his government to sign an agreement of this kind with Israel, an agreement which exists in its own right, without being dependent on developments on other fronts. I

am not saying that the President of Egypt has violated Arab solidarity, merely that he has adopted a realistic approach....We decided to sign the agreement with our southern neighbor not because we do not wish to reach peace with the other neighboring Arab countries, but because we realized that progress on the Israel-Egypt front was attainable and should not be postponed....

It is our belief that the undertaking not to use force in the relations between Israel and Egypt will help to attain solutions with the other neighboring countries too. The close involvement of the U.S. in the process of attaining the agreement and in its results on the ground, in the bilateral sphere, in the relations between the U.S. and Egypt, and in the global context, is also of political significance. If, as I hope, there is a real chance of a change for the better in the relations between Israel and Egypt, every additional significant step towards peace will be a continuation and development of this agreement.

I am sure that the agreement is in the interests of both countries. Egypt's vital interest in attaining and maintaining this agreement strengthens the realistic dimension and expands the political horizon of this agreement, even though it is couched in legal language, as agreements generally are. The political significance is the main point of the agreement, and what we have received in exchange for the concessions we have made justifies taking a reasonable risk....I am not one of those who disregards the significance of lines, routes and distances. I am aware of the value of those things for Israel's security on the various fronts....It should, however, be remembered that Israel's basic security considerations are complex and interconnected and cannot be restricted solely to the subject of territory. Taking Israel's basic and overall security into account, it can be said that even according to the map to which we have agreed, we retain territory, routes and continued strategic control which guarantee us defensive and offensive advantages should Egypt go to war....

It was with a heavy heart that we agreed to the map and I am not here to say that the new border is better than the old one. What I am here to say is: A. the IDF is firmly entrenched on the new line; B. the conditions for the IDF's reinforcement through more and better weapons have been assured; C. assessing things coolly in terms of overall security considerations, after the agreement Israel will be stronger both politically and militarily....

During the negotiations on the interim settlement with Egypt, and taking into consideration the risk Israel was taking, we pressed the U.S. government to ensure Israel's military and economic strength. I note with gratitude that the U.S. government, President and Secretary of State displayed understanding for Israel's needs and that accord was reached on several subjects. This guarantees us U.S. aid in the process of Israel's rebuilding and reinforcement, in the purchase of the sophis-

ticated weaponry required by the IDF and in important political subjects arising from Israel's and the U.S.'s joint interests in a regional and international context.

I would like to add that we gave up the oil we were pumping from the Abu Rodeis field. We never regarded Abu Rodeis as Israel's property in perpetuity and we did not agree to give it up until we had assured the supply and storage of the oil for Israel.

I hope that the U.S. Congress will endorse President Ford's readiness for the U.S. to be involved in the early warning system in the Sinai, which will benefit both sides. The details are in the document before you. This was proposed in view of the need to strengthen the stability and reliability of the agreement beyond what can be expected from the U.N. Emergency Force. The proposed American civilian presence, once approved, will take up its positions with the agreement of both sides. It is not being imposed on anyone. It is a total distortion to represent this presence as an expression of selfish U.S. interests...or U.S. military involvement in the region....

I endorse what President Sadat said after the agreement was signed: "Let us look forward to a new era, because I am sure that the agreement we have signed today constitutes a turning-point in the Arab-Israel conflict." The implementation of the undertaking implied in that statement depends on both sides. The Israeli side is resolved to work for real peace, and has proved this by the risk it has taken. During the exhausting negotiations one was aware of the tension, suspicion and alienation in the climate of relations between us and Egypt. These were initially evinced in the refusal to recognize the existence of the State of Israel on any borders, and were heightened by successive wars and the lack of human contact between Israel and Egypt. The clauses of this agreement, such as the joint Israel-Egypt Committee and the shared use of the road, may perhaps enable the first shoots of relations and a different atmosphere to emerge....

I bring this agreement before the Knesset in the full awareness of the hopes and hazards it embodies....It is a possibility, not a certainty, and that is why security alertness will continue. The agreement rests on: A. the strength, power and alertness of the IDF; and B. our striving for peace. We hope that our neighbor has a basic interest in moving away from war and towards peace. If Egypt truly wants peace Israel will be prepared to replace the present agreement with a final peace treaty, with all the territorial changes this involves, including the IDF's disposition on permanent, defensible borders.

This is no panacea. There are tensions and difficult struggles ahead of us....It is dangerous to regard the agreement as a permit for social disintegration, for loosening the belt instead of tightening it. It is dangerous to regard the agreement as a permit for disregarding personal and public values and for behaving in ways which do not fit our

values, possibilities and missions. We will have to devote our best efforts to those subjects. I ask the Knesset to approve the agreement between Israel and Egypt, with its appendices....

M. Begin (Likud): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, Knesset Members...I call on all the Members of the House to note what the U.S. President said to the Egyptian ruler, Sadat, when the Israeli withdrawal agreement was initialled in Jerusalem and Alexandria. He promised Sadat that he would not tolerate a deadlock. One would have thought that President Ford should have used the past tense, meaning that he had kept his promise, made Israel withdraw, returned the Abu Rodeis oil fields to Egypt, and also restored the Gidi and Mitla passes to them. But the President was using the future tense.

We have heard the word "deadlock" throughout the last few months. It featured prominently in the pressures exerted on Israel. The ink has barely dried on the interim signatures and we are already being told that shortly after the withdrawal there may be deadlock and it will not be tolerated. How does one break a deadlock in the Middle East? By an Israeli withdrawal. This, then, is a specific and general assurance to Sadat in the wake of the withdrawal agreement....

Sadat, for his part, has said that if there is no parallel interim agreement with Syria "the Middle East will be a very dangerous area," as he put it. His deputy has said that if Israel does not continue withdrawing there will be war. Two days ago they undertook not to resort to force...and before the ink has dried on that commitment they are making threats....Against this background we must examine two issues today: A. the negotiation process; and B. the nature of the agreement. The Government is once again trying to create the impression that there were free negotiations between two countries with the mediation of a third party, a Power, and after lengthy deliberations an agreement, which is now before us, was reached. It is my duty to say that this is a sham. Deception will be to no avail. That is not how the talks on this agreement were conducted.

During those two months tremendous pressure was exerted on the Government of Israel to abandon its official positions and withdraw further east. I will adduce proof of this. I can still hear the Prime Minister saying from this podium that unless Egypt annuls the state of belligerency the oil fields of Abu Rodeis and the Gidi and Mitla passes would remain in our hands, in the IDF's hands. How vehemently that assertion was made!...Why was the reverse assertion broadcast over the radio in the U.S...? Prime Minister Rabin tells us that during the negotiations it transpired that Egypt would not be able to annul the state of belligerency. How did that transpire, sir? Over the radio? On television?...Why did you not try to clarify whether that was really the case or not? But you made conflicting statements in the U.S. and from this podium....And what is left of the assurance you gave...? It is no mere

trifle. The annulment of war is the key to all the relations between us and the Arab countries. Why did you relinquish that condition...? Was there no pressure from Dr. Kissinger...?

I recall another statement you made, namely, that we would be prepared to forego that condition—the annulment of the state of war—but we would not withdraw from all the passes and proposed that they be divided up. The reply you received was: if you're proposing to divide up the passes, that's deadlock. The word "deadlock" terrified you...so you moved the border east and relinquished the annulment of the state of war...It is quite obvious, then, that the Government succumbed to pressure. That is the truth. It did not wish to relinquish its source of energy...and the passes, but it made very forceful statements from which it retreated under pressure....

So do not try to tell the Knesset that there were free negotiations by means of which you reached an agreement which you think is reasonable, or at least the lesser of the two evils. That is not the case. You surrendered, gentlemen, you gave in to pressures, you withdrew from your positions, one by one, one line after another....Now you are trying to create rejoicing in Israel by artificial means. There is no rejoicing in Israel. This is no disengagement. It is withdrawal. It is throwing away the fruits of victory of the Six Day War. And you are already being assured that when there has been further withdrawal no deadlock will be tolerated and further withdrawals will be demanded. This is not a step towards peace, it is a step towards additional pressure and concessions....

Of course, Dr. Kissinger, in his wisdom, told you not to say that the withdrawal line was determined by pressure from Washington, because...that would only invite pressure on them from the Arabs to put more pressure on you....You say that there has been a change in the relations between us and Egypt in the political-legal sphere arising from Egypt's undertaking not to resort to force, to negotiate with us, etc. I wish I could agree with you on that. Unfortunately, it has no basis in reality, the principal reason being that you knowingly left the state of war in existence. How did you do that? You demanded that the state of war be annulled. You received a flat refusal. You were told that even after additional withdrawals the state of war would not be annulled, and that that assurance would be given only after there had been total withdrawal and the establishment of the State of Arafat in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. In other words, you yourselves endorsed the state of war between us and Egypt....

A much firmer commitment to refrain from the use of force was given in the Armistice Agreement....Then, too, Egypt maintained that the state of war remained in force, and in the wake of that undertaking we have had five wars in the Middle East. Consequently, I repeat that the verbiage which Mr. Rabin regarded as virtually worthless in March

remains virtually worthless today if the state of war remains, as it does. And between March and August the circle of the zero has been squared ...but only in someone's imagination, not in reality. The state of war between Egypt and us remains. Sadat's objectives remain unchanged...: Israel's total withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967 and what he refers to with deliberate vagueness as restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, and we all know what that means—endangering Israel's existence....

We have heard of late that the Gidi and Mitla passes...are of slight importance....The Prime Minister has not said that, but several persons in high positions have. I would like to remind the Chief of the General Staff that he is subordinate to the elected civil authority, namely, the Knesset, and that if he makes a mistake we will not hesitate to reprimand him and tell him that there are differences of opinion in this House and the country. That person in high position who heads our Army—and the Army must retain its apolitical character—may not interfere in a public debate of this kind. He should not say things from which it can be inferred that the withdrawal is good for Israel. There are very many people who are convinced that the withdrawal is very grave for Israel's future....

But I would like to ask, what logical basis is there for claiming that the new line is better than the previous one? Do we not remember the Disengagement Agreement? From this podium it was said that the line determined in the Disengagement Agreement was the best for the defense of Israel....How is it possible to try to mislead the nation in this way...? How is it possible to make mutually contradictory statements...? Why should we allow this irresponsible kind of talk in Israel? If the explanation is that now the situation is better because each side, each army, is further away from the other...maybe you should withdraw further still, before Dr. Kissinger asks you to, and then things will be even better. If that is the case, then there will be no end to things....There is no logic in those statements, and an end must be put to them specifically because they come from military men.

We have relinquished an important source of oil which supplied more than half our annual requirement. I know, the U.S. has promised us an alternative supply, and will even pay for it...but by agreeing to that apparently beneficial agreement we are increasing our dependence on the U.S...and our vulnerability to further pressure....

I am aware of a certain undertaking to fight alongside us which has been given by Egypt in the event of an attack upon us by Syria. I am not authorized to cite it in full, though parts of it have been leaked...and the undertaking itself is praiseworthy. But throughout the negotiations we were told that if Israel attacks Syria, Egypt will fight alongside Syria....I therefore wish to warn the Knesset in view of our experience of the past....The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War was planned and ex-

ecuted by Egypt and Syria in close coordination...and I doubt whether that undertaking we received is worth the paper it's written on. Of course Israel will not attack Syria. Syria will attack Israel and claim the reverse, as happened with the Yom Kippur War...bringing Egypt into the fray, too....

The settlement before us is bad. It is a withdrawal, not a disengagement of forces. We are withdrawing, the enemy is advancing. What will the future bring? Of course Sadat can say that for him it is a turning point. He knows and states his objective, and this is a step towards attaining it....He also knows and states his interpretation of Resolution 338....

The Government should have taken the decision on such an important issue to the entire nation....The rules of democracy indicate that one should let the nation decide on such a crucial issue....Did anyone imagine in December 1973 that Israel would leave the oil fields of Abu Rodeis and the Mitla and Gidi passes with a state of war prevailing and in the knowledge of the enemy's objectives? Had that been discussed in any election meeting? Had not Mr. Rabin said precisely the opposite in February...? Since the subject has not been discussed in public, and since it is of vital importance for our future, we must let the public decide....You maintain that the majority of the public supports you. Go ahead and see. Reality might prove otherwise. Let us try. Nothing is clear. Nothing is certain....

We are always asked—what is the alternative...? We reject the Egyptian demands, we will stand firm, the pressure will be to no avail and the whole nation shall be united....The security of Israel, the future of the nation, the fruits of our victory, the lives of our children in the Land of Israel, the lives of future generations, are all at stake....It is disingenuous to ask what the alternative is. You ruined the alternative yourselves. You once insisted that there should be direct negotiations for a peace treaty, otherwise there would be no change in the situation fixed by the ceasefire or any other agreement....Nonetheless, our reply is that there is an alternative, which is: A. in a state of war which has been officially declared by the enemy, for whom no verbiage changes the relations between our two countries, we will not abandon vital defense positions; B. there must be direct negotiations for a peace treaty; C. the entire nation, in Israel and the diaspora, and all the many forces which are friendly to Israel, must be mobilized and united, so that these principles may be implemented.

...

Z. Warhaftig (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, it is with a heavy heart that I come to support the interim settlement. The Government also deliberated at length before initialling it...realizing that it does not solve anything. I have not supported interim settlements of this kind in the past, preferring to utilize the political arena, even if

this means risking a military confrontation...with all that it involves, in order to attain peace with our neighbors. But since we have found ourselves at a dead end, and are confronted with the necessity of reaching another interim settlement with Egypt, let us hope that it will be the last such settlement and will be followed by peace and good neighborly relations.

I suggest that we refrain from adopting extreme positions in assessing the settlement, whether positively or negatively....The settlement should be accepted without any victory fanfares, but neither with lamentation. The settlement is not good, but neither is it a disaster....For Israel the agreement is not a significant turning point...but neither is it one of the mishaps of the Yom Kippur War. It is one of several attempts to attain a permanent peace agreement with our neighbors, in the wake of ceasefire agreements, armistice agreements and disengagement agreements....

The nature of agreements between countries which have been at war with one another for several decades...depends to a great extent on the way they are interpreted by the two sides....We must try to create a good atmosphere around the agreement. What is good about the agreement...is the realization by both sides that the Middle East conflict must be resolved by peaceful means, not by force, and that the agreement is a step towards a just and lasting peace through negotiations....We, the Jewish people, which yearns for peace, must not reject that principle...and must make our neighbors equally aware of its importance....

The interim settlement defers the possible outbreak of war...let us hope that it does, and although we have paid a high price for that abstract principle in far-reaching military and strategic concessions, I accept what the military experts have said...namely, that our security will not be threatened....I am not ignoring the fact that the primary reason for our accepting the interim settlement after years of insisting on direct peace negotiations...is the influence of the U.S....But I do not reject out of hand the validity of the interests and global political considerations of a great and friendly country. Firstly, those considerations involve bringing tranquillity to a troubled region and diverting the resources of the nations of the region to solving their social, economic and cultural problems. Taking the interests of a Power which is friendly to Israel into account is a valid consideration for us.

Regrettably, little Israel does not have many friends in the world, and we need friends...."A people may dwell alone," but a country may not. The friendship of the U.S. is precious to us...and we must cultivate it even if the price is high....The interim settlement involves grave hazards and great hopes. One of the hopes is a period of relative tranquillity. The question is whether we will be able to use it wisely and well. Will we utilize it to strengthen the unity of the nation in Zion prior to the great tasks ahead of us? Will we be able to adapt our mode of life to

reality without adhering to illusions? Will we insist on endeavoring to raise our standard of living beyond what we can afford? I fear industrial unrest more than I fear the Saudi Arabian boycott and the sanctions of the U.N....

If we utilize the period of calm well...we may hope to influence our neighbors to see that there are other ways of resolving the problems between us, namely, the path of peace, which constitutes the basis of the interim settlement. There is hope, and as the High Holy Days approach we will pray, in the words of Isaiah: "And in that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria (Assyria meaning Syria here), even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

...

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Interim Agreement with Egypt is far from being perfect, but it represents the maximum which can be attained in the existing conditions. It is better than the agreement which we were being pressed to accept in March...and is accompanied by far-reaching U.S. and other undertakings which are virtually unprecedented in the relations between our two countries. It is true that we have taken a certain risk, but we did so in order to attain important aims: to try and break the vicious circle of wars and find a new path to resolving the Israel-Arab conflict by peaceful means; to reduce Egyptian motivation to wage war on Israel or participate in a war against us; and to rehabilitate our relations with the U.S. in order to continue the process of our military and economic reinforcement.

This Agreement is not the end of the road....We must regard it as a stage, as the preparation of the ground for a comprehensive agreement, and we must prepare the next stage now, during the respite granted us, because we will be deluding ourselves if we think that it will be a period of tranquillity. Those who oppose the settlement must prove that they have a viable alternative, while those who approve of it must prove that it does not endanger Israel's security.

It is obvious to me that the alternative could be a rift with the U.S. and the eventual inevitability of more warfare, a process we have been involved in since the establishment of the state. MK Begin has tried to claim that the alternative is direct negotiations for a comprehensive peace...but if such negotiations were held does he really think we would not have to make far-reaching territorial compromises, to which he does not agree, in Judea and Samaria, for example...? I also think that there must be an end to statements to the effect that the Agreement endangers Israel's security. I do not think the new line is so wonderful, it may be worse than the present one, but there is no doubt that it is defensible, and can even serve as a point of departure for an attack, should that be nec-

essary. Consequently, the security hazard is very small and is taken for the sake of a very great hope....

With his usual flood of rhetoric, MK Begin notes every inconsistency in the Government's statements. But that is not the real problem. Is it possible to conduct negotiations without budging one inch from one's initial position?

E. Olmert (Likud): Yes, the Egyptians did.

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Didn't Egypt shift its position? Whereas we may have made certain tactical changes, the change in the Egyptian position was one of essence as well. Didn't Egypt adhere to the three noes of Khartoum? Didn't Nasser say that what had been taken by force would be returned by force? And now, hasn't Sadat signed an Agreement with the Government of Israel in which there is a clause saying explicitly that the conflict will be resolved by peaceful means...?

It has been claimed that we have given a great deal in return for nothing. I agree that the Egyptians' political contribution is insufficient and is supplemented by the American one. But it cannot be claimed that the Egyptians have contributed nothing. They have certainly made a political contribution, albeit inadequate...and the U.S. undertaking is substantial and unprecedented...not only in the sphere of aid. There is an undertaking by a Power in the event of a violation of the Agreement and the endangering of our security; there is an undertaking that the U.S. will afford us political and diplomatic aid. There is an understanding between us and the U.S. as regards joint strategy should the Agreement be violated, as regards relations with Jordan and Syria and as regards future procedures at Geneva....

This Agreement gives us three basic advantages: first, the rehabilitation of the friendly alliance between us and the U.S., and let us not speak of dependence...; secondly, the opening of the path towards the peaceful solution of the conflict...and thirdly, the facilitation of Israel's military and economic reinforcement.

The opponents of the Agreement maintain that Egypt will not adhere to it....That may happen...but the likelihood of war breaking out without an agreement is greater than with one....Furthermore, won't our position be better with the U.S. commitment to extend us military aid should there be war than without it...? We may have lost a certain amount of territory, but we have gained strength, weapons, and political and economic aid, and so with the Agreement we are stronger than without it.

MK Begin claimed that we are deluding the nation if we claim that we are now going to have a period of tranquillity. I do not think that there is any such delusion....There may be military quiet on the Egyptian front, at least, we hope there will be. There is no guarantee that there will be quiet on the Syrian front. It can be assumed that the PLO will be more active. There will certainly not be political quiet. That is

why we must regard the Interim Agreement as an important preparation for a comprehensive settlement. We must not sit and wait until we are surprised again or confronted with initiatives and pressures from the outside. We must formulate our own comprehensive settlement now, our own initiative, an Israeli peace plan, and utilize the limited respite we have been granted and the new atmosphere which has been created to persuade the Americans...of the justice of our plan....

It is my impression that the policy of stages has been exhausted. That is why we must formulate a comprehensive plan now, taking into account our security, the future borders, the need to solve the Palestinian problem and our international position. I know that this will give rise to deep differences of opinion among us. But there will be nothing for it other than to decide. One needs courage for peace as well as for war. I am convinced that the next elections will have to constitute a democratic decision as to an Israeli peace plan based on a territorial compromise....

I believe that the period of tranquillity should be used for two main aims: A. to crystallize an Israeli peace plan and bring it to the people, making use of the U.S. readiness to coordinate positions with us to convince it of the justice of our position; B. to settle our internal affairs by introducing essential reforms in the social and economic spheres.... The entire House must serve as the watchdog of democracy. Whatever decisions are made...however difficult...must be accepted without exhibitions of violence, verbal abuse and the cultivation of internal dissension, and reached through fair debate and democratic decisions, whether by elections, in the Knesset or in the Government....

We have taken another step towards creating a new reality and solving the Israel-Arab conflict. We must be ready for any violation of the agreement, but we must act so as to widen the crack in the front of Arab intransigence so that we may advance towards peace. We must not relax our alertness, but we must do everything so that this settlement will be a real turning point in our relations with Egypt, and perhaps with the whole Arab world too.

A. Eban (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, we have heard the Government's statement regarding the Agreement with Egypt, followed by MK Begin's proposal that we refuse to approve it. I confess that while listening to MK Begin's speech memories extending over all the years since the establishment of the state came into my mind. I remember the speeches made by MK Begin and his colleagues against the Armistice Agreement of 1949...against the settlements of 1956 which ended the Sinai campaign, against the ceasefire of 1970, against the U.S. peace initiative which concluded the War of Attrition, against the ceasefire in October 1973, against the six-point agreement, against participation in the Geneva Conference according to the conditions which enabled it to be held, against the Disengagement Agreement with Egypt,

against the disengagement with Syria. And so, I must admit, that had I not heard his "against" today, I would have been very surprised. For in actual fact, the debate between us does not refer solely to this Agreement, but to basic world-views regarding the handling of political situations.

The memory of former disagreements between us is still fresh. One does not have to be a great scholar to find faults, blemishes, ambiguities and risks in the agreements I have mentioned. But the question which arose on each occasion was not the internal quality of the agreement but the overall balance. Today, too, the Knesset is not being asked to interpret or analyze or evaluate. It must decide. The decision is not between this Agreement and a better one. It is between accepting or rejecting this Agreement, the only attainable one. In other words, the calculation has to be one of the result of approving the Agreement today or rejecting it after the Government has given it its approval.

Anyone who proposes not approving this Agreement today owes the nation an explanation. He must point out what is wrong with the Agreement, what the situation will be after it is rejected and why that situation does not embody far graver political and security dangers than the situation following its approval....We still have not heard what those who would reject the Agreement have to offer in its stead...what their alternative plan is...what would be done the day after it was annulled... or, rather, rejected, since it has not yet been approved....How do you envisage advancing Israel's principal aims regarding security, peace, development, production and growth, after this Agreement has been overthrown...? How do you propose dealing with the relations with the U.S...after months of negotiations? In the depths of your minds do you not realize that once that happens Israel will have no solution to any of its various problems?

M. Yedid (Likud): Who caused that?

A. Eban (Alignment): In that case, let us vote and determine who caused it. Today we are voting on whether to approve the Agreement or not....It is true that a few months ago the country, the Government, faced several possibilities regarding its political direction: an interim agreement with Jordan, a comprehensive agreement within the framework of the Geneva Conference, a comprehensive agreement with Egypt, and an interim agreement with Egypt. I must admit that it is not solely due to the decision of the Government of Israel that the direction of the Interim Agreement with Egypt was preferred. Regrettably, Egypt and the U.S. had reasons for feeling that the time was not yet ripe to discuss a comprehensive agreement. Months have passed, long and tortuous negotiations have been held, and now it is being suggested that we withhold our approval and smash all our hopes for political progress in the future.

Admittedly, if this Agreement contained any threat to the security of the state it would be our duty to annul it, even at this late stage. But can one seriously claim that the security of the state is harmed by the Agreement before us...? Our international right to use the Suez Canal was guaranteed under the previous agreement...and we will not implement one paragraph of this settlement until that condition of the previous one is upheld.

There is a limited security risk. That is the paradox of this Agreement...but no risk would be alleviated by annulling it...on the contrary, by doing so our security risks would be increased...our relations with both Egypt and the U.S. worsened...and our chances of obtaining oil reduced....There is no inconsistency between seeing the imperfections of the Agreement and voting for it today as the only way out of the present deadlock towards the achievement of our national aims....I am not in favor of blindly accepting every U.S. attitude, as the history of our country has proved...but one cannot read or write about Jewish history without realizing that the downfall of Jewish independence in the past was due to the inability of rulers to navigate their policy between aggressive empires. In historical terms, the Jewish people has not been blessed with sensitivity to the balance of power and the need to fortify its position within it, and in view of the tragedies and dangers of our history any shadow of a rift in our relations with the U.S. must give us cause for deep anxiety....I will not say that our existence depends on the U.S., but without it we will have no arms, no political backing and no powerful international ally....

I do not think that the U.S. President's remark about not tolerating deadlock need alarm the Israeli public....Israel's policy does not favor deadlock....Our principal task today is to make it clear that what lies ahead is not torpidity and the neglect of our other political problems, but the clearing of the ground, even in a modest way, so that we may tackle them more vigorously. The U.S. President's remark would alarm only those who are deluded into thinking that there will be a protracted period of political tranquillity, for after signing this Agreement there may well be developments with regard to Syria....There will be no tranquillity on the Palestinian-Jordanian front. There is no cause to think that the Arab world will quietly tolerate our remaining in 85 percent of Sinai and 100 percent of the other territories without exerting pressure on us to continue the political process. That is a delusion....

Is there any real change in Egypt's policy...? That question will be answered solely by the test of reality, and this Agreement is part of it....In my opinion, it cannot be said that nothing has changed. Even some of the vague phrases of this Agreement contain faint indications of change. I do not think that President Sadat has decided to opt for peace, certainly not the peace we desire, but I think that the doubt is growing in his heart as to the efficacy of force and the relevance of the con-

flict with Israel for Egypt's list of priorities. Here and there, in conversation, newspapers and literature, one finds references to the need to accept Israel's existence, references which would not have appeared a few years ago....

The only alternative I have heard proposed is to attempt to reach the annulment of the state of war with Egypt. I admit that that would have been a more desirable outcome of this Agreement. The question is whether it is attainable today....To the best of my experience and knowledge, Egypt's position is that the state of war will be annulled only within the framework of a comprehensive agreement regarding the international border....But why should that lead us to reject the Agreement before us now...? Will that improve the relations between our two countries and bring the annulment of the state of belligerency nearer...?

In conclusion, I would like to say that at this stage the Knesset should rise above every assessment, suspicion, account and dispute on other subjects in order to unite behind this necessary decision....It is, in my view, the last agreement which can be attained outside the framework of a comprehensive peace. Consequently, the Government must be free to crystallize a detailed policy regarding the nature of peace and the borders on each front, including Judea and Samaria. This Agreement is not a sleeping pill. It is an injection of energy for the continuation of vigorous, albeit hazardous, political activity.

M. Arens (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the Government is proposing today that the Knesset approve the purchase of a lottery ticket for a game of chance whose outcome no one can predict. Unfortunately, I and the rest of the House can predict what the outcome of the vote here tonight will be. The leaders of the Coalition decided that this is not a matter of conscience and so coalitionary discipline is being imposed.

Y. Ben-Meir (National Religious Front): Not the whole Coalition, only two parties, the Alignment and the Liberals. The Religious Party had the courage to give its members the freedom to vote as they pleased....

M. Arens (Likud): I take my hat off to those party groups which enabled their members to vote freely. But, unfortunately, we can predict what the outcome of tonight's vote will be, and the Government will probably receive authorization to purchase that lottery ticket, and so I join those who hope and pray that the ticket will be a winner. But hopes and prayers are not enough. It is evident to everyone here that we are confronting a scenario in episodes, and the same problems, considerations, threats and wishes will face us over and over again in the near, and probably the distant, future. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that we ensure that the problems confronting us are dealt with in a thorough, logical and intelligent way.

I regret to say that I do not have the impression that the Government's decision after its marathon sessions was the result of a sane and sensible view of the situation. To judge by what the Ministers and the supporters of the Agreement, including the last speaker, have said, one is led to think, from the limited vocabulary of meaningless phrases they employ, that they are hypnotized by terminology, by senseless expressions. One of their favorite words is "dynamics." As everyone knows, dynamics is a part of mechanics which deals with calculating the courses of bodies in a given field of force, in accordance with the laws of dynamics formulated by Newton a few hundred years ago. According to which laws does our Foreign Minister calculate movement in the dynamics which he seeks so eagerly in this region? He must know that in mechanics there are no one-way courses, one can go up or down. The use of that word does not contribute to clear thinking on the issues before us.

Another of the Prime Minister's catch phrases is "exhausting all the chances for peace." What does it mean? Does it have any significance at all in our present circumstances? Does it mean continuing to buy lottery tickets and to empty the stock of our limited resources until nothing is left? What is "the lesser of the evils," or "no alternative?" The lesser of the evils would seem to be the optimum....Has an effort really been made to examine all the possibilities and predictions...? The basic questions we should be asking are: 1. What is the price we are paying for this lottery ticket? 2. Can a policy based on wagers, on the readiness to weaken our ability to withstand an Arab attack, on the hope that this will bring about a change in the attitude of the Arab world to Israel, be regarded as an intelligent and efficient policy in the present circumstances?

From MK Eban and several others who support this Agreement one might think that the price of the lottery ticket the Government is offering us is zero, nothing....But they may be wrong, and the policy of wagers may not be an appropriate one for the situation in which we find ourselves. The price has three components. The first is oil, amounting to \$350,000,000 a year, 10 percent of the foreign currency deficit in our budget today—financial resources which will be at the disposal of the Arab world, and Egypt in particular, tomorrow. The transition from the limited dependence of today to total dependence once we leave the oil fields of Abu Rodeis means exposure to pressure and standing in line each year at the U.S. Congress with the request that it approve \$350,000,000 for the purchase of oil.

The Foreign Minister told us a few days ago that in terms of energy our situation will be better after this Agreement, as MK Eban claims, than when we control the oil fields. I suggest that the present and former Foreign Ministers consult experts in the field, the people who drill, pro-

duce and sell oil. I do not think that their view as to there being no price and our position being better will be borne out.

The second component is the military one. Without going into the tactical and strategic aspects connected with a comparison between the new line and the previous one, is it not obvious according to logic that the further forward a line is the better...? To this one could add the considerations of passes, putting the bridges over the Suez Canal out of the range of the IDF artillery, etc....I would like to express my admiration for the Prime Minister who, to the best of my knowledge, was the only member of the Government...who spoke out loudly and clearly and said here today that the new line is worse than the present one.

E. Moyal (Alignment): He said: less good.

M. Arens (Likud): Yesterday on television I heard him say: worse....I am surprised that former and current military men and the Minister responsible for defense do not speak out loudly and clearly. It seems that there are those among us who also seek to delude themselves in such purely military matters as the location of a line, here the situation is better and there is no price to pay.

The third component, which might sound paradoxical, is the danger to our standing in U.S. public opinion....I would like to remind the House that in the period between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War the image of Israel in the U.S. was one of a small, brave, independent, democratic country which stood on its own two feet and was not a burden on U.S. foreign policy and the American taxpayer. It was one of an ally which made its contribution to the relations between the two countries. But this agreement makes us appear as a client state, a burden, an annual recipient of Congressional aid....

I would like to remind our Foreign Minister and the House that the U.S. is a truly democratic country, possibly the only one in the world, in which there is the best correlation between public opinion and the actions of the Administration. There is a certain time-lag between the two, but in the final event the Administration must catch up with U.S. public opinion. If we lose that friendship which Israel has had for the last six years, this will eventually be reflected in the foreign policy of the U.S., and we will be paying a heavy price for signing this Agreement.

In addition to the price, there is the question of whether we may adopt a policy of wagers, whether that policy is wise and whether it can solve the problems facing us....I think that even though only two years have passed since the Yom Kippur War, the members of the present Government, most of whom served in Mrs. Meir's Government...have not yet learned the true lesson of the defect revealed in the method of thinking and the decision-making process prior to the war. The lesson is that future political events cannot be given any significant probability. We can calculate the probability of a dice game or of life-expectancy, but we

do not know and cannot calculate the probability of change in the policy of Sadat or Assad or Hussein. Political decisions should be based on an examination of the expected results if the events occur, not on assessments of the likelihood of future events.

Does the fact that the Arab armies did not attack Israel in May 1973 prove retroactively that the decision to mobilize the forces then was a mistake? If we had not been attacked on the Day of Atonement, would that have proved that the decision not to mobilize the reserves was right? It is not on our wishes that we must base our moves, and not on wagers, but on a penetrating analysis of the situations which might arise in the future. None of us can assess what the policy of Egypt or the Arab world will be in another month or year. Nor do we know what are the intentions of Sadat, Assad and Hussein, just as we did not in October 1973. Consequently, we must not base our policy on the wager that that optimistic forecast will come true....

I propose that we base our policy on sound, rational thinking, on the attempt to predict the range of alternatives before us. That policy has three elements: first, with regard to the Arab countries, in the face of that wave of military reinforcement which is going through the Arab world, our steps, whose object is to reduce tension and modify the Israel-Arab conflict, must be symmetrical and must not bring about the weakening or strengthening of any one side in the conflict. A movement of that kind could increase instability and the danger of war in the region. And since the Agreement has already been signed, it is particularly regrettable that it was not utilized to attain an additional reduction of the Egyptian forces on the eastern side of the Sinai Peninsula. Anyone who reads the Agreement will be surprised—as I was—to find that the Egyptian forces and arms on the eastern side of the Canal will increase... and that the infrastructure built there by the Egyptian army prior to the Yom Kippur War—and which could serve as a jumping-off point for a future attack on the IDF—is to remain.

The second element is that in our policy vis-à-vis the U.S. we should be aware of the three basic aspects of the governmental and political scene there. The U.S. public has always been afraid of intervention or a commitment to intervene and fight far away from the U.S. Secondly, each year there is a fierce struggle between the Administration and Congress regarding the budget. The three billion dollars we are talking about not as a one-time payment constitute quite a significant sum. They will be discussed and argued about. Thirdly, the energy crisis is also affecting the U.S., which supplies only 60 percent or 70 percent of its own needs and has not yet found the solution to this problem. Consequently, the objective of our policy vis-à-vis the U.S. must be to rehabilitate our image amongst the public there, and to turn ourselves from a client state into one which can be regarded as a true ally by the American public.

The third element is at home, where we must reorganize our economy, change the structure of the market and reduce or cancel our complete economic and defense dependence, which will be a corrupting and debilitating influence. What distinguishes Israel today from most other countries of the world is the fact that due to the challenges, obstacles and threats confronting us, our latitude for making mistakes in our policy has been reduced to virtually zero. There is no room left for wagers and improvisations. What is needed is a policy based on correct assessments of the situation, clear criteria for decision-making and intelligent decisions.

...

M. Wilner (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the new Interim Agreement between Israel and Egypt does not bring a comprehensive peace settlement nearer but delays and defers it as much as possible. It does not solve the basic issues of the Israel-Arab conflict and the Palestinian problem, and therefore does not remove the danger of war in the Middle East. Consequently, we will not support the Agreement. The Interim Agreement also contains a dangerous clause—one-sided American involvement disguised as the entry of American technicians. This American involvement, which is essentially military, even when the clothing is civilian, completely contradicts the Security Council resolutions on the Middle East and the spirit of the Geneva Conference, creates another source of tension in the region and threatens to increase U.S. influence in opposition to the true national interests of Israel and Egypt and the interests of peace in the Middle East and the world. For that reason, too, we will not vote for the Agreement.

But considering the fact that the Interim Agreement also includes an element of withdrawal from occupied Arab land and in view of the fascist-nationalistic onslaught which opposes any withdrawal, we will not vote against the Agreement and will abstain. Those who adhere to the doctrines of the U.S. Secretary of State say that the circumstances prescribe the method of going step by step since there is supposedly no possibility at present of reaching a comprehensive peace. This contention is in contradiction to the facts....Peace can be reached with all the neighboring Arab countries by means of the Geneva Conference, under U.N. auspices, with the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. as chairmen and with the participation of all the parties involved, including the Palestinians.

The Prime Minister was in error when he said here today that the neighboring Arab countries do not agree to true peace with Israel...what they are not prepared to accept is peace with annexation and without guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state alongside Israel....The delay in reaching a comprehensive peace is due to the fact that the U.S. is not interested in it, for its own selfish reasons, and the Rabin Government blindly follows the American tactics,

both because it is a party to the U.S. global policy against national and social liberation and socialism and because it hopes to gain time through interim settlements, perpetuate its control of the occupied territories, eradicate the national existence of the Palestinian Arab people, create *faits accomplis* in the occupied territories and receive enormous quantities of modern weapons from the U.S....

We warn you that these are dangerous illusions on the part of both the U.S. and Israel....The delaying of the comprehensive solution will not only ultimately be to Israel's detriment, but will cause untold damage in the future....Those who boast proudly of having initiated the presence of American "technicians" are merely giving the U.S. a military foothold in the region...which may well have dire consequences and derives from an unrealistic assessment of the international situation and the dynamic development of the Middle East, which will not necessarily be in the direction desired by Kissinger, Rabin and Sadat....

Israel has no future as the Middle East extension of American imperialism. Instead of finding common ground with the Arab peoples on the basis of justice, realism and the mutual recognition of rights, the Rabin-Peres Government continues with its time-worn policy of making Israel a tool of imperialism against the peoples of the region....Israel's interests lie with the Arab peoples and against imperialism rather than the opposite....It should be clear that with the present international balance of power and the atmosphere of Helsinki, detente, agreements to limit strategic arms and the development of economic ties between countries of different social regimes, an important and complex international issue such as that of the Middle East cannot be solved without the U.S.S.R. or the U.N....

Furthermore, there is a basic difference between international guarantees for an Israel-Arab peace settlement and one-sided U.S. involvement. International guarantees under the auspices of the U.N., with the participation of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., will be able to assure peace and security in the region, while one-sided U.S. military involvement will heighten tension and the danger of war....

The parties of the Right, by demagoguery and irrational and unrealistic slogans, seek to inflame nationalistic urges. The Right is trying to work towards a new war and is threatening democratic freedoms. But the responsibility for the growth of this fascist genie belongs to the Government, which has cultivated and encouraged it by its forgiving attitude to acts of violence and by its own policy of annexation and the failure to establish peace.

The Government has brought Israel to a dead end. Even those who support the new interim settlement say that it is bad, or at best the lesser evil. They think it is bad because they oppose withdrawal. They also say that we cannot act contrary to the wishes of our American masters. We

have never yet seen such national humiliation. The root of the evil is the basis of the Government's policy which, like that of the Likud, involves the refusal to withdraw from the territories we occupied in 1967—not even within the framework of peace treaties with the Arab countries recognizing Israel's territorial integrity—and to recognize the right to self-determination and an independent state for the Palestinian people.

I appeal to the House and to all the political forces and people in our country who recognize the importance of peace and democracy...to unite to repel the nationalistic-fascist onslaught of Gush Emunim and Herut...and to intensify the struggle against the Government's policy, so that a just and lasting peace may be established, and the fundamental problem of the Israel-Arab conflict resolved, within the framework of the Geneva peace conference, to the benefit of both Arabs and Israelis....

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, if today's motion was to express no confidence in the Government we would have voted for it. The Agreement signed two days ago...jeopardizes Israel's sovereignty. The U.S. involvement initiated by the Minister of Defense, and the U.S. grants over which the Minister of Finance is rejoicing, undermine Israel's political and economic independence and make it the satellite of a Power....This Government, which was formed in 1974 because of the nation's demand for a change and on which such high hopes were pinned, has let us down. There are no long-term plans, no vision, no clearcut policy lines, merely short-term, inconsistent and opportunistic maneuvers....

Today we are being asked to approve an agreement which is the outcome of something to which the Government maneuvered us by opportunistic improvisation....Even in a situation of "no alternative" there is no need to lose one's courage and upright stance or to ignore the truth. It is true that an agreement requires compromises and concessions, but it is not the relinquishment of territory in the Sinai which has impaired Israel's sovereignty. Nor is it the lack of any political change in Egypt in return for the territory....No one can say that there was no alternative to the U.S. money which is to save us from the policy of emergency economics and the U.S. technicians who were invited here....The Government initiated those developments. Does anyone really think that they will bring us the friendship of the U.S...save the Israeli economy, raise productivity and responsibility and increase our economic independence...?

In return for those "achievements"...we have abandoned the principles of direct negotiations with Egypt, of demilitarization and of mutuality. The joint Israel-Egypt Committee is like those established by the Armistice Agreements in 1949. But this is 1975 and we have experienced several wars since then. Where are the steps towards peace? What has been achieved other than the delusion that it will be possible to reach a status quo in the region while separating Egypt from the Arab world and

driving a wedge between it and Syria, something which is impossible, just as it is impossible to ignore the existence of the Palestinian people and continue establishing settlements in the occupied territories....

If there is any advantage in this Agreement it is in the possibility of breaking the deadlock between the parties to the conflict, but will the Government have the strength and wisdom to continue the dynamics of action? We are already being tempted with three years of tranquillity. What tranquillity? What initiatives and plans does the Government have apart from fortifying the new lines and expanding the settlements in Judea and Samaria...? In the absence of plans and initiatives of our own these will come from outside, together with pressure, additional dictates and further encroachments on our sovereignty....

We are being asked to approve an agreement today which, in our opinion, has to be approved, because the alternatives the Government has left us are worse still. But you have nothing to boast about....The Government must realize that a country cannot be run on off-the-cuff decisions, the sole objective being to remain in power....If you wish to lead this nation, prepare plans and go to the country with them....Organizing demonstrations of support for yourselves will not help you.... Unfortunately, we have been led into a dead end from which there is no exit except by approving the Agreement before us now. But do not regard our vote—or that of the rest of the House—as an expression of confidence in the Government and its policy.

...

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...MK Begin referred to what I said here in February, but after that, in March, I told the House that we had proposed that Israel and Egypt effectively annul the state of war and undertake not to resort to force or threaten to do so....I also mentioned that the oil fields at Abu Rodeis and the surrounding area would be returned to Egypt...and the Knesset resolved to take note of what I had said...regarding the suspension of the negotiations for an interim settlement with Egypt. I will refrain from reminding the House that the Likud voted for that resolution then, for whatever reason....

M. Begin (Likud): But then you said “no” to Egypt’s demands on those two points.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: I said that in the negotiations we had agreed to them.

M. Begin (Likud): What do you mean “we had agreed to them?” You said that Egypt’s demands were unacceptable. Why did you afterwards propose to Kissinger that the passes be divided?

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: With regard to the passes, I would like to say that if President Sadat said that Israel has left the passes along the

roads that is correct. But if he said that Israel has lost military control of the passes, that is not true.

As for the comparison with the Armistice Agreement, I think I am the only Member of the House who was a member of our delegation to the armistice negotiations with Egypt at Rhodes....That agreement did not contain a clause regarding the agreement of both parties to refrain from resorting to the use of violence, nor did it contain the term “demilitarized zone.”...This Agreement, on the other hand, makes reference to both those concepts....

I do not wish to go into the topic of an American dictate, a term I repudiate. Israel takes the Israel-Arab and Israel-U.S. contexts into account in making its decisions, and while doing so we reached certain decisions....Suffice it to say, we have accepted no American dictate....

As far as the Agreement itself is concerned...one must realize that in discussing an interim settlement one must look towards the aims of a comprehensive settlement, and in my view, at least, in referring to a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel we are not speaking of returning to the 1967 borders, though there is room for border changes and the redistribution of the IDF....I favor the extensive demilitarization of the Sinai, and regard the renewed civilian activity in the Suez Canal area as the basis for this....In this Agreement we achieved more than we did in the Armistice Agreements....

The idea of an American presence was initially proposed by the Egyptian President...during the struggle over the warning stations... so that the Israeli presence would be reduced....Thus, the idea of the two strategic warning stations was not an Israeli initiative....At a later stage the idea of tactical warning stations alongside the strategic ones was raised, but it must be made clear that the initial proposal did not come from Israel, and that in fact Israel opposed it and insisted that the strategic warning stations should be operated by Israel, just as the parallel ones were to be manned by Egypt....

The financial aid we are to receive is in the main part destined to aid our military reinforcement, while a smaller part is intended to compensate us for the loss of the oil, and in effect there is no addition to the economic aid. Thus, when large sums of money are mentioned, they derive from the situation created in the wake of the Yom Kippur War and the dimensions of Arab reinforcement. In financial terms, the IDF needs five or six times as much in order to reequip itself today than it did before the Yom Kippur War.

Finally...the basic concept of an interim settlement rather than a comprehensive peace agreement was ours...taking into account the reality of the situation and the view that one cannot make a sudden switch from a state of war to absolute peace....I regret to say that the attitudes of the Arab leaders, including President Sadat, regarding the nature of peace, the borders of peace and the subject of the Palestinians are far

from being politically compatible with ours. The question which confronted the Government was whether to insist on peace or nothing, knowing that in fact that was not nothing. There was room for examining a course which, though not certain, contained a certain hope, with minimal hazards, and could lead to a process which would change the situation and eventually lead to more serious talks.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Peace, of course. But you, with your annexation plans, destroy it and prevent it. That is the historical truth.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: I repeat, peace today, on the conditions which I foresee, within borders which I foresee and with a certain solution for the Palestinian problem, does not exist. What does one do, then? Should one take a risk...and go towards the principal country, because if there is a chance of a change in the Arab world the key is a change in Egypt—

(From the floor: If there won't be peace, what are you aiming at?)

On a front where the strategic depth is very great, I believe that that approach is justified, despite the risks involved. I believe that in order to check this one needs time, because we are talking about a process. Thus, the point of departure for this approach...is to create conditions which will, in the long run, make it possible to deal with the comprehensive solution of the problem by negotiations, and to examine this process continually...Within this framework the Government has also reached a series of understandings with the U.S. This is a move which regards the shift from war to peace as a process which needs to be examined both verbally and on the ground, and first of all on the Egyptian-Israeli front...That is what the Government is proposing that the Knesset approve....

M. Wertman (Ma'arach): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, on behalf of the Alignment, National Religious Front, Independent Liberals and MK Halevy, I propose that the Knesset approve the following motion: "The Knesset endorses the Agreement between Egypt and Israel, together with its appendices, which the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has brought before the Knesset today, 3 September 1975."

The Vote

Those in favor	70
Those against	43
Abstentions	7

(MK Wertman's proposal is adopted.)

U.N. "Zionism is Racism" Resolution

Introduction

The rapid increase in the number of new nations joining the U.N., the increasing identification of the Soviet Union with the Arab Bloc and the institutionalization of the voting in the General Assembly of the U.N. brought about a gradual deterioration in Israel's parliamentary position in the Assembly. Resolutions condemning Israel or Israeli policy abounded from the 1950s onwards. In fact, they became a matter of routine, and little or no attention was paid to them by Israel's media and public opinion, or for that matter by media elsewhere. A watershed was reached, however, when on November 9—by coincidence the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the night on which, in 1938, the Nazis in Germany and Austria had burned most synagogues, killed and maimed scores and detained many thousands of Jews—the U.N. adopted by a two-thirds majority a resolution equating Zionism with racism, which in essence tried to deligitimize the very existence of Israel as a sovereign state.

In a rare show of near unanimity, the Knesset rejected that resolution, as well as two others, adopted simultaneously, concerning the PLO and its presence at the Geneva Conference.

Sitting 224 of the Eighth Knesset

11 November 1975 (7 Kislev 5736)

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, yesterday the majority at the U.N. Assembly, serving Arab hostility, voted against the Jewish people, Zionism and the State of Israel. The majority at the Assembly approved resolutions which are factually and historically false, condemning Israel as a "racist state in occupied Palestine," and defining Zionism as "racism and racial discrimination." The prologue to the resolutions calls on all countries "to oppose that racist and imperialist ideology." Prior to that the Assembly approved two resolutions calling for the participation of the terrorist organization known as the PLO in the Geneva Conference and the establishment of a committee to supervise the implementation of those hostile resolutions.

By those three resolutions...the majority at the Assembly extended political support to the enemies of the Jewish people and the State of Israel who seek to undermine its moral, ideological and legal basis. By condemning Zionism as a supposedly racist theory, the people who initiated

the resolution seek to deprive Israel of its right to exist, which is the result of the independent liberation movement of the Jewish people—Zionism.

We must not delude ourselves. This is not an abstract ideological debate, but a significant attack with clear political objectives, and as such it is unprecedented in the history of the struggle we have been engaged in for several decades. The aim of the Arab representatives and their supporters is to set Israel outside the pale and invalidate its very existence in order to prepare the political conditions for intensifying the struggle against Israel as an independent country and prepare the ground for the establishment of an Arafat-led state on Israel's ruins....

The resolutions...are barren in terms of *realpolitik*. Their content and timing stand in complete contradiction to the positive trend embodied in the Interim Agreement between Israel and Egypt. Progress towards peace and the solution of the conflict in our region, including the Palestinian problem, cannot be attained in the way indicated by the U.N. Assembly. Progress towards peace and the solution of the various problems is possible, but only while respecting the rights, existence, vocations and security of Israel. We will continue to follow that path despite bitter disappointments and the selfish appeasement of wealth and oil-producers.

I said yesterday that Israel rejects those resolutions completely and will not cooperate with anything arising from them....Israel will not participate in the Geneva Conference or in negotiations in any other forum to which representatives of the PLO's murderous organization, whose declared aim is to destroy Israel, are invited. Israel does not recognize the committee set up at the Assembly yesterday and will not cooperate with it.

What regimes rule in the Arab countries which initiated the resolution condemning Zionism and what moral right do they have to decide on matters of human and national rights? They are all countries which, since becoming independent, have been characterized by persecution, torture and even the destruction of minorities and ethnic groups within their territory. Independence in Iraq began with the massacre of the Assyrian minority. In recent times Iraq has tormented the Kurdish minority, causing massive bloodshed. In Sudan the black tribes of the south have been slaughtered for years. In Egypt the Coptic minority has been accorded second-class status, and everyone remembers the treatment meted out to the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip when it was under Egyptian rule. Syria has always gloried in persecuting its minorities. Saudi Arabia still trades in slaves. In Lebanon the Maronite Christians are still fighting to survive. That is the true portrait and the moral mandate of the Arab countries which initiated those resolutions at the U.N. Assembly.

As for the PLO, which is invited to give its views on bringing peace to the Middle East, let it suffice to quote a few passages from its Manifesto: "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is therefore a strategy, not a tactic." "The liberation of Palestine is a national duty in order to repel the imperialist Zionist invasion from the great Arab homeland and purge Palestine of Zionist existence." "Claims as to the historical or spiritual bond between the Jews and Palestine are incompatible with historical truths." "Zionism is merely a virulently racist, aggressive movement which is expansionistcolonialist in its aims and fascist and Nazi in its means."

Who supported this base initiative? An examination of the list of countries which supported the resolution condemning Zionism reveals that it includes several countries whose regimes are dictatorial or totalitarian and whose histories are full of tyranny, repression and the disregard for human rights and dignity. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the resolutions make no mention of human, religious and social freedoms, knowing the initiators' own deficiencies in those areas.

We may draw encouragement from the countries which opposed the anti-Israel initiative...each one of which has a past which is distinguished by the ceaseless struggle for human freedom and national rights. They are enlightened democracies which have on more than one occasion fought against attempts to subordinate and subject man and society in the name of racist and reactionary theories....Once again it has been proved that the attitude of societies and people to the Jewish people is one of the touchstones of their enlightenment.

This is not the first time that November 10 has marked a significant event in the history of the Jewish people. Yesterday was the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* (the pogrom of 9 November 1938) in Nazi Germany....It is also the date on which the majority in the U.N. struck a mortal blow at the U.N. itself....By supporting this Arab scheme the U.N. has lost whatever moral and political validity it had, becoming the arena for clashes which have nothing to do with the principles and ideals for which it was established. Israel will not be the victim of these resolutions. It is the U.N. which has set itself beyond the pale...of universal principles....

There is no greater historical and moral distortion than what happened last night at the U.N. Assembly. The nation which throughout the generations has been the victim of racist persecution which is unparalleled in the history of mankind was once again the object of despicable attacks by benighted regimes. There is no greater and crueller irony than branding Zionism, which represents the struggle of an ancient nation for freedom in its land from the time our ancestors left ancient Egypt to this very day, and the nation which has contributed more than any other to the values of human freedom, as racist.

This requires the Jewish people in the diaspora and Israel to draw some basic conclusions. I call on the Jewish people in the diaspora to stand up to the plot against us, because Zionism, Judaism, the State of Israel and the Jewish people are all one and the same. At the basis of Jewish belief lies the link with the Land of Israel and the return to Zion...I call on the Jewish communities to make a greater effort to assure the welfare and future of the nation and State of Israel. I call on the entire Jewish nation to deepen Jewish consciousness, cultivate Jewish values and traditions and identify fully with the Jewish state. Today more than ever all Jews are responsible for one another. I call on Jewish youth throughout the world to immigrate to Israel and join us in fulfilling the Zionist vision.

I call on the nation in Zion to rise to the challenge before us. The attacks on Zionism and the Jewish state oblige us to reexamine our way of life and increase private and public efforts to fortify the State of Israel. Today more than ever we must rise above individual selfishness and comfort and devote ourselves completely to the objectives of Zionism. To those who rose up against us yesterday at the U.N. I say: we are no longer a helpless community. We are no longer a weak and frightened people. We are no longer despairing and hopeless. Something has happened since *Kristallnacht*. The Jewish nation now stands erect. The State of Israel has come into being. The State of Israel is firm, confident and strong. The State of Israel and its nation have decided once and for all to ensure that henceforth and forever "Israel shall dwell in safety in its land."

S.Z. Abramov (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, for many years now the U.N. has not been favorably disposed towards us and many of its resolutions have caused us pain. But the three resolutions approved yesterday...constitute a nadir which we should regard as a turning-point, and this may also apply to the very existence and function of the U.N. The two operative resolutions should be regarded merely as a calculated effort to foil the tentative progress towards peace....The decision to invite the PLO to the Geneva Conference and set up a committee to restore the Palestinians their rights constitutes an attempt to impose the authority of the Assembly on the Security Council and foil the peace process we all desire.

The Arabs and their friends have succeeded on more than one occasion in acting contrary to the U.N. Charter, as they did when they expelled Formosa and suspended South Africa....Anyone who listened to the speeches of the Arabs could not help feeling that even the supposedly moderate ones among them are not sincerely interested in peace. Egypt's attitude...raises doubts as to its true intentions, and may even run counter to the spirit of the recent agreement between it and Israel. Anyone who heard Sadat's statements in the U.S. about Zionism and Judaism cannot help thinking that this is a man who is consumed by

anti-Semitism. I think that our reply must be unequivocal: we will not go to Geneva to sit with the PLO and we will not cooperate with the U.N. in implementing the resolution about restoring the rights of the Palestinians. We will go to Geneva on the basis of Resolution 338 as we interpret it.

The debate on Zionism was one of the strangest in the history of the U.N. The U.N. is a political institution and should discuss political issues. But for three weeks it debated a subject as abstract, philosophical and historical as Zionism, as if it was debating the nature of Socialism....It was a strange mixture of Alice in Wonderland and something by Kafka. But the debate also revealed the true face of the U.N., and may even have benefited us indirectly. First of all, the resolution on Zionism united the Jewish world, and how encouraging it was to find organizations which had formerly termed themselves non-Zionist or anti-Zionist entering the fray against that resolution, for with their healthy Jewish instincts they realized that it was based on anti-Semitism....

We owe a debt of gratitude to the U.S., whose representative at the U.N. reinforced the assertion that the attempt to equate Zionism with racism stems from anti-Semitism....The 35 countries which voted for us are the democratic countries. The 72 which voted against us all have regimes of tyranny and dictatorship, whether black, red or yellow... and are seeking, by the supposedly democratic means of their majority in the U.N., to impose their doctrines and concepts on the free world.... We can only regret the fact that three-quarters of the countries of the world do not have democratic regimes and that the countries of black Africa have jumped on that bandwagon....

We can only conclude that the U.N. is an anti-Semitic institution...but it is anti-American and anti-the West to an equal extent...which is one of the absurdities of the twentieth century....The Americans have begun to realize what the situation involves, and have started acting accordingly, initially with regard to UNESCO....I regard it as our duty as Jews, as free men, as members of the free world, to reveal and to help reveal the true face of the U.N. to intellectuals and the whole world....

The fight against our right to independent existence in this country is part of the fight of the forces of evil in the world against the free world. We must stress the idea that a blow at us is a blow at the whole free world. The debate on Zionism served as a touchstone for the true division of forces within the U.N., and although we are all grieved by the resolution...we must regard it as the reflection of a disease currently afflicting most countries, and we can be proud to be part of the minority upon whose banner flies freedom and human dignity....I am sure that the Jewish people throughout the diaspora will stand up to defend its dignity, and that the countries of the free world will realize that their de-

fense of Zionism commits them to take a firm stand in defending the State of Israel.

...

A. Melamed (National Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the spirit of Hitler must have hovered over the U.N. Assembly when the *Kristallnacht* resolution was adopted. Hitler's aspirations to establish a new International based on hatred of the Jews is now being fulfilled within the U.N., which was founded in order to save future generations from the ravages of the war which Hitler brought on the world....What an ironic contrast between the noble intentions of those who founded that organization and the reality of today....

I agree with the Prime Minister's analysis of the regimes of the countries which voted against us. I would just like to say a few words about the U.S.S.R. My attitude to it is known, and I have always acknowledged our debt of gratitude to it for fighting against Nazism.... But we and the U.S.S.R. should also remember that prior to that war there was a brief period...in which the U.S.S.R. tried to benefit from the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, according to the Nazis moral, political and military advantages....The Russian people paid a heavy price in order to learn that one does not make agreements with murderers....

The U.S.S.R.'s current alliance with racist and nationalistic countries which state quite openly their intention of destroying Israel, where the victims who survived Nazism have found refuge...is the continuation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, and may even serve as a prologue to aggression by those racist countries against the civilized world, including the U.S.S.R.

What was new about Nazism was that hatred of the Jews became an official state policy...and the focal point of a new world outlook openly and unashamedly supported by politicians, scientists, writers and intellectuals, and publicized in the mass media....

The resolution adopted at the U.N. is against the U.N. itself, which is controlled today by a majority of countries whose regimes are racist and chauvinist. If a resolution against racism were adopted it would be against most of the members of the U.N. By adopting this resolution the U.N. has destroyed itself morally....I hope that we will be able to turn this defeat into triumph...and stop and think about our internal situation....There must be an end to industrial strikes and internecine strife....We can make use of that resolution to unite and strengthen the nation, reinforcing our links with the diaspora and winning friends for Israel and Zionism....We must draw the necessary conclusions from this resolution, just as we failed to do so from the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. When the U.N. Charter becomes the Nuremberg Laws we must learn from our experience of the past....

In conclusion, I would like to paraphrase Ben-Gurion and say that we will fight this resolution as if our neighbors with whom we seek

contact had not supported it, and we will fight for peace despite the U.N. resolution....To the Jewish people we say: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," and "Through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is that shall tread down our enemies." And to the U.N. we say: "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us."

...

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Prime Minister's statement on the vote in the U.N. on November 10 ignored the reasons which gave rise to that discussion there.

Y. Be'eri (Likud): The reasons are Arab racism and imperialism.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): We cannot ignore the fact that—

A. Nof (Likud): Are you for the resolution or against it?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Listen and then you'll know. We cannot ignore the fact that the lack of peace in our region causes everincreasing tension, which could degenerate into a new conflagration whose results are difficult to predict. Most of the members of the U.N. are concerned by this situation. The principal reason for the absence of peace in our region is the Government of Israel's refusal to implement the U.N. resolutions regarding the solution of the Middle East conflict.

A. Lin (Likud): In 1947 we agreed to the Partition Plan. Who refused to accept the U.N. resolution then?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): We are not conducting a debate about history now. Listen to what I have to say. Those resolutions involve Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in June 1967 and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including its right to an independent state alongside Israel. Instead, Israel continues with its policy of force, seeking to annex land and perpetuate the occupation. The Prime Minister says we will not go to the Geneva Conference if the representatives of the Palestinians are invited.

(From the floor: What has that got to do with the resolution condemning Zionism?)

The Prime Minister has declared that Israel will not cooperate with the committee which is to be set up. Statements of that kind, in addition to Israel's policy of repression in the occupied territories, with arrests, exile and the blowing up of the homes of Arab residents...not only do not bring peace nearer but also arouse the anger and opposition of people in Israel and the whole world who love peace.

That is the background and the situation which led to the discussions and resolutions of the U.N. Assembly....The Assembly called for the participation of the PLO in all the discussions and conferences on

the Middle East held under U.N. auspices...and set up a committee to ensure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people....

A. Lin (Likud): Within what borders?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): We must agree to the right of the Palestinian Arab people to an independent state alongside Israel; the solution is Israel within the borders of 1967....

E. Olmert (Likud): Do you support the U.N. resolution...?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): I am referring to all the resolutions and am speaking in the order I consider appropriate. The two resolutions are important and I am referring to them.

E. Olmert (Likud): Do you support the U.N. resolutions or not...?

The Speaker, B.Z. Keshet: Stop conducting interrogations. The speaker does not have to reply. MK Lebenbraun, kindly continue....

A. Nof (Likud): Doesn't he have to say what his position is?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Anyone who really wants peace should regard these resolutions, which refer to the Palestinian problem and speak of a just peace, as an opening for peace. Anyone who really wants a just peace—and there cannot be peace without taking the just rights of all the peoples and countries of the region into account—must realize that without a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian people there will not be peace in the region.

A. Nof (Likud): To say that in these circumstances indicates a sick mind.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): The Prime Minister's statement on the resolutions referring to the rights of the Palestinians and their participation in the Geneva Conference strikes a blow at Israel's right to exist and harms the state. The Prime Minister claims that all the 101 countries which voted for the participation of the Palestinians in the Geneva Conference oppose the existence of the State of Israel. The truth is, however, that all the countries which favor the Geneva Conference with the participation of Israel and all the parties concerned, including the Palestinians, support the existence of Israel.

Y. Be'eri (Likud): Including the PLO, which you recognize and regard as the leader of the Palestinian Arab people.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): What does it mean if the PLO is prepared to sit with Israel at the Geneva Conference? It means that it recognizes the existence of Israel. Try to think logically. What national interest is there in representing all those countries as being against Israel's existence...?

A. Nof (Likud): First one has to know the truth....

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): But not only most of the countries of the world are in favor of the rights of the Palestinians. If you want to exist and live here you cannot deprive the neighboring people of its right....Anyone who thinks logically and wants to live in this part of the world must realize that we must reach a just settlement with the neighboring people....Hysteria and incitement are not enough.

D. Koren (Alignment): How dare you speak of hysteria and incitement?

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Anyone who wants to live here must see things as they really are....In the end you will have to sit with the Palestinians. Why do you have to wait for U.S. pressure to do it...? The central problem is to find a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian people and recognize its right to an independent state. The continuation of Israel's policy of power and the disregard for those rights not only arouses the opposition of most of the countries of the world...but also harms Israel's existence and security.

Y. Moda'i (Likud): They can't tell us what to do, as you well know.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): It is an unrealistic policy which harms Israel....

A. Nof (Likud): The fact that that resolution was adopted with that majority proves that even when the whole world is against us we are in the right.

Y. Be'eri (Likud): No, Iraq and Abu Dhabi are right.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): With regard to the resolution which regards Zionism as a form of racism and discrimination, we expressed our opinion during the debate in the Knesset on the Government's statement concerning the decision of the U.N. committee. We said then that the discussions at the U.N. Assembly were held at a time when inside Israel the policy of national discrimination and repression against the Arab population was increasing. Plans have been prepared for the expropriation of the rest of the land of the Arab citizens of Israel.

E. Olmert (Likud): Why don't you say that you support the U.N. resolution? That, at least, would be quicker.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): The plan to Judaize Galilee and establish and expand Jewish settlements while choking Arab villages is being executed. These and many other things shock everyone with a conscience in Israel and the civilized nations of the world. The subject which should be occupying the Knesset is how to remove the threat of war from our heads, attain a just peace and prevent further bloodshed and vic-

tims, additional widows and orphans. There is today a realistic possibility of reaching a just peace.

Y. Moda'i (Likud): Of submitting.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): The Government of Israel should abandon its policy of force and annexation and take the course of peace. It must declare its readiness to go to the Geneva Conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestinians, under the auspices of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., with the object of attaining a just peace on the basis of the U.N. resolutions....That policy will bring Israel out of its isolation in the international arena and guarantee the peaceful existence of Israel and all the peoples and countries of the region.

A. Nof (Likud): MK Lebenbraun, you haven't answered the question whether you are for the resolution or against it....

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the U.N. resolutions are, without a doubt, an indication of the degeneration of an organization which was established with great hopes after the dreadful devastation suffered by the world. It is an indication of degeneration to a point from which there may be no return....By these resolutions the U.N. has not contributed anything to the need to advance the cause of peace in the region. By these resolutions the U.N. revealed negligence and submission to pressure. But I am careful not to include the 35 countries in the term U.N....

I suggest that most of us are united in thinking that the U.N. resolutions have not brought peace nearer....It is evident that what was done, was done under pressure and not out of any good intention of advancing the cause of peace. Nonetheless, we must not conclude that the U.N. is played out because it is our duty to hope that that organization, which was established at an important time, will continue to exist. 35 democratic countries who are by no means small fry voted with us...and believe, as we do, that peace will not be brought to the region by submitting to the blackmail and pressure of petty despots....

It is not our standing which has been undermined but the U.N.'s. Many libels have been published about the Jews...and sometimes we even tend to believe them ourselves, up to a point....This libel is particularly base, but we cannot for a moment believe it to be true. The nation does not need to do anything in order to be able to stand erect on this score....Although the resolutions do nothing to advance peace in the region, we must react and act. We must not compete in libellous statements but must act intelligently....Our reply to the statements made in the U.N. and elsewhere of late, and which are not in the least bit peaceable, must be a bold plan put forward by the Government of Israel for peace in this region....

Y. Be'eri (Likud): And should we refrain from condemning Arab racism?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): We do not condemn individual instances of racism, we condemn racism of every kind, and I do not think there is any need to argue on this point....By calling one another racists we will not get anywhere. We should show—

Y. Be'eri (Likud): Why should we always be on the defensive? Why shouldn't we attack for once?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I think a bold plan for peace in the region is the best attack, the most political and the wisest way by which we can attack the war-mongers.

E. Olmert (Likud): Doesn't the Arab initiative lead you to certain conclusions about agreements?

Y. Be'eri (Likud): Do they want peace?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I have never said that they want peace or believed in angels of peace who would bring peace to the region. I believe that if they could destroy us they would, and colleagues on a certain side would expel the Palestinians if they could.

E. Olmert (Likud): That is idle chatter which there is no need for now.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I propose that we do not restrict the freedom of expression and thought in democratic Israel. We wanted a population exchange, the existence of twenty other countries was mentioned. If we could have, we would have acted in that direction.

E. Olmert (Likud): Maybe you would have, but why attribute that to others?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): The sides realize that they cannot continue fighting one another.

E. Olmert (Likud): Which sides?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): As a reply to that attack we must propose our own peace plan, rather than hurling their epithets back at them. We must face our own fate today. And when the Government asks the public to display unity, it must set an example, cut its own budget and lead the country wisely and well....Above all, it must understand that, despite attacks from outside, we continue to be a democratic society and have no need to ban plays, movies, newspapers or TV programs in the name of public morale. The morale of the Jewish public in Israel and abroad is not harmed. All we received was a warning signal, an indication that we are on our own, and I have no doubt that if we can only free ourselves of our verbal games, feelings of revenge and inappro-

prate style, we can mobilize additional forces, both in the world and in that declining institution, and cause a different spirit to prevail....

...

M. Wertman (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...on behalf of the Alignment, Likud, National Religious Front, Independent Liberals, Citizens' Rights Movement and MK Halevy, I propose the following concluding resolution:

The Knesset rejects the resolutions adopted on 10 November 1975 by the U.N. Assembly condemning Zionism and the State of Israel. The Knesset determines that those resolutions encourage Israel's enemies in hindering peace. The Knesset determines that Israel will not recognize the committee to be set up and will not cooperate with it....

The Knesset determines that the organization known as the PLO is a framework for murderous organizations whose declared aim is the destruction of Israel. Israel will not conduct negotiations with the terrorist organizations in any forum and will not participate in the Geneva Conference if those organizations are invited to it. The Knesset calls on the Jewish people in the diaspora to increase immigration to Israel and all Zionist activities, and to support Israel in implementing its Zionist objectives. The Knesset expresses its gratitude to all the countries which voted against those shameful resolutions at the U.N. Assembly.

(MK Wertman's concluding resolution is adopted.)

Israel's Responsibility for and Policy towards Diaspora Jewry

Introduction

The relationship between Israel and Jews living abroad and, by the same token, the implications of Israel's character as a Jewish state have been fundamental issues echoed in many debates in the Knesset. They have, however, only seldom constituted the focus of a special debate. A motion for the agenda on the subject was presented by MK Geula Cohen on 26 November 1975, and was followed later on by a full-scale debate.

Sitting 231 of the Eighth Knesset

26 November 1975 (22 Kislev 5736)

G. Cohen (Likud): Distinguished Knesset, despite the Knesset's low labor morals...I hope things have not reached such a pass that I have to ask the House to forgive me for raising a purely Zionist issue...and asking whether we are still a Zionist state....

In effect, what happened yesterday, when Jews who sought to settle in Judea and Samaria were removed, is sufficient indication...its ultimate implication being the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank...and the condemnation of Zionism not only by our enemies. But today I will discuss Zionism from a different angle...that of the Jewish people, and ask to what extent the Government of Israel, as a Zionist government, is responsible for the fate of the entire Jewish people and is prepared to accept whatever derives from that and, accordingly, to appoint a Minister whose sole responsibility will be the Jewish people.

The only Jewish community...which cannot concern itself with the welfare of the Jewish people is the Jewish community in the State of Israel. In Israel's Knesset, which represents Israel's citizens, there is no possibility today of seriously discussing a topic connected with the Jews of the diaspora, whether it be immigration or Jewish education, assimilation or anti-Semitism, because there is no Minister in the Government who deals with the subject....

That is no mere chance. The subject of the Jewish people does not appear on the agenda of the Knesset because it does not appear on the agenda of the State of Israel. The phenomenon I am referring to has its roots in a fundamental error...committed in the early years of the state's existence, when it decided not to take upon itself the responsibil-

ity for the Jewish people....Today, it cannot do so even if it wants to...although the state has accepted a situation of coexistence with the exile...(I am using the term deliberately), emptying of content all its statements about immigration and thereby relinquishing its role as a Zionist state....

May I remind the House...that the Zionist state was established in order to solve the problem of the Jewish people, and that its responsibility should extend beyond its territorial sovereignty to the place where the furthest-flung Jew resides....Because if the Jews of the world may have a problem of dual loyalty, the Government of Zionist Israel can have only one loyalty, i.e., to every member of the Jewish people, wherever he or she may be.

The moral question as to what extent the Jewish people has empowered the Government of Israel to interfere in its affairs...was settled when Zionism—whose consequence is the state—came into being.... There may be no precedent in international law for one country's interference in the affairs of the citizens of another, but the Jewish people and its problems are so abnormal that they cannot be based on precedents. Such questions as in what ways to do it and whether we should intervene only when Jewish lives are threatened...can be asked only after the basic question of whether the Government of Israel regards itself as being responsible for the entire Jewish people has been answered....

I expect to receive an answer to that question from the Prime Minister today, because if I had to answer it in the light of the behavior of all Israel's governments to date I would say that they hesitate to accept this responsibility, and that this has serious implications for the situation of the Jews of the exile as well as for the State of Israel. Officially, the Government has not divested itself of that responsibility...by transferring it to the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organization, except in the spheres of financial and political aid for Israel's defense...this arrangement being anchored in an agreement signed in 1952, with a coordinating committee between the Government and the Zionist Organization....But that agreement is one which purportedly deals with the Jewish people and its problems, on the one hand, and the State of Israel and its problems, on the other...irrespective of the extent to which the Zionist organization is in fact Zionist and representative of diaspora Jewry....

The inescapable fact is that that coordinating body cannot coordinate because it does not meet. Its chairman is the Prime Minister, and he is too busy with the problems of the State of Israel to convene it. Although it should meet at least once a month, it has not met more than twice or three times in the last two years...for the real question is not whether the Prime Minister has time for the problems of the Jewish people, but whether he is interested in them....I assume that he is interested...as was indicated by his admirable remarks in the debate aris-

ing from the U.N. resolutions on Zionism....That was the first time I heard a Prime Minister speak in a truly Zionist spirit in this House... though the circumstances in which his warning to the Jews of the diaspora and his call to them to immigrate to Israel were issued were regrettable....

Be that as it may...why shouldn't a special Minister, someone who is genuinely concerned about and identifies with the Jewish people, take the Prime Minister's place as chairman of that committee...? The State of Israel, as a Zionist state, should not, from the very outset, have divested itself of responsibility for the fate of the Jewish people. This is even more so today, when the Jews of the exile will not make a move without Israel's approval and when Israel's fate determines the physical condition of the Jews of the diaspora....Without a doubt, Israel does act on behalf of the Jews of the diaspora in various roundabout ways, but it must do so openly and officially....

There are several contradictions in Israel's policy on this subject. On the one hand we hear the Foreign Minister declare, in Kissinger's wake, that the subject of Soviet Jewry is the internal concern of the Soviet authorities, while on the other the State of Israel sends Israeli citizenship documents to immigration activists in Russia....Israel's responsibility for the diaspora is particularly necessary now...when assimilation and mixed marriage is rife, Jewish education is declining, anti-Semitism is increasing and immigration to Israel has become an infinitesimal trickle....

In the 1950s Ben-Gurion made a weak attempt to alter the situation and criticized the Zionist Organization...but his sole concern was immigration....His approach was to turn his back and display pique, which is hardly a rational, useful or Zionist approach....

I am not unaware of the problems involved in our accepting this responsibility, particularly after having shrugged it off for twenty-seven years....I live in this country and have also fought for it and know how much wars and struggles can distract a nation's attention from the more general problem of the Jewish people....But we are all aware of the dreadful experience of the Holocaust and know now that it could be fatal to defer dealing with problems...for the enemies of the Jews are in a hurry to solve the problems of the Jewish people in their own way....

By neglecting to deal with the problem of the Jewish people we are also harming the State of Israel...cutting ourselves off from the historical process of redemption and the vision of the ingathering of the exiles and raising a barrier between Israelis and Jews....All those things have caused a diminution in every sphere of our life: withdrawal from parts of the Land of Israel, negative immigration and retreats in the fields of culture, economics and morals....A country which was created to be Zionist and does not act accordingly is not only non-Zionist, it is abnormal. The attempt to evade the Zionist mission and establish a

normal country here is not succeeding. One might understand the desire to be normal, to be a country like any other, though when I look around at the normal countries I am not so very impressed. But even if we want to achieve that, we will not.

At any rate, in its declaration of intent, the state decided that it was Zionist. The only Zionist law which distinguishes this country is the Law of Return. This is the only country in the world most of whose potential inhabitants live outside it. Even in order to attain peace Israel will not abrogate the Law of Return....But that law alone cannot bring immigrants to Israel...and what the country needs is a Zionist policy. I therefore propose that the Knesset hold an urgent debate on revising the state's responsibility for and policy towards the Jewish people, with all that that implies regarding the coordinating committee of the Zionist Organization, as well as on establishing a parallel Knesset committee to deal with the issue....

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker...the subject raised is without doubt an important one and concerns the basis of Israel's existence....I will not repeat what is contained in the Government's guidelines regarding Israel and the diaspora. I am convinced that we are all united in realizing that the Jewish state is based on our firm and close link with our brethren abroad. Israel was established and exists for the entire Jewish nation, to ensure our national survival and continue Jewish history, not solely for its own inhabitants. That is no empty phrase, because it is reflected in our daily activities in every sphere....I will not say that what we do is sufficient and that more could not be done to combat assimilation, heighten Jewish consciousness, encourage immigration and strengthen the bond between the State of Israel and the diaspora.

These obligations are of particular importance at this time, in view of the great and urgent challenges now on the agenda of the Jewish people....No one will dispute that the subject currently under discussion has to be given greater attention...but it cannot be said that nothing is being done....I would like to remind the House of the law passed by the Knesset regarding the status of the Zionist Organization in 1952 and the agreement between the Government and the Zionist Executive in 1954....Those documents embody both the basic ideology and the practical measures of and authority for its implementation...and considerable activity is being undertaken within those frameworks....

The Government, in conjunction with the Zionist Executive, is inviting Jewish leaders representing the major Jewish organizations of the free world to Jerusalem next week for the Jerusalem Conference for Jewish Solidarity, to express the solidarity of the Jewish people with Zionism and Israel and prepare a practical and detailed plan of action for 1976. There is a widespread awakening in Jewish communities all over the world....The committee coordinating the work of the Govern-

ment and the Zionist Organization met yesterday and the final details of the conference were worked out....We hope that the conference will express the unity of the Jewish people in Israel and abroad, a unity which has grown stronger in the face of the attacks upon Zionism, the Jewish people and the State of Israel....I support MK Cohen's proposal that the subject be discussed, which the Government will bring before the House.

(The proposal to place the subject on the agenda is adopted.)

PLO Participation at the U.N. Security Council

Introduction

While the results of the terrorist activities—both inside and outside the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967—were meager, the political progress of the PLO was impressive, particularly in the wake of the oil crisis of 1973/74 and the perception of an increasing number of countries that their vital interest in ensuring a steady supply of oil necessitated friendly relations with Arab governments, producers of over 50 percent of the oil on the world market, and that this dictated some sort of recognition of, or dialogue with, the PLO. At the Arab Summit Conference of Rabat in 1974 the PLO had been recognized as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs.” At the end of the following year it was invited to the table of the Security Council with the status normally accorded only to representatives of sovereign states.

Sitting 252 of the Eighth Knesset

14 January 1976 (12 Shevat 5736)

M. Begin (Likud): Mr. Speaker, my teachers, Knesset Members, this week should be known as the week of international ignominy. A murderous organization whose fell ferocity is unparalleled in the annals of mankind, a murderous organization which plans the murder of women and children and then boasts of its deeds, a murderous organization which states openly that its aspiration is to do what Hitler did, was invited as a sovereign state to the table of the Security Council to participate in the deliberations on the future of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel.

In a newspaper interview the representative of that murderous organization...said that Israel has two choices: to let all the Palestinians return to their country and establish the democratic secular state of Palestine or to live “in the so-called State of Israel” without letting the Palestinians return, in which case the Jews would eventually die and the Palestinians be victorious. He also boasted that the Palestinians were getting stronger from day to day, receiving millions of petrodollars, and that the future belonged to them, concluding: “The Zionist ghetto of Israel must be destroyed and the entire region united.”...

People say, why should we care if that gangster, Farouk Kadoumi, says that sort of thing? The PLO should be known as the Palestine

Loathsome Organization rather than the Palestine Liberation Organization, for what is to be liberated, and from whom? The Land of Israel has been liberated, one cannot liberate the same area twice....By using the word “liberation” in that context we are undermining our own existence....We must stop doing that.

So what if Farouk Kadoumi says that sort of thing to journalists or in the Security Council...? One IDF brigade is sufficient to crush all the PLO gangs throughout the Middle East. Yes, we know that the entire Arab world supports the PLO, as was proved at the Rabat Conference and in the Security Council....It is also claimed that world public opinion supports the PLO. What, then, should we do?

My generation remembers propaganda that was more successful than that of Farouk Kadoumi. The Germans demanded merely to be united with the three million Germans living in the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. The propaganda succeeded tremendously, being accepted by the British Cabinet and many sections of the French nation as well as elsewhere...Goebbels' propaganda regarding the Jewish people also succeeded tremendously. At that time there was anti-Semitism in every country, and many people were ready to believe that the claims that the Jews ruled the world and everything else were true. Today we know what price mankind, and the Jewish people in particular, paid for submitting to successful propaganda. The choice is between submitting to wicked, false propaganda which creates the possibility of destroying a nation or not. The experience of our generation proves that we must not....

There are people who say that the people known as the Palestinians should be granted the right to self-determination. I would like to remind the House that the great American leader who gave the world that term, Woodrow Wilson, said explicitly that it meant that Palestine should become a Jewish state....People say that if we accept that term with regard to the Palestinians we will be uniting with the progressive elements. Quite the contrary is true. Those who conduct Palestinian propaganda are dark reactionaries. Our return to Zion and the liberation of the Land of Israel are acts of human progress. A persecuted, afflicted nation returns to its homeland and thereby amends the injustice of generations. Others seek to return us to the days of darkness when our people had no country and no state. That is an expression of intolerable reaction....

I would like to point out that those Jewish or Israeli advocates of Palestinianism are to no small extent responsible for what has happened in recent years regarding what is known as the heart of the conflict, turning it into a conflict in our hearts. They are unjustified in doing so because our cause is just...and eventually the Israelis who support the Palestinian cause will see the error of their ways. It is our duty to issue this warning before it is too late. A Palestinian state in Judea,

Samaria and the Gaza Strip, linked by a corridor, endangers the very existence of the State of Israel. Our entire population will be within range of those in whose name Farouk Kadoumi says "the Zionist ghetto of Israel must be destroyed."

T. Toubi (Rakah): Why do you ignore Kadoumi's denial of having said that?

M. Begin (Likud): MK Toubi, there is no common basis between us for any discussion. You support Kadoumi and had better keep quiet. Kindly let me speak. He has not denied anything. He reiterated his demand for the destruction of Israel in the Security Council yesterday....And you dare defend him in this House. For shame! We won't let you destroy the State of Israel either, MK Toubi.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Don't speak like a demagogue. Who's talking about destroying Israel?

M. Begin (Likud): Be quiet and don't speak. Is there a Jew in the Syrian parliament? In the Iraqi parliament? In the Egyptian parliament? We let you say anything in this House, but don't go too far....

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Don't use threats....

T. Toubi (Rakah): Don't do me any favors. I'm not here because of you....

H. Landau (Likud): Anyway, you're a foreign agent....

T. Toufik (Rakah): This is my homeland....

M. Begin (Likud): In addition, a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip would overnight become the main Soviet base of the Middle East...along the lines of the process which took place after Angola became independent....Arafat, Jibril and Dr. Habash are Marxist-Leninists, Soviet agents in every sense of the word....The Sovietization of the Middle East would be inevitable....Since ancient times every power has sought influence in the Land of Israel, because this is the crossroads to three continents...and that is why the U.S.S.R. now supports the PLO....We must emphasize that aspect of the situation and strengthen our ties with the free world, for the U.S. is as interested in keeping U.S.S.R. bases out of the Middle East as the U.S.S.R. is in putting them there....A Palestinian state will endanger our existence and the interests of the entire free world....

We must confront the successful propaganda of Israel's enemies with the following Israeli plan: 1. The Land of Israel belongs by right to the Jewish people, and from this podium I would like to congratulate the great teacher, Rabbi Schneerson, at whose initiative Jewish teachers in Israel decided to proclaim to the world that the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. That is the basis, that is the principle, that is the

source—our right, which will never be revoked....2. That right to the Land of Israel is inseparably connected with our right to national security. 3. The Arabs of the Land of Israel may choose freely as regards their citizenship, cultural autonomy, a positive and humane solution of the refugee problem under our jurisdiction. 4. There must be direct negotiations on peace treaties between us and the Arab countries.

I request that a debate be held in the Knesset on the subject I have brought before it today, so that a resolution may be adopted regarding the participation of murderous organizations in the deliberations of the Security Council on the future of the Land of Israel, a resolution which will be transmitted to all the parliaments of the world....

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Syrian initiative of holding a discussion in the Security Council on the Israel-Arab conflict with the participation of the PLO was intended to harm Israel and Egypt, foil the interim settlement between them in the Sinai, transfer the arena of discussions and negotiations from Geneva to the Security Council, alter the relevant resolutions which serve as the basis for those negotiations and pave the way to an imposed solution.

The U.S. did not impose a veto on the PLO's participation and Sweden encouraged it. By doing that they both acted against their declared positions...incidentally encouraging the PLO's extremism, since it was allowed to participate without making any concessions or accepting Resolutions 242 and 338, and bringing the negotiations to a state of deadlock....I endorse our Government's decision to boycott the Security Council discussions, though this need not apply to all future discussions to which the PLO is invited....

I regard the problem as being less what is being done now, that is, at the Security Council, than what is to be done in the future....We cannot have deadlock in the Middle East...because that will lead to support for an imposed solution, leaving the initiative with our enemies....Thus, a lack of initiative on our part is dangerous and could give rise to a further erosion in the position of the U.S....We must define our position on four issues: 1. within which framework we are prepared to hold negotiations with the Arab countries; 2. on what; 3. with whom; and 4. when....

We must demand the immediate convening of the Geneva Conference...and insist on holding discussions regarding peace, the assurance of Israel's security and, within a peace plan guaranteeing our security, express our readiness to reach a territorial compromise and the solution of the Palestinian problem....The negotiations must be tripartite, that is, between Israel, Jordan and a legitimate representative of the Palestinians...who recognizes Israel's existence and is prepared to make peace with us. Obviously, under existing conditions the PLO is not a partner for such talks....

I do not think that the policy of rejections has proved itself...It has caused the PLO to be regarded as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians by much of the world and has brought us to a position of political and intellectual isolation....Being an election year, 1976 is better for us than 1977. We must utilize it to our benefit, for if we do not the Arabs will use it to theirs, every deadlock of ours leading to an Arab initiative and the erosion of the U.S. position....Now that we have clear military superiority, that there is disunity within the Arab world, that there is an Interim Agreement which promises a chance of quiet, at least on the southern border, this is the time to set the wheels of the Geneva Conference and the dialogue between us and the Arab countries into motion....

We must not let short-term internal policy considerations impair our long-term foreign policy objectives. The Prime Minister should make use of his visit to Washington to prepare the Geneva Conference, establish the appropriate contacts to embark on a joint long-term policy and political strategy with the U.S. and express readiness to reach a solution to the Middle East conflict....There is no guarantee that a peace plan will indeed bring us an agreement....But if we do not attain that agreement, by having moved from a politically defensive to an initiating position...we will have proved our readiness to compromise, thereby strengthening our international position and our partnership with the U.S....

The Government must draw up and present a comprehensive, long-term peace plan which contains solutions to all the problems between us and the Arab countries, including the Palestinian problem. We must gain the approval of the U.S. for the plan and regain the initiative in the international political arena....I propose that this important subject be placed on the Knesset's agenda.

The Foreign Minister, Y. Allon: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the only thing one can say in favor of the PLO is that it is frank. Neither its leaders nor the so-called moderates seek to conceal their intentions. MK Begin quoted them correctly and no denials have been issued....They consistently declare their refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist and intention of destroying it, seeking to clothe their program in progressive guise, thereby confusing the world, including Jews and even some Israelis....That organization does not represent any nation and is not a legitimate partner for negotiations about anything. That is the Government's position, which has recently been approved by the Knesset and brought to the notice of the nation and the world....

Security Council Resolution 381 of November 30 is damaging both in its content and in the fact that it offers encouragement to the extremist elements in the Arab world. The Security Council met on November 30 in order to extend the mandate of the U.N. Observer Force in the Golan Heights. But Syria and the PLO, encouraged by the U.S.S.R., wanted to

exploit that occasion to attain a propaganda victory, undermine our Interim Agreement with Egypt and heighten that country's isolation in the Arab world....

We are not participating in the discussions of the Security Council, but not because we have decided to boycott it. Israel's representatives participate in the deliberations of many U.N.-sponsored international organizations where PLO representatives are observers. We will not make it easy for them to isolate us in the world and deprive ourselves of our position in the international bodies....When I recommended that we refrain from participating in the Security Council discussions...I based my argument on the fact that irrelevant paragraphs had been included in Resolution 381...and that these could be erroneously interpreted as representing an erosion in the position of the Council, of our friends in the world and first and foremost of the U.S. We also wished to protest at the fact that the PLO had been invited as if it were the representative of a country or nation....Our representative at the U.N., Ambassador Herzog, has made and will make a statement parallel to the Security Council debate which will gain the attention of the world just as if he had participated in the discussions. By our absence from the Security Council I sought to hint at the possibility of our absenting ourselves from other frameworks, i.e., the Geneva Conference, if an attempt is made to grant them a jurisdiction which does not belong to them.

It is not the absence of a solution to the problem of the identity of the Palestinians which has prevented peace till now, but the insistence of the Arab countries on maintaining a state of war....I claim that a constructive solution to the problem of the independent identity of the Palestinians has to be found, in connection with peace with Jordan. Adhering stubbornly to positions and ignoring the existence of problems will only lead to greater violence....We do have a plan which seeks, on the basis of a territorial compromise within the framework of peace and giving Israel defensible borders, to provide an answer to the political interests of the Arab side, including the identity of the Palestinians, in connection with peace with Jordan....

There is a great political difference if a plan is rejected by Israel or by the Arabs....If Israel presents a constructive plan which preserves its interests while also considering those of the other side, and that plan is rejected by the other side, the responsibility for the deadlock cannot be represented as being wholly ours....I do not think that Israel is in splendid isolation, as has been claimed. I think that over the past year we have improved our position, and I have proof of this....Nonetheless, we must fight to gain understanding. We also need weapons, economic aid, political support and sometimes even a veto in the Security Council. Do you think that all that is guaranteed if we keep on saying no to everything...?

The present Security Council session was intended by Syria, the PLO and the U.S.S.R. to serve as another stage in the political offensive which began when we signed the Agreement with Egypt...the assumption being that a majority hostile to Israel was guaranteed, with the objective of imposing a solution on the region....The President and Secretary of State of the U.S. invited me to Washington to try and work out a joint strategy for dealing with the Security Council discussions, blocking the destructive offensive and removing the obstacles from the path to the convening of the Geneva Conference. My talks in the U.S. were very useful as regards reaching an understanding about the Security Council, speeding up the delivery of supplies which had been promised to Israel and also in the field of economic aid.

The U.S. agrees with us: A. that the PLO should not be invited to the Security Council debates, and I express my appreciation of the way the U.S. voted...; B. that the conversion of the Security Council into a de facto peace conference is not to be permitted...; C. that the Peace Conference at Geneva and bilateral negotiations are the only frameworks by means of which it is possible to progress towards peace in the Middle East. The U.S. Government is adamant that only Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for the future activity of the Geneva Conference.

Naturally, we defined objectives and decided on strategic moves... and the U.S. will consult with us before acting in the Security Council on debates associated with the Middle East....I found greater understanding for our case in the U.S. than in the past, both within the Administration and by the public and the press....I would like to make it clear to MK Sha'ari that Israel is constantly taking the initiative...and remind him of the Government's decision of July 1974 about granting self-expression to the Palestinians in the context of peace with Jordan....I and others believe that Jordan can serve as a partner for a solution...but the situation has been complicated by the extremist Rabat resolutions and Syria's stubborn refusal to hold talks with us....

We have initiated both a comprehensive agreement and interim settlements intended to bring us nearer a comprehensive agreement... but things are by no means simple....I informed the U.S. Government and the whole world, via the media, that Israel proposed convening the Geneva Conference at the earliest possible opportunity, with the original participants...to deal with all the components of the Arab-Israel conflict....Any decision which diverges from Resolutions 242 and 338 or from the terms of the original invitation to the Geneva Conference issued by the Secretary-General could paralyze the Conference. If that is the case, I will recommend that the Government reexamine its commitment to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Consequently, anyone who wishes to prevent deadlock in the Middle East, and I appeal from here to all the members of the Security Council,

should avoid tampering with the original terms of reference of the Geneva Conference....I agree with MKs Begin and Sha'ari that the subject should be debated by the Knesset....

M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...I propose that MK Begin's proposal be removed from the agenda....Israel should not adhere blindly to the decisions of the past, i.e., Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338....It must also contend with the challenges of the present and the future and take the initiative....

I think that the wisest political approach to coping with the PLO's participation in the deliberations of the Security Council is the following three-point plan: A. We should not display pique at the Security Council but tackle the PLO's arguments...at the discussion table, while combating it on the battlefield. We must defeat it both politically and militarily...; B. Resolution 242 need not be regarded as a *sine qua non*, it may be amended and we should display flexibility regarding it....We should propose that the U.N. recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, alongside Israel and while recognizing it. This constitutes Israeli acceptance of the amendment to Resolution 242; C. We should have demanded the amendment of Resolution 242 long ago...obliging the Arab countries and the Palestinians to recognize Israel and sign peace agreements with it in return for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories....

The Vote

Those in favor	37
Those against	4

(The proposals that the Knesset debate the subjects raised by MKs Begin and Sha'ari are adopted.)

Supply of French Atomic Reactors to Iraq

Introduction

All the wars in the Middle East, whether between Israel and Arabs, Arabs amongst themselves, or Arabs with non-Arab states on the periphery, have been conventional ones, but the possibility of one or more Arab states acquiring nuclear capabilities has never escaped the attention of Israeli policy-makers. This concern came to the fore with the signing of an agreement between Iraq and France for the establishment of a nuclear reactor with war-like potentialities near Baghdad. The reactor was subsequently destroyed in an operation carried out by the Israel Air Force in June 1981.

Sitting 257 of the Eighth Knesset

27 January 1976 (25 Shevat 5736)

A. Nof (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Iraq is purchasing nuclear reactors and technology from France. The first step is an atomic power station based on water pressure to be built by the French under license from Westinghouse. Also planned is a power station based on a rapid reactor...following the pattern of the French Phoenix rapid reactor, using plutonium and uranium. The program includes training Iraqi engineers, scientists and technicians.

According to the bilateral cooperation agreement signed by France and Iraq in October 1975, a research center is to be set up in Iraq and will comprise a nuclear reactor of the Osiris type, similar to the one first used outside Paris in 1966. The output of the reactor is 70 megawatts. In comparison, the output of the reactor at Nahal Sorek is five megawatts. The nuclear fuel used by the reactor is 93 percent enriched uranium and the core of the reactor is approximately seven pounds of uranium 235. Plutonium can be manufactured by a sophisticated reactor of this kind. Both the plutonium and the enriched uranium can serve as nuclear explosives.

Five pounds of plutonium are sufficient to produce an atom bomb of approximately ten kilotons, the same size as the one dropped on Hiroshima. The bomb which India managed to manufacture while hoarding material and circumventing supply contracts for reactors supposedly for peaceful purposes is even bigger, being approximately twelve kilotons. The French project in Iraq gives the Iraqis three basic elements:

1. the introduction of sophisticated, modern technology; 2. the training of personnel; 3. explosives.

Apart from the plutonium, which requires a complicated separation installation, the bomb can be manufactured from enriched uranium. The latest information is that the French company which looked for uranium deposits in Iraq found a rich field there. Thus, if the plot to establish the nuclear center in Iraq is not foiled, that country will have technical knowhow, trained personnel and bombs....Iraq is one of the countries which waged war on Israel in 1948. It refused in 1949, and still refuses, to sign an armistice agreement with Israel. It conducts public hangings, massacres the Kurdish people, and its rulers are unstable and irresponsible....

The possibility of the manufacture of the bomb by Iraq is another link in the nuclear armament of the Arab countries. In the meeting between Sadat and the U.S. President in November 1975 it was decided that Egypt would purchase two nuclear power stations from the U.S... and the preliminary work for this is now under way....A survey has also been conducted in Egypt as to the feasibility of excavating a fifty mile tunnel between the Mediterranean Sea and the Katara Basin by means of nuclear explosives. The U.S. Government has admitted to being involved in this project...The technique being learned and applied by the Egyptians to implement this and the material used is the same as that employed in manufacturing the bomb....

Egypt has an active nuclear cooperation agreement with India, which acquired the bomb by trickery. Egyptian scientists are being trained at Indian installations. Egypt's "moderate" leader, Sadat, has declared that in order to fulfill his plan of destroying Israel he is prepared to pay with the lives of three million Egyptians....

The Libyan leader, Kaddafi, is also trying to gain entry to the nuclear club....Having failed in his attempts to purchase a ready-made bomb from China, he has signed agreements with Sweden and Argentina for training Libyan personnel....Saudia has an arrangement with France whereby, in return for two hundred million tons of oil in the next decade, France will pay in part by means of atomic reactors. Pakistan is now working towards producing a bomb of its own....It is evident that the ultimate use of all these reactors is military....

This situation requires us to draw two essential conclusions. First of all, we must make the development of Israel's nuclear capability our top priority...knowing that our sole purpose in so doing is to enhance our defensive capacity....Israel, unlike other countries in the Middle East, is rich in the mental resources which no petrodollars can buy....Secondly, we must embark on a vigorous international information campaign to dissuade the world from putting the weapons which could destroy the planet into the hands of mentally-deranged elements. The citizens of France and other countries must not let the government of the

country of freedom, brotherhood and equality give atom bombs to the irresponsible government of hangmen in Iraq...We must mobilize world public opinion to stop this madness....

...

The Foreign Minister, Y. Allon: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I share the concern of the previous speakers and think the subject warrants discussion...but because of its nature I think that the most appropriate forum for doing so is the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....With alertness and concern, the Government of Israel is keeping track of the cooperation between Arab countries and countries with advanced nuclear technology. We have warned those countries of the dangers involved in giving nuclear technology to countries which could use it for aggressive purposes in the region....I propose that the subject be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

...

(The proposal to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

Deteriorating Situation in Lebanon

Introduction

The precarious Christian majority in Lebanon, whose supposed existence had formed the basis for the Constitutional Formula, introduced in 1946, which called for a Christian President, a Sunni Moslem Prime Minister and a Shi'ite Moslem Speaker of Parliament, was gradually being eroded, and the power of the central government diminished accordingly. Civil war between Moslems—led by Palestinians who by now constituted the major military force in the country—and Christians broke out in 1975. Syria, which had never renounced its claim to Lebanon, intervened. The Israel-Lebanon border had been the quietest border for many years, from 1949 to 1965, when Al Fatah launched its first terrorist attacks from Lebanese soil. Subsequently the situation deteriorated. The perpetrators of the outrages at Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot had come from Lebanon, where the government was no longer able to control its own territory. All the same, the Government of Israel, while maintaining its freedom of action, refrained from intervening at that point.

Sitting 258 of the Eighth Knesset

28 January 1976 (26 Shevat 5736)

S. Tamir (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members...events have overtaken the slow pace at which the Knesset works, and what was a danger when I proposed my motion for the agenda is now an established fact....An army which is trained, maintained, equipped, financed and commanded by Syria, and which is known as the Palestinian army, has invaded Lebanon, reaching Beirut and tipping the scales in the civil war raging there....The leader of the terrorist gangs, Arafat, has established himself as a head of state, received ambassadors and announced: Lebanon is in our hands. The leader of the Christian Phalangists, Pierre Jamayil, has been forced to admit in public that they have become strangers in their own land. We are referring to 50 percent of the population of Lebanon, the first "secular-democratic" country in the Middle East governed by the murderous gangs.

Lebanon has become a client of Syria, or half of Syria and half of Arafat, and thus Moslem-Arab imperialism has, with Soviet backing, gained control over the last nation in the Middle East, apart from Israel, which is not Moslem. The Western, so-called free world views this

tragic and highly significant development helplessly, mouthing an empty phrase here and there....

When one compares what happened in the Mediterranean in the 1950s, when U.S. Marines landed in Beirut because of far less danger; when one recalls what happened in 1970, when Jordan was in similar danger, the Syrian army having crossed its northern border, and the U.S. Sixth Fleet sailed east from Naples and Athens, the U.S. agreeing to Israel's readiness and even its active interference should certain developments occur; when one compares this with the behavior of the U.S. in 1975/76, displaying acceptance, weakness and silence as it witnesses a massacre; when one makes that comparison one realizes how far the free world has sunk under the guise of the policy of detente, and how Soviet involvement throughout Asia, Africa and on our very doorstep in the north has increased....There have been mass murders, thousands of people have been forced out of their homes, churches have been burnt down...yet the Vatican remains silent, as it did when similar but worse outrages were perpetrated against Jews. France, with all its links with Lebanon, is totally passive...while the U.S. appears to be impotent....

If that is how the Western, Christian world reacts to the massacre of Christians and the Soviet-backed Syrian invasion of Lebanon...what will its response be if, heaven forbid, Israel is in a position where its fate depends on help from the outside...?

The change in Lebanon is, from our point of view, first and foremost in the political and security situation. It will not be long before the skies of Lebanon are no longer clear as far as our Air Force is concerned. It will not be long before Soviet ground-to-air missiles are situated in Lebanon and the Arab armies fortify the country, like the Syrians did in the Golan Heights. Soon Beirut will not be what it once was for the Navy, becoming a larger version of the terrorist dens on the Lebanese coast...and Beirut's deep-water port will become a Soviet-backed base.

The Government of Israel's response was to declare on various occasions that Israel would not intervene in Lebanon as long as outside forces were not involved, but if they were Israel would regard that as a threat to its security and would act accordingly....Now Syrian troops are in Lebanon commanding the terrorists, and Israel's statements remain empty threats...proving its unreliability to the world once more....The process of the Syrian domination of Lebanon has not ended. Israel must demand the withdrawal of the Palestinian-Syrian army and state quite clearly that it will not tolerate the present situation....Had Israel done this earlier this entire development might have been avoided....

...
The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Y. Allon: Distinguished Speaker and Knesset...I would like to use this opportunity to express my sorrow...at the dreadful human tragedy which has befallen

the inhabitants of Lebanon. As Lebanon's neighbors, who hope to live in peace and cooperation with it one day, we share the grief of the families of the 10,000 dead and 30,000 wounded, most of them helpless citizens, not to mention the damage to the economy over the last ten months. It has been distressing to see that unfortunate country gripped by civil war while the world looks on indifferently.

It has been particularly hard to see what has happened to the Christian community of Lebanon, which was left to the mercies of the Moslem communities backed by local and international forces....Its plight was not even raised at the Security Council...no one was prepared to champion its cause, let alone offer organized, practical aid. The appeals for help by its leaders to the Western, Christian world fell on deaf ears.... Israel, which has a long, winding border with Lebanon, cannot be indifferent to what is happening in that country, but the principle which underlies our actions...is that we do not interfere in the internal affairs of our neighbors provided they remain internal. Some of us may have certain thoughts about the structure of government or the political system of any one of our neighbors...but those are essentially their internal affairs.

Israel's sole concern with what happens beyond our borders derives from our essential security interests and the welfare of our inhabitants....During the civil war in Lebanon we made it clear in various ways that we would regard an invasion by Syrian troops as harming our security interests. There is no doubt that this helped deter Syria from invading Lebanon and seeking to annex it, in accordance with its expansionist dream of Greater Syria....We are keeping a close watch on developments to see if Damascus keeps its word and refrains from sending its army to Lebanon....

A. Nof (Likud): What about what has happened now? Isn't that annexation?

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Y. Allon: The danger of a Syrian invasion is not the only security danger to Israel deriving from the civil war in Lebanon and its consequences. There is an increasing danger that the terrorist organizations will try to seize control of the southern part of Lebanon and turn it into an organized base for terrorist attacks on Israel and its settlements. We will not countenance that danger or ignore it if it is fulfilled. We will continue to maintain our political and moral right and our military alertness to ensure our security interests and the welfare of our inhabitants in outlying areas....

Lebanon's more distant future is still shrouded in the mists of uncertainty....No one can tell how matters will turn out...but one thing is sure, the Lebanon that was, as we have known it for the last fifty years, will no longer exist....It will be a different country....Lebanon's

miserable plight has made it abundantly clear what is the nature of the "democratic, secular and multinational" state which the PLO claims to want to establish here, which slogan has been blindly accepted by the credulous world....The Palestinian gangs also played a large part in exacerbating the civil war in Lebanon...acting as mercenaries for others, and for Syria in particular....This process could be repeated in other Arab countries too....I propose that the subject be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

T. Toubi (Rakah): Distinguished Speaker...our party group moves that the proposals be removed from the agenda....What should be discussed is not Syria's intervention in Lebanon, where it extended brotherly aid and stopped the bloodshed, but the threats of Israel's Government to engage in military interference....It is surprising that the whole world esteems Syria's help in stopping the bloody civil war in Lebanon while Israel regrets it....Raising the subject of Syria's supposed military intervention and speaking of Moslem and Soviet domination while calling for Israel's intervention in Lebanon now that the fighting has stopped is an attempt at provocation and a desperate effort by foolhardy people in Israel to throw Lebanon back into the turmoil of civil war. The behavior of Israel's Government in the last few months with regard to the events in Lebanon has been characterized by interference of various kinds, encouraging the fascist Phalangists against the patriotic, anti-imperialist Lebanese and against the Palestinians, in the hope that the bloodshed would lead to outside intervention, possibly by Israel with U.S. support, the object being to crush the Palestinian people's movement, divide up Lebanon and set up an American puppet-state while satisfying the Israel Government's expansionist aspirations.

Israel's leaders have issued those threats in the hope of attaining their objectives...but the balance of power in the world today has precluded heavy-handed U.S. intervention similar to that of 1958, even under Israel's auspices....MK Tamir regrets what he calls American impotence in Lebanon and elsewhere...but he should draw the appropriate conclusions from it....It is true that the Lebanese people have paid a high price for the reactionary plot of the emissaries of imperialism, but with the help of their Syrian neighbor they have overcome their difficulties, normal life has been restored and the threats of intervention foiled. Anyone who is concerned for the welfare of the Lebanese people will welcome the agreement and wish it success.

Consequently, we again warn both the Likud and the Government to keep out of Lebanon and let the Lebanese people settle their affairs without your threats or intervention. The Government's concern for the refugees in Lebanon is humbug when it refuses to recognize the rights of the Arab refugees from this country. Like Israel's other borders, there will be genuine peace on the border with Lebanon not by virtue of a show of force by Israel but when there is true peace between Israel and the

Palestinian Arab people, a peace which the Government of Israel has rejected till now.

(The proposal to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

Egypt's Threats of War in Violation of the Interim Agreement

Introduction

Relations with Egypt continued to occupy a central place in the Knesset's deliberations, after the 1975 Interim Agreement as before. The following is a motion for the agenda which is related to the subject and is of interest primarily because of the fact that a decade later the two main protagonists—Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres—were to be locked together as rotating Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, in the National Unity Government.

Sitting 273 of the Eighth Knesset

3 March 1976 (1 Adar I 5736)

Y. Shamir (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, it has not been two days since the Egyptian army entered the parts of the Sinai which were formerly in our hands and were handed over to it under the Interim Agreement, and now President Sadat has said that if the Geneva Conference fails the only alternative left will be war. That is an open threat and a clear violation of the Interim Agreement, in which the sides undertook neither to resort to nor to threaten force. Sadat claims, however, that the Geneva Conference can meet only if a representative of the terrorist organization is invited to participate, and that it will fail if it does not attain his twin objectives: Israel's withdrawal to the borders of 1967 and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people.

One cannot help admire the consistency and persistence with which all the Arab representatives state their demands, at every opportunity, on every podium...and no one asks them to come up with fresh ideas and plans. Only we are required to do that. Yet we abandon an important information advantage, our original demand for direct negotiations and peace treaties....Despite his warlike threats, Sadat is represented as being a man of peace today. Our Prime Minister praises him and the risks he has taken for peace...and as a result the U.S. appears to be inclined to supply arms to Egypt...and may well cut military aid to Israel....

President Sadat has not changed his tune since he worked for the Nazis or initiated and spearheaded the surprise attack on the Day of Atonement. He is adopting new tactics, appearing in the guise of a lover of peace, but he is consistent in his adherence to the dominant Arab de-

mands: that Israel shall not benefit by one inch of land and that the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs must be recognized....From the Yom Kippur War Sadat learned that he can gain the advantage over Israel only with the help of the U.S....We must fight this policy in the American arena, revealing his true Nazi face and tearing off the mask of peace-lover. Instead, however, we play his game and help him make further conquests in the U.S. Administration and public opinion....

There is, in effect, a division of labor in the Arab world. The Syrian-Iraqi group plays the Soviet game, receives Russian arms and prepares the military machine, while Egypt plays the American game and undermines the ties between Israel and the U.S. The objective is to get the two Powers to act as a pincers against Israel....That is Sadat's policy...and we must not allow ourselves to forget that he is our enemy and we must foil his plans. We can do so provided we see the situation as it really is...something our Government fails to do....

The Government creates the mistaken impression that by having handed the oil fields and the passes to the Egyptians they are no longer a hostile force....The Government's recipe for peace is to hand over territory and make additional interim settlements....I must warn the nation already today that that process leads rapidly and undeviatingly to the borders of 4 June 1967, the borders which MK Abba Eban once called "the Auschwitz borders." Anyone who recalls our perilous security situation on those deplorable borders prior to the Six Day War is making a grave mistake if he thinks that by returning to the borders of 1967 we will be returning to the situation of 1967....The situation will be far more serious. The indefensible borders will be supplemented by the Arafat-led state and a huge stockpile of arms aimed at us will be situated on our doorstep.

It is a cruel scenario, but we cannot prevent its fulfillment if we let this weak Government continue to lead us down the slope of failures. It is no exaggeration to say that every day this Government remains in office increases the danger to the nation and the country. The nation has the power to change the course of developments...but first of all the Government must resign, so that the nation and the country may be saved.

The Minister of Defense, S. Peres: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, after Israel completed its part of the Interim Agreement in the Sinai on 22 February 1976, only time will tell if Egypt is ready and able to keep its part of the bargain....Underlying Sadat's policy is the realization that making use of political means while maintaining military alertness is the best way of overcoming Egypt's national problems....Egypt has come to the conclusion that the conflict cannot be resolved by war alone....It has already paid a high price in its economy and internal development....The Egyptians also fear that military action could lead to the loss of the "gains" of October 1973....

Egypt's declared strategic conception is based on three components: First, the objective of the "current generation" is to reach a comprehensive settlement, to cancel "the results of the 1967 war," i.e., to get Israel to return to the 1967 borders on all fronts, to establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to attain a non-belligerency pact which will be reinforced by international guarantees. Egypt has refused to define its position on "peace," maintaining that that is for "the next generation."

Secondly, the best way of reaching that settlement is by a gradual process, utilizing U.S. mediation. The settlement in the Sinai constitutes an initial stage since this is easier to attain, and is to be followed by a settlement in the Golan Heights. Thirdly, the next stage, after the Interim Agreements in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, will be to convene the Geneva Conference with the participation of the PLO...which, Egypt claims, will have to moderate its stand, at least tactically, and reach an accommodation with Jordan....

Starting from that point of departure, since the war Egypt has sought to reach a substantive change in its relations with the Powers, contending that it must prevent a further dichotomization between the Soviet-Arab camp and the American-Israeli one, which would lead once more to deadlock and a state of "no war-no peace." Egypt assessed that as a result of the war the conditions facilitating the loosening of the special ties between the U.S. and Israel had been created....

Egypt sought to benefit from its rapprochement with the U.S. by receiving significant material, economic and military aid. In order to attain this it was prepared to display a responsible and moderate attitude and pay the price in the deterioration of its relations with the U.S.S.R.... The Egyptian attitude has not been significantly affected in the last two years by internal considerations...and there seems to be widespread support for Sadat's policy. Egypt's position has been affected by considerations of Arab solidarity, however...particularly since its military strength and economic development are also dependent on aid from the oil-producing countries.

Sadat's policy since the Yom Kippur War has enabled Egypt to receive extensive aid from the other Arab countries...commitments from the Arab oil-producing countries to pay for the weapons purchased by it, particularly in the West...and private and governmental financial aid from the West.... That policy also created the background for the implementation of social and economic objectives, part of which are the outcome of the Six Day War, namely: A. bringing over 750,000 displaced persons back to the Suez Canal region; B. rebuilding and developing the towns along the Suez Canal; C. reopening the Canal to ships and widening and deepening it. Prior to signing the Interim Agreement in September 1975, the Egyptian government estimated that the Arab world was permitting it to reach a settlement in the Sinai, though

this has not yet been verified. The reduction of Egypt's scope of action within the Arab world during the last six months, and particularly the rift with Syria, is one of the salient characteristics of Egypt's political position today.

The change in Egypt's position within the Arab world, and particularly in its relations with Syria, is a result of the Interim Agreement. The dispute between Egypt and Syria developed already during the Yom Kippur War, but the Interim Agreement brought it to the fore, with Egypt regarding it as an impressive achievement...and Syria adhering to its extremist nationalist-militarist position. Syria hopes to drag Egypt into another war, whether directly or indirectly, and during the last six months the relations between the two countries have deteriorated considerably....

Since the possibility of progressing towards a settlement in the Golan Heights has been blocked by Syria, most of Egypt's attention has been focused on an attempt to achieve progress on the subject of the Palestinians...within the framework of a comprehensive settlement to be attained via the Geneva Conference.... Egypt regards the latest agreement as a major policy achievement, restoring to it territory, strategic positions and the economic resources of the oil fields. The Agreement proved to Egypt that the U.S. was indeed prepared to exert pressure on Israel and that additional achievements, particularly in the sphere of economic and military aid from the U.S., could be attained this way.... Equally important, the Agreement enables Egypt to divert resources from the sphere of the conflict to that of the economy, and the impression is that most of the Egyptian public wants this. On the other hand, Egypt does not regard the Agreement as placing it outside the framework of the conflict with Israel....

Egypt's leaders repeatedly affirm that they intend to honor the Agreement and will not submit to pressure. They state that they will adhere to the political approach, and that only if that fails will they resort to other measures.... Only this week Sadat spoke in public against embarking on a war of attrition in the Golan Heights, and his words were possibly directed at Syria and at Jordan too.... There is a general feeling in Egypt...that the time has come for the country to concern itself with its own internal affairs and that the Egyptian people deserves to be compensated for the sacrifices it has made for the Palestinians and the Arab countries, even if this involves a certain isolation within the Arab world. On the other hand, Egypt has been asked by the oil-producing countries from which it has sought aid to accept the general Arab attitude on the conflict....

To date Egypt has not seriously violated the Agreement, regarding it as part of its overall strategic approach, not merely a tactical move. This does not mean that Egypt adheres to every last item of the Agreement. For example, there has been no noticeable change in its hostile

propaganda regarding Israel—though it is more moderate than Syria's...and there have been minor deviations in the military sphere. ...In general, it can be said that since the Agreement was signed the Egyptians have not come forward with any new ideas about the possibility of attaining peace...apparently leaving this to the "next generation."...

Statements made by Egyptian leaders still present Israel as an aggressive and expansionist country, as an enemy which has to be fought until it accepts the Arabs' conditions and as a country whose desire for peace has not been proven as long as it has not withdrawn from all the territories occupied in 1967 and a Palestinian state has not been established. There has been no discernible attempt by the Egyptian authorities over the last six months to prepare the Egyptian public for coexistence with Israel.

The Egyptian army is currently undergoing a process of extensive reorganization....It is difficult to tell where Egypt is headed, though it seems to have signed the Interim Agreement with the intention of adhering to it. To date it has been consistent in this and rejected pressures to violate it. In the future we will have to examine Egypt's intentions in various spheres: first, whether it will be able to continue withstanding Arab pressure; second, whether it genuinely rejects the military option; third, whether it is possible to detect the first signs of a change in its attitude toward Israel in the direction of peace....

I would be happy if it were possible to overlook the discrepancy in Egypt's policy...but one must be realistic and relate to both the positive and negative aspects....Israel has repeated its readiness to try and reach an additional agreement with Egypt which would end the state of war and create a new situation which, though not full peace, would constitute progress in that direction and away from war, thereby benefiting both countries....

We regard Egypt's present policy with qualified optimism, being ready for additional agreements with it and with other Arab countries, while maintaining our military alertness and building up our military strength....Our readiness for additional agreements with the Arab countries accurately reflects Israel's desire for peace, while our current and future military dispositions reflect the uncertainty of the Arab position and the hopes of some of the Arab countries to take Israel by surprise....I propose that MK Shamir's proposal be transferred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee for a more detailed discussion....

M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...the content of the Minister of Defense's speech indicated that he was about to end by suggesting that MK Shamir's proposal be removed from the agenda, but since he did not, I would like to say...that it is high time that the Alignment leadership summoned up its courage and removed from the agenda all the contentious and disingenuous proposals which the Likud

makes every other day, yapping endlessly about every extremist statement made by any Arab leader, the Likud's objective being to intimidate the Israeli public and the already-intimidated Alignment....Today the Likud's alarmism reached absurd heights when MK Shamir cried wolf about Sadat's threat even though Sadat has stated openly that Egypt will not join in a war against Israel if Syria initiates it....In order to clear the political air, which the Likud is constantly and mercilessly making murky, MK Shamir's proposal should be removed from the agenda....

(The proposal to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

Dismissing Cabinet Ministers

Introduction

Under the Basic Law: the Government, members of the Government are assigned specific authority in, and responsibility for, the area within the jurisdiction of the portfolios assigned to them. This division of labor requires the approval of the Knesset. Ministers could not, however, be held accountable individually to the Knesset for their actions or those of their respective Ministries. Vis-à-vis the Knesset, and consequently the public, the Government bears collective responsibility. The Knesset could vote no confidence only in the Government as a whole. The Prime Minister could not dismiss an individual Minister, except by resigning himself and subsequently—if his majority remained intact—reconstituting the Government without the Minister concerned. The issue became particularly poignant following the publication of the Agranat Commission Report.

One of several attempts to modify the situation is given below. Although rejected on this occasion, an amendment enabling the Prime Minister to dismiss a member of the Government was subsequently adopted.

Sitting 306 of the Eighth Knesset

16 June 1976 (18 Sivan 5736)

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset...we have all seen how the Government's coalitionary agreements restrict the Knesset in its debates on matters of the highest importance....But worse still is the Government's decision, because of coalitionary agreements, to impose coalitionary discipline and determine how Knesset Members shall act with regard to the Basic Law: the Government....By doing so it has exceeded the bounds of its authority, because it is the Knesset's prerogative...to debate and decide freely, on a party group basis, with regard to Basic Laws....This constitutes further erosion of the Knesset's authority and makes a mockery of the concept of the Knesset's sovereignty....

It is not for nothing that the Knesset is known as a rubber stamp, and this is another example of how, in the present situation, the Knesset cannot express no confidence in an individual Minister....As the situation stands today, a Minister may fail in his task yet does not have ministerial responsibility. He may not function at all, yet he cannot be dismissed. He may undermine the Government's authority and speak

against the Government, but it would seem that the Ministers are not and do not want to be responsible for their actions, blunders and words. That is the conclusion which must be drawn from the Government's decision this week.

We are told that it is a coalitionary problem, but it is for the Knesset, not the Government, to discuss topics of this kind. The Government's job is to function and implement a clear policy....When every Minister's position is buttressed by coalitionary arrangements...this gives rise to a great many questions and doubts within the electorate and the Knesset as to what its policy really is, as is indeed the case. For there are Ministers who act in contradiction to the Prime Minister's statements and the Government's policy....Today neither the Government nor the Ministers are responsible for things Ministers say...and there is even a conflict of interests between them at times.

Lately we have witnessed a phenomenon which in my view is extremely dangerous. People are talking about "a firm hand" and "a strong man," because the Government is not functioning. A presidential regime has been mentioned....This would restrict the Knesset's authority still more and inevitably lead to dictatorship....People like Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler and de Gaulle came to power because of shaky democracy....

The object of our proposal is to enable the Government, within the limits of its power, to act, function and accord responsibility to a Minister who does not function appropriately or undermines the Government's policy. These things should not be done in secret or at the Prime Minister's whim. In my view, personal relationships should not come into things, and it is irrelevant whether the Prime Minister does or does not get on with one Minister or party group or another. Within an open political framework one cannot dismiss a certain Minister simply because one does not like the color of his eyes or because he has made a certain remark. The problem arises when the Prime Minister encounters a situation in which public opinion demands parliamentary responsibility from a particular Minister who is an evident failure in his position. It is the Prime Minister's right, under pressure from public opinion...to demand that Minister's resignation, so that the Government may continue to function....This will, of course, give the Prime Minister greater authority....

Today a Minister may act against the Government, informing the press of what was discussed at Cabinet meetings, acting contrary to the Government's policy and causing considerable damage. The only way the Government can get rid of a Minister who does those things is for the Prime Minister to submit his resignation, whereupon the entire Cabinet resigns and a new Cabinet has to be formed. This disrupts the entire process of government....The proposal now before you would enable the Prime Minister to be responsible for the work of his Ministers and dis-

miss anyone who acts contrary to the basis of the Government's existence....

Everything would be done in an open and official way and be subject to public criticism, so that the Prime Minister would not be able to act in an arbitrary way....Our Ministers appear to be afraid of accepting parliamentary and individual responsibility for their actions and words...hiding behind coalitionary agreements and continuing to snipe at one another....I suggest that the proposal be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

The Minister of Justice, H. Tzadok: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the subject raised by MK Aloni has been discussed by the Knesset on at least two occasions in the past....Both times the Knesset rejected proposals to empower the Prime Minister to dismiss Ministers....It is true that in certain countries with parliamentary regimes the Prime Minister is so empowered, but the Government feels that this would not be appropriate in the political reality of Israel, where all the governments to date have been based on coalitions....The Government consequently suggests that MK Aloni's proposal be removed from the agenda....

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the fact that the subject has been discussed in the past does not preclude the Knesset from debating it today. Many things have changed. We should free ourselves of conservatism....I object to statements on the lines of "the Government thinks." I think that this is a subject for the Knesset. I would like to inform you that we will discuss this issue again...within the framework of another proposal, because anyone who wishes to guarantee democracy in Israel cannot agree to having a group of people rule in the name of coalitionary habits without the Ministers being responsible for their actions, words and blunders. I ask the Knesset for its support once again. The authority is the Knesset's by virtue of its being a constituent assembly. Coalitionary agreements are not binding in this instance....

(The proposal to remove the motion from the agenda is adopted.)

The Allon Plan

Introduction

In September 1976 Foreign Minister Yigal Allon published an article in *Foreign Affairs* detailing the principles underlying Israel's definition of secure and defensible borders. In that article he expressed his private opinion that the town of Gaza should become part of the Palestinian-Jordanian entity. The Knesset was in recess at the time. After thirty Knesset Members had submitted a request to that effect to the Speaker, the Knesset was convened in a special sitting to debate the subject, four days before Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year. Mr. Begin, the leader of the Likud, took issue with the opinions expressed by Allon.

Sitting 333 of the Eighth Knesset

21 September 1976 (26 Elul 5736)

M. Begin (Likud): Mr Speaker, my teachers, Knesset Members, irresponsibility and folly, the denial of our people's right to the Land of Israel, derision for the Government's decisions...an irrational, unfortunate conception of supposed security borders which exist only on an imaginary map—all these are to be found in the Foreign Minister's wretched and distressing article in the leading American journal of international diplomacy, *Foreign Affairs*. To the absurd plan to repatriation the western Land of Israel, granting what is known in the confused jargon as "Jordanian-Palestinian" sovereignty over the heads of Israel's soldiers posted along the Jordan River and Valley, the Foreign Minister added: "The town of Gaza and its environs, which is densely populated by Palestinian Arabs, may be part of the Jordanian-Palestinian entity which will arise to the east of Israel." Thus far Israel's Foreign Minister.

On the subject of the Gaza Strip an official Government spokesman, speaking on behalf of the Government, has said: "The members of the Labor Party should know...that all the Government's decisions regarding guidelines for negotiations with others state that the Gaza Strip will be part of the State of Israel." He also said: "In 1956, in opposition to the attitude of the Labor Party, the Knesset decided to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. Many of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip fear that this may happen again. It must be made clear to them that it is our intention that the Gaza Strip shall not be severed from Israel again."...

That statement and others were made from this podium by Minister without Portfolio, but with understanding, Israel Galili....Have the de-

cisions of the Government, as conveyed on its behalf by Minister Galili, been altered or annulled? When were they annulled? If they were annulled, why did the Knesset not hear about it from you, Minister Galili, as it did about the former decisions? If they were not annulled, by what right, by what authority, did Israel's Foreign Minister present the town of Gaza and its environs to the Jordanian-Palestinian entity? Who empowered him to write those things? Has the Government decided to detach the town of Gaza and its environs from the Gaza Strip...?

There is something more serious still in this regrettable phenomenon. The statements made by a Minister of the Government of Israel were granted the approval of the Knesset....I would like to know when the Knesset decided to annul those decisions of the Government.... Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister has left for New York...although I learn to my surprise that he is not to participate in the opening session of the U.N. Assembly....Initially he was very apologetic, saying that those were his private views, though how a Foreign Minister can have private views on a matter such as this is beyond me. Last night, however, before leaving for New York, he said that he had published the article in *Foreign Affairs* in the awareness of his responsibility as Foreign Minister. This is something unparalleled in a democracy. He changed his tune because, it seems, at the Cabinet meeting three other foreign ministers supported him. Another argument of his is that four years ago the Minister of Education lectured at the Van Leer Institute and said that we may have to relinquish Gaza....Foreign Minister Allon relies on Minister of Education Allon and thence derives his authority....

I would like to ask the Prime Minister...whether he permits such licentiousness in his Government, which is anyway a laughing stock...with Cabinet meetings constituting a running battle between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense....I would also like to know how that information reached the press....I sometimes wonder whether certain members of the Government are not doing what Richard Nixon did....Does the Prime Minister agree that the Foreign Minister, the principal Government spokesman on foreign affairs, should speak contrary to the Government's decisions...and hand parts of the Land of Israel, our homeland, to the enemy...? You are making the Government an object of derision and scorn.

Of course, after what happened, the Foreign Minister should have resigned...but he did not. For the sake of the country, for the sake of its vital interests, for the sake of serious negotiations for the peace treaty which will come one day, I propose that the Government make use of paragraph 17A of the Basic Law: the Government...which entitles it to alter the distribution of portfolios among the Ministers....

Davar, the organ of the Labor party, writes of the Foreign Minister's article: "The article may have done a disservice to Israel's information efforts." The pro-Government *Jerusalem Post* writes: "The fundamen-

tal policy statement made by the Foreign Minister prior to his departure for New York indicates merely the internal disintegration of the Government of Israel."...Quite. *Al Hamishmar*, the paper representing views on the left of the Labor party, lauds the Foreign Minister's opinions while claiming that he "goes too far in his territorial demands." If part of the Alignment says that Mr. Allon has gone too far in his territorial demands after he has already given up Gaza and its environs and more besides, what will the Arabs say? What will the Americans say? Any child can see that if one submits a drawing of that kind...exact almost to the last mile, which Mr. Allon regards as the minimum, it will immediately be made the maximum for *Al Hamishmar* and Mapam, as it will for the former Foreign Minister...not to mention the Arabs and other international bodies....Now Egypt says that that plan is unacceptable and there must be withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian, not a Jordanian-Palestinian, state. The Americans say that the plan will not be acceptable to the Arabs, meaning that it has to be whittled down in negotiations.

Where does this lead if not to an extremely dangerous proximity to the borders of 4 June 1967? Is that the way to conduct negotiations? Only a year ago you asked the U.S. for an explicit undertaking that the next agreement after the interim settlement with Egypt would be a final peace treaty. Is that the way to negotiate for a peace treaty? You are such pragmatists, such lovers of political tactics, what did the Foreign Minister do to you with his wretched and distressing article...? What has happened? I acknowledge that we have different views...but what has happened to the Land of Israel? What have you done to the Land of Israel? Each Minister places the Land of Israel on the operating table. One hands over Judea, the other Samaria, a third Gaza, the town of Gaza and its environs. Did we not write, together with Minister Galili, at the end of the Six Day War, on behalf of the Government and the Zionist Organization: "Our patrimony has been redeemed"? And those words were approved unanimously by the Government. Were we not referring to Judea and Samaria? Did we not include the necessity of establishing settlements throughout the homeland—meaning Judea, Samaria and Gaza—in the Government's guidelines...? You are causing demoralization among the younger generation...!

Permit me to share a personal experience of mine with you. I received a letter from a girl in her last year of high school asking me to explain two concepts: state and homeland. I replied that state is a legal concept and is easily defined as an area of land wherein a nation is sovereign. Homeland is difficult to define. Can one define a mother? A mother is a mother. Of course, one can say that homeland is the land where one was born, where one's parents and ancestors were born, where a nation is formed and maintains its culture. But that is not yet a definition, just as it is not enough to define a mother as the woman who

gave birth to one. Those definitions do not embody love, sanctity, devotion, loyalty. Homeland—the term is self-explanatory.

What are you doing to the homeland of the Jewish people? Who empowered you to relinquish it, partition it, hand it over? When did any Government decide to give up one part or another of Judea and Samaria? When did the Knesset resolve that? When was the subject debated here? When was the vote held? You do not have a majority here for handing Judea and Samaria over....By what right, by what authority does a disintegrating, declining, disputatious, discordant Government play games with the homeland for which our forefathers yearned and our best sons gave their lives and to which all Jews everywhere direct their prayers—the Land of Israel?

Now look at what you are doing to yourselves. What are you gaining from all that wrangling, from the Foreign Minister's article and all your statements? Peace? Not a chance. An agreement with the Arabs? Not a hope. The more you give up, the more the Arabs say: the borders of 4 June 1967, a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria, with a corridor linking them. What do the Arabs call Yigal Allon after the article? An annexationist. What do they say about his plan? It is an obstacle to peace....Permit me to conclude by extending my best wishes for the coming year to all the members of the House....

Minister I. Galili: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...MK Begin was kind enough to quote part of a speech I made in the Knesset in May 1972, but refrained from quoting the whole speech...which I think was a good one and whose content is still valid. Naturally a statement of that kind could only be made on the basis of the Government's decision of October 1968, which has not been altered to this day....

As everyone knows, the Opposition, for which MK Begin speaks, disagrees with the Government's policy on various issues. The Opposition carries weight in the Knesset and with the public, but it has not gained the confidence of the nation sufficiently to govern the country....In contrast to the Likud, the policy of the Government of Israel, like its predecessors, aspires to attain peace within defensible borders and is ready to reach a territorial compromise. That policy is conducted with the knowledge and approval of the Knesset at every stage. Our actions in the international, settlement and defense arenas have been in accordance with that policy. We believe in that policy and are convinced that the nation has benefited and will benefit from it....We reject the Likud's policy of "not one inch shall be returned"....and maintain that it could, albeit unintentionally, foil the chances of gaining peace....

M. Drobles (Likud): That is demagoguery.

M. Yedid (Likud): You have brought us wars.

A. Lin (Likud): Has your policy brought us peace?

M. Nissim (Likud): Can someone who is responsible for the Yom Kippur War speak like that...?

G. Cohen (Likud): You are here to speak about the policy of the Government, not of the Likud. If you have nothing to say, leave the podium.

D. Levy (Likud): What do you think of the map that was drawn?

M. Begin (Likud): Aren't you in favor of the territorial integrity of the country, Mr. Galili?

Minister I. Galili: On that issue there has been a public debate, which will doubtless continue during the forthcoming elections. Beyond what is said in one article or interview or another, the main point is that the Government's peace policy has received the approval of the majority of the nation....

G. Cohen (Likud): What is that peace policy?

Minister I. Galili: ...and is prepared to make territorial concessions for peace.

(Shouts.)

Minister I. Galili: And the Knesset has approved that policy, as a result of which steps have been taken towards peace.

B. Keshet (Likud): Minister Galili, for heaven's sake, kindly tell us whether the Government agrees with Minister Allon or not.

Minister I. Galili: I don't have to answer systematic interruptions and obstructions....

M. Yedid (Likud): You're avoiding the issue....

Minister I. Galili: That policy has led to the interim agreement with Egypt. The Government is entitled to conduct negotiations with Jordan and reach decisions, but has undertaken to go to the nation and hold elections, provided one of the members of the Coalition requests this, if relinquishing parts of Judea and Samaria is involved. For political reasons, the Government has not yet submitted an official map to anyone. We do not think that the conditions are ripe for doing this yet....But we do not think we should do nothing in political, settlement or security terms, and are doing all we can to increase our strength. The general Arab refusal to make peace with us does not justify leaving a vacuum in Jewish, Zionist and constructive terms in parts of the country which are essential for our security and existence, such as the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, the Etzion Bloc, the Jerusalem region, the Gaza Strip, the Rafah area and the Gulf of Eilat. Hence the settlements which the Gov-

ernment decided to establish after the Six Day War. Not only does Yigal Allon agree with this approach, he is one of its principal proponents....

As far as the future is concerned, there are various plans, including the one known as the Allon Plan. My colleague the Foreign Minister put his plan before the Government on 26 July 1967, when the Likud was still in the Government. The Government did not think it appropriate to adopt any detailed plan then, and since then references of various kinds have been made within the Government to the principles and details of the Allon Plan during the course of discussions on general and settlement issues. But neither that nor any other plan has yet been submitted for a decision.

Nonetheless, since a few months after the Six Day War the Government has been aware of the fact that in its contacts with various political factors it is advisable to examine the acceptability of open and secret talks with certain elements, but the Plan has not been submitted as the official plan of the Government of Israel. Similarly, no map has been presented. None of the neighboring countries has agreed to the principles of the Allon Plan or any other plan based on defensible borders and a compromise, but that does not detract from its educational and settlement value, and of course it does not deter the Government from persevering in its efforts to attain peace....

The assumption underlying Minister Allon's approach...is that our right to the Land of Israel is the moral basis for Israel's right to exist within any borders. He maintains that his approach ensures the strategic and national integrity of the country. His version takes the Arab factor which is entitled to an expression of its identity into account as far as possible, and is also a fair basis for a peace settlement with a territorial compromise which will end the protracted conflict.

His article in *Foreign Affairs* puts Israel's case for defensible borders...within the strategic, security, demographic and political reality of the situation....The article makes it clear that the borders of June 4 are not defensible and cannot guarantee Israel's security and existence. Allon also states that we will not agree to an imposed solution, criticizes France for encouraging the most extreme Arab countries, castigates the Rogers Plan and contrasts Israel's basically peaceful policy with the Arab countries' intentions of destroying Israel.

I believe that those arguments will help us whenever we have to explain the security motives for significant border changes. Anyone who has been following our discussions with our friends will know...that the need for strategic depth is an essential element of Israel's argument for defensible borders. I am sure that the Foreign Minister is aware of the fact that the compromise he advocates does not meet with MK Begin's approval, just as the Government's policy does not....I am sure that when we do finally reach peace negotiations and it is necessary to draw

exact maps there may be differences of opinion within the Government and a decision will have to be made.

Allon did not ask the Government to endorse his whole article... even though the principles underlying it are the Government's....The readers of *Foreign Affairs* can distinguish between an official statement of the Government of Israel and an analytical article, even if written by the Foreign Minister....The Foreign Minister has made it clear that the views expressed in the article are his own private ones... and as you know, members of the Government are allowed to hold and express their own views....

It has been suggested that the time is now ripe for preparing a detailed peace map and submitting it to international bodies and the Arab countries. To date the Government has not decided to do this nor have new decisions been made regarding Gaza or El Arish, or the strip of territory connecting Sharm el-Sheikh....We are prepared to make concessions for peace, while maintaining defensible borders, rejecting the establishment of another Palestinian state, expressing our unwillingness to rule another nation, particularly if its numbers threaten the country's Jewish character and democratic regime, continuing to establish settlements which buttress defensible borders, enabling the Palestinian identity to express itself only within a Jordanian-Palestinian state and repudiating an imposed settlement. All those elements will continue to constitute Israeli policy. Anyone who disagrees will be able to speak out at the forthcoming elections...and meanwhile we are authorized to reinforce the period of tranquillity by reaching additional agreements, including one to end the state of war. I see no reason to discuss this subject in the plenum and recommend that it be transferred to committee....

The Vote

Those in favor	53
Those against	13
Abstentions	2

(Minister Galili's proposal, with MK Begin's agreement, to transfer the subject to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee is adopted.)

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Basic Law: the Knesset (Amendment No. 6), 5736-1976

Introduction

In defining eligibility for the Knesset, the Basic Law: the went far in leaving the decision entirely to the voters, barring didacy of only the president of the state and certain categories officials, who might directly or indirectly influence the outcome vote. The liberality of that attitude contrasted even with the attitude played with regard to local elections, at which the candidature of categories are barred. One of the lists competing for representation the Eighth Knesset had been headed by a person previously convicted a crime against the security of the state. Even though that list had a crime to secure even one seat, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee decided to present a bill denying the right to submit their candidates persons convicted of such crimes. Having undergone several legislative changes, the proposed amendment was ultimately adopted.

Sitting 344 of the Eighth Knesset

15 November 1976 (22 Heshvan)

M. Shahal (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the Law: the Knesset lays down specific criteria as to who may stand for election, i.e., any Israeli citizen who is at least twenty-one years old and has not been legally deprived of that right by the court. Neither the President of Israel, the two Chief Rabbis nor the judges are eligible as they are in office. Under the Knesset Elections Law, senators, servants and IDF officers may not stand for election.

The right to stand for election is restricted merely in the minimal and necessary way to ensure equality between candidates. Every able every citizen to submit his candidacy. The Israeli legislature has even made a distinction between candidates for the Knesset and for municipal positions, determining that the latter must meet certain qualifications, such as being sane and not having been bankrupt, having committed an offense which carries with it a mark of dishonor, while no such restrictions apply to candidates for the Knesset. In civilized countries the law of the land...determines that a person who has been convicted of treason or a similar crime which is injurious to the security or territorial integrity of that country may not be elected to the legislature of that country. Permit me to quote the English law

to this case: "Persons who have been convicted of treason or sentenced to death, preventive detention or corrective training for any term of imprisonment exceeding twelve months cannot be elected to sit or vote until they have suffered the allotted or any substitution of punishment or have been pardoned."...

in the U.S. even if someone has been sworn in to the Congress or the Senate he is disqualified if he has taken part in any activity which constitutes a rebellion against the country or has extended aid to its enemies. That person is permanently disqualified from taking office unless a two-thirds majority of one of the two houses of Congress decides otherwise....

Y. Av (Citizens' Rights Movement): Why don't you propose that

M. Shahal (Alignment): Israel's special situation, where we do not face with the neighboring countries, makes it essential to ensure that persons who have been convicted of treason do not sit in its elected parliament. Consequently, in discussing this law, and being sensitive to the need to ensure the right to be elected, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee has decided to restrict the right to be elected only of persons who have been convicted of the most serious offenses, the offenses for which is ten years imprisonment or more....

serious offenses for which the penalty is ten years imprisonment or more and in some cases even death, are...: harming Israel's sovereignty or territorial integrity...deliberately causing war or military action against Israel, aiding the enemy...whether in times of peace or in times of war...serving an enemy country or in an enemy army, if this is done by an Israeli citizen...or disseminating information during war-time which could undermine the morale of Israel's troops and population...or with the deliberate intention of injuring the security of the state....

These offenses are among the most serious and carry heavy penalties. A person who has committed them and is not prepared to recognize the existence of the state, going so far as to act accordingly, as someone who cannot be eligible to be elected to its parliament....In my view there can be no disagreement on this point. Other countries whose situations are not like ours and do not have problems of war have restrictions of various kinds, and no one expresses surprise or disputes their restrictive nature....

After lengthy discussions, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee recommends that a person may not be elected while he is serving a sentence and for as long again afterwards....Thus, if a person is sentenced to ten years imprisonment, the subsequent ten years will act as a cooling-down period during which he may not be elected....The law deals with all the various elements and aspects, and in effect

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pertains to this case: "Persons who have been convicted of treason or felony and sentenced to death, preventive detention or corrective training or to any term of imprisonment exceeding twelve months cannot be elected or sit or vote until they have suffered the allotted or any substituted punishment or have been pardoned."...

In the U.S. even if someone has been sworn in to the Congress or the Senate, he is disqualified if he has taken part in any activity which constitutes a rebellion against the country or has extended aid to its enemies....That person is permanently disqualified from taking office unless a two-thirds majority of one of the two houses of Congress decides otherwise....

B. Mo'av (Citizens' Rights Movement): Why don't you propose that here?

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Security offenses for which the penalty is ten years imprisonment or more, and in some cases even death, are...: harming Israel's sovereignty or territorial integrity...deliberately causing war or military action against Israel, aiding the enemy...whether in times of peace or of war...serving an enemy country or in an enemy army, if this is done by an Israeli citizen...or disseminating information during war-time which could undermine the morale of Israel's troops and population with the deliberate intention of injuring the security of the state....

Those offenses are among the most serious and carry heavy penalties....A country which is in a situation such as ours must regard a person who has committed them and is not prepared to recognize the existence of the state, going so far as to act accordingly, as someone who can on no account be eligible to be elected to its parliament....In my view there can be no disagreement on this point. Other countries whose situation is not like ours and do not have problems of war have restrictions of this kind, and no one expresses surprise or disputes their free and democratic nature....

After lengthy discussions, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee recommends that a person may not be elected while he is serving his sentence and for as long again afterwards....Thus, if a person is sentenced to ten years imprisonment, the subsequent ten years will act as a cooling-down period during which he may not be elected....The proposal deals with all the various elements and aspects, and in effect

constitutes a compromise between more extreme proposals....I think that this is a good law and should have constituted part of the original Basic Law: the Knesset...and that it is high time it was adopted....I recommend that the Knesset approve the proposal and transfer it to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

T. Toubi (Rakah): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, Rakah objects to the proposal before us on principle...since it opposes the spirit of the Basic Law: the Knesset, the Knesset Elections Law and the citizen's inalienable right to stand for election to the Knesset.

The proposed law is anti-democratic and opposes basic civil rights. It is a political law which will be a tool in the hands of the authorities, enabling them to prevent citizens from standing for election to the Knesset because of their political views....The Basic Law: the Knesset and the Knesset Elections Law define certain categories of persons who may not submit their candidacy for the Knesset, such as the President of the state, the Chief Rabbis, judges, senior civil servants and high-ranking army officers, in other words, people who hold public or national office and could make use of their position to influence the course of free elections. In other words, the object of the law is to ensure fair elections. But the object of the proposal before us today...is to add a new category of persons ineligible to stand for election to the Knesset because of their political views.

M. Ghuez (Alignment): That is not so.

T. Toubi (Rakah): It is, and I'll prove it to you.

M. Ghuez (Alignment): The proof is that you are sitting here....

T. Toubi (Rakah): That's all we need, that I should be disqualified because of my views. But there is a danger that if this law is passed it will be possible to try someone like me and disqualify me....

Y. Hurwitz (Likud): That would be a positive development.

T. Toubi (Rakah): You see, you are just proving the intentions of the proponents of the law. If Israel had a constitution, it would reject the proposed law...for contravening the basic rights of citizens....To say that...this law will prevent traitors and spies from being Knesset Members is demagoguery and deception....Among the crimes for which the penalty is ten years or more, and which MK Shahal omitted for some reason to mention...is the dissemination of information in wartime which could undermine the morale of Israel's soldiers and populace....

M. Shahal (Alignment): Your reference is incomplete. The law specifically says: with the intention of injuring the security of the state....

T. Toubi (Rakah): This is obviously a political ploy. There is no guarantee that the editor of a newspaper or a member of an Opposition party

will not find himself standing trial one fine day for having acted contrary to that clause and having published information which is not to the liking of one Minister of Defense or another. And will it be so difficult to accuse him and prove that he intended to injure the security of the state? If that law had been in effect twenty years ago, when yours truly published the details of the Kfar Kassem crime, during the Suez War of 1956, there is no guarantee that I would not have been charged with disseminating enemy propaganda....

Fifteen years imprisonment is the penalty for encouraging others to evade military service during a period of hostilities—and when have there not been hostilities here? Is this not clearly a political issue? In my view, and that of many people, the security of the state requires us to call on the soldiers of the IDF not to serve in the occupied territories. Shall a person be tried and disqualified from standing for the Knesset because of that?

D. Coren (Alignment): Yes.

T. Toubi (Rakah): How do I know that...one of these days anyone who says that the annexation of Jerusalem is a criminal act which is injurious to peace, and that Arab Jerusalem should be restored to the sovereignty of the independent Palestinian state which will be established alongside Israel within the framework of a just and stable peace agreement...will not be accused of violating the law and harming the security of the state...? How can one prevent a citizen who holds those views from standing for the Knesset, when his attitude reveals more concern for Israel's sovereignty, security and future than all the annexors of Arab Jerusalem...?

The law also imposes a penalty of ten years imprisonment or more on anyone who acts against a country which is friendly to Israel or who intended to harm the relations between those two countries....South Africa is a friendly country. Any support for the just struggle against apartheid in racist South Africa, with which the Government of Israel has extremely close relations, may be interpreted as an offense and disqualify a person from being elected to the Knesset.

There are many more such instances. But the debate is not about the nature of the so-called security offenses which could disqualify a person from being elected to the Knesset. These examples merely serve to show how ridiculous the proposed law is and that it is a political law intended to harm basic civil and democratic rights....If this law is passed it will be another layer in the wall of reactionary and anti-democratic legislation and will encourage further chauvinism and rightwing nationalism....We propose that it be returned to its proposers.

B. Mo'av (Citizens' Rights Movement): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, Israel is a democratic country without a constitution, with strict emergency regulations, and one in which one has to struggle to

ensure that there is orderly government. The proposal before us would be acceptable...if it referred solely to those instances in which a person attempted to commit an act of treason, the penalty for which is life imprisonment or death, in other words, if it were limited only to the most serious offenses. If the proposal is left in its present form my party group will oppose it....

The law imposes a penalty of fifteen years imprisonment on a person who publishes confidential information about, for example, immigration, the deliberations of the Ministerial Defense Committee, immigration from countries from which exit is restricted, oil tankers in Israeli ports and loans by outside factors to the Government of Israel, without being authorized to do so....In effect, such offenses are committed daily. One merely has to look at the paper of yesterday or two days ago. There is information about Government discussions and about the deliberations of the Ministerial Defense Committee....An amendment to a Basic Law must be prepared far more carefully....

We must also remember that in Israel's current situation, surrounded by enemies, without a constitution, with strict emergency regulations, we must struggle daily to maintain democracy, and in a democracy authority lies with the electorate....It is the voters who will decide who will be elected to the Knesset, not we who have been elected to the Eighth Knesset....

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Alignment): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, the proposal which was submitted for its first reading today was initiated by several Knesset Members as the result of a "warning light" arising from the list of candidates for the Eighth Knesset. To our surprise, it transpired that a Jewish citizen of Israel who has been convicted of treason and endangering Israel's security and is currently serving a prison sentence appeared on one of the lists as a candidate for the Knesset.

T. Toubi (Rakah): It's not true that he was convicted of treason. Why do you distort things...? If he were to stand trial today, he would be acquitted....

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Alignment): I call what he did treason.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): The Israeli court acquitted him of that....

A. Lin (Likud): Regrettably, they are right. According to the new norms he would be acquitted.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Propose any fascist law you want, but don't use that example.

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Alignment): The list on which he appeared as a candidate failed miserably, but if it had acquired sufficient votes he would be sitting here with us today, discussing and deciding on the fate

and security of the country. The appearance of someone who has been convicted of an offense against the security of the state as a candidate for the Knesset is the result of a lacuna in the Basic Law: the Knesset, arising from the fact that the legislature did not imagine that an Israeli citizen would want to injure Israel's security....Despite the fact that this is an exceptional phenomenon, I am sure that the logic and common sense of Israel's citizens will ensure that a person who has endangered the security of the state will never be an elected representative....

But the very fact that someone who has been convicted of an offense against the security of the state can present his candidacy for the Knesset, and even head a party list...is a legislative and social-national defect which must be corrected, as the proposed law seeks to do. I know that people who have been educated according to liberal principles instinctively oppose any legislation which restricts the individual liberties regarding the right to vote and be elected which a democracy grants all its citizens. The proposed amendment does not restrict freedom of opinion in any way. I would like to make that clear to MK Toubi, who has sought to impugn the objective of the proposal....In view of the restrictions which already exist on persons who may be elected to the Knesset, as opposed to persons who have the right to vote, the proposal before you does not create a precedent in distinguishing between the two rights....

Most democracies have, in the course of time, been obliged to introduce legislation depriving persons who have been convicted of treason or offenses against the security of the state of the right to be elected to parliament....That is the situation in France, England and the U.S., and those countries are generally at peace and are not threatened....They also have a long-standing democratic tradition, adhere to the principles of liberalism and uphold civil rights....

I am curious, MK Toubi, whether your party group, which opposes the proposal, has interested itself in the fate of people convicted of treason in the U.S.S.R., a country which serves as a shining example of democracy and civil liberties for you. There is no argument there as to whether those people may be candidates for the Supreme Soviet. The only question is whether they are to be condemned to life imprisonment or execution.

Israel can serve as a fine example of a country where human life is regarded as sacred and the death penalty is not enforced, even for the gravest crimes. Nonetheless, it is unacceptable that someone who has been convicted of acting against the security of the state should be a candidate for the Knesset while he is still serving his sentence or shortly thereafter. The proposal should not be regarded as impairing democratic freedom or depriving anyone of the freedom of speech, opinion or thought....But, to quote an Austrian statesman from before the Second World War, democracy should be intelligent enough to prevent its enemies using it in order to crush it.

The proposal limits the period of time in which an individual is deprived of the right to be elected to ten years after he has completed his prison term...the assumption being that he committed the offense when he was very young and has since seen the error of his ways and become a loyal citizen....In so doing we are adhering to the principles of Jewish ethics, namely, that a person should not be punished forever....For these reasons I request that the proposal be transferred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee to be prepared for a second and third reading.

...

M. Pa'il (Moked): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I do not agree with the proposed law....There is a certain logic in barring entry to the house of representatives to persons who have committed grave criminal offenses for which the penalty is ten years imprisonment or more, and in restricting their eligibility to stand for election for a period of several years after their release....But this should apply to all major criminal offenses, including white collar criminals, robbers, murderers, rapists, etc., and would serve to keep that riff-raff out of the Knesset....I agree with MK Mo'av that the definition of information detrimental to the security of the state is far too broad...and that the relevant law is too imperfect to serve as a basis for restricting entry to the Knesset....

We should ask the authors of the proposal to take it back and amend it to include all persons who have been convicted of grave criminal offenses, and not merely those connected with the security of the state....

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: The debate is ended. The reply and the vote will take place in one of the forthcoming sittings....

Motion of No-Confidence by the Orthodox Religious Front

Introduction

The arrival on Friday, 10 December 1976, of the first consignment of F-15 planes from the U.S. was marked by the Government by a well-publicized ceremony, but was marred by the fact that the Orthodox military correspondent of one of the daily newspapers was unable to reach his home after the ceremony before the commencement of the Sabbath, which begins early in mid-winter. The desecration of the Sabbath served as the basis for a motion of no-confidence by the (Opposition) Orthodox Religious Front. It united the entire Opposition, including those of its members not distinguished for their orthodoxy. The (Coalition) National Religious Party found itself in a particularly unpleasant situation, having to choose between supporting the Government, to which it belonged, and by implication endorsing the desecration of the Sabbath, or opposing it. In any event, the National Religious Party, except for Minister Burg, abstained. The Government barely survived the motion of no-confidence, with supporters of the motion, together with those who had abstained, constituting a majority in the House.

The motion signalled the beginning of the end of the Rabin Government and the Eighth Knesset. Basing himself on a passage in the Collective Responsibility Law, stating that the Cabinet members representing a Coalition party which did not support the Government in the course of a motion of no-confidence would be regarded as having resigned, Prime Minister Rabin forced the resignation of the National Religious Ministers from the Government, and was thus left with a minority Government. Since it was impossible to establish an alternative Government with the support of the majority, the Knesset decided to dissolve itself and hold early elections, half a year before they were due to take place. It was said that even before being incorporated into the IDF, the F-15s had brought down the Israel Government. By so doing they put an end not only to the Government headed by Yitzhak Rabin, they also brought to a close a period of almost thirty years during which all Governments had been headed by the leader of the Labor party.

Sitting 357 of the Eighth Knesset

14 December 1976 (22 Kislev 5737)

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K. Cahane (Orthodox Religious Front): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I ascend this podium today to express no-confidence in the Government. But I am convinced that it is my duty to do so and to ask for the Knesset's support. In my view, there can be no-confidence in a Government which, in order to enhance its public image, is prepared to desecrate the Sabbath with an official ceremony and is prepared to mislead those who warned it in advance merely in order to hold a spectacle whose necessity, even without the desecration of the Sabbath, is questionable. There was certainly no justification for the financial expenditure the spectacle involved.

The facts of the case are as follows. Last Monday I was informed of the arrival of F-15 planes on Friday afternoon and the official ceremony to welcome them....I requested the help of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in preventing the public and official desecration of the Sabbath. My principal argument was...that one should not cause pain to many thousands of citizens of the state by a festive event. I note with satisfaction that all the members of the Committee agreed with me and asked the Prime Minister to cancel the ceremony....The following day I was told that the ceremony had been cancelled. I was unquiet because I learned that the invitations sent to the military correspondents had not been withdrawn. I was then informed that the ceremony was an internal IDF affair. I immediately stated that this was unacceptable to us, though I thought that at least the circle of participants had been restricted. Regrettably, on Saturday night I learned from the radio that there had been a ceremony in which three thousand people had participated....

The planes arrived only at 15:25 hours. One of them still performed aerobatics. After they had landed, there were several speeches. Some of the guests went over to inspect the planes from close quarters while others fell upon the sandwiches. I am informed that the Prime Minister hastened to leave and even reached his home before the beginning of the Sabbath....I am not questioning the necessity of holding that ceremony now. Planes and weapons have reached us in the past, and were received with the appropriate modesty. There are those who say that the Government needed the booster provided by a spectacle of that kind. But even if that were so, was it necessary to do so by means of that mass desecration of the Sabbath?

We are told that it was not an official ceremony. Is not the IDF an official body? There were promises that the ceremony would be cancelled,

but all that was cancelled was the participation of the President of Israel, the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Ministers. American military attaches were invited, as were the upper echelons of the Ministry of Defense and the IDF....And the Prime Minister consoles me by saying that he did not desecrate the Sabbath. He is to be congratulated. But we have not yet reached a situation in Israel when a Prime Minister may say *l'etat c'est moi*. What about those thousands who desecrated the Sabbath at the end of the ceremony as they attempted to go home?

We are told that it was an internal Army affair. That is even worse. Within the Army orders are given. The hundreds of soldiers who were not granted leave before the Sabbath began in order to see to the ceremony and direct the traffic were acting under orders....

We are informed that the information came too late and it was impossible to switch the arrival of the planes to another time. The entire flight took only eleven hours. Could not Jewish ingenuity have found a way of delaying their arrival or bringing it forward by a few days? And why was nothing done from the outset, when the ceremony was planned, to see to it that the planes did not arrive on Friday afternoon? And if the time of their arrival could not be changed, why could the ceremony not have been held on Sunday or Monday? Why did I and the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee have to be punished and prevented from participating in the ceremony? Why did a day of rejoicing have to become a day of sorrow for many...? Why was it necessary to split the nation?

Nearly thirty years ago, as I recall, we assembled to proclaim the establishment of the State of Israel....In accordance with international law, this should have been done the moment the Mandatory authorities left the country, but since that was at midnight on Friday, David Ben-Gurion realized that he would have to act contrary to international law and bring the ceremony forward, which he did....To my regret, the Government led by Yitzhak Rabin did not realize this with regard to a far less important ceremony, despite the protests and the pleas, misled the protesters and broke its promises.

The Sabbath is not the monopoly of one religious party group or another....It is precious to a large part of the nation. A secular writer and philosopher coined the phrase: "More than the Jews kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept the Jews." How can we countenance its public and official desecration by the Government of Israel for trivial purposes, while engaging in deception and displaying inefficiency...? From this podium I express my great distress and horror at the Government's action...and ask for the Knesset's support in expressing no-confidence in it....

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, to the best of my knowledge the no-confidence motion is based on a mis-

conception. The organization of the arrival of the F-15 planes in Israel and the accompanying ceremony did not involve any desecration of the Sabbath. Permit me to read out the program. The planned landing time of the planes was 15:00 hours. As the proposer of the motion noted, the actual landing time was 15:25 hours. The ceremony ended at nearly 16:00 hours. The Sabbath began that Friday at 16:17 hours. Thus, everything connected with the arrival of the planes and the ceremony had ended before the beginning of the Sabbath, in accordance with the timetable, and there was no desecration of the Sabbath....

Nonetheless, in its statement the Government expressed regret for any desecration of the Sabbath there may have been as a result of a guest at the ceremony who lived at some distance from the site having to travel on the Sabbath. That was not the intention of the organizers of the ceremony and there was no need for that to happen. I would not like to make things difficult for one of the religious military correspondents who participated in the ceremony, but I know that he was there, left in time and reached his home before the beginning of the Sabbath.

M. Begin (Likud): Did he fly in an F-15?

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: No. Now, before going into the details of the timetable...I would like to state unequivocally that as Prime Minister I am responsible for everything that happened and the decisions that were made, with or without my knowledge. I am here in order to account for what happened in connection with the arrival of the planes, the ceremony and the timetable.

The participants in the restricted ceremony were the Prime Minister, the Chief of Staff, fourteen colonels....

E. Olmert (Likud): Did the Minister of Defense participate or not? Why didn't you wait for him?

H. Landau (Likud): It's preferable to desecrate the Sabbath than to consecrate Peres.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: MK Olmert, your question will be answered in good time. Also participating were members of the U.S. embassy, employees of the Ministry of Defense, the Air Force, its senior commanders, lieutenant-colonels, military correspondents—a total of 290 invited guests, 200 of whom were Air Force officers. All the others were people living on the base who remained there, with their families.

As is customary in such cases, the host at the ceremony was the commander of the Air Force. The invitations were sent out on November 18, almost a month before the actual ceremony....The timetable of the event, as is usually the case, was drawn up by people of the IDF and the defense network, in cooperation with their counterparts in the U.S....On November 30 I met with the Minister of Defense before his departure for the U.S. and suggested that the ceremony be postponed to en-

able him to participate in it. He told me that he could not do that, for reasons which I will not give here....

On Monday, December 6, I was informed of the precise timetable of the arrival of the planes. After conferring with the Minister of Religion and other Ministers I examined with the Chief of Staff the possibility of either postponing the arrival of the planes or bringing it forward. I learned that the planes had left the U.S. on Monday morning and the timetable could not be changed in any way....I then decided to restrict the ceremony and cancel the invitations to the Ministers and the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee....

When all the fuss was made about the subject I decided to examine how greater and more experienced Prime Ministers than myself had acted in similar circumstances in the past....I discovered that the Phantoms had arrived in Israel on Friday, 5 September 1969, at 17:20 hours, when the Sabbath began at 17:40 hours. They were welcomed with a military ceremony in the presence of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense and the Foreign Minister.

(Shouts.)

What I am saying should not in any way be taken to mean that I am implying that there was any desecration of the Sabbath. I assume that that ceremony also ended before the Sabbath began. I know that members of the Likud were Ministers then....If they think that 47 minutes are not sufficient time between the landing of a plane and the beginning of the Sabbath and twenty minutes are I shall be very surprised....The military ceremony took the same format. What has changed—the position of certain Knesset Members...?

Another problem is the publicity. The publication of the possession of weapons by the IDF is influenced by a variety of factors. The first consideration is the extent to which the dissemination of this information harms Israel's security. The second consideration is the opposition of the country supplying the weapons to the publication of the information. The third consideration is the internal and external political, public and psychological interest in disseminating information about our military strength....

M. Drobles (Likud): Elections.

J. Amir (Alignment): You're talking nonsense.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: During the last year we have witnessed motions for the agenda at every rumor of weapons which might be supplied to an Arab country....How many motions for the agenda were there about the supply of arms to Saudi Arabia? Four F-5 planes were supplied within the framework of the eight billion dollar deal between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Each one of them is inferior to a Phantom.

Y. Hurwitz (Likud): What pearls of wisdom!

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: Sir, I'm telling the truth. And when the IDF receives arms one has to keep quiet.

M. Pa'il (Moked): Right.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: I understand you.

E. Olmert (Likud): The Government of Israel itself criticized the supply of arms to the Arab countries.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: I was talking about planes. I wasn't talking about other weapons.

E. Olmert (Likud): Correct, about planes. The Government of Israel criticized U.S. policy regarding the supply of planes.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: It criticized the supply of all weapons, even a single bullet, to an Arab country.

E. Olmert (Likud): Correct, so why can't the Opposition table motions for the agenda on that subject?

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: That's not what I said. I was talking about keeping a balance. I was talking about telling the nation, our enemies, the world, that we are strong, and doing this the right way, not by sowing confusion. Not by presenting ourselves as lacking confidence in our own strength when we have strength, when we have weapons.

M. Begin (Likud): This Government lacks wisdom.

M. Drobles (Likud): You seek to attain security by declarations.

The Prime Minister, Y. Rabin: In conclusion I will say: A. The no-confidence proposal is based on incorrect facts. There was no desecration of the Sabbath in the flight of the planes and the limited ceremony; B. I believe that every effort was made to change the day on which the planes were to land and bring their arrival time forward. At this stage I would not like to say how and why this subject has been raised and who supports the no-confidence motion. I propose that the Knesset reject the motion of no-confidence in the Government.

J. Tamir (Likud): Distinguished Speaker, my colleagues, members of the Knesset, I do not wish to deny that the Likud party group determined its position vis-à-vis the Orthodox Religious Front's motion of no-confidence in the Government after a great deal of hesitation. The actual issue does not warrant a motion of no-confidence. If all that was at stake was the sanctity of the Sabbath the Likud would whole-heartedly condemn the Government for its foolishness in arranging the ceremony marking the arrival of the F-15 planes so near the beginning of the Sabbath....Mr. Prime Minister, if you did not manage to persuade your religious colleagues in the Government that you were in the right,

how can you persuade the nation and the Knesset that there was no desecration of the Sabbath?

(From the floor: The nation is convinced.)

Honoring the Sabbath and showing respect for the religious and traditional segments of the population are values which justify avoiding any event which could desecrate the country's holy day. The event would in no way have been marred had the ceremony been moved to another day and organized in an appropriate, modest way, enabling the nation's elected representatives to participate in it....That would have constituted a fitting way of marking an increase in our military strength, which we all appreciate.

But that was not the way things happened. Contrary to conclusions reached unanimously by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee...namely, not to hold the ceremony at a time when the desecration of the Sabbath was likely but to postpone it to another day, and contrary to the Government's assurance that that would indeed be done, a great many guests were invited to the airfield, some say over two thousand. Nothing associated with the event was distinguished by the modesty or economy which it is incumbent upon us to display at this time....

Thus, the whole affair goes beyond the bounds of the desecration of the Sabbath and involves grave phenomena for which the Government must answer. On that hurried, worried occasion strange things were said by various speakers, things which are illogical and inexplicable. One speaker regarded the arrival of the planes as a world-shattering event which completely altered the country and the IDF....

Israel will be completely altered when our society is based on human, Jewish and national values appropriate to a nation as ancient as ours. Israel will be completely altered by virtue of the men flying those planes, not the planes themselves. It will be completely altered by virtue of the sons of this valiant nation....We have a splendid younger generation, a wonderful Army and first rate pilots and soldiers. Concomitantly, Israeli society must be healthy, more united, moved by higher principles and cleaving to the aim of building a well-ordered society...with good services, improved human relations and a reliable and efficient administration. It is doubtful whether all this exists. The altered Israel must be free of blemishes, of corruption, of imperviousness, of unsavory phenomena which must be eradicated. It must serve as an example at every level of the population—from the top to the very bottom. No shining planes will help us if we cannot preserve the values with which we have been blessed and which are our strength. Regrettably, in recent years we have undergone grave shocks as regards the application of those values. The altered Israel for which we pray must be imbued with a sense of the great responsibility the nation bears at this time. It must be aware of the dangers threatening it and be ready to contend with them for the sake of peace and security.

Regrettably, not only does the Government not act in this spirit, but because of its internal weakness it cannot meet the challenges confronting us at this time. The mass display on Friday, just as the Sabbath began, was a transparent attempt to make use of the arrival of the planes for narrow inter-party and internal-political purposes....Anything connected with the IDF...must be outside the sphere of the election campaign. We regard this phenomenon as being very serious. The Government is responsible for it. On no account can this phenomenon be countenanced. We must adhere to the rule of keeping the IDF out of politics....

The Likud party group has no-confidence in the Government. The Government is spineless, does not deal appropriately with extremely pressing social and economic problems and lacks the ability to lead and decide....It is showing signs of disintegration which preclude it from being responsible for the fate of the country and the nation. There is no greater proof of this than the fact that one of the parties in the Coalition, including its Ministers, or some of them, is not expressing confidence in the Government today. For these reasons the Likud will express no-confidence in the Government.

...

S. Friedman (National Religious Front): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset Members...the Mafdal party group...expresses its regret at the fact that it must abstain on the motion of no-confidence proposed by the Orthodox Religious Front. We do this while protesting the insult to the Sabbath by holding a reception for the three F-15 planes, and to human intelligence by representing it as a private affair....To the best of my knowledge, no essential national interest would have been harmed had the party been deferred to another day. On the basis of our national-religious outlook, we regard fulfilling Israel's true defense needs as the consecration, not the desecration, of the Sabbath. It has been claimed that the ceremony was devoid of any official character because the President of Israel, the Ministers and the members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee were not invited. I cannot accept that explanation....

With all due respect, the Prime Minister's argument based on what happened on 5 September 1969 provides no justification whatsoever for what happened last Friday....Our responsibility to the country does not permit us to vote for the motion of no-confidence. Our religious responsibility does not release us from making our protest. Consequently, we are not part of the motley crew of those expressing no-confidence in the Government for a wide variety of reasons, but we cannot express confidence in what the Government did on Friday, and will therefore abstain.

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we very much regret the fact that no other time could be found for the ceremony marking the arrival of the F-15 planes. As a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, I also thought that the ceremony should have been postponed, but I regret even more the fact that this incident has been exploited in order to overthrow the Government. We are not always satisfied with what the Government does...but even if we were in the Opposition today we would not express no-confidence in the Government on a subject such as this. One must have a sense of proportion and know what subjects are appropriate for expressing no-confidence in the Government and which are not....

The Knesset members of the Aguda could easily propose motions of no-confidence each week....By your lights, the Sabbath is desecrated every week. We do not agree with you that the whole country has to be switched off for the Sabbath, that all life has to come to a stop and the country has to be cut off from the rest of the world. We want the Orthodox to realize that in this day and age life has to be lived a different way and a country which is fighting to survive must take the necessary steps to ensure its continued existence. I would prefer it if the Government were more active in resisting the pressures of Orthodox Jewry on this and on other issues, such as civil rights and liberties....

It is a strange sight to see such party groups as Rakah, the Aguda, Herut and Moked combining forces....To me that seems to be the desecration of something else, of the minimum of ideological consistency which a political party should display.

B. Mo'av (Citizens' Rights Movement): Is it alright when your party group receives payment in the form of two Ministries? Is the ideology acceptable then?

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): I regret the fact that an event which should have been a source of joy, of exhilaration, of satisfaction, because it expresses the increased strength—

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): A fig leaf to cover up failures.

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): It expresses the increased strength of the IDF at a difficult time, yet such an event was perceived as an opportunity for petty intrigue and chicanery. I hope we shall not see a repetition of the behavior which brought about our downfall in ancient times. Even if there are differences of opinion, one must preserve a sense of proportion and know when to launch a full-scale attack and when to express one's protest—

Z. Shuval (Likud): A week ago you wanted to leave the Government over the issue of compulsory arbitration.

N. Eliad (Independent Liberals): So what? We'll get compulsory arbitration. We'll get more than you will.

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): We did not base a campaign on an unfortunate mistake, our campaign focuses on basic issues. Because of its internal difficulties I am not sure that the Labor Party will be able to keep all its commitments to us. I would also like to make it clear at this time and place that if that is indeed the case we will draw the necessary conclusions and leave the Government. But we have not joined all manner of strange proposals which do not accord with our views solely in order to vote against the Government. That seems to be your *metier*.

Z. Shuval (Likud): No confidence in the Government is a very basic issue indeed.

Y. Sha'ari (Independent Liberals): The fact that the IDF is growing in strength and that this is being made clear to the outside world is commendable....I approve of the publicity given to the arrival of the planes....I appeal to all those who favor the strengthening of the IDF and who are constantly deploring religious coercion not to support a proposal which I regard as being ridiculous in view of your opinions. Our party group will not express no-confidence in the Government.

A. Lebenbraun (Rakah): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the subject to be discussed and decided today is not the desecration of the Sabbath, as the Orthodox Religious Front represents it. Holding a virtually official, flamboyant ceremony to mark the arrival of three F-15 planes, even when this takes place immediately prior to the beginning of the Sabbath, is a political, not a religious, issue. The object of the publicity and the hysterical pronouncements about "a completely altered IDF and a completely altered Israel" is to show the neighboring countries and the world what the Government of Israel's true intentions are, namely, another war. That is what we are voting on here today, for or against war. That is why we will support the motion of no-confidence in the Government.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense are in competition with one another as to which of them can obtain more sophisticated and destructive weapons from the U.S. After the carnival in honor of the F-15s in which the Prime Minister participated, the Minister of Defense announced that he had obtained bigger and better weapons—shock-bombs, F-16 planes, not three or five but 250.

What are all these weapons for? To attain peace one needs a different policy, not more weapons. The purpose of these weapons is to make war....We warn the nation against this, as we did in October 1973....Another war will not bring peace....That is what we are discussing today. In reply to the point made here about our joining forces with reli-

gious party groups, allow me to point out that secular parties have always included religious parties in the Coalition and submitted to their pressures....

One F-15 plane costs 25 million dollars...the precise sum needed so that Israel's children can receive adequate child allowances....I have not worked out what can be done with the money for two planes, and certainly not for 250 F-16s. But what will all that solve? That really could be a completely altered Israel, one of peace and welfare for the nation....

There is virtually no difference between the policy of the Alignment and of the Likud. If the Likud proposes voting no-confidence it is not because of the purchase of arms. It wants more sophisticated weapons and in larger quantities. It is dissatisfied with the Government's present policy, which is not sufficiently extremist. In effect, the Alignment is implementing the Likud's policy, but the Likud is still not satisfied. It wants to rule, and by your policy you are paving the way for it. If you want there to be a discernible difference between the policies of the two parties, come forward with a clear-cut peace proposal....

But just a week ago the Prime Minister repeated the old refrain: no withdrawal to the 1967 borders, no withdrawal from the whole of the Sinai, no withdrawal from the Golan Heights, no recognition of the Palestinian Arab nation. How do you want anyone to believe your peace plan...? How long do you think you can ignore world public opinion?...Do you think the U.S. will support you forever...? Why was Israel the only country to abstain on the proposal at the U.N. Assembly to make the Middle East a nuclear-free zone while 130 countries voted for it? That means retaining the nuclear option....That is insane. What peace does that guarantee?

And so, it is desecration of the peace, not of the Sabbath, that is at stake here....That is why we say that there must be thorough-going change in the policy of this Government. The assurance of Israel's survival and security will not be gained by weapons, however sophisticated. Peace will not be attained through war....The Government must declare its readiness to go to the Geneva Conference under the auspices of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and with the participation of all the countries involved, including the representative of the Palestinian Arabs, the PLO, with the objective of implementing Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338....That is the way to peace. Since the Government's policy is the diametrical opposite of all this...we will support the motion of no-confidence.

S. Tamir (Free Center): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, we will support the motion of no-confidence in the Government, but not for the reasons given by the party proposing it. There is no doubt that the Government of Israel should be sensitive to the subject of the Sabbath, but I think that things have been inflated beyond all proportion, and after the Prime

Minister's factual explanation I doubt whether the Orthodox Religious Front has any justification for proposing its motion....I fail to understand how the National Religious Party can omit to support a proposal on the subject of religion....This is obviously a matter of political horse-trading and the benefits offered by the establishment....

We will support the motion of no-confidence in the Government, and are prepared to propose a motion of that kind every day, because after thirty years in office and fifty years of dominating the running of the country, this Government, the Alignment Government, must make way and let the nation choose a different Government. Many people within the Alignment admit that the Government has become corrupt, is declining and disintegrating, and brings one disaster after another upon this unfortunate nation....

The country's economy is on the verge of total collapse, Government companies are breaking down, the old-boy network is rife, taxes are high, the Government disregards public opinion, there is growing general unrest, subsidies for the lower-income groups are being cut, financial mismanagement is rewarded, preelection economics are rampant and on top of everything the Government is divided and engages in acrimonious internal disputes....In those circumstances we say to the Government: make way, let the nation decide. Something happened on the Day of Atonement when the Alignment led the nation, something has happened since then, the very basis of Zionism seems to be called into question, and it is time to ask the nation to renew the Government's mandate or give someone else the chance of receiving a mandate. But no. They hold onto their positions for dear life....Because that party seeks to rule at all costs....

Although I am far from happy with the motion now before the House and...am loth to raise my hand together with Rakah, which is constantly assailing Israel's security policies...because of our deepseated lack of confidence in the Alignment Government we will support the motion of no-confidence in this Government today.

...

A. Eliav (Independent Socialists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...in my view there is nothing more legitimate and correct than for as many people as possible to combine in order to bring down a Government in which there is no-confidence, however different their views....Many party groups in the House have done no less in the past....There is nothing more natural, political and legitimate....MK Cahane has proposed a motion of no-confidence in the Government, and I share his opinion of the Government....

The issue is not whether the arms should have been brought here but whether the ceremony should have been held when it was held....At best, what we have here is laziness, though there are those who say that it was something else. I do not accept the Prime Minister's explanation that in

this technological age no different arrangement could have been made. A Government which displays laziness of that kind, and has already displayed a similar idleness in other subjects, is not worthy of confidence.

The nature of the actual ceremony is symptomatic, because this was not the first ceremony in recent months....Most of the House endorses the heroism of the IDF and its predecessors. Now they have turned the heroism into heroin...trying to make political capital out of each military success, such as the Entebbe Operation....The present Prime Minister is not the first during whose term of office weapons were brought to Israel...but no one made a whole festival out of it....There was no call for that idle, showy, boastful and unfortunate ceremony....I propose that anyone who has no-confidence in the Government vote accordingly. I am one of those.

...

The Vote

Those in favor	48
Those against	55
Abstentions	9

(The motion proposed by the Orthodox Religious Front to express no-confidence in the Government is not adopted.)

Requiring a Quorum in the Knesset

Introduction

The Knesset is one of the very few parliaments which do not require a quorum for debates or even for votes, except on certain special occasions specified by law. The poor attendance of Knesset Members, avidly broadcast to the nation on the nightly TV news program, has given rise to questions and diminished the stature of the Knesset in the eyes of the public. MK Arens' proposal to remedy the situation is one of several tabled by members of the Opposition, and opposed by the Coalition of the day. Like its predecessors and successors, it did not succeed.

Sitting 363 of the Eighth Knesset

28 December 1976 (7 Tevet 5737)

M. Arens (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, of late it has become fashionable in Israel to criticize the method of government and the electoral system. In my opinion there is room for improvement. One is sometimes thunderstruck by certain of our rules and regulations which, I believe, are unparalleled in any democratic country. We have a whole new movement whose entire political platform consists of seeking to change the electoral system and which promises, upon being elected, to dissolve the Knesset in order to reelect it by a different method. I would advise caution in making far-reaching changes in our method of government and electoral system. Whatever our criticism of the present arrangements, there is no telling what the results of the changes might be.

In the U.S., for example, it has been agreed for some time that the election of the President by the Electoral College is not the most democratic system, and that it would be better for him to be elected directly by the voters. It has already happened in the past that a President was elected without having an absolute majority simply because he had a majority in the Electoral College. But although it has been generally agreed, no decision has been reached even though committees have sat, experts been appointed and discussions held, because it is not quite clear what will happen if the Electoral College is annulled.

A debate has been conducted in England for some time on the subject of the electoral system, tending in the opposite direction from the one proposed here by the various Israeli reformers, i.e., there the idea is to abandon regional elections. The Hansard Association Committee, comprising former Ministers, professors and MPs, concluded its report

by saying that changes in the electoral system were not the panacea for the ills of a nation, which have historical causes, though they may be partly responsible for the state of the country....

All this indicates that the subject has to be tackled warily. In Western Europe today certain academic circles have built computer models to see what the possible results of elections held according to different systems would be. In my view it would be worthwhile investing more thought and effort here too before drawing any final conclusions.

Israel's system of government is based on four foci of power: the Prime Minister, the Government, the Knesset and the parties. Israel is distinguished from other democracies by the amount of power in the hands of the parties, which do not operate within the framework of a specific law defining the way they should function. In the U.S., for example, the parties are far weaker than they are in Israel and in effect only play any role at elections, after which they have no influence. In my view, the first thing that should be done in Israel is to pass a law determining how parties should be run, choose candidates, etc.... There is one thing that can be done to improve matters with regard to the work of the Knesset straightaway, however, and that is to ensure adequate attendance by enforcing a quorum requirement for Knesset debates and votes.

There are probably many Knesset members who, like myself, address audiences at IDF bases, high schools and university campuses and are repeatedly asked about the poor attendance in the plenum of the Knesset.... Whatever our replies, it is evident that the Israeli public, and the younger generation in particular, is losing faith in Israel's democratic institutions, whether justifiably or not. That is a fact.... Poor attendance in the plenum is not merely an aesthetic defect, it is one of substance too, influencing the level of the debates and the decisions reached....

One hundred years ago the situation in the U.S. Senate was somewhat similar, and we would do well to learn from the steps that were taken to remedy the situation... one of which being that the names of Senators who were absent from the vote are published in the *Congressional Record*.... The House Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives contain a clause whereby in the absence of a quorum fifteen Congressmen may oblige the absentees to be present, even arresting those who do not have sufficient reason for absenting themselves.... Israel is one of the few democratic countries... where there is no quorum requirement. In England there must be a minimum of forty MPs for a debate to continue. There are quorum requirements in Belgium, Holland, Australia, Greece and many other countries. In the U.S. the requirement is a minimum of 50 percent.

I therefore propose Amendment No. 9 to the Basic Law: the Knesset. The proposal is, I believe, a modest one which can only do good, not

harm. The proposal is that five Knesset Members may request a head-count, and that if less than twenty-five Knesset Members are present in the plenum the debate shall be interrupted until that minimum numerical requirement is met.

M. Wertman (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the subject of a quorum is one this Knesset has been deliberating since its establishment. It is true, as MK Arens pointed out, that when members of the general public are in the gallery they want to see all the Knesset Members, not just a quorum...because on the whole—and even at this moment—there are more than twenty-five Members in the plenum....I do not think that we will be able to solve this problem, just as it has not been solved elsewhere in the world....

M. Begin (Likud): Are you aware of the fact that in most democracies there is a quorum requirement?

M. Wertman (Alignment): I have not yet got to the essence of the subject....MK Begin's motion for the agenda on this subject is currently being discussed by the House Committee. It is somewhat strange that at the same time...there should be a proposal on the same subject from the same party group....

Many parliaments in the world have sought ways of solving the problem. I do not have the figures before me just now, but as we know, most of them have not managed to solve it....I am not saying that it is a good thing that attendance is weak, but it is a widespread phenomenon, though a solution should be found for it....The question is, however, whether there is any point discussing the subject now, when the Knesset is on the verge of being dissolved and elections will probably be held some time in May....I do not think that this is the right time.

Y. Peretz (Likud): When is the right time?

M. Wertman (Alignment): I propose that the debate be deferred...until the next Knesset and not be transferred to committee, in the hope that we will all be in the next Knesset and be able to discuss it then....

The Vote

Those in favor of transferring the proposal to committee	35
Those in favor of removing the proposal from the agenda	27

(The proposal to transfer the proposal for the Basic Law: the Knesset (Amendment No. 9) for preliminary discussion by the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is adopted.)

Budget Law, 5737-1977

Introduction

Because of their often technical nature and the fact that they are always tied to the situation at a given moment and therefore seldom of more than passing interest, budget debates have hardly ever been reproduced in the current selection, even though they take up a major share of the Knesset's time. For 28 years the chief Herut, Gahal and ultimately Likud spokesman in these debates was Dr. Yochanan Bader. Having decided not to stand for reelection, he chose the budget debate of 1977 to deliver his farewell speech, in the course of which he outlined his philosophy and credo.

Sitting 374 of the Eighth Knesset

24 January 1977 (5 Shevat 5737)

Y. Bader (Likud): Distinguished Speaker, I suggest that the proposal and the budget be returned to the minority Government....Permit me to make a few personal remarks. For the past twenty-eight years, almost always immediately after the Minister of Finance, like a voice calling in the wilderness, I have voiced my criticism of the Government's economic policy and the proposed budget. I wish I had not been right. Today, in the prevailing situation, woe is me that I am right. This is the last time that I participate in a budget debate and, it would seem, the last time I speak from the Knesset podium, but it is my duty to examine the issue in depth....

Throughout that period...I have pointed to the five ills of the prevailing economic regime: bureaucratization, controlism, developmentism—in contrast to healthy development—devaluationism and sectorism. The bureaucratization of which I complained in 1949 has grown worse with the years. Our homeland has become a homeland for bureaucrats. Since 1973 18,000 employees have entered the manufacturing branches, while 32,000 have entered the public sector and 8,000 have entered new sectors. This year, 1976, 14,000 persons have entered the work force, and they have all gone into the public sector, which has become a means of fighting unemployment. If the entire new work force has entered the public sector, this means that their salaries come from the public purse and there is no production....

By sectorism...I am referring, first of all, to what is in effect a state within the state. It has almost complete control of the health services, pensions, industry, land, capital and investments, with the consent of

the Treasury. It enjoys privileges in the form of favorable taxation for forms of agricultural settlement....The Federation of Labor benefits from all these and more....There is also the Government sector, which is in a constant state of development, meaning that additional investments come from the public purse...and that enterprises in this sector have the right to lose money....How can free enterprise flourish with two such competitors...?

As far as devaluationism is concerned, the object of devaluation in 1952 and 1962 was, we were told, to put an end to devaluation...but now the process has accelerated...making investments unprofitable. Between 1969 and 1976 money in circulation increased by 343 percent and consumer prices rose by 380 percent the connection between the two being obvious, since the former pushes up the latter....There will be price rises in 1977, too, though the budget is somewhat confused as to what extent, noting 25 percent on p. 12, 28 percent on p. 127 and 30 percent on p. 130....

Usually inflation goes hand in hand with economic prosperity. There is more money, more investment, more optimism, there are more buyers, more producers, more developers, more investors. That is what the textbooks teach us about inflation. What happens in Israel? In 1971 investments rose by 22 percent, and since then have declined each year....In 1972 there was an increase of 12 percent in the national product, and it has declined every year since then, reaching 1.5 percent in 1976...i.e., negative growth. This is, in effect, a situation of stagflation, i.e., stagnation plus inflation....

How was the national cake divided in 1976? 5 percent more went to private consumption; 2.7 percent to civilian public consumption; 11 percent less to defense consumption; and 15 percent less than in previous years went to investments. That means that we, private citizens, are living better at the expense of defense and investments. The 1977 budget augurs similarly....So that the administration and the citizen will receive a little more on election day, defense and investments suffer. We have almost reached the situation of the consumer society which obtains in the U.S....The figures for previous years show that of the means available in the economy, approximately 35 percent comes from the Government while less than two-thirds is the national product....

The import of products and materials is also far too high...even though defense imports declined in 1976 by 12 percent...and raw materials for industry by 13.5 percent....Thus, all the good life in Israel was at the expense of our internal stocks, which is one of the Government's chief offenses. One cannot keep on raising interest rates and taxes...because the wholesalers will draw on existing stocks. This is a danger to our defense, and that is the price of the so-called improvement. All the achievements of which the Government is so proud have been at the expense of our foreign debt...which appears to have dropped between 1975 and 1976 but was achieved by drawing on stocks, restricting imports

and limiting investments....I have calculated how much foreign aid Israel has received during its existence...and this amounts to a net debt of twenty-five billion dollars, i.e., \$8,000 per person....

Of course, this situation requires a change of economic policy. There are some people—who are not to be taken seriously—who believe that all we need is to change the electoral system. That is utterly ridiculous. First of all we need a change of economic policy....Instead of the consumer society we must become a producer society. We must abandon the systems of developmentism, controlism, etc. We must have a free economy of free enterprise, fair competition, profitable and productive investments and a minimum of governmental intervention in the market....

The first thing we must stop doing is printing money. Between 1973 and 1976 the Government printed twelve billion Israeli pounds....The Treasury takes the money from the Bank of Israel and channels it to the public. Milton Friedman has taught us that the public will not hold on to money, especially not in times of inflation, and so the public spends the money. The money circulates to the shopkeepers, the importers, the wholesalers. They go to the Bank of Israel and exchange the money for foreign currency, with which they import goods. That is how our trade deficit is increased. This system of printing money must be stopped forthwith....That will also put a stop to strikes and industrial unrest, as there will be nothing with which to meet demands for wage increases....

We must also have a more sensible monetary policy. This year, even though the public did not want to hold on to money, money in circulation grew by almost 25 percent and the rate of circulation increased....Can this go on? The solution proposed by Milton Friedman, who has advised Brazil and other countries, is that everything that can be linked—credit, debts, taxes, wages, wage increases, even mortgages—should be linked to the index....

There must be an end to monetary control. The pound must be allowed to find its level by means of a floating exchange rate....Then there will be no need for administrative mini-devaluations....There must be an end to controlism. What is not controlled in Israel? There is control of foreign currency, prices, credit, capital, investments...all of which act to the detriment of the economy.

As for the budget itself...I am surprised that there is no supplementary budget this year....The actual budget will be 122.5 billion pounds, i.e., 95 percent of the national product, though again, there are discrepancies within the budget, and different figures are given on different pages, ranging from the figure I have just given to 135.17 billion pounds, which is 105 percent of the national product....There is also spending which is conditional on the receipt of credit, which will doubtless be found...bringing total expenditure up to 122 percent of the national product. Small wonder, then, that our economy is not flourishing.

Taxes...will provide only 122 billion pounds, i.e., 54 percent of the national product....But to this can be added additional taxes—National Insurance, health insurance, municipal taxes, amounting to 64 percent of the national product. In the wealthy U.S. they constitute 32 percent of the national product, and in socialist Sweden 43 percent....We are told that taxes prevent inflation and absorb money. That is a lie...because the money thus absorbed is put back into circulation, thereby increasing inflation....Indirect taxes obviously increase inflation by causing price rises. Direct taxes lead to additional wage demands...thereby increasing production costs and causing further inflation....

Mr. Rabinowitz...has sought to reduce incomes and raise the prices of goods and services by the wage-freeze agreement...as well as by increasing taxation and reducing subsidies. In that way he sought to reduce consumption so that this would reduce imports and hence the deficit....The trouble is that in econometric terms...it did not work in reality because of the opposition of the workers...and the Government's inability to stand firm....What we need is savings, with a guarantee that their value will be maintained....We also need foreign investments, for which there must be a free market and profitability....We also need increased production, particularly for export. All this is possible provided we overcome the plague of controlism....We must bring our economy more into line with what obtains in the free world....People who work in industry should be paid in accordance with the profitability of their place of work; people who work in the public sector should be paid in accordance with the funds available in the public purse, not by adding money from the Bank of Israel....The weaker sections of the population should be helped in accordance with the nation's ability, and there should be compulsory arbitration...which would benefit us all....

There is widespread demoralization in the country, not only when here and there one leader or another is revealed to be corrupt and a thief. Those are just the tip of the iceberg....We have to give the nation back its confidence in leadership, convince it that the sacrifices it will be asked to make are necessary and that the new policy—after the last twenty or so “new policies” of this regime have failed—has a chance. Then the sacrifice will be worthwhile. We must return to the days when the question was not what can I get from the Government but what can I give my country. I am sure that the worker who does his job loyally in the defense industry is not corrupt, and that he cares about the national economy....

What we need is trust, and the existing regime does not have it. It is not pleasant to say, but it is the truth, though there are still honest people in the upper echelons of administration who adhere to the pioneering values of old. In my first budget speech to the Knesset I said: *Senatores boni viri, senatus bestia mala*, the Senators are good men, the Senate is

a wild beast. There are good people, but the regime is a wild beast. The regime must be changed....I believe that this is possible. I believe that grave defense, foreign policy, economic and social problems can be solved...that national unity can be restored and trust regained....

This budget is a continuation of previous ones, and is as ineffective as they were....I would like to conclude by wishing all past, present and future Knesset Members, and all the nation's leaders, and my colleagues in particular, that they may succeed in running the country on the basis of seeking what contribution they can make to it rather than what benefit they can obtain. Take the right course, however unpopular, to fulfil your mission, as you did when you left dismal Ukraine and went to drain the swamps of the Jezreel Valley, when you did your duty in bringing illegal immigrants to the country, when you did your duty in the fighting underground, with the same modesty, loyalty and dedication. Then we will have a genuine democracy, not the caricature of one. That is my wish for the Knesset and my friends in my last address to the Knesset.

The Speaker, Y. Peretz: Members of the Knesset, permit me to make use of my position as Speaker to congratulate MK Bader for his last budget speech....In his parliamentary activity he has acted in accordance with the rule of asking what he can do for the country, not what the country can give him. On your behalf, Knesset Members, I wish MK Bader good health and a long life.

I. Kargman (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset...although I do not believe that this really is Dr. Bader's last speech in the Knesset, permit me to say that he is one of the greatest men to have sat in the Knesset, and of course in Herut....He is a man of great faith...a man who believes in what he says, in what he fights for, and manages to convince others of the justice of his cause....Although Dr. Bader and I are great friends, I do not agree with what he has said about the budget.

I would like to remind Dr. Bader that for twenty-eight years he has spoken about the budget, and voted against it for twenty-five years, yet there has been a budget. A country cannot live without a budget, and there is no logic in suggesting that the budget proposal be returned to the Government. The Government must supply services to the nation—education, health, defense. It must pay its debts. One might argue that the budget is too big, too long, and must be cut. That is something else. But if the budget is returned to the Government, how will we pay the salaries of the workers, the teachers, the doctors, the soldiers? How will we see to our defense needs...?

I agree that the budget should be cut, but when one examines it in detail one sees that that is easier said than done....The budget contains expenditures of 110 billion pounds which cannot be whittled down any

further: 42 billion for defense, 30 billion for debts, 6 billion for export incentives, National Insurance, etc. The list is long, and there is nothing that can be cut....Secondly, there is no supplementary budget, and that is our achievement, the Knesset's achievement, for in the last ten years there have been supplementary budgets. This represents real savings and cuts in expenditure....

I would like to ask Dr. Bader what has happened in Israel in recent years...during this Government's term of office? The national product may not have increased, but it has grown in industry and agriculture....That is a great achievement....Exports have increased....All this is very encouraging...and is the outcome of the Government's economic activity and policy....Dr. Bader omitted to mention that our trade deficit has dropped by 800 million dollars. That is no mere trifle....Our foreign currency reserves have risen, and we are no longer almost in the red....

The Yom Kippur War cost us more than thirty billion pounds, and that is not a debt which can be paid in one year or even five years....Our defense expenses are high, as is the cost of the welfare services we provide....We regard it as our duty to help the old and the sick, as well as providing education, health services, a minimal income, help in housing, etc....I, too, regret the fact that there have been developments which are far from positive, such as an increase of 18,000 employees in the public sector in 1976....

One of the objects of our policy has been to reduce inequality in the distribution of income...and attain greater social equality...and although there is much still to be done in this sphere, some progress has been made....The overall tax burden on wage-earners has been reduced each year...being 27 percent of all taxes today as opposed to 40 percent beforehand. In addition, higher taxes have been imposed on Government companies....I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the employees of the tax system who have been doing a fine job of ascertaining the true income of self-employed persons....

Estimated income for 1976 was 47 billion pounds, and this was found to be accurate....There will be an additional billion pounds before the end of the fiscal year resulting from improved methods of tax collection....Estimated income for the 1977/78 fiscal year is 66.7 billion pounds, representing an increase of 41 percent and being based on natural growth....The major contribution of the introduction of VAT has been to raise standards of honesty and impose methods of bookkeeping on larger sections of the economy....

I would like to conclude by saying that inflation is devastating. The attempt to combat it must come from the public, not only from the Government. All those who fail to support actions intended to keep prices, wages and taxes down...have no right to complain about inflation....Everyone must make a sacrifice in order to restrain inflation

...and we will all benefit in another year or two, when the currency stabilizes....I propose that the budget be transferred to the Finance Committee for its approval, even for a limited period, until a new Government is elected....The Government cannot be left without a budget to allocate for salaries, essential services and those in need....

Conclusion of the Eighth Knesset

Introduction

Another veteran departing at the end of the Eighth Knesset was the Speaker, Israel Yeshayahu. Born in Yemen, he had worked as a weaver at the court of the Imam before coming to Palestine as a pioneer in the early 1920s. He had been associated with the Knesset from the beginning, first as a clerk but soon thereafter as a Member. In the course of the years he had served as Minister of Posts and as Chairman of the House Committee, until he was elected Speaker in 1972, upon the death in office of Reuven Barkat.

Sitting 397 of the Eighth Knesset

16 March 1977 (26 Adar 5737)

The Speaker, I. Yeshayahu: Knesset Members, the relatively short term of the Eighth Knesset is coming to an end....In assessing the Eighth Knesset permit me to quote the words of Motzkin and Ussishkin at the close of the Zionist Congresses: it has been a difficult Knesset but a good one. It was difficult because it was formed soon after the Yom Kippur War, whose shadow hung over most of its actions and debates. Nonetheless, this Knesset did a great deal of important work, introduced significant legislation and held serious debates on the issues of the day...both internal and external...

In the three and a quarter years of its activity, this Knesset passed 350 new laws and amendments to existing laws. 80 of them were in the sphere of labor and social legislation as well as laws pertaining to the reform in income tax and VAT...and many of them were private members' bills. Regrettably, the Eighth Knesset did not complete the work of introducing Basic Laws in such areas as civil rights, health insurance and other subjects or make improvements in its own procedural code and internal regulations....Nonetheless, this Knesset has been impressive both in the amount of work done and in the high level of its debates and decisions....There have been good working relations among its members, despite differences of opinion and party affiliation....

There was a time when the Knesset was regarded as a rubber stamp because it had a stable majority....That cannot be said of the Eighth Knesset, and there is reason to consider whether this is entirely positive....This Knesset has not been treated kindly by the media and has come under considerable criticism, which has not always been entirely justified....Since the Yom Kippur War the public has held the Knesset

in higher esteem, as is evinced by the eagerness of various individuals and groups to be elected to the House....Israel's friends in the enlightened world have also expressed their respect for the Knesset as the reflection of the one truly democratic society in the region....

As Speaker, on behalf of myself and my colleagues the Deputy Speakers, permit me to express my gratitude and congratulations...to all the Knesset Members throughout the political spectrum for the trust and respect they have accorded us....On behalf of us all I would like to thank all the employees of the Knesset for their devotion to their work and efficiency in undertaking it. Let us all send our best wishes to the President of the state, the Prime Minister and the Ministers, the soldiers of the IDF, the prisoners of Zion in Russia and Syria and the whole Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora.

To Jerusalem, our holy city, our glory and the capital of our state, we send our heartfelt congratulations on the tenth anniversary of its liberation and unification....May it flourish and prosper, as our fathers and forefathers have prayed that it shall throughout the generations, and as we pray it may for all the generations to come....

I extend my warmest wishes to each and every one of you. May the Rock of Israel grant you wisdom to act well on behalf of the country and success in everything you do, and may we all enjoy good health and tranquillity and live to see peace on our borders, large-scale immigration, the blossoming of the desert and the building of a society based on the pillars of justice, equality and fairness. Goodbye to you all and a pleasant Passover to one and all.