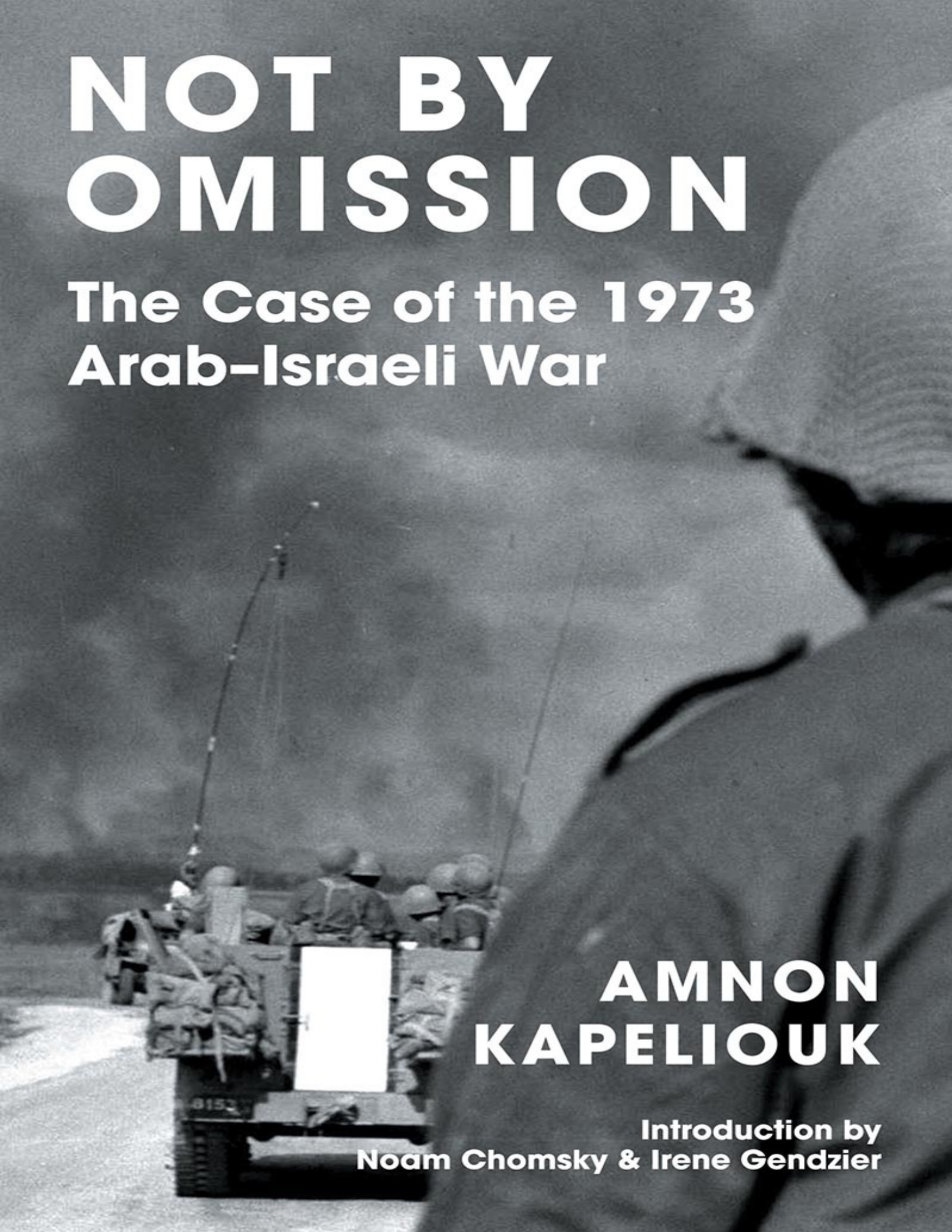
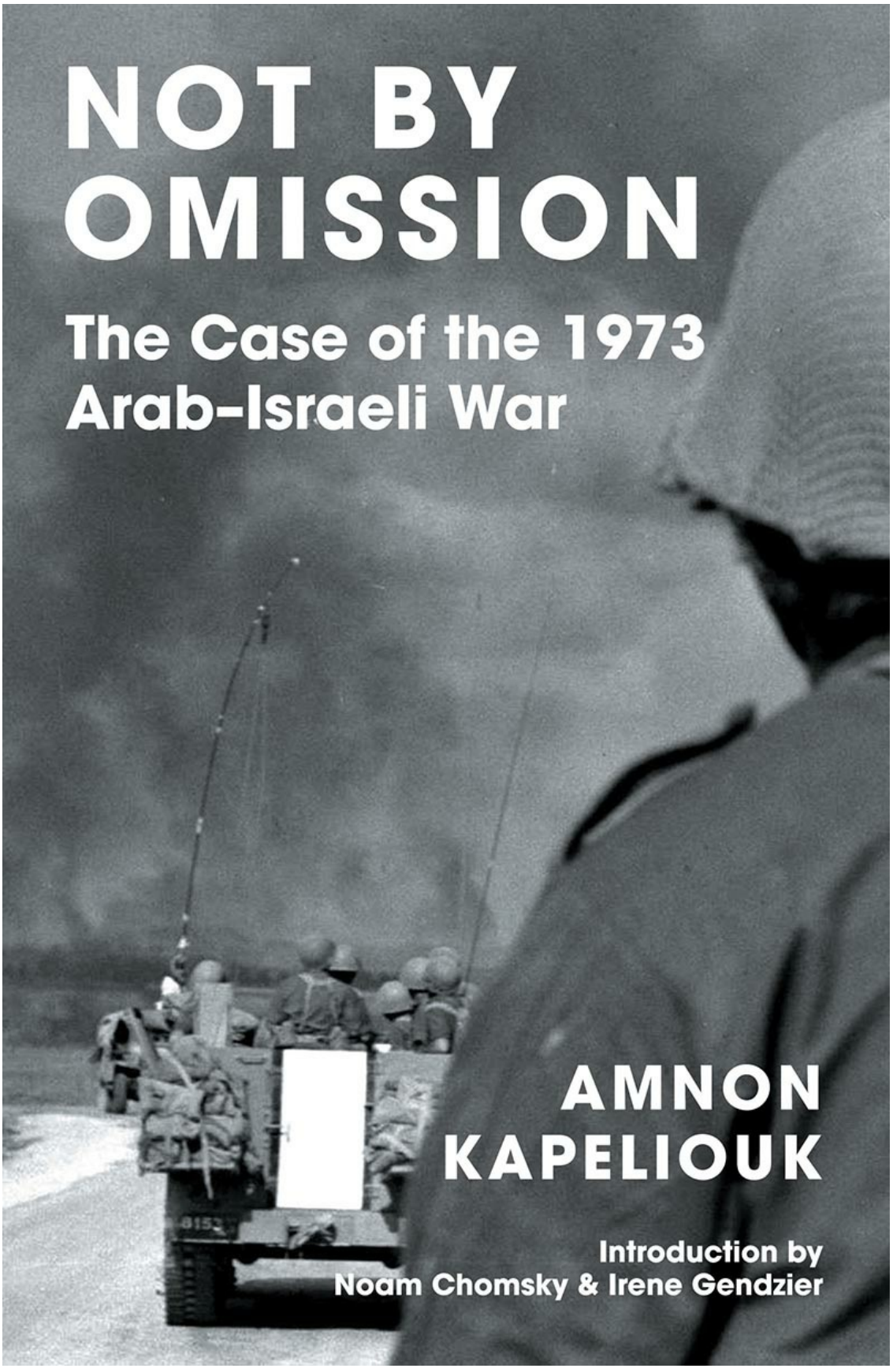
NOT BY OMISSION

The Case of the 1973 Arab–Israeli War



AMNON KAPELIOUK

Introduction by
Noam Chomsky & Irene Gendzier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Amnon Kapeliouk

Translated by Mark Marshall
Introduction by Noam Chomsky and Irene Gendzier

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Contents

A note on the translation

Not by Omission: The Policy That Led to War was the English title Amnon Kapeliouk himself provided for the Hebrew version of this book, where it appeared on the inside of the cover page. 'Not by Omission' is a quasi-literal translation of the Hebrew title, *Lo 'meḥdal'!* – Not 'omission'! For the English translation, the title has been modified to refer specifically to the 1973 war.

All the quotes that were originally in English appear in this translation in their original English form, except the following, the original English versions of which I was unable to locate:

Chapter 1: The Moshe Dayan interviews with the BBC on 14 May 1973 and 13 June 1967.

Chapter 7: Associated Press, 6 March 1974.

'Israel Broadcasting' appears in various places in the book. It is a translation of *shidurei yisra'el*, which literally means 'Broadcasts of Israel'. It is the term that was used at the time to refer to Israeli national broadcasts on both radio and television.

I have translated the Hebrew term *rav-aluf* as 'lieutenant general'. Some sources translate it as 'major general'.

The following Hebrew letters (and their Arabic cognates) are transliterated as follows:

א (alef): apostrophe (')
ח (ḥet): 'h' with a dot under it (ḥ)
כ (kaf): 'k'
כ, ך (khaf and final khaf): 'ch'
ע (ᶜayin): superscript 'c' (ᶜ)
צ, ץ (tzadee and final tzadee): 'tz'
ק (quf): 'q'

For the rest, I rely on a common-sense approach. Note that I do not use this system to transliterate well-known proper names such as Yedioth Ahronoth, Yitzhak and Al Hamishmar.

Mark Marshall
Toronto, February 2019

Introduction to the English edition by Noam Chomsky and Irene Gendzier

'The status quo will persist in the region for as long as we want it to.'[1] The current situation will stay the way it is, even for twenty or thirty years, until the Arabs agree to convert it into a 'real peace' with Israel, in which normal relations will be established between the Arab states and Israel and extensive territorial changes will be made in Israel's favour. Within the political echelon, it is agreed that 'we will remain in the Territories and that is what will force the Arabs to change their position.' The Arab states and the residents of the Occupied Territories will reconcile themselves to the new status quo, even if it takes a long time.

These words describe with fair accuracy the policies of the government of Israel today, backed strongly in practice by Washington. The words are, however, taken from or are a very close paraphrase of Amnon Kapeliouk's account of the 'first and foremost among the myths that crumbled to their foundations in the Yom Kippur War' of October 1973, myths that he investigates in depth in his revealing study of the background for the October War and its immediate aftermath.

The Yom Kippur War was a traumatic event for Israel. It was a very close call that shattered the conception of Israeli might and Arab ineptitude that led Israel to near disaster and posed a threat of nuclear war. The myths did 'crumble to their foundations', as Kapeliouk reports. Over time, however, they have been revived in new forms, and these new versions may well lead on to further disasters.

Kapeliouk's important study focuses mainly on the period from the 1967 Six-Day War, which firmly established these myths, and the 1973 October War, which shattered them – for a time. These were 'years of nationalistic drunkenness and military triumphalism', in the words of historian Shlomo Ben-Ami, former foreign minister of Israel and a lead Israeli participant in peace negotiations, including the Camp David talks in 2000.[2] The words also apply to Washington during the crucial years 1971–73, when Henry Kissinger had taken charge, displacing Secretary of State William Rogers. The period is a critical one in the history of Israel, with far broader global impact. An examination of what took place, and why, thus provides many

valuable lessons for today.

Israel's stunning military victory in 1967 established US–Israel relations in pretty much the form that has persisted since. As always in the region, its enormous energy resources were not far in the background. Since the Second World War, Washington has regarded these resources as 'a stupendous source of strategic power' and 'one of the greatest material prizes in world history'.[3] Prominent figures have recognized that control of Middle East oil would yield 'substantial control of the world' and that America's control over Middle East oil producers 'gives it indirect but politically critical leverage on the European and Asian economies that are also dependent on energy exports from the region', an insight that goes back to George Kennan. 'By 1947', historian Irene Gendzier comments, 'the importance of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East to US policy was beyond argument. Economic and strategic interests dominated calculations of US policy, whether in Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, or Lebanon.' And still do.[4]

Control was threatened, it was felt, by secular Arab nationalism, based primarily in Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt. Nasser's independence and role in the Non-Aligned Movement were deeply disturbing to Washington and London. Syria was regarded in a similar light, as was Iraq after British domination was overthrown in 1958, and Lebanon, in whose civil war the US intervened in 1958. Israel's severe blow to Nasser's authority and power in 1967 was very welcome to Washington, and also to Saudi Arabia, Egypt's main regional rival, then engaged in a proxy war with Egypt in North Yemen. The Kingdom was then and remains by far the most important of the oil states. It has also long been the centre of extreme Islamic fundamentalism and has been very active throughout the Muslim world in propagating its radical Wahhabi doctrines. In the conflict between secular nationalism and radical Islam, the US and Britain have regularly supported the latter, regarded as much less a threat to their interests.[5]

After its 1967 victory, Israel was granted the role of 'strategic asset', although its potential in that role had been recognized as early as 1948.[6] In that year and the year that followed, the US warned Israel of the risks of relying exclusively on force to resolve the conflict over Palestine, alarmed by its territorial expansion and expulsion of Palestinian refugees. In the period following the 1967 War, its role was significantly enhanced, particularly in 1970, when Israel, at Washington's behest, mobilized its forces to deter a possible Syrian intervention in Jordan to support Palestinians then being massacred by Jordanian forces during 'Black September'. Syrian intervention was regarded as a threat to the Jordanian Hashemite monarchy, and potentially to Saudi Arabia. The US was so bogged down in Indochina at that moment that it was unable to act decisively. By then, Israel had found its natural place within the Nixon Doctrine, which recognized that the US could 'no longer play policeman to the world' and would therefore 'expect other nations to provide more cops on the beat in their own neighborhood', in the words of Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. Police headquarters, it was understood, would remain in Washington, with a branch office in London. The two main neighbourhood cops on the beat in the Middle East precinct were Israel and Iran (then under the Shah), who were informally allied.

Reviewing this system in 1974, Robert Reppa, a former Middle East analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, wrote that Israeli power had protected the regimes of Jordan and Saudi Arabia from 'a militarily strong Egypt' in the 1960s and that 'the Israeli–Iranian interrelationship' continued to contribute to the stability of the region, securing US interests. This picture was endorsed in May 1973 by the Senate's ranking oil expert, Senator Henry Jackson, a strong supporter of Israel. He stressed 'the strength and Western orientation of Israel on the Mediterranean and Iran [under the Shah] on the Persian Gulf', two 'reliable friends of the

United States [who] have served to inhibit and contain those irresponsible and radical elements in certain Arab States . . . who, were they free to do so, would pose a grave threat indeed to our principal sources of petroleum in the Persian Gulf'.[7]

There were precursors. In 1958, a critical year in the region, the National Security Council had concluded that a 'logical corollary' of opposition to radical Arab nationalism 'would be to support Israel as the only strong pro-Western power left in the Middle East',[8] the policy instituted after Israel's 1967 victory.

Earlier, in the spring of 1949, Israel's military successes had impressed the US military, leading the US Air Force chief of staff to send a memo to the US Joint Chiefs entitled 'US Strategic Interests in Israel', in which he observed that Israel 'has demonstrated by force of arms its right to be considered the military power next after Turkey in the Near and Middle East'. In the light of these developments, he concluded that 'as the result of its support to Israel, the United States might now gain strategic advantages from the new political situation'.[9]

The post-1967 arrangements fulfilled David Ben-Gurion's aspiration for an 'Alliance of the Periphery', based on the triangle Israel–Iran– Turkey (allied with Israel, secretly, since 1958) and barring Nasserite and other secular nationalist tendencies as well as Soviet influence. The US had refused to endorse this proposal in 1958, Ben-Ami reports, but the 1967 victory changed its strategic calculus.

Immediately after the June 1967 war, the Israeli cabinet on 19 June formulated a peace proposal calling for the return of captured Syrian and Egyptian territory, but omitting the West Bank and Gaza,[10] in what has commonly been claimed a generous offer. It seems, however, to have been solely an internal document. According to Ben-Ami, 'No formal peace proposal was made either directly or indirectly', and though the Americans were briefed, they 'were not asked to convey [the proposal] to Cairo and Damascus as formal peace proposals'. And no reply was expected. Ben-Ami's account is extended by Avi Raz in his detailed review of Israel and US archives. He concludes that the version given by Abba Eban, on which many scholars and writers have relied, 'is nothing but a fiction', and that 'the 19 June resolution was not a generous offer at all but a diplomatic maneuver to win over the one international player that really mattered to Israel – the United States', with the primary objective of heading off a 'Soviet drive for a United Nations resolution demanding Israel immediately and unconditionally withdraw from the territories occupied in the war'.

The matter was quickly rendered moot by initiation of the programme of 'creeping annexation' by means of new settlements in the Occupied Territories. The guiding doctrines were formulated by Moshe Dayan, the most influential figure throughout the period of post-1967, who rose to heroic status in the United States. As he explained in August 1971, 'We must consider ourselves the permanent government in the territories and plan and carry out as much as possible and not leave options open for the day when peace comes, which may be distant.'[11]

Diplomatic efforts did not cease, but they were still-born. In December 1969, Secretary of State Rogers made several proposals known as 'the Rogers Plan', calling for Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territory and an official end to the state of war. It was rejected by both Israel and Egypt.

In Egypt, in the interim, popular demonstrations intensified massive frustration with the failure to arrive at a political solution to the Middle East crisis, leading Nasser to launch the War of Attrition, beginning in March 1969. It escalated through the following February as Israeli forces reached into Egypt, leading Nasser to turn to the USSR for assistance. But, as Kapeliouk

reminds us, 'while the War of Attrition was at its height, Nasser began to ponder ways to end it.'

The Egyptian president made his views on the subject known in an important interview he granted on 19 February 1970 to the special Cairo correspondent of the French daily *Le Monde*, Éric Rouleau. In it, Nasser expressed the view that 'it will be possible to establish a lasting peace between Israel and the Arab countries, not excluding economic and diplomatic relations, at such time as a satisfactory solution will have been reached on the two sole [*sic*] problems that are the causes of the current conflict, the occupied territories and Palestinian refugees.'[12] Israeli prime minister Golda Meir rejected Nasser's overture.

A major potential breakthrough took place in February 1971, in negotiations with UN mediator Gunnar Jarring. President Sadat of Egypt, who succeeded Nasser after his death, agreed to 'enter into a peace agreement with Israel containing all the . . . obligations as provided for in Security Council Resolution 242' of November 1967 (recognized on all sides, formally at least, to be the basic UN document – and, crucially, making no mention of Palestinian national rights), once Israel withdrew from the Sinai. Sadat also offered an interim settlement as a first stage.

'The combined significance of the Egyptian offers could not be overstated,' Israeli strategic analyst Zeev Maoz writes in his magisterial review of Israel's security policies from 1948. However, 'blind and drunk throughout' (Ben-Ami), Israel rejected the offer, responding to Jarring that it 'will not withdraw to the pre-June 1967 lines'.[13] At the time, Israel was planning extensive development projects in the Egyptian Sinai, including a city (Yamit) and many settlements, while driving thousands of Bedouins into the desert, destroying towns and villages in preparation for these plans.

Sadat's offer of a full peace treaty was supported by the US State Department, but 'they were up against two formidable enemies', Maoz observes: 'Golda Meir in Israel and Henry Kissinger, the US national security adviser.' Ben-Ami writes that 'it is difficult to imagine a greater gulf than that which existed between the resourceful peace strategist, the compulsively creative and far-sighted statesman that was Sadat, and the trivially immobile government led by Mrs Meir', which rejected all offers while pursuing its ambitious programmes of expansion into the Egyptian Sinai.

In earlier years, Israel had developed even more ambitious plans for expansion, but these were blocked by Washington. Not this time, however. Kissinger's doctrines were no less 'immobile' than Meir's. In his memoirs published eight years later, Kissinger outlines (and justifies) his policy of 'stalemate': no negotiations, just reliance on force, in which Israel reigned supreme, he assumed, adopting the triumphalism of the times. He also spells out his reasoning: it was necessary to insist upon 'stalemate until Moscow urged compromise or until, even better, some moderate Arab regime decided that the route to progress was through Washington . . . Until some Arab state showed a willingness to separate from the Soviets, or the Soviets were prepared to dissociate from the maximum Arab program, we had no reason to modify our policy' of stalemate.[14]

It is hard to imagine that Kissinger was unaware that one of the two major Arab states, Saudi Arabia, did not even have diplomatic relations with the hated Russians, and that the other, Egypt, was plainly 'showing a willingness to separate from the Soviets' – and, shortly after, even expelled Soviet advisors in a further effort to induce Washington to support the peace initiative. As for the Soviets, the question of their dissociating from the maximum Arab programme did not even arise. They remained well within the international consensus to which, at the time, the US still formally adhered. The matter was not obscure. As Senate Foreign Relations Committee Middle East specialist Seth Tillman pointed out, 'The official Soviet position has been consistent

since 1948 in support of Israel's right to exist and consistent since 1967 in support of Israel's right to a secure national existence, as called for in Security Council Resolution 242, within its 1967 borders.'[15]

Kissinger's account of his decisions is so bizarre that one is tempted to suspect that the real issue was the 'bureaucratic turf struggle' between Rogers and Kissinger to which Maoz alludes. The fact that he was willing to repeat these absurdities eight years later defies comment.

Kissinger won the 'turf struggle', replacing Rogers as secretary of state and taking total control of foreign policy. At this point, Sadat and peace were facing 'formidable enemies': Israel and Kissinger. Nevertheless, Sadat proceeded with further initiatives. All were dismissed or rebuffed. Not surprisingly, he was well aware of the unified front of rejectionism that he was facing. 'Every door I have opened has been slammed in my face by Israel – with American blessings,' he informed the US press a few months before he launched the war: 'There is only one conclusion – if we don't take our case in our own hands, there will be no movement . . . But now the time has come for a decision . . . The time has come for a shock . . . Americans have left us no other way out.'[16]

Sadat made it crystal clear that, if peace was barred by Israeli immobilism and Kissinger's insistence on stalemate, he would have to turn to war. His warnings elicited mostly ridicule in the reigning atmosphere of 'nationalistic drunkenness and military triumphalism'. Kapeliouk writes that 'the Egyptian threats and the reports from Arab and foreign sources about the dangers of an Arab offensive against Israel were received by Israelis with ridicule, swaggering contempt and a deluge of jokes.' Israelis were mesmerized by their confidence that 'war is not for Arabs', as the 'conception' was articulated by General Ezer Weizman (later president of Israel).

The few who took Sadat seriously and tried to warn of the severity of the threat were also ignored, even the deputy chief of Israel's General Staff, General Israel Tal, who tried almost desperately to persuade the intelligence chiefs and the General Staff to attend to the facts before their eyes until a few days before the war, and was effectively cashiered from the army for his pains, on the initiative of the supremely confident hawk Moshe Dayan. Kapeliouk describes these events as 'another symptom of the omnipotent power of the defence minister in everything done within the IDF, and the lack of public supervision over his actions'.

A peace agreement with Egypt, the only major Arab military force, would have been a very considerable step towards security for Israel. Its reasons for preferring expansion to peace and security were clearly articulated by leading military-political figures. General Chaim Bar-Lev of the governing Labour Party wrote in March 1972, 'I think that we could obtain a peace settlement on the basis of the earlier [pre-June 1967] borders. If I were persuaded that this is the maximum that we might obtain, I would say: agreed. But I think that it is not the maximum. I think that if we continue to hold out, we will obtain more.' A few weeks later, General Weizman explained that, if Israel were to withdraw from the conquered territories, it could not 'exist according to the scale, spirit, and quality she now embodies'.[17] In the prevailing atmosphere that Kapeliouk reviews, one of arrogant dismissal of Arab military capacity and, indeed, racist contempt for Arabs generally, there seemed little reason to be unduly concerned about security problems.

The October War proved otherwise, shattering these myths. Furthermore, the war brought the superpowers dangerously close to nuclear confrontation. Kapeliouk writes that this was 'one of the gravest international crises in Moscow–Washington relations, maybe the gravest one since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. For a moment it looked like a confrontation between the two superpowers . . . was near.'

To warn the Russians, Kissinger raised the nuclear alert to DEFCON 3, just below DEFCON 2 (the level at the peak of the Cuban Missile Crisis).

What was Kissinger warning the Russians about? Brezhnev was bitterly critical of the Israelis for continuing to violate the cease-fire and continuing 'to seize new and new territory from Egypt'.[18] According to the National Security Archive documentation of Kissinger's role in this period, Nixon did not see the letter sent by Brezhnev until the following day. Timing was critical here. Brezhnev proposed the following: 'Let us together urgently dispatch to Egypt the Soviet and American military contingents, to insure the implementation of the decision of the Security Council.'[19] The Soviet leader warned of unilateral action: 'If you find it impossible to act jointly with us . . . we should be faced with the necessity urgently to consider the question of taking appropriate steps unilaterally.' While Soviet insiders claimed that no military moves in the Middle East were seriously planned, the movement of some East German troops as well as signs of transport planes being sent to Egypt, evoked a sharp response in Washington.

The US response to Brezhnev's letter, which was sent out under Nixon's name, although he had not seen it, contained both a rejection of the proposal for joint US–Soviet military contingents in Egypt, and a denial that the 'cease fire is now being violated on any significant scale'.[20] In addition, it asserted US support for the ceasefire and warned against the possible consequences of the USSR taking unilateral action.

Following the nuclear alert, Ambassador Dobrynin called Kissinger, exclaiming, 'I did not see why the US government was trying to create the impression of a dangerous crisis.'[21] Kissinger responded by claiming that domestic factors had been major determinants of US action, and then assured Dobrynin that the DEFCON alert would be cancelled the next day.[22]

It was not only Nixon who was initially kept in the dark about Kissinger's moves; so was NATO. To the great outrage of its members, NATO was not consulted about the decision on DEFCON 3, a refusal to consult that clearly undermined the central purpose of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group.

Kissinger's reply to French ambassador Kosciusko-Morizet's objection to the 'lack of US consultation during the crisis either on the alert or the latest US resolution at the Security Council' was to disparage Washington's European allies as 'hostile powers. Not once did we get their support.'[23] The French position reflected that of other NATO members, leading Donald Rumsfeld, who was then US ambassador to NATO, to report sympathetically, that 'most of the allies felt embarrassed by not being even generally aware of what has been happening in the US–Soviet discussions.' Rumsfeld added that they were 'further surprised and made to feel irrelevant by the calling of the alert without prior notification until more than seven hours later'.[24]

This was the context for Kissinger's famous 'shuttle diplomacy', an effort to achieve some gains from the catastrophe for which he bore considerable responsibility. But Kissinger's involvement in the October War, which is little known, preceded this.

US sources disclose that 'Moscow was interested in a cease-fire throughout the conflict', given their scepticism about Arab military prospects and their concern about the war's effect on US–Soviet relations.[25]

The Egyptian leader, however, 'wanted to keep fighting in order to get political concessions from Israel while Israel rejected a cease-fire that left Arab territorial gains in place'.[26] By the fourth day of the war, the Soviets let the US know that they wanted a UN Security Council resolution supporting a ceasefire, although they were eager not to have their role be made public. Kissinger delayed responding to the Soviets in order to 'give Tel Aviv time for military

advances'.[27] As a result of Israel's advances, the Egyptians turned against the ceasefire, relying on the Soviets for military aid.

As the war continued, Israelis became concerned about the Soviets resupplying their Arab clients and turned to the US for assistance. By 12–13 October, Kissinger was receiving reports from Israel about the need for ammunition and decided to respond positively in order to make certain that Israel would be 'going as a fierce force'.[28] When it became clear that US civilian carriers were unwilling to get involved, 'Nixon ordered a major US military airlift to supply Israel.'[29] Two days later, with the Pentagon in charge, 'seventeen flights a day were already scheduled with 25,000 tons of supplies approved for shipment.'[30]

Kissinger's goal was to ensure Israeli military superiority, Egyptian submission short of total defeat, and Soviet subordination and marginalization in the Middle East. From this perspective, Nixon's effort to arrive at a Middle East settlement with the USSR was anathema to Kissinger, who resented the president's interference as well as his intention to work with Moscow. According to National Security Archive sources, 'Nixon believed that Moscow and Washington had to impose a settlement: to "bring the necessary pressures on our respective friends."'[31] Such a policy would risk undermining Kissinger's own preference for 'buying time for Israeli military advances'.[32]

Kissinger manoeuvred to allow the Israelis to keep fighting while ostensibly supporting the ceasefire. He let the Israelis know that he would not object if they delayed the implementation of the ceasefire in order to improve their position, as in the case of the crisis over the encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army. Kissinger informed the Israeli ambassador, Simcha Dinitz, that 'we would understand if Israelis felt they required some additional time for military dispositions.'[33] As to UN Resolution 338 (calling for a ceasefire and implementation of UN Resolution 242), 'Kissinger gave the Israelis leeway in interpreting the cease-fire so they could gear-up military operations before it went into effect. He advised Meir that if Israeli forces moved 'during the night while I'm flying' there would be no 'violent protests from Washington'.[34] The effect of the resulting Israeli violations of the ceasefire was not lost on the US State Department, which revealed that Israel's massive violations of the ceasefire were directed at encircling Egypt's Third Army.[35] Kissinger was reported to be wary of Israel's dealing Egypt a decisive blow and finishing off the Third Army, yet he assured the Israeli prime minister of continued US military aid, 'more Phantom jets and a military aid request totalling $2.2 billion'.[36] Kissinger described US objectives to Golda Meir as keeping the Arabs and the Soviets down, goals which he considered had been won by Israel and the US. It remained for the Arabs to face 'objective reality', which would oblige them 'to talk to us', since a settlement of the conflict was possible only through Washington.[37]

As to the Arabs facing this 'objective reality', President Sadat had long recognized its meaning and had turned away from the USSR in an effort to win US support in a resolution of the conflict with Israel – to no avail.

In the aftermath of the war within Israel, a war that, Kapeliouk argues, shattered the myths that had dominated Israeli policy towards the Arab world, a vocal opposition emerged bent on challenging and changing the status quo, in particular the role of Moshe Dayan, then coming under harsh criticism. Kissinger was rumoured to have intervened to arrest its course, facilitating the continuity in power of Israel's Labour Party hawks, chief among them the previously untouchable hero Dayan.

Dayan's reluctant decision to accept demands for his resignation was reversed as a result of

an alleged threat of a Syrian attack in the spring of 1974 that effectively bolstered his political immunity. These rumours of another war resulted in the mobilization of support for Dayan's appointment as minister of defence in the post-war regime of Golda Meir. But matters were not so straightforward. As Kapeliouk reports, there were continuing doubts about the validity of the alleged Syrian threat and its source:

> All eyes were now on Dr Henry Kissinger. According to the rumours that were widespread in political circles, it had been he who had taken care to 'plant' the information, because he feared that a government from which Dayan and maybe even Golda was absent would not dare to sign a separation-of-forces agreement with Syria, on which great hopes depended.[38]

The implications of such actions for Israelis who questioned the dominant myths propagated by Dayan and Meir and their cohorts were grim. They were no better for those calling for a different conception of Israel's future, one in line with the objective reality of Israel's 1967 occupation of Palestinian territory.

On 26 March 1979, a peace treaty was signed between Israel and Egypt at Camp David under President Carter's auspices, essentially accepting Sadat's rejected 1971 offer, but on harsher terms from the US–Israeli perspective. The 1971 proposal, like others of the period, paid no attention to Palestinian national rights. As in UN Resolution 242, the Palestinians were mentioned only as refugees. But during the 1970s, Palestinian nationalism had intruded on the international agenda, and by 1978–79 Israel was compelled to agree to a treaty that offered eventual autonomy to the Palestinians – though Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin made it clear that Israel would ignore those provisions, and proceeded to do so.

The Camp David treaty is regularly portrayed as a diplomatic triumph. More accurately, the whole series of events should be seen as a diplomatic catastrophe. The rejection of Sadat's peace proposals in 1971 led to a devastating war and years of needless suffering, and finally to acceptance of the proposals that were offered in 1971 – though by then with at least formal recognition of Palestinian national rights. The US–Israeli preference for expansion rather than security in 1971 may have been the most fateful decision in Israel's history, particularly because it has continued to guide Israel to the present, contributing to Israel's unenviable status as 'by far the most conflict-prone state in modern history'.[39]

Kapeliouk concludes that, for all its trauma and tragedy, the October 1973 war might still 'be considered a positive chapter, [but] only if it conforms to the true needs of Israel's security, based on the lessons of this war'. The record of the forty years that followed, and the circumstances of today, provide little basis for such hopes. 'The idol of the status quo', which brought about near-terminal disaster forty years ago, is worshipped with renewed complacency today, and continues, as before, to prevent 'Israel from presenting serious proposals, plans and initiatives for peace with the neighbouring states' and by now, crucially, with the Palestinians with whom it must somehow share this troubled land.

As in Avi Raz's exposé of the fraudulent claims that Israel allegedly offered peace to Egypt and Syria after the 1967 war, so Amnon Kapeliouk dares to question Israeli policies that have been justified in the name of peace, but that have in fact continued to subvert it.

Preface

A year and a half after the Yom Kippur War, at the end of January 1975, the Agranat Commission of Inquiry into the failures of the war completed its work. In the widely circulated short summary of the report, as well as in the report itself, only technical matters were discussed. Those who had expected that the report would shed light not only on military-technical failures but also on the political failure that caused the war and which had characterized Israeli policy since the Six-Day War, were disappointed. The claims of those who had maintained that we could expect ten years of peace because the Arabs had no military option were left unchallenged by the commission. And, thus, to this very day, nearly two years after the war, we have still heard no clear statement from representatives of the government about the responsibility for the Yom Kippur disaster. I decided to write this book when I realized that all the books that had been written about the worst of Israel's wars – the Yom Kippur War – passed over the political dimension of the war and did not touch on its real causes at all. This book is therefore political in nature, and does not concern itself with military plans and descriptions of battles.

Even while the war was in progress, I thought, more than once, that this terrible disaster that had befallen us could have been avoided. In my mind, I reviewed conversations with Arabs, the most recent of which had taken place in Paris a few months previously, with one of the editors of *Al-Tali'a* (a left-wing Egyptian monthly published by the Al-Ahram publishing house), who said that 'the accursed status quo' that was dragging on with no end in sight, was for Egypt 'the worst of situations, even worse than defeat in war'. I also recalled the words that I had written and said between the two wars (in *Al HaMishmar*, for which I am an Arab affairs correspondent, in the monthly *New Outlook*, in the electronic media and elsewhere), to the effect that, if a peace agreement including the return of the Occupied Territories were not reached with the Arab states, a new war would break out sooner or later, and it would be the Arabs who would fire the first shot. I recalled the war game that was conducted by *Hotam* (the weekly edition of *Al HaMishmar*) two years before October 1973, in which I 'played' the Egyptian side and captured the Bar-Lev line, to the sound of the laughter of the 'Israeli' player (the proceedings were written up in *Hotam* at the end of 1971 and published again after the war). It all came back to me, and I wondered: Could it happen?

On the very day of Yom Kippur in 1973, between the siren at midday and the call I got just an hour later, I wrote an article in which I sought to explain how we had gotten ourselves into renewed military hostilities and to point out that this was a war whose political objectives were clear: to move the Middle East crisis out of its state of stagnation. The article was not published in my newspaper, because the editor thought it was ‘too objective’; it nevertheless appeared a few weeks afterwards, without a word changed, in *New Outlook* (October/November 1973).

Those thoughts ran through my head unceasingly even while the battles were still raging in all their horror. When the war was at its height and the full dimensions of the disaster became clear, the conviction took shape within me that the truth behind this terrible war must be written.

I see this book as a contribution to the discussion of the responsibility for the Yom Kippur disaster. If I have succeeded in establishing that the responsibility for the October 1973 disaster lay with high-ranking members of our political elite, then I will have been well compensated.

Dr Amnon Kapeliouk

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Between two wars

A month after the Yom Kippur War, while Israel was still licking its wounds and mourning its dead, Minister Haim Bar-Lev was interviewed at length on Israel Broadcasting. The interviewer began the interview with one word, a word that was often on the lips of Israelis who were shaken by that terrible war. 'Sir,' he said. 'Why?' The answer too was short and sharp: 'Because the Egyptians couldn't tolerate the status quo any longer.' Coming from a top member of the Israeli establishment and a former chief of the General Staff of the Israel Defence Forces [IDF], this was a courageous admission of the failure of a policy that had been in place since 1967, and that the authors of which, convinced that the status quo created by the Six-Day War would last forever, had tried in vain to stop the course of history.

Indeed, Israel's astonishing victory in the Six-Day War had changed more than the map of the Middle East. It also changed the face of Israel and the political outlooks of its leaders as well as the mentality of some of them to some extent. That victory, the likes of which few have been seen in the history of modern warfare, could have produced a turning point in Israel's relations with the Arab states. In June 1967, Israel, strong and triumphant in its victory and enjoying the support of most of world public opinion, faced a beaten and humiliated Arab world that had only one card left in its hand: nonrecognition of Israel. Israel's leaders had two options then: one was to seriously seek ways to resolve the conflict with the Arab states, by making a dramatic historical gesture worthy of a magnanimous victor, and to outline a peace agreement in stages, according to which the Occupied Territories would be returned to their owners in return for the signing of a peace agreement between the Arab world and Israel; and the other was to choose 'territorial gains' over peace with the Arabs.

It quickly became clear that Israel's leaders had chosen the second option, or, more precisely, an unrealistic third option that can be summed up in the title of a book by Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, which appeared in 1969: *A New Map, Different Relations*;[1] that is to say, territories *and* peace. Instead of an untiring effort to find a realistic path to peace with the Arab world; instead of showing interest in the various options for a solution that were opened after the Six-Day War; instead of converting the military victory of June 1967 to a full victory by making peace with the neighbouring Arab states – governments of Israel adhered to the slogan of 'direct

negotiations' and their opposition to any withdrawal without peace. Israel's leaders channelled the nation's energies primarily towards the newly acquired territories, while relying on force and an Israeli military supremacy that appeared to them to be absolute. The process by which Israel consolidated its position in the occupied Arab territories therefore acquired more and more momentum, both during the 'National Unity' government from June 1967 to August 1970, and in the period that followed. Songs of praise were written about the 'return' to those territories, soldiers paraded through them, and the new generation learned to know them as if they were part of the State of Israel. On the Education Ministry's maps displayed in schools, the delimitation line that separated Israel from the new territories disappeared.

Creeping annexation

With the end of hostilities in June 1967, prominent Israeli leaders expressed the opinion that in return for peace with the neighbouring states, it would be necessary to return to them the territories that had been occupied in the war. On 19 June 1967, the government decided, without publicizing the fact, to authorize the prime minister to transmit to Egypt, through the government of the United States, the message that Israel had no territorial aspirations in the lands it had captured from Egypt. The general feeling was the same among a decisive majority of Israel's ministers regarding the territories captured from Jordan and Syria as well. True, on 29 June 1967, the Knesset decided to apply Israeli law to East Jerusalem, that is, to annex the Arab part of Jerusalem to the State of Israel. That was the only time a decision was made to annex occupied Arab territory to Israel *de jure*. However, the policy that was subsequently implemented in the Occupied Territories, while not involving *de jure* annexation, was intended to create *faits accomplis* in the Golan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Sinai, so that those places, once they had been colonized by Jews, would eventually be annexed to Israel. That policy was referred to as 'creeping annexation'.

The question whether the neighbouring Arab states – Egypt, Jordan and Syria – would respond to a proposal to make peace with Israel in exchange for the return of the territories captured from them in June 1967 apparently remained an open one, for the matter was never put to a serious test. There are those who claimed that the leaders of those states would reject any Israeli proposal regarding peace in return for the Occupied Territories in any case. If that premise was correct, then official Israeli policy gave the Arab leaders a good pretext to conceal their true intentions from the world. However, there have been many indications that at least two states, Egypt and Jordan, were willing to accept a peace agreement that would put an end to the conflict in return for restitution of their lands Israel had occupied. This was confirmed by Moshe Dayan himself in various statements in which he repeatedly declared that it would be better to keep the territories than to 'receive a document'. In a comprehensive lecture he gave about two months before the Yom Kippur War, he confirmed that 'there has been fundamental movement in the Arab world' that was manifest in the fact that 'the leaders of Jordan and the Arabs of the Territories would prefer to reach a peace settlement with us', but the condition was 'their demand for our complete (or nearly complete) departure from Judea and Samaria'.[2] The claim is widely made among the top Israeli leadership that the creation of *faits accomplis* in the Territories would prove to the Arabs that time was against them, making them despair and eventually bringing them to the negotiating table with Israel, in a more pliable state. However, neither Nasser's or Sadat's Egypt nor Hussein's Jordan (which had publicly expressed its

willingness for full peace with Israel, far beyond what other Arab leaders had dared to do) were prepared to reconcile themselves to the facts on the ground that had been created in the Occupied Territories. Regarding Egypt, there are explicit statements that it was precisely Israeli plans for consolidation in the Territories that reached their height with ratification of the 'Galili Document' in the summer of 1973, which hastened the decision to go to war in 1973.

Of all the measures that governments of Israel took in the period between the two wars, building settlements in the Occupied Territories was the most significant one in the web of its relations with neighbouring states. It is easy to change political decisions when necessary, but it is nearly impossible to uproot dozens of settlements that have been erected over the course of years with the encouragement of sympathetic public opinion. In some cases, settlements in the Territories were initiated without prior authorization from the authorities. The first settlement in the Golan was founded by kibbutzniks about five weeks after the war, most of them from the United Kibbutz Movement [*Hakibbutz Hameuhad*], without the approval of the authorities. The first group of 'settlers',[3] who arrived in Hebron on Passover 1968, also acted in a 'guerrilla' [*partizanit*] way; and the settlement at Dahab, called Di-Zahav, in the Sinai on the Gulf of Eilat, was also erected without advance authorization. But these 'private initiatives' quickly won the government's seal of approval in keeping with the policy of 'increasing the construction of security outposts and permanent settlements, rural and urban, on the soil of the homeland'.[4]

In order to appease international public opinion, the authorities would represent the erection of the settlements in the new territories as measures that arose from 'security needs'. As Foreign Minister Abba Eban noted: 'If we want to do something [in the Territories] and not invite a crisis . . . it is necessary to do what we want in the framework of security. The settlements have to be in the framework of security, in order to leave some options open in the event of peace negotiations.'[5] However, the truth was that the settlements in the Territories were erected as permanent communities that would determine the future map of the State of Israel. 'I do not think', said Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, when he appeared at the press club in Beit Sokolov, 'that settlement is particularly important from the security standpoint today. In the present era it is possible to defend a border with settlements just like a border without settlements . . . I consider settlement to have the greatest significance *in the creation of political facts* [emphasis in the original] under the assumption – as the prime minister has also pointed out – that we will not move from a place where we set up a civilian or military settlement [*'hityashvut o he'aḥazut'*].'[6] About a week and a half before the war, Moshe Dayan again said that 'the settlements that have been erected in the Territories are established forever and the future borders will be such that the settlements will remain within Israel.'[7] That was also the opinion of Prime Minister Meir: 'The border is in a place where Jews live and not lines on the map.'[8] Indeed, of out of forty-four settlements that were erected in the Occupied Territories between the two wars, only ten Nahal [military] settlements remained on the eve of Yom Kippur, and not one of them was on the Golan Heights.[9]

The process of settlement in the Territories proceeded and gained momentum. Some settlements were established in 1967: two in the Golan, two in the Sinai, one in the Etzion Bloc,[10] and the construction of Jewish neighbourhoods in the annexed Arab part of Jerusalem began. In 1968, the main effort was devoted to the Golan, where eight settlements were built, as compared to three in other places. When proponents of 'the Greater Land of Israel' demanded that the pace of settlement in the Territories be increased still more, then prime minister Levi Eshkol apologized, claiming that 'Israel is forced to take international public opinion into

consideration'.[11]

Five settlements were built in 1969, and in 1970 momentum passed to the Jordan Valley, in keeping with the 'Allon Plan' (a far-reaching plan that was intended by its authors to include the construction of thirty settlements along the Jordan Valley, including at least one urban settlement).[12] Five of the six settlements built in 1970 were in the Jordan Valley. Seven more settlements were built in the Territories in 1971 and six more in 1972. Only three settlements were built in 1973, but work began on a comprehensive plan to build the city of Yamit, in the Rafah area in Sinai.

A clear majority of the settlements in the Occupied Territories were erected on lands that had been abandoned by their owners after the war, or on government land. Lands were confiscated for the purpose of building new Jewish neighbourhoods in Jerusalem and Hebron. Arab lands were also confiscated for Jewish settlement in the Jordan Valley and the Etzion Bloc. In the Rafah area, a new 'system' was adopted: in January 1972 the army expelled about 6,000 Bedouin, destroyed their residences, filled in their wells and fenced off the whole area with wire so that Jewish settlements could be built in the area. The expelled Bedouin were permitted to work as hired labourers and guards for the Israelis who had settled in their lands (in Moshav Sedot, for example). Two months later, in March 1972, the 'system' was enhanced: the lands of the village of Aqraba in the Jordan Valley, which had been confiscated by the authorities but whose owners continued to work them in contravention of the governor's order, were sprayed from the air with poison and the crop destroyed. Over the course of the year, the Jewish settlement of Nahal Gitit was built on those lands.

Needless to say, the residents of the Territories were not asked for their opinion on settlement on their lands. The Arabic press in Jerusalem occasionally voiced protest against settlements in the Occupied Territories by pointing out that it constituted an obstacle to peace and a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, article 49 of which forbids occupying states to settle their subjects in the territories they have occupied. When Moshe Dayan claimed that he saw no sign of opposition from the residents of Hebron to the construction of a Jewish neighbourhood there, Sheikh Muhammad Ali al-Jabari replied to him: 'The Israeli settlement in Hebron was received with strong protests by the representatives of the Arabs in the areas involved, and by the landowners whose land was taken away for the establishment of the settlement. The fact that there were no violent incidents by armed men against the settlement was due to the fact that the Arabs knew that any such resistance would lead to the destruction by the Israelis of the surrounding Arab quarters.'[13]

As time passed, the impression grew stronger that Israel's national objective was colonization and expansion. Warnings from moderate Israeli circles that this would only enhance the hostility of the Arab world fell on deaf ears. The following dialogue between interviewer Alan Hart and Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, broadcast on the BBC on 14 May 1973, was typical:

> ALAN HART: 'Why do you call for more and more settlements? The Arabs claim that you actually want Israel to stay in the West Bank forever.'
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> MOSHE DAYAN: 'Correct. I do indeed think that the Israelis should stay in the West Bank forever.'
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> ALAN HART: 'The Arabs who are listening to you now, and President Sadat, will say: Dayan is confirming that he has expansionistic aspirations . . .'
>
> MOSHE DAYAN: 'Absolutely! If you see the desire to feel at home all over the West Bank as expansion, if that is what you call "expansionistic aspirations", then I have expansionistic aspirations.'[14]

‘The Emperor of the Territories’

In the period between the wars, the Israeli leader who had the most influence on Israel–Arab relations, on Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories, and indirectly on Israel’s foreign relations as well, was Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, an army man who stuck to his objectives but implemented them pragmatically. Dayan’s policy since the Six-Day War was characterized by aspiration to build a large and strong Israel, into which all the new territories would be integrated except for part of the Sinai. On that subject, he found common ground with the nationalist Right (Gahal), a fact that he did not hesitate to admit in public. Rafi (Dayan’s party) and Gahal, which joined the Eshkol government on the eve of the Six-Day War, often found themselves sharing the same position, such as the demand to expand the settlements and to reject UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967. After Gahal’s departure from the government in August 1970, following Israel’s agreement to accept the initiative of US secretary of state Rogers, which led to a ceasefire on the Egyptian front, Dayan became the most hardline member of the Israeli government. Historians will record that Moshe Dayan’s joining the government in June 1967, and his decisive influence on Israeli policy until October 1973, were a primary cause of the failure to find a solution to the Middle East conflict and therefore of the fourth round of Israeli–Arab warfare.

It was perhaps a jest of fate that none other than Golda Meir had been one of the strongest opponents of his entry into the government on the eve of the Six-Day War. Being loyal to her party, Mapai, for which she was then serving as general secretary, Meir did not want Moshe Dayan, one of the leaders of the breakaway Rafi faction, to get on the ‘train’ of the government and reap the fruits of victory at the last minute. And, indeed, Meir’s fears were realized. Moshe Dayan was named defence minister four days before the outbreak of the war, when all the battle plans had been written and approved, and he ended up being the one who reaped the glory. Less than two years later, in March 1969, after Golda Meir was surprisingly appointed prime minister upon Levi Eshkol’s death, the two of them began to reconcile, and she increasingly permitted Dayan to conduct his hawkish policy nearly without restraint.

Under the protection of Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan became not only the most popular personality on the Israeli ‘street’, but also the most charismatic personality in Israel after Ben-Gurion. Thanks to Meir, he succeeded most of the time in imposing his opinions on his party, to the joy of the Right, which had become progressively stronger since 1967. Dayan won much affection among the public, who saw him as ‘the architect of the Six-Day victory’ and appreciated his rakish style. He also enjoyed the loyalty of senior journalists in the Israeli press (some of whom abandoned him after the Yom Kippur War), who were always at his service when it was necessary to explain his policies. Every one of his speeches, many of which were published in their entirety in most newspapers, was met with extensive commentary, nearly always favourable. As a charismatic personality, he naturally enjoyed a special status. When it came to light, for example, that he had broken the law in his quest for archaeological treasures without authorization and sometimes even with the help of the army, there was a forgiving attitude towards him and the matter was quickly forgotten. ‘For Dayan, it’s allowed,’ people would say.[15] Once and only once before the Yom Kippur War, after public criticism of ‘unusual’ actions in the Territories, did an Israeli journalist dare to ask Dayan at a televised press conference, in July 1972, if he had considered resigning because of them. Dayan answered in one word, with a contemptuous smile: ‘No.’ At the time, everybody was astonished at that surprising question, the likes of which became routine only after the war.

Of all the political groupings in Israel, only the small and factionalized Left and certain Labour Party circles consistently opposed Dayan's policy, but without substantial success. Demonstrations and parliamentary action against Dayan could not change the policy of force, which was tied to the ideology of force that Dayan expressed and represented more than any other leader of the Israeli Establishment between the two wars.

That ideology, the roots of which go back to the Ben-Gurion regime, was based on complete lack of faith in the possibility of peace with the Arabs. In Dayan's opinion, the aspirations of the Arab states could be summed up as nothing but the desire to destroy Israel; if they exhibited willingness for an accord with Israel in exchange for the return of the Occupied Territories, it was nothing but a trick intended to advance their final goal of destroying Israel. Therefore, only force and military power could guarantee the survival of the State of Israel. That alone could make the Arabs despair and compel them at the end of the day to abandon their aspirations for Israel's destruction and force them to reconcile themselves to Israel as it is.

Moshe Dayan's ideology of force was a new stage in the development of Zionist political thought. In the past, before the birth of the State of Israel and at the time of its birth, Israeli-Zionist policy was based on two principles. The first was relative political realism, which took into account the relations of force on the ground and the willingness for compromise, which did not mean giving up on long-range objectives. That approach began to change after the birth of the State of Israel. Then David Ben-Gurion's *étatiste* approach began to predominate. It focused on strengthening Israel vis-à-vis the Arab world by any means, including the most unsavoury ones, such as the conspiracy Israel entered into in 1956 with two declining imperialist powers, Britain and France, to bring down the nationalist regime in Egypt after the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company.

The Six-Day War elevated the ideology of force to its highest point. The crushing victory over the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in 1967 planted the feeling that from then on the fate of the entire Middle East was subject to the will of Israel and its military strength. From there it was a short path to the establishment of settlements in the Occupied Territories without regard for Arab objections, and the policy based on the assumption that time was working in Israel's favour, and the conviction that due to the 'hopeless weakness' of the Arabs, the status quo in Israel–Arab relations was, for all practical purposes, a de facto peace. The theoretician of that ideology was Moshe Dayan. It was accepted by most Israelis as the embodiment of political wisdom and long-term thinking.

In the period between the two wars, Dayan's thoughts and plans were mainly focused on the new territories. There he was a virtually absolute ruler – 'the Emperor of the Territories', as he was called by the public. His views on the subject can be summed up as follows:

1. 'We must consider ourselves the permanent government in the Territories and plan, and implement, as much as possible and not leave options open for the day when peace comes, which may be distant.'[16] For that reason it was seen as necessary to take advantage of the opportunity to erect as many Jewish settlements as possible, both rural and urban, in the territories that were occupied in 1967, because it is 'the soil of our homeland'. Moreover, Dayan was determined that Israelis, both institutions and individuals, should be permitted to buy land in those territories and especially in the West Bank. The objective was clear: to hasten the process of creating accomplished facts and the integration of the territories into Israel – in other words, their de facto annexation. For it was clear that the purchase of land would not only strengthen the Israeli hold on the Territories but would also make it difficult for the government to return them in the

context of a peace agreement. The fact that the acquisition of lands in the Occupied Territories violates international law did not concern Dayan and his supporters, for in their opinion the Territories were not in fact occupied but were part of the Homeland. In answer to criticism, Dayan and his supporters even raised the claim that 'we cannot accept that a Jew can buy land anywhere in the world except the West Bank'.[17] Dayan described the Allon Plan, which called for selective settlement in the West Bank, as a 'White Paper', in reference to the famous 'White Paper' laws of the British Mandate government, which forbade Jews to acquire land in areas where Arabs were the majority. However, when he was asked if Arabs would also be permitted to buy land in Israel, Dayan answered unequivocally: 'No! Because that could harm the continuity of Jewish settlement.'[18]

When the matter of the acquisition of land in the Territories was raised in the government in April 1973, many deals had already been signed for the purchase of lands from Arabs, on a scale of tens of thousands of dunams, some of them through a third party. According to local law they were not valid,[19] but the military government turned a blind eye and did not prosecute anyone. One of the buyers of land in the Territories who did not hesitate to disclose publicly what he had done was a cousin of Moshe Dayan, MK Yigal Hurvitz, of the National List, who soon afterwards became one of the leaders of the Likud. After the negative repercussions this caused outside the country, especially in the United States, the government decided not to change the situation but henceforth to ban individuals from acquiring lands in the Territories and to confer that right only on governmental institutions. But Dayan did not give up. Not many months had passed before his demand was nearly completely fulfilled, as expressed in Article 12 of the Galili Document.[20]

In arguments with opponents, Moshe Dayan did not hesitate to invoke even mystical-religious motives and the Bible. He declared that 'those who think that our connection to the West Bank is temporary should stop teaching the Bible and then Jews will stop feeling at home in the West Bank'.[21] Here, Dayan touched a sensitive spot and elicited many negative responses, to the effect that the Bible should not be converted into a title deed. Former minister Mordechai Bentov, for example, responded sharply, saying, 'It is convenient for Dayan to forget that the Bible also speaks of moral and social obligations; those who call for grounding in the Bible would do well to relearn some of the Ten Commandments and their meaning, and to obey them first at home.'[22]

2. In Dayan's view, the Arab residents of the Territories would be permitted to live their lives in accordance with their culture and their traditions. They would be provided with jobs in Israel, although they would not be permitted to sleep overnight in the places where they work. The residents of the West Bank would be permitted to maintain their ties to Amman, because they are Jordanian citizens and even carry Jordanian passports. Dayan explained his views on this subject in the simplest and clearest way in an interview on the British television programme *Panorama* on 14 May 1973. He said that the Palestinians should be part of Jordan. The physical future of the Palestinians must be in the place where they live, but their capital is in Jordan and therefore it is definitely possible for people from Nablus, who are Jordanian citizens, to sit in the parliament in Amman. When the surprised interviewer said that it is quite strange that Palestinians should live in Israel but vote for the Jordanian parliament, Dayan explained that 'we have to find an arrangement according to which the Arabs of the West Bank can remain Jordanian and we can realize our aspiration to settle there, in the West Bank'. That is how Dayan tried to overcome the 'demographic problem' that abruptly emerged after the Six-Day War, when many Israelis

expressed willingness to return the territories inhabited by Arabs in the framework of a peace arrangement, so as not to add to the State of Israel a million Arab residents, who constituted, together with the Arabs of Israel, a minority of 1.5 million people as against 2,800,000 Jews. Dayan 'solved' the problem in a way that contradicted basic principles of human justice by proposing to give different rights to people living in the same state, and by separating the Territories from their population by giving the status of foreign citizens (Jordanians) to the Palestinians, who would then be unable to determine their destiny in their own country. The defence minister applied a similar solution to the Gaza Strip by permitting the former mayor of Gaza City, Rashad al-Shawwa, to distribute Jordanian passports to residents of the Gaza Strip, which had never belonged to Jordan. With Dayan's blessing the mayor went to Amman and returned with Jordanian passports and began to distribute them to whomever asked for them. King Hussein was, of course, happy to get a foothold in the Gaza Strip. Dayan too was pleased with this programme, because it conformed to his policy. Only the residents of Gaza, like the residents of the West Bank, did not exhibit any enthusiasm for the plan, according to which they would vote for a Jordanian parliament that would have no sovereignty over any Palestinian territory whatsoever.

Opponents of the plan in Israel and in the Territories pointed to the fact that the creation of a constituency of residents who are effectively foreigners in their own country would likely facilitate their future expulsion to Jordan.[23] In fact, in the same frank interview on British television quoted above, Dayan hinted to the Palestinians that there is nothing for them in their own country.

> INTERVIEWER: 'If you were a young Palestinian, would you become a terrorist?'
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> DAYAN: 'If I thought I had a chance of getting a Palestinian state here and of conquering Jerusalem, I might do that. But if I thought it was a hopeless battle, I would settle in one of the Arab states. I do not think it is hard for a Palestinian to see Jordan, Syria or Iraq as his homeland.'

The year before the war, it looked as if Moshe Dayan's plan to strengthen the tie of the residents of the West Bank to Jordan was slowly being realized. In the summer of 1973, four residents of the Territories were appointed by King Hussein as members of the Jordanian parliament, and Israel did not punish (that is, expel) them. West Bank municipalities began once again to receive large loans from banks in Jordan as in the past, with Jordanian government backing. All that, along with the continuation of commercial ties with Jordan by means of the 'open bridges' policy and visits to the Territories and Israel by residents of Arab states – which in 1972, the year before the war, reached a record 172,000 people – caused Dayan to believe that his dream was indeed on its way to coming true. In a graduation ceremony at the Technion, he declared before a battery of microphones with a triumphant smile: 'There was a Palestine, and it is no longer,' explaining his perspective to his audience in these words: 'If the Palestinians wanted to conserve a Palestinian entity they could have done so in 1948. They preferred to join the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to give up their Palestinian political distinctiveness, and with that, political Palestine came to an end.'[24] If not for the Yom Kippur War, the Israeli–Jordanian 'coexistence' in the West Bank that Dayan dreamed of would have continued to solidify. Under that regime of 'coexistence', Dayan sponsored mass Jewish colonization of the West Bank, while attempting to forcibly convert the Palestinians into Jordanians and make the name of Palestine forgotten. Prime Minister Meir confirmed the defence minister's policy by stating, in her categorical way, that 'this Palestinian entity was invented by Jews with twisted minds'.

3. Moshe Dayan aspired to create conditions under which the population of the Occupied Territories could continue to live their daily lives (without, of course, getting involved in political matters, as political organizations were banned in the Occupied Territories) and gradually become used to the new status quo. Hostile activity against the Israeli regime in the Territories, on the other hand, was met with a strong hand: curfews, the blowing up of the houses of suspects, widespread arrests, expulsions to Jordan. That is how it was in the West Bank; as for Gaza, when the activities of the *fedayeen* organizations increased at the beginning of 1971, collective punishments were also carried out. However, in the years that preceded the war, resistance decreased in the Territories, creating the illusion of reconciliation – even if forced – to the Occupation.

In the spring of 1972, Dayan carried out one of his most brilliant and successful political-propaganda operations in the Territories: municipal elections. It is true that the former mayor of Nablus, Hamdi Kanaan, had raised the idea long before, out of purely local considerations. But Dayan quickly grasped the potential significance of elections under Israeli rule, and decided to impose the elections on the residents, despite the reservations and even opposition they expressed soon before the elections. It was clear to all that those elections were intended to prove that everything was fine under Israeli rule and that the process of normalization in the Territories had reached such a stage that the residents were even willing to elect their representatives under the Israeli flag. Dayan wanted to see a massive turnout, so the military administration did not intervene on behalf of one candidate or another, but took care to ensure that the voters, all of them owners of property (the elections were conducted under Jordanian law, which gave the franchise to property owners only), showed up at the polls. The turnout was therefore 84 per cent – a record. In the previous municipal elections in the West Bank, under Jordanian rule, only 50 per cent of the electorate had turned out. The newspaper *Davar* dubbed the elections 'Dayan's big initiative', pointing out that it was a thoroughly political operation and that 'the image of the West Bank as an occupied area diminished' after the elections. Dayan was described as 'the hero of the day, the man of vision and action of policy in the Territories'.[25]

The quiet in the territories was now interrupted only occasionally. The fact that many Arab workers from the Territories, up to 100,000 (out of a population of about a million) worked in the Israeli economy also enhanced the idealized image of 'coexistence' that was so dear to Dayan's heart. Nevertheless, the defence minister continued to invoke the principles, sacred to him, that 'coexistence between Israelis and Arabs is possible only under the government of Israel and the IDF'.[26]

The picture painted, therefore, was one of a 'transitional stage' that would likely last for many years. When the mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Muhammad Ali al-Jabari, asked Moshe Dayan how long he could plan on receiving loans from the Israeli authorities, he was told, 'You can safely count on fifteen years. We'll still be here.'

'We've never had it so good'

The six years between the wars can be divided into three main periods:

The *first period* was from the great victory of 1967 to the end of the War of Attrition in August 1970. It was a difficult period, in which IDF soldiers fell on all fronts, especially the Egyptian one. The number of victims reached 594, as compared to 679 in the Six-Day War. In September 1970, immediately after the end of the War of Attrition, war broke out in Jordan

between King Hussein's army and the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations. One of the results of that cruel war was the end of *fedayeen* activity against Israel from the Jordanian side of the border.

The *second period* began with the death of Nasser. Israelis breathed a sigh of relief. The bloodshed along the borders stopped, and it was hoped that with the death of Nasser, 'the source of all evil in the Middle East', there would be progress towards some settlement in the region. The main fronts – the Egyptian and the Jordanian – were quiet, but there was concern that the ceasefire with Egypt, where thousands of Soviet technicians and advisors had been present for over a year, would collapse. Multiple short extensions of the ceasefire along with President Sadat's repeated declarations that 1971 would be the 'year of decision', when a solution to the Middle East crisis that would entail the evacuation of all the territories occupied by Israel would have to be found by peaceful means or by war, caused tension that did not diminish. However, signs of normalization began to appear in Israel in this period as well: more strikes, increased material demands, and the appearance of the 'Black Panthers' social protest movement, which decried the growing inequality in Israeli society. At the same time a class of *nouveaux riches* rose to prominence, which had amassed wealth from the construction of the Bar-Lev Line, the provision of materials and services to the Defence Ministry, corrupt dealings related to the war (including embezzlement from the Netivei Neft company), and the employment of cheap labour from the Occupied Territories. All these phenomena gave this new class an economic interest in the perpetuation of the status quo. Tourism to Israel grew at a dizzying pace, which also contributed to the feeling of well-being. Politicians and generals permitted themselves to publicly debate the question – which until then had been taboo – of whether Israel had really faced the threat of destruction on the eve of the Six-Day War.

Only in the *third period*, which began with the removal from Egypt of the Soviet technicians and advisors in July 1972 and continued until Yom Kippur 1973, did the leadership and the public in Israel come to recognize that the new situation created in 1967 was likely to last for a long time. It became known that Dayan's fears were not in fact about dealing with the Arabs, but rather about the prospect of conflict with the Soviets. Like his teacher and rabbi Ben-Gurion, Dayan had made it a rule to avoid getting involved in a war with foreign – non-Arab – forces. And, indeed, even in the Six-Day War, Dayan hesitated to storm the Golan Heights for fear of a firm Soviet response. On the Egyptian front in the War of Attrition, he ordered the pilots of the Israeli Air Force to do their utmost to avoid confrontations with Soviet pilots and attacks on bases and facilities that served the Soviet units in Egypt. Now, with the departure of the Soviet technicians and advisors from Egypt, it appeared as if Israel had finally reached the end of its travails. Dayan expressed the hope that this was the 'de-Sovietization of the war'.

The celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel took place in the middle of this period. The celebrations were crowned by an impressive military parade, the biggest in the history of the state, which passed in all its splendour through the streets of Jewish and Arab Jerusalem, displaying modern weapons before the eyes of hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic spectators. Overhead was an impressive fly-over of 400 aircraft – it, too, the biggest of its kind seen in Israeli skies.

The feeling of security reached its peak. No one could have imagined, even in their worst dreams, what was awaiting Israel five months down the road. The common expression among the public was, 'We've never had it so good.' And indeed, the balance sheet shown to the Israeli public was an impressive one: unshakeable military might in the face of Arab armies that were 'falling ever more behind the IDF', and a divided and conflict-ridden Arab world; a military,

political and economic alliance with the United States that was closer than ever before while the friction between the Arabs and the Soviet Union was growing; peace in the Occupied Territories; the effective neutralization of the *fedayeen* organizations in all sectors, forcing them to shift their operations far from the Middle East theatre; financial aid from world Jewry that had reached record levels; and finally, the immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union, which until 1970 numbered only a few hundred up to a maximum of a thousand or two every year, but which had jumped to 13,000 in 1971 and 32,000 in 1972. All the news media represented these phenomena as a new victory for Zionism.

On the eve of the celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the state, Moshe Dayan appeared at a paratroopers' summit in Jerusalem and stated what was in his heart: 'Until recently I was not sure of it, but now it looks to me like we are entering the high point of the hundred-year history of the Return to Zion.'[27]

And, in a formal speech from the summit of Masada, which is a symbol of heroism and sacrifice about which every Israeli child is educated, Dayan spoke at a ceremony in commemoration of the passage of 1,900 years since the war between the site's defenders against the Romans and called for the creation of 'a new State of Israel, with broad frontiers, strong and solid, better than the one that was imposed on us by the battles of the War of Independence in 1948; we have conditions that we have never had in the past, above all the might of the IDF and the authority of the government of Israel from the Jordan to the Suez. When in the past'– he asked – 'could we sit on the Golan, build airports in the Sinai and expand Jerusalem?'[28] Now, with an unprecedented sense of strength, Dayan no longer felt the need to emphasize the requirements of defence and security when he spoke of the plans for expansion that he had set his sights on; instead he frankly proclaimed a 'new and big Israel'. He argued with Foreign Minister Abba Eban, who believed that Israel should aspire to assert Israeli sovereignty only with regard to territories necessary for security, flinging back, 'I do not share the view that the only measure for settlement in Judea and Samaria should be what we need to achieve secure borders. For me, "soil of the homeland" is the key term in the government's platform.'[29] Now, Dayan repeated over and over again the thesis, which had been close to his heart for years and which always irritated the idealistic Zionists, that there was no choice but to realize Zionism at the expense of the Arabs. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, he appeared before high school students in Haifa and explained to them that 'a Jewish state was created here essentially at the expense of the Arabs, and in their place. There is no avoiding this. In most cases Jewish settlers came to a place where Arabs were living, and the Arabs moved . . . we are converting an Arab country into a Jewish country.'[30] Thus did the students hear directly from the defence minister about the ideology of force that was then celebrating its triumph, the doctrine according to which there is an unavoidable and unbridgeable conflict of interest between the Jewish people and the Arab residents of this country, because the former can take possession of their inheritance only at the expense of the latter.

Undoubtedly, the quiet situation in the Occupied Territories contributed greatly to Israelis' sense of well-being. In a radio broadcast, the commander of the West Bank, Colonel Raphael Vardi, summed up the situation six years after the war: there was absolute quiet in terms of security. The Arab population was mainly preoccupied with the concerns of everyday life, and they had gotten used to the existing situation and tried to derive from it whatever advantages they could. Naturally, the average Israeli admired the wisdom of Dayan's policy in the Territories. The general feeling among the public was that '(Palestinian) nationalism has been swept away by the stream of water that (with Israel's help) has burst out of the well' – as the governor of Nablus

[Shechem, in Hebrew] graphically put it. Most Israelis were not troubled by the existence of a classical colonial system based on the supply of cheap labour to the Israeli economy from the Territories, the workers being legally barred from staying overnight near their places of work, while the Territories also served as a market for Israeli products (90 per cent of the imports in the Territories are from Israel) – all this in relation to a population of a million people deprived of political rights. Nor, to judge from the meagre protest that appeared in the press, were Israelis troubled by the racist decision taken in February 1973 by the majority of members of the Hebrew Writers' Association in Israel not to accept Israeli Arab writers into its ranks – a decision that was consistent with the climate of nationalist arrogance that flourished after the Six-Day War.

The anniversary of the Six-Day War, a day when there are usually strikes or demonstrations in the Territories, passed in complete quiet in 1973. In a few spots, Palestinian flags were displayed and were quickly taken down by police. Only in the Arab part of Jerusalem was there a commercial strike, the main motivation for which was economic: the heavy tax burden that had been imposed on merchants. The strike was broken by midday and immediately forgotten. On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Six-Day War, former Jordanian defence minister Anwar Nusseibeh sadly observed that if developments in the Territories continued to proceed at the same pace, there would be nothing left for Israelis and Arabs to talk about after a few more years. True, the response of the residents of the Territories to the killing of three *fedayeen* leaders in Beirut in April 1973 in an IDF commando operation spoiled the idealized and fraudulent image of 'coexistence' and acceptance of the Israeli Occupation, because that action was greeted with demonstrative expressions of mourning and anger and general identification with the victims, who were described in dozens of obituaries in the press in the Territories as 'martyrs of the Palestinian struggle'. But the authorities consoled themselves with the conviction that that was a one-time event. And indeed, the affair was soon forgotten in the serene atmosphere of the period.

However, Israelis were troubled by one dark shadow cast over the picture of 'smooth sailing' that had prevailed since the departure of the Soviets from Egypt: terrorist attacks against Israeli institutions and individuals outside Israel by extremist *fedayeen* organizations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Black September (connected to Fatah). Those actions had no potential to affect the situation on the ground, but they created many problems for Israeli security agents and provoked anger in Israel over the victims they claimed. Eventually Israelis got used to a situation in which it was not soldiers at the front who were getting killed (twenty-seven soldiers fell in 1971 and only ten in 1972), but innocent civilians, as the number of whom were murdered in terrorist attacks came to exceed the number of soldiers killed in battle.

The event that really set red lights flashing in Israel was the massacre on 30 May 1972 at Lydda airport carried out by three Japanese *kamikazes* acting on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Twenty-seven people were killed and eighty wounded, most of them Puerto Rican pilgrims. About three months later, on 5 September 1972, eleven Israeli athletes were murdered at the Munich Olympics. The centre of gravity of current military action therefore shifted to the war on the *fedayeen*. There were successes in that war between the Israeli security services and the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations that continued right up to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, and, of course, there were failures as well on both sides. The *fedayeen* organizations continued to plot against Israeli institutions and individuals, but only some of their actions met with success. And Palestinian representatives were being murdered one after the other all over Europe during that period, in professional operations: Wael Zwaiter in Rome, Mahmoud Hamshari in Paris (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), Hussein Abu al-

Kheir in Nicosia (Fatah) and others. It was never discovered who killed those people. Israel, in any case, did not admit to it. But the Israeli press hinted (for example: *Maariv*, 13 April 1973, under the headline 'The Boomerang of Arab Terror') that the vengeful hand of Israel was behind them, while always taking care to maintain that they were 'mysterious' attacks.[31] The high point of the campaign of assassinations of Palestinian representatives was 'Operation Beirut' on the night of 9–10 April 1973, for which Israel took full responsibility: in the middle of the night Israeli commandos killed three important Palestinian leaders in their homes in the heart of Beirut. They were the official PLO spokesman Kamal Nasser and senior Fatah commanders Muhammad Yusuf an-Najar and Kamal al-'Adwan. A senior Israeli officer described the raid as the greatest of Israel's operations, adding: 'We can go anywhere we have to in our war on the terrorists.' To Israelis it seemed as if the last ember of the Arab fight against Israel – terrorism abroad – was dying.

In the corridors of the Knesset they joked, 'Why didn't they liquidate Yasser Arafat in Operation Beirut?' Answer: 'Because they're saving that for closer to the next elections.'

The war between the *fedayeen* organizations and the Israeli secret services was not waged according to written rules. The Israelis endeavoured to strike everywhere, as hard as possible. According to General (Ret.) Aharon Yariv, former head of the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, 'One thousand terrorists have been killed since the Munich massacre in September 1972.'[32] Israel adopted a new method of deterrence by putting civilians who had been abducted during IDF raids in Lebanon on trial in military courts for membership in *fedayeen* organizations, even though they had not committed any crime in Israel and had never even been there. One of those put on trial was a Turkish citizen who was nabbed in Lebanon by IDF soldiers and sentenced by a military court to six years in prison for membership in a *fedayeen* organization.

However, Israel's war on the *fedayeen* did not reach its climax until the interception of a Lebanese Caravelle aircraft on 10 August 1973 as it was flying from Beirut to Baghdad. Israel had received intelligence to the effect that Dr George Habash, the head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and his deputy were on board. 'The bird is not in the cage,' said one of the leaders of the operation after the identities of all the passengers had been thoroughly checked on an unidentified airfield. Differing versions of the event were published after the interception. Some sources claimed that Habash had been warned at the last minute and had cancelled his trip, and others claimed that the Israeli intelligence effort was thwarted by design. But the importance of that unprecedented act lay in two other respects, which were instructive about the mood and the stance of the small group that defined Israel's defence policies:

A) Israel was so strong and self-confident that its leaders permitted themselves to carry out a reckless act, the hijacking of a civilian passenger plane – even though Israel had been urging the world to take action against such attacks since the first time an El Al plane was hijacked and forced to land in Algeria in July 1968 – thereby undermining the political and moral basis of Israel's activism against air piracy. The act was particularly grave for its having been committed half a year after the shooting down of a Libyan aircraft by the Israeli Air Force over Sinai (21 February 1973). That aircraft had gone off course due to a sandstorm but was already on its way back to Egypt, a minute's flying time from the Suez Canal, when it was shot down. A hundred and three passengers lost their lives. Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and IDF Chief of the General Staff David Elazar accepted responsibility for the act.

B) The decision to divert the aircraft was not ratified by the cabinet but by three ministers, the triad of hawks: Prime Minister Golda Meir, Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and Minister

without Portfolio Israel Galili. The other ministers heard about the incident on the radio. Despite their astonishment, not one minister dared to come out against the action or to criticize it even indirectly.[33] Apart from the oppositionist Left, the only other voices that expressed reservations were those of the chairman of the Israeli Pilots' Association, Yitzhak Shaked, followed by Histadrut General Secretary Yitzhak Ben-Aharon. Nevertheless, in the prevailing atmosphere at the time, the authors of the action felt that they were immune to any criticism.[34]

One of the indicators of the extent to which the political and military leadership of Israel was preoccupied with terrorism against Israelis abroad right up to the outbreak of the war was the traditional formal interview given by the chief of the General Staff to IDF Radio on 15 September 1973 on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah. The interview dealt mainly with issues related to the struggle against the *fedayeen* organizations and their attacks on Israeli targets. The interview contained not a single hint, however small, of the possibility of war with Egypt or Syria – a war which was to break out exactly three weeks later.

The Galili Document

The war on the *fedayeen*, which had been conducted outside the region since the summer of 1972, did not lead Moshe Dayan to neglect his long-term plans for the Territories. In mid 1972, he began energetically to strive for the ratification of a large operational plan to create facts on the ground in the Territories with the objective of integrating them into Israel. In July 1972, Dayan demanded that the Labour Party conduct a serious discussion on the question of the Territories and take decisions on the matter, on the grounds that it was the most important issue on the agenda. He explained his views accordingly: regarding Lebanon, there's no one to talk to. Regarding Syria, there's nothing to talk about. With Egypt we must continue to talk about a partial settlement and a separation line in Sinai; and with Jordan 'it's not worth our while to talk'. Why? Because any agreement with Jordan would have to involve Israel's returning of the West Bank, or part of it, to Jordanian sovereignty, and Moshe Dayan saw the entire West Bank as a zone for Jewish settlement, as he had declared many times since the Six-Day War. In his view, the only thing left to do was to prepare a work plan for the Territories and implement it.

The Labour Party accepted Dayan's proposal. An exhausting debate was held intermittently over seven months in the party secretariat, with the participation of nearly all the top leaders. Many participants in the discussion actually expressed moderate positions, similar to that of Finance Minister Pinchas Sapir, the strongman in the party machine. He claimed that Israel's presence in the Territories was temporary and so no maximalist annexations should be sought, but only annexations based on 'security needs' (as in the Allon Plan, for example). The moderates repeatedly pointed out, over the course of the debate, that no nation in history had given up its independence in return for a high standard of living. But Dayan, contemptuous of the lessons of history, utterly rejected that view. At one point, Dayan told a famous newspaper commentator who had expressed doubts about his policy: 'The trouble with you is that you know too much history.' The big debate in the Labour Party secretariat was brought to a close on 2 April 1973 by the triad of hawks – Prime Minister Meir, Defence Minister Dayan and Minister without Portfolio Galili. Nevertheless, to avoid conflict it was decided not to take any formal decisions.

But Moshe Dayan did not give up. A few months later, as the date for the Knesset elections drew near, he renewed pressure for the ratification of a large-scale operative plan to be set in

motion in the Territories. Confidants of Dayan disclosed that activity in the Territories had become an *idée fixe* for Dayan, to which he devoted much of his time. At a meeting of Rafi members, for example, Dayan declared: 'Hundreds of years from now, it will be asked what we did in the decade after the war. We have the authority to make decisions about what we will do in the Territories. If we do not act we will cause the uniqueness of Zionism to be lost at our own hands.'[35] But this time, means of applying pressure were at Dayan's disposal to impose his will on his party, and consequently on the government. It was election time, and Dayan's star was rising as the most popular person on the Israeli street. Nor was this the first time Dayan had exploited his position in order to impose his views on his party on the eve of elections: thus in 1969 he had imposed the insertion of the term 'strategic security borders' into the party platform, instead of the term that had been used until then, 'secure borders'. Moreover, at that time, he also imposed on the party the 'oral law' that stipulated that 'Israel considers the Jordan River to be its eastern security border – that is, a border across which foreign forces will not move westward. The Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip will remain under Israeli control and freedom of navigation from Eliat southward will be guaranteed by Israeli forces, which will control the straits area. That area will be connected to Israel with territorial continuity as befits its security objectives.'[36]

This time, too, the phenomenon of election-eve extortion was repeated, again with success. As in 1969, Dayan repeated the covert threats that if decisions were made that were counter to his views, he would be unable to participate in the elections on the Alignment list. However, the difference between 1969 and 1973 was that this time Dayan took no interest at all in the party platform, but in more 'practical' matters. Instead of concerning himself with general goals in the platform as in the past, he insisted on an action plan for the Territories for the four years' duration of the Knesset and the allocation of a budget suitable for the implementation of that policy.

Before the elections, Dayan submitted an action plan nearly all the provisions of which were included in the famous document that Minister Israel Galili subsequently prepared with the advice of the prime minister and which came to bear his name. The document called for increasing the pace of settlement in the Territories, the building of a city (Yamit) in northwest Sinai and a port south of Gaza,[37] the construction of an industrial urban settlement in the centre of the Golan, permitting Israelis to buy land in the Territories, although subject to certain restrictions, and the encouragement of capital investment in the Territories by Israelis. The budget for this plan was to be I£1.3 billion. In the Labour Party Secretariat, which ratified the document on 4 September 1973, no one dared vote against it, for fear of the ruling triad. Only Knesset Member Aryeh (Lova) Eliav, a leader of the dovish faction, who abstained on the vote, gave a short speech that was a despairing appeal against the document: 'In this country and throughout our movement', he said, 'there are many who are weeping inwardly because of this document.'[38] Shulamit Aloni, the 'bad girl' of the Labour Party, also condemned the document, because it contained the danger of racism, creating in the Territories two groupings of citizens: Arabs, who would be subject to military administration, and Jews, who would enjoy the protection of Israeli law.[39]

The ratification of the annexation document, which symbolized the intoxication of six years of Israeli rule in the Territories and which struck a blow at the moderates' inclination not to complicate eventual peace negotiations with the Arab states 'without preconditions', was a big victory for Dayan. But the doves, who had made their voices heard during the debate within the Labour Secretariat several months previously, were silent this time. Even moderates like Foreign

Minister Abba Eban and Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon did not dare criticize the document. Allon declared, in the session at which the document was ratified, that in his opinion it represented no hardening of Israel's position on the Territories, but Foreign Minister Abba Eban surpassed him in its defence, saying at a public gathering that 'whoever describes the Galili Document as a victory for a hard-line school does not know how to read and write'.[40] Only after the war, when Dayan's star was declining, did the doves dare to tell the truth about the Galili document. Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon admitted at a session of the Labour Party Central Committee on 5 December 1973 that the document was imposed on the party 'after Dayan's fence-sitting exercise'. The justice minister when the document was ratified, Y. Sh. Shapira, said that 'the document was an expression of the hope that over time we would solve the problem of the Territories, if not all of them then at least the greater part of them, such that they would remain annexed to, or integrated into, or united with the State of Israel'.[41] As for Finance Minister Pinchas Sapir, who had voted for the document in an original way – he had departed the hall before the vote and left a piece of paper with instructions to add his name to those voting in favour – he admitted: 'If I had not given my consent to the Galili Document I would have been lynched on the street.'[42]

Pax Israelica

It would appear that only those who lived in Israel in the years preceding the war can understand the atmosphere of calm, security and success that the leadership had instilled in the people. Whoever raised the need for bold peace initiatives was thought to be hasty or even deranged. Israel's policy towards the Arab world, which was defined ironically by its proponents as 'dynamic immobilism', shrank down to occasional appeals to Arab leaders to come and sit with Israel at the negotiation table 'without preconditions'. But the general feeling was that there was no urgency, since the situation of 'no peace and no war' was better than any other situation. When Defence Minister Moshe Dayan was asked by a German journalist if he saw any chance for a comprehensive peace in the near future, he answered, 'We are now enjoying a kind of peace . . . I believe that when the time comes the situation of peace will turn into a peace formula, a kind of accord. I hope and believe that the present situation will crystallize into a formal framework.'[43]

Prime Minister Golda Meir, who shared the view that there was no burning urgency, explained: 'In my opinion Israel should wait quietly until Sadat "stews in his own juice", does some soul-searching and decides exactly which direction he wants to go.'[44]

Along with this political stagnation, the Meir government continued to create accomplished facts in the Territories, on the mistaken assumption that what was going on in the Territories – the acceptance of Israel's actions by the Territories' residents, for lack of any alternative – also reflected the situation in the Arab world. Accordingly, they explained that peace must begin in the Territories, through the fostering of the famous 'coexistence' with their residents. A situation of de facto peace prevailed in the Territories, which needed only an official seal of approval from the Arab politicians, explained Police Minister Shlomo Hillel, who maintained regular contacts with Palestinian leaders and notables in the Territories on behalf of the government. At one meeting, he tried to convince them that the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Territories was to their benefit 'because it increasingly expands development activities for the benefit of the

Arabs of the Territories'.[45] On the very same day, Colonel Shlomo Gazit, the coordinator of operations in the Territories, declared in a lecture at an international gathering of journalists: 'I hope that history will prove that our tenure of the Territories was one of the most important factors in the hastening of peace.'[46] It is hard to know if those words were said in full confidence of their truthfulness, or as mere wishful thinking. At any rate, they were said with growing frequency and the overwhelming majority of Israelis accepted them as uncontroversial facts.

Even educated Israelis were heard to say words that were for all practical purposes nothing but a reiteration of Dayan's well-known view to the effect that 'the Arab workers [from the Occupied Territories] who work in Israel alongside Jewish workers, dress like them and eat like them – that is the real peace plan'.[47]

Thus was created and even began to take root the faith that it would be possible to withhold political rights from a population of a million people for the long term and create facts in the Occupied Territories in the face of a passive Arab world, and even to see doing so as positive steps towards peace. Whoever leafs through the Israeli newspapers from the last months before the Yom Kippur War will come to realize that Israel's leaders, above all Moshe Dayan, believed that 'Pax Israelica' was indeed prevailing in the region. All of their declarations were testimony to an absolute political blindness that was rooted in an outlook based on wishful thinking. 'I do not expect the renewal of war,' declared Moshe Dayan, less than a month before the outbreak of battle. 'All told' – he went on – 'we have gotten used to fighting a war for six days every ten years. The important thing is what we do in the Territories.'[48] In a lecture to workers in a defence plant about three weeks before the war, Dayan continued to peddle rose-coloured illusions: 'In my opinion we should not expect a war in the next decade,' he explained, even adding with irony, 'but if in any case it happens, I promise to get back to you to explain why.'[49] The categorical assertion that we would have ten years of quiet was repeated many times, and not only to Israeli audiences. In an interview with the American weekly *Time*, Dayan predicted that 'the next ten years . . . will see the borders frozen along present lines – but there will not be a major war.'[50] It was not only in government circles where confidence prevailed that peace was ensured for a long time and that the Arabs had begun to despair and to reconcile themselves to Israel. The right-wing opposition repeated the same assessments as the government. 'A hundred thousand Arabs work in the State of Israel. That is a huge blessing because it is a bridge for peace and understanding,'[51] said General (Res.) Ezer Weizman. General (Res.) Arik Sharon explained in a lecture about three weeks before the Yom Kippur disaster that 'Israel can now anticipate years of quiet as far as security is concerned, and we must take advantage of them to solve the problems that are troubling us'.[52]

The conviction that Israel could expect years of peace had a direct effect on the defence budget. Defence expenditures, which in 1970 were about 40 per cent of the national budget, declined to 32 per cent in 1973. The defence budget's share of the gross national product, which in 1970 was 24.1 per cent, declined to 16.3 per cent in 1973. According to the Defence Ministry's forecasts, it would continue declining, to reach 14.6 per cent by 1977. Moreover, beginning in the second half of 1972 the annual military service period for hundreds of thousands of reservists was reduced by 31 per cent from the level of 1970. According to the head of the General Staff Operations Branch, over I£50 million and 300,000 reserve days were saved in consequence in 1972, and as for 1973 it was decided that the reduction would be continued and that no reservists over age forty-seven – and later, fathers of six children – would be called up.[53] Obviously, those reductions were instructive to the nation regarding the 'de facto peace'

that prevailed between Israel and its neighbours, and the vast majority perceived it as the fruit of the wise policies of far-sighted leaders. Only a few isolated individuals warned about the short-sightedness of Israel's official policy, but they found no audience. Dr Nahum Gold-mann, president of the World Jewish Congress, one of the greatest statesmen of the Jewish people in our era, tried to disabuse Israelis of their illusions and restore to them some grounding in reality. When Goldmann was interviewed for *Haaretz*, the interviewer observed that it looked like the status quo would last for a long time to come. Dr Goldmann replied, about three months before the war, in prophetic words that stood in stark contrast to the optimism of the Israeli leadership: 'I do not believe that the status quo can continue. I disagree with the view of Israel's leaders, who think it is possible to keep postponing and the world will get used to it. It is not realistic. Sadat's policy has been quite bold. He declared that he was willing to recognize Israel. He did that in the face of opposition. If he cannot demonstrate that he achieved something, the army will force him to begin a war . . . If a war starts, the threat from the USSR that it will not allow another Egyptian defeat is a serious one.'[54] The words of General (Res.) Dr Matityahu Peled of Tel Aviv University also fell on deaf ears. He warned unceasingly against the policy of creating accomplished facts in the Territories, which placed obstacles on the way to peace with the Arabs, and he worked systematically in the pages of *Maariv* to demystify the sanctified word 'security', in the name of which acts were done that had absolutely nothing to do with security, such as expelling Arabs from their lands in order to build settlements. On the eve of the war, in an article under the headline 'New Values', he warned with unusual sharpness against the policy of accomplished facts in the Territories, and especially the expulsion of the residents of the Rafah area (Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir preferred to say that they were being 'moved' rather than expelled), a project that had nothing to do with the security of Israel, and which he characterized as a 'crime against humanity'.[55] Nor did the former Labour Party secretary general, Knesset Member Aryeh (Lova) Eliav, the fighting dove, who also had a literary bent, remain mute. In response to the ratification of the Galili Document, he wrote an allegory entitled 'The Seagull', which was basically a prophecy of what was about to occur on Yom Kippur. It tells the story of a ship sailing on a calm sea, the captain and the other officers at their posts on the bridge, drunk on the wine of glory and confident in themselves and their status. Overhead hovers a seagull, who sees a wall of rocks on the horizon, towards which the ship is sailing. He lands on the bridge and tries to warn the officers of the danger and utters sharp cries of warning, but to no avail. 'His voice was not their voice, his eyes were not their eyes; his horizon was not their horizon.' Night fell and the ship's denizens prepared for a festive evening as the seagull continued to utter his warning cries. Eliav submitted this short piece to the editors of *Davar* in mid September 1973, about three weeks before the terrible Yom Kippur, but it was rejected.[56] The editors considered it too emotional – hysterical and not suitable for publication during an election campaign in which the country's leadership was being portrayed as a paragon of political wisdom.

In that atmosphere of self-confidence and serenity, the biggest air battle since the Six-Day War took place on 13 September – as if to demonstrate Israel's decisive military superiority. Israeli aircraft patrolling off the Syrian coast 270 kilometres north of Israel shot down thirteen Syrian MiG-21s. One Israeli Mirage was shot down into the sea and its pilot was rescued. Like the big air battle on the eve of the Six-Day War, when six Syrian MiG-21s were shot down on 7 April 1967, this too was a prelude to war. But this time the blow was bigger and Israel was dizzier in its drunkenness on victory. A high-ranking air force officer reacted on IDF Radio (*Galei Tzahal*) the day after the air battle: 'Small wars like this are occasionally necessary in order to prevent a big war.' And the chief editor of *Yedioth Ahronoth* concluded: 'The incident

has reminded our Arab neighbours that they must not arrange their accounts without consulting the real boss in our region.'[57]

The general feeling among the Israeli public was that Israel's position as the setter of the agenda in the Middle East was unshakeable. On Rosh Hashanah, exactly ten days before the outbreak of the war, the holiday editions of Israel's newspapers ran articles which repeated the famous theory that our situation had never been better. One of the main editorials stated, for example: 'Rosh Hashanah 5734 . . . A time when our security situation [has] never seemed better. Altogether, a Rosh Hashanah filled with a sense of great strength and hope.'[58]

The Labour Party exploited this popular feeling during the electoral campaign that was then at its height. Huge ads were published in the press picturing a large black cat along with a message criticizing the pessimists.[59] The right-wing opposition went on the offensive, of course, but it did not dare challenge the assumption that Israel was at the peak of its strength, because they too had been full participants in the process of fostering an atmosphere of nationalistic arrogance in Israel since the Six-Day War. Instead, they criticized the rise in prices and the decline in the purchasing power of the Israeli pound and Trade and Industry Minister Bar-Lev's 'new [economic] line'. Meanwhile the (Labour) Alignment gloried in Israel's greatest success, the original Bar-Lev Line along the Suez Canal. About two weeks before that line suddenly collapsed, to the great astonishment of Israelis, the political ad that met with the most success was published in the press – an ad that announced in giant letters that 'all is quiet on the Bar-Lev Line on the banks of the Suez, and in the Sinai Desert, the West Bank and the Golan too. The lines are secure, the settlements are rising and our political position is strong. This is the result of the balanced, bold and far-sighted policy of the leadership of the State.'

Scientific backing

Predictably, the government of Israel, which adhered to the status quo and avoided any serious initiative to resolve the conflict with the Arab states, was supported by members of the business class who had begun to profit from investments in the security field and orders from the defence establishment. At the same time, there was also 'scientific' backing from a group of Israeli orientalists for the government's policies. They constantly propagated the view, in all the communications media at their disposal, that 'the Arabs' (they usually used that term, ignoring the multiple shades of opinion within the Arab ranks, from the Jordanian Hussein to the Libyan Qaddafi) were striving for nothing but the destruction of Israel, for their hatred was as deep as the abyss. The conclusion that logically followed was that there was no chance whatsoever for a substantial agreement with the Arabs and thus no reason for any Israeli initiative to promote peace with the Arabs, the minimum demand of whom was the destruction of the State of the Jews. In their view, no solution to the conflict was in sight, and so Israel must reconcile itself to the conflict's persistence for the long term. For that reason, nothing remained for Israel except to keep strengthening itself, which might hasten the day when the Arabs finally gave up all hope of realizing their goal. Accordingly, Israel should ensure that it had strategic security borders – that is, embrace a policy of annexation in order to create better conditions to repel the enemy in the next, inevitable war.

A special place in this group was held by General (Res.) Yehoshafat Harkabi, formerly the head of the Intelligence Branch in the General Staff, later a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and beginning in August 1974 an advisor for strategic planning at the Defence

Ministry. Due to the high office he had held in the past and because his views conformed to official policy, Harkabi's words had special resonance and his writings were distributed by the Israeli *hasbara* institutions in Israel and abroad.[60] The approach of the professor-general is essentially that of a psychologist, which takes into account concepts in the emotional realm, such as hatred,[61] or motives laden with ideological or historical-philosophic associations – which, unlike a complex reality, are usually extremist and absolutist – instead of political and economic interests, etc. His approach was influenced by the work of the American orientalist Harold Glidden (as evident from an article that was once distributed by the Israeli public-diplomacy services), according to which the Arabs' 'tribal-Bedouin' nature was at the heart of the Israeli–Arab conflict. That nature was said to engender a sense of 'shame of defeat' which prevented them from adopting a rational approach. A species of 'cultural-psychological determinism' can be discerned in Harkabi's work, which implies that Arab culture is based on foundations that render coexistence with Israel impossible. From there, the path to dismissal of any Israeli political gestures towards the Arabs is a short one. Like various Israeli politicians, the general-professor was inclined to scorn moderate statements from Arab leaders in favour of the extremist stance he ascribed to them. In conducting policy based on General Harkabi's outlook, Israel thus played down the need for serious diplomacy for peace and ignored Arab initiatives – above all from Jordan, but also from Egypt. Prof. Yehoshafat Harkabi provided the 'scientific dimension' for all who sought it in order to justify neglecting the stagnant political process.

After the Arab world, led by Egypt, launched the October War, the primary objective of which was to shatter the status quo, Harkabi hastened to declare that the war proved that he was right, and added that 'we have not missed any opportunity to end the conflict with the Arabs'.[62] This was yet another example of the tactic of reiterating a theory (that 'the Arabs are not ready for a peace settlement') and making policy in conformity with it (the creation of facts in the Territories, reliance on the politics of force alone and avoiding peace initiatives) in order to avoid any other possible outcomes. When the adversary resorts to military means, you are then free to claim that your predictions were correct, without having to dwell on the possibility that you yourself contributed to the fulfilment of the prophecy. And the laughable thing about the whole affair is that General Harkabi found that responsibility for the Yom Kippur disaster lay with those whose influence over Israeli policy was zero: none other than the moderate circles, including doves like the orientalists Prof. Shimon Shamir and Dr Matityahu Peled. In articles in the press and appearances on radio and television after the war, Harkabi repeated again and again the groundless allegation that Israeli moderates, by explaining that the Arabs had moderated their positions since the Six-Day War, had caused Israel's complacency and reduced its level of alertness, and that they were the main actors who had obscured the evidence that war was a concrete possibility, as claimed in the title of his article 'The Fog of Peace Obscured the War'. Moreover, after the publication of the interim conclusions of the Agranat Commission, which investigated the failures of the war, Prof. Harkabi proposed, in a radio broadcast on 7 April 1974, that a commission of inquiry be convened to determine the guilt of those 'commentators and professors' who had 'created an atmosphere of complacency' by expressing the view that a peace agreement with the Arabs was possible. This accusation was groundless because the proponents of annexation and the hardline policy were the ones responsible for the illusions that were shattered on Yom Kippur. If the Israeli moderates have anything to feel guilty about, it is, on the contrary, that they did not do enough to change the Israeli policies conducted by Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir.

After the war, Harkabi continued to advance this hard line in his articles. When the chances

for a settlement and the hopes for a separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt grew, he declared: 'The Arabs [again 'the Arabs' – AK] no longer see the elimination of Israel in a big war as a possibility; now they hope to achieve it by means of complex systematic processes against Israel. To them even the signing of a peace agreement with Israel would not constitute the end of hostilities, but a new stage in the conflict.'[63]

Harkabi was not alone in his views. Several other professors among Israel's Arabists continue to provide an ideological rationale for the hawks. For example, on the day the Geneva Convention opened, the director of the Centre for the Study of the Arabs of Palestine and Israel–Arab relations, an academic at Hebrew University, published a long article arguing that the objective of 'the Arabs' is the elimination of Israel.[64] And when, after the implementation of the separation-of-forces agreement, a debate took place in Israel over whether Egypt was oriented towards peace, that same Arabist hastened to assert that 'the continuation of the conflict with Israel will receive support from large sectors of the Egyptian population, including more than a few intellectuals who believe that the supreme objective of Egypt and the Arab world is the elimination of the State of Israel'.[65] Another orientalist, who is considered an expert on the problems of Egypt, claimed in a lecture in Jerusalem after the war that the Egyptian regime feared a peace agreement with Israel more than it feared defeat in war. A third explained that 'Israel's demand for peace is interpreted by the Arabs as our weakness and an opening for the possibility of destroying Israel'.[66] About two weeks after the war, a symposium of orientalists was held in Jerusalem to discuss current problems. The prevailing opinion of most participants was that the objective of the Arabs was to eliminate the State of Israel, and that that objective had not changed after the war. One of the participants explained, according to Harkabi, that 'anti-Israeliness and anti-Jewishness are one in Arab eyes'.[67]

It would appear that isolation from the Arab world and lack of direct contact and consequent reliance on the written word or second-hand evidence had caused a substantial proportion of Israel's orientalists to adopt such positions. The influence brought to bear on them, both by the general atmosphere charged with the tensions of a bloody conflict, with its potential to inhibit free inquiry, and by the Establishment's views on the Israeli–Arab conflict, as well perhaps as a desire to contribute to strengthening the nation's morale in this tough conflict, had led them to ignore the diversity of opinions within the Arab world. This had the effect of strengthening the position of the Israeli hawks. There are, of course, other orientalists who have more balanced and moderate views, but their influence has been minimal.

Most journalists who covered Arab affairs in the Israeli press also endorsed the government's opinions and assessments. Some self-criticism was expressed within this group after the war, however. In a symposium of Arab-affairs commentators, the Arab-affairs correspondent for *Davar*, Ehud Yaari, expressed the view that the shortcomings of the IDF's Intelligence Branch could not have persisted for so long if not for a degree of collaboration from the Israeli press, which uncritically accepted every declaration from the Establishment. 'We [journalists] were captives to a certain outlook: the outlook of the State of Israel; and we read events through the eyes of Military Intelligence . . . if the press had not [automatically] accepted that [official] outlook, and if, when the head of Military Intelligence gave one assessment or another, the newspapers had published opposing assessments, then both the ministers of the government and other people would have begun to think and the outlook would not have become so engrained.'[68]

Those same orientalists as well as experts on political science and international relations who volunteered to support the government line also proved to be devotees of the Cold War. They

were wont to claim that Israel was ‘vital to the United States’ in the face of the unravelling of NATO in Europe and the weakness of certain of its components (the Colonels’ regime in Greece, for example) and that Israel was the mainstay of the United States in the region. The longer the Cold War persisted, they explained, the more important Israel would be in the eyes of the United States, which in return would support Israel’s ‘territorial outlook’. One of the arguments for the perpetuation of the status quo was the ‘service’ that Israel rendered to the United States by occupying the east bank of the Suez Canal, thereby preventing the canal from being opened for navigation, which was a ‘vital Soviet interest’. Those circles were dismayed by détente between the two superpowers, and any sign of its weakening, such as the massive US bombing of North Vietnam, was greeted by them with inward rejoicing and outward indifference.

Admittedly, it is hard to know exactly how much of the responsibility for the strengthening of Israeli hard-line policy can be attributed to the orientalists. It is a near certainty that Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir would have conducted the same policy even if the orientalists had strongly disagreed with them. Indeed, it occurred more than once that intellectuals and professors expressed disagreement with the government, which haughtily dismissed them and proceeded on its own path. In any event, the assistance the government received from orientalists like Yehoshafat Harkabi helped it to wave off warnings of the dangers inherent in the policy that was exposed in its full nakedness on Yom Kippur.

Egypt: shock, recovery, attrition and ceasefire

Militarily, the Egyptian–Syrian attack on Yom Kippur was a complete surprise to Israel and the entire world. However, those who had been following political developments in the Middle East, especially since the efforts to resolve the conflict by peaceful means had reached a dead end, knew – if they were not captive to illusions or misleading assumptions – that Israel’s neighbours would initiate military action sooner or later. In that regard, the Egyptians and the Syrians were playing with an exposed hand, and had not concealed their intentions. The speeches and declarations of the leaders, and articles and commentaries in various media outlets left no room for doubt that in the absence of a political solution, the cannons would speak. But the road taken by the Arab world from those six dark days in June 1967 to the events of October 1973 that restored its self-confidence was a long, hard and winding one.

The military defeat sustained by the Arabs in the Six-Day War was one of the worst and most humiliating in their history. It also had far-reaching influence on the political and social levels and on morale. Egypt lost Sinai to Israel for a second time; Jordan lost the West Bank – the most vibrant and urbanized part of the Hashemite Kingdom – including the Arab part of Jerusalem; Syria lost the Golan Heights. The entire Arab world was stricken with shock at the vast scale and suddenness of the calamity. Ever since that defeat, the aspiration of those Arab states had been to secure the return of the occupied territories. The word ‘change’ (*taghayyur* in Arabic) was on the lips of all, not only in Cairo, Damascus and Amman, but also much further afield – in Baghdad, Khartoum and Algiers. The Arab world’s initial recovery after the June shock was at the Arab Summit in Khartoum (29 August–1 September 1967). There, Nasser declared before the gathered Arab leaders that the new situation now dictated the need for a political solution. But the summit set certain restrictions that were intended to prevent any Arab actor from breaking with the common denominator: no negotiations, no recognition and no peace with Israel (the term used in the resolutions was s*ulḥ*, which means a real reconciliation; not s*alaam*, the meaning of which is

more formal), and no negotiating over the rights of the Palestinians. Unlike the previous Arab summits convened since January 1964, which dealt mainly with the 'liberation of Palestine', at the 1967 summit the Arab states were forced to reconcile themselves indirectly to Israel's existence, in response to the new reality that had been created. Various Egyptian initiatives before the Khartoum Summit (a proposal to meet within the framework of the Ceasefire Commission, which Israel had not recognized since 1956) and after it (the Egyptian attempt to move northwards the ships that were stuck in the canal, which was interpreted as opening it) were met with negative responses from Israel.

Towards the end of that year, on 22 November 1967, Resolution 242 was passed by the Security Council to promote a resolution of the crisis in the Middle East. The resolution, a work of diplomatic crafts-manship, would be interpreted by Israel for its part and Egypt and Jordan for theirs in their own ways regarding the withdrawal of Israeli military forces. Did the withdrawal have to be from 'the occupied territories', as the French version stated, or from 'occupied territories' – that is, not necessarily from all the territories – as was written in the English version of the resolution? Israel adhered to the English text, although the preamble to the resolution (in both languages and with the same wording) emphasized the 'inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war'.[69] The debate was not confined to that question, however. Egypt and Jordan, who declared that they accepted the resolution after initially hesitating, saw it as a kind of injunction that required no negotiations with Israel; whereas Israel, which had hesitated for a long time before accepting the resolution,[70] saw it as a general framework that required negotiations in order to be implemented. After the passage of the resolution the UN emissary to the Middle East, Dr Gunnar Jarring, began to conduct talks with both sides in order to implement peace on the basis of that resolution. He shuttled back and forth between Cairo and Jerusalem and Amman; but because of the profoundly different ways the two sides interpreted the resolution, the talks had reached a dead end by the spring of 1969, when the representatives of the four powers began their talks on the Middle East crisis.

Meanwhile, Egypt recovered militarily thanks to Soviet aid. The internal pressures that were manifested by – among other things – violent student demonstrations in February and November 1968, and the stagnation of efforts to reach a political solution to the Middle East crisis pushed President Nasser to decide to launch a war of attrition against Israel on the Suez front and thereby to apply pressure on Israel to accept the Egyptian position regarding the solution of the conflict, or at least to move closer to it. 'Thus far I have taken care to punish anyone who opened fire counter to orders,' announced Nasser. 'Now I will punish anyone who does not open fire.' The War of Attrition began on 8 March 1969 with artillery battles and quickly escalated, and on 20 July the Israeli Air Force began to go into action in the canal sector. The war expanded. Forces from both sides began to carry out raids across the ceasefire line, and on 7 January 1970, Israeli aircraft began to attack targets deep within Egypt. In the course of the bombings, which were aimed at strategic targets, civilian targets were hit as well (Israel announced that it had been done by mistake), prominent among which was a steel plant at Abu-Za'bal, where about a hundred workers were killed (12 February 1970). Some in Israel hoped that the escalation of the bombing deep in the interior of Egypt would bring about the downfall of the Nasser regime, but developments did not bear that out. Nasser turned to Moscow for help and received it. The Soviets set up a modern ground-to-air missile system west of the Suez Canal, and they took upon themselves the anti-aircraft defence of the Nile Valley. Trainers, advisors, missile operators and fighter planes including their pilots streamed to Egypt from the Soviet Union. A new qualitative factor appeared in the theatre.

However, while the War of Attrition was at its height, Nasser began to ponder ways to end it. He apparently came to the conclusion that, at that stage of the Israeli–Arab conflict, it would not be possible to resolve it by military means.[71] He also raised the idea, while the War of Attrition was still in progress, of inviting the moderate Jewish-Zionist leader Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, to Egypt to feel out a direction for a settlement with Israel, but the government of Israel vetoed the visit (April 1970). In a public speech on 1 May 1970, Nasser dramatically addressed US president Richard Nixon and called on him to use his influence to bring about a solution to the conflict that would include Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. The Americans, who feared that the Middle East conflict would become an international one, were also interested in a settlement, and they launched a series of contacts, first and foremost in order to procure a ceasefire. While Israel initially rejected the American mediation initiative, in June Washington's pressure on Jerusalem forced the Meir government to accept it.[72] At midnight, on the eve of 7 August, the ceasefire came into effect on the Suez Canal front, after seventeen months of the War of Attrition, in which both sides were indeed attrited.

Contacts and initiatives, without results

With the ceasefire, the UN Emissary to the Middle East, Dr Gunnar Jarring, returned to the region and renewed contacts with both sides in order to implement a lasting peace in accordance with Security Council Resolution 242. The contacts were soon stopped again, at the initiative of Israel, which accused Egypt of violating the agreement to freeze the military status quo by moving missiles up to the Suez Canal.

Meanwhile, attention shifted to Jordan, where a bloody war was being waged between the army and the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations that opposed Nasser's political process. The Egyptian president devoted all his energy to being a mediator between the two sides in that war, and when it ended he collapsed and died of a heart attack on 28 September 1970. He was replaced by his vice-president, Anwar Sadat. In November, Sadat prolonged the ceasefire until February 1971. That month, he announced two important initiatives:

On 4 February, Sadat prolonged the ceasefire by thirty days and presented a plan to open the Suez Canal according to which the IDF would partially withdraw such that the east bank of the canal would no longer be under Israeli control. In effect, it constituted the adoption of the interim accord that Moshe Dayan had proposed at the end of 1970, but of course in Egyptian garb. Sadat's proposal was greeted with scepticism in Israel, because it included several conditions of which Israel did not approve. Prime Minister Meir replied to Sadat in the Knesset on 9 February by stating that any Israeli withdrawal would be implemented only within the framework of peace agreements that put an end to the war. She expressed dismay that 'Sadat's speech was not a speech of peace. Throughout the entire speech the president of Egypt refrained from saying that Egypt is ready to make peace with Israel. Peace between Egypt and Israel, simply and clearly.' At another point in the same speech, Golda Meir pointed out with sorrow that 'in the documents that have so far been presented to Ambassador Jarring, the representatives of the Arab states have taken care not to speak explicitly about making peace with Israel, but have spoken in general terms about peace in the region'.[73]

Only six days later, an event of historical significance in Israel–Arab relations occurred. Egypt replied to a questionnaire from UN emissary Jarring, and in a memorandum of 15 February 1971 a willingness 'to enter into a peace agreement with Israel' was mentioned

officially by an Arab state for the first time since the birth of the State of Israel.

In Israel, the surprise was total. No one had expected such a far-reaching step towards acceptance of a peace agreement, which, according to Israel's official declarations, was the most important step needed to advance a solution to the Israeli–Arab conflict.[74] Instead of giving a reply to Jarring's questionnaire, which included questions about Israel's willingness to return to the international border with Egypt, Israel sent a reply to the Egyptian letter on 26 February 1971, declaring in the fourth paragraph that Israel would not return to the lines of 4 June 1967. That is to say, the most important thing for Egypt – the return of the Occupied Territories to their owners – was rejected by Israel. Beyond any doubt, that position derived from the Meir government's policy that was based on the aspiration to annex Sharm al-Sheikh and the entire eastern Sinai up to a certain point on the Mediterranean Sea, tens of kilometres west of the international border. Dayan's famous declaration, which he had repeated more than once, that he 'would rather have Sharm al-Sheikh without peace than peace without Sharm al-Sheikh' was given final ratification in this response, which left Egypt in no doubt that Israel was demanding not only a signed peace agreement but annexation of Arab territories as well.

After Sadat's reply, the Americans immediately reminded Israel that when Prime Minister Meir had visited the United States in the spring of 1970, she explicitly stated that if the Egyptians would only agree to enter into an accord with Israel, Israel would agree to lay its cards on the table rather than merely making the usual demand that the Egyptians go to the negotiating table. Meir invited the US ambassador to Israel, Walworth Barbour, to a meeting and explained to him that, when she was in Washington, she had said that 'if Egypt expresses willingness for peace with Israel, Israel will be prepared to begin a substantive discussion on the setting of secure and agreed-upon borders; and indeed Israel is prepared for that if Egypt comes to the negotiations table without preconditions'.[75]

The political stagnation continued. On 7 March 1971, Sadat cancelled the ceasefire, but pointed out that 'this does not mean that political action will end and only the cannons will speak'. Sadat continued to maintain his contacts with the Americans, who were trying to advance the possibility of a partial arrangement to open the Canal, but he met with disappointment after disappointment. The removal of the Nasserist anti-American Left (the Ali Sabri and Sha^{c}arawi Gum^{c}a group) in May 1971, when the talks with the Americans were at their height, had done nothing to improve the chances of a settlement. On the contrary, Sadat discovered that the Americans were becoming ever more inclined to adopt Israel's positions on the issue of negotiations between the adversaries – particularly that the ceasefire was the most important achievement, which had to be preserved forever. The Americans seldom spoke any longer of the region as if it were a 'powder keg'. The absence of American pressure on Israel permitted Israel to continue to adhere to its policy of perpetuating the status quo.

In June 1971, Sadat declared that 1971 would be the 'year of decision' during which a solution to the regional conflict would have to be found, by peaceful means or otherwise. The famous phrase coined by Nasser after the Six-Day War, that 'what has been taken by force cannot be recovered other than by force', gained new currency in Egypt. Sadat repeatedly said that confrontation with Israel appeared to be inevitable, but he always took care to add that a peaceful solution was still possible, if Israel would agree to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. And, indeed, contacts over a partial settlement with American mediation were renewed. It was proposed that the talks between Israel and Egypt begin at the end of October 1971, at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, and Egypt even appointed Deputy Foreign Minister Murad Ghaleb as its representative at the talks. But stagnation returned. Israel requested

that the United States first of all complete arrangements to provide Phantom aircraft. Meanwhile, Israel continued to oppose the transfer of Egyptian soldiers (700 according to the US proposal) to the east bank of the Canal as part of the partial settlement, and insisted on seeing that as a separate accord and not as a stage in a full withdrawal. Israel also asked Egypt to agree to a cease-fire without an expiry date as part of the settlement.

On 1 November 1971, Sadat assumed direct personal command of Egypt's armed forces. Tensions rose. Israel took defensive measures along the Suez Canal, and 1971, the 'year of decision', ended with the sound of silence: all was quiet on the banks of the Canal. In a public speech two weeks later, Sadat justified his failure to keep his solemn promises about a 'year of decision' by invoking 'the fog of the India– Pakistan war' that had broken out in late 1971 and diverted the world's attention from the Middle East.

Humour-loving Egyptians did not accept that explanation and reacted to it with jokes. According to one of the jokes, the real reason was not fog (*dabaab* in Arabic), but an Israeli tank (*dabaaba* in Arabic). Another joke mocked Sadat for issuing an order extending 1971, the 'year of decision', by twelve months. Egyptian students were in ferment; they postered walls and demonstrated against Sadat. A song by the popular poet Ahmad Fuad Negm mocking the regime and its promises spread by word of mouth. Lack of confidence in Sadat grew. The regime responded by stepping up its preparations for war. In January 1972 the government of Aziz Sidqi was set up as a 'war cabinet' and began to issue escalating warlike declarations. In a speech Sadat delivered in a Cairo mosque on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (25 April 1972), one of the most extreme speeches he had ever made against Israel and Jews, he promised that 'a year from now we will be celebrating here the liberation of our land from the Israeli invaders'. Experts pointed out that Sadat's frustration was growing after another attempt to reach a partial solution between Israel and Egypt with American mediation had concluded without result.

However, the Egyptians discerned that it was not only the Americans who were satisfied with the situation of 'no war and no peace', as the editor of *Al-Ahram*, Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, put it; the Soviets, for their part, were not acting as fast as Egypt would have liked to change this situation in which Israel had all the advantages and the Arabs all the disadvantages. The May 1972 Nixon–Brezhnev Moscow summit indicated to Sadat that the atmosphere of détente between the two superpowers would not advance a solution to the crisis in the Middle East and that the ceasefire lines were in danger of eventually turning into a new international border. In July 1972, Sadat surprised the entire world by announcing that the Soviet advisors and technicians would leave Egypt. The surprise grew when it emerged that the decision had been taken without advance coordination with the Americans; that is to say, there was no covert deal between Cairo and Washington to bring American pressure to bear on Israel. Only later was it learned that that measure was intended to give Egypt more freedom to take action militarily, for it was known that the Soviets refused to support an Egyptian military adventure for fear of the negative consequences that could ensue. Indeed, joint Egyptian–Soviet announcements such as the one that was published at the end of Sadat's visit to Moscow in late April 1972 spoke of the right of the Arab states to liberate their lands under Israeli occupation 'by various means'; but, in practice, the Soviet Union only supported the conduct of a political struggle for the return of the Occupied Territories.

The die is cast

Stagnation continued in the political arena. The Israeli flag continued to flutter over the Suez Canal. Unrest reappeared in Egypt. In December 1972 and January 1973, students again took to the streets to demonstrate against Sadat, but this time the protest movement was more comprehensive and also included famous writers like Naguib Mahfouz and Tawfiq al-Hakim, journalists, and union activists. Faced with pressures at home and stagnation in the political arena, Sadat made up his mind to take military action that would 'shatter' this situation which was so intolerable for Egypt. Only after the war would Sadat admit that the internal conflicts in Egypt had been serious and that the military campaign was necessary to restore national unity in response.[76] In January 1973, the Egyptian chief of staff was ordered to study, improve and prepare plans for crossing the Canal as well as other operative plans for war with Israel. The sum of 20 million Egyptian pounds was allocated to preparations for military hostilities. At the same time, President Sadat made an additional effort to move the United States from its stance of absolute support for Israel. He sent his national security advisor Hafez Ismail to Washington to talk with President Nixon. The meeting took place in the White House on 23 February, and the result was zero. Sadat lost all hope of reaching a settlement through the Americans. In an interview he gave to *Newsweek* that was a kind of confession, he said:

> If Hafez Ismail had conducted these talks with Golda Meir, the results would have been less ridiculous . . . And on the heels of Ismail's mission, Washington released the details of the new Phantom deal and aid for the development of Israel's new homemade fighter-bomber. Everything was discouraging. Complete failure and despair sums it up . . . My intentions were quite clear. Yes, I want a final peace agreement with Israel. But there was no response from the US or Israel – except to supply Israel with more Phantoms . . . Every door I have opened has been slammed in my face by Israel – with American blessings . . . There is only one conclusion – if we don't take our case in our own hands, there will be no movement . . . But now the time has come for a decision . . . The time has come for a shock . . . Americans have left us no other way out.[77]

Politicians who visited Egypt and then Israel testified that an 'atmosphere of suffocation' prevailed in Cairo. One of them said that Israel's policy was pushing Sadat into a situation of no alternative but to resort to military means. As long as Israel held to its territorial demands, the negotiations Israel was demanding looked to Sadat like surrender. As if that were not enough in the eyes of the Egyptians, Golda Meir went to Washington after Hafiz Ismail's visit. On 1 March, she met with President Nixon and revealed that the two of them were in full agreement. She received a promise from Nixon that he would continue to fully support Israel until the end of his presidency. Two weeks after her visit came the news that the United States would supply forty-eight Phantoms to Israel.

It was not only the complete identification of the US with Israel that caused Sadat to despair. He realized that the moderate policy of King Hussein, who was prepared for a separate peace with Israel through an agreement for small border modifications, was also rejected by the Israeli leaders. Even the frequent 'telephone calls' from Amman to Jerusalem were constantly being answered with a 'busy signal'.[78] Sadat came to learn that neither King Hussein's meetings with top Israeli leaders nor his gestures, such as the condolences he expressed after the Munich massacre on the English-language section of Jordanian television, which is watched by many Israelis, had moved the Israelis from their evasive position, and they found various pretexts to reject any arrangement that would involve returning the Territories to the Arab states. He heard the old-new excuse from Golda Meir herself, that 'even if King Hussein signed a peace treaty, who can guarantee that his regime will survive to implement it?'[79] Later, it would be the Galili Document that rang alarm bells in Egypt. In a meeting with the ambassadors of the five big powers on 7 October 1973, Sadat explicitly mentioned the Galili Document in justification of the

war he had launched the day before.[80] According to the editor of *Al-Ahram*, Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, the plan to build the city of Yamit in northeastern Sinai (in keeping with the Galili Document) was one of the reasons for the decision to go to war. Sadat, who was shocked when he learned of the plan, told him that 'Yamit means war. For Egypt, at any rate.'[81]

In March 1973, Sadat again proclaimed the 'stage of total conflict', and named himself the military governor of the country, in addition to his roles as president and supreme commander of the armed forces. In April, he finally made up his mind to go to war. The decision was made easier by the fact that consignments of modern weapons, which the Soviets had tarried in delivering after the signing of a billion-rouble arms deal, had finally begun to arrive in Egypt after the intervention in Moscow of Syrian president Hafez al-Assad in October 1972. Libyan Mirages and Iraqi Hunters also arrived in Egypt. The decision to make good on the threats of war was made at a meeting of the Egyptian– Syrian joint command in early May 1973, with the participation of al-Assad and General Ahmad Ismail Ali, the new Egyptian minister of war, who had assumed office in October 1972 in replacement of General Sadeq, who had expressed doubts about Egypt's ability to contend with Israel. Civil defence exercises were conducted in Egypt, a partial blackout was declared and training bases were opened in various parts of the country. The Egyptian plan leaked and came to the attention of the Americans and the Israelis. In May, fears were aroused of a joint Egyptian–Syrian attack, and the IDF carried out a military alert that cost about $10 million. The tensions dissipated a short while later. Was it because of the Israeli alert? Or was the reason Egypt and Syria's inadequate preparation for war? Or maybe pressure from the Soviets, who feared that an eruption in the Middle East would jeopardize the Moscow summit?[82]

The new Nixon–Brezhnev summit, in June 1973, again reinforced the widespread feeling in Egypt that in the current atmosphere of détente, no drastic political measures would be taken to move the conflict in the region out of its stagnation. The joint communiqué that was issued at the end of the Moscow summit devoted a few sentences to the Middle East and was received with undisguised disappointment in Egypt. A commentator on Radio Cairo replied: 'This policy of warming relations is liable to freeze the situation in the region for many generations.' In Jerusalem, on the other hand, the outcome of the summit was met with satisfaction. The conclusion of the discussion of the Middle East problem that Egypt had initiated at the Security Council was another blow. On 25 July, when the celebrations of the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution were at their height, the United States cast a veto on a pro-Arab resolution at the Security Council.

The Egyptian threats and reports from Arab and foreign sources about the dangers of an Arab offensive against Israel were received by Israelis with ridicule, swaggering contempt and a deluge of jokes. No one believed that the Egyptians would be able to carry out any successful military action whatsoever. Upon a review of what was said on the subject in that period, it is hard to understand how nearly an entire nation could have been captive to illusions that were not grounded in reality. The eggs were not even laid yet, and already they were counting their chickens. 'Empty threats', screamed the headline of the lead editorial in *Maariv*, which explained that 'the show is intended only for the Egyptian domestic front'. Generals, both on active service and in the reserves, displayed boundless confidence. The chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar, when asked how Israel would respond if Egypt launched a war, apologized for not being at liberty to reveal operational details that would answer the questions 'what', 'where' and 'how many', 'but we will do everything to ensure that the "what" and the "where" will be surprises and the "how many" will be a great many'.[83] The pithy-tongued

General (Res.) Ezer Weizman said that 'the Egyptians should know that if they re-open fire they will sustain such a blow at home, inside Egypt, that the Six-Day War will be a pleasant memory in comparison'. And, as for an Egyptian invasion, he said jocularly, 'somebody once dug a canal there that he and others thought would be for the passage of ships, but it turned out to be an excellent anti-tank trench.'[84] Another general in the reserves, Arik Sharon, who was the commander of the Egyptian front until three months before the war, was asked by a journalist to tell the Egyptians the price they would pay if they launched a war. His reply: 'A terrible price, terrible! A price the Egyptians will be unable to bear. In the Six-Day War the Egyptians had somewhere to retreat to – the Canal. The same during Operation Sinai. In the next war the Egyptian line of retreat will be Cairo. They have no other line, and it will involve terrible destruction for Egypt. Total destruction.'[85] And, in the same interview, he explained: 'Israel today is a power on the level of France and Britain,' and there was no target between Baghdad and Khartoum, including the territory of Libya, that the IDF could not conquer, according to him. No wonder, then, that General Sharon believed that within 'the present borders we basically have no security problems'.[86] At any rate, that is what he claimed to the Social and Political Affairs Circle in Tel Aviv, only two weeks before the war. Lieutenant General (Res.) Yitzhak Rabin, the chief of the General Staff at the time of the Six-Day War, said, two weeks before the Yom Kippur disaster, that 'Golda Meir has the best defence lines of any king or president in the history of the Jewish people'.[87] Minister Haim Bar-Lev, Rabin's successor as chief of the General Staff, explained that 'Egypt knows that it will not achieve anything substantial from war, whereas the danger to itself and its leader is more substantial . . . after all, he and only he will be responsible for the failure, in the eyes of the Egyptian people'.[88] The IDF's official position on the chances of war was expressed to the public by General Israel Tal, head of the Operations Branch of the General Staff, when he reviewed for journalists the IDF's work plan for 1973: 'The likelihood of a general Arab war against Israel is even lower in 1973 than it was in 1972, because of the balance of forces and Israel's superiority.'[89] Air Force commander General Mordechai Hod predicted, upon the end of his term, that 'in the event of war we will be able to bring the matter to a conclusion with great speed'.[90] And so on and so forth. A senior officer in the IDF promised that the next war 'will be a war of hours and not a war of days'. A famous veteran military commentator decreed: 'The possibility of a crossing of the Canal by the Egyptians appears to be a delusional fantasy in view of Israel's air supremacy.' A high-ranking Israeli civil servant, quoted in *Haaretz*, stated a quarter-year before the war that 'Sadat is an absolute zero who lives in a fantasy world'.

The general view, of course, was that the Egyptians had no military option. Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, one of the members of the Israeli elite who were more circumspect in their political declarations, said in a lecture on 'the strategy of peace', that the Egyptians feared that a partial settlement on the Canal would deprive them of a military option, but he immediately added that 'they are wrong, of course, because they have no military option'.[91] Two weeks before the war, a high-ranking officer said in the same spirit to paratroop officers at a public gathering, that he pitied Egypt, because 'no military options are open to it except the option of failure'.[92] Moreover, not only did the Egyptians lack even a shred of a military option; any Arab action that did not follow a scenario determined by Israel would be 'counter to logic'. Dayan declared: 'War would be an act of suicide on the Egyptians' part.'[93] Golda Meir explained: 'A violation of the ceasefire on Egypt's part would be illogical. They will achieve nothing and we have no doubt about the outcome . . . I assume that Nixon too knows, as do we, that if Sadat

violates the ceasefire he will suffer a defeat.'[94] Only Shimon Peres continued to speak of the 'distorted logic' of the Egyptians even after the war, saying that 'the Egyptians' mistake was to act out of illogic. Our mistake was to rely on logic. I prefer our mistake when all is said and done.'[95]

Many jokes were passed from mouth to ear. Each one more boastful than the last:

– It's a good thing China isn't at war with us.

– ?!

– What would we do with 700 million refugees?

Another jest: What does the IDF need in order to conquer Damascus, Istanbul, Moscow and Vladivostok? To receive the order!

Still another: Generals Dayan and Elazar are sitting together, bored. 'There's nothing to do,' says Dayan, with a sigh. 'How about if we conquer some Arab city?', suggests Elazar.

'That won't help,' replies Dayan. 'What would we do in the afternoon?'

Many cartoons mocking President Sadat appeared in the Hebrew press, like the one that showed him holding a pistol representing the renewal of hostilities, pointed at his head. In another, Sadat is pulling a sword out of its sheath and while pulling it out he slits his throat. Beside him stands a figure representing Israel, saying 'This is really not nice to see.' Sadat sitting in front of an empty chessboard, contemplating his next move. And Sadat again with a sword, this time facing a giant battery of microphones, saying 'I threaten, therefore I exist.' A quick-witted impresario organized an event featuring famous actors. The show was called 'An Evening of Threats from Sadat', and it took place in a cultural hall in Tel Aviv under the sponsorship of the mayor. Photos of the serene Suez Canal periodically graced the pages of newspapers. One of them showed a stronghold on the Bar-Lev Line, with a sign saying, 'Dear guest! If you want to cross the Canal see us first, because we have the key.' The Canal had become a symbol of peace and quiet: a headline in a popular evening newspaper read, 'The Carmel Market is more dangerous than the Suez Canal.'

Meanwhile, the die was cast in Egypt. At the 1973 celebrations in commemoration of the July Revolution, two subjects repeatedly came up: war is inevitable, but it is necessary to formulate long-term policy 'as Israel does'. Sadat revisited the idea that he had raised at the beginning of the year – that there was a need to prepare for a long struggle and to prepare a 'twenty-five-year plan'. In Israel, as usual, the emphasis was put on the long term.

In August, the Egyptian–Syrian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces convened at the Navy Headquarters at Ras al-Tin in Alexandria, under the leadership of General Ahmad Ismail Ali. They discussed the details of the attack, including the day and hour the offensive would be launched. At the end of August, President Sadat made secret visits to three Arab states. In Saudi Arabia, he met with King Faisal, with whom he coordinated financial aid and the use of the oil weapon in the context of the campaign, as well as grants to buy weapons from the Soviet Union. This time, the Egyptians wanted to pay as much as possible in cash for the Soviet weapons it bought, so as to be less dependent on the Soviet Union and its decisions.

Sadat's next stop was the oil principality of Qatar. There too he discussed the two subjects that were raised in Saudi Arabia – the 'oil weapon' and financial aid. His requests were granted after he hinted that 'zero hour' was near. From there, he went to Syria where he discussed the details of the joint attack with President Hafez al-Assad and members of his staff.

The preparations went into high gear. On 10 September, the leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Syria met for a conference at which various subjects were discussed, including the opening of an

eastern front, weapons acquisition and more. Sadat did not disclose the date of the war to King Hussein, but he hinted that the time was near and voiced his opinion that Jordan did not have to participate. One of the reasons for that was to prevent the Israeli army from entering Syria through the Irbid Heights in northern Jordan, thereby bypassing the Syrian fortifications facing the Golan.

The rapprochement between Syria and Jordan, which began quite soon before the war, was met with sharp criticism from the Palestinians, who were not prepared to forget what King Hussein had done to them. But this time – unlike acceptance of the Rogers Plan in 1970, when by their opposition the Palestinians effectively dictated the pace and direction of events – the Syrian authorities took a firm stand against them. The Fatah radio station in Deraa (in southern Syria) was shut down and the Palestinians were warned not to try to sabotage Syria's policy. The initiative for which Syria had mobilized all its resources was too important to let the Palestinians ruin it.

The Arab stage was ready. On the international stage, in the period before the war, anti-Israeli resolutions were passed in various conferences such as the summit of the Organization for African Unity, the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement at Algiers and the International Civil Aviation Organization (over the diversion of the Lebanese aircraft). Sadat had learned the lesson of the Six-Day War and knew the importance of the international stage for the preparation of the grounds for war. Sadat gave his last speech before the war on 28 September 1973, the third anniversary of Nasser's death. The speech dealt mainly with internal affairs: he announced the cancellation of the trials of the oppositionist students and the reinstatement of journalists who had been dismissed at the beginning of the year because of disagreement with the president's policy. A small section of the speech towards its end dealt with the war and did not attract attention at the time: 'We've had enough talking,' he said. 'There are no efforts that we will not invest, or sacrifices that we will not make to realize our objective. I will not promise anything and I will not go into details. I will say only this: the liberation of the land is our primary mission, and with God's help we will bring it to fruition.'

A week later the armies of Egypt and Syria broke through the ceasefire lines in the north and south.

2

Irrefutable facts – disastrous interpretation

In early September, at his vacation home at Burg al-Arab in the Western Desert, 180 kilometres northwest of Cairo, in a stone house surrounded by orange trees and lemon trees and flowerbeds, President Sadat, along with his war minister, General Ahmad Ismail Ali, made a final decision on the timing of Operation ‘sharara’ (Spark). The date chosen was 6 October. The countdown began. Consultations with Syria took place frequently, and preparations for war went into high gear while absolute secrecy was maintained. Fewer than twenty people participated in the military talks that took place in the summer between Egypt and Syria on the plan for the joint attack, and, indeed, the secret was not leaked. Egyptian and Syrian soldiers were kept busy until early October with military exercises and holding the line and were completely unaware that they were about to go to war. According to General Ahmad Ismail Ali, in an interview with Muhammad Hassanein Heykal,[1] the details of the plan of attack were divulged to the commanders of the armies, the divisions, the brigades and the battalions a few days before the operation began. Some of the advance units learned of it only forty-eight hours before H-hour, and some of the soldiers who were to spearhead the attack learned of it only on the morning of 6 October. But they were all well prepared to execute the mission assigned to them, for they had been training for it for years.

The Egyptians also leaked disinformation, as the Egyptian war minister later admitted. The press reported that the Romanian defence minister would visit Egypt on 8 October, and the Cairo newspaper *Al-Ahram* was asked to report that the war minister was accepting requests from officers and soldiers who wanted to do the umrah (visit to the al-Haram Mosque in Mecca outside the pilgrimage season). Twenty-five thousand reservists were released four days before the war as part of the disinformation campaign. A few days before the war, on 30 September, it was even reported officially that Egypt had signed a $340 million deal with a group of American companies for the construction of an oil pipeline from Suez to Alexandria. The Syrians, too, were enlisted in the disinformation campaign. Radio Damascus reported on 5 October that President Hafez al-Assad was about to visit various regions of Syria. In the last, critical stage, no hint appeared in the Arab press or electronic media about preparations for the big attack. Only

one serious leak took place, and its source was in the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations. It turned out that President Sadat had taken care in the second half of September to inform the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization that a war would be launched against Israel soon. Yasser Arafat did not believe him and did not take it seriously, and the information was leaked to the Beirut newspaper *An-Nahar*. On 21 September 1973, that newspaper published that Cairo had reported to the Palestinian resistance movement through a Palestinian VIP that Egyptian military action that would be large scale but limited in time was to be expected, which would pave the way for American pressure on Israel to soften its hard-line position on a Middle East peace agreement. That report was read in Israel, of course, but Israeli Intelligence, just like Yasser Arafat, greeted Sadat's new threat with scorn.

The worrying signs actually began to come from the north, which had been tense since the big air battle of 13 September 1973. At a meeting of the General Staff on 24 September, the head of the Northern Command, General Yitzhak Hofi, expressed concern about the limitations of the capacity of Military Intelligence to provide advance warning of Syria's intentions. His concern stemmed from the dangerous situation in the Golan Heights following the reinforcement of Syrian forces, which were protected by an effective system of anti-aircraft missiles. Two days later, Defence Minister Moshe Dayan visited the Golan, where he gave a speech containing a warning to the Syrians, in line with the policy of deterrence by means of declarations. Dayan also decided to reinforce the armoured and artillery forces on the Golan Heights to some extent. The number of tanks, which had been reduced, was more than doubled. More artillery pieces were transferred there and leave for Rosh Hashanah was cancelled. Israel's explanation for the Syrian concentrations was quite typical: the Syrians were panicking because of Israel's victory in the air battle, and they feared that Israel would do the same on the ground. 'This is temporary tension, which will pass soon,' said official sources.

Attention was soon diverted from the situation on the Golan. Another event occurred, part of the no-holds-barred struggle in Europe between Israeli special services and *fedayeen* organizations, which had been casting a shadow over Israel–Arab relations for over a year. This event was destined to preoccupy public opinion and the government in Israel right up to the outbreak of the war. On 28 September a group of members of *al-Saᶜiqa* (a *fedayeen* organization controlled by the Syrian Baath) attacked a train carrying Jewish emigrants on their way to Israel at a border-crossing point between Czechoslovakia and Austria on the Austrian side of the border, kidnapping three emigrants and an Austrian customs officer.[2] The hostages were freed only after Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky promised to close the border-crossing point, at the Schönau Castle near Vienna, to Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union. The Austrian decision was greeted with shock in Israel. The government met to discuss the matter the next day, and it was proposed that Golda Meir, who was to travel to the Socialist International conference in Strasbourg the next day, would also go to Vienna to discuss the decision with Kreisky. Not a word was said at that meeting about the situation on the borders. On 30 September, six days before the war, the Knesset Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee convened, to discuss only two subjects: the Schönau affair and the expulsion of Bedouin from the Rafah Salient in preparation for the construction of more Jewish settlements in the area.

Prime Minister Meir was in Strasbourg and Vienna from 30 September to 2 October. During her absence, the Mossad gave no security information about the situation on the borders to Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, who was acting prime minister in Meir's absence. When she returned, Meir convened a military-political consultation session on 3 October which included Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, Minister without Portfolio Israel Galili and Deputy Prime

Minister Yigal Allon. The chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar and Brigadier General Aryeh Shalev, the Military Intelligence chief's assistant for research, also participated in the consultation. The main subject discussed at the meeting was the situation on the Golan, but attention was also given to the situation on the Egyptian front. A day before, the Egyptian Middle East News Agency had announced that the government of Egypt had declared a state of alert in the northern and central sectors of the Suez Canal, and according to reports from Cairo, the reason for that was 'concentrations and movements of Israeli units on the east bank of the Canal'. The Israeli assessment was that the measure was taken due to the tension that prevailed along the ceasefire line in the north and was intended to demonstrate Cairo's solidarity with Damascus. At that consultation, Brigadier General Shalev presented an intelligence study that concluded with the assessment that 'a joint Egyptian-Syrian war does not appear to be likely, because there has been no change in their [the Egyptians'] assessment of the situation of the forces in the Sinai [such] that they can go to war'.[3] No one who was present dissented from the assessment; it was well known that the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff enjoyed a full monopoly in Israel on everything related to intelligence assessments in the military and political domains.[4] At the end of the consultation, the prime minister decided to raise the subject of the situation on the borders for discussion by the government immediately after Yom Kippur, at the cabinet's regular weekly meeting due to take place on 7 October. On 4 October, an extraordinary cabinet meeting took place, which was dedicated exclusively to Golda Meir's report on her trip to Strasbourg, the Schönau affair and especially her conversation with the Austrian chancellor. The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee met again on the evening of the same day. The question of Egyptian and Syrian troop concentrations was not even hinted at in the course of the committee's discussions. The Defence Committee would not receive information on the situation on the fronts until Saturday evening, a few hours after the outbreak of hostilities.

Meanwhile, on the other side, final preparations for attack were being completed. On 30 September, the Egyptian war minister warned the High Command that the time for action was approaching. On 1 October, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in Egypt convened for final ratification of the plans. Two days later, Egyptian war minister General Ahmad Ismail Ali went to Damascus to coordinate the H-hour for the attack. Previously, 6 pm had been chosen as the time for the attack, but now H-hour was advanced to 2 pm.[5] According to the Egyptian war minister, the Syrians preferred that the action begin with the morning's first light, so that the sun would be at their backs; whereas the Egyptians preferred to attack when the sun was setting, for the same reason. In the end, a compromise was reached, as stated above. And the date of 6 October was chosen because it would permit action by moonlight in the fateful hours of the first day. Undoubtedly, the fact that everything would be shut down in Israel on that day, including all radio broadcasts, was also taken into account.

Meanwhile, troops and supplies were flowing to the front lines. The Egyptians acted as if their forces were conducting exercises, moving tanks and entire brigades in broad daylight, but returning only a few of them at the end of the day. The rest remained near the Canal and awaited the signal. An additional measure, which attracted attention, was the renewal of diplomatic relations between Syria and Jordan on 4 October, after a rupture of over two years. That measure would make it easier for Jordan to move forces to Syria when the war was at its height.

A day before the outbreak of the war, Soviet Antonov, Tupolev and Ilyushin aircraft began to arrive at the airports of Cairo and Damascus to rapidly evacuate the families of Soviet technicians from Egypt and Syria. In some cases, aircraft from the Soviet airline Aeroflot were diverted from their routes and redirected to Egypt to help in this operation, which was another

sign of what was about to occur. By that date, the Soviets knew that war would break out very soon. However, according to Egyptian and Syrian testimony – and, so far, no evidence has emerged that contradicts it – the decision on the Egyptian–Syrian attack was made exclusively by the leaders of Egypt and Syria.[6] They kept it a secret even from the Soviets until very close to the day of the attack, lest Moscow move to thwart the operation before it occurred, for fear of another Arab defeat. That would force Moscow to make a difficult choice: either intervene actively to save the Arab armies, which could endanger détente with the US, or stand aside, which could cost the Soviet Union its position in the Arab world.[7] According to one report,[8] official Egyptian representatives admitted that President Sadat had informed the Soviet Union of his intention to launch a war against Israel 'less than a week' before the crossing of the Canal. Sadat himself stated that he informed the Soviet ambassador in Cairo of Egypt's intentions only on 2 October,[9] four days before the war. He did not indicate the exact date of the operation, but he made it clear that the war would begin 'within a short time'. In Damascus, too, a similar report was given to the Soviet ambassador two days before the outbreak of hostilities. The rapid evacuation of Soviet citizens from the two countries began immediately afterwards. This was a calculated risk on the part of the Egyptians and Syrians, and one that should have lit a red light at Israeli Intelligence, but the 'network' was out of order and the green light kept glowing uninterruptedly.

Another measure was taken which had the potential inadvertently to expose the Egyptians' intentions. On 5 October, the Egyptian minister of civil aviation ordered that Cairo airport be closed and all flights cancelled. The minister was acting on his own initiative following a request from President Sadat to take appropriate steps to protect civilian aircraft at Cairo's airport beginning at zero hour, which was set for 6 October. The minister decided for some reason that the best way to do that would be to close the airport before that date, a measure that could have given Israel a hint about the approaching danger, and he even sent an announcement of the closure to all the world's airports. When General Ahmad Ismail Ali learned of this he feared that the plan of attack would be revealed, and immediately ordered the reopening of the airport with the explanation that 'the closure was due to technical problems that have been overcome'.[10]

Meanwhile, the danger signs multiplied on the Canal front. From the observation posts of soldiers in strongholds on the Bar-Lev Line, a picture emerged of unusual preparation and organization of forces, the removal of anti-personnel mines on the bank of the Canal and the anchoring of stakes in a way that would facilitate the laying of breaching equipment across the water. The breaching equipment itself was brought up to the line close to the day of the attack. However, the assessment of the Intelligence Branch remained unchanged: it was an exercise that was not cover for a real operation planned by the Egyptians. Even when the deputy chief of the General Staff, General Israel Tal, alone among the upper command echelon, warned the intelligence chiefs about their assessment and tried as early as 30 September to convince them to change their fatal outlook, his appeal was rejected. On 4 October, aerial photos were taken which indicated an alarming degree of reinforcement of the Egyptian forces along the Canal. They revealed a complete array of breaching equipment including bridges, which had been brought in on roads that had been previously paved in preparation for the war, almost up to the crossing points that had been prepared along the shore of the Canal in preparation for its breaching. Southern Command chief Shmuel Gonen did not believe the facts on the ground and, until 6 October, accepted the Intelligence Branch's assessment that what was taking place was merely an exercise by the Egyptian army.

Nor did General Gonen even ask the chief of the General Staff to reinforce the mobilized

regular force that was at his disposal, a force that was incomplete without the addition of reservists. When he was asked by the Agranat Commission why the armour was not deployed earlier, General Gonen replied that he feared making the Egyptians nervous, which could have caused the situation to deteriorate to the point of unplanned exchanges of fire.[11]

A day before the war, on Friday, 5 October, indications and reports accumulated that should have undermined the Intelligence Branch's faith in its assessment that all that was occurring was a military exercise in Syria and an inter-branch exercise in Egypt, similar to exercises that had been occurring for years during that time of the year. However, the obvious conclusions were not yet drawn. The summary of the Intelligence Branch's assessment for that day continued to be 'low probability' and even 'lower than low', regarding the prospect of the initiation of hostilities by the Egyptians and Syrians.

On the morning of the same day, after additional worrisome reports were received and after a meeting between the defence minister and the chief of the General Staff, the prime minister held additional consultations with the participation of the defence minister, the chief of the General Staff and the head of the Intelligence Branch, General Eli Zeira. The chief of the General Staff reported that he had put the regular army on the highest level of alert ('Level 3' – in Hebrew, the letter *gimel*), including the cancellation of leave on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts as well as in the air force and the armoured corps. He also reported that the tank formations on both fronts would be reinforced. A report on the measures for readiness was given by the chief of the General Staff at a meeting that was convened later, towards midday, at the prime minister's office in Tel Aviv, with the participation only of the ministers who were in Tel Aviv (Dayan, Bar-Lev, Galili, Peres, Hillel and Hazani). 'Mobilization of the reserves and additional measures are being held back pending further indications,'[12] said the chief of the General Staff. The head of the Intelligence Branch repeated the assessment that a general war was not to be expected. The Jerusalem ministers were not invited to the meeting at all.[13] The prime minister only asked the cabinet secretary to clarify where the ministers would be on Yom Kippur, so they could be summoned if necessary.

At 13:15 hours on 5 October, a secret study by the Intelligence Branch was distributed to those involved, which stated at the end of the section on Egypt, in paragraph 40: 'Even though the taking of emergency measures on the Canal front supposedly implies indications of aggressive intentions, to the best of our assessment there has been no change in the Egyptians' assessment of the relation of forces between them and the IDF. Therefore the likelihood that the Egyptians intend to renew hostilities is low.'[14] That section was written by the head of the Egypt desk of the research department of the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Yona Bandman.

'The likelihood is low', but, for all that, certain measures for preparedness were taken, not only on the fronts but also in the rear, such as the preparation of Egged buses in case of emergency on Yom Kippur. It was also decided that mobilization officers – that is, those responsible for calling up the various reserve units – would be put on alert.

The newspapers on the day before Yom Kippur, 5 October, gave no indications at all of what was going on across the border. *Maariv*, in a long article, told of a dramatic development in the protracted struggle that Defence Minister Moshe Dayan was waging to procure the appointment of former air force commander General (Res.) Hod as head of the Administrative Council of Israel Aerospace Industries. Dayan won an important victory that day. The headline at the top of the front page of *Maariv* proclaimed, 'The Defence Minister has dismissed three from the Administrative Council of Israel Aerospace Industries.' Just a small report of nine lines in the

same edition reported that 'the IDF has taken all [possible] measures to prevent a surprise from the Egyptian side'. The newspaper *Haaretz*, on the other hand, did not say even one word about the alert on the border.

Indeed, in the days leading up to the war, the Israeli press reflected with extraordinary faithfulness the opinion of the circles within the armed forces and the Defence Ministry who believed that there was no danger of a deterioration of the situation on the fronts. On 2 October, four days before the outbreak of hostilities, a high-ranking officer met with military correspondents for Israeli newspapers and explained to them that there was no danger of war, and he also asked them to play down reports from foreign sources about troop concentrations and states of alert on the other side of the ceasefire lines, because the Egyptians and the Syrians had an interest in raising tensions and there was no need to help them do that. That request was also sent directly to the editorial offices of all the newspapers by senior military officials. The obedient Israeli press complied with this request. And the scissors of the military censor (who is subordinate to the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff) completed the job by removing undesirable reports about the serious preparations being made on the Egyptian and Syrian side as they were discovered by, for example, the military correspondent for *Maariv*, who wanted to bring them to the attention of the public but was denied permission to do so. On the other hand, short reports occasionally appeared in the newspapers in the days preceding the war, which stated that 'there is no sign of Egyptian preparations on the Canal' and 'the IDF is ready for any surprise'. One of the newspapers announced to its readers that 'there is no chance of a future resumption of fire between Israel and the Arab states, which recognize the IDF's strength and justly fear another defeat . . . in another day or so, maybe a little more, life will clearly return to normal both on the Golan Heights and on the Egyptian line, if indeed tension prevails there'.[15] The *Jerusalem Post* also published an editorial on 3 October, three days before the war, under the headline 'False Alarm', in which it took advantage of the opportunity to praise the annexationist theory of 'security borders':

> Before 1967 such troop movements by our neighbours would undoubtedly have led to an escalation of tension. The fact that this did not occur this week can be taken as an object lesson in the value of borders which constitute a natural barrier as in the case of the Canal, or which provide a buffer zone of safety as in the Golan . . . For all those here and abroad who would belittle the security value of our present frontiers, and their role in preventing outbreaks of armed hostility, the events of the last few days should provide much material for thought.[16]

Maariv wrote the next day that 'authoritative observers' are not inclined to interpret the preparations of the Arabs on the borders 'as the signal for the launching of warlike activity war or harassing actions'.[17] An article even appeared under the headline, 'taking leave of the military option', written by a person close to Intelligence circles, in which he explained that Cairo had abandoned the military alternative for the resolution of the conflict. But, as fate would have it, the weekly in which the article was published, *Ot*, reached the newsstands only after the outbreak of the war.

After the end of the battles the military correspondent for *Davar* revealed that 'an official source', whose name he did not disclose, but who was a high-ranking military figure, had told him in the days preceding the war that 'one thing is clear: no war will come from this. The worst that can happen is that a few unfortunate youths who were not on leave on Rosh Hashanah will not get leave for Yom Kippur either.'[18] Of course, the atmosphere produced by these reports also influenced the soldiers on the lines to some degree.

The many reports that accumulated in the hands of Intelligence on the eve of Yom Kippur clearly pointed to the growing danger, but those who were directly responsible for the defence of

the state brushed off the conclusion to which they pointed – that the outbreak of war was indeed near. Indeed, logic should have pointed to the conclusion that the conduct of 'annexationist' policy and utter lack of political flexibility towards the Arab world called for more awareness of the danger of a revanchist war by the neighbouring states, but Israel's leaders, starting with Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, reacted to the possibility of Arab military action with undisguised contempt, based on their prejudices and their wishful thinking regarding the chances of war. Their view was that peace was guaranteed for a long time – ten years at least, and that the Arab states were not able to fight Israel, because they had absolutely no military option. If, despite all that, they were tempted into a military adventure, they would be knocked flat on their backs right away. The conclusion: there was nothing to fear and there would be no surprises. Moshe Dayan explained before the war in a speech to students that one of the bases of Israeli doctrine was never to leave the initiative in the hands of the enemy. 'If it turns out that Sadat intends to bomb us at six in the morning, we will make sure that Egypt's capacity for surprise is eliminated by five that morning,'[19] he said decisively. However, the possibility of realizing that principle depended on two crucial conditions: first, the ability to act on what you see, without any political constraints; and second, the possession of timely intelligence, so that the challenge can be met effectively. Those two conditions did not exist in October 1973; the first because of the political situation that prevailed at the time, and the second because of the intelligence failure.

For political reasons, Israel was not free to take action that would inflict a preventive blow using the air force, as Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General David Elazar suggested on the morning of 6 October. At the time, the State of Israel was nearly completely isolated on the international stage, with only the United States really standing at its side. A preventive war would have likely cost Israel even American support, without which Israel could not have withstood a difficult war.[20] However, if an explanation could be found for the political constraint, which was a direct result of the collapse of Israeli foreign policy, the intelligence failure was all the more serious.

As the Agranat Commission found in its interim report, which was published on 2 April 1974, it turned out that the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff was in fact in possession of abundant information, but that it was a prisoner of a flawed 'conception' [*konseptzia*] that matched its way of thinking, which was that there was absolutely no reason to expect war. That 'conception' dictated that Egypt would not go to war with Israel unless it could be certain in advance of its aerial capability to attack deep inside Israel and especially the main bases of the Israeli Air Force, in order to paralyse it. As for Syria, the 'conception' held that it would not launch a large-scale offensive against Israel unless Egypt was doing so at the same time. Since Egypt, according to the same view, was not prepared for war, a Syrian attack was also unlikely. Moreover, in analysing the reports that had begun to accumulate, the heads of Military Intelligence remembered that during the time of tension in May 1973 disagreements emerged between Military Intelligence and the chief of the General Staff. The latter took the worrying reports seriously and ordered various preparatory measures, including the mobilization of reserves, which cost the substantial sum of $10 million. Military Intelligence disagreed with the chief of the General Staff's assessment. Adhering to the above-mentioned 'conception', they claimed that there was a 'low probability' of war and they turned out to be right. This time, too, the heads of Military Intelligence were convinced that they were right.

Military Intelligence bequeathed its 'conception' to the Knesset Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee as well, the constitutional role of which is to supervise the activities of the

government in the domains of defence and foreign affairs as well as its doctrines in those domains. Committee member Yitzhak Ben-Aharon revealed after the war that 'all the information in our possession was grounded on the solid rock of the certain knowledge that we would not be surprised, that we had tools and arrangements that would give us advance warning'.[21] The big mistake, of course, was to confer exclusive responsibility for intelligence analysis and assessment of the national situation on one body: the Intelligence Branch of the IDF General Staff. Only after the war was there sufficient awareness of that subject to correct the distortion.

Judgement Day

Only on the morning of 6 October did it become completely clear that war was indeed near. Until then, neither the high command of the IDF nor the political leadership had assessed that war was about to break out. At 4:30 am on Yom Kippur, Intelligence Branch chief General Eli Zeira reported, on the basis of new and unmistakable information he had received from a most reliable source, that the Egyptians and the Syrians would launch a war at 18:00 hours on the same day.[22] The report was given to the prime minister, defence minister and chief of the General Staff. In the early morning hours, the chief of the General Staff held a discussion of the situation with Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and recommended that all the reserves be mobilized. However, Dayan opposed a general mobilization and favoured only the mobilization of forces for a defensive posture. He did not believe that a large-scale war was at hand. The hands of the clock were moving, however. The mobilization was delayed by two hours, because the chief of the General Staff was waiting for the prime minister's decision. Differing opinions were put to Golda Meir, and, at 9:05 am she authorized mobilization of sufficient reserves for a defensive posture. Upon reconsideration, she decided twenty minutes later in favour of a full mobilization of the reserves, as recommended by the chief of the General Staff. Dayan continued to hold to his opinion and when the mobilization was at its height, he asked Elazar in jest, 'So, Dudu, when are you thinking of freeing the Jews and sending them back home?' During that discussion in the morning hours, the chief of the General Staff proposed launching a preventive attack by deploying the air force against troop concentrations on both fronts, but the proposal was rejected due to political considerations.[23]

The machinery of mobilization was set in motion and citizens in Israel's cities and towns were astonished by an unprecedented sight: large numbers of vehicles, military and civilian, driving in the middle of Yom Kippur. Soldiers in military vehicles began to deliver emergency call-up orders to reservists who were resting in their homes on the fast-day, or in synagogues, into which they periodically burst, interrupting the prayers with calls like, 'Who here is David Goldstein, who here is Nissim Abutbul? They are immediately called to their reserve units. The vehicle is waiting outside.' Gradually, reservists began to gather at their meeting places in the cities. Yom Kippur became a regular work day.

In the midday hours, on the Golan Heights, the evacuation of the residents of the seventeen Jewish settlements that had been erected since 1967 was executed at a rapid pace, so that their presence would not impede the military operations. The evacuation was completed only after the outbreak of hostilities and, miraculously, there were no victims.

The United States officially came into the picture only a short time before the outbreak of hostilities, even though it had in fact been aware of the preparations on the Syrian and Egyptian

sides of the ceasefire lines.[24] In the morning hours, the prime minister had a conversation with the US ambassador to Israel, Kenneth Keating, and told him about the Egyptian and Syrian concentrations, about the danger of war and the mobilization of the reserves in Israel, and emphasizing that Israel would not launch a preventive attack against the Arab states, requested the rapid intervention of the United States to prevent war. The details about the situation were reported to Foreign Minister Abba Eban, who was in New York at the time for a meeting of the UN General Assembly, and he immediately called Henry Kissinger to ask him to take action to prevent a conflagration. The time was 6 am in New York – 1 pm in the Middle East, that is, fifty minutes before the outbreak of hostilities. Kissinger, for whom this was the first serious crisis since he had assumed office in September, immediately called the US intelligence services, who confirmed that there were concentrations of Egyptian and Syrian troops as well as indications of preparation for attack on both fronts. Kissinger briefed Nixon on the seriousness of the situation and immediately afterwards (forty minutes before the outbreak of hostilities) called the Egyptian foreign minister, Dr Muhammad Hassan al-Zayyat, who was also in New York, and asked him to ask his government not to launch a war and to inform him on behalf of Israel that Israel was not preparing to open fire. A message was also transmitted from Nixon to Brezhnev through Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin stating that if Egypt and Syria were in fact preparing to attack Israel, the United States requested the Soviet Union to intervene in order to prevent a deterioration in the Middle East, but, if the troop concentrations were due to fear of an Israeli attack in the wake of the tensions that developed from the Syrian– Israeli air battle on 13 September, the United States affirmed on Israel's behalf that Israel had no intention of carrying out an attack. The Egyptian foreign minister immediately transmitted the message to Cairo, and Moscow called the Soviet ambassador to Egypt, Vladimir Vinogradov, who hastened to President Sadat's office to submit the content of the American letter to Moscow. But it was too late. The code word for the opening of fire, 'Badr', had already been transmitted to various units in Egypt and Syria. The answer given was: 'Egyptian forces are now responding to an attack that has been carried out by Israeli forces on several positions in the Gulf of Suez and it is likely that the action will develop.'[25]

At 12:00 noon, Prime Minister Meir convened the cabinet at her office in Tel Aviv. It was the first time since the beginning of the crisis that the details of the danger of war were reported at a meeting of the Israeli government. Most of the ministers heard then for the first time about the tensions on the borders. They received a report about the decision to mobilize the reserves as well as the meeting with the US ambassador. The ministers asked questions and gave opinions. One asked what would happen if only Egypt attacked: would it then be advisable to launch a preventive war against Syria? Suddenly, the prime minister's aide-de-camp, Israel Lior burst into the room and announced in an emotional voice: 'They are reporting that the attack has now begun.' The meeting came to a close.

At the end of the war, some ministers claimed that if the information about the situation on the borders had been reported at a meeting of the government a few days before the outbreak of the war, a minister probably would have interpreted the facts differently and demanded that the reserves be called up in order to meet the danger. In that situation, those responsible for defence probably would not have dared to reject the demand and thereby take responsibility upon themselves in the event of war. However, it was difficult to believe that things were about to develop the way they did, because of the unshakeable omnipotent authority of the IDF's Intelligence Branch and of the defence minister in everything related to national security. In any case, the prime minister dealt with the troop concentrations and war preparations on the borders

as she had dealt with other important things over the years: the issue was brought for discussion and even for decision in an informal setting, in her 'kitchen', and only afterwards in the cabinet for formal ratification. 'Golda's kitchen' was well known as a unique institution, which turned into one of the most important ones on the Israeli political landscape in the period of Meir's government. The term 'Golda's kitchen' originally referred to a real kitchen in Meir's official apartment when she was foreign minister (1956–66), where she used to hold unofficial consultations over a cup of coffee, and later became a synonym for an inner cabinet where the important decisions were made. When Golda Meir became prime minister the 'kitchen' moved to her new official apartment in Jerusalem. There she conducted the same consultations with her inner circle in the cabinet and the Labour Party, usually on Saturday evenings, so as to make decisions and reach conclusions that would be brought before the cabinet meeting on Sunday, as several ministers attested after they left the government.[26] In many cases, important issues were discussed and decided there which were not brought before the cabinet at all.

The Agranat Commission complained about this practice of discussing important issues in an informal setting:

> It became clear to us that over the course of time, the process by which the government should be fulfilling its role of deliberation and decision-making at the highest level on security matters became distorted. This distortion is connected to the disappearance of the Ministers' Committee on Security Affairs in its original composition, which contained a small number of members. Since the creation of the broad coalition (the national unity government) in 1967, that Committee expanded so as to give representation within it to all the parties in the coalition as well as factions within the parties. Eventually matters came to such a pass that out of the total number of Ministers (24), 17 were members of the Ministers' Committee on Security Affairs. Under those circumstances the special committee ceased to exist and the entire government became a Ministers' Committee on Security Affairs.[27]

Fear of leaks 'sometimes made it difficult to present complete information to the government', and thus important matters were discussed in unofficial forums. The Agranat Report suggested 'the creation of a Ministers' Committee on Security Affairs . . . as well as the application of the law to ensure the secrecy of the discussions on security matters, such that there would no longer be cause to transfer . . . discussions on security or political-security matters from the cabinet or a cabinet committee towards bodies that have been composed *ad hoc* that were not agreed upon by the cabinet' (that is, the 'kitchen'). Indeed, before the war only a few raised objections to Meir's informal form of leadership and decision-making process. It was not until the shock of Yom Kippur that the Establishment itself began to criticize the institution of the 'kitchen', which before the war was the body to which reports on occurrences beyond the borders were exclusively confided.

The war therefore caught the IDF unprepared. The reserves were still in the first stages of mobilization. Even the state of readiness of the regular forces on the fronts, especially on the Suez Canal front, was inadequate. It turned out, for example, that even after reports were received on Yom Kippur of the approaching war, the regular armoured forces (about 300 tanks) did not deploy on the Canal front in an adequate or timely manner. Instead of two-thirds of the force being stationed near the Canal and the remaining third in the rear, the opposite was the case, and even that deployment was executed imperfectly. The advance force did not reach the Canal on time, and when hostilities began it was far from its final deployment line, with only a few tanks taking up position at their assigned spots. The responsibility for the IDF's unpreparedness when the war began was attributed by the Agranat Commission to the head of the General Staff Intelligence Branch, which had promised the IDF that it would receive advance warning of any intention on the part of the enemy to launch a general war – warning which would have permitted the orderly mobilization of the reserves. That promise formed the

institutional basis for all the IDF's defence plans, but because of the delayed warning those plans were disrupted, and in order to stop the general attack it was necessary to rely on the regular forces alone, which were relatively small. The failure to provide warning on time stemmed from that same unrealistic 'conception' discussed above, which guided the analyses and assessments of intelligence, and the spiritual father of which was the defence minister himself.

This may seem very strange, but it is a fact, and the report of the Agranat Commission confirms it:

> The IDF had no detailed plan for a surprise general attack by the enemy . . . The chief of the General Staff was unrealistically confident that he would always receive advance warning to mobilize the reserves in a time-span that would be sufficient, even if shorter than planned. To this must be added the exaggerated confidence in the IDF's ability to repel a general attack by the enemy on two fronts by means of the regular forces alone *under any circumstances* (emphasis in the original; they are the only two words [in Hebrew, *bechol hanesibot*] in the entire report that were emphasized), and in the IDF's ability at its full capacity [including the reserves] to conduct a defence and rapidly to make the transition to a large-scale counter-attack, as a condition for the effective defence of the State. In that spirit the chief of the General Staff occupied himself in the hours preceding the war with planning a counter-attack instead of concentrating first and foremost on breaking the momentum of the surprise of the expected attack and stopping the enemy by adapting the plans to the situation that had been created and providing guidance to the generals of the Command accordingly.[28]

Right up to the outbreak of hostilities, the soldiers on the front lines themselves did not believe that the warning they had received not long before of the possibility of a conflagration was serious. On the Bar-Lev Line there were about 600 soldiers in total. Most of the positions from north to south were manned by members of a Jerusalem reserve regiment, except for a few positions in the southern sector that were held by IDF soldiers from the regular army. Only sixteen out of thirty strongholds on the Bar Lev Line were active on the eve of Yom Kippur. Of the strongholds themselves, only some were in an adequate state of preparation for war. Requests before the war for vital supplies for the strongholds had repeatedly gone unanswered. In the command headquarters in the rear it had not occurred to anyone that these requests were really vital. One of the positions in the south, for example, had received no sandbags, even though the commander of the position had asked Headquarters for them many times. At Headquarters, they called him 'the *nudnik* of the sector'. The commander of the northern-most position on the Bar-Lev Line, the coastal position known as 'Budapest', Reserve Captain Motti Ashkenazi (later to become famous for his protest action calling for the firing of the defence minister for his responsibility for the failures of the war), related: 'I went with my people to the stronghold about two weeks before the war and saw that the position was not at all prepared for war, if – God forbid – it were to happen. I talked to Headquarters and they answered, "Guys, you can relax. Nothing will happen. There is no chance that anything will happen. No need to get excited. On the other side of the Canal they're just doing an exercise. If some Egyptian idiot decides to do something, we're prepared for any eventuality; we'll rise against them and get rid of them."'

'But there are six Egyptian commando positions in front of us and we are such a small group,' persisted Motti.

'Guys, listen to me,' replied the regiment commander. 'Those commandos are scum! They're not worth one shot. Just fire a round and they'll run like rabbits . . .'

Motti Ashkenazi also related that, when he had reported on unusual movements on the other side before the war, Headquarters reassured him that there was nothing to fear and that if anything happened 'reinforcements will arrive instantaneously'. On Yom Kippur, less than an hour before the outbreak of the war, he received an announcement that war would begin at 6 pm. He reported that to the commanders of the positions, but they did not believe it. 'It took me five to ten minutes with each one to convince him that this was serious, but no one believed it, of

course, until the first shells suddenly fell on us.'

The commander of the stronghold next to al-Qantara, Captain Yaakov, had a similar story. He too reported the activity on the other side, including the manning of anti-tank missile batteries, in the days that preceded the war, and especially on Yom Kippur, but the standard reply was: 'Guys, don't panic. As long as the water line is calm there's nothing to worry about.' A third commander related that he too received reassurances and explanations that the Egyptians were 'just blustering', and that the purpose of their exercises was to preoccupy the soldiers who had been sitting by the Canal for years without doing anything. 'Nothing will come of it,' they told him.

In the north the picture was more alarming. From the observation point on top of Mount Hermon, which commands the entire sector as far as the outskirts of Damascus, vast concentrations were seen, arranged in a defensive posture for deception until very close to the attack. Here, too, it was not believed that a large-scale war would break out. No one knew, of course, that schoolchildren in Damascus had been sent home at 10 that morning as part of the preparations for war.

Quiet prevailed on both fronts during the first half of Yom Kippur. At a UN position next to the Suez Canal, an Israeli liaison officer, First Lieutenant Sharon, basked in a bathing suit. At a stronghold opposite Ismailia, a soldier named Avi hung his laundry to dry on a barbed-wire fence. In another place, soldiers were playing with a ball. Opposite, as part of an exercise in deception, Egyptian soldiers were ordered by their commanders to sit on the earthen barriers in their undershirts and to smoke, to sunbathe on the shore of the Canal, to read newspapers and play football within sight of the Israelis. Others went down to the shore of the Canal to fish as they did every day. The gardener who watered the gardens of the abandoned villas in Ismailia every day and who was well known to the Israeli soldiers observing the city with binoculars, did his work as usual on the day the war broke out. The Egyptian soldiers who were in the habit of swimming in the Canal every day at midday were ordered to do the same on 6 October. Some were still in the water when the first shots were fired. Egyptian soldiers were forbidden by their commanders to wear helmets as long as the first shot had not yet been fired. 'Whoever is wearing a helmet a minute before the attack will be forced to go into battle without a helmet,' the commanders told the soldiers. Although there was a higher level of preparedness at the strongholds in the Golan, there too soldiers were washing clothes, reading books, playing backgammon or napping.

At 2 pm, Israeli radio resumed its broadcasts. In an emotional voice, the announcer Aryeh Golan read the first announcement of the IDF spokesman: 'Near two o'clock today, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched an attack on the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Our forces are operating against the attackers.' It was the first time since the founding of the State that the radio had broadcast on Yom Kippur. Codes for the mobilization of reserve soldiers, each one composed of two words, preceded by a sharp and grating buzzing sound, interrupted the news and the music on the radio between short breaks . . . 'meat pot' . . . 'heat wave' . . . 'kindhearted woman' . . . 'last saint'. In Israel's cities the rising and falling sound of the air-raid sirens was heard – a sign that the alarm was genuine. The Fourth Israeli–Arab war had begun.

3

A war different from previous wars

When the war broke out early in the afternoon of Yom Kippur, the initial response of Israelis was: ‘War? Are you kidding?’ On further reflection, some added, almost offhandedly: ‘Oh, well – this too will pass quickly.’ But some reservists said to each other as they rushed to the gathering-stations: ‘Something smells completely different about this one.’ At the time, they did not know just how right they were.

The Yom Kippur War was different in many ways from the wars that had preceded it; the shock that followed in its wake was also unprecedented in the history of the State of Israel. Indeed, this time too, as in the past, there was a full mobilization and the reservists rushed to their units from all over the country and from wherever they happened to be all over the world. Israelis abroad rushed to the airports and struggled to get on flights to Israel in order to join their units. Just as in the Sinai and Six-Day wars, those in the rear did not suffer from the hostilities, but the battles on the fronts in the Yom Kippur War were harder and crueller. In comparison, the 1956 and 1967 wars were ‘deluxe wars’, as military commentators put it.

As recently as July 1973, General Arik Sharon, like the other political generals, were promising that ‘if Sadat starts a war, the Egyptian army will sustain such a blow that the Six-Day War will look like a stroll in the desert in comparison’. Right after the war the same Arik Sharon said, in a moment of truth: ‘I fought in all the IDF’s wars and I dare to say that until this month I did not know what war was. All the others were just battles. This time it was war. A terrible, terrible war.’

In the first days, no one believed that this was a different war, one that was quite different from the previous ones. The declarations by military and political leaders at the beginning of the war left no room for doubt that this would be a new edition of the Six-Day War, both in length and in outcome. Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, who appeared on television a few hours after the outbreak of the war, announced: ‘We will knock them flat.’ The chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar, who appeared on the third day of the war full of confidence, waving his fist in front of the cameras and the microphones at a televised press conference, also created the impression for the viewers that everything was going smoothly. He said, before the turning point on the Golan and much, much before the tide turned in the south, that the IDF had made the transition to a counter-attack and that the enemy was broken and its forces were

withdrawing. ‘We began with the destruction of the Egyptian army; in some places we have returned to the Canal; we have managed to reduce the Egyptian concentrations in the Sinai and to surround them,’ he said, without any basis in reality. When he was asked about the truth of the reports from abroad that the IDF had crossed the Canal, he replied, ‘The forces have not yet crossed the Canal.’[1] The impression created by those words was that the crossing would happen very soon, even though it would be eight days before it actually happened. No one doubted then that complete victory was near, within reach; not the generals, not the politicians and not the general-politicians like Arik Sharon, who had taken off his uniform only three months before the war and quickly became one of the leaders of the right-wing Likud. When he was called up, Sharon told the leader of the Likud, Menachem Begin, that he would be absent ‘for only a few days’, and would soon return to his political activities in order to do his part during the electoral campaign . . .

A glance at the Israeli press from the first days of the war shows that everybody expected a ‘repeat of 1967’. More than a few articles in that period began or ended with the promise that ‘when these lines are published we will certainly be on the road to victory’.

On the fourth day, for example, the *Jerusalem Post* ran a long article from the north under the headline, ‘Golan soldiers hope to be home by Shabbat’.[2] The political correspondent for *Haaretz* wrote, on the same day, that, in the general election that was scheduled for 30 October (the preparations for which the Electoral Commission continued to conduct as usual up to a week after the outbreak of hostilities, at which point they were stopped), the ruling Alignment would be the main victor and its expected decline would be halted, because ‘military victory – and there is no doubt that that victory will come – is a tried and true recipe for rallying the public around the victors, and the victors are none other than those who hold the reins of power’. On the sixth day, an occasional expert on Arab affairs published an article in the weekly *Hotam* containing predictions about who in Syria and Egypt would pay the price for the painful defeat that they would sustain in the very near future.

Nor did the cartoons published in the Hebrew press in the first days of the war leave any doubt about the decisive outcome. One of them depicted Sadat running back across the Canal, without shoes of course; in another, Sadat holds a sign saying, ‘Hooray! We won!’ while an Egyptian general is running for his life towards him, calling for him to raise the other sign that had been prepared in advance, on which was written, ‘Help!’ In another newspaper, the editor of the stamps column wrote that he had asked the management of the post office if the issuance of a stamp in commemoration of the coming victory had yet been decided upon, and he was told that the decision had not yet been made . . .

In grocery stores, the shopkeepers reassured housewives who were stockpiling supplies: ‘What do you need another package of tea for? The war will be over before you finish the first one!’

Foreign correspondents who were sent to Israel upon the outbreak of the war were not permitted to join combat units, contrary to the practice during the Six-Day War. They waited a few days, tried in vain to infiltrate to the front lines, and some were heard to utter in disappointment: ‘The war will be over before we have a chance to see it!’

Even the residents of the Occupied Territories did not expect anything different from the past. A resident of Bethlehem said after the war: ‘When the fighting broke out we immediately started to prepare explanations for ourselves for the coming inevitable Arab defeat.’

The war provoked astonishment and even fear in the Arab countries as well. In Egypt, citizens refused to believe the Egyptian spokesman’s announcements of the Egyptian successes.

Many thought that this was a repetition of the fake victory cries of 1967. Only after they saw on their televisions Egyptian forces crossing the Canal and planting the Egyptian flag on strongholds on the Bar-Lev Line did they believe the declarations of their spokesmen. In Beirut, just as in Tel Aviv, it was believed that the Egyptian and Syrian armies were about to pay dearly for their 'act of madness'. In Beirut itself, a French correspondent preferred to report the incorrect Israeli accounts of the destruction of the bridges that the Egyptians had laid over the Suez Canal, and added that 'Mr Sadat's thousands of soldiers and hundreds of tanks will therefore be cut off from the rear and from their supply bases, and it is expected that they will sink into the sands of Sinai as in 1967'. He goes on to ask, 'Has Israel laid a trap for the Arabs?' And he answers:

> It is conceivable, then, that Israel 'goaded' the Arabs by 'heating up' the front in an effort to motivate Egypt and Syria to play the role of aggressor this time. In the first hours of the current war Israel pretended that it did not intend to respond, in order to strengthen that impression of Arab aggression as well as to draw Sadat's tanks into the sand dunes of the Sinai. This is definitely a reasonable conjecture. No one, not even the Arabs, could yet believe that the Israelis with their excellent intelligence service could have been surprised by such a large-scale attack . . . It was clear that to the extent that the Israelis wanted Sadat to attack, they could not mobilize their forces and station a powerful contingent on the east bank of the Canal to meet the attackers, for in that case Sadat would have again postponed his attack. Moreover, the commanders in Tel Aviv were interested in letting the Egyptian tanks break through into Sinai, so that they could hit them and destroy them.[3]

It was widely believed, even in the Arab world, that Israel 'had done it again', inflicted another blow on the Arabs, this time by means of a diabolical ruse. To think that Israel had been surprised was just too far-fetched.[4]

Confidence in a rapid victory was sky-high, but discernible alongside that was a feeling of anger and loathing towards the Egyptians and the Syrians for having dared to violate the serene and pleasant life Israelis were enjoying. The editor of *Davar*, Hannah Zemer, wrote on the fifth day of the war: 'The strongest urge that I feel these days, I confess, and I assume that a great many share it with me, is to grab some deadly implement and lash out. Not noble, but natural.' Others, hysterical in their own ways, proffered advice on 'how to deal with the enemy'. On the fourth day of the war, articles by well-known journalists appeared in almost all the newspapers, under headlines such as 'The objective: to break' (*Haaretz*); 'Strike the enemy and destroy his reserves and potential' (*Davar*); and one of *Maariv*'s people outdid them all by proposing, under the headline 'Break them', that 'our counterattack must be so hard, crushing, ruthless and cruel that it causes a national trauma in the collective consciousness of the Arabs . . . The Yom Kippur adventure must be so costly for the Arabs that the very thought of another adventure in the future causes their hearts to contract . . . The blow must transcend the realm of rationality, such that the Arab peoples' sense of self-preservation forces them to reconcile themselves to Israel.' Even a researcher on the Israeli–Arab conflict from the Shiloah Institute of Tel Aviv University (Dan Schueftan) was pulled into the wave of 'ruination and destruction' and said in an article in *Haaretz* that in order to prevent more wars, 'Israel's war objective should be to extract from the Arabs a price they cannot pay, and so move towards the systematic destruction of the industrial and transport infrastructure of Egypt and strike at its ability to exploit its natural resources' . . . Simple citizens too expressed their opinions and gave advice in letters to the editor and in ads they published in the newspapers with their own money. One proposed refusing any settlement 'before the enemy is subdued once and for all', and another proposed threatening Cairo and occupying Jabal al-Druze.

It took the appearance on television of General Aharon Yariv, formerly the head of the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, at the end of the fourth day of the war for the faith in an

imminent quick victory to begin to dissipate. He repeated over and over to his astonished Israeli audience that, this time, it would not be a short war. The next day, articles with a different tone began to appear in the newspapers: ‘The test will be a long one’, ‘we must conserve our breath’. Along with those, column-sized and full-page ads began to appear, sponsored by institutions and enterprises, municipalities, kibbutzim and villages with telephone numbers their mobilized members and employees were asked to call in order to confirm that they were all right.

Thus, Israelis began very slowly to understand that this time there would be no repeat of 1967 or 1956. Back then, the IDF organized itself to its full potential and meticulously planned war, which lasted for less than a week and concluded with a clear victory. This time, the war happened all of a sudden, like thunder on a clear day, and it lasted for nearly three weeks. It did not at all unfold as the IDF had hoped, and concluded in a draw, without the destruction of the enemy’s armies as had been the case in the past and as had been promised at the beginning of the war.

Back then, the country was flooded with glorious victory albums; this time not even one album was published, and the first book that appeared after the war was called *The Failure*.

Back then, evenings were organized in which the generals appeared before journalists and explained, with the help of maps, how the battles had been conducted and the victory won. Now, a commission of inquiry was established to look into and expose the failures that had led the IDF to be so surprised when Israel was attacked.

Then, the generals looked like ‘supermen’ and fraternity and mutual affection prevailed among them. Now ‘wars of the generals’ began even while the war was still going on, and they led to vilification in the local and international press, mutual lawsuits, and finally to the ouster of the commanders who were responsible for the failures.

Back then, after the war, there were glorious military parades on Independence Day, in which weapons that had been taken as booty were displayed; now there were no parades in Israel, but Israelis heard about a big display of plundered military gear in the heart of Cairo – the first of its kind in an Arab country – that took place two months after the war, in which the Egyptians displayed tanks and cannons, vehicles, weapons and ammunition of various kinds that had fallen into their hands. On the first anniversary of the war there was a victory parade in Cairo, while in Jerusalem Captain (Res.) Motti Ashkenazi held a demonstration against those responsible for the failures of the war.

Back then, the reservists were quickly released from service and returned to their daily lives; this time the reserve duty of most of those called up lasted for several months, such that the ‘Kippurniks’ began to say that ‘those who will relieve us are still in grade eleven’.

Then, the mobilized reservists returned home and joined in the waves of joy at the unexpected victory that swept over the country; now they returned sad and tired and many of them even required the services of the psychiatric branch of the medical corps, having been afflicted with shell shock, a phenomenon that was previously unknown in the IDF.

Then, the Israeli economy took on real momentum after the war; now it suffered from the economic shock caused by the war.

Then, Israel enjoyed broad sympathy worldwide, even though it was Israel that had fired the first shots on 5 June [1967]; now, despite the fact that Israel had been attacked by the armies of Egypt and Syria, Israel met with lack of sympathy and even condemnation from other countries, and it was not always Arab oil that was the cause (such as, for example, the breaking of relations with all the states of the African continent except South Africa and its two satellites Lesotho and Swaziland, as well as Malawi and the island of Mauritius, which continue to maintain relations

with Israel).

Then, the song ‘Jerusalem of Gold’ was sung; now a popular poet writes upon the signing of a separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt in January 1974, a quarter-year after the war: ‘Good times are coming, with vegetables and fresh bread and without field rations.’

Then, everyone believed that peace was on the horizon, after the IDF had ‘taught the Arabs a lesson, once and for all’; now the entire horizon was covered with clouds after the shattering of many myths in the tumult of war.

Killed, missing, captured

The shock that afflicted Israel was a powerful one, due to the gap between expectations and reality. For years Israelis had been promised repeatedly that if, God forbid, war should occur, it would be a ‘good war’ as in the past; and now suddenly there’s a ‘bad war’, a war with many victims. Indeed, one of the main reasons for the terrible shock that gripped Israel after the war was the large number of losses: 2,523 killed, from private to general (the number of officers killed reached 581), as well as 7,056 wounded, about half of them with a disability of 10 per cent or higher.

The Israeli public’s high level of sensitivity to losses, due to Israel’s relatively small population, produces a sense of unity and shared destiny in times of crisis. More than once, after a military operation that was described as successful, in which only one or two soldiers fell, Israelis could be heard saying, ‘None of that was worth the one soldier who was killed.’ The Egyptians were aware of that sensitivity, and in their public statements they made no effort to conceal that one of their objectives was to cause a large number of Israeli casualties, in order to traumatize Israel as much as possible. And, on that point, their success unfortunately surpassed all expectations. Indeed, the number of victims during the War of Independence (1947–49) was about 6,200, of whom about 1,700 were civilians, out of a total Yishuv population of about 600,000 Jews; but that war lasted a very long time (November 1947– January 1949). The next two wars produced light losses: 171 Israeli soldiers fell in the Sinai War, and in the Six-Day War, in which Israel fought three Arab states, 679 soldiers died. Relative to its population, Israel’s losses were very high in 1973: in relative terms, Israel’s losses were two and a half times the total losses of the United States in Indochina over ten years.

When Israelis learned the high number of losses (the full number was not published until a few months after the war, whereas in 1956 and 1967 it was published the day after the war), the country was plunged into a general state of mourning. When in March 1974, an official booklet was published by the IDF which listed the names of the dead and missing, many pages in the Israeli press were dedicated to announcements of mourning by various departments and institutions lamenting their fallen members. The mourning for the war’s fallen was manifest for a long time. The first Independence Day after the war,[5] in April 1974, was grim, and Remembrance Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the IDF, which preceded it, cast a dark shadow over the holiday itself, which lacked the rejoicing and dancing of previous years.

Moreover, this time, the shock was all the greater because of an additional phenomenon, which was hitherto virtually unknown in Israel’s wars: the missing. The IDF always had a sacred rule, which was obeyed under all circumstances: the dead and wounded were never to be left behind on the battlefield. The Israeli soldier always knew that his comrades would do even the impossible to avoid abandoning him should he become a casualty. The IDF adhered to this iron

law in the past and even in this terrible war enormous efforts were expended to evacuate dead and wounded, and it occurred more than once that those efforts resulted in additional victims. However, there was a large number of missing due to the murderous nature of this war, the surprise that befell the IDF and the fact that for the first time since 1948 the IDF was forced to retreat in the first stages of the war. Only after the battles ended did the scale of the disaster become clear. At first, the number of missing was reported as about 500, but by the time the IDF published the booklet of the fallen and missing their number was 224.

The IDF, which was not organized to deal with the missing on such a scale, did a great deal to help to locate them, even when it was clear that the missing were no longer alive. The issue of the missing soldiers caused one of the worst scars left on the nation by that war.

On the second day of the war, as Israeli citizens watched Jordanian television in order to see how the war was being shown on the other side, they were thunderstruck at the sight of an Egyptian news film of Israeli soldiers who had fallen captive to the Egyptians on the Bar-Lev Line. On subsequent days, Jordanian television continued to show films of Israeli prisoners, including the interrogation in Hebrew of the prisoner Lieutenant-Colonel Assaf Yaguri, commander of a tank battalion that had fought by the Canal. Israelis saw their brothers standing with their heads bowed, in the typical stance of prisoners of war, beside them their captors, Egyptian and Syrian soldiers. Afterwards came the surrender under UN auspices of the Mezah outpost at the southern entrance to the Suez Canal, after seven uninterrupted days of fighting. And again – pictures of Israeli prisoners, thirty-seven in number.

The shock in Israel at the sight of the prisoners was a terrible one. Suddenly the unvanquished Israeli was seen as a prisoner. More than one Israeli sobbed at the sight of the unkempt and terrified Israeli prisoners, some of them wearing the slippers they were wearing when they were captured. ‘If I had not clearly seen my brother in the film,’ said a Jerusalem resident, ‘I would have thought it was a falsified film. Israeli prisoners in Egyptian hands? Who would have believed it?’

Indeed, Israelis had gotten used to thinking of prisoners in a different way. In the 1956 war, only one prisoner, an Israeli pilot, was captured by the Egyptians, as against 5,850 Egyptian prisoners. In the Six-Day War, the number of Israeli prisoners captured by the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Jordanians and even the Iraqis (pilots) was fourteen, as against 5,200 Egyptian prisoners (thousands more Egyptian soldiers got lost in the desert at the end of the hostilities but were not taken prisoner and were ordered to return to Egypt), 591 Syrians and 520 Jordanians. Now the Egyptians had captured 241 Israeli soldiers (most of them at the beginning of the campaign), as against 8,135 Egyptians (most of whom were captured after the crossing to the west bank of the Canal and after the ceasefire. By 24 October, Israel had transmitted to the Red Cross the names of 998 prisoners; on 27 October, the number rose to 5,000), and 62 soldiers were captured by the Syrians, as against 378 Syrians captured by Israel. Israel also captured 12 Iraqi soldiers and 5 Moroccans. The Israeli public’s acute sensitivity to the fate of the prisoners was demonstrated, when, for months, Syria refused to transmit the names of the Israeli prisoners, in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, on the grounds of allegations by Syria that – among other things – Israel had violated the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Until the list of names was submitted to Israel at the end of February 1974, not a day passed without demonstrations against the Syrians, who exploited this Israeli sensitivity for all it was worth. The exchange of prisoners with the Egyptians, on the other hand, was conducted a few weeks after the end of the hostilities.

The Egyptians used the Israeli prisoners as a psychological weapon for internal and external purposes. Until the Yom Kippur War, profound fear of the Israeli 'superman' was widespread in Egypt. The exhibition of Israeli prisoners on television and in the press, especially in the newspapers of the Egyptian army, contributed to the raising of morale by proving to the people, and especially to Egyptian soldiers, that the Israeli soldier was flesh and blood like them. The other use to which the prisoners were put was in the service of the Egyptian propaganda machine directed at Israel. Every evening, during the war and after it, Egyptian radio broadcast conversations in Hebrew with Israeli prisoners as well as declarations made by them that were elicited, as they admitted after they returned from captivity, by means of compulsion and enticement, although they were sometimes made of their own free will in order to notify their families that they were still among the living. In those statements the prisoners criticized 'the failing Zionist leaders who sent us to fight an unjust war'.[6]

During that time, the masses of the Israeli public were glued to their radios, which were tuned to the Hebrew broadcasts of Radio Cairo. At first, everyone wanted to know exactly who had been taken prisoner, and afterwards they continued to listen out of curiosity, in order to hear the propaganda statements of the captive Israeli soldiers, which more than once were made through compulsion. This was manifest both from the pace of the reading as well as the texts, which were not always well drafted. There were expressions an ordinary Israeli would not use, and the prisoners, of course, did not take pains to correct the style so that it would be clear to friends in Israel that it was not they who had composed their statements. The radio critic for *Haaretz* responded to those broadcasts by writing: 'Listening to Radio Cairo was one of the strangest experiences of the war, a moving, infuriating, provocative and thought-provoking experience. Until I heard the interviews with some of the Israeli prisoners, I doubted the truth of the reports that there were Israelis in Egyptian captivity.'

And this war was also different from previous wars when it came to listening to enemy broadcasts. Now Cairo's Hebrew broadcasts were listened to with worry, whereas during the Six-Day War, Cairo's hysterical broadcasts in Hebrew ('We are advancing'; 'Tel Aviv is going up in flames') were a source of entertainment for Israelis – so much so that a shrewd businessman produced a recording containing excerpts from the Arab broadcasts from Cairo during the war, which sold like hotcakes.

Fathers and sons

The 1973 war was also different from preceding wars in that this was, first and foremost, a war of the sons, sons of the fighters of the generation of 1948 who fought for the independence of the State. In the previous wars, the sons were still too young for military service. This time, at ages eighteen and over, they found themselves in the ranks of the fighters, sometimes alongside their fathers. The latter, men of forty and even fifty who had had their fill of war, were again called to the army, almost all of them as commanders. This time when the entreaty to 'take care of yourself' was heard in face-to-face meetings or on the two-way radio, it was no longer said only by worried fathers to their sons, but also by sons to their fathers. This was symbolic of the continuous chain of wars in this country and it gave rise to melancholy reflections in the hearts of old and young alike.

Among the older generation, the Yom Kippur War revived memories of Hitler's Holocaust. In a session of the Knesset that took place during the war (16 October 1973), Knesset Member

Yaakov Hazan (Mapam – Alignment) gave an extraordinarily emotional and hard-hitting speech, in which he attacked the European countries 'who love crucified Jews', and even accused the Arabs of continuing the work of Hitler. When he was asked later about the cause of his agitated state on that occasion, he replied: 'I gave my speech under the conditions of a hard and bloody war. Don't forget that I came from a family that lost seventy of its members at the hands of Hitler. Only four souls remained out of the whole family.'[7]

However, unlike previous wars, the voices of more than a few bereft parents were also heard, expressing the view that the disaster could have been avoided. Alongside the patriotic ads of bereft parents who expressed, as in previous wars, their complete faith in the leadership that had led the nation during the war, now items that were quite different were appearing in the newspapers, such as that of Tzefira, mother of Lior, a son of Kibbutz Sarid who fell at Suez, who wrote: 'I cannot escape the thought that this sacrifice could have been avoided. That is why I do not want to hear any words of condolence or any words of praise from Golda and Dayan. It is so repulsive.'[8] A father whose son died on the Golan returned the insignia of the rank that was conferred on his son after his death, accompanied by a letter stating, among other things: 'With feelings of anger and deep pain that my son, Shalom, fell in a superfluous and pointless war I hereby return the new rank that was conferred on my son, the sergeant, after his death. I am no longer in need of additional ranks for him.'[9] Things reached such a pass that bereft parents heckled Prime Minister Meir and Defence Minister Dayan at a memorial for the war's fallen held at the military cemetery on Mount Herzl about five months after the war. Expressions and manifestations like these were not frequent, but such things had not happened after Israel's previous wars, and that was an indication of the seeds of doubt that the war had planted.

The responses of the young, who saw the horror with their own eyes, pointed first and foremost to the terrible shock with which they were struck by the war. They returned from the war older, more serious, sad and shaken. For the first time, soldiers of the IDF saw terrible war. One of them engraved on a wall in a camp on the west bank of the Suez Canal the following surrealistic inscription: 'One night a man dreamed that he died – he woke up in the morning and saw that it was true'. Of course, there were those for whom the war strengthened their chauvinistic feelings, as in the past, but there were more than a few whose thoughts turned in a different direction, and they began to pose, vocally and on the pages of the newspapers, questions that contained within them both an outcry against the war and a political stance. True, after the Six-Day War, questions came up about existence and war, but this time the phenomenon was more comprehensive and more penetrating. A soldier wrote after the ceasefire:

> I celebrated my birthday by myself . . . I thought about my three sons, whom I strive to nurture for the coming wars. About my wife, consumed with worry. About my abandoned office. About the driver who was afflicted with shock when his ammunition truck was shelled and he refused to set out on the road again . . . the thoughts are galloping like crazy. Thought 1: When will it end? Thought 2: Why is it happening? Thought 3: Is it impossible to prevent this at any cost? I try to get into the minds of all the publicists who were gripped by terrible pessimism and in whom the blind faith in the force of arms grew. Why do they not try to get into the mind of the enemy? Why do they not understand that he himself was pulled into the valley of slaughter as the last way out, for lack of alternatives? Rivers of blood are on the heads of those who sent their armies to fight us. But in all seriousness – what did we do to get that bloody plan out of the heads of our adversaries in the past six years, since they sustained a terrible and shameful defeat in the Six-Day War? I believe, despite all the pain of a wounded heart and the sorrow and the sadness and the hate, that peace will be no illusion if they learn how to deal with it immediately and in the correct way.[10]

Youth from the kibbutzim, who, after the Six-Day War, published the anthology *Soldiers Speak*,[11] now dared to ascribe the guilt for the absence of peace to the Israeli leadership as well. Avinoam, a commando and kibbutz member who figured prominently in *Soldiers Speak*,

returned from the war and related that, even during the battles, he could not escape from the thought that 'it would have been possible to avoid the war, if Israel had adopted a policy different from the one that found its most significant expression in the Galilee Document'. Youths from Kibbutz Harel, who returned stunned from the war, published a booklet entitled 'Accursed is the war', which included the following: 'The most important and basic question is: do we want peace and have we done everything to reach that goal? It looks like the people who were leading this country did not want peace and as long as they continue to lead the country we will not attain peace.'

An awakening also took place within the ranks of the secondary-school students, 'the soldiers of the next war'. Of course, there were among them manifestations of nationalism, which goes with every war like a shadow, but there were also more than a few who demanded honest and non-evasive answers to the probing questions they put to their teachers after the upheaval. In meetings with educators, who more than once stood helpless before the 'evil spirit' that had taken hold of the youth, questions were asked such as: 'Until when will we be fighting wars in this country?'; 'Is it our fate here to always live by the sword?'; 'Why are we isolated in the world?'; and even – 'Is the Zionist idea worth dying for?' Nor did these expressions bypass the kibbutz movement, which had sacrificed the most blood in the war, about 15 per cent of the fallen, while constituting only 2.8 per cent of the population. At a conference of hundreds of grade 12 students from the kibbutz movement, which was convened about five months after the war, youths expressed 'heretical' views that shocked their teachers, such as: 'There's no future here'; 'Does Israel have to be the only possibility that exists for me?' Said by a girl in tears: 'You love war and you send our guys to die in it. You don't love peace, and that's despicable. The whole country is a graveyard.'

Among the questions raised anew by the war were questions about the nature of the Zionist movement, which had troubled Israeli public opinion in the two years before the war, because of the struggle of the people of the villages of Iqrit and Bir'im, who were asking to return to their land,[12] and the expulsion of the Bedouin from the Rafah Salient in preparation for the construction of Jewish settlements there. Once again, embarrassing thoughts were raised to the effect that the claims of the other side too – the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular – had a degree of justice and that we were not dealing here with a conflict in which one side was all right and the other side was all wrong. There were youths who began even to question the truth of the slogan of the past wars – 'There is no alternative' [Hebrew: *Ein breira*]; and there were those who wondered out loud: 'They tell us that the purpose of Zionism is to ensure the existence of the Jewish people, but here, after a series of wars with the neighbouring peoples, a situation has been created in which the existence of the Jews who live in Israel is subject to real, physical danger, more than in any other place in the world. Is this a decree from heaven, or could this situation have been avoided?' These were opinions expressed by minorities, but they were voiced in many forums and they expressed confusion and a search for a way forward.

These words of scepticism and protest from the youth, which also found their way to the press, provoked shock and worry among the leadership and especially among the heads of the Education Ministry. The conclusion, as could have been expected, was that there was a need to reinforce 'homeland consciousness' [Hebrew: *toda^{c}at ha-mole-det*] in the schools – as if that were the answer to the fearful, perplexed and angry youth. The youths who returned from battle broken and devastated were also given voice by the poet Yehonatan Geffen in the protest pieces he wrote for the stage after the war, in which the 'sacred cows' from before the Deluge were slaughtered. A young man appears on the stage and reads a postcard from the next world: 'To the

Knesset Member, greetings. Everything's OK with me, I'm deep in the ground and you're still in the gallery. Tell me, when you said "Big Israel", exactly how far did you want me to go?'

The economic burden

Unlike previous wars, the Yom Kippur War placed a huge financial burden on the Israeli economy, manifested not only in vast military expenditures but also in harm to production and exports, in consequence of widespread mobilization of the reserves lasting for several months. The war caused a grave crisis in several sectors such as transportation, construction and above all in the hotel industry and tourism. The Israeli economy was prepared for a short war like those of 1956 or 1967, not for a war of weeks, and certainly not a protracted state of emergency. The financial aid from Israel's only friend, the United States, and from its only ally, the Jewish people in the diaspora, as well as the heavy taxes, direct and indirect, that were imposed on Israelis since the beginning of the war, prevented the collapse of the economy and foiled the calculations of the Arab states that the Israeli economy could be brought down by means of a war that would last longer than two weeks. The economy sustained a serious blow, but in the end stood firm. However, as Finance Minister Pinchas Sapir put it, 'We, our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren will bear the costs of this war.'[13]

In order to understand the economic burden that was placed on the Israeli economy by the Yom Kippur War, it's useful to compare the defence budget to the national product. In the annual budget for 1970–71 (the last stages of the War of Attrition, including large arms acquisitions and reconstruction of the Bar-Lev Line) the defence budget reached 28 per cent of the national product. Afterwards there was a gradual decline and in 1973–74 the defence budget was supposed to be 18 per cent of the national product. Due to the war, military expenditures jumped that year to 43 per cent – I£16.5 billion out of a GNP of I£39 billion. In the 1974–75 budget, the defence budget took I£16 billion, about 33 per cent of GNP (for comparison: in the US the defence budget was only 7 per cent of GNP), and approximately the same percentage is expected for 1975–76.

The loss of national product over eighteen days of war is estimated at I£50 to 60 million a day, and the cumulative loss of productivity from the beginning of the war to the end of 1973 is estimated at I£1.7 billion. In 1974 there was an additional loss of about I£3.3 billion. If we add to the loss of exports and investment new IDF purchases from outside Israel or from local production, expenditures for ammunition and fuel, the expenses of maintaining a large reserve army for a long period and the rehabilitation of the wounded and the bereft families, the price of the Yom Kippur War reaches a total of about I£30 billion.

A look at the forecasts of the Economic Planning Authority of the Ministry of Finance, published in a special study in May 1974, reveals the enormous growth of defence procurement, in foreign currency alone, for the coming years:

YEAR	**EXPENDITURE** (Millions of US dollars)
1970	770
1971	715
1972	662

1973	1,570*
1974	1,800**
1975	2,050**
1976	2,200**
1977	2,350**
1978	2,500**
* The forecast before the war was $600 million. ** Projected.	

In view of the trend in this table, we can follow up Pinchas Sapir's statement by adding that the children of our great-grandchildren, too, will still be paying for the Yom Kippur War, and that is assuming that another war does not break out in the meantime. The cumulative burden is reflected in Israel's debt in foreign currency, which reached $5.7 billion at the end of 1974. The foreign currency debt could have been bigger had Israel not received a US grant after the war that was included in the allocation of $2.2 billion promised by President Nixon a few days before the end of the war.

The war harmed productivity, and consequently exports as well. The balance-of-payments deficit, which was supposed to reach $1.5 billion the year of the war (approximately $1.7 billion in 1972), reached $2.5 billion because of it (that sum does not include imports in the framework of the special procurements agreement with the United States, which amounted to about $1 billion more for the year). The Yom Kippur War therefore resulted in a setback for Israel's economic independence.

Production was hampered by the mobilization of a substantial part of the 1.1 million men and women who comprise the workforce of the Israeli economy,[14] as well as the absence of the workers from the Territories – about 70,000 in October 1973 – who heeded the appeal by the *fedayeen* organizations to remain home during the war, although most of them returned to work after a few weeks. The war hit Israel just when its economy was flourishing, and the economic blow was greater than it had been in the 1967 war, when Israel was experiencing an economic slowdown and 9 to 10 per cent of the workforce were unemployed. At the end of the Six-Day War, the reservists were demobilized after a short time and the economy gained momentum. This time, the demobilization of the reserves was slower, and in January 1974 about 20 per cent (60,000) of the industrial workforce were still mobilized. It was not until several weeks after the signing of the separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt, in mid January, that large numbers of reservists were demobilized.

Productivity was particularly affected by the mobilization of key players in the economy, who are usually also commanders or holders of vital positions in their units, which more than once caused stoppage of production lines in enterprises. For example, the banking system, which has come to depend on computers in recent years, was faced with paralysis at a certain point after the outbreak of the war, because its workforce is composed mainly of young people, almost all of whom were mobilized. Only the transfer of computer operators to the banks from elsewhere and the demobilization of some crucial employees solved the problem. At the end of November, a special committee was formed to demobilize employees who were vital to industry, but only a few hundred out of thousands of crucial employees were demobilized early.

This war was characterized by protracted service on the part of reservists, which provoked increased allegations of unequal distribution of the burden of military service, which had never

been heard before. The head of the Manpower Branch of the General Staff publicly promised on several occasions that the army was trying to find the reservists who had not turned up and that their number was in fact small. But that perception among the mobilized soldiers did not abate, as documented by many letters published in the press from soldiers and members of their families. The sense of unfairness, in conjunction with particularly serious economic problems among independent business owners, was socially explosive. A major in an armoured battalion stationed along the Canal explained his view in a conversation with journalists, some time before the signing of the separation-of-forces agreement:

> We have a real war of attrition here, but this time it is imposed not on the soldiers of the regular army but on the reservists, who are now in their fourth month on the line. People are getting painful letters from home. Families are suffering from hardship. Some have even received dismissal notices. Bills are piling up. One has a sick wife who can't take care of the children. Add to that the Egyptian shelling, the knowledge that a soldier can't help his wife and that there are healthy people walking around in the rear, for whom the war is a story in the newspaper and a picture on television – and you get a level of bitterness that is liable to blow up in our faces one day.

The home front felt the war only indirectly. The supply of vital necessities continued to flow as usual, and there was not even a shortage of fuel.[15] Nevertheless, the shortage of transport vehicles affected daily life on the Israeli home front for several months. Civilian trucks and buses were also pressed into service during the war, and only about 8 per cent of that vehicle fleet was left for service in the rear. That had also been the case in 1967, but then, unlike in 1973, civilian vehicles were released after a short time and returned to their usual functions. One of the lessons of the war is that the IDF emergency transport system needs to be based on a separate fleet of vehicles that belong to the IDF, parallel to that of the civilian economy. That programme will require acquisition by the IDF of about 5,000 trucks.

One of the unavoidable consequences of the war was a decline in the standard of living due to the mobilization of the citizenry's money in various ways: a war loan and a voluntary loan, which was in fact deducted from the income of all taxpaying citizens (the two together constituted about 15 per cent of salary), the increase in direct and indirect taxes, drastic reduction of subsidies for vital necessities (bread, milk and dairy products, sugar, oil and flour) and for public transportation. In addition, there were higher prices for all services and necessities (including a 30 per cent increase for electricity, 20 per cent for water and between 40 per cent and 100 per cent for various kinds of fuel) – all on a scale unprecedented in the history of the State of Israel. Between the Passover before the war and the one after it, prices overall rose by 55 per cent. Most of the increase, of course, came after October (an increase of 8.1 per cent was recorded in February 1974, the biggest in the previous twenty years). Prices again rose at a dizzying pace after the devaluation of the Israeli pound and its fixing at the rate of six to the US dollar in November 1974. If we recall that the standard of living in Israel had increased in recent years and that that process had appeared set to continue, then the decline in the standard of living caused by the war was even bigger. Here, too, as in the issue of military reserve duty, protests were heard over the unequal distribution of the burden. The former secretary of the Histadrut, Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, said in an internal Labour Party debate that 'regarding the distribution of the burden for requirements of war, no government in the world has acted like the workers' government – that is, of Israel – is acting. Such a thing did not take place during Churchill's time, nor in Roosevelt's time during the Second World War.'[16] Requests to the finance minister to impose a war profits tax were turned down. As is known, there are branches of the economy that are linked to war, such as metals and electronics, which increased their output during and after the war and even absorbed workers from other sectors of the economy.

But despite the economic hardships manifest across the economy and in the lives of individuals, economic problems were not the main preoccupation of the residents of Israel in the period immediately after the war.

A crisis of confidence

The eighth of October in the morning hours, on the Canal front: IDF forces are fighting at great personal risk against the Egyptian forces that have seized control of the Bar-Lev Line. Many are wounded. Hundreds of Israeli tanks are already out of commission. In a brief pause in the shooting, someone in an Israeli position turns on a transistor radio and the voice of the announcer in Jerusalem is heard: 'Our forces in the Suez Canal area are eradicating the enemy.' A soldier utters a juicy curse and yells to his comrades: 'I don't want to hear the radio any more. Guys, let's keep fighting.'

The same day, the same hour, on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv: several people are gathered around a transistor radio, listening to the inaccurate reports from the southern front. 'They'll finish them off within a day or so,' says one. 'Soon we'll hit them hard enough to last them for ten years,' says another.

The surprise Arab attack on 6 October put the military and civilian public information (*hasbara*) services in an unprecedented position during the first days of the war. IDF forces were withdrawing, abandoning lines and positions; many were killed. Israeli soldiers were captured and missing, hundreds of Israeli tanks were hit and dozens of warplanes were shot down. The first reports that arrived from the fronts caused growing confusion within the leadership. The leaders chose the path of minimization. Even more unhelpfully and dangerously, they chose to conceal the painful facts. When the truth was revealed a short time later, an unprecedented event occurred: a crisis of confidence among the population with respect to official announcements. Israelis who until the Yom Kippur War were willing to swallow any report by the government and its spokesmen on all matters related to defence and foreign affairs began to be sceptical even on those subjects, after learning that they had tried to deceive them. Even the announcements of the IDF spokesman, which in the past had been sacred to Israelis – unlike the reports of the spokesmen of the Arab armies, which, in previous wars, had been full of exaggerations and elicited ridicule and mockery – were no longer received as unimpeachable truth.

'When your only objective is to stay alive, you don't devote much time to secondary issues such as information.'[17] That is how General (Res.) Chaim Herzog, Israel's official military commentator during the hostilities, explained the failure to provide the public with reliable information about what was occurring on the fronts at the beginning of the war. Perhaps that solution was preferable, in terms of the civilian morale, to Moshe Dayan's plan to appear on television on the fourth day of the war 'to provide the public with information about the situation without any cover-up or untruth, so that they will have confidence in us'. As it turned out, Dayan's appearance on television was cancelled at the last minute by Golda Meir. In his place appeared General Yariv, who refrained from drawing the grim picture that Dayan had intended to present to the people and which he had revealed a few hours previously in a closed meeting with Israeli newspaper editors. When the editor of *Haaretz*, Gershom Schocken, heard Dayan's report at that meeting and his intention to speak in the same spirit in a television appearance, he told him: 'If you say on television this evening what you have told us, it will cause an earthquake in

the consciousness of the people in Israel, the Jewish people in the world and the Arab people.'[18] An earthquake in public opinion was thus avoided on that fourth day, but it came afterwards, and then it caused a crisis of confidence between the public and the government.

The fundamental allegation levelled against the government by the shocked public did not stem from the concealment of losses on the Israeli side, which produced a 'sanitized' picture of the war, according to which it was only the Arab side that sustained casualties and the destruction of tanks, aircraft and artillery batteries; nor did it stem from the delays in providing accurate information about casualties and the missing.[19] The allegations related to the fact that the truth had not been told to the people about the situations on the fronts in the first days of the war – not about the capture of the Bar-Lev Line by the Egyptians, and not about the capture of over half of the Golan Heights by the Syrians, not even about the capture of the Israeli position on Mount Hermon by the Syrians – a fact reported only when the position was recaptured from the Syrians at the end of the war. What occurred on the battlefields in the first days of the war was not faithfully reflected in Israeli reports, so that for the first time in the history of the Israeli–Arab wars the reports of the Arab spokesmen were closer to the truth than were the Israeli reports in the first days of the war. That harsh statement is difficult for Israelis to digest, but it is a verified fact. The damage within Israeli public opinion could no longer be repaired. One correspondent came out with the following statement, uttered in a moment of anger and which expressed the prevailing consternation at the inaccurate information: 'The Arabs learned from Israel how to fight and we learned from the Arabs how to lie.'

Whoever today goes through the material published by the official spokesmen and newspapers at the beginning of the war will understand why public opinion was thunderstruck when the truth was revealed. The performance of Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General David Elazar at a televised press conference on the third day of the war, which drew a picture that did not correspond to the situation in reality, is one example out of many. General Shmuel Gonen, the head of the Southern Command, for example, explained on the radio at midday on the second day of the war, that 'in the south, along nearly the full length of the line, the Egyptians have not achieved the objectives they sought to achieve. In some places there are heavy battles and the Egyptians are still trying to breach the Canal.' Those words were said as the Egyptians were continuing to transfer massive forces across the Canal and most of the waterway was in their hands. The next day, when the Bar-Lev Line fell in its entirety, a Daily Order was issued by the commander of the armoured forces in the Sinai, General Avraham Mendler, which included the following: 'The line of fortifications has absorbed the first shock and stood fast. Before the passage of another day, the full might of the IDF will be brought to bear, which will completely defeat the enemy.' Even a cautious military commentator like General Chaim Herzog explained on television at the end of the second day of the campaign that 'following the destruction of the bridges on the Canal by the air force [in fact, only a few of the bridges were put out of commission – AK] the Egyptian army fell into a trap to a certain extent'.

Even in the official announcements of the IDF spokesman there was a substantial gap between reportage and reality. On 7 October (at 00:45 hours), while Syrian forces were still advancing, the IDF spokesman issued this statement: 'The battles between the Syrian force attacking with infantry and armour and our forces are continuing without interruption, the attackers failing to break through our forces' defensive lines.' On the grave situation at the end of the same day: 'The Syrians' infantry and armour formations have attacked throughout the day in great force all along the front on the Golan Heights. In a series of attacks the Syrian forces have succeeded in achieving territorial objectives, but with the counter-attacks by our forces,

with the assistance of the air force, the Syrians have been repulsed in most sectors. By evening the Syrians still held part of our territory in the central sector of Khushniyyeh, but our forces' defence lines have stabilized in most of the other parts of the front.' When that report was published, Syrian forces were still careening towards Lake Kinneret and the Bnot Yaakov Bridge.

After the turning point on the fronts, the situation changed. At the end of the big day of combat on 14 October, when the Egyptian attack was broken, Lieutenant General Bar-Lev, who was in command of operations on the Egyptian front, called Golda Meir and told her, 'Golda, today is a good day, the old IDF is back and the old Egyptians are back. The IDF put 200 Egyptian tanks out of commission and only a few of our tanks were hit, and the Egyptians have reverted to character and begun lying.'

Indeed, there were also Israeli announcements that did not truthfully reflect the situation at later stages of the Yom Kippur War, but there the objective was to create a 'fog of war' in order to withhold information from the enemy. An example of selective publication that served IDF objectives, as in the Six-Day War, came in the second week of the war, when the IDF crossed the Canal. The crossing was described by Israel as an action by a mere 'task force', a report that was apparently believed in the critical first days of the breakthrough by Egyptian staff officers, who were surprised by the Israeli move without having a clear idea of what was occurring on the ground. The Egyptian announcements tended at first to disparage the advancing force. Thirty-six hours after the crossing by the first armoured force, Cairo reported on 'seven amphibious tanks that crossed the Canal; three were destroyed and the other four scattered in all directions'. A few hours later, the Egyptian spokesman reported that the Egyptian army had 'surrounded the Israeli units that had infiltrated across the Canal in the Bitter Lakes area and given them an ultimatum to surrender'; and as for the next announcement, the third one that day, it reported that the Egyptian army was striking the infiltrating forces. The Egyptians described the crossing and the advance in the western sector of the Canal as a 'propaganda action', a 'psychological warfare operation' and an 'operation to raise morale in Israel', and as for the Israeli enclave in 'Africa', even after the war they described it as a 'trap', a 'stranglehold' and the like.[20]

When the policy of distorting information was decided upon at the beginning of the war, it was done, of course, out of fear that the public, which was used to nothing but stories about heroism and success in Israel–Arab wars, would suffer from emotional shock upon hearing that the IDF had been forced to withdraw.[21] Perhaps it also stemmed from a desire to cover up the failures which, due to neglect and contempt, had rendered possible the Egyptian and Syrian surprise attack, meanwhile hoping that the tide would turn within a day or so and no one would remember how badly it had begun. In the first days they tried to provide selective mendacious information even to army units. Lecturers sent by the Information Centre and its managers described to the soldiers the situation on the fronts as it was represented in the rear. A reserve combat-medic and professional journalist related his experience:

> On the morning of the third day of the war the radio broadcasts created the impression that this was a rerun of the Six-Day War. In the afternoon a lecturer from the IDF Information Administration appeared before us and confirmed to us the turnaround that the radio correspondents had reported. He related that the IDF had broken the Egyptian attack and two units under the command of Arik Sharon and Bren [the nickname of General Avraham Adan. –Trans.] had already crossed the Canal and were hurtling deep into Egypt. 'How did they cross?', asked a member of the company. 'On our bridges and on the bridges that were captured from the Egyptians', answered the information officer,[22] smoothly and confidently, emphasizing now and then that he had been updated from the General Staff war room. I left the lecture in frustration, in envy of my journalistic colleagues who serve in the IDF spokesman's unit for their role in the campaign, and I asked the unit command for permission to transfer to the IDF spokesman's unit. Arik, a senior officer in the unit, sounded surprised at my request for transfer and he was quite astonished when I told him about the content of the lecture.

> He blanched and immediately ordered the lecturer to be removed from the base. 'The situation on the southern front is grave', said Arik.[23]

If, in those first, hard days of the war, there had been far-sighted people among the leadership, they certainly would have opposed the practice of providing incorrect information, knowing that the deception could not last. In any case, the consequences were not long in coming and they were manifest in the polls conducted after the war. A public opinion survey published less than two months after the war showed that 'nearly half of the public thinks that only part of the announcements made by government spokesmen can be believed'.[24] Another survey, which was published later, showed a further widening of the credibility gap between the public and the government. According to that survey, '61.6 per cent of the public have only partial faith or no faith at all in the announcements of the government and the IDF.'[25]

Already, the day after the war, the authorities were alert to that phenomenon. They acknowledged its existence and sought ways to restore confidence in announcements from the government and the army. But despite that experience during the war, the practice of selective publication continued afterwards, and it met with resentment among the public. During the War of Attrition the Egyptians waged until the disengagement agreement was signed in mid January, the authorities tried for a time to conceal the gravity of the skirmishes on the Egyptian front; and, when the oil fields at Abu-Rudeis in Sinai were set on fire in early January 1974, how it occurred was not reported and rumours based on rumours spread among the public. Only thanks to an NBC correspondent, who published the information after he left Israel and was no longer subject to Israeli censorship laws, did residents of Israel learn that a Hawk ground-to-air missile fired from the Israeli coast accidentally hit the offshore drilling tower and caused the fire, which lasted for several months. This roundabout way of important news getting to the Israeli public, by means of foreign correspondents, a phenomenon that was widespread before, during and after the war (for example, it was mainly from the foreign press that Israelis learned about the existence and nature of disagreements between Israeli generals), provoked such anger that one of the daily newspapers responded with an editorial under the headline, 'Tell us the truth'.[26]

In the first days of the war, when partial information on the situation on the fronts was given by official sources, the government enjoyed complete cooperation from all the media outlets. That was not to be wondered at when it came to the radio, as well as television, which was covering a war for the first time in Israel. The Broadcasting Authority is a public body, but the government has decisive influence over it in all political and military matters.[27]

Moreover, it is the IDF spokesman or his representative (as well as the military censor) who has the final word on all matters related to the army and defence that are shown on television or broadcast on the radio, in times of peace as in times of war. The many military correspondents who were attached to operative units reported in the first days of the war only on the successes of their units, with emphasis on the heroism of the fighters. Those who were fed exclusively on media reports received the impression that although Israel's war was a hard one, it was nevertheless marked by achievements and victories. Phrases such as 'the enemy has been defeated' were uttered freely by editors and broadcasters even on the hardest days. Only on the fifth day of the war was a report from the Canal front broadcast on the radio which described the other side of the war: the blows the IDF had sustained in the first days, the anti-tank missiles that caused many losses to armoured units of the IDF, and other painful aspects of the war.

As for the press, it willingly took upon itself the task of presenting a distorted version of the reality on the fronts, apparently from a sense of 'patriotic duty', even though its editors knew the

truth from their daily meetings with the defence minister and military commanders during the war.[28] There were newspapers that took the morale-raising project to greater lengths, such as *Haaretz*, which on the third day of the war ran the following headline stretching over four columns: 'Egypt and Syria acknowledge an Israeli attack alongside their announcements of fictitious victories; the commands in Cairo and Damascus must be assumed to be receiving inaccurate reports.'

The motivations of Egypt and Syria regarding the war were not well covered in the Israeli media, as could be expected under the conditions of such a bitter war. The objective truth about the positions of the enemy was not foremost in the minds of the editors while blood was flowing on the fronts. Also understandable were aspirations to 'incite' Arab states against each other on the part of certain analysts, such as General Herzog, who tried not only to create conflict between Damascus and Baghdad upon the arrival of Iraqi forces in Syria (commentary on Israel Broadcasting on 18 October 1973 and the next day), but even hinted to the Kurds and the Iranians that it was a good time to move against Iraq, now that half its army was preoccupied with war against Israel (radio commentary on 21 October 1973).

However, this practice of presenting the Arab positions in a way that denied Israeli audiences an accurate and complete picture persisted even after the war was over. Accordingly, for example, *Haaretz* interpreted the term 'the national rights of the Palestinian people' as meaning the elimination of Israel, and its correspondent for Arab affairs, mixing up facts in a commentary, wrote that 'the Arab leaders (at the Arab Summit in Algiers) also made secret decisions according to which the final objective of the Arabs regarding Palestine went further than just the return of Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories. The Arab kings and presidents committed themselves to the restoration of the immutable national rights of the Palestinian people (the elimination of Israel).'[29] The words 'elimination of Israel'[30] were the correspondent's interpretation of the preceding term, but the headline over the story was: 'Among the secret decisions of the Algiers Summit: the elimination of Israel'. Many people repeated that claim after it was published in *Haaretz*.[31] And that is only one of a series of examples of distorted representation of the adversaries' position.

After the war, two institutions looked into the reasons for the crisis of confidence between the public and the government, and the extent to which the Establishment and the press were responsible for it. A commission of inquiry into the public relations activities of the IDF Spokesman's Unit (composed of a military officer, a professor and a journalist) pointed out in its report that the main causes of the credibility gap were the optimistic declarations by the political and military leadership during the first days of the war; inaccurate operational reports from the IDF, which painted a rosy picture of the war at various stages; inaccurate reports by military correspondents from various sectors on the southern front,[32] as well as selective excerpting from rhetoric that was published in the 'combat bulletins' of various units, and their conversion into news.

In January 1974, the Israeli Press Council dedicated three sessions to the role played by the press in the war and the harm done to the image of Israeli journalists in the eyes of the public. Many of the participants admitted that the press had not given a faithful picture of what was taking place on the fronts, though they justified it with 'the need to protect morale'. However, the content of the discussions, which was published in the press, made it clear to the general public that since the Six-Day War the Israeli press had treated the IDF as if it were a 'sacred cow'. The press did not criticize when critique was called for and always accepted the verdict of the censor, who spoke 'in the name of morale'. The image that was created, therefore, was one in

which ‘everything was OK’ with the IDF, as if it were a perfect army, devoid of defects and shortcomings, with the result that the Israeli public was psychologically unprepared to deal with the possibility that the army might not fulfil what was expected of it in the most perfect way. Gershom Schocken, the editor of *Haaretz*, who demanded at the Press Council that press censorship be lifted entirely, explained that if it had been possible to publish information on military matters as freely in *Haaretz* as economic matters, for example, it would also have been possible to point out weaknesses in the IDF and the public would not have reacted to the military failures of the latest war with such surprise and consternation.

The role of the press in the ‘Failure’ was such, therefore, that in matters related to security and the army it did not act like a free press, but rather, as the editor of *Yedioth Ahronoth* put it in the same discussion, ‘like a rather too comfortable partner of the Establishment’, which willingly or under duress agreed to publication restrictions in that domain. And the Israeli press paid a price for its role in withholding information from the public, both in the period before the war and while the hostilities were at their height. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the credibility of the press suffered to a substantial degree.

The two faces of the Failure

If an Israeli were to ask what best characterizes the Yom Kippur War, he will almost certainly be answered with one word: ‘failure’.[33] Some called it, with irony, ‘the war of failures’. Indeed, the word ‘failure’ has become more popular since the war.

It was ordinary citizens who first began to use the word ‘failure’. In a questionnaire that a quick-witted journalist conducted on the second day of the war, three of eight respondents replied that the fact that the Egyptians and the Syrians had surprised Israel was due to an ‘Israeli failure’.[34] It was only later, when the scale of the war and its disasters became clear, that politicians and public figures also began to use the term ‘failure’. The opposition quickly exploited the new situation even before the end of the war and attacked the government for its failures. The government tried to defend itself against the attacks. The chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Haim Zadok, spoke of ‘the alleged failure that took place’, but soon afterwards government spokesmen changed their tune and admitted that there had indeed been a ‘fatal error’ (in the words of the prime minister), and they promised to investigate its causes, adding that ‘the error was human’ and that such things had been known to happen. A lecture was broadcast on television, given by a history professor to soldiers at one of the fortifications, about one of the wars of Judah Maccabee, in which there was also ‘an intelligence mishap’ accompanied by inadequate preparation, and even intervention by the superpowers.

When the right-wing opposition spoke of ‘failure’, it was referring to the mistakes that were made on the eve of the war, the intelligence mistakes about the intentions of the enemy and the failure to mobilize the reserves on time. If only they had mobilized the reserves on time, if only they had moved the tanks and the artillery closer to the fronts, the right-wing opposition said, it would have been possible to win another crushing victory over the Arab armies. That assertion completely ignores the motivation of the Egyptians (and the Syrians) in launching the war. They wanted a military achievement for political purposes and not a war at any price and at any time. If the leaders of Egypt and Syria knew that massive IDF forces were facing them on the ceasefire lines, they almost certainly would have postponed the war and tried their luck at a later date, as

happened in May 1973, when the IDF took preparatory measures.

The criticism over the technical failures also focused on negligence in many units in the army, which resulted in the IDF not being properly prepared when the war broke out. Everyone who served in the army during the war, or who had met with soldiers who had returned from the fronts, knew about that negligence. And, indeed, even before the Agranat Commission concluded its investigation, the State Comptroller published its annual report for 1973, which criticized negligence that had come to light about the IDF's state of emergency preparedness. The report stated, among other things, that in one workshop no combat vehicle had been inspected for three to five years, and that there was a delay of 15 to 20 per cent in the periodic inspections of tanks. The execution itself was far from what was called for in the standing orders. The Comptroller also revealed that the IDF's Transportation Centre had been run by computer since 1970, but that the computer program was not designed to manage transportation during emergencies.[35] It quickly became clear to all that neglect and unpreparedness prevailed in the army on the eve of the war. In certain units the tanks were totally unprepared for operation and required precious hours to be put into combat condition; in a place where the tanks were ready to go into action, there were no tank transports and they were forced to spend many hours driving to the front on their tracks, about 200 kilometres and more, wasting engine usage and fuel in the process; crucial vehicles were not in operational condition; there were jeeps without motor oil and even without machine guns. In certain units there were insufficient mortars and sometimes not even enough shells (the estimates of the amount of ammunition required for war were usually based on data from the Six-Day War). There was a shortage of vital equipment for night warfare, and tank crews lacked binoculars, not to mention the shortage of personal equipment, blankets and even underpants and undershirts. There were also many shortcomings in the operation of emergency depots. Even the Civil Defence was not free of failures. In the two years that preceded the war, hardly any budget was allocated for building bunkers in the rear; and there were many shortcomings in the existing ones. In some communities in northern Israel, the bunkers were not opened when the war began, because the keys were in the possession of people who no longer lived there.

But these were technical failures. The emphasis on them and on the intelligence 'failure' alone, despite their seriousness, was seen by critics of the government's policy as misleading and liable to obscure the root of the disaster, which was the 'political failure', the bigger, more profound 'failure', which the Agranat Commission did not investigate – to wit: to what extent were the policies of the government of Golda Meir, which had avoided any serious political initiative towards the Arab world to resolve the conflict in the Middle East, responsible for creating the situation that led to the war? How was it that real chances to reach a settlement with the Arab states (above all, Egypt and Jordan) had been squandered since 1967, due to unwillingness to pay the price for peace – the return of the Occupied Territories to their owners, even when there was a possibility of agreement on small territorial modifications (with Jordan)? Why did the Israeli leadership prefer and sanctify the status quo, which was intolerable to the Arab world, to the point that President Sadat was finally compelled to use force to end it? How was it that an atmosphere of national arrogance and contempt for the Arab peoples and their national aspirations prevailed in Israel, along with the belief that 'time is on our side' and that 'the Arabs have absolutely no military option' and so the existing situation would prevail for another 'ten years' and even more, so that the only thing left for Israel to do, supposedly, was 'activity in the Territories'? And, finally, how was it that all this ultimately contributed as well to the neglect of defence matters in the groundless belief that war was far off?[36]

While it was military people who were responsible for the technical failures on the eve of the war, the ‘political failure’, which was, as stated above, the crucial one, was the responsibility of those who set the government’s political line. And moral responsibility was shared by the right-wing opposition, which promoted a harder line than that of the government, as well as by journalists who promoted that political line.[37]

The truth of the matter is that the ‘Failure’ was, above all, a political one. It was not only the approach of the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff that collapsed on 6 October, but also the general political approach of the government of Israel regarding the Israeli–Arab conflict. And that big, fundamental failure, the ultimate failure, is unacknowledged by the government of Israel. Minister without Portfolio Israel Galili, one of those primarily responsible for the government’s policy between the two wars, said after the war that it ‘was caused by factors we had no control over. Even today, in retrospect, I do not know of any policy that could have prevented the war.’[38] Likewise, Prime Minister Meir has declared several times since the war that she believed the government had done all it could to achieve peace. In an interview on Israel Broadcasting (1 December 1973) she declared, ‘We did all so that there would not be war. With a clear conscience I can say that we missed no opportunity for peace.’ In her view there was no ‘political failure’ at all, there was only a certain error, a few days before the war, an error which, if it had been avoided, she could, supposedly, have prevented the disaster of a fourth round.

4

Myths confronted by cruel reality

The higher you climb, the harder you fall, says the English adage. And, indeed, on 6 October a serene and self-confident Israel tumbled from a mountain of illusions down to the ground of reality. The trauma was severe. Suddenly Israelis opened their eyes and discovered that dogmas, 'sacred cows' and other 'unshakeable truths' had been smashed on the rocks of reality. The Yom Kippur War could also be called the 'War of Disillusionment'. One of the reasons for the gloom that afflicted Israelis after the war was the shattering of myths to which they had become enslaved. It became clear that the characteristic that Israelis had attributed to the Arabs – self-delusion – had struck deep roots within the Israelis themselves.

Although the myths were destroyed, they were not replaced by any changes in the approach to Israel–Arab relations. That would require self-criticism and a radical change in the composition of the leadership and its ideology, which were not quick to come, despite the transformations that occurred after the war.

'The status quo will persist in the region for as long as we want it to'

First and foremost among the myths that crumbled to their foundations in the Yom Kippur War was the 'eternal' status quo, which was supposedly contingent on nothing but Israel's will. The current situation will stay the way it is – repeated Israel's political and military leaders between the two wars – even for twenty or thirty years, until the Arabs agree to convert it into a 'real peace' with Israel, in which normal relations would be established between the Arab states and Israel and extensive territorial changes made in Israel's favour. A year after the war, former foreign minister Abba Eban would admit that 'there was agreement within the political echelon: we will remain in the Territories and that is what will force the Arabs to change their position'.[1] The illusion of a never-ending status quo was facilitated by the fact that although after the 1948 war the Arabs did not immediately reconcile themselves to Israel's new borders and demanded a return to the Partition borders, after the 1967 war they forgot the Partition borders and demanded that Israel return to the armistice lines, that is, the lines of 4 June 1967. Many claimed, therefore,

that just as the Arab states had eventually ‘swallowed’ the status quo of 1948, the same thing would happen this time: lacking any military option, the Arab states and the residents of the Occupied Territories would reconcile themselves to the new status quo. Acceptance would come, they said – even if it took a long time. However, the mistake of the partisans of the status quo was that they had made a mechanical comparison and failed to take account of the enormous changes that had occurred in the Arab world and in the international balance of power since 1948 and their dynamic. They drew conclusions for the present day based on a period in which the Arab world was weak and fragmented and the international balance of power was against it (it was a rare moment of pro-Israel agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union). Eventually developments proved that the Arab world as well as the residents of the Occupied Territories rejected the status quo, which evaporated with the roar of the cannons on 6 October.

It also became clear that, not only did the status quo based on ‘ideal security borders’ not prevent war, but it had served as a motivation for war and the rallying of a huge national effort, above all in Egypt, in order to break the status quo and regain the Occupied Territories. The Israeli leadership habitually scoffed at the widespread fear of Israeli expansionism in the Arab countries, a fear that the Six-Day War enhanced. That scorn strengthened the illusion that the Arabs would reconcile themselves to the new status quo. The Arabs, on the other hand, now came to realize that despite the declarations of Israel’s leaders that the Jewish state had no aspirations for territorial expansion, when the opportunity presented itself to expand their borders, they would exploit it by building settlements in the Occupied Territories with the goal of later annexing them officially.

The myth of the eternal status quo was also harmful in that it prevented Israel from presenting serious proposals, plans and initiatives for peace with the neighbouring states, for the status quo and the absence of political initiatives are two sides of the same political coin. Indeed, there may be cases when the status quo is desirable, if it is directed towards a defined, narrow and time-limited objective; but that is not the case when it comes to ‘stopping the hands of the clock’ by misunderstanding the political situation, as was the case here.

The faith in the idol of the status quo could not exist without other myths, such as the belief that the Arabs understand only the language of force, or that ‘time is on our side’ and that the 1967 ceasefire borders are second to none as a deterrent factor preventing war.

‘The security borders deter the Arabs from attacking’

The myth that ‘the security borders prevent the Arabs from attacking’ was one of the most beloved by Israel’s leaders. It is directly connected to the plans for consolidation in the Occupied Territories. Israel’s leaders did indeed point out that the lines created by the ceasefire in 1967 were not the borders of peace, but, until peace came, Israel would keep the present lines, the value of which lay in the fact that they would deter the Arabs from war, make them despair of any military adventure and eventually advance peace. Various proposals were raised in Israel to define the ideal peace borders, but everyone agreed on one thing, both in the Establishment and the right-wing opposition: the ceasefire lines were the most ideal security borders, whose strategic depth deterred the Arabs from thinking about a new war. The leaders of the state, military experts, journalists and even poets repeated it unrelentingly. ‘For deterrence, territories and borders are the most important factor’, stated the military commentator Colonel (Res.) Yosef Nevo, in the monthly magazine of the IDF officer corps.[2] General (Res.) Yeshayahu Gavish

explained: ‘We need depth. Once and for all we need to achieve depth for this State. The greater the depth, the better for the Jews. We need a border that will spare defensive forces from the topographical-military perspective, create a physical barrier and remove from the Arabs the desire to attack.’[3] Those are only two examples out of hundreds with which the daily press and periodicals in Israel were replete after the Six-Day War, and which repeated the same refrain: the Six-Day War borders are unparalleled for deterrence.

On 6 October, Israelis suddenly and painfully realized that the border did not deter war at all. In order to explain away the collapse of the myth of borders that prevent war, Moshe Dayan hastened, even while the war was still raging, to explain in an interview on Israeli television, on 14 October, that Israel could not keep the reserves constantly mobilized on the borders, and therefore took upon itself some risk. It was now clear that the borders alone, even if ideal, could not prevent war.

Proponents of the ‘security borders’ quickly found another claim, which was also repeated while the war was still at its height: that Israel had done well not to return to the 1967 borders, because ‘no rich imagination is needed to describe what Israel’s situation would be like if we had been on the borders of the fourth of June 1967’ – in the words of Golda Meir in her report to the Knesset on 16 October 1973. After the war, she returned to that idea, mentioning in a recorded speech before pro-Israeli demonstrators in London that ‘the war has proven that we acted wisely not to accept the advice of some of our friends to return to the 1967 borders’.[4] Indeed, those who believed that Egypt and Syria had the sole objective of attacking Israel under any circumstances, at any price and at any time, certainly accepted this claim of Golda Meir’s, even though that begs the question: why did those responsible for Israel’s security show such blatant disregard for the inevitable danger and not take appropriate preparatory measures? On the other hand, those in Israel who believed that the war broke out because the Egyptians and Syrians wanted to undermine the protracted status quo with military action and put the Middle East crisis onto the agenda of the international community do not accept that outlook. They believed that their pre-war argument had been proven correct: that the ceasefire lines slowly being turned into de facto borders would not prevent war, but could on the contrary push the Arabs into renewed conflict with Israel in order to change them. The ‘strategic depth’ that was supposed to defend the State would turn out in the end to be an invitation to war . . . And as we have seen, the ‘security borders’ created the illusion of security and complacency in Israel and lowered the level of preparedness, as was proven on 6 October.

Moreover, it has not been proven that war would have broken out even if the sides had reached a peace agreement. Such an agreement would have prevented, or at least reduced the danger of war. According to General (Res.) Dr Matityahu Peled:

> We learned in the war that by having a physical hold on all the territories occupied in the Six-Day War, we did not strengthen the security of the State. The security that we can derive from the Territories is that they constitute a buffer between the two armies. Security must be based not on annexation and the deployment of armies in the Territories but on demilitarization and the creation of distance between us and the Arab armies.[5]

This is not a case of insight after the fact, because Gen. Peled repeatedly made that point before the war. Even if the war had broken out after a peace agreement with the Arab states that involved return of the Territories and their demilitarization, the IDF would have had space for advance warning, which is so vital, and which did not exist this time, with the forces of both sides facing each other at close quarters. In addition, the campaign would have been conducted under conditions more favourable for the IDF, and without the missile umbrella under cover of which Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal.

Many in Israel shrink from the idea of demilitarization, especially on account of 'the experience of 1957'. But no one is proposing a repetition of that failed experiment. After Operation Suez, when Israel withdrew from Sinai and the Gaza Strip under US–Soviet pressure, it received only promises rather than real security guarantees, and the evacuated territories were not demilitarized. It was a mistake to accept in 1957 the secret promises of US secretary of state John Foster Dulles regarding freedom of navigation, which were not ratified by the US Congress or any international body. There is no similarity between the promises the Americans gave Israel in 1957 regarding freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran and the guarantees the two superpowers will give in the framework of the Security Council, guarantees that only the end of détente would be likely to undermine. The demilitarization of Sinai – effective demilitarization anchored in solid security agreements – would give Israel greater security than the stationing of soldiers or 'security borders' on the Suez Canal or on the Mitla and Gidi Passes, with long supply lines. Any transfer of Egyptian forces to Sinai in violation of the agreement, and even any preparations for such an action, would be a red light for Israel to mobilize the full array of IDF capacities, unlike what happened in the Yom Kippur War. By no means does demilitarization facilitate a surprise attack, which the IDF fears, because it keeps relatively small units on the front lines. One of the lessons of the Yom Kippur War was that effective demilitarization is what will provide Israel with real strategic depth. This is true not only of Sinai but of the Golan Heights as well. There too, to the extent that the Golan Heights are effectively demilitarized and normal relations are established with Syria, demilitarization would contribute more to the security of the Israeli border settlements than would keeping the Golan Heights in Israeli hands, which has the potential to perpetuate the bloody conflict.

Between the two last wars, the Israeli public also heard unceasingly about the settlements' contribution to security. The Yom Kippur War decisively refuted that thesis. In the Golan, where the Syrian columns broke through, the new settlements became nothing but a security burden, rather than an asset. The armed forces were compelled to preoccupy themselves just before the outbreak of hostilities, and in some places even afterwards, with evacuating the settlers from the seventeen settlements of the Golan. Part of the evacuation operation was done under Syrian fire, and it was only by a miracle that no one was hit. If they had not managed to evacuate those settlements, there certainly would have been victims, as there were in the Druze villages on the Golan, which were not evacuated.

Nothing remained of the myth of the importance to Israel's security of the settlements on the Golan, but apparently that had no influence on the policy of consolidation in the Territories. Immediately after the end of the war, governmental institutions were already discussing doubling the Israeli population on the Golan Heights and building five new settlements there, including a central city, and authorizing budgets for it. Moreover, in view of the intention to 'never' come down from the Golan Heights, the IDF has begun to convert the settlements there into 'small forts'. Arrays of walls, wires and anti-tank positions are being built around them and modern weapons, including anti-tank weapons, artillery and anti-aircraft weapons will be handed over to each settlement in order to convert it, in conformity with this plan, into a combat unit composed of its residents and the soldiers who will be sent there.

The residents of the settlements in the Territories, who had been promised ownership of the land so that they would stay there forever, feared after the disengagement agreement with Egypt that further withdrawals would be coming, which would lead to the return of the land on which their settlements had been built. They organized themselves, held conferences and demanded that there be no withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The prime minister replied that she saw no

possibility of Israel withdrawing from the Six-Day War border on the Golan, 'including the city of Quneitra', and that she saw the Golan, including all its settlements, as 'an integral part of the State of Israel'.[6] Syrian President Hafez al-Assad gave this response: 'Israel will give up the Golan Heights against its will even if we have to fight a hundred wars . . . If Israel builds a new city in the Golan we will destroy that city regardless of the effort and energy they invest in its construction and regardless of how much time that operation will take.'[7] The Israeli– Syrian disengagement agreement, which was signed at the end of May 1974, did indeed include a small Israeli withdrawal across the 1967 ceasefire line. But no Israeli settlement was moved from its site. In the attrition war the Syrians waged against Israel until the signing of the disengagement agreement, those settlements were ceaselessly shelled. Some jestingly pointed out that, according to the logic of the pro ponents of security borders, it was necessary to acquire strategic depth for the Golan settlements as well, in which, as is the accepted practice, new settlements would be erected, which would be shelled like their predecessors and require their own strategic depth, and so on . . .

And, in the end, Sharm al-Sheikh. Of whom a songwriter sang that it is 'always in our hearts', and of which Moshe Dayan repeatedly said that he preferred to have it without peace than peace without it. That place, it was claimed again and again to justify annexation to Israel, was vital to ensure freedom of navigation to the port of Eilat and so it must not be given up. In June 1971, however, the indispensability of Sharm al-Sheikh for navigation was called into question when the Liberian-flagged tanker *Coral Sea* was attacked on its way to the port of Eilat, near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, 1,900 kilometres south of Sharm al-Sheikh, by *fedayeen* operating from South Yemen. But that incident was quickly forgotten and Israeli experts later claimed that the width of the straits (about 20 kilometres) and the proximity to its shores of many states that had various interests (including Ethiopia, which until the Yom Kippur War was a friend of Israel), would complicate any attempt to stop navigation. They also cast doubt upon the efficacy of the coastal artillery which, according to declarations by South Yemen, were intended to close the strait to Israel.

The war came and a full blockade was imposed on the straits – but by units of the Egyptian fleet rather than South Yemen's coastal artillery. According to US sources, that force included two submarines, a destroyer and a frigate, and its base was the port of Aden. The blockade, which was total, completely shattered the claims about the vital need to annex Sharm al-Sheikh to ensure freedom of navigation to Eilat. That is perhaps the reason why the blockade of Bab al-Mandeb was concealed from the Israeli public throughout the war. That blockade, which had not been officially declared by the Egyptians, was quietly lifted only after the six-point agreement between Israel and Egypt was reached in November 1973.

Historical experience proves that security does not depend on this or that set of borders, but on the nature of the relations between the two states. If one side decides to attack, whether for the sake of expansion or from a desire to achieve what it sees as a vital interest, or even from despair, then the nature of the borders will not prevent them from carrying out their plans. The borders, even if they are called 'strategic security borders', may complicate matters for them and compel them to make more preparations, use sophisticated technological means or resort to deception, but they will not dissuade them from their plans. The Yom Kippur War is a classic example of that – one of many. The sole conclusion: a peaceful border is a secure border.

'The Bar-Lev Line is impenetrable'

The Bar-Lev Line had a place of honour in the 'deterrent security borders', very much the jewel in the crown. It was a symbol, an expensive symbol (it cost about a I£1.5 billion); a symbol of Israel's steadfastness in the face of its enemies. It was a symbol as well that had an element of provocation about it, because the line was built on the shore of the Suez Canal, which since its nationalization by Nasser in July 1956 was one of the symbols of Egypt's national independence. It was given various ironic appellations in Israel, like 'the best anti-tank canal in the world' or 'a strategic partition that will turn into a canal of blood if the Egyptians try to cross it'. Lieutenant General Haim Bar-Lev declared when he was still chief of the General Staff: 'I do not believe, for example, that they [the Egyptians] can attack and capture one of our positions, and I do not believe that they can cross the Canal. But what? – Infiltrate between the positions, lay mines – that they can do.'[8] Declarations of that kind and in that spirit were heard until the war.

Everyone had confidence in the Bar-Lev Line and saw it as a symbol of Israeli success. A popular song until the last war sang the praises of its forts. Journalists and wealthy donors to the United Jewish Appeal were taken on tours of the Bar-Lev Line. During the Knesset election campaign that abruptly ended when the war broke out, the Labour Alignment used the Bar-Lev Line in its electoral propaganda as a perfect symbol of the success of Israel's policy of deterrence.

The outlook that favoured defence by means of a fortified line along the Canal was in fact derived from a political 'conception' [*konseptzia*]. That is, from the desire to hold territories and demonstrate a permanent presence in them until the coming of peace with the Arab states. Soon after the Six-Day War the IDF began to entrench itself along the shore of the Canal. In October 1968 the Egyptians shelled the length of the Canal heavily, causing many casualties. The line of fortifications was quite flimsy and there were fears that the success of the shelling would encourage the Egyptians to renew firing. Therefore, the IDF sought to deal them a heavy blow that would postpone any renewal of shelling, at least until construction of the fortifications was complete. The choice fell on the transformer station at Nag Hammadi and two bridges over the Nile, about 300 kilometres within Egyptian territory. They were all blown up by IDF raiding parties a few days after the shelling along the Canal. Meanwhile work began at a feverish pace to fortify the line, and when the Egyptians renewed firing four months later, the number of losses was small due to the fortifications. However, not only was a system of defence by means of a static line antiquated after the experiences of the two world wars, but it also ran counter to the tradition of the IDF, which always emphasized strategies of movement. What happened in reality was that the line, which had cost vast amounts of money that could have been used to strengthen the IDF in other ways, instilled a magical faith in its defensive power.

Generals Israel Tal (then head of the IDF Operations Branch) and Ariel Sharon (then head of the Southern Command) were among those who opposed the approach based on a static line. They were proponents of a system of defence by means of mobile forces that would guard the ceasefire line. Lieutenant General Haim Bar-Lev, the chief of the General Staff during the War of Attrition, claimed, on the other hand, that mobile armoured forces alone would not be able to block the line from Egyptian commando forces. After the ceasefire began in August 1970, the IDF decided, following the view of Chief of the General Staff Bar-Lev, to refurbish the Bar-Lev Line as an expanded and integrated system.

As is known, the Bar-Lev Line was not just a chain of forts on the shore of the Canal, but a complete and complex system. The strongholds, about thirty in number, were entrenched forts, defended by very thick layers of concrete, stones, steel and sand, surrounded by wire fences and other means of defence. They provided very good living conditions for the soldiers, who were in

fact the least important part of the system. It also included other components: ramparts of sand the length of the Canal, between the strongholds, which were intended to prevent attempts to cross from the western side; tanks in protected firing-positions behind the strongholds, the function of which was to strike at whoever managed to cross the Canal; large units of tanks that could rapidly go to where the breach was; artillery that was to lay down suppressive fire on the crossing area; obstacles, paved and unpaved roads; communications and command centres, medical teams and logistical services. All these constituted a comprehensive system intended to stop the Egyptians.

On 6 October, however, the system of the Bar-Lev Line was not ready and did not function as intended. The primary strong link in the line, the tanks, did not function in accordance with the plan, because when the attack came they were not in place in positions overlooking the sand ramparts along the Canal, and armour reserves, which had been placed in the rear and tried to advance, were destroyed by Egyptian infantry carrying missiles. Another component, the artillery, hardly made its presence felt due to the reduction in the number of pieces, and so it could not give massive assistance to the strongholds. Nor did the air force exploit its full capability, at least in the first, critical stages of the campaign, because of the rain of missiles that were fired at the airplanes, and also because it was dispatched mainly to the Golan Heights to stop the rapid Syrian advance towards the population centres in the north. Even the strongholds themselves were not ready for action on 6 October and only about half of them – sixteen – were manned; and even those with only sparse forces.

After the war, Bar-Lev was forced to defend the line that bore his name (in fact it was the Egyptians who first used that name and the Israelis adopted it from them, though with satisfaction) by stating, in an article entitled ‘The Lesson of the War’, that the Egyptian gains ‘were not achieved due to an [Israeli] operational outlook that did not withstand the test, but due to an operational outlook that was not put to the test. It was not put to the test because not all the components of the system were in a state of full preparedness.’[9] In other words, it was the fault of the IDF command that the system of the Bar-Lev Line was not prepared, as it should have been, to repel the Egyptians. But to that must be added that it is quite possible that the general idea of the line, which satisfied political needs and not strategic ones, was necessarily condemned to fail because of the inability of such a line to withstand a massive attack. Thus, the line collapsed like a house of cards within a day or so, despite desperate fighting by its defenders. Just as the conquest of the strongholds of the Bar-Lev Line by the Egyptians was a huge psychological victory for them, the fall of the line was a blow to Israel’s morale. It was sadly joked after the war that all that remained of the line was the contractors’ villas in Afeka and Herzliya Pituach.

‘Our intelligence services are never wrong’

The legend of the omnipotent Israeli intelligence services took wings throughout the world. Many said that Israel’s special services were ‘the best in the world’. That assessment came in the wake of Israeli operations in which the intelligence services took an active part, such as the campaign of deception preceding Operation Suez (1956),[10] the abduction of the Nazi criminal Eichmann in Argentina (1960) and the actions against the German scientists in Egypt in the first half of the 1960s, the intelligence success in the Six-Day War, the smuggling of the warships out of Cherbourg right under the noses of the French authorities in December 1969 as well as various

operations within Arab states that culminated in the Beirut raid in April 1973, in which three PLO leaders were shot to death in their private residences. None of those operations could have been carried out without underlying intelligence work.

The astonishing victory in the Six-Day War, which was, in many ways, the result of complex intelligence work, raised still higher the stock of the Intelligence Branch in the General Staff, including its Research Department, such that it became the only intelligence agency in Israel that did political and military situational analyses that were presented to the political echelon. When the head of the General Staff Intelligence Branch, General Eli Zeira, was asked, a few months before the war, about this anomalous situation in which evaluations of the political-strategic situation were entrusted to only one body, the one he headed, he replied with smiling self-confidence: 'It's because we have never been wrong.'[11] Another high-ranking officer in the Intelligence Branch, in a conversation with journalists shortly before the war, also expressed that same exaggerated self-confidence: 'I do not know when the war will break out. Nor does Sadat know. But in the event that the president of Egypt decides to launch a war, at the latest we will know it forty-eight hours after he makes the decision.' And, if the Egyptians nevertheless launch a war, Intelligence Branch chief General Eli Zeira had an answer to that as well: 'They will not be able to take even three millimetres by war . . . They will drown in a sea of blood.'[12]

Nevertheless, Israeli Intelligence was not immune to mistakes, and it had erred more than once in the past, very much like other intelligence agencies, but its recent successes had rendered the mistakes forgotten. Even before the last war,[13] former Intelligence Branch head General Meir Amit, who had formerly served as head of the Mossad, admitted that Israeli Intelligence was by no means free of mistakes. For example, it had assessed that King Hussein 'would not survive after September 1970, after the bloody war between the Jordanian army and the terrorists. Reality proved the opposite.' Also proven false was the assessment of President Sadat that characterized him as 'weak, grey, mediocre, a compromise ruler, etc.' And those were not the only mistakes.

However, those errors in assessment can still be seen as understandable. A completely different matter is the fatal intelligence error on the eve of the Yom Kippur War. That error had two sources, an incorrect military 'conception' and an incorrect political 'conception', both of which assumed, each from its own perspective, that the Arabs in fact had no military option. 'Intelligence', said General (Res.) Amit in an interview that appeared after the war, 'is an answer to questions. Usually it gives an answer to questions that are asked. Much less often it gives answers to questions that are not asked.'[14] And, indeed, the military and political leadership assumed that the Arabs, because of their weakness, would not go to war in the foreseeable future, and so they did not pose the necessary questions. This 'conception' was a good fit for Military Intelligence, which assessed as 'low probability' reports that clearly pointed to plans by Egypt and Syria to attack. In fact it was Eli Zeira (then a colonel in the Intelligence Branch) who after the Six-Day War published an article in which he stated that 'the role of the armed forces is to foresee both where the grave danger lies and what is most likely, even if it does not appear to be dangerous, and to prepare to confront both of them',[15] but that theory was ultimately discarded in favour of the perceptions of Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, who scoffed at the possibility of war, a scornful stance that was shared by those close to him in the army, who were influenced by the mentalities that prevailed among the leadership. That was the reason for the great intelligence failure; not excuses like 'Soviet agents', as General Chaim Herzog hinted,[16] nor the incorrect allegation that Israeli Intelligence had neglected vital subjects in the period before the war and

dedicated itself mainly to monitoring the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations, which in the years 1972–73 had increased their activities in Europe. The information that accumulated in the hands of Intelligence regarding Egyptian and Syrian intentions on the eve of the war was enough to warn of the danger. It was its analysis that was incorrect.

Among the findings of the Agranat Commission, which judged the operational echelon harshly in its interim report of 1 April 1974, was that the head of the Intelligence Branch in the General Staff, General Zeira, as well as the assistant head of the Intelligence Branch for research, Brigadier General Aryeh Shalev and other Intelligence officers should be transferred from their positions.[17] The commission also recommended that the practice of concentrating military, strategic, operative and tactical intelligence assessments in one body (the Intelligence Branch in the General Staff) and under one authority (the head of the Intelligence Branch) be ended, through the adoption of various measures, including strengthening the Research Branch of the Foreign Ministry and the creation of an assessment unit in the Mossad for material it gathers.

The failure of Israeli Intelligence in assessing the intentions of the Egyptians and the Syrians on the eve of the Yom Kippur War returned it to its true dimensions: a diligent and skilful intelligence agency, but one that is by no means above any error.

'The Arabs understand only the language of force'

For many long years, that phrase was on the lips of Israelis and in articles in more than a few Israeli newspapers. True, Israel's leaders did not put it so bluntly, but it emerged as a direct conclusion from the declarations of officials, in times of tension, to the effect that 'the Arab aggressors must be taught such a lesson, the price exacted from them must be so high, and they must be punished so severely that they will not dare to do it again'. Moshe Dayan once opined that it is necessary to hit the Arabs every seven to ten years so that they 'know their place'. This 'philosophy of force' was explained by a high-ranking Foreign Ministry official (who held the title of 'Middle East affairs advisor') and veteran Arabist Ezra Danin, who greatly influenced the shaping of the outlooks of Israel's Establishment orientalists: 'When we respond, and punish, there is quiet. It may not be a modern psychological educational technique, but as the grandmother put it, all told the old way works best.'[18] The words of Chief of the General Staff General David Elazar on the third day of the war: 'We will break their bones' – were nothing but a graphic expression of the same doctrine.

That outlook fit in well with a nearly mystical faith in Israel's permanent supremacy over the Arab world, supremacy that was to deter the Arabs from any military action and was to be demonstrated by hitting them hard every now and then, until the Arabs got tired and gave up. The journalist Shabtai Teveth relates that, in a conversation with the former head of the Israeli air force, General (Res.) Mordechai Hod, after the downing of thirteen Syrian airplanes about two weeks before the Six-Day War, Hod told him: 'There was a need for it, because the Syrians were talking about war and it looked to them like they were prepared for it. The downing of the thirteen airplanes taught them that that was not the case, and it deterred them from war.'[19] It was that same mentality that motivated quite a few Israelis to make demented proposals during the war to completely destroy the economic infrastructures of Egypt and Syria and to destroy the combat personnel and the combat reserves of those countries, so that they would learn a lesson 'for several generations'.

In fact, the lesson that the language of force is not a magical key to the Israeli–Arab conflict

should have been learned in Operation Suez (1956), but that war and its lessons were quickly forgotten. The 1967 war came along and created a distorted picture of reality in Israeli eyes. The competition in the Middle East between the two super-powers in effect produced stagnation, of which the winning side, Israel, was beneficiary. The call by the Security Council for a ceasefire in the Six-Day War did not require, as was the practice in similar cases, the return of the armies to the lines of before the war, and the first resolution of the Security Council regarding the way to a solution to the crisis was adopted about half a year after the war (Resolution 242), and for years afterwards no substantial measures were taken to implement it. Meanwhile, the War of Attrition raged on the Egyptian front (1969–70) and it too ended with an Israeli political gain – a ratification of the status quo. It is no wonder, then, that many Israelis concluded from the course of events that it sufficed to be strong and resolute towards the Arab world, and to show one's muscles from time to time, in order to achieve the desired results. Prime Minister Meir explained, in a formal interview on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel, that 'if there has been a ceasefire for nearly three years, it is not thanks to Sadat but thanks to the policy towards him – that is, because Israel is strong and Nixon's policy has contributed to that strengthening'. When the interviewer pointed out, 'But if the ceasefire is violated there will be a hole in that theory', Meir replied (exactly five months before the Yom Kippur War): 'No. I assume that Nixon knows, as we do, that if Sadat violates the ceasefire he will sustain a defeat.'[20] Thus did the leaders of Israel remove local military power from its global context, and, upon the first test – the Yom Kippur War – it was proved that force is not a permanent, unchanging given in a static world, but only one component, and not even the most important one, in a broad weave of factors that determine the outcomes of wars.

The new reality brought about a more balanced view of the military factor, as expressed by Yitzhak Rabin in a lecture in Jerusalem before he was chosen to serve as prime minister: 'The Yom Kippur War highlighted Israel's inability – because of the threat of Big Power intervention – to dictate terms to the Arabs by force of arms.'[21] Nevertheless the recognition had not yet taken root in Israel that the entire national effort had to be directed above all towards one sole objective: to reach an understanding with the Arab world and procure its recognition of the State of Israel, by using not the language of force, which had failed time and again, but political, moderate and realistic language.

Egypt and Syria had also acted in October 1973 out of the belief that force was the key to changing the status quo that was unbearable to them, but, unlike Israel, which had relied on military force alone, its adversaries proved in the last war that their conception of force is broader and more complex, and includes the political and economic spheres as well as the military factor. In the Yom Kippur War, they employed integrated power, of which military force was an important part, but by no means the only one, and in the end they won the war strategically, by moving the crisis out of stagnation. An Arab intellectual wrote after the last war: 'They talked to us only in the language of force, and we were left with no choice but to learn it. In the Ramadan War we proved not only that we know the vocabulary of that language, but also its rich syntax, even more than our adversaries . . .'

'War is not for Arabs'

One of the most widespread myths, not lacking in racist features, was that 'war is not for Arabs', as General Ezer Weizman put it. The IDF's amazing victories over the Arab states inflated the

belief in Israel that the Arabs had no chance at all in a military contest with Israel and that their defeat would be quick and decisive. There were also those who endowed this myth with a 'scientific' basis. The Arabist Ezra Danin explained, before the last war of course, that the Arab fighter, as he knew him in the 1930s, had not changed fundamentally and that 'up to today the elementary bases of what we and other nations call patriotism have not developed among the Arabs. The willingness of the individual to sacrifice his life for the whole hardly exists among the Arabs, and without that it is impossible to win in war. You can accumulate weapons, you can scream at the top of your lungs and brag, like Sadat does a few times a month, but it's a groundless pretention.'[22]

The former head of the Intelligence Branch of the IDF, and later a professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, General Yehoshafat Harkabi, also stated in a book published by the IDF and written in a thoroughly racist tone ('lying is common in the life of the Arabs', 'honesty is lacking in Arab public life', and so on), that social connectors are weak among the Arabs, and consequently 'the individual finds himself in moments of crisis of the encounter in battle fighting not as a member of a team but as an individual left on his own. Therefore every individual tends to pay heed first and foremost to his own well-being and the unit disintegrates.'[23] In his lectures, Harkabi disseminated those views to soldiers and officers as well as to the general public.

Space constraints prevent the reproduction here of all the words of scorn and the haughtiness, boastfulness and contempt that were expressed before the war by generals in and out of uniform and that were written by military correspondents in the Israeli press, fed and inspired by official military sources. They spoke at length about the basic weakness of the Arab armies, the deep-seated and incorrigible backwardness in which they are immersed and even that the Egyptians do not know how to attack (Lieutenant General Bar-Lev: 'The Egyptian army has not attacked since 1948. It did not execute even one attack, not in 1956 and not in 1967. Even their attacks in 1948 were nothing to be proud of'[24]), that Egyptian officers had no motivation to fight and they were concerned only with improving their conditions of service, that Egyptian soldiers would rush to take their shoes off, as in the past, and flee at the sound of shooting, that the Egyptian army would not manage to cross the Suez Canal and capture even one stronghold on the Bar-Lev Line. Moreover, since July 1972 the claim was heard, over and over again, that the evacuation of the Soviet advisors from Egypt had caused a further decline in the level of the Egyptian army, because 'of course' the 'Egyptian brain' could not manage modern technology and 'without the Russians, the Arabs are worth nothing'. In a lecture at the IDF Command and Staff College only about two months before the war, Moshe Dayan summed up his view on the fighting ability of the Arabs in a few words: 'the weakness of the Arabs comes from factors that I do not think will disappear soon: the low level of their soldiers in education, technology and integrity'.[25] Put differently, the impression that the Arab armies are nothing but a paper tiger was strengthened, and so 'with soldiers like that you can definitely take risks' (as a senior Israeli officer put it to journalists visiting the Egyptian front before the war).

The war came and brought with it the surprise of the Arab fighter. This time, Israeli soldiers encountered brave and disciplined soldiers with improved fighting ability, who had undergone prolonged training at a high level, and above all, soldiers who were willing to sacrifice themselves. Particularly surprising were the Egyptian soldiers, who had always been described as incapable of succeeding. Testimony of Israeli soldiers that was published in the IDF weekly a week after the outbreak of the war,[26] described that surprise:

SOLDIER A: 'I was very surprised by the Egyptians' fighting. What I had known until then was that the Egyptians, when

you shoot at them or attack them, they run away. In this war, the first war I participated in, I discovered the exact opposite. I know that the Egyptians stormed our positions, fought, shot at us and I hardly saw any Egyptian run away from the battlefield, I don't know the reason exactly, but that's how it was.'

SOLDIER B: 'We attacked infantry with tanks and were surprised to see people standing and shooting at us with missiles. Standing not far from a tank and just shooting. Not running away. We destroyed a whole brigade of tanks and they continued to charge at us even though we were in superior positions. I definitely did not see them running away. We even saw them evacuating wounded under fire. There were all kinds of things, which up to now I had heard didn't exist among them.'

SOLDIER C: 'What surprised me most was that they evacuated their wounded. From what I had heard until then I knew that they left their wounded and dead after they were hit.'

SOLDER D: 'I had the chance to encounter their commandos and it looked to me like they were well trained, and actually the elite of the Egyptian army. They were really good soldiers and they fought very well.'

In the Yom Kippur War, the Arab soldier proved to be a night fighter for the first time. In previous wars, night was the natural ally of the IDF, which had developed night fighting to a high level. In the October War, it was the Egyptians and the Syrians who initiated many night battles, on an expanded scale, while the IDF fought during the day, except on a few occasions, like the crossing of the first wave to the west bank of the Canal. Veterans of previous wars gritted their teeth when they heard the repeated IDF reports that pointed out that 'our forces on the fronts had a quiet night'. Indeed, Israeli military commentators explained that the reason for the widespread Arab night fighting was the many infrared and night-vision devices that had been installed on the equipment of Arab armies, from infantry weapons to tanks. One way or another, it was a big and unpleasant surprise to the Israeli combat soldier, just like the widespread use of weapons incorporating the best of modern military technology by the armies of Egypt and Syria.

In fact, all the Arab armies' weapons and combat systems were known to the IDF. They were even published in the Israeli press. A few months before the war, an Israeli daily published an article based on Egyptian sources that detailed all the 'surprises' that were uncovered in the Yom Kippur War: the Egyptian infantry units were armoured; the mechanized infantry forces, which had anti-tank missiles at their disposal, were able to project stronger firepower; the armoured infantry units were conducting exercises in night warfare, in crossing water obstacles, including a model that resembled the Suez Canal, and in taking control of the other side of the Canal, with the purpose of securing a bridgehead for the other forces; those exercises were multi-branch and also included attacks by warplanes, parachuting commando units behind enemy lines and concentrated shelling by artillery.[27] Indeed, that same article enumerated nearly all the factors that would become apparent later in the war. But in Israel it was read, filed away and assumed that it would all remain within the realm of the theoretical, because when push came to shove, it would turn out that 'an Arab is still an Arab', as they were wont to say in the IDF, and outside it.

The war also revealed that the quality of command of the armies of Egypt and Syria in strategic planning for large-scale campaigns, in deployment and execution, was better than had been assessed, in any case much better than in the Six-Day War. This time, unlike the previous two wars, the commands of the two armies knew how to initiate counter-attacks. The Egyptian army did not collapse and did not stop fighting even when the war moved to the western side of the Canal, to the complete surprise of the Egyptian command. Nor did the Syrian army collapse when the IDF broke through in a counter-attack and advanced towards Damascus – this, too, was counter to what had happened in the Six-Day War. General Dan Lener, who commanded a division in the Syrian sector, noted, 'They [the Syrians] underwent a conspicuous improvement and whoever claims otherwise either does not know or is trying to conceal and ignore the truth . . . their fighting was much more tenacious. The moment of terror and panic did not come in the field. It was a different army . . . the quality of the command had changed a lot – and for the

better.'[28] In a lecture he gave at Tel Aviv University, the deputy chief of the General Staff and head of the Intelligence Branch during the war, General Israel Tal, praised the way the Arabs had planned the October War with balanced, sober and realistic consideration of the war's objectives. 'If I were asked to grade them for it,' he said, 'I would give them the highest marks possible. I do not think that the planning of the war, in strategic terms, was a flash in the pan; thus from now on we will have to contend with them on that level.' 'On the strategic level,' added Tal, 'Israel is confronting rational strategic thought on the other side. The days when irrational feelings characterized Arab strategic thought are gone forever.'[29]

The fact that a substantial part of the Egyptian fighting forces was educated (tens of thousands of university students and a larger number of high school graduates) undoubtedly contributed to raising the level of the corps and the command in general. The Egyptian officer did not flee first when there was a withdrawal, and when there was an attack he stood at the head of his forces. According to the Egyptian deputy war minister General Saad Ma'mun,[30] this meant that Egypt lost a higher percentage of officers in this war (including the pilot Adel Sadat, a stepbrother of the Egyptian president[31]) than in previous wars. The ratio of officers to soldiers among those who were taken prisoner by the IDF was also higher than in previous wars. A survey of Egyptian prisoners indicated that the percentage of officers who had completed academic studies was 39.4 per cent, as opposed to 30 per cent among prisoners in the Six-Day War.[32] Some of them also understood Hebrew, unlike the prisoners in the previous wars. Changes for the better were also observed in the officers' treatment of the soldiers in the Egyptian army, which reduced the gap between them.

The IDF command always claimed that the motivation of the Israeli soldier was higher than that of the Arab soldier, which was considered low, and that is known to have direct influence over the will to fight, the ability to fight and of course the outcome of the battle. But this time the Egyptian and Syrian soldiers felt – and this was also confirmed in conversations with prisoners – that they were fighting for the soil of their homelands, in proximity to their own homes, and that undoubtedly contributed to increasing their will to fight. Another important moment also appeared in the October War, which had been cultivated for years by the Egyptian and Syrian commanders: the aspiration to restore national honour, which had been besmirched by the shameful defeat of 1967. In order to urge the soldiers on in battle, especially in the Egyptian army, religious propaganda was also increased between the two wars. The fact that the war was waged in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, to which many historical and religious themes are connected, and it was even launched on the tenth day of Ramadan, which is the date of the famous Battle of Badr, in which Muhammad won a historical victory (in the year 624) over the unbelievers, added a special dimension to it ('Badr' was the code word that announced the Egyptian–Syrian attack).[33] Every soldier going into battle was provided with a small booklet, of which a million copies were published in June 1973 by the Egyptian Ministry of War, which was entitled 'Our religious faith – our path to victory', and which contained sections on the need for discipline, order, commitment and sacrifice, keeping secrets and so on, all of which were accompanied by passages from the Qur'an, the New Testament and the Old Testament (the Book of Proverbs). A special section at the end of the booklet included passages from the Qur'an that condemned the Jews. During the war, an announcement from the Morale Department of the Egyptian Ministry of War was also distributed among the soldiers, outlining in great detail how the Prophet Muhammad had appeared before the beginning of the campaign, announcing the coming victory.

The military leaderships of Egypt and Syria had prepared for the Yom Kippur War with great care. General Muhammad Abd al-Ghani el-Gamasy, the head of the Operations Branch of the Egyptian army during the war, related in a private conversation with a British journalist that, when the Egyptian General Staff was preparing for the war, an extensive list was prepared of the strengths and weaknesses of the IDF and of the Egyptian army, and a supreme effort was begun to overcome the points of weakness. It was decided, for example, to deploy massive quantities of missiles against the Israeli pilots and tank crews, who were superior to the Egyptian ones. In view of Israel's inability to wage a prolonged war, which would involve mobilizing the Israeli economy's labour force, the war was planned in such a way that it would last as long as possible, and only developments in the last stage – the crossing to the west – foiled that Egyptian plan. Another point that was accorded supreme importance was the preservation of the secrecy of the attack, so that the surprise would be complete and Israel would not be able to mobilize the reserves on time. Heretofore, military and political secrets had leaked easily in the Arab world and made the rounds of the Arab capitals, particularly due to various political rivalries. Things were different this time. The effort at camouflage and deception was successful.

Nevertheless, Israeli military experts stated that, even though the planning ability of the Egyptian and Syrian armies had improved, and despite the massive crossing at the beginning of the war, which was a complex operation both in engineering-technical terms and in terms of coordination between the branches of the military, two basic flaws were manifest in the armies of Egypt and Syria, due to which the IDF was inestimably superior to them. Initiative was lacking at the low levels of the command echelons of the Egyptian and Syrian armies when unexpected situations developed, and the command itself was weak in improvisation. And it proved clear that the level of training of the soldiers and maintenance of equipment and weapons were also higher in the IDF than in the armies of Egypt and Syria.

From the moment they established themselves along the east side of the Canal line, the Egyptians' strategy was characterized by the avoidance of any action that could endanger their forces. When the Egyptian attack plans were discussed before 6 October, President Sadat consistently supported the most cautious line. It came up again, for fear that unconsidered or adventurous measures of the type to which General Saad al-Shazli, the chief of staff, was inclined could again lead to the collapse of the Egyptian army. That would thwart the war's objective of creating an international crisis that would pull the Middle East problem out of the freezer, and which would also confirm for the fourth time the 'chronic inferiority of the Arab world', not only in the eyes of Israel and the great powers, but also in the eyes of the Arabs themselves.

About a week after the outbreak of the war, the second stage of the Egyptian attack began. On Sunday, 14 October, the Egyptians carried out a large tank offensive with the support of artillery and aircraft. That entire day, a huge battle of armour against armour was fought, but the attempts to break through by the Egyptian army, which had thrown its two reserve armoured divisions into the battle, were halted. That day, the Egyptians lost about 200 tanks, whereas the IDF lost only a few dozen. The Egyptian war minister would later admit that the attack had come too early and its objective was to reduce the pressure on Syria.[34] In any case, in that attack, the Egyptians did not succeed in achieving their central objective: to capture the line of hills 10 to 12 kilometres from the Canal that dominated it along nearly its entire length. That line remained in the hands of the IDF until the end of the war.[35]

Not only did Egypt and Syria meticulously prepare for the war, but they also took care to explain it. In that regard, they learned the lesson of 1967, when they lost the war in terms of

international public opinion before even the first shot was fired. This time things were different. Official and unofficial Arab spokesmen emphasized in their statements the liberation of the territories that had been captured in 1967, sometimes adding as well the need to restore the rights of the Palestinians. In any case, declarations and threats about the approaching end of Israel, of the type made by official propagandists in the Arab press and radio in 1967, were not heard this time. Those declarations were compiled by the Israeli Foreign Ministry and published immediately after the war in public-diplomacy booklets, which were intended to prove the intentions of the Arabs. Now, after the war, only one thin sparse volume was published, containing only two statements that diverged from the general line: one by the editor of *Al-Ahram*, Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, from 19 October 1973, in which he said that 'if the Arabs succeed in liberating by force of arms their lands that were taken in June 1967, what is to stop them in the next stage from liberating Palestine itself by force of arms?' The second was by Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, in a broadcast to the nation on Radio Damascus on 16 October 1973: 'Our forces will continue to pursue the enemy and to strike him . . . until we recover our positions in the occupied land. Afterwards we will continue until we liberate all the land.'

While the war was still in progress, when the armies of Egypt and Syria were demonstrating combat competence and operative ability, a campaign of self-criticism was begun in the Israeli press over its [previous] derision of the Arab soldier. On the fourth day of the war, Moshe Dayan, in his meeting with newspaper editors, admitted his mistaken assessments, and said that 'there is one thing that did not go as I had thought – our ability to stop the construction itself of the bridges on the Canal. I had a theory that they would have to work all night to set up bridges and that we could prevent that with our armour.'[36] Moshe Dayan again acknowledged error in a speech he gave after the war, this time in public: 'I, as defence minister, did not appreciate the effectiveness and the combat ability of the Arabs, even when I knew in advance the quality of the kinds of weapons in their possession, the bridges that had been prepared for crossing the Canal and the quantity of weapons in their possession.'[37] Others spoke in similar terms. 'What was a big shock to me', said General (Res.) Yeshayahu Gavish, former head of the Southern Command, 'was and still is that the Egyptians succeeded in crossing in such force, under the best conditions for the IDF and the worst for the Egyptian army.'[38] Derision gave way to a more balanced view among the public as well. In a public-opinion survey conducted immediately after the war, 60 per cent of the respondents reported that the image of the Arabs as fighters had improved in their eyes.[39]

The wars of 1956 and 1967, in which the Arabs fought under difficult conditions due to surprise Israeli attack which had disrupted all the plans of the Arab military HQs, and due to the complete absence of any air defence, created a distorted image of the Arab combat soldier. In fact, in every battle in the previous wars, in which it was possible for those soldiers to fight under conditions for which they had been trained, they exhibited a high level of resilience and combat discipline and even heroism and sacrifice, qualities they had always possessed. That was true in the Falluja Pocket in 1948 (a place where an unknown major named Gamal Abd al-Nasser fought), it was the case at Abu-Ageila and Mitla in 1956, and at the positions at Jiradi (in Sinai), Tel Fahd (in the Golan) and in Jerusalem in 1967. In the October War, the possibility was afforded to the Arab armies, not just isolated units, to fight in accordance with the doctrine that they had memorized well, and so they demonstrated competence, discipline and sacrifice to a greater degree than in the wars of the past. It suddenly became clear that the racist perception that 'the Arabs can't fight because of their mentality' turned out, like every racist theory, to be groundless. And, indeed, in previous centuries, the Jews themselves were not known for their

tradition of combat, but it was conditions that converted them into excellent fighters, among the best in the world. It was the conditions and circumstances that compelled the Arabs to undertake a major national effort, to rally all their energy and to do everything they could to fight well in October 1973.

'The Arab world never had a military option'; 'the "oil weapon" is propaganda'

Those who claimed there was no real danger of war argued that the Arabs were unable to carry out a coordinated attack on Israel because of the deep divisions in the Arab world, and that without a unified Arab effort – which they believed was a utopian prospect – a military attack on Israel would be of no account even if it happened. That assumption was built on the foundation of past tests of strength between Israel and the Arabs, in which there was no real unified Arab front. In 1948 the Arab armies operated without a unified command, and every Arab state had its own objectives, which sometimes contradicted those of other Arab states (like the opposing objectives of King Abdullah of Jordan and King Farouk of Egypt). In 1956, Egypt was left on its own, without any Arab army opening a second front to help it. There was indeed a joint Arab command in 1967, which was established shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, but it proved ineffectual and did not coordinate between the participating armies. It was Israel that set the pace of the war by throwing all its weight first against Egypt, the air force of which was destroyed in the first hours of the war, and on a weak Jordan; only at the end came the attack on the Syrian front, which was not active in the first stages of the war.

Then came the Yom Kippur War, which proved to the surprise of many that the Arab world was able to coordinate and cooperate militarily. That coordination was not only on the military stage,[40] the war being fought on two fronts at once, something the Israeli command always tried to avoid; but also on the political stage and even the economic one, on which Saudi Arabia played a central role. Without joint action on all stages by the various sources of power in the Arab world, the military initiative would not have produced the desired political results. President Sadat knew that, and so on the eve of the war, he dedicated much effort to the consolidation of a united Arab front. One of the expressions of that inter-Arab cooperation was the opening to Egypt of the treasuries of Saudi Arabia and some of the oil principalities on the Persian Gulf to finance the campaign. In consequence, Cairo could pay the Soviet Union in cash for the weapons it acquired during the war and so was freer in its policies towards Moscow.

Divisiveness and extremism in the Arab world, two factors that had always helped Israel in its conflict with the Arab world, had engendered in Israel the saying: 'The Arabs are our best allies.' The Yom Kippur War erased that expression from the political lexicon.

However, if, regarding the creation of a unified Arab front, one could say, 'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be', that was not the case regarding the Arabs' resort to the oil weapon in the event of war with Israel. Clear signs were in evidence to the effect that this time the Arabs would use that weapon in their struggle against Israel, but they were ignored in Israel. The prevailing view at the highest levels was that this was an empty threat. True, the Arab states had been speaking for many years about using the 'oil weapon' to realize 'the Arab goal'. As far back as Nasser's 1954 book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, it was possible to find words to that effect. But until the Yom Kippur War no serious steps were taken in that direction. Moreover, the ineffective use of the oil weapon in 1967 caused the Arabs financial and political

harm and also increased the contempt of Israelis, who continued mockingly to claim that it was just propaganda, a bluff, because 'the Arabs have a choice: to sell the oil or to drink it'.

Indeed, the Energy Crisis that everybody was talking about in 1973 would have occurred even without a direct connection to the Israeli– Arab conflict, but the Arab oil-producing states took advantage of it for political purposes as well as to gain economic benefit. Not only did those states understand that the Middle East crisis was a good opportunity to realize the old objective of setting the price of oil according to the laws of supply and demand; they also knew how to effectively integrate the economic and political aspects of that move. That integration became apparent a few months before the October War. Already on 15 May 1973, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the State of Israel, all the oil-producing Arab states made a political statement by suspending the extraction of oil in their territories for one hour.

And, while, in the outside world, there was more talk about the Energy Crisis, so far with no direct connection to the war against Israel, the Israeli public-relations organs were doing all in their power to minimize and even deny the danger of the use of the 'oil weapon'. They claimed that oil is not a weapon, because alternative sources are likely to replace oil 'soon', and they also hinted that, in the event the Arabs tried to use oil as a political weapon, the United States would intervene with force to prevent it. The monthly magazine for IDF officers, published by the Defence Ministry, explained at length a few months before the war that the oil weapon could not be used, for many reasons, including the unwillingness of Saudi Arabia to get into a conflict with the United States, the inability of the Arab states to act in concert, the unwillingness of the US to accept 'that kind of extortion', and so on: 'to sum up: the oil weapon is a double-edged sword of limited value.'[41] Contempt for the oil weapon bordered on blindness. In fact, the very day on which the Committee of Arab Oil Ministers in Kuwait decided at the height of the war to gradually reduce the production of oil by 5 per cent every week and to impose an embargo on the states that supported Israel until Israel withdrew from the territories it occupied in 1967 and the rights of the Palestinians were restored, Prime Minister Meir declared that 'the Arab threat [to use the oil weapon – AK] has no substance and is mere extortion'.[42]

When the political and psychological dimensions of the 'oil weapon' became clear (it was during the first days of winter and restrictions on the use of fuel in the West provoked fears among the public), Israelis were surprised. 'I had never heard from our political leaders such a forecast of the collapse of our entire system of foreign relations due to Arab oil extortion,' angrily wrote an Israeli newspaper editor, who proposed, incidentally (after the Yom Kippur War!) [that Israel] 'capture the Arab oil fields and prevent their present owners from subjugating the world to one anti-Israeli front'.[43]

The use of the 'oil weapon' in the Yom Kippur War and afterwards was cautious and measured, and therefore also effective from the Arab point of view. It is evident that those who waged the oil war, first and foremost Saudi Arabia, the biggest oil producer in the Middle East, knew the limits of that weapon and understood that only partial results could be attained by means of it, and that it could not open all doors. Those who used the 'oil weapon' did not intend, therefore, to stop the wheels from turning in the states that supported Israel, but instead to inspire an atmosphere of threat and intimidation. As a matter of fact, the embargo on the boycotted countries was not effective. The oil companies, due to their multinational structure, could indeed stop the flow of Arab oil to the United States and Holland, which were on the 'blacklist', but at the same time they were able to increase the shipments to those countries of oil from Iran or Venezuela, for example, which had increased their output during the Middle East crisis. Nevertheless, the importance of the 'oil weapon' was in the fear it inspired of what could happen

if its use were intensified in tandem with developments in the Middle East conflict. That was what bore the desired political fruit, both in the United States (President Nixon's statement, published on 22 December 1973, that he preferred Israeli withdrawal to an energy crisis and an economic recession), and in Europe (the statement of the nine member-states of the European Common Market on 6 November 1973, which called on Israel to give up its territorial conquests). But things came to a head in Japan, where 82 per cent of the oil consumed was imported from the Arab world. The government of Japan, which had adopted a neutral position in the Israeli–Arab conflict until the war, abandoned that line under pressure from the Arab oil states, and starting in November 1973 issued several strongly pro-Arab statements in support of the demands for withdrawal from all the Occupied Territories and accusing Israel of ignoring UN resolutions that called for such withdrawal. This was the first time in many years that Japan had intervened openly in an international conflict in which it was not directly involved.

Nearly half a year after the war, in mid March 1974, the Arab oil ministers gathered again, this time in Vienna, and decided, with opposition from Syria and Libya, to lift the oil embargo that had been imposed on the United States. President Sadat, in the course of his rapprochement with the United States, had actively lobbied for passage of that resolution.

It became clear during the Yom Kippur War that oil is an important weapon in the hands of the Arabs if they use it well. Without it, the war would have gone less favourably for the Arabs. It also became clear that the struggle in the Middle East is not just a military and political one, but also one with important economic aspects. There is no longer any doubt that if armed conflict recurs in the Middle East, renewed use will be made of oil, which has become for the Arabs a permanent economic-political weapon in their struggle with Israel. On the eve of the decision to lift the embargo on oil shipments to the United States, Saudi oil minister Ahmad Zaki al-Yamani said that 'the oil-spigot remains in our control and we can close it at any time'.[44] This time no one scoffed at his statement.

'The Palestinians in the Territories will accept the situation'

The tragedy of the Palestinian people did not bother the vast majority of the leaders of Israel. In any case, they never made any public statement of their sympathy for a scattered people, a great many of whom live in refugee camps, while the rest live under a regime of occupation. The wretched situation of the Palestinians, the only Arab people without national sovereignty, has been seen by the Israeli leadership as a direct and exclusive result of the mistakes of the Arab states and of the Palestinians themselves, and so they have held them responsible for solving the problem. Moreover, the feeling of the Israeli elite, especially in recent years, has been that the Palestinian national movement (which it considered a movement of murder and terrorism) was fading away after reaching its peak in 1968–70, and that the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories had accepted their situation for lack of any alternative. During that period, they hoped, accomplished facts would be created in the Territories which would render impossible the creation of a Palestinian state. The despair that gripped the Palestinians in September 1970, after the slaughter of their brothers by King Hussein and the subsequent steep decline in their actions in the Territories was represented as evidence of the correctness of that perception. One could even hear from members of the elite the view that the residents of the Territories were in fact comfortable in their present situation, that indeed they 'eat, drink and work, they can maintain contact with their relatives east of the Jordan across the open bridges, and they benefit from the

situation, after all'. It turned out that those same people forgot not only the biblical adage 'Man does not live by bread alone' but also the lessons of the history of recent centuries, which teach that it is impossible to wipe out a national identity by force of military occupation, and that there was no chance, in this era of vigorous national movements and decolonization, that that process would bypass the Palestinian people, among whom the percentage of educated people is greater than all other Arab peoples. And, indeed, the October earthquake did not pass by the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories, and the myth of the 'helpless Palestinian, who accepts his fate in the face of Israeli power' turned out to be unrealistic.

'The Ramadan War', which caused the Arab nations to stand tall and planted within them the feeling that their honour had been restored, also had its effect among the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The feeling of weakness, hopelessness, frustration and even shame now gave way to hope. A resident of Bethlehem defined the change as follows: 'In the company of Israelis I always felt that I was not a man. That feeling disappeared with the war.' The Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan, a native of Nablus, describes in one of her poems how from the dust of June she began to return to flesh and blood in October, and in that poem she even called 1973 'the year of the Elephant', in reference to the great victory (related in the Sura of the Elephant in the Qur'an) won by the Muslims against their adversaries who had risen against them from Yemen. An intellectual from Ramallah, who had been liquidating his assets and planned to emigrate overseas 'because the status quo will continue forever and the Arabs have no future here', changed his mind at the outbreak of the war. 'Now, for the first time in years, I see a ray of hope,' he explained. The feeling in the Territories was that a solution had begun to appear on the horizon and the chance of establishing Palestinian national sovereignty had become a real possibility.

The war came as a complete surprise to the residents of the Territories. The leaders of the *fedayeen* organizations learned about it from Cairo only at the last minute, and they were not excited about the idea, because their sceptical political sense told them that it would be a limited war whose objective would be to advance negotiations and reach a compromise between Israel and the Arabs. The *fedayeen* had always feared such a compromise, because they assumed that the Palestinians would be its victims. Nevertheless, they responded to orders from Cairo and contributed their humble part to the war effort. During the war, the *fedayeen* organizations operated only within the borders of Lebanon, and from the first night of the war they contributed mainly by firing shells from mortars, bazookas and Katyushas at communities in northern Israel. The results of those actions amounted to less than a pinprick in comparison to the horrors of the war, but by means of them the Palestinians 'demonstrated a presence'. According to official Israeli statistics, there were 116 attacks from the Lebanese border on forty-four Israeli civilian communities in the north of the country during the war, of which dozens of civilians and six soldiers were casualties. The number of *fedayeen* members across the border reached 2,000 and maybe more.[45]

On the other hand, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip there was complete quiet. There the war was not apparent at all. Schools and public institutions were open, the military administration operated normally and movement across the bridges to and from Jordan continued as usual. It was as if there was no war. The *fedayeen* organizations claimed that the failure to open a third front between Jordan and Israel prevented fighting in the Occupied Territories themselves, but that was not the case. Active *fedayeen* cells hardly existed in the Territories when the war broke out; in any case, their number was very small and the civilian population itself did not respond to the call by the *fedayeen* radio station to carry out sabotage actions and to disrupt life in Israel,

because experience had taught them that passive resistance (in Arabic, *sumud* – steadfastness) was the only method that was effective and that bore fruit under their conditions. The only way the residents of the Territories responded to the appeal from across the border was not to go to work in Israel, during the war and for a while afterwards. And by that means more than any other, they inflicted harm on the Israeli economy, which was lacking not only the hundreds of thousands who had been mobilized and were fighting on the fronts, but also the tens of thousands of Arab workers who had become crucial to it in recent years. A resident of Nablus, who had lost a month's pay in consequence of this, explained that the role of the residents of the Territories was to hold on to what remained of Arab Palestine; if they had used force – and in reality, they did not have the means to do that – the Israelis would have taken advantage of the opportunity to expel them. 'The struggle here is over the land, and we must hold on to it first and foremost.'

The blood-soaked war with Egypt and Syria returned the Palestinian problem to its natural dimensions, after it had stood at the top of the list of priorities in the wake of the struggle between the *fedayeen* organizations and the IDF. Unlike the situation that prevailed after the Six-Day War, however, when there was hardly any talk about the Palestinians (even the famous Security Council Resolution of 22 November 1967 did not mention Palestine or the Palestinians at all), now all sides – the powers, the Arab states, the Palestinians and even the Israelis – were made aware of the fact that it would no longer be possible to avoid the Palestinian question and that any true solution to the Middle East conflict would have to take account, in a serious way, of the problem of the Palestinian Arab people.[46]

There was unrest in the Territories when the war ended. The Arab workers did indeed begin to return to their jobs, but, along with that, after several years of quiet, a rising wave of incidents was recorded in the Territories, which reached its high point in November and December and began to subside starting in January. The objective of those actions was above all political – to demonstrate the hegemony of the *fedayeen* organizations in the Territories – but their scope was limited: shootings on highways, throwing grenades here and there and the detonation of small explosive charges next to Israeli institutions in the Occupied Territories, especially labour offices. One of the most serious actions was the attempt on the life of the military governor of Nablus, who was wounded as he was touring the city's Casbah in December 1973.

At the same time – and this worried the authorities no less – many Palestinians in the Territories began to dare to state in public that the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasser Arafat, was the legal representative of the Palestinians. This was done in different ways, starting with slogans on the walls of houses or the covert distribution of leaflets, and ending with a petition signed by well-known notables in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who expressed complete support for the resolutions of the Arab Summit in Algiers and stated that the PLO was the legal representative of the Palestinian people. Even figures known to be supporters of the Hashemite crown were forced, after the Arab Summit in Algiers in November 1973 and the Muslim Summit in Lahore (February 1974), to declare that the PLO was the representative of the Palestinians, although they suggested that the possibility remained of retaining the link between the two banks of the Jordan. One of the expressions of the change that occurred in the outlooks and activities of the residents of the Territories was the nearly complete abstention from voting in the Jerusalem municipal elections in late December 1973. About 8 per cent of those who had the right to vote participated, the vast majority of them employees of the municipality or the government, versus about 23 per cent in the previous elections in 1969. 'In the competition between the government leaflets, which were distributed overtly and which called for voting, and the underground leaflets which called for a boycott of the elections, the latter won,' concluded an

Arab Jerusalem journalist.

Whereas the sabotage and the assassinations were the work of groups linked to the Palestinian *fedayeen* organizations, the Palestinian National Front (*al-Jabha al-wataniya al-filastiniya*) – a group that united all the underground resistance figures in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which was affiliated with the PLO and the Palestinian National Council – was behind the political activities. The creation of the Front had begun before the war, but only afterwards did it develop variegated activities including leafletting, publishing newspapers, gathering signatures on petitions, demonstrations and sit-ins. The moving spirit behind the Front were the Communists – the most organized political body in the Occupied Territories, even though they had never been legal, including during the previous administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But the Front also included other national political bodies, professional associations and other groups. In order to break the Palestine National Front the authorities unleashed a widespread wave of arrests of its activists in April 1974. About 150 people accused of membership in the Front were put under administrative detention under the British Mandate laws. A few dozen were still detained in the prisons in the summer of 1975.

In the wake of the increase in armed and political action by the Palestinian organizations in the Territories (the first wave was after the war, and the second wave began after the Arab Summit Conference in Rabat [October 1974], which recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, and Yasser Arafat's appearance at the UN in November 1974), the military government returned to its methods of 1967–70. These included blowing up dozens of houses of suspected members of *fedayeen* organizations; exiling Palestinian leaders (including the mayor of al-Bireh) either to Jordan or to Lebanon; closing institutions (Bir Zeit College was closed for a few weeks after its students demonstrated against the occupation); curfews in several communities; widespread detentions, including the administrative detention of dozens of political figures; harsher verdicts against those accused of acts of sabotage and harsher treatment of prisoners and detainees, who complained more than once of torture. The 'strong hand' that had been concealed for years was revealed again.

Three important developments related to the Palestinian problem emerged from the October War. The first was that Hashemite Jordan lost its position in the West Bank in the eyes of the Palestinians and the Arab world and its chance of acquiring sovereignty over the Gaza Strip as part of a peaceful solution to the Israeli–Arab conflict. The efforts of King Hussein since the war to gain influence in the Territories by means of emissaries, the distribution of money and various promises did not bear fruit, and his supporters lost their influence. Israel's refusal, inherited by Yitzhak Rabin from Golda Meir, to discuss with Amman the future of the West Bank, exposed the Hashemite regime in all its weakness and enhanced the weight of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians.

The second development was that the residents of the Territories, who were united in their demand for a rapid end to the Israeli Occupation but divided in their opinions about the solution 'after the liberation', were now more and more united around one demand – the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which the PLO also adopted indirectly in the summer of 1974 after prolonged debate.[47] The residents of the Territories now understood that the Palestinian leadership's past policy of 'all or nothing' had failed and that the time had come for the Palestinians to embrace compromise solutions. The test they faced was to overcome the two misfortunes that had afflicted the Palestinians since the national movement was born after the First World War: the taking of extreme positions not consistent with political reality and with the balance of power, and the permanent divisions within their ranks, even in the hardest times

(such as in 1936–39, 1948 and 1970).

The third: Israel had lost a rare opportunity, during the period between the two wars, to establish relations between the two peoples, the Israeli-Jewish people and the Palestinian-Arab people, who consider the same small piece of land to be their homeland, on the basis of equal national rights. Instead of building on the fraudulent coexistence of occupier and occupied and a total ban on any political activity in the Territories under the belief that 'political Palestine is finished',[48] Israel – as far-seeing circles in Israel recognized – should have recognized the existence of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, and given political freedom to the residents of the Territories. That route, if it had been taken, could have led to only one thing: the strengthening of the moderate and realistic faction within the Palestinian movement. Well-known Palestinian personalities told the Israelis a few months after the war: 'You are too late. You had six years to approach us, to talk to us, to try to solve the problems of this country between the parties themselves, without outside intervention. Instead you chose to declare that you did not recognize the Palestinian entity, that you would not recognize the existence and rights of the Palestinian people as an ethnic entity within the borders of this country. Now, after what has happened to you, you will be forced to recognize that entity and you will pay a higher price in concessions. Your bargaining position will be much weaker than if you had done it before the war.'

'Time is on our side'

That axiom, which was exposed in its full nakedness on Yom Kippur, served as justification and excuse for the immobilism of Israeli policy between the two wars. Israeli public figures and journalists were in the habit of claiming that time was on Israel's side, and that Israel knew well how to take advantage of this and so its situation was better than that of its Arab adversaries. There was thus no need to propose new initiatives towards the Arab world. The important thing, they explained, was 'to buy time', because at the end of the day the Arabs would accept the essential part of Israel's conditions for peace. The more the Arabs tarried – they added in a warning tone – the less they would get in the negotiations. This 'warning' was often repeated, as if it had magical power which would draw the Arabs to the negotiation table.[49]

Abba Eban testified after the war: 'The political "conception" that the Arabs were destined to compromise with us on our terms if we would just stand fast, and that they could not achieve anything by war was the legacy of the Military Intelligence people. They propagated it and they strengthened it in others who believed it. The General Staff has great influence over the government, in the absence of other professional sources of assessment of the intentions of the enemy.'[50] As a matter of fact, military circles could not have instilled that opinion in the politicians if the latter had not firmly shared their belief in that myth.

Proponents of the view that 'time is on our side' did not understand, of course, that time in the Middle East does not exist in a vacuum, but is integrated into international processes. They had already been proven wrong long before Yom Kippur 1973. Way back in the 1950s, they believed that the problem of the Arab refugees would be solved by itself, 'because the young generation of refugees will accept their situation', and in this they were disappointed. After Yom Kippur, there was much astonishment when it turned out that 'time is working against us' because Israel had been resting on its laurels and did not have the sense to take advantage of the unique window of opportunity that had been opened for it by the Six-Day War by exchanging the

asset that had fallen into its hands – the Territories – for a more important asset: peace. And it also became clear that, between June 1967 and October 1973, the Arabs had improved their fighting ability and their military power, which would include political struggle. They increased their influence all over the world, especially in Europe and Africa, and they also learned to use the oil weapon effectively. When all was said and done it was the Arab states that used time more effectively.

Even so, apparently not everyone understood that the days of putting off decisions in order to 'buy time' in the hope that the situation would improve were over. Yitzhak Rabin, even before he became prime minister, provoked wonder with his advice about the Geneva Convention and peace negotiations, which could be summed up in two words: 'Don't rush.' 'To gain time is the best way. If we go to political discussions in summer 1974 we may find ourselves in a more comfortable position with the United States in terms of the consolidation of tougher positions towards the Soviet Union.' Why? Because 'there are elections for the Congress and a third of the Senate in November 1974'. Nor did he abandon that line of thought after he became prime minister. In January 1975 he stated, 'For the good of Israel the present situation should be frozen until the beginning of 1976, which is an election year in the United States, in which no pressure will be applied on Israel.'[51] Indeed, there are still people in Israel who hold to that mirage of 'time' and see it as the most important thing.

'It doesn't matter what the Gentiles say; what matters is what the Jews do'

That popular saying of Ben-Gurion's, which every Israeli youth can quote, was for many years one of the cornerstones of Israeli policy. Its practical meaning was that the facts that we create in this country are what will be determinative, and not foreigners' talk or resolutions of the UN, which Ben-Gurion called 'UM-Shmum'.[52]

That saying became a symbol of Israeli policy in the period between the two latest wars, when it looked as though guardianship over the Middle East had been conferred on Israel, and that it was free to do whatever it wanted in the new territories in any case: to create facts on the ground and dispossess residents while ignoring the protests of the Arabs and the advice and assessments of friendly and neutral leaders all over the world. Proponents of this policy in the Occupied Territories believed, in disregard of the atmosphere of détente, that since Washington was neutralizing Moscow and the Arabs were helpless, then Israel, by relying on its strength, could shape policy and its borders as it wished, without taking into account the words and opinions of others, very much along the lines of Ben-Gurion's adage. The enormous credit Israel had in 1967 was accordingly rapidly wasted, and Israel became, due to flawed policy and not, as many thought, due to flawed public relations, one of the most isolated states in the world. Standing against it was not only a united Arab world, supported by the socialist bloc and most of the states of the Third World, but also the states of the European Common Market, with their stance of dissociation from Israel. Undoubtedly, that situation encouraged the Egyptians and the Syrians to launch military action against Israel.

Suddenly, the Israelis realized that political isolation on the international stage was equivalent to additional columns in the armies of the enemy; suddenly, they heard from their leaders that, due to political considerations, Israel could not launch a preventive war on the morning of 6 October; suddenly, they learned that Israel's weakened political position had caused European governments connected to NATO, like Germany and Greece, to oppose the

transfer of American arms to Israel through their territories; suddenly, they learned that the firing on the fronts stopped when the Gentiles ordered it, even before Israel had 'finished the job'. The Israelis also learned that, with 'bad borders', but with political freedom of action and sympathy in international public opinion, a great victory was won in 1967; whereas, in the October War, with 'ideal borders' and 'strategic depth', but with oppressive political isolation, Israel won a few tactical victories which could not conceal its political-strategic failure.

The resulting shock was great. The following, word for word, is the response of a soldier on the front soon after the ceasefire: 'Look at what is written in the newspaper, it's totally the joke of the month' – pointing to a headline on the front page: "Honduras has not broken off diplomatic relations with Israel".' A second later, the laughter disappeared from his face and he gravely explained:

> Less than three months ago I thought I was a citizen of a Middle Eastern superpower. When Sadat threatened war, I laughed inwardly: he's crazy, within two hours we'll be in Damascus, in three hours we'll be in Cairo. It's true: I scorned the Arabs. Why did I scorn them? Because in fact we had been educated to scorn them. In a world where everybody prostrates before power we were the strong ones and they were the weak. And when I read about the responses of the civilized world – they always wrote 'civilized' within quotation marks – I knew that it was unimportant what the Gentiles said, it was what the Jews did that was important. And now, all of a sudden, we're melting with joy that Honduras will not break diplomatic relations with us. My God, if that's not a joke, then it's very tragic.

It was a long, hard fall down to the ground of reality for many, like that reserve officer, a journalist by profession, who related that the hardest experience of the war for him came on the tenth day of the war. It was an experience that was unconnected to acts of heroism or bloody battles.

> My hardest experience in the Yom Kippur War verged on the grotesque, and was related to . . . underpants. That day the unit's quartermaster showed up in a commandeered civilian vehicle and began to distribute personal items to us, including a change of underwear. Imagine my surprise when I noticed that it was made in the United States. It struck me like a thunderbolt: we're in bad shape if there are no longer underpants made by 'Ata' in the warehouses, and our dependence on the United States is serious if even the clothing supplies they give us are American. Not many days passed before the whole IDF was wearing green American combat fatigues. Can we still talk about Israel as an independent state?

Again, it is hard to say that the Israeli leadership or most of public opinion has drawn the logical conclusion from the collapse of the approach that scorned international public opinion and the 'Goyim'. Instead of listening to constructive criticism and learning lessons, voices said, among other things, that the conclusion was that 'we need only one single criterion, which is "Is it good for the Jews?"' Hence the articles after the war calling for closer relations with 'our only friend in the African continent', South Africa, which is 'a White, orderly and successful state', began to appear in the Israeli press after the war – accompanied by racist insults to the Black African states, which had broken off their relations with Israel before, during and after the war.[53]

The Soviet–American agreement which put a stop to the war just when it looked like 'the tide was turning in our favour' provoked anger on the one hand, and nostalgia for the Cold War on the other. Suddenly, all the 'Cold War orphans' who saw every measure to strengthen détente as harmful to Israel came to the forefront. US senator Henry Jackson, who embraced a hard line towards the Soviet Union, became the 'hero of the day' in Israel and was described in the press as an 'asset for Israel'. Nevertheless, Israeli regard for President Nixon did not decrease, and Israelis followed the Watergate affair with concern and hope that he would not be harmed by it.

The Yom Kippur War made Israel more dependent on the United States than ever before – politically, militarily and economically. No longer was heard the scornful adage about ignoring 'what the Gentiles say'. The humourist Ephraim Kishon ironically summed up Israel's new situation after the war thus: 'Our fate now depends on three reels of tape from the Watergate

Affair somewhere in Washington.’

5

The army and politics

The Israeli public had always seen the IDF as an entity that represented perfect efficiency, one able to undertake any mission even if it looked impossible, an entity that was elevated above all the afflictions of society, and of course, clean of politics. The Yom Kippur War proved once again that the IDF was a competent and resourceful fighting force, but it also became clear that there were flaws in that great organization, reflecting those in the society within which it operated. And it also emerged that after high-ranking officers had gone from the army to the political arena in the preceding years, a parallel process emerged by which politicization percolated into the army, a process that reached its height during the Yom Kippur War, and then continued afterwards.

As a matter of fact, there had never been real separation between the army and politics in Israel. The conventional wisdom was that during David Ben-Gurion's term as prime minister and defence minister there was complete separation between the army and politics, but that is a myth. Ben-Gurion, who was a party man through and through, did all he could to keep undesirable partisan influences out of the IDF and knew how to ensure that people with views compatible with his were appointed to key positions. The evidence that Ben-Gurion undertook such practices is abundant. Lieutenant General (Res.) Yigal Yadin, the second chief of the General Staff of the IDF, testified: 'When I appointed a commander I took no interest in his partisan affiliation. With Ben-Gurion there were also – so it seemed to me – partisan considerations, when it came to the appointment of senior commanders.'[1] Lieutenant General (Res.) Haim Bar-Lev has also stated that during the Ben-Gurion period, 'Talented people could not advance on the promotion track as they deserved, due to [their] political views.'[2] Further evidence comes from General (Res.) Matityahu Peled, who said that during the Ben-Gurion period there was 'very intensive politicization of the army, which stood in the path of talented officers', who 'were forced to leave the IDF, and other officers, also talented, were rapidly promoted due to their loyalty to Mapai'.[3] Accordingly, for example, a gifted officer like Yitzhak Rabin was forced to wait for many years, until Ben-Gurion's retirement in 1963, before he could be appointed chief of the General Staff. Other Palmach veterans were no more fortunate.

The rise of Ben-Gurion's disciple Moshe Dayan, on the other hand, was truly meteoric. Two

days before Ben-Gurion's first retirement to Kibbutz Sde Boker, in December 1953, he made sure to appoint Moshe Dayan as chief of the General Staff, an appointment of great political significance. The degree of Dayan's loyalty to the new prime minister, Moshe Sharett, was illustrated by Dayan's own words to the Olshan-Dori Commission, which was looking into the Lavon Affair: 'I did not conceal my passive participation in the misleading of Sharett by Lavon. I explained that I knew occasionally that Lavon was misleading Sharett (by not keeping him apprised of the matter), but if Lavon took that upon himself, I didn't have to intervene. Moreover, I dissent completely from Sharett's political approach, and I sometimes see his refusal to authorize actions as harmful to the interests of the State, and I have no reason to help him with that beyond what my duty requires of me.'[4]

Another manifestation of the politicization of the army in the Ben-Gurion period was the assigning of the IDF to run the military administration in the Arab areas in Israel. That administration was such a thoroughly political tool in the hands of Mapai, the party in power, that even the right-wing party Herut, which was known for its hard line towards the Arabs, demanded that it be abolished and even voted for that in the Knesset several times.

And it was none other than Yitzhak Rabin, who had himself been a victim of the politicization of the army, who taught its proponents, a few years after he hung up his uniform, about the political considerations behind the appointment of senior officers. He explained that, under Israel's conditions, security considerations were an integral part of every discussion, and the opinion of the IDF directly influenced the decisions of the political echelon. 'In the Israeli reality there is not really any framework or possibility for criticism of the security position expressed by the chief of the General Staff, which imposes a great deal of responsibility on the General Staff and the chief of the General Staff when they are expressing the military's position to the political echelon. It is logical that the political echelon should expect that the senior level of the military echelon identify with the line it has adopted'. Rabin admitted that the political echelon had always cultivated a high command that was willing to identify with its political decisions 'whether due to global outlook or willingness to set aside its opinions'.[5]

Political considerations have therefore always dictated the decisions related to the IDF, its command and its direction, but Ben-Gurion always took care outwardly to impose the impression of an absolute separation between the high command of the army and the political system. Accordingly, for example, active-duty officers were barred from cabinet meetings, except in extraordinary cases. General (Res.) Chaim Herzog, who served as the head of the Intelligence Branch in the General Staff, testified, for his part, that 'during the two periods in which I served as head of Intelligence in the IDF, both of them while Ben-Gurion was serving as prime minister and defence minister, for a total of over five years, I did not enter the cabinet meeting room even once, nor did I appear before the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. Even the chief of the General Staff he summoned to those forums only occasionally, for very specific issues, and more than once he barred those in uniform from answering questions that were put to them.'[6] That practice was abandoned after Ben-Gurion retired, and was unknown while Dayan was serving as defence minister.

The process of blurring the boundary between the army and politics has intensified, especially since the Six-Day War. The IDF's crushing victory in that war enhanced the influence of the conqueror-commanders in the eyes of the public and the political establishment and motivated party hacks to start pursuing the generals who were crowned with glory. Suddenly, IDF commanders discovered that an achievement on the field of battle was also an important asset in the field of politics, and more than a few learned how to take advantage of that fact.

The appearance of the reserve officers in the political arena

The first open manifestation of the blurring of the boundary between politics and the army was the instantaneous passage, with no transitional stage, of high-ranking officers from military service to the cabinet table. The first was General (Res.) Ezer Weizman, who hung up his uniform in 1969 and went straight to the cabinet as a representative of Gahal (Herut) as transport minister. The second was former chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General (Res.) Haim Bar-Lev, who was added as minister of trade and industry for the Labour Party in March 1972, after he left the army.

The 'parachuting of the generals' into the cabinet occasioned sharp public criticism, including from members of the party machine. Dov Ben-Meir, the secretary of the Labour Party in the Tel Aviv region, responded to that phenomenon by saying that 'every joining of the government by a general and a lieutenant general (*rav-aluf*)[7] is accompanied by the silent question, did he enter because the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Transport or any other ministry really needs a person like him, or is perhaps his entry intended to ensure the obedience of the security establishment to the civilian government by giving the defence establishment direct and unmediated access to the cabinet through lieutenant generals and generals in the reserves?'[8]

In the wake of the public criticism of the 'parachuting of the generals' onto the political arena, the Knesset ratified a bill submitted by Reuben Arzi (Alignment-Mapam) in the summer of 1973, which mandated a cooling-off period of a hundred days between the date of a person's release from military service and their joining the government as a minister, as was the practice for a military person who wanted to run as a candidate in elections to the Knesset. However, even when that law was passed, the parties did not change their practice of maintaining contacts with high-ranking commanders while they were still in uniform, in order to attract them to their service, especially on the eve of elections, when the generals' stock increases in value. It also occurred that an opposition party's contacts with a high-ranking officer of renown caused government circles to try to 'buy him' by promoting him in rank or offering him a higher command position in the army. The case of General Ariel Sharon is a characteristic example. According to his testimony, on the eve of the elections to the Knesset in 1969, he had talks with the leadership of Gahal with an eye to joining its ranks, although he did not see it as something that would occur right away. This came to the attention of the Labour Party and one of its senior ministers held talks with him in order to dissuade him from taking that step. Eventually, Sharon attained his true objective, for which he was striving at the same time: he was appointed head of the Southern Command. In 1973, when it became clear to him that he would not be a candidate for chief of the General Staff, he left the army in anger, immediately entering the political arena and also succeeding in bringing about the creation of a bloc of right-wing parties: the Likud.

In the 1973 electoral campaign, the parties' pursuit of generals' names to adorn their lists of candidates reached its peak. Rabin, Bar-Lev, Yariv, Sharon, Yoffe – those are some of the prominent names that appeared as candidates for the two big blocs that contested the elections – the Alignment [Maarach] and the Consolidation [Likud]. The pursuit of generals elicited various responses, some sharply critical. Former justice minister Yaakov Shimshon Shapira observed with irony that, if the flow of high-ranking Reserve generals to the political arena continued, every soldier would carry not a marshal's baton, but a party membership card, which would open the gates of the Knesset to him.

The flow of senior Reserve officers to the political stage entailed two new phenomena, which

characterized tendencies that were developing within Israeli society. Until a few years previously, army officers who chose to become politically active after they left active service tended to join the ranks of the Labour movement. More than a few officers were members of the party even before they rose in the ranks of the IDF, like Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon and Moshe Carmel. It was General Ezer Weizman who broke with that unwritten custom when he joined Herut upon his retirement from the IDF in 1969. Generals Lahat and Sharon (in 1973) and others followed in his footsteps. Those officers made no effort to conceal their right-wing views in the social sphere.

General (Res.) Shlomo Lahat declared while still a candidate for the mayoralty of Tel Aviv: 'I demand compulsory arbitration and reject strikes. I do not distinguish between essential and non-essential services when it comes to strikes. In Israel the whole economy is essential. At least we have to set a trial period of two years without strikes. We'll see how it works'.[9] As for General Sharon, who was asked by a journalist why he had joined Gahal even though, in the past, he had been a card-carrying member of Mapai, he explained, 'The concepts of Right and Left are no longer valid. They are outdated concepts and no longer legitimate.'[10] Thus the rightwards tendency which has characterized political life in Israel since the Six-Day War did not bypass the officer corps.

A second phenomenon, which attests to the 'practical' approach of some senior officers towards political life, was the practice of conducting negotiations with two parties at the same time, as if it were a matter of choosing a job. The most famous example is that of General Shlomo Lahat, who maintained contacts with the Labour Party (via Minister Sapir) and with Gahal at the same time. In the end he decided to join the latter, which agreed to put him at the top of its list for the Tel Aviv municipal elections in 1973.

A great many generals were thus prominent in the campaign for elections to the eighth Knesset. The war that broke out by surprise brought with it a reverse flow of reserve officers from the political field to the battlefield. The scale of the war and the grave problems it presented compelled the re-enlistment of the 'old warhorses' who were dispatched both to the field of battle and to General Staff positions.

In the year before the war, when the chances of war were considered low, the process of replacing the members of the senior command was at its height, in accordance with the rotation system, which was one of the sacred principles in the IDF. The purpose of the replacement of senior commanders was primarily to inject new blood into command and staff positions, in order to prevent stagnant thinking, conservatism and adherence to consensus, and to strive for dynamism in all ranks of command (this principle, incidentally, stood in diametrical opposition to the existing practice in the parties and at the top level of government, where leaders were frozen to their seats for decades). On the other hand, the rotation system, which entailed the release from active duty of officers in their forties and still at the height of their powers, helped them find their way into various branches of the civilian economy, in both the public and private sectors. On the eve of the war, the chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar, revealed that nearly 20 per cent of the officers in the IDF at the rank of lieutenant colonel (*sgan-aluf*) and higher had been released from active duty since the beginning of 1972 and about another 10 per cent were in the process of being released. 'The exchange of about 30 per cent of the senior command over the course of two years is a very serious, very significant turnover and it is a major contribution to the refreshing of the IDF and the senior command in particular,'[11] he explained. Whether that did indeed contribute to the refreshing of the army, or whether that turnover, sometimes forcing officers to leave the army while still in their prime, was excessive

and harmed the leadership of the army at the critical time of the Yom Kippur War, was the subject of bitter debates.

The number of politician-generals who were mobilized during the war was substantial. Before the war about 20 per cent of the high-ranking officers of the army who took part in the war were active politicians in various parties, especially in the big blocs, the Alignment and the Likud. Minister of Trade and Industry General (Res.) Haim Bar-Lev was the commander of the Egyptian front from the fifth day of the war, after a sojourn of twenty-four hours on the Syrian front (he remained a member of the government even while he was mobilized, despite the objection of the justice minister). General Arik Sharon, a founder of the Likud, acted as a division commander under his command. It was natural that not only would political rivalry among the politician-generals be manifest, but also the aspiration to justify the strategic outlook each one of them had held before the war, particularly regarding the Bar-Lev Line. From there, the path to the 'identification' of units based on their commanders' parties was a short one. In a cartoon published after the war, a tank crew member said to his comrade: 'Tell me what party our brigade commander is from. I just want to be sure the reinforcements will arrive on time.'

The 'war of the generals'

Success has many fathers, and failure is an orphan, according to the popular adage. But, for all that, after the Yom Kippur War various efforts were made to find the fathers, real or imaginary, of the failures that had occurred during the war. Those attempts, as well as the rivalries between the politician-generals, were the source of the new phenomenon in the IDF which was called by all 'the war of the generals'. Discussions and arguments between generals about military procedures were familiar. There had been such debates in Israel after previous wars, but two factors distinguished the previous debates from the ones that broke out after the latest war. In the past, they were conducted long after the ceasefire and were only in the context of strategic discussions, without political characteristics. This time, the debates began even before the ceasefire on the fronts, and they heated up into the sharpest of polemics, which drifted far beyond the military-operational realm. Israelis who were witness to the waves of accusations that uniformed generals flung at their comrades, even in front of foreign journalists, were astonished by that phenomenon, which until then had been completely unknown in the IDF.

Soon after the end of the hostilities, the Israeli public was surprised to hear that the head of the Southern Command, General Shmuel Gonen, had lodged very serious complaints against General Ariel Sharon (whose position Gonen had inherited three months before the war) and had even demanded that he be court-martialled for breach of discipline and disobedience of orders in time of war.

On 20 November 1973, Gonen submitted his complaint to the chief of the General Staff. Two days later, on the orders of the defence minister, he was transferred to a post of much lower importance – the commander of the Shlomo District [southern Sinai]. This was the only case of any IDF commander losing his command in the wake of the war. The decision was made by Moshe Dayan, even before the mutual accusations had been looked into. Among the public, the impression was created that General Gonen bore the brunt of the guilt for the failures of the war. Dayan, in any case, openly sided with Sharon, while Bar-Lev supported Gonen and even demanded the ousting of Sharon while hostilities were still in progress. Only in July 1974, as a result of pressures and various intercessions, did Generals Gonen and Sharon agree to withdraw

their complaints.

Moshe Dayan gave his support to Sharon on other matters too, which emerged after the war. Some saw this as the result of political considerations on the defence minister's part, which stemmed from his desire to maintain contacts with leaders of the Likud in anticipation of possible developments in the political arena.

The Gonen–Sharon feud was military in nature, with no overtly partisan manifestations, but after the war there were debates, accusations and mutual attacks between supporters of the Alignment and those of the Likud, the tone of which was thoroughly partisan and political. General Ariel Sharon, for example, claimed that he had been attacked by his adversaries from the beginning of the war for transparently political reasons. He responded with scathing attacks on the pages of foreign newspapers immediately after the ceasefire, while he was still in uniform, bypassing military censorship in the process – something unprecedented in the IDF. In a series of interviews noteworthy for the disclosure of operational details which he gave to the international press (the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, London *Guardian* and others), General Sharon harshly accused the high command of being responsible for the disasters that occurred on the first days of the war, of failing to correctly understand the situation on the battlefield and of harassing his division. He personally accused Southern Command head Shmuel Gonen of responsibility for the Egyptian gains in Sinai at the beginning of the war and scornfully criticized Haim Bar-Lev and David Elazar: 'The Command was political and acted in conformity with internal political considerations,' he said.

The shock in Israel on reading these allegations was total. After the first interviews, *Haaretz* called for Sharon's dismissal from the army.[12] Counter-interviews and articles of reply were soon published, including by Lieutenant General (Res.) Haim Bar-Lev. Particularly interesting was the reply of Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, considering that he had emerged from Sharon's interviews clean of any accusations of military failures and politicization, and had even received praise from Sharon. Moshe Dayan provided Sharon with cover along the lines of 'you watch out for me and I'll watch out for you' by saying, 'I do not think that it is necessary to relieve a talented officer of his command just because he gives interviews to the press. No one has yet died because an officer gave an interview to the *New York Times*.'[13]

Dayan's covering for Sharon also continued when, with the approach of the Knesset elections (which had been postponed because of the war to 31 December 1973), General Sharon's candidacy for election to the Knesset came up while he was still in the army. Article 56(d) of the Knesset Elections Law stipulates that a candidate for the Knesset shall not do reserve military duty under the Defence Service Law between the date of publication of the list of candidates and the day of the election. Accordingly, the attorney general informed Generals Sharon and Yariv that they would have to leave active service in the army immediately, otherwise they could not be candidates for election to the Knesset. Aharon Yariv was demobilized from the army; not so Ariel Sharon. The Likud requested a modification to the Elections Law which would permit candidates for the Knesset to serve in the army in special cases. A similar tendency emerged within the Alignment as well, and for a while it looked as if a seal of approval would be given to the politicization of the army under the cover of 'emergency conditions'. However, opposition increased, and during a stormy discussion within the Alignment faction in the Knesset, MK Avraham Ofer exclaimed: 'They never shut up with that word "security". It's a diktat of Ariel Sharon. It is very dangerous for the Knesset of Israel to convene to pass laws under the impression that Ariel Sharon's tanks are stationed in the Knesset Plaza.'[14] In the end, the Alignment was dissuaded, and, by a majority of 24 votes to 16, the faction decided against

modifying the law. General Sharon continued to serve in the army without modification of the law. His picture was displayed on campaign posters and he was elected to the Knesset without hanging up his uniform, in a triumphant victory for the politicization of the IDF.

After the election too, alarm bells continued to ring over the politicization of the army. The day on which General Sharon was demobilized from the army and began to serve as a member of the Knesset (20 January 1974), he issued a special Daily Order to the troops of his division, unprecedented in its content, in which he said that 'despite the omissions and mistakes, despite the failures and the impediments, despite loss of senses and loss of control, we succeeded in attaining victory'.[15] That evening, he appeared at a Likud demonstration in Tel Aviv against the separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt and called it 'a withdrawal by a victorious army led by a defeatist government'. His supporters carried him on their shoulders and rhythmically chanted: 'Arik, King of Israel!' But for others his declarations had unpleasant associations, and some compared it to the 'stab in the back' ('Dolchstoß') theory[16] that was propagated in Germany after the First World War by the nationalist Right against the 'gang of traitors who seized control on the home front and plunged a knife into the backs of the troops'.

With that Daily Order, Sharon elicited a sharp response. The appointment of General Sharon as the commander of a reserve division was withdrawn, despite Moshe Dayan's opposition, and he was attached to a unit for soldiers who were released from active reserve duty for a specified period, as was the practice for other Knesset members. In late 1974, General Sharon resigned from the Knesset and was appointed to an important position in the reserve forces. Knowledgeable people say that he has abandoned the political arena only temporarily.

Supervision of the defence establishment

The shortcomings in the army that came to light during the war prompted, once again, a demand that had been voiced many times in the past, but not realized: the implementation of an effective civilian-public supervision over the defence establishment, which had arrogated to itself a very broad degree of autonomy and freedom of action. Decisions on the subject of service in the army, appointments in the IDF and the designation of areas within the borders of the state as off-limits to civilians were made and implemented by the defence establishment, which bypassed the Knesset. For example, contrary to the accepted procedure, according to which it is the cabinet that ratifies various appointments, such as consuls and ambassadors, the appointment of generals, all the more important under Israel's special circumstances, is left entirely in the hands of the defence minister. The practice is that the defence minister recommends the candidate to the cabinet, which always ratifies that recommendation.

The only law that deals with the IDF was published as an order on the eve of the birth of the state and it has undergone no changes since then. It states that the defence minister is responsible for its implementation, but it says nothing at all about the structure of the army, of the way appointments are made in it, or the network of relations between it and the civilian government and elected institutions. Accordingly, the defence minister has in practice unlimited authority in everything related to the IDF, and he serves as the only link between it and the government. There is no body charged with supervising the defence establishment along the lines of the National Security Council in the United States. Even the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee has limited authority and cannot fulfil that role. This lacuna is manifest in everything related to the ratification of the defence budget, among other things. Not only are data or

considerations regarding the distribution of that gigantic budget not provided to the public, but even the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee is not given adequate information to conduct a serious discussion of the budget. The chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee during the war, Haim Zadok, admitted that the situation was such that, outside the defence establishment, no one was equipped to examine the budget before it was submitted, and all the information at the disposal of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee was based on the requests that it submitted to the defence establishment. Haim Zadok declared: 'The committee does not have means of its own to check these lists of priorities and so it does not have the ability to determine which alternatives to choose among what is proposed, because the proposals are not known to us.'[17]

Evidence of the degree to which appointments and dismissals within the senior officer corps are dependent on the decision (and sometimes the whim) of the defence minister is provided by the case of General Israel Tal, the deputy chief of the General Staff and former head of the Operations Branch, who was forced to leave the IDF in March 1974. General Tal, more commonly known by the nickname Talik, is one of the builders of the IDF's armoured corps and a world-famous expert on the subject. Talik is a Sabra, born in Safed, who dedicated the best years of his life to service in the Hagana and the IDF. He served as the commander of the armoured corps, as a division commander in the Six-Day War and commander of the Egyptian front after Lieutenant General (Res.) Bar-Lev hung up his uniform at the end of the Yom Kippur War and returned to the cabinet at the beginning of November 1973. In that capacity, Talik met with the head of the Egyptian Operations Branch, General el-Gamasy, a few days after the end of hostilities, and conducted a long conversation with him behind closed doors. Upon the transfer of General Gonen out of his position as head of the Southern Command, about a month after the end of the war, Talik took his place, thereby becoming the highest-ranking officer on the front. While he was still in that role, when a war of attrition was taking place on the Egyptian front, he received an order from the defence minister, which, if it had been carried out, would have had extremely grave consequences. Dayan ordered General Tal to 'heat up' the front and also asked him to stop the supply of food and water to the besieged Third Army every time the Egyptians violated the ceasefire, but Talik saw the full implications of those orders and refused to obey them, even though they were transmitted to him both orally and in writing. General Tal stated then that, in his opinion, those drastic orders were not legal and therefore he was not required to carry them out.

General Tal was known within the IDF for his moderate views on the subjects of the future of the Territories and a settlement with the Arab states. Long before the Yom Kippur War, he took the view that in return for a resolution it would be necessary to return most of the Territories to the Arabs, so as to minimize their motivation for war. As early as May 1973, General Tal warned his comrades in the General Staff as well as the minister of defence that, if Israel failed to come up with a political initiative, the result would be war, from which Israel would derive no benefit. On 30 September 1973, just a week before the war, he reiterated that his analysis of the political situation and the facts about what was occurring on the fronts indicated that there was a danger of war. At a meeting of the General Staff on the same day, he expressed his concerns to his comrades and proposed that measures be taken to deal with the danger. But General Tal remained isolated among the generals of the General Staff, who adhered to the views of Moshe Dayan and Military Intelligence regarding the 'low likelihood' of war 'because the Arabs in fact have no military option'. Talik, on the other hand, tried to convince Military Intelligence in particular and met with General Eli Zeira and one of his senior assistants, Brigadier General

Aryeh Shalev, and pleaded with them to change their assessments, because war was imminent. They rejected his position. The independent views of General Tal were not accepted by Moshe Dayan, and he decided to get rid of this 'recalcitrant' officer who had refused to implement his dangerous orders during the War of Attrition. Moshe Dayan established contacts with the division commanders in the south directly and not through General Tal, as was the standard procedure, and tried to persuade them to carry out the orders that had been refused by Tal. At the same time, he sought a way to dismiss Talik. This became known to senior government figures, and they intervened to prevent Talik's removal from the army. Three generals and many other officers even threatened to resign if General Tal were removed. The dismissal was indeed cancelled, but Dayan created a situation in which Talik was left with no alternative but to resign. He withdrew Tal's appointment as head of the Operations Branch, and in January transferred him from his position as commander of the Egyptian front, replacing him with General Avraham Adan ('Bren'). General Tal retained the position of deputy chief of staff, but it was emptied of all substance. Talik's authority was restricted, and in the end he handed in his resignation, his only sin having been his adherence to his moderate views and his opposition to adventurism. This was another symptom of the omnipotent power of the defence minister in everything done within the IDF, and the lack of public supervision over his actions.

Following the observations that were included in the interim report of the Agranat Commission of Inquiry into the failures of the war (April 1974) regarding 'the lack of clear delineations for the division of authority, duties and responsibilities regarding defence matters between the three authorities that deal with those matters, that is, the government and its head, the defence minister and the chief of the General Staff who stands at the head of the IDF, and for the establishment of reciprocal relations between the political leadership and the high command of the IDF', a ministerial committee was convened to discuss those problems. In late 1974, the committee, headed by Justice Minister Haim Zadok, submitted an opinion which recommended that the prime minister and the defence minister should be authorized, under circumstances that prevented the cabinet from meeting, to declare a general mobilization of the reserve forces. As for the composition of the war cabinet, the committee recommended that the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs serve as a war cabinet until such a cabinet could be appointed by the prime minister. The committee also submitted a draft for a Basic Law for the IDF, which guaranteed the supremacy of civilian authority over the army. It stated, among other things, that the chief of the General Staff is the commander of the IDF, while being subordinate to the government, which acts through the minister of defence.[18]

It was the atmosphere of pride, praise and even flattery around everything having to do with the IDF and its generals that prevailed after the Six-Day War which distracted attention not only from the defence minister's management, but also from various shortcomings in the army. The Yom Kippur War demolished the legends that had been woven around the IDF, which was described as 'the only island of purity in our materialistic society'. It turned out that the IDF could not be an enclosed entity operating separately from society, and that there can be no separating the flaws that were discovered in the army from those manifest in Israeli society, for the IDF takes on the image of the society in which it operates, or to be more precise, the image of the echelons that set the tone within it. In 1948, upon the birth of the state, the pioneering society of the kibbutz was held up as an example and ideal for the army and its officer corps. Now, the tone is set by Israel's nouveaux-riches, who popped up in their hundreds and thousands after the Six-Day War. And it also became clear that a society for which the pursuit of a glittery and profligate standard of living and quick and ostentatious enrichment has become the ideal cannot

prevent such values from taking root within the army, including its commanders. An echelon thus gradually developed within the senior officer corps which began to pay more and more attention to its social class and to personal advancement and benefits, while basking in the aura of praise that surrounded it. High-ranking officers became an inseparable part of 'high society' circles, alongside industrialists and contractors. Those phenomena could not have developed except in the general atmosphere that enveloped the country between the two wars, in the period of belief in the idol of the status quo. The complaints before the war of an isolated few, such as Captain Motti Ashkenazi, who along with his comrades protested against the total negligence that prevailed along the Bar-Lev Line, fell on deaf ears. They were tucked away in files in the full awareness that that was where they belonged.

The special treatment given the IDF before the Yom Kippur War as a 'nature reserve' passed quickly. The idealization of the officer-'super-men' and the tolerant downplaying of problems began to be replaced by criticism. 'It was lucky for us', observed a senior officer, 'that the war broke out in October 1973 and not three years later. Who knows if we would then be as able to get rid of the layer of fat coating the IDF as we are today.'

The 'conception' of national security

In the Yom Kippur War, Israel's national security 'conception' [*konseptzia*] did not withstand the test, for the first time in the history of Israel's wars. After the war, it began to be re-examined. The reason for the failure of the country's defence doctrine was the failure to assess the new situation after the Six-Day War. The attitude to the new factor that was added then – the new territories – was not as if it were a card in peace negotiations with the neighbouring Arab states, but as an important additional layer in the strengthening of Israel. This led to the Territories being seen as a necessity for defence, with all that that implies.

The essential principles in Israel's national security 'conception' were deterrence and subdual. Deterrence had to be based on the existence of a military force that was strong and ready for action at any time, with reprisal actions to be conducted from time to time to demonstrate the supremacy of the IDF, and maintenance of the 1967 ceasefire lines 'that deter any attack'. The 'conception' stated that if deterrence does not work and the enemy attacks regardless, the transition must be made as fast as possible to the stage of subdual: to defeat the attackers on their own territory with maximum speed before international players intervene in the war and stop the Israeli offensive.

In order to achieve subdual, a strategic doctrine based on four foundations was developed: the existence of an excellent system for warning of the enemy's intentions; the rapid mobilization of the reserves before the enemy could translate their intentions into action; the existence of a network of internal lines to permit transfer of forces from front to front by means of a mobile logistical system, in order to respond to one of Israel's biggest concerns: fighting a war on two fronts at the same time; and, finally, securing the skies, so as not to disrupt the mobilization and to protect the rear from attack. In the Six-Day War, all four principles were operational. In 1973, only the last principle worked, while the warning[19] system had not worked, the reserves were not mobilized on time, and the war was waged on two autonomous fronts. It became clear that it was the new territorial element itself that had brought about a relaxation in military thinking and that 'strategic depth' had lowered the level of preparedness, which permitted the Arab states to achieve surprise and successes in the first stages of the campaign.

Not only had the principle of deterrence not worked, the principle of subdual did not come into play in the Yom Kippur War either, because of the balance of power in the international arena at that time. For the same reason, it was not possible to realize an additional principle of the 'conception' – the striking of an advance blow in case of danger, as had been proposed to the government by the chief of the General Staff in the early hours of the morning of 6 October.

The national security 'conception' stipulates that it is necessary to do everything to ensure that the war will be as short as possible, both so that it can be fought with the existing inventory of resources and to avoid serious harm to the economy, in consequence of the prolonged mobilization of the reserves. Both those stipulations were unmet during the war.

And, finally, Israel's national security 'conception' called for the IDF to have a qualitative advantage to compensate for Israel's inferiority both in quantity (of materiel) and in demography vis-à-vis its Arab neighbours. During the war, it became clear that despite the superiority of the IDF's soldiers and command, the Arab armies exhibited greater ability than in the past and the vast quantity that they brought to bear sometimes translated into quality as well.

At the end of the war, and sometimes even while it was still going on, many military lessons began to be learned, some of them inconsequential technical ones related to the use of weapons and some of them fundamental, like the method of combining infantry and armour in battle, or avoiding a return to the situation that prevailed on 6 October, when the army was forced to deploy from emergency warehouses straight to the battlefield. It also became clear that there was a need for the IDF to bring more massive firepower to bear to compensate for the Arab armies' quantitative advantage. And, indeed, in the process of strengthening the IDF after the war, within about half a year, the artillery force was increased by 25 per cent in comparison to the situation that had prevailed on the eve of the war, while the number of tanks increased by 15 per cent and the strength of the air force increased by 10 per cent. That is not the end of the story, of course. At a special conference held on 6 June 1974, eight months after the outbreak of the war, the general command of the IDF summed up its professional and tactical lessons, after discussions and summaries that had been conducted previously at the lower levels. A special structure was also created in the General Staff to systematically monitor the combat doctrines of the Arab states and how these might influence the deployment and training of the IDF.

The creation of a Planning Branch in the General Staff immediately after the war, alongside the other four branches that existed within it, shows recognition of the urgent need to allocate a special unit that would concern itself with consolidating a combat doctrine, strategic planning, development of weapons and planning the IDF's order of battle. The question is, to what extent will this branch, which General Avraham Tamir was appointed to head, be independent in its considerations? Will it be restricted to political 'conceptions' dictated from above, as occurred in the period between the two wars? No doubt has been cast on the need to re-examine the IDF's combat doctrine, but the requirement for the consolidation of a new national security doctrine with a new order of priorities is no less important. The manifestation of a positive attitude towards subjects that had not previously been appreciated, such as the stationing of UN forces between the adversarial forces or the creation of demilitarized zones between them is a sign of the fact that the new reality is bringing about the abandonment of old outlooks whose flaws have been proven. The Yom Kippur War, which shook doctrines and 'conceptions' to their foundations, opened a new chapter in Israel's national security doctrine, a fateful chapter for the security of Israel. It will be considered a positive chapter only if it conforms to the true needs of Israel's security, based on the lessons of this war.

6

The diktat

The feeling in Israel was that if war broke out, it would be a war of attrition or a series of commando raids. The prospect of the concentration of maximal force and a massive invasion along the lengths of both fronts, as actually happened on 6 October 1973, was thought to be a ‘very low probability’. And yet it was that very prospect that became reality.

A political intermezzo, the only one in the whole war, occurred on 16 October, a few hours after Israeli forces crossed the Suez Canal. When the Egyptians did not yet know what was transpiring on the western side of the Canal, a dialogue of the deaf was being conducted between Anwar Sadat and Golda Meir. The president of Egypt, addressing the Egyptian People’s Assembly, proposed a ceasefire on the basis of the withdrawal of Israeli forces to the lines of before the June 1967 war, honouring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, opening the Suez Canal to navigation and the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the UN, in order to forge a ‘peace based on respect for the legitimate rights of all the peoples of the region’. Israeli prime minister Meir, who gave a speech a few hours after President Sadat, informed the Knesset in one sentence that ‘an IDF force is also operating on the west side of the Canal’ and she declared that Israel’s sole objective was victory in the war and the breaking of the enemy’s forces on both fronts. Her reply to President Sadat, without mentioning his name or his plan, was: ‘Now, while the battles are still being fought, we will not get into discussions about political objectives and issues. The repulsion of the enemy and the crushing of his forces are necessary conditions for the guaranteeing of our future’. An authoritative Israeli source at the UN, who was described as reflecting the view of Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban, who was in New York at that time, replied to Sadat’s words by saying that it was the ‘speech of a man who wants neither a ceasefire nor peace’;[1] and political circles in Jerusalem responded directly to Sadat’s speech by saying that it constituted ‘a euphemism for taking apart the State of Israel’ because the second stage of his plan was ‘to discuss ‘restoring the rights of the Palestinians’.[2]

The Yom Kippur War ended indecisively, after both sides sustained heavy losses in life and equipment. Egypt lost about 8,000[3] (the US estimate); Syria, about 3,500 (Israeli estimate), and Israel, about 2,500. Losses in the air (according to US estimates) were: 242 Egyptian aircraft,

190 Syrian ones and 22 Iraqi ones, as against 106 aircraft lost to Israel. The number of Arab tanks destroyed was 1,280, whereas the Israelis lost 240 tanks.[4] The numbers given for tanks that were hit were much lower than the first estimates after the war (2,100 Arab tanks against 850 Israeli ones), and they do not take into account tanks that were repaired and returned to service. However, even on the basis of these cautious data, it is possible to arrive at a clear conclusion from the war: the massive attrition of weapons, which was above and beyond expectations, enabled the two superpowers to determine the duration of the war and the date of its conclusion. It was clear to all that the two adversaries, Israel and the Arab states, were no longer free to wage war without coordination with their arms-suppliers. It would be too risky.

In purely military terms, the war ended with a certain advantage to Israel. After the surprising blows that the Egyptians and the Syrians inflicted in the first days, there were Israeli tactical victories, the climax of which was the crossing to the western side of the Suez Canal. But Israel's declared objective – destruction of the armed forces of Egypt and Syria – was not realized.

Every war has a phrase that characterizes its nature. In 1967, it was General Haim Bar-Lev, whose comment to some friends before 5 June became the catch-phrase: 'We will hit them hard, fast and elegantly' . . . In October 1973, the chief of the General Staff, David Elazar, said in anger on the third day of the war, before hundreds of journalists and television cameras: 'We will break their bones.' But this time the wish did not come true, and that arrogant declaration left a bitter taste in the mouths of Israelis.

There were indeed those in Israel who shouted after the war, 'We won! We won!' – in order to raise morale; but the public was not drawn in. And not only the public. Moshe Dayan, too, declared at a gathering of his party about two weeks after the end of hostilities: 'For God's sake, I am not one of those who say that the Egyptians and the Syrians lost and we won.'[5]

The desire of the two superpowers was that neither of the two adversaries would achieve victory, and they imposed that desire on the two warring sides. In the end, it was not the balance of power in the arena of combat that determined the outcome of the war, but the international balance of power.

At the beginning of the war, an Israeli orientalist wrote that the indicator for success in the war would be the name the Arabs gave it. 'We must strive', he said, '[for them to call the war] "the disaster" and not "the gamble that succeeded," and for the date 6 October to be added to the days of mourning (29 November – the date of the Partition of Palestine; 15 May – the date of the birth of Israel; 5 June – the outbreak of the Six-Day War) that the Arabs commemorate every year.'[6] At the end of the war, it turned out that President Sadat's gamble had paid off. The political strategy that had been the motivation for the war bore fruit. The military action had taken the Israeli–Arab conflict out of the freezer and put it onto the international stage as a problem that demanded an urgent solution.

The Security Council resolution on a ceasefire came as a total surprise to the leaders of Israel, nearly as much as the outbreak of the war itself two and a half weeks previously. The Israeli leadership, which had ignored the transformations that had occurred in the international arena in the period before the war, did not know how to read the international political map even during the war. At first, Israel's leaders expected a short and fast war, and they were dis appointed. When they got used to the thought that, this time, it would not be a campaign of only a few days as in the past, they began to believe, for some reason, that they would be allowed to 'finish the job', to 'destroy the Egyptian and Syrian war machine' and attain victory, and that a ceasefire would not be declared before a crushingly decisive outcome was achieved on the front. The possibility of an 'incomplete war' was the furthest thing from the minds of the Israelis, both

leaders and ordinary citizens. Re-reading the words that were said during the war, it is quite hard to believe just how much the Israeli leadership failed to understand that it would not be the military situation on the field that would be decisive in this war, but instead the international balance of power, especially relations between Moscow and Washington, which, throughout the war, and even in the period of inter-bloc tension at its end, were conducted under the sign of détente.

The confidence that prevailed in Israel to the effect that there would be no time-limits to the application of its military power increased still more after IDF units crossed to the west of the Canal on 16 October. In her speech to the Knesset the same day, Golda Meir declared that 'the hour of the ceasefire will come when the strength of the enemy is broken'. She concluded by saying: 'When will it end? When we succeed in striking at the enemy.' And with that sentence *Davar* even headlined its report of the prime minister's speech the next day. Moshe Dayan expressed himself on Israeli television on 20 October, forty-eight hours before the ceasefire, by saying that 'this will not be a war of years or of months, but I would not suggest standing with a stopwatch in your hand to count it in days'. In the same interview, he explained that the Arabs, 'who now have a nearly fatalistic approach', will not at all be ready for a ceasefire; 'they are willing for us to be parked outside Damascus and Cairo, but they will not request a ceasefire, which would involve a certain sign of moving towards peace or of non-war'. On the evening of that same day, Foreign Minister Eban returned from New York. At Lydda airport journalists asked him about the political situation, and Eban confidently replied: 'We have been presented with no initiative, argument or clarification regarding the ceasefire, and I am not prepared to make any statement whatsoever on that subject, because it is not on the agenda at all . . . the only subject that is on the agenda now is our victory in the war. Our victory is the key to any political process there will be afterwards.' The journalists did not let up questioning over the chances of a ceasefire, but the minister interrupted them: 'I do not see any chance of that now.'[7] At the same time, in Moscow, Kissinger and Brezhnev were already formulating the proposal for the resolution that would be passed in the Security Council regarding the ceasefire. The next evening, twenty-four hours before the ceasefire and a few hours before it was dictated to Israel by Washington, Abba Eban repeated what he said before members of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset, ruling out any possibility of a ceasefire in the near future. The same day, Deputy Prime Minister Allon visited the southern front, and when the time factor, which appeared likely to prevent the realization of the main objective of the campaign – the destruction of the Egyptian army – was raised, he replied: 'This time there is no problem of time.'[8] At the meeting of the government that took place on the same day, 21 October, the possibility of a ceasefire in the near future was not discussed at all.

In the newspapers of 22 October, the day of the ceasefire, it was still possible to find articles that ruled out the possibility of a cease-fire in the near future and which predicted 'a campaign the end of which cannot yet be seen'. Knesset Member and former minister Moshe Carmel wrote that 'the aims of the war are now to wear the enemy down. To destroy his war machine and drive him out of all territory that was under Israeli control before the outbreak of the war'. As for the ceasefire, in his opinion, 'it is a big mistake on our part to deal with proposals regarding the lines of the ceasefire.'[9] Those words were published about eight hours before the beginning of the ceasefire. That feeling also prevailed among military commanders. In its issue of 22 October, the field organ of the Israeli air force published an interview with air force commander Binyamin Peled, who said that the state of the Egyptian army on the Canal front was getting worse and that 'the only alternative that remains for that army is to die'. He added, 'The aims of the war are to

punish the aggressor, to cleanse the eastern side of the Canal of the presence of Egyptian forces as well as to preserve the military achievements that were attained with the IDF's penetration to the other side of the Canal.'

Even a politician like Yitzhak Rabin, who, after being chief of the General Staff in the Six-Day War, served for five years as Israel's ambassador in Washington, and who, therefore, must have been familiar with American political processes in light of détente, continued to think in terms of the period before October, when the Americans gave full backing to Israel and essentially let it act with its neighbours however it pleased. Three days before the ceasefire Yitzhak Rabin stated that 'the two fighting sides in the Middle East now enjoy more military and political freedom than ever before' and so 'the decision will fall on the battlefield and not on the American– Soviet negotiation table'.[10] Only after the war would Rabin abandon that illusion and admit that 'the war between the Arabs and the Israelis can no longer be considered a local conflict, it has turned into a part of the global Soviet–American struggle, and Israel cannot always use its full military might'.[11]

In fact, there was one leader who cried out unceasingly that it was necessary to take advantage of the limited time that Israel had and to act quickly, before the powers imposed a ceasefire: General Arik Sharon. In his opinion, his superiors were too slow to reinforce and take advantage of the westward breakthrough, as well as too fearful of Soviet intervention and American pressure, which were 'not so serious', as he put it, and so they missed the chance to inflict a decisive defeat on Egypt. He alleged that officers of the Israeli high command 'failed to understand the element of time, which was critical'.[12] That feeling, which gave birth to the saying that the Yom Kippur War was 'the war of the missing day', stemmed from a fundamental error in the assessment of the dimension of time. Those who held this view, who thought that if the IDF had speeded up its movements, it would have been able to break the Egyptian army, related to the dimension of time as if it were an unchanging factor, whereas, in fact, it was nothing but a function of Israeli movements on the battlefield. There is no doubt that if, on 17 October, for example, the IDF had been standing at the spot where it stood five days later, when the ceasefire was imposed on it, the two superpowers would have imposed their will on the two fighting sides *then*. The best proofs of that are the Soviet threat to intervene militarily and US pressure on Israel to immediately lay down its arms when the hostilities continued after the appointed time for the first ceasefire, a threat and a pressure that put an end to the hostilities on the Egyptian front without any decisive outcome. The dimension of time was not moving in a vacuum, detached from the other factors that were operating in the arena. 'There is a feeling that victory was stolen from Israel at the last moment', said the lead editorial of *Davar* the day after the ceasefire.

Under the sign of détente

Contacts between the two superpowers over the new crisis in the Middle East began even before the outbreak of hostilities.[13] It was reported in the American press that the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin,[14] hinted to Secretary of State Kissinger on the eve of 6 October that war was approaching, and he did so out of fear for the fate of détente in the event of a huge eruption in the Middle East. Those reports were emphatically denied by Moscow and described as an attempt to harm the Soviet Union's relations with Arab states. One way or another, the two superpowers held ongoing talks from the moment the war broke out, in the hope of controlling

the situation in the event of unforeseen developments, and in order to prevent a dangerous confrontation between them.

The United States and the Soviet Union followed the progress of the battles fought by their clients with anticipation and surprise. At first, the Americans believed – just like the Israelis – that the war would end within a few days with a crushing Israeli victory, and the Soviets feared that a new Arab defeat was near. A few days later, both sides realized that they had been wrong. Nevertheless, each super-power continued to maintain contacts with the other, knowing that the attempts at a ceasefire would be crowned with success only when the two sides were worn down, or when one of them faced a massive defeat. Discussions began in the Security Council, which convened on 8 October at the request of the United States, and consultations behind the scenes progressed sluggishly until the big turnaround on the Egyptian front. In any case, neither of the two global powers took any steps that could be interpreted as diverging from the agreed-upon game of détente.

Meanwhile, after the terrible attrition of weapons on both sides and the massive use of ammunition, the airlifts from the Soviet Union to Egypt and Syria and from the United States to Israel began to operate at full capacity. Only at the end of the war would it become clear that such vast quantities of such sophisticated arms had never been sent to the region in such a short time.

The Soviet airlift was activated on 10 October, at first at a slow pace, which increased more and more. According to Israeli information, the number of Soviet aircraft taking war materiel and ammunition to Egypt and Syria reached 647, most of them Antonov An-12s (which transported a maximum load of about 20 tons in a flight) and a few of them Antonov An-22s (maximum load of about 80 tons). According to Arab sources, the Soviet Union transported 17,000 tons by air to Egypt and Syria during the war.

Three days after the beginning of the Soviet airlift, the Americans began to conduct their own airlift, after hesitations stemming from their desire not to confer a clear advantage on Israel. Thus did the United States respond to Israel's repeated requests, from the second day of the war, for military equipment and ammunition. The next day, on 14 October, the United States began a massive airlift, composed of gigantic aircraft of the American air force, first and foremost the C-5 Galaxy, the biggest aircraft in the world, which can transport 110 tons. At the height of the airlift, during the war, the number of flights to Israel reached twenty-eight a day, and it surpassed the Soviet airlift in terms of the amount of supplies transported. In fact, the US acceded to all Israel's requests, even types of weapons and ammunition that for various reasons it had not sent before. That airlift, which lasted for a month – that is to say, even after the cease-fire – included 566 transport planes that brought 26,000 tons of arms and military supplies, including aircraft, tanks, missiles of various kinds, large quantities of ammunition and even warm clothes for the Israeli soldiers on the northern front, where the cold was beginning. Some of the airplanes that Israel received had been transferred from units of the American Sixth Fleet, which patrols the Mediterranean Sea.[15]

Israel did not reveal details about the contents of the shipments, but it is known from US sources that sophisticated supplies brought to Israel included modern TOW anti-tank missiles that had a very high kill rate, as well as advanced Maverick air-to-ground missiles, guided by television cameras, which were launched from Phantoms against Egyptian and Syrian tanks and missile systems; laser-guided bombs; air-to-air missiles and other equipment with the best of US technology, including electronic anti-radar systems. According to the American press, the munitions supplied also included cluster-bombs called Rockeye, intended for use against

concentrations of infantry, the use of which in the Vietnam War provoked protests by liberals in the United States. According to reports in the American press, which were quoted in Israel,[16] it turned out that the air force used those bombs against Syrian army concentrations in the Golan Heights. To that must be added, of course, the supplies that were delivered by sea, because the Soviet shipments sent that way to Egypt and Syria were bigger than the American ones to Israel.[17]

The airlift was vital, especially because munitions ran out with astonishing speed in the Yom Kippur War. In the IDF, calculations for reserves of ammunition were based on the optimistic assumption that no war would last more than a few days. According to American sources, munitions were sometimes rushed by air directly to bases near the front, and from there they were transferred to the lines within hours. A few days after the war, during a debate in the Knesset on 30 October, the defence minister revealed that 'the shells that they [the soldiers] are firing today were not in their possession a week ago'.[18] And munitions were expended on an astonishing scale on the Arab side as well. More than once Israeli pilots reported upon their return from raids that a hail of missiles had been fired at them the likes of which they had never seen before. There too the Soviet airlift helped to fill the shortfalls. Thus, for example, in a certain sector on the Syrian front, the firing of anti-aircraft missiles suddenly stopped. On the afternoon of the same day the pace of the Soviet airlift increased and the next afternoon the firing of anti-aircraft missiles resumed in the same sector.

Thus, the superpowers decided not only the duration and limits of the combat, but also its intensity, by regulating the amounts of arms supplied to both sides. However, even as they sent shipments of arms to their protégés, the two superpowers maintained contacts with each other unceasingly, and did not consider that the airlifts were inconsistent with détente.

On 16 October, Soviet Premier Kosygin went to Cairo for talks with President Sadat about the conditions for moving the armed conflict to the political level. He arrived a few hours after the Israeli crossing of the Canal, but at that time no one in Cairo had yet realized its real significance. While Kosygin was in Cairo, the scale of the Israeli offensive became clear. Although the Egyptians were still being entertained by reports that tried to minimize the scale of the action, Kosygin was receiving aerial photographs from Kosmos satellites, which were constantly photographing the battlefield, and the picture became clear. The two sides worked out a detailed ceasefire plan and, on 19 October, Kosygin returned to Moscow with the intention of discussing it with the Americans. However, the scale of the rapid Israeli advance across the Canal changed the data and the assessments. The main Egyptian–Soviet effort was now to achieve a ceasefire as fast as possible, without setting conditions that would complicate the situation, in order to prevent a collapse of the Egyptian forces in Sinai caused by their being outflanked from west of the Canal. Moscow, which up to now had held to the view (along with Cairo and Damascus), that a ceasefire should be conditioned on Israel's agreement to withdraw to the lines it held before the Six-Day War, was now agitating for a ceasefire as soon as possible and without conditions. On 19 October, Leonid Brezhnev called Henry Kissinger to Moscow for urgent discussions, in accordance with the clause for talks between the two superpowers (which was included in the declaration of twelve principles signed when President Nixon visited Moscow in May 1974), 'before we make decisions that cannot be reversed', as Brezhnev put it. Kissinger arrived in Moscow on 20 October, and two hours after his plane landed he had already talked to Brezhnev and Gromyko about imposing a ceasefire.

Indeed, the Soviets acted with urgency in the face of the rapid Egyptian reversal on the Canal front. But it looked as if the Americans, too, did not want to see an Israeli victory over the Arabs

this time, because yet another Arab defeat would return the region back to the state of stagnation that had prevailed after the Six-Day War as well as enhance the sense of frustration and desire for revenge within the Arab states. That would again prevent a political solution to the conflict, as a consequence of which US influence would decline in the region. A humiliated Egypt, the Americans explained, would not be able to negotiate; now, they went on, given the scale of the war and the use of the oil weapon, the creation of a situation that would leave no chances for a resolution of the conflict must be avoided. In fact, as early as his news conference of 12 October, Kissinger made it clear that the objective of the United States was to put a stop to hostile actions in such a way as to contribute as much as possible to the possibility of a lasting solution in the Middle East. The meaning of those words was clear, but the Israeli leadership ignored it. Thus, when Abba Eban declared upon his return from New York that 'the Americans are urging us to succeed in the war and to win, because it is important to them',[19] Kissinger and Brezhnev were already discussing the conditions for a ceasefire and formulating a resolution to be submitted for ratification at the Security Council. The Soviets insisted on the need for an immediate ceasefire, whereas the Americans demanded the inclusion of an article that would refer to peace negotiations between the two sides, to make it easier for Israel to swallow the diktat. Both those principles became components of the resolution that was submitted to the Security Council after two days of intensive talks in Moscow.

Israel was shocked. The Americans transmitted the text of the resolution to Golda Meir on 21 October at 22:00 hours, a few hours before the convening of the Security Council, and Israel was asked to ratify it as it was. In a special message to Meir, President Nixon tried to sweeten the diktat by pointing out that the proposed resolution satisfied Israel's long-standing demand for negotiations with the Arabs – moreover, under 'appropriate auspices' (that is, not necessarily within the framework of the UN, where the Arabs enjoyed a great deal of support). Nixon promised to continue the arms shipments even after the resolution was ratified.

In the small hours of 22 October, the government of Israel met for a dramatic night session. It became clear to the ministers that no choice remained to Israel but to announce its acceptance of the American– Soviet resolution if it wanted to continue to enjoy Washington's support. The cabinet ratified the resolution unanimously, but emphasized in its decision that it was accepted in response to the request of the government of the United States and President Nixon. About an hour later, the Security Council convened and passed Resolution 338 unanimously, China not participating in the voting. This was the first in a series of US diktats to Israel, one of the most significant of which was to force Israel to agree to the transfer of non-military supplies to the Third Army, which was besieged after the ceasefire. That demand came in the wake of a Soviet threat to fly in forces to aid the Third Army. Israel had no choice but to accede to the various US demands, which came in quick succession. Until the Yom Kippur War, Israel had succeeded by various means in torpedoing every American proposal of which it did not approve. Now, after the war and after the airlift, without which the IDF could not have continued to fight, Israel was deprived of the freedom of action and room for manoeuvre it had had in the past, and its dependence on the US was greater than ever before.

Upon the approval of the Security Council resolution, Golda Meir requested that Henry Kissinger go to Israel to report on additional details about his talks in Moscow and on the ceasefire accord. The Kissinger–Meir talks took place a few hours before the time set for the ceasefire. The next day, 23 October, after it became clear that hostilities were continuing, Kissinger called Jerusalem from Washington and emphatically demanded that Israel stop fighting, as he had committed to a ceasefire in Moscow, in accordance with the Security Council

resolution. He hinted that if the shooting did not stop, the United States would not stand in the way of the Soviet Union should the latter intervene on Egypt's side.[20] Kissinger's demand was accepted, and the next day, on the morning of 24 October, upon the passage of a new Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire, the guns fell silent on the fronts. The blackout of Israel's cities was also called off the same day.[21]

As President Sadat admitted, it had been his country that had asked the Soviet Union to initiate the ceasefire. But in terms of Egyptian public opinion, it was not easy for him to explain the decision, since only a few days previously, in his speech at the Egyptian People's Assembly on 16 October, he had set out his own conditions for a ceasefire. However, the situation on the ground left him with no other choice. The ceasefire was received by the Egyptian public with surprise, for the military communiques had not provided accurate information on the Israeli advance on the western side of the Canal and the picture of the situation on the front that had been drawn for the Egyptian citizenry was basically optimistic. Only three days before the ceasefire, the editor of *Al-Ahram*, Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, wrote in his weekly article that to accept a ceasefire would be a disaster. That view was shared by the man on the street. The Egyptian public-diplomacy machine was therefore set in motion to explain to the people that Egypt had no choice but to accept the ceasefire, once it had become clear, in the face of the American airlift to Israel, that Egypt was in effect fighting the United States and its modern arms, 'which even the American army has not yet used in war'. The government of Egypt also represented its agreement to a ceasefire as being in response to the request of both superpowers and the guarantees they gave regarding the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242, as mentioned in the Security Council Resolution of 22 October. Cairo did not forget to point out, in an announcement that was published on the day of the ceasefire, that Egypt's objective, which had been to break the stagnation in the Middle East crisis, had in fact been attained.

The Syrians, unlike the Egyptians, did not rejoice at the ceasefire. According to some sources, Syrian and Iraqi forces were about to launch an attack against Israeli forces in the north the day after the date set for the ceasefire. The Security Council resolution came as a surprise to Damascus, which had not been party to all the processes that had led to the ceasefire. Hafez al-Assad of Syria immediately convened the central committee of the National Front, at the centre of which stood the ruling Baath Party, and reported the contents of a telegram he had received from Sadat, in which the latter stated that he had responded to the request of the leaders of the Soviet Union to initiate a ceasefire 'because we had begun to fight the United States', and requested that Syria too accept Security Council Resolution 338, signifying willingness to reach a settlement with Israel on the basis of Resolution 242 of November 1967 – a resolution Syria had not previously formally accepted as binding.

In the thirty-six hours that passed between the ratification of Security Council Resolutions 338 and 339, serious changes occurred on the battlefield, which led to the encirclement of the Third Army and the city of Suez by the IDF. Faced with that situation, Sadat and Brezhnev proposed to Nixon that a joint American–Soviet force be dispatched to the Middle East to supervise the ceasefire.[22] After those requests were denied, Brezhnev announced to Egypt that the Soviet Union would stand by Egypt 'until the end'. He sent another – strongly worded – letter to Nixon, in which he made clear that, if the United States did not agree to send a joint two-superpower force to impose the ceasefire, 'the Soviet Union will urgently consider the possibility of taking suitable unilateral measures'. At the same time, Washington received reports about the declaration of a state of alert for Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. According to US intelligence sources, a state of alert was declared for seven Soviet airborne divisions (about 49,000 soldiers),

in preparation for their being sent – all or some of them – to the Middle East in order to rescue the Third Army.

The United States again rejected the Soviet proposal, as well as the warning that accompanied it, and decided on a military and political response. On 24 October at midnight, the National Security Council convened in the White House, headed by Henry Kissinger, and decided to put the American armed forces on DEFCON 3 (out of five levels of alert, called Defense Readiness Condition),[23] including the Strategic Air Command, with its nuclear-armed bombers and missiles. Nixon sent a letter of reply to Brezhnev; it, too, was drafted in strong language, in which he said that the United States would not tolerate unilateral Soviet action in the Middle East. Nixon warned Brezhnev that such action was liable to harm the interest of peace and he called for American– Soviet cooperation to resolve the crisis within the framework of the UN. It quickly became clear that the Soviet Union had gone back on its plan to send forces to the Middle East, alone or in collaboration with the United States, to preserve the ceasefire. The Security Council convened again on 25 October and decided to send an emergency UN force to the Middle East, which would not include forces of any of the five big powers (Resolution 340).

The secretary-general of the UN, Kurt Waldheim, ordered the immediate dispatch to the region of an advance party of the emergency force, to be stationed between the armies of Egypt and Israel. That measure was greeted with relief internationally. There was also a change in Israel's attitude to the presence of UN forces. In the past Israel had not looked favourably on international forces in the region, preferring to remain 'face to face' with the Arabs, and had also refused to have them posted on its territory after the Suez War, which had made it possible for Nasser to remove them so easily in May 1967. Now Israel understood that the presence of international forces between the two adversarial armies would render another Arab surprise attack more difficult, both militarily and politically.

The first 900 soldiers – Finns, Swedes and Austrians, arrived in the Canal area and their number quickly grew to several thousand.[24] The chief of staff of the UN observers in Jerusalem, General Ensio Siilasvuo of Finland, was appointed commander of the UN emergency force. The tension between the superpowers dissipated as quickly as it had emerged. The US military alert was cancelled for most units two days after it had been declared.

The violation of the ceasefire on the Egyptian front had created one of the gravest international crises in Moscow–Washington relations, perhaps the gravest since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. For a moment, it looked as if a confrontation between the two superpowers was near. However, the rapid and smooth way the crisis was resolved gave rise to various interpretations, starting with those of members of the US Congress, who suggested that President Nixon had inflated the tensions in order to divert attention from the Watergate affair, which was reaching a new climax at that time. Other, more far-reaching interpretations posited that the tension had been jointly staged by the Americans and the Soviets, and its only objective had been to put a complete end to the fighting in the Canal Zone after it became clear that the ceasefire of 22 October had broken down. Of course, it cannot be known whether the Soviets really intended to intervene with force, and whether it is true that they were deterred by steps taken by the United States, or whether they were not preparing to do so at all, and that the American response was out of proportion to the real situation. One way or the other, the US knew that a total ceasefire and rescue of the Third Army would negate any Soviet plan to rush to its rescue. Having absolute influence over Israel, they procured the lifting of the siege on the Third Army, as well as the ceasefire, with a telephone call from Washington to Jerusalem.

After heavy pressure from the United States, Israel agreed to the transfer of water, food and

medicine to the besieged Third Army and the city of Suez. High-ranking officers in the IDF and the Egyptian army met under the auspices of the UN at Kilometre 101 on the Cairo–Suez road, on 28 October, for the first time in seventeen years, and discussed the passage of supply trucks. The next day, the first convoy of Egyptian trucks (a total of 175 trucks had been agreed) passed through the Israeli-occupied territory on the west bank of the Suez Canal, driven by UN soldiers and containing supplies for the besieged soldiers of the Third Army as well as the city of Suez, where about 1,500 wounded people, soldiers and civilians, remained under harsh conditions. The scene was unparalleled. Soldiers who, only a few days previously, had been fighting each other in bitter battles were meeting and discussing together the passage of water canisters and boxes of food for the besieged Egyptian soldiers. General Adan, the commander of the division that controlled the area, expressed his chagrin over the operation, and told visiting journalists: 'It angers me. I would like to stop the supplies and destroy them. They are our enemies. Never in my life have I heard of supplying food and water to any enemy.'

'Henry the magician': first contacts and agreements

Israelis poured out their wrath at the superpowers over the IDF's not having been allowed to 'finish the job',[25] without sparing their ally the United States. Some said that the US had exhibited weakness in the face of 'groundless threats' by the Soviet Union. Others, like General Chaim Herzog (in discussions on Israel Broadcasting on 27 October 1973), pointed to 'international anti-Semitism' as the reason for the denial of victory to Israel. However, a target that provoked criticism, sometimes covert, sometimes overt, was US secretary of state Henry Kissinger. The fear of his political moves was expressed in various ways, including jokes and cartoons.[26]

The ugly side of the attacks on Henry Kissinger was manifested in repeated emphasis on his Jewishness, a fact that caused an additional criticism to be directed at him. Indeed, Israel is perhaps the only country in the world where statesmen of Jewish origin are attacked for their Jewishness. The reason is that many national leaders in Israel believe that a Jew feels himself to be inferior to non-Jews wherever he is when he occupies an important position in the political or journalistic arena. He is quite eager, according to this line of thought, to prove his loyalty to his country and adopts an attitude towards Jews and Judaism, and in consequence to the State of Israel, that is more reserved than that of a non-Jew 'who does not always have to prove his objectivity all over again'. It is easy to stick the label 'anti-Semite' on a non-Jew who criticizes Israel, but if a leader or journalist of Jewish origin acts, on matters regarding Israel, according to his understanding and considerations, then he is, according to this mentality, 'a pathologically self-hating Jew, consumed by complexes, cosmopolitan, self-deprecating before the Gentiles' and suchlike. No wonder, then, that during one of Henry Kissinger's visits to Israel extremist right-wing circles distributed leaflets bearing the slogan: 'Kissinger, don't flee from your Jewish destiny'. Nor was it surprising when the label 'Jewboy' was flung at him by those same circles at a demonstration in Jerusalem. Or when he was attacked by nationalists like Eliezer Livneh or Israel Eldad, who called Kissinger 'an international Jewish pimp, devoid of roots and a true homeland'.[27] More worrisome is the fact that the leader of the Likud, Menachem Begin, also incited against Kissinger in the Knesset, though in a more refined way: 'You are a Jew. You are not the first that has attained a high position in the country he lives in. Remember the past. There were such Jews who, from a complex lest it be said that because of their Jewishness they direct

their activities for the good of their people, did the opposite.'[28] Of course, public references to Kissinger's Jewishness were not heard from government circles, but the following joke that made the rounds in political circles in Jerusalem is characteristic of the mindset of figures in Establishment circles. In a talk with Golda Meir, Nixon says, 'You must know that Kissinger is American first, then a diplomat and lastly a Jew.' Meir answers: 'That's true, Mr President, but in Hebrew we read from right to left.'

The campaign against Kissinger did not find much support in Israeli public opinion. A public opinion survey published in December 1973 showed that 65.5 per cent of respondents believed that Kissinger would protect Israel's interests.[29] Another survey, published about two months later,[30] indicated that 57.8 per cent were satisfied with Kissinger's treatment of Israel and another 24.5 per cent were 'more or less' satisfied. The degree of satisfaction is particularly high among younger groups. Among those aged 18–29, 61.8 per cent support Kissinger's policy, as against 48.3 per cent among those aged sixty and over. IDF soldiers, who during the war wrote on tanks 'Arik, King of Israel', added another slogan after the separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt: 'Kissi, King of Israel'. However, the incitement against Kissinger continued and reached its height in the summer of 1975, during the talks over the interim agreement with Egypt.

The short confrontation between the two superpowers, which was manifested in the declarations of states of alert, ended immediately with an agreement for cooperation that was intended to speed up contacts between the fighting sides for the purpose of reaching an agreement between them. For several months, the 'first violin' in that process was Dr Henry Kissinger.

Already on 26 October 1973, when Cold War tensions had dissipated, President Nixon reported in a press conference that the United States and the Soviet Union had moved towards an agreement to the effect that, to prevent confrontation between them in the Middle East, they would have to apply their influence more than in the past, in order to bring about negotiations between the two sides for a permanent peace. 'We will use our influence on the nations of the region in order to speed up an agreement between them,' he said. Everyone interpreted that as the beginning of an era of US pressure on Israel, after the massive and unprecedented aid that Washington had given Israel in the war. And, indeed, every time they saw fit to do so, the Americans applied pressure in order to realize their objectives. But what astonished the Israelis, who had gotten used to setting the pace of the process by themselves, was the fact that since the war others were setting the pace, and that pace was now faster than what they were used to.

Prime Minister Meir went to the United States immediately after the end of the Third Army crisis. In Washington, she had to clarify what the plans of Israel's only ally were for the region. From the visit, which took place in early November, Meir learned that at least one thing had ended with the Yom Kippur War: foot-dragging in solving problems and foot-dragging in order to thwart unwanted plans. Less than a year earlier, she had made a triumphant visit to Washington, and now everything was different. True, the president heaped praise on her, but the talks with Henry Kissinger were serious and not devoid of tension. The secretary of state demanded of Golda Meir that Israel adopt a more flexible policy.

Israel's next test was the signing of an agreement with Egypt, which would deal with the ceasefire and urgent problems that had emerged from the war. Here, too, as in previous cases, Israel was presented with a six-point agreement to sign, which did not satisfy some of its demands. For example, the document did not mention lifting the sea blockade on Eilat, which had been imposed by the Egyptians at Bab el-Mandeb at the entrance to the Red Sea. The Americans promised that the blockade would in fact be lifted; and, indeed, that is what

happened. But in Jerusalem it was asked: in the future, will we continue to be dependent on oral promises given to the Americans?

On 11 November 1973, the six-point accord was signed,[31] and four days later the exchange of prisoners between Israel and Egypt began, which concluded eight days later. The other provisions of the agreement were also implemented, apart from the second provision, which was the problematic one. It was a typical Kissingerian provision, the formulation of which satisfied both sides, but was sufficiently ambiguous that it left room for negotiation between them. It stated: 'Both sides agree that discussions between them will begin immediately to settle the question of the return to the 22 October positions in the framework of agreement on the disengagement and separation of forces under the auspices of the United Nations.'[32] Ten meetings were held during November, at Kilometre 101 on the Suez–Cairo road, between the Israeli delegation headed by General Yariv and the Egyptian delegation headed by General el-Gamasy, most of them dedicated to the second point; but the talks were an exercise in marking time. The Egyptians demanded withdrawal to the lines of 22 October first and foremost, whereas the Israelis strove for a separation of forces. When it became clear that there was no progress in the talks on the second point, the first point, which spoke of the ceasefire being respected by both sides, was violated. The Egyptians launched a war of attrition in order to apply pressure on Israel; and on 29 November they announced the end of the talks. All sides involved agreed that the entire matter would be raised at the Geneva Conference, which was to begin the following month.

All eyes were therefore on Geneva. Israel asked for the conference to be postponed because of the Knesset elections, which were scheduled for the end of December, but the two superpowers insisted on opening the conference on schedule and Israel accepted their decision. However, when the invitation to the conference arrived in Jerusalem, Golda Meir angrily replied: 'No, this is impossible to accept.' It turned out that Israel's demand that the conference take place under the auspices of the superpowers, a demand based on the interpretation President Nixon gave to the words 'under appropriate auspices', which appeared in the Security Council resolution of 22 October, had not been accepted. Moreover, the Security Council explicitly stipulated on the eve of the conference, that it would take place under the auspices of the UN. Kissinger initiated a postponement of the conference for four days and rushed to Jerusalem to placate Meir who felt she had been deceived. Concurrent with the secretary of state's visit, Meir received a message from Nixon, in which he stated clearly that the United States could not justify Israel's refusal to go to the Geneva Conference and demanded acceptance of the invitation.

Israel announced its agreement to participate in the conference, but the general feeling in Israel was that this was not the peace conference that had been anticipated for so long, but a walk to Canossa. For years, Israelis had imagined that a peace conference, if it took place, would come after the Arabs had accepted most of the ideas for peace with Israel, and it would take place only after they realized that they had no military options, and that the only alternative remaining was to sit down with Israel for direct negotiations. Only then, according to that imaginary scenario, when Israel was in a position of strength, would an Israeli–Arab peace conference take place, without outside actors, and it would conclude with a peace accord stipulating new borders between Israel and the Arab states and creating between them a situation of peace like the one that prevails, for example, between Belgium and the Netherlands. The idea that a peace conference would take place under the auspices of outside powers, under international conditions that were unfavourable to Israel, that the invitation to the conference would come after a

resolution of the Security Council and not by a telephone call from a despairing Arab leader, as Moshe Dayan had expected after the Six-Day War, was very far from the consciousness of Israelis. Nor did the fact that Israel would attend one conference with several Arab states appeal to them. An official political commentator explained in an IDF publication that 'we did not actually want a conference of the type that is now beginning in Geneva . . . Because any meaningful negotiation with the Arabs must take place in bilateral meetings with each Arab delegation separately'.[33] Cairo, on the other hand, had as an objective from the first day of the war to put the Middle East crisis on the agenda of the international community, under conditions suitable for the Arabs, in the framework of an international conference with the participation of the powers. The Geneva Conference, therefore, looked a lot more like the Arab model than Israel's.

Before the conference, an Arab summit conference convened in Algiers (26–28 November 1973), from which Iraq and Libya were absent, their leaders being in opposition to participation in the Geneva Conference. Egypt participated in the Algiers conference with all its weight. In his speech at the Algiers conference, President Sadat explained that it was a duty to go to the Geneva Conference. 'With a mighty blow on the battlefield we showed the world the urgency of a just solution to the conflict in our region. Now that the world understands this and most of it is standing behind us and against the Israelis for various reasons, we must try to play the political card,' he declared. However, both the concluding declaration of the conference, which stated that 'in order to realize peace there must be an Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories, especially Jerusalem; and the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people must be restored' and the secret resolutions[34] passed over the Geneva peace conference in silence. In political circles in the Arab world, this was interpreted as a green light to Egypt (and to other Arab states) to go to the conference, as it desired. Now, upon going to Geneva, two of the three 'noes' of Khartoum – no to negotiations and no to peace – were effectively abandoned by the participating Arab states. The extremists in the Arab world saw this as a betrayal and abandonment of principles.[35]

The Israeli–Arab peace conference opened on 21 December 1973 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, with the participation of delegations from Israel, Egypt and Jordan. The secretary-general of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, acted as chairman of the opening session of the conference, and the initiators of the conference, the United States and the Soviet Union, were represented by their foreign ministers, Kissinger and Gromyko. The speeches of the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan and Israel reflected the known positions of the two sides, and they were essentially directed at internal public opinion, Israeli or Arab, more than the adversary across the table. The only surprise was the speech of the Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister, Zaid al-Rifai, which was tougher than that of his Egyptian counterpart. Soviet foreign minister Gromyko gave a speech with an optimistic tone, and the speech of his US counterpart, Henry Kissinger, was also optimistic, but also notable for its neutral tone. One table remained empty in the conference hall – that of Syria, whose leaders disagreed among themselves over participation, and had decided to boycott the conference at the current stage. Another table, for the Palestinians, was not even set up at the conference. For that, a substantial struggle was still to be expected.

The opening session of the conference was adjourned the next day with a decision to create an Egyptian–Israeli military working group, headed by the commander of the UN Middle East emergency force, General Siilasvuo, to discuss the separation of forces between the two states. Five days later, the Israeli–Egyptian discussions on the separation of forces began in Geneva, as

a war of attrition continued between the two sides on the Canal front which caused casualties unceasingly. On two occasions, according to Israeli reports, the static battles on the Egyptian front were at the point of turning into a new general war. The talks in Geneva moved in a vicious circle. The Israelis proposed a return to the positions of before 6 October and emphasized the separation of forces; whereas the Egyptians again demanded a return to the lines of 22 October. The discussions were fruitless, the parties to the talks parted on 9 January, and then Kissinger took matters into his own hands. On 11 January, the Kissingerian steamroller went into action again. The secretary of state flew between Jerusalem and Aswan, where President Sadat was staying, and after three rounds of talks with each of the sides, within less than a week, on 18 January 1974, an agreement for the separation of forces between Egypt and Israel was signed at Kilometre 101 on the Suez–Cairo road. The agreement was signed by the chiefs of staff of the armies of Israel and Egypt, David Elazar and Abd al-Ghani el-Gamasy. It was the first time that the heads of the two armies had met and signed a joint document since the Israeli–Arab wars had begun over a quarter-century before. On the same day, the firing stopped on the Egyptian front.

The agreement that was signed by the two sides was the only realistic alternative to a full-scale renewal of military action on the Canal front, and the IDF now had an opportunity to rehabilitate itself on the necessary scale. In general terms, the agreement was based on the plan for a partial Egyptian–Israeli settlement that was raised separately by Israel and Egypt, but not put into effect because of Israel's opposition to any Egyptian military presence east of the Canal and to the tying of the partial agreement to a comprehensive agreement, as demanded by the Egyptians.

On the tactical level the agreement was based on three foundations: separation between the forces, the creation of a buffer between them (where UN forces would be stationed on a scale of several thousand soldiers) and the reduction of forces in areas on both sides of the buffer.[36] The agreement was intended to contribute to creating a situation in which the danger of a renewal of fire would be greatly reduced, and in which a surprise attack would not be possible. In another document that was signed by both heads of state on separate papers, it was stipulated that in the area where forces would be reduced on both sides, it would be permitted to keep no more than 7,000 soldiers, 30 tanks and 6 batteries of short-range artillery (122 mm calibre). The Egyptians also officially committed themselves, through the United States, to lift the blockade on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait (a blockade that had already been lifted de facto in November), to begin preparations to open the Suez Canal to navigation (including cargo that was destined for Israel, but not ships flying the Israeli flag at this point) and to rehabilitate the ruined Canal cities. The separation-of-forces agreement was implemented without a hitch. The IDF destroyed its fortifications in the area that was evacuated, including the fortifications on the second line of the Canal, and withdrew to new lines, about 20 kilometres from the Canal, and completed its deployment there on 5 March 1974. The implementation of the agreement was greeted with joy in Israel. The southern front was quiet and disappeared from the headlines.

Now came the turn of Syria, which always lagged behind Egypt when it came to making agreements with Israel (as early as the armistice accords of 1949). Henry Kissinger again betook himself to the Middle East to conduct contacts for a separation of forces between Syria and Israel. The first positive sign was the transfer to Israel of a list of Israeli prisoners in Syria, at the end of February. In May, Kissinger made his longest visit to the Middle East, in order to attain a separation of forces between Israel and Syria, an objective that seemed to have no chance because of the chasm between the positions of the two sides. The contacts continued intensively, against the background of a Syrian–Israeli war of attrition – artillery battles and air attacks as

well as raids by small units across the front lines. The Syrians, like the Egyptians, decided that fire would not cease until an agreement was reached, and the IDF also acted 'as if it were at war'. The inevitable result: dozens of killed and wounded on each side. Kissinger's mediation efforts continued throughout the month of May, as he shuttled between Jerusalem and Damascus once every two days on average. In the end, a separation-of-forces agreement was reached, on the Egyptian model. The Israelis gave up not only the conquests of 1973, but also a small part of the Golan that they had conquered in 1967, including the city of Quneitra (which was destroyed completely when it was returned to the Syrians). It was broad considerations and US pressure that pushed Israel to agree to this, for it was clear to all that the absence of a solution in the Syrian sector would eventually bring about deterioration in the south. Nor was it easy for the Syrians to sign an agreement with Israel, and pressure – especially from the Egyptians – was helpful here too. On 31 May 1974, the separation-of-forces agreement with Syria was signed in Geneva.[37] The firing ceased in the north as well, and the prisoners returned home. The agreement was implemented without mishap over the month of June.

The only front that was still active was the Palestinian–Israeli front. The *fedayeen* organizations carried out terrorist attacks from Lebanese territory, against communities in northern Israel (Kiryat-Shemona, Maalot, Kibbutz Shamir, Nahariya), in which civilians died, and Israel responded with retaliatory bombing of refugee camps in Lebanon and shelling of villages in southern Lebanon, which also caused fatalities.

Jordan, on the other hand, remained on the margins of events. It strove with all its might to integrate itself into the fabric of the Israeli– Arab agreements, in order to establish the fact that Amman, and not the PLO – which had been recognized at the Algiers and Rabat summits as the sole representative of the Palestinian people – was the party with which the future of the West Bank was to be negotiated. Jordan's position on this matter was shared by the United States. On several occasions, King Hussein proposed signing a separation-of-forces agreement between Israel and Jordan, even though the war had bypassed the line between the armies of those two states. The practical meaning of the proposal was that Israel would withdraw to a certain degree from the Jordan River. However, Israel ignored King Hussein's overtures, mostly due to internal Israeli considerations (the fear of going to elections early). Henry Kissinger visited Amman several times in the framework of his tours of the capitals of the region, and promised King Hussein that in due course he would begin to deal with the Jordanian–Palestinian–Israeli problem as well. But by the autumn of 1975, no substantial steps had been taken towards a settlement with Jordan, nor with the Palestinians, whom Israel continued to ignore as in the past.

The war had brought about massive intervention by the two super-powers in the affairs of the Middle East. The position of the Soviet Union as a partner in every arrangement in the Middle East was officially recognized by the United States, which was also manifested in the fact that the Soviet Union was one of the two initiators of the Geneva Conference, and its foreign minister one of its two permanent chairmen. Moreover, with the help of Soviet weapons, Egypt and Syria had succeeded this time in attaining certain military objectives, and consequently political ones as well, the credit for which redounded to Moscow.

However, the bigger winner in the Middle East after the war was the United States. Its secretary of state was the exclusive orchestrator of contacts between Israel and its adversaries over agreements for cease-fires and separation of forces. He proved to the Arab states that only the United States was able to pressure Israel and cause it to give up occupied Arab territory. After the signing of the separation-of-forces agreement between Syria and Israel, President Nixon even conducted a victory tour of four Arab states (Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan)

and Israel, in June 1974. However, the biggest US achievement was rapprochement with Sadatist Egypt. Just two weeks after the war, on 7 November, while Moscow was celebrating the anniversary of the 1917 Revolution, Sadat and Kissinger reported their decision to renew relations between Cairo and Washington. In January, the US flag was again waving over the US Embassy building in Cairo, and at the end of February 1974 full diplomatic relations were re-established between the two countries. President Sadat expressed his great fondness for 'my friend Kissinger' and at the same time expressed criticism – albeit moderately and indirectly – of the Soviet Union. For example, against Kissinger's recommendation Sadat chose Kilometre 101 over Geneva as the place for the signing of the separation-of-forces agreement with Israel, thereby avoiding the involvement of the Soviet Union in that event. Moreover, Egypt's doors were opened to US money after changes in economic and social policy implemented by the regime. However, that process, aggressively implemented by Sadat, depended, like many other things in the Middle East, on a resolution of the Israeli–Arab conflict. The lack of a solution to that conflict threatened to throw a wrench into the works, re-igniting tensions and leading to renewed intervention of the superpowers in the region, and maybe even the danger of conflict between them – a danger to which the two super-powers were alert and wanted to avoid as much as possible.

7

The internal political arena: between continuity and change

The earthquake that shook Israel after the Yom Kippur War was the worst shock the country had experienced since its birth. The feeling was as if a good and beautiful world had suddenly fallen apart, and the public started to ask probing questions, questions that demanded answers: Why? What happened?

Some tried to impute responsibility for the tragedy to their political rivals. It was mainly the primary guilty parties, those who were responsible for Israel's policy in the Israel–Arab conflict, who were guilty of that approach. Some of Dayan's supporters, hoping to 'pass the buck', even made the absurd allegation that 'the doves caused us to let down our guard', and so were responsible for the disaster.

But the favourite thesis of many in the Establishment was the claim that 'we are all guilty'. The president of Israel, Ephraim Katzir, expressed this explicitly when he declared: 'We are all guilty for the failures, because we wanted to live in a utopian world that in no way resembled the reality in which we lived.'[1] In a flyer printed by the Foreign Ministry for public-diplomacy purposes a few weeks after the war, that claim was repeated – that 'one of the reasons for the high price we paid in the war was that we preferred comfort and personal affluence over a sober perception of reality'. The attempt to impute guilt to everyone, both the leaders who had failed and the simple citizens who had no influence on the policies of the government, was like assigning equal shares of responsibility for an airplane crash to a negligent pilot and to his passengers who had dozed off to the strains of soothing music. But this move was not well received. Letters began to appear in the press from disgruntled citizens, including bereaved parents, who rejected collective responsibility. 'Was my son guilty?' – asked the father of a soldier who fell in the war.

On the other hand, there were some courageous people in government circles who pointed to the true guilty party. For example, Knesset Member Yitzhak Navon did that during a closed discussion at a high-level Labour Party meeting in Jerusalem (15 November 1973). He said that if the government had courage, it should confess to its guilt, but 'so far I have not heard, either from the prime minister or from the defence minister – and I specifically name those two,

because they are responsible in the eyes of the public, one has general responsibility and the other has direct responsibility – the following words: I admit it, I erred.'

Slowly, the recognition that the guilty ones were, first and foremost, those in leadership positions who had made decisions and implemented policy began to gain ground. As for the people, they had been fed information from only one source, along with rosy promises about the situation which did not at all match reality and of course did not come to fruition. True, it was pleasant to hear those forecasts, and most of them supported the leadership, relying on that myth-based information. Nevertheless, that still does not make the public responsible for the failure, nor does it render their share of responsibility for what happened equal to that of the leadership. In the end, the shock helped to open people's eyes, even if for only a short while. A survey conducted a few days after the war showed that 29.3 per cent of the respondents believed that the government had not done enough to make peace. The percentage of critics of the government in that poll was particularly high among people born in Israel, educated people and youth.[2]

The question 'who is guilty' did not come off the agenda even after a commission of inquiry was set up, headed by Supreme Court President Shimon Agranat, to investigate the failures of the war. The commission was asked to investigate the information that was available in the days preceding the Yom Kippur War about the enemy's moves and their intentions to launch a war, as well as the assessments and decisions of the authorized military and civilian decision-makers regarding that information; and the IDF's preparedness for war in general, including its readiness in the days preceding the Yom Kippur War and the actions it took until the Egyptian and Syrian forces were stopped. The commission's reports, both the interim one and the final one, did not put a stop to the debate over those pointed questions.

The first to try to benefit from the Yom Kippur disaster were members of the right-wing opposition. Its leaders accused the government of responsibility for the tragedy because they had neither ordered the mobilization of the reserves on time nor delivered weapons to the front lines. The Right did not utter one word of criticism of the government's policy; that is to say, they completely ignored the political failure, and concerned themselves only with the technical failure. The reason for that was clear and well known. The nationalist Right – Gahal, known as 'Likud' in its new incarnation – was a full partner in the political failure, and maybe even more guilty than the government in moral terms, for it surpassed the government in intransigence and unwillingness to compromise with the Arabs. When, for example, in the summer of 1970, the government announced its willingness to implement Security Council Resolution 242, in response to US pressure, as it accepted a ceasefire on the Egyptian front, Gahal left the government. All its actions in the political arena between the two wars were directed at one objective: to prevent compromise with the Arab states. In that regard, it can be said of the Israeli Right that it forgot nothing and it learned nothing, since it had opposed the signing of the armistice agreement with Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon in 1949, and it had always remained faithful to its doctrine of 'No'.

The Likud also continued its traditional right-wing policy after the war, disregarding all its lessons. It opposed all the government's initiatives: its response to the Security Council Resolution of 22 October 1973 [Resolution 338], which declared a ceasefire; the six-point agreement between Israel and Egypt (11 November 1973), which produced among other things the lifting of the blockade on Bab el-Mandeb and an exchange of prisoners; going to the Geneva Conference in December 1973 under the agreed conditions; the separation-of-forces agreement between Israel and Egypt (18 January 1974), which Likud leader Menachem Begin called 'recklessness and irresponsibility'; the separation-of-forces agreement between Israel and Syria,

which was signed at the end of May 1974, which was called a security disaster, as well as the interim Israeli–Egyptian agreement of September 1975, which was described as an abandonment of Israel's security. The Right ignored the entire political context within which the government acted – superpower relations and Israel's dependence on the United States.

Popping up like mushrooms on the margins of the traditional Right were extremist groups which published announcements in a fascistic tone and also demonstrated against the 'defeatist government that is helping the enemy to solve the Jewish Problem'.[3]

Opponents of the government's policy from the dovish camp, a large majority of them on the Left, who had also predicted that political intransigence and annexationist tendencies would end up bringing on war, were in fact astonished when their prediction came true. Some of them took fright and put their own views aside and adhered to the general line for the duration of the war; but they quickly came around again. At first, it was only left-wing circles who dared to publish public statements that linked the policy of annexation and the lack of political initiatives to the war. The New Israeli Left, for example, published a statement on the day the hostilities broke out, saying that

> The hostilities that have broken out today between Israel and Syria and Egypt prove unequivocally that the expanded borders from Quneitra [in Syria] to Qantara [in Egypt] are not borders of peace and security, but borders of annexation that will generate repeated wars. Regardless of the sins of Arab nationalism, a more substantial share of the responsibility for the hostilities that have broken out today belongs to the government of Israel, which conducted a policy of force for the conquest of territories and expansion of borders and which has opposed peace initiatives since the Six-Day War. The government did not respond to the Jarring questionnaire, has not recognized the Palestinians' right to self-determination and is implementing [a policy of building] settlements and eviction. These and other actions prepared the ground for the outbreak of hostilities today.[4]

A few weeks after the end of the war all the moderate elements from various parties came together under a statement called 'Peace Initiative – Now', which was signed by 15,000 people and which stated that 'the policy of stagnation and creeping annexation has not brought peace and has not prevented war', and demanded that the government show initiative and immediately formulate a realistic peace plan, recognize the existence of the Palestinian Arab people and help to involve them in efforts for peace.

Elections without substantial change

However, the eyes of all were first and foremost on the party in power – the Labour Party, within which various tendencies had a presence. There were hawks, such as the Meir–Dayan–Galili triad; doves, like Knesset Members Yitzhak Ben-Aharon and Aryeh Eliav; moderates, like ministers Allon and Eban; as well as some 'dovehawks' [in Hebrew, *yonitzim*], who moved between the extremists and the moderates.

The party was forced to take a position before the Knesset elections on 31 December 1973, but it chose a compromise, a middle way, that would satisfy all the tendencies. On the one hand, it was decided to avoid a schism in the party by rejecting the doves' demand to initiate legislation in the Knesset to reopen the list of candidates, which had been set 'before the deluge'. On the other hand, in response to the demand for change, which had begun to be heard more and more among the public and many Labour supporters, some of whom had come together under the slogan 'Despite everything, Maarach',[5] in advance of the elections the party ratified the 'fourteen principles document',[6] the wording of which was indeed relatively moderate but also

quite ambiguous. It was characterized as a 'thoroughly Kissingerian document', in that all the tendencies could interpret it in accordance with their views. The hawks claimed that the new document did not abrogate the Galili Document, which had been ratified on the eve of the war, whereas the doves emphasized that this document effectively buried that annexationist document. Party Secretary Aharon Yadlin effectively confirmed that the new document was the result of a compromise, when he declared that it was not intended to invalidate or to reaffirm the Galili Document. The main objective – internal peace in the party and the avoidance of a split – was achieved at the expense of clarity. That was particularly clear, for example, in the clause that addresses the question of the Palestinians. Heretofore, the Labour Party had tended to ignore the Palestinian problem in its decisions, but after the war it was no longer possible to keep one's eyes closed. Clause 10 of the document states, therefore, that 'the peace agreement with Jordan will be based on the existence of two independent states – Israel, the capital of which is united Jerusalem, and an Arab state to its east. In the neighbouring Jordanian-Palestinian state, the identity of the Palestinian Arabs and the Jordanians can be realized in peace and good neighbourliness with Israel. Israel rejects the creation of an additional separate Palestinian Arab state west of the Jordan River.' On the one hand, this is a recognition of the existence of the Palestinians (though not as a people), but on the other hand, the document rejects their right to self-determination and to a state of their own in the Land of Israel,[7] which is their homeland. A formulation like that could have been signed by Moshe Dayan as well as Aryeh Eliav. Nor did the Alignment ignore the Palestinian problem during the election campaign, as the Likud did; but it raised the issue cautiously, as was its way. One of its announcements stated: 'In this election you will decide between willingness to establish good-neighbourly relations with a Jordanian-Palestinian state, and disregard of the existence of Palestinians and their aspirations.'

Eventually, the Labour Party went to the election united, but without the aura that had graced its leaders in the past. Moshe Dayan had lost his charisma, and Golda Meir had lost so much authority in the party that other party leaders no longer feared to harshly criticize her and to summarize her years in power in a doleful tone ('she received a state in good condition and she returned it to us in much worse condition,' said one of her friends).

The result of the elections to the Eighth Knesset, which took place on the last day of 1973, indicated a right-wing tendency that stemmed from disappointment with the Alignment, particularly due to the failures of the war. But, regarding the rise of the Right-nationalist Likud by eight seats in the Knesset, and its appearance in the Knesset with thirty-nine mandates – although it was a respectable showing, it did not elevate it to the position of the real alternative in the name of which it spoke. The Likud was operating under the most ideal conditions, which, for once in an Israeli electoral campaign, were right-wing. This time as well General Sharon, who many believed was the only commander who emerged from the war with his reputation enhanced, was on its list of candidates. The Likud, along with the religious lists, which had become more and more right-wing in recent years (they lost two mandates, for a total of fifteen seats in the Knesset), did not achieve the majority necessary to form a government.

The Alignment lost six seats, but it would have lost more if not for its electoral propaganda, which was conducted by one of the moderates in the Labour Party ranks, MK Avraham Ofer. In its propaganda the Alignment emphasized the need for peace and hope for an agreement at the Geneva Conference (although the talks were very general) as against the danger of war under a Likud government. The Alignment thereby managed at the last minute to deter many voters from 'punishing the Alignment'.[8]

A vote for the Alignment in the elections of December 1973 was not support of a hard line,

like the Galili Document; supporters of the strongly annexationist line voted for the Likud. Characteristically, Moshe Dayan, who participated in only a few Alignment electoral meetings, did not even once call on voters to vote for the Alignment but settled for general speeches about the army and security.

The electoral lists to the left of the Alignment, which ran in isolation from each other, met with no success, except for the New Communist List [Hebrew acronym: *Rakah*], which won an additional seat for a total of four. The increase for Rakah was indicative of changes in the mood of Israeli Arabs in consequence of the October War and of growing national consciousness, which that list expressed in their eyes. In the Histadrut elections, which took place less than a month before the war, Rakah had declined by 4 per cent among the Arab voters, whereas in the Knesset elections it rose by 7 per cent in the Arab sector, within which the other lists declined. Between Rakah and the Alignment, only one deputy entered the Eighth Knesset: Meir Pa'il, a representative of Moked. The representative of Meri [*meḥane radiqali yisra'eli* – Israeli Radical Camp], Uri Avnery, who before the war had repeatedly spoken out in the Knesset against annexation and the political hard line and warned of their dangers, did not pass the threshold for election to the Knesset. The sensational surprise in these elections was, of course, the success of the Citizens' Rights List, headed by Shulamit Aloni, which won three seats. That list took a moderate line on foreign affairs, but fought for everything related to civil rights. It picked up protest votes from many who did not want to move to the Right, but were afraid to vote for the radical Left for some reason.

The results of the elections did not express any revolutionary change in the wake of the 'October earthquake'. The reason may be that the elections were conducted on the basis of the old lists, from before the war; and it could be that its source was in the famous conservatism of the Israeli voter. 'What has been, has been', said the man on the street, upon hearing the results of the elections and upon seeing the old faces in the Knesset, and returned to his business. Some of the soldiers in the reserves, who returned to their homes seared by the horrors of the war and the following months of sitting on the lines, did not do that.

The protest movements

The word that was most widespread after the war – after 'failure', of course – was 'change'. The undermining of myths and the crisis of confidence in the leadership after the war and its aftermath aroused among Israelis – along with many questions – a call for change.

The response among reserve soldiers was different. They, who had seen their friends fall on the fronts of the 'superfluous war' and had watched from a distance as the Israeli leadership was exposed in all its nakedness during the hour of crisis, said to themselves: 'It cannot go on like this; when we return home we will work for change in society.' What that desired change was, how would it be achieved, what paths would be chosen for its realization, they did not make clear. Maybe they did not even know exactly how to formulate it. The Knesset elections, which had produced no significant change, the prolonged negotiations over the composition of the government, which was complicated by the demands of the religious on the eternal question of 'who is a Jew', while on the front lines a war of attrition was taking place which was claiming victims nearly every day – all that kept adding to the soldiers' resentment, as those who were in their midst could perceive. The stage was set for protest action. All that was missing was a hero who would take on the role.

About two weeks after the signing of the separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt, when the reserve soldiers began to return home, a bespectacled young man of medium height, holding a placard that called for Defence Minister Moshe Dayan to resign over his responsibility for the failures and omissions of the Yom Kippur War, suddenly appeared in front of the prime minister's office in Jerusalem on the morning of Sunday, 3 February 1974. He was a 'lone wolf' who had not previously been politically active: Reserve Captain Motti Ashkenazi, a thirty-three-year-old physicist from Jerusalem, and the commander of the only stronghold on the Bar-Lev Line that did not fall. Even before the war, he claimed that Israeli policy would end up pushing the Egyptians to war, in which they would mobilize all their resources to achieve limited objectives. In that campaign, he claimed, the Bar-Lev Line could not hold, due to the way it was constructed, its quality and the Israeli method of deployment generally. He wrote an article outlining those observations and sent it to *Maarachot*, the IDF periodical for military issues, but the editorial board refused to publish it. He went to the Bar-Lev Line with his unit on 23 September, two weeks before the outbreak of the war. He warned about the neglect that prevailed there, and at the same time he saw the preparations being made on the other side of the Canal. 'The war did not come as a surprise to me,' he later said in an interview. 'I saw it developing and organizing itself. Days before it broke out I warned and yelled and begged, I saw all the signs on the ground, the flow of Egyptian forces, all the preparations. Nothing. We were subject to a fatal campaign of anaesthetization from above in the form of soothing statements: Don't panic! Relax! All will be quiet! It's just an exercise! Stop it!' And Motti added: 'In those first hours, under hellish fire and an armoured advance towards us, I decided that if I ever got out of that hell alive, I would do everything a person can do, however isolated I may be, to get those responsible fired and to ensure that such a thing never happens again, never!'[9]

Motti Ashkenazi explained that he was demanding first and foremost the resignation of Dayan, the man who had shaped defence policy since the Six-Day War and who therefore bore responsibility for the Yom Kippur failure. The strange phenomenon whereby ministers are not called to account for their actions within their spheres of responsibility or for the failure of their policies, an accepted and deeply rooted phenomenon in Israel, did not frighten him.[10] 'Too many guys were killed; this time there must be an accounting,' demanded Motti. In a talk with those who gathered around him in front of Golda Meir's office, he condemned the leadership that was 'living on another planet', and called on the individual citizen to get more involved in political life.

The protest reverberated. Several hundred students and soldiers in and out of uniform began to visit the protester beside the prime minister's office. 'Letters to the Editor' columns were flooded with letters of support for Motti, including letters from soldiers, though they were forbidden by law. Motti's supporters were encouraged by the response and decided to stage a mass demonstration in front of the prime minister's office in Jerusalem to demand the removal of those responsible for the Failure. Ads appeared in the newspapers calling on the public to demonstrate, saying such things as: 'If the memory of the 600 who fell on the Bar-Lev Line is dear to you, come to the demonstration.' Only two weeks after Motti began his one-man demonstration, there was a large demonstration of about 4,000 people, including soldiers in uniform, who gathered despite the stormy weather. Prominent among them were two orphans, who carried a sign bearing the stark words: 'Dad was killed – why?' Motti, who had the looks and voice of an anti-hero, addressing the thousands about the need to intensify the struggle, also demanded the dismissal of Golda Meir and the holding of new elections. Motti Ashkenazi's movement spread all over the country and his gatherings attracted a large constituency of youths.

The protest movement quickly branched off in other directions. On 11 February 1974, another demonstrator appeared, Reserve Captain Asa Kedmoni, a company commander in the first battalion that crossed the Canal and who survived by a miracle, holding out in the face of hundreds of Egyptians on the western side. He stationed himself with a placard which demanded the dismissal of Trade and Industry Minister Haim Bar-Lev 'for his responsibility for the disaster on the Bar-Lev Line, which bears his name'. Another demonstrator stood with a placard demanding the dismissal of the chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar. And meanwhile the practice of reserve units going to demonstrate in front of the Knesset upon their demobilization to demand the punishment of those responsible for the 'Failure' and to demand new elections became more common. Protests were also heard in response to the treatment of demobilized soldiers, which was not consistent with the promises that had been given before. Many poured out the bitterness of their hearts on the Knesset Plaza. A young doctor who had distinguished himself in the war said: 'I am not willing to fight any more for a leadership like this. Sometimes it seems to me that to them we are pieces on a chessboard that can be moved in any direction and sacrificed if necessary.' But after the demobilized soldiers poured out their anger with various declarations, they concluded the gathering with dancing and singing in the street. A Knesset guard observed with a sigh of relief: 'Well, singing in public has not yet caused revolutions.'

Indeed, there can be no comparing Israel's protest movement in 1974 with those of the demobilized German soldiers after the First World War or the movement against the Vietnam War in the United States. And they were also different from the protest movement that emerged in Israel in 1961 against Ben-Gurion after the renewal of the Lavon Affair.

Above all, the aspiration to get involved in political life among the young, who, in their trust of the leadership, had exhibited apathy and even scorn towards political activity of any kind, came to fruition during the awakening of the protest movement that appeared after the Yom Kippur War. Suddenly, they realized that 'dirty politics' affected them – their skins, their lives – directly. There was a reservoir of vital potential in these movements, but it was channelled towards changing the *style* of political life, and not the substance of policy itself. The demands that the various protest movements raised focused mainly on the realization of the principle of ministerial responsibility, democratization in the parties and the need for the integration of youth into their leaderships, as well as the holding of new elections as soon as possible. Not one of the movements grappled with the main problem which had caused the big upset, the primary political problem in Israel: the government's policy on the Israeli–Arab conflict. Hardly any of the spokespersons of the protest movement spoke of an alternative Israeli policy that could have prevented the last war.

It turned out that the atmosphere of depoliticization in which Israeli youth had been raised for the most part, and the national-nationalistic education that they had undergone from grade 1 until their release from military service at age twenty-one, had eventually produced a lack of political maturity among many age groups. This also left its mark on the protest movement. The appearances of spokespersons for those movements in the media revealed that they were lacking in a clear political identity; and to the extent that it was possible to define the political character of the protest movements, most of them actually inclined towards the Right. Among the reasons for that was the fact that the Israeli public tended for historical reasons to identify the Mapai–Alignment Establishment with the Left, so it was but natural that if anger should be directed against it, such anger should bear features of the Right.

The protest movement was at its height from February to April 1974. Movement

spokespersons spoke in ringing tones of changing the whole style of life in Israel. 'There is no more impossible', said one. 'Do you think making changes in society and its institutions is more impossible than a counter-attack on a Syrian unit with just three tanks at your disposal? And we carried out that counter-attack.'

In mid April 1974, about ten protest movements of demobilized reserve soldiers united under an umbrella organization called 'Our Israel' [*Yisra'el shelanu*], one of whose central figures was a former navy commander, General (Res.) Yohai Ben-Nun. A public declaration that the new organization published was drafted in the most general terms ('our aspirations: an Israel that is good to live in, is worth fighting for and has the strength to fight for its existence', etc.), without any indication of any way out of the Israeli–Arab conflict.

The protest movements quickly disappeared from the headlines. On Independence Day (April 1974), which, due to the disaster of the Yom Kippur War, passed without the usual joyful celebrations, the protest movements organized a mass picnic in Jerusalem to show that 'we must not let mourning take hold of the country' and that 'there is hope for the future'. To many those movements became more and more reminiscent of the scouting movement. There was a feeling that a great deal of energy was dissipated, leaving hardly any impression on political life.

As the protest movement was disappearing, a demobilized reservist published an article in the Jerusalem student newspaper under the headline 'The Impotents', an article which reflected the feelings of most demobilized soldiers:

> During the long African nights, in our imaginations we rented a small airplane for the whole company and one day after demobilization we travelled in it to Australia and we settled there and raised horses and cotton and drank sun and left in the Middle East a homeland lost in a big fire. Or in our imaginations we approached the police barriers in front of the Knesset and waved signs and smashed windows and were taken to jail for the night, until our return to the barricades and the eruptions of rage and straining the limits of tolerance the next day.
>
> Because in the five months of Africa we saw only polarization and implemented only the most radical solutions and did not leave even one small corner for compromise. Now we are demobilized and we do not have the strength to leave the country for very much the same reason that we do not have the strength to demonstrate and strike and turn this country upside-down.
>
> All we aspire to – a few days after demobilization – is quickly to get back on track and erase the 'unpleasantness' of the past half year and to make up for the missed lectures and to get an exemption from income tax and a discount on Egged [bus company] and rights for demobilized soldiers.
>
> One after the other we are violating all the oaths we took on the unending nights of rage of Africa. Because beyond all the hackneyed words and beyond all the exhausted reserves[11] we are nothing but a bunch of impotent good-for-nothings. And all we are able to do is to endanger our lives in the Chinese farm,[12] read summaries in *Introduction to Statistics* and look for females in the cafeteria.[13]

The end of the Dayan charisma

Israel had two charismatic leaders in its first twenty-five years: its founder, David Ben-Gurion, and his protégé Moshe Dayan. However, whereas Ben-Gurion always had rivals to contend with, either in the right-wing camp or in his own party (Mapai), Dayan, as long as his star was rising, enjoyed ever-increasing support among broad segments of the public. The Right openly supported his policy; and his own party was forced nearly always, even when Dayan was in the minority, to agree to most of his demands. Only among the dovish Left of the Labour Party were voices raised against his policy, but they were drowned out by the tumultuous applause that greeted the charismatic leader wherever he went. In the eyes of many, Moshe Dayan was the symbol of the strong, self-confident Israel that had vanquished its enemies in the blinking of an eye. With the waning of the myth of omnipotent Israel, the charisma of the man who represented

it also passed, and he was revealed to be flesh and blood, capable of error like any mortal. Public opinion surveys now showed a sharp decline in public reputation of Israel's most popular leader before the war. Even his supporters admitted that 'the king is naked'. That did not happen to Ben-Gurion when the rift emerged between him and his party after the renewal of the Lavon Affair in the early 1960s. And even when Ben-Gurion was the head of a minority faction in the Knesset (Rafi) and waged his small wars, his historical image was not diminished.

The scale of the Egyptian–Syrian attack in October 1973 shook Dayan. On the first day of the war, he still believed that it would be possible to 'brush off' the invaders and conclude the war within two or three days. A few hours after the outbreak of the war, he told newspaper editors that he was not worried and that he was optimistic. When he realized that matters were not turning out according to the desired scenario, he went to the opposite extreme, and even to despair. Speaking to Israeli newspaper editors on the evening of the fourth day of the war, he was already expecting a long war and predicting that it would be necessary also to mobilize, in addition to the reserve forces, older people who had previously been released.

Even though Dayan's entire array of political and strategic outlooks collapsed on Yom Kippur, he did not see fit to resign. If he had resigned immediately after the war, the Israeli public might have seen that as a noble act and quickly forgotten his responsibility for the failure. But Dayan chose the opposite route: he refused to resign, while hiding behind a wall of formal excuses: 'I offered my resignation to Golda Meir twice' (at the end of the first week of the war, and upon its conclusion), he said. 'But she gave me her confidence'; 'It is impossible to resign from a government that is serving as a transitional government'; 'We must wait for the verdict of the Agranat Commission'; 'If I had resigned it would have been as if there were something wrong with the army, as well as with the chief of the General Staff, the head of the Intelligence Branch and the heads of the District Commands' – all of which he declared about a month and a half before the interim report of the Agranat Commission, which laid responsibility on those very figures for whom Dayan had supposedly sought to provide cover. And so on and so forth: excuses built on other excuses.

Incredulity grew among the public. Was the great Dayan, the lauded commander, the visionary leader, really clinging to his seat like a political hack? Or was he truly convinced to the depths of his soul that the good of the state required him to stay in his position? Meanwhile, through his public appearances, the public became reacquainted with the annexationist Dayan, the anti-Palestinian Dayan, the Dayan of the city of Yamit. 'We do not have to come down from the Golan Heights, we must not move from the Jordan or from the mountains of Shechem [Nablus]. Various kinds of security guarantees can come in addition to this, but not instead of it. The city of Yamit is now a thousand times more important than it was before, and if our relations with the Arabs are based on a maritime blockade, like the one that was imposed on Bab el-Mandeb, then God forbid we should move from Sharm al-Sheikh',[14] he declared in a speech in Tel Aviv a month after the war. He would exhibit flexibility, but only in negotiations with the Egyptians, and afterwards with the Syrians, over the separation-of-forces agreements. However, public opinion no longer received with reverence either Dayan's assessments or his excuses, by means of which he rejected, with the loyal help of his supporters in Rafi, the demands for his resignation.

Even while the war was in progress, Dayan heard biting criticism of his political-strategic outlook and his failures that were manifested in the IDF's lack of preparedness. He heard it from officers and soldiers, even wounded soldiers who dismissed him from their presence. Letters appeared in the press, only a few at first, and later in an unending spontaneous flow, that

demanded the resignation of the 'Minister of Failure'.[15] Alongside the letters, petitions and paid announcements were also published calling on Dayan to draw the conclusions from his failure. At his appearances before the public, members of the audience would fling accusations at him and demand his resignation. At the Labour Party Central Committee in Tel Aviv, a few weeks after the war, a demonstration by hundreds of people, including writers and professors, was organized in front of the building where the meeting was taking place, in vocal demand of Dayan's removal. When he appeared there, the audience hurled catcalls at him. Golda Meir and Israel Galili got the same reception. A placard held by one of the protesters read: 'Louis the 14th: Après moi, le déluge; Dayan: Après le déluge – moi'.

Motti Ashkenazi, who was protesting in front of the prime minister's office, suddenly became a magnet for youth who did not let go of the demand for the resignation of the defence minister 'who was responsible for the most terrible failure in the history of the State of Israel'. At a closed gathering of the staff of the IDF's senior command, at which the lessons of the war were discussed, a colonel in the regular army surprised those present by demanding Dayan's resignation, and no one came to his defence. In the Knesset, Dayan was asked embarrassing questions by members of his own faction, something inconceivable before the war. Matters came to a head when, in late February at a memorial ceremony for fallen IDF soldiers at the military cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, Dayan's speech was interrupted by bitter shouts from bereaved parents: 'Murderer! You murdered them! You sent the children to die!' He continued his eulogy, his facial muscles twitching nervously.

Calls were heard for his resignation not only from the public but also from within his party. The first came from Justice Minister Yaakov Shimshon Shapira, and the impact was like a powerful bomb. At a meeting of the Alignment leadership on the day the war ended, Shapira called for the defence minister to resign, because his guilt for the failure was beyond any doubt and any need for investigation. He said that to the prime minister as well. His words provoked a storm, but it turned out that they were only spoken 'ahead of their time'. His colleagues were not able to digest the accusation, with the result that it was Shapira who was forced to resign from the cabinet. After his resignation, Shapira continued his attack on Dayan and his supporters, declaring that 'no one believes that the Golda–Dayan–Galili triad can lead Israel to peace'.[16] Knesset Member Aryeh Eliav also voiced a strong denunciation: 'I wonder where Dayan finds the chutzpah to ridicule someone's opinions these days, after all his predictions shattered on Yom Kippur. It looks to me like Dayan should lament the state of the nation, for which he has no small part [of the responsibility]'.[17]

Various people were no longer deterred from publicly expressing their negative views about Dayan. Even in a conference of his faction Rafi there was overt criticism of him. And even in his own house: His son, the actor Assi Dayan, announced to journalists: 'My father should resign from his position as defence minister.'

Moshe Dayan was angered, but he did not concede. He even continued to burnish his public image. In order to 'clear his name' after the reports that appeared in the local and foreign press that he had broken down at the beginning of the war, when he let slip the statement, 'We're losing the Third Temple', he permitted the publication in all the newspapers (on 15 February 1974) of the overview that he had given to newspaper editors on the fourth day of the war. But in that overview, Dayan came across as someone haunted by fears. Secret information, which had not previously been released for publication, was disclosed in that report, including the number of Israeli aircraft that were downed in the first three days of the campaign (fifty aircraft), the name of a pilot, and the fact that the radar station that was bombed in Lebanon had transmitted

information to the Syrians, counter to promises by Lebanese governments that they would refrain from doing so.

At the time, Dayan asked the editors not to publish anything about the Lebanese promise, because that could deter them from doing anything similar in the future. But now, all was permitted. Dayan returned fire, and without shrinking from vulgar replies. While attacking 'the professors and intellectuals', he called the famous historian, Prof. Yaakov Talmon, who had 'dared' to criticize, 'the worm Yaakov Talmon'.

Suddenly, on 20 February, when the anti-Dayanist wave among the public and within his own party was at its height, he announced that 'the situation in the party is intolerable', and that he had no intention of entering the government that Meir was preparing to form following the December elections. In his opinion, the best solution would be to form a national unity government with the Likud or to dissolve the Knesset and hold new elections. Observers perceived Dayan's position as a successful stratagem, since without Rafi it was impossible to form a majority government in the Knesset. The key to the situation was therefore in his hands. This created a paradoxical situation in which General Dayan's star was in constant decline in the eyes of the public, but on the other hand he enjoyed even greater bargaining power due to the outcome of the elections. Evidently Dayan had returned to his beloved tactic of 'sitting on the fence', his demand this time being that the party defend him against the mounting criticism. Regardless of the pleas from the party leadership, he repeated on nearly a daily basis after 20 February that he would not join the government. 'My decision is definite and irreversible,' he declared. They began to pack up his private papers in the office at the ministry of defence. In the Knesset he 'cleared his desk', replying on 25 February to all the questions that had been put to him until then. 'In a way, we have come to a point where a responsible person can no longer agree to be minister of defence,' he declared at a Rafi meeting on 26 February.

Hannibal at the gate

The Labour Party began to search for a new minister of defence. A few candidates were proposed, but Yitzhak Rabin stood out in particular. Everyone knew that if he accepted the portfolio, Dayan would lose his chance of returning to that position.

Meanwhile, Dayan continued to declare that he would not continue to serve as defence minister in the new government. At a session of the Labour Party Central Committee in Tel Aviv on 5 March 1974, Dayan again emphatically rejected requests that he reverse his refusal, and he declared categorically that it was his last day as defence minister. Those words were spoken to members of the Central Committee at 18:00 hours. Now came Yitzhak Rabin's turn, and he gave the only speech that received thunderous applause, even from some of the Rafi people, who had effectively reconciled themselves to the departure of their leader Dayan. 'That was the coronation speech,' they said in the corridors. Some saw him as the heir not only of Dayan, but also of Golda Meir. In the eyes of the public, he was clean, in that he had no connection at all to the failures of the war, for he had lived in Washington for years, and had returned to Israel a few months before the war broke out, he did not participate in the 'Wars of the Generals' during the war, and moreover, he was acceptable to the military command. Even adversaries of the Alignment like Arik Sharon did not consider him unacceptable.

That was a 'red light' for Dayan. The echoes of the applause for Rabin expedited his re-evaluation of the situation, and four hours later, together with his friend Shimon Peres, he

appeared before Golda Meir and announced that he had decided to rescind his refusal and that he was ready to take on the defence portfolio. Golda Meir thanked him with tears of joy and said, 'This is the best gift I could receive.' The National Religious Party now withdrew its reservations and decided to join the government. The obstacles to assembling the new government were thus removed in the blink of an eye, and the next day, twenty-four hours after Dayan gave his consent, Meir presented her new government to Israel's president.

However, instead of settling for a brief announcement of his decision to reverse his refusal, Dayan – along with his friend Shimon Peres, who was at his side throughout the manoeuvres surrounding his resignation – chose a way that was unique and unprecedented, and which was intended to justify the turnaround: the creation of military tensions, to the point of causing alarm among the public. The public subsequently realized that it had been sold a bill of goods by Dayan.

About two hours after that same meeting of the Labour Party Central Committee, the cabinet held an extraordinary night meeting at which was reported military information Dayan had received at midday, warning of the danger of war in the north due to Syrian intentions to carry out an attack on IDF forces in an enclave that had been conquered in the Yom Kippur War. That information had been known to Dayan when he gave his speech at the meeting of his party in the evening, when he announced the end of his term as defence minister. Meanwhile, Rabin had made his impressive appearance, and Dayan decided to take advantage of the reports in his possession to pave the way for his return.

In the morning hours of the next day (6 March), residents of Israel turned on their radios and were frightened. They heard about an 'eventful night' and about 'security tensions', which had forced Moshe Dayan to return to the government. Minister Shimon Peres explained that morning to the radio correspondent that after he and Dayan heard the security information at the cabinet meeting at 10 pm, they decided to reverse their refusal to join the new government. Dayan himself said: 'After the reports that were received on the situation, I thought I could no longer refuse to accept the position of minister of defence.'[18]

There was anxiety in the streets. Since Yom Kippur 1973, Israel had responded seriously to every report about security tensions. In the morning, long lines formed at the banks as people sought to withdraw deposits. Worried reservists called their units. On the other hand, no tension at all was discernible in the Golan itself, and life went on as usual. In all seventeen Israeli settlements in the Heights, farmers went to work as usual, even on lands near the ceasefire line. The movement of vehicles on the roads of the Golan also proceeded without restriction. 'Tensions in the north are more palpable in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem,' joked settlers in the Golan Heights.

In order to confer credibility regarding the security tensions, another unprecedented step was taken. Prime Minister Meir herself, known to be a sworn enemy of leaks from cabinet meetings, personally gave information to the public ('The government of Syria decided to undertake military action to liberate the territory that was conquered by Israel in Syria during the Yom Kippur War, and the Syrian army has been put on a state of very high alert', she said on a television broadcast on 8 March 1974). She did so, regardless of the fact that those words had been said at a meeting of the cabinet convened as the Ministers' Committee on Security Affairs, and the publication of anything said there – even its agenda – was forbidden and constituted a serious criminal offence. Minister Shimon Peres was also enlisted in the campaign to lend credibility to reports of tensions in the north and explained in an interview that 'those same sources [the newspaper in which the interview appeared indicated that the sources were

American] that gave us the information on the eve of last Yom Kippur about the expected war, and with accuracy, provided similar information on Tuesday night [5 March], along more or less the same lines, regarding the Syrians' preparations for attack'.[19] All eyes were now on Dr Henry Kissinger. According to rumours that were widespread in political circles, it was he who had taken care to plant the information, because he feared that a government from which Dayan and maybe even Golda was absent would not dare to sign a separation-of-forces agreement with Syria, on which great hopes depended. His prestige and that of Nixon, they explained, depended at that time on the Middle East card, and he was willing to do everything to prevent a protracted crisis in Israel, or new elections, before the end of the negotiations between Israel and Syria. In any case, as soon as the crisis ended, Kissinger expressed satisfaction that Israel's internal political problems had been resolved and he announced in Washington that the talks for a separation of forces between Syria and Israel would begin within two weeks.

From the beginning, public opinion was sceptical of the claim that the danger of a Syrian attack was the reason for Dayan's return to government. Dozens of letters published in the press show that the public saw the affair as a 'show' or a 'Purim game' (it happened during the Feast of Purim). 'Defence was a sacred cow, along came the defence minister and slaughtered it with his own hands. In the IDF we were taught to hold to the target, and now the defence minister is teaching us to hold to the sacred seat' – wrote a Tel Aviv citizen ironically in one of the newspapers. Another wrote: 'Even if there was danger, we do not want the one responsible for the Yom Kippur disaster to keep leading us in a "grave security situation".' 'The security excuse of tensions in the north, in order to restore 'unity' to the Labour Party and Peres and Dayan and the National Religious Party to the government is so transparent that any child can perceive it' – said another letter writer. That same sarcasm and distrust were repeatedly expressed in many dozens of letters.

Scornful jokes were told among the public: 'The Syrians are demanding a minister in the government of Israel in return for heating up the border from time to time as needed.' A cartoon in *Haaretz* showed Hafez al-Assad, brandishing a submachine gun, marching Dayan, Peres and the religious ministers to the cabinet meeting room. The words of Yael Dayan, the defence minister's daughter, after the Six-Day War, that 'Nasser had to throw thousands of soldiers into Sinai so that my father could return to the government' were recalled, with the addition: 'but one solitary soldier, Motti Ashkenazi, succeeded in removing him from it. And now Dayan has mobilized the entire Syrian army in order to return to the government.'

Some of the press outlets that published reports of tensions in the north from official reports expressed suspicion of them and pointed out that in the recent past there had been more serious warnings of the danger of deterioration on the borders and the matter had never been published in the media, as was the case this time. 'The personal credibility of the three [Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres] has been seriously compromised by the 180-degree change in the line within a few hours . . . the credibility crisis regarding the central figures of this government is deepening' – stated the editorial of *Haaretz* the day after the first reports of tensions on the border with Syria. Another editorial in the same edition, under the headline 'A Distorted Picture', denied the assumption that the Syrians had planned to attempt a massive attack: 'It is hard to assume that President Assad, who two weeks ago was willing to hand over a list of Israeli prisoners and complied with Kissinger's proposal for the continuation of the talks in Washington would now risk the renewal of war, when it is clear to him that he will not be able to realize any significant gains, as long as Egypt does not agree at the present stage to get drawn in after him.' A confirmation of that view came in reports from Damascus, which were published in the Israeli

press itself, according to which Hafez al-Assad had won the support of the leadership of the Baath Party and other partners in the governing coalition in Damascus, regarding the separation of forces and the future of the indirect contacts between Syria and Israel. The date of that news was 6 March, the day on which Israel was struck by panic because of the reports about the looming Syrian attack.

Among the political parties too, the claim of the 'Syrian danger' was received with incredulity. Likud leader Menachem Begin, as one who always gave first priority to military-security considerations before even he looked into the matter,[20] called the affair a scandal the likes of which had not occurred since the birth of the State. In the Labour Party, opponents of Dayan were shocked and protested against the exploitation of the tension on the Syrian border as an excuse for Dayan's return to the defence ministry. 'A cynical ploy which the mind cannot tolerate' read a statement from one of the ideological groupings in the party. Responding in a radio interview, MK Aryeh Eliav asked whether, after the exercise of using the external danger for internal purposes, Israel was now approaching the status of a banana (albeit a kosher banana, he added with irony) republic.

As for the Syrians, who more than once in the past had solved internal problems and silenced the opposition with the tested cry 'The enemy is at the gate!': what did they say? A spokesman for the Syrian government declared that 'the Israeli announcements about tension on the border with Syria were invented in order to justify the political aspirations of General Dayan and his decision to join the government'.[21] The words of the Syrian spokesman this time resembled the criticism expressed in Israel regarding false alarms in Syria being exploited to settle internal accounts.

Golda Meir retires

Criticism from the public receded after a short while. The new government led by Golda Meir won its confidence vote in the Knesset on 10 March 1974, but its life was short. About three weeks after its inception in the beginning of April, the interim report of the Agranat Commission of Inquiry into the failures of the Yom Kippur War was published. It discussed the information available before the war about the intentions of the Egyptians and the Syrians to attack Israel, its assessment by the authorized Israeli decision-makers, and the preparations that were taken in accordance with that information and that assessment. All Israel held its breath. At long last, it would be known who was responsible for the terrible disaster. The report officially ratified what everyone already knew: there were grave failures. But regarding responsibility, a surprise was prepared for the public. Those responsible, all of them, were in the military-operational echelon. The political echelon emerged from the report completely clean, even though its assessments and its decisions were definitely within the commission's sphere of authority. The commission recommended the dismissal or transfer only of high-ranking officers: the chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General David Elazar (the end of his service); the head of the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, General Eliyahu Zeira (the end of his term as head of the Intelligence Branch); three senior Intelligence officers (their transfer from their positions in Intelligence) and the head of the Southern Command, Shmuel Gonen (removal from any active role until the end of the commission's work). As for the political echelon, the commission had not a word to say to its discredit. The report had much praise for Prime Minister Golda Meir, and perceptible within it was a transparent attempt, through a supreme effort, to absolve Defence

Minister Moshe Dayan of any responsibility whatsoever, practical or formal, for the inaccurate assessments, the IDF's lack of preparation, the failure to mobilize the reserves on time and even for his opposition to a general mobilization on the morning of 6 October, counter to the suggestion of the chief of the General Staff. The commission's defence of Dayan was based on its quoting of words said by Dayan to the General Staff of the IDF on 21 May 1973, that it was necessary 'to consider the possibility of the renewal of war in the second half of this summer'.[22] If someone read only the interim report of the Agranat Commission, without knowing a thing about the previous assessments by Dayan regarding the negligible chances of war, they would certainly think that it had been none other than the defence minister himself who had foreseen the war, while the command staffers under him had erred. But if that claim were correct, the question would be asked, why did the defence minister not take seriously the many indications that came at the beginning of October of preparations for war by Egypt and Syria, just as he had foreseen in May; and why did he accept the assessment that there was a 'low probability' of the outbreak of war? The commission spoke at length about the 'conception' adopted by the heads of Intelligence, according to which there was no chance of war in the foreseeable future, but it refrained from uttering even one sentence about the political-military views of the defence minister, which matched the Intelligence 'conception' and even served as inspiration for it.

Moshe Dayan breathed a sigh of relief on the publication of the interim report. His colleague, Information Minister Shimon Peres, appeared on television on the evening of the publication of the report and hastened to declare: 'This is a verdict.' Meaning: those who have been found guilty will be punished, and those who have been acquitted can keep their jobs. But broad sectors of public opinion thought otherwise, and rejected the commission's 'verdict'. The anti-Dayanist wave swelled again, with great strength. Many circles, outside the Labour Party and within it as well, opposed the imputation of guilt to the military echelon alone and demanded that Dayan draw a conclusion, both in accordance with the principle of parliamentary responsibility and because he too had played a part in the Yom Kippur disaster, even if the commission had chosen to ignore it. Those demands were also addressed to Golda Meir. She was called upon to dismiss Dayan, and some also demanded that she herself draw a conclusion, because a certain degree of responsibility lingered about her as well. 'This time we will not keep silent until Dayan is dismissed' declared his many opponents. Dayan refused to resign and claimed that the Agranat Commission had exonerated him. But in the end Golda Meir was broken. Only a month after she had assembled her new government and a week after the publication of the interim report of the commission of inquiry, she resigned – this time for good. Faced with the renewed public outcry, she declared: 'I can no longer bear the burden.'

Less than two weeks later the Labour Party Central Committee chose Yitzhak Rabin as its candidate for prime minister. The second candidate, Shimon Peres, trailed by only a few dozen votes (54 per cent for Rabin to 46 per cent for Peres), and in the new government, which won the vote of confidence in the Knesset on 3 June 1974, he received the defence portfolio. The Defence Ministry therefore remained in the hands of a faithful friend of Dayan and member of the Rafi faction.

Before he left, Dayan managed to orchestrate two operations. One of them failed: on 15 May 1974, in Maalot, twenty-two children were killed and dozens were wounded, who had been held hostage for several hours in a school by three members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who opened fire indiscriminately the moment an IDF force broke into the building to liberate the hostages. Dayan, as he revealed afterwards in the Knesset, did not agree with the decision of the government (which was taken in the morning hours and later repealed) to

free imprisoned *fedayeen* in return for the hostages,[23] because he saw it as a dangerous precedent. His position ultimately influenced the government, which made the fatal decision to storm the building. Another operation, this one successful, was the long and exhausting negotiations that took place through the US secretary of state over a separation-of-forces agreement with Syria, in which Dayan played an active role. Three days after the signing of the agreement, which brought quiet on all the fronts for the first time since the end of the Yom Kippur War, Dayan quietly left the defence ministry, exactly seven years after he had entered it as a hero clothed in glory.

Golda Meir left the political arena altogether. Along with words of praise and accolades for her strength of spirit and her courage that were heard upon her departure, there was criticism of her management of affairs of state in a way that was sometimes far removed from democratic norms (the 'kitchen'); her hard-line positions, which prevented agreements with the Arab states; her simplistic way of seeing the conflict with the Arab states, as if the choice Israel faced during her period in office was 'to be tough and live, or have a nice image and perish' – a sentiment she expressed on several occasions; as well as for her belief that she had done everything she could to come to an agreement with the Arabs.[24] For all that, many pointed out that Meir's intransigence was indeed welcome in the internal arena in the last months of her government. In spite of strong pressures from various quarters – including from within her own party – to set up a national unity government with the Right, she steadfastly held to her position and explained that a government that included the Likud would be a government of paralysis. Because of that stubbornness and only because of it, the Right remained in the opposition and was not able to impede the signing of the separation-of-forces agreements with Egypt and Syria.

The accession of Yitzhak Rabin, a fifty-two-year-old Sabra, to the office of prime minister marked the beginning of the end of rule in Israel of people in their sixties and seventies. Some saw that as a blessing. But the real question is not biological, but political, first and foremost: how will the new generation deal with the complex legacy left to them by the generation of the founders?

When Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister, he declared that it would be a 'government of continuity and change'. The conclusion of the first year of Rabin's government showed that it was stamped with the seal of continuity, whereas the change was hardly discernible. This was true both of foreign affairs, including the government's positions in the Israeli–Arab conflict, and social and economic policy. However, there are those who hope that, in decisive moments, Yitzhak Rabin will prove to be more of a realist than his predecessors. His experience in his five years as ambassador in Washington and the lessons of the Yom Kippur War regarding Israel–US relations are likely, they hope, to prevent him from being foiled by fatal errors in assessing the US position. Yitzhak Rabin knows, at least, he should know, how small Israel's margin of manoeuvre is with its only ally, the United States, whose military, economic-financial and political aid has permitted Israel to withstand adversity to this day. Moreover, it can be assumed that Yitzhak Rabin will not repeat his predecessor's mistake of trying to prove to the Americans what their 'real interests' in the Middle East are, and that he will not foster futile dreams of Israel as a 'power'. Today's harsh and stubborn reality dictates that every Israeli prime minister must adopt realism as the basis of their policy, otherwise the dangers that continue to surround Israel will grow still more.

True realism under our conditions and in our time means, of course, taking into consideration the international balance of power – that is, including the American factor. But it would be a mistake to see everything in terms of relations with Washington, to calculate every step and

every action in the light of Israel–US relations and to focus political action through the American angle while relegating the 'Arab consideration' to secondary status. In the unfortunate international situation in which Israel finds itself, friendship with Washington is important, but it does not negate or prevent a policy the essence of which is to reach out to the Arabs, and more precisely, to the moderate and realist groupings in the Arab world, including among the Palestinians!

From his predecessors, Yitzhak Rabin inherited three 'noes', to which he has studiously adhered. These 'noes' constitute an obstacle on the path to a solution of the conflict in our region: no to a Palestinian state ('the creation of a Palestinian state is the beginning of the end of Israel', as he put it); no to a partial settlement with Jordan ('separation-of-forces agreements with Arab states are over'), and no to political activity by residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and representation for the Palestinians in the Territories, concurrent with the continuation of the administrative detentions of political figures from the Palestinian National Front in the Territories.

Indeed, on the Palestinian question, the Rabin government constitutes a seamless continuation of that of Golda–Dayan–Galili. Rabin's declarations on the subject of the Palestinians effectively constitute the closing of options for solutions, at the very time when it is crucial to Israel to leave all options open and to prevent development of a new status quo. Rabin's first period was in fact marked by political stagnation, as opposed to the multifarious political activity that took place for months after the end of the war. The interim agreement with Egypt from September 1975 should represent the beginning of a new path, if it extends into the other sectors.

Despite the weakness of Rabin's government, the hopes of the Right that its days would be numbered and that the prime ministership would rapidly fall into its hands like a ripe fruit were in vain. The 'wildcat' settlement in Sebastia in the summer of 1974, the objective of which was to undermine the authority of the government, ended up as a failure for the ultra-right-wing/religious elements who were behind the operation. However, more than once, Rabin has acted to the satisfaction of the Right, as when, for example, he authorized the creation of the settlement at Ma'ale Adumim and the construction of Yamit.

The publication on 30 January 1975 of the final report of the Agranat Commission of Inquiry into the failures of the war supposedly lowered the curtain on the Yom Kippur War. However, after an inquiry that lasted more than a year, the questions that presented themselves in the wake of the war remained unanswered. The final report discusses technical and military problems and gives answers only on the operational level. It touches on the fate of one man only, General Gonen, whose suspension was rescinded, but it recommends that he not be given command of any large formations. Even though the matter was within their authority, the members of the commission said: 'We have not found that it is our role to cast a critical gaze on the strategic political decisions themselves, the objectives of the war or the principles of one military plan or another.' The strategic 'conception' that was the basis for the IDF's action was not a subject for discussion, unlike the Intelligence 'conception', which was extensively discussed in the interim report. The name of the former defence minister, Moshe Dayan, did not appear at all in the part of the report released for publication in the press. Even though the commission pointed out in its final report that Article 26 of the Defence Service Law of 1959 authorizes the defence minister alone to mobilize the reserves, not a word was said about the responsibility of Dayan for the failure to mobilize the reserves on time. The report contains not one word about the responsibility of the political echelon or its political and strategic approaches. To clarify those

matters, another commission is required – one that will act without bias.

Whither Israel?

‘Superman woke up one morning and found that he was an ordinary man’ – thus did a Hebrew author in Jerusalem describe the widespread feeling in Israel since the Yom Kippur War. Indeed, since the war, the people have sensed that their country has returned to its natural dimensions and that it is now more restricted in its actions, in comparison to the ‘glorious’ period that preceded it.

In the period between the two wars, Israel could have taken advantage of the position of strength it had won in June 1967 to come to a decent settlement between itself and its neighbours, but it squandered the rare card that was in its hand. Israel rejected all the proposals that were raised by others, itself refusing to undertake any serious political initiative while devoting all its attention to the obstinate preservation of the results of the Six-Day War. Instead of the status quo changing because of a bold Israeli political initiative, it was eventually broken by Arab military action, which put an end to the protracted political stagnation. Israel, which had acted like a theatre critic, rejecting every peace plan that was put on the stage – as was later admitted, for example, by Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban,[25] could continue to do so no longer. If it did not come up with an initiative of its own, it would have to accept a diktat presented to it by others, who would exact a high political price.

For years, there has been a political debate among politicians and political commentators about the opportunities Israel has missed to break through the wall of hostility between it and the Arabs, in order to come to a peaceful settlement between the two sides. There are those who claim that in the period after the first Israeli–Arab war in 1948, it would not have been difficult to make progress above and beyond the ceasefire agreements with the Arab states, and stronger relations could have been forged with the neighbouring states through an attempt to solve the problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees. However, no serious effort was made in that direction at the time. Israel rested on its laurels after the realization of the old dream of the restoration of Jewish independence in the Land of Israel, and the leaders of the state did not direct their efforts first and foremost to ending the conflict with the Arab world. Another opportunity came in the summer of 1954, when Egypt, the largest and strongest of the Arab states, set out on the path of national independence after the Free Officers’ revolution in July 1952 and was about to sign an agreement for the withdrawal of British forces from the Suez Canal Zone. Instead of welcoming that development and extending a hand of friendship to Egypt, Israel tried to sabotage the British withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone (the Lavon Affair), because it saw the withdrawal as a danger to its security. Two years later, when Egypt was engaged in an intense political struggle with Britain and France after Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956, Israel exploited the opportunity and joined in the conspiracy with the two declining colonialist powers and attacked Egypt along with them (Operation Sinai-Suez).[26] There might have been an additional opportunity to break the wall five years later, when the Egyptian–Syrian union broke up in September 1961 and Egypt appeared to be trying to shift its focus to internal affairs. Then too, nothing was done.

Those who reject the thesis of missed opportunities claim that every Israeli initiative would have been condemned to failure anyway ‘because of the Arabs’ profound hostility to Israel’. Moreover, even if Israel had accepted initiatives in those cases just mentioned, no substantial

result could have been expected, ‘because Israel does not have much to sell’. That last claim has no validity regarding the period after the Six-Day War. In that war, vast expanses of Arab land fell into Israel’s hands, and these could have been used as a serious bargaining chip for the realization of peace. In the period after June 1967 Israel was at the peak of its power and prestige, and if it had proposed bold political initiatives it might have been able to break through the wall surrounding it at long last, to launch a new era in relations with the Arab world and to advance towards peace settlements with the neighbouring states. This applies first and foremost to Egypt and Jordan, whose opposition to Israel’s existence has undergone serious erosion, and even to the Palestinians, whose presence as a political force in the Middle Eastern arena was already beginning to make its mark in the mid 1960s. That golden opportunity to change the nature of Israeli–Arab relations was not exploited. Instead of political initiatives came the fascination with the Territories, along with drunkenness with victory and reliance on the myth of force and the generals’ dreams of Israel as a Great Power somewhere in the continuum between the two super-powers and France and Britain. Moshe Dayan, the man who had more influence than any other leader on the course of events in the period between the third and the fourth rounds, which lasted six years and four months, admitted more than once that it was possible to achieve peace in exchange for the return of the Occupied Territories, but – as he stated – he preferred territory over peace.

The government of Israel was supported in its visionless policy by the Johnson and Nixon administrations. There is no doubt that the status quo which prevailed between the two wars would not have lasted so long without the increasing support of Washington for the policies of Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir. Only after the war did Henry Kissinger permit himself to admit that it had been a mistake for the United States not to pressure Israel to undertake an initiative for a peace settlement.

One of the most important lessons of the Yom Kippur War was that the Israeli–Arab conflict is not likely to be resolved by military means and that the military component of that complex fabric is no longer of supreme importance as in the past. The war in the Middle East became more and more terrible, more and more expensive, without any potential for a decisive conclusion under the international conditions. That was proven decisively in October 1973. But only when the two sides come to a full recognition of the existence of this new reality in our region and together initiate a search for political possibilities to break the tragic circle of recurring wars at ever-shorter intervals – only then will it be possible to say that a most important step has been taken on the way to the ending of this conflict.

At the moment, mutual distrust, anxieties and fears still exist, despite the first hesitant steps that have been taken on the long road to a settlement. The residue of a quarter-century of hostility, blood, tears and destruction cannot disappear quickly. And indeed, alongside those groupings in both camps that are beginning to understand the lesson of the October War – that is, that war under the current conditions cannot advance a solution to the conflict – there are players on both sides who have not yet drawn that logical conclusion. On the Arab side there are those who were encouraged by the gains of October and who dream of repeating it ‘more completely’, and on the Israeli side there are still those who believe that only military gains can pave the way to a lasting political settlement on Israel’s terms. In the Israeli camp, a new phenomenon is also discernible, which had been known up to now only on the Arab side: the aspiration of military circles to erase the shame of the war’s first days. In addition, here as there, there are still many who believe and are convinced that justice in this conflict is all on one side.

As a result of the ‘Ramadan War’, the Arab world went from the intolerable situation of ‘no

war and no peace' to a situation of 'no victory and no defeat'. Any attempt to exaggerate the importance of the Arab achievement in the October War will give the Arab public a distorted view. Algerian president Houari Boumedienne insisted on that point when he said that 'we must not exaggerate our victories, so that the Arab citizen is not misled as Israel was misled after 1967. We did not defeat Israel, but we defeated fear; and that is one of the most important achievements of the campaign.'[27] The Arabs must adopt a realistic approach, which means recognition of the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state, as well as an understanding of the psychology of the adversary, the psychology of a persecuted people that lives in fear even when its power has grown and surpassed that of all its enemies. The 'Masada complex' the Jewish people carries with it is accompanied in time of danger by the example of Samson who pulled down the pillars of the temple on both himself and on his Philistine enemies. None other than MK Aryeh Eliav, the dove known for tirelessly seeking a way to a compromise agreement with the Arabs, said after the last war, 'They will not succeed in uprooting us from here. The whole world will be uprooted along with us.'

As for Israel, the realism that is demanded of it is to recognize that real peace will come only when a compromise settlement is reached between it and the Arab world that surrounds it and only when it stops acting like an appendage grafted onto this region and becomes an organic part of its body. For the sake of a peace settlement with the Arab world, which is the only long-term guarantee of Israel's survival, it is necessary to mobilize all efforts, to embrace imagination instead of eschewing it, until the objective is attained. But, in order to choose peace, which of course involves big compromises, which are preferable to short-term (and therefore bogus) advantages, Israeli leaders need deep historical insight and broad political horizons. They must understand the period they live in and the historical situation they have been given, with its objective limits. That is the necessary condition for the making of wise decisions, so as to avoid repeating the mistakes based on delusions and vain dreams along the lines of the illusions of the period from 1967 to 1973. And the strength to make unpopular decisions is also required. One of Ben-Gurion's greatest moments was when he gave the order to withdraw from Sinai at the end of the 1956 war. It was only twenty-four hours after he had solemnly declared the birth of the 'Third Kingdom of Israel'. But Ben-Gurion had the sense to take external pressures into account, to assess the international situation and to understand that he had to order a withdrawal. And, as soon as he had decided, he acted without hesitation.

However, moral sensitivity is no less necessary than political considerations. And this relates above all to the treatment of the problem of the Palestinian Arab people, who have suffered more than any other people from the terrible conflict in the Middle East. To ignore their just rights, their right to an independent state of their own in part of the Land of Israel (which they call 'Palestine'), alongside the State of Israel, is to leave the wound open. Any attempt to reach a settlement with the Arab states at the expense of the Palestinian people will soon prove to have been a short-term calculation. The prolonged and violent Israeli–Arab conflict has caused many distortions in Israeli life, starting with the channelling of national energy towards military and security matters, all the way up to the corruption of human values, such as inattention and even indifference to the suffering of other peoples. The lack of response in Israel, outside limited left-wing circles, to the horrors of Vietnam, for example, was one saddening sign of that phenomenon. From the Jewish people in Israel, whose fathers had suffered from persecution for generations, some awareness of the sufferings of other peoples might have been expected. All the more so when it comes to the neighbouring people, the Palestinian Arab people, whose tragedy occurred simultaneously with the emergence of the State of the Jews.

The previous wars left the Israelis with exclamation marks. The Yom Kippur War ended with question marks looming on the horizon. After the previous wars, Israelis became more and more prisoners of their victories. This time, in consequence of the ‘unfinished war’, they emerged from that captivity. There are those in Israel who call the Yom Kippur War the ‘war of disillusionment’. That description will be justified only if it turns out that the earthquake of October truly contributed to the elimination of the nationalistic mysticism that reached its peak between the two wars; only if it strengthens realism and hastens the internal social and political recovery which is so crucial to the young state; only if it causes the young people who returned from the fronts to say wholeheartedly: ‘This is a country where it is good to bring children into the world.’

Appendix 1: United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967

The Security Council,
Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the region can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter.

1. *Affirms* that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

    (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
    (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity

    (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
    (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
    (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles of this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

Adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting.

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 2: Conclusions and recommendations on the plan for action in the Territories in the next four years (the Galili Document)

(Ratified at a session of the Labour Party Secretariat on 3 September 1973)
Some comments by way of introduction:

1. These conclusions are not intended as ratified decisions by the Labour Party, but recommendations of the ministers of the Labour Party. The Prime Minister will present the conclusions for ratification by the authorized institutions (the Party, the Alignment [Maarach] and the government). The conclusions will be expressed for the most part within the Alignment's electoral platform, and will be included in the framework of the government's general action plan.
2. After the ratification of the main points of the action plan the operative plans will be worked out in detail. The budgets for implementation will be included in the annual budgets of the government.
3. The plan of action in the Territories in the next four years does not imply any change in the political status of the Territories and the civil status of the residents and the refugees.

1. Principles

The next government will continue to act in the Territories on the basis of the policy that has been adopted by the present government: 1. development, employment and services. 2. Economic ties. 3. 'Open bridges'. 4. Autonomous activity and the renewal of municipal representation. 5. Orders issued by the military government. 6. Rural and urban settlement. 7. Rehabilitation of the refugee camps. 8. Controlled and supervised employment in Israel of Arabs from the Territories.

2. The Gaza Strip – refugee-rehabilitation and development

Adopt an action plan for a period of four years and budget for the necessary financing and execution, with the aim of development and promoting the rehabilitation of the refugees.

The main elements of the action plan: transformation in housing conditions (construction of residential neighbourhoods for refugees near the camps and the rehabilitation of the camps and their inclusion within the municipal responsibility of the nearby cities); professional training; the promotion of health and education services; creation of sources of livelihood in trades and industry; encouragement of independent initiative on the part of the residents and improvement of the standard of living.

3. Development in Judea and Samaria[1]

Elaborate an action plan for four years and ensure the necessary financing for its execution, with the aim of developing the economic infrastructure and the improvement of essential services (health, education, etc.). Improvement of the water system for the needs of the population; promotion of professional and post-secondary education; improvement of the electricity, communication and transportation services; repairing the roads and access routes; development of trades and industry as sources of employment for the residents; improvement of housing for refugees; assistance to the municipal authorities.

4.

The sum determined between the Finance Ministry and the Defence Ministry after ratification by the government will serve as a framework for financing the action plans in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria.

5.

An effort will be made to find outside sources of financing for the action plans for rehabilitating the refugees and development in the Territories.

6. Incentives for Israeli entrepreneurs in the Territories

Incentives and benefits will be given to encourage Israeli entrepreneurs to establish industrial enterprises in the Territories (in coordination with the Minister of Trade and Industry’s proposals of 1 August 1973 to the Ministers’ Committee on Economic Affairs).

7. Autonomous activity by the residents in Judea and Samaria

Aid to autonomous activity of the population in the fields of education, religion, services and

fostering democratic patterns in social and municipal life. Senior civil positions in governmental services will be occupied by local residents as much as possible.

8. The ‘open bridges’ policy

The ‘open bridges’ policy will continue.

9. Employment of Territories residents in Israel

The employment of residents of the Territories in Israel and in Jewish establishments in the Territories will be controlled in terms of number and place. Measures will be taken to ensure the workers receive conditions and pay to Israeli standards.

10. Outposts and settlements

New settlements will be established and the settlement network will be strengthened. Action will be taken to increase the population through the development of trades, industry and hospitality.

When the government budgets are set, the means required for new settlements, in accordance with the recommendations of the Settlement Department and with the ratification of the Ministerial Settlement Committee, will be allocated every year, in order to build additional settlements in the Rafah Salient, the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights; urban and industrial settlement in the Golan Heights; a regional centre in the Jordan Valley, the development of the north-east of Lake Kinneret and north-west of the Dead Sea and the implementation of the planned water-works. Nongovernmental actors – public and private – will also be integrated into the development of the settlement areas, within the framework of the approved plans.

11. The regional centre in the Rafah Salient

The continuation of the development of the regional centre in the Rafah Salient to 800 housing units by 1977–78 will be ensured. Encouragement will be given to industrial development and settlers willing to settle there using their own private resources.

12. Acquisition and consolidation of lands in the Territories

1. Activity to concentrate lands for the purposes of existing and planned settlement (acquisitions, government lands, lands of absentee owners, exchanges of land, arrangements with residents) will be increased.
2. The Israel Land Administration will be used to increase the acquisition of land and assets in the Territories for the purpose of settlement, development and exchanges of land.
3. The Administration will lease land to companies and individuals for the execution of

approved development projects.

4. The Administration will act to acquire land in every effective way, including through companies and individuals who will acquire land in coordination with the Administration, so that it can take possession.
5. The acquisition of lands and assets by companies and individuals will be authorized only in cases where it has been confirmed that the Administration cannot or is not interested in acquiring the land for its possession.
6. The body authorized to give these authorizations will be a ministerial committee. The authorizations will be given on the conditions that the acquisitions are intended for constructive enterprises, not for speculation, and within the framework of the policy of the government.
7. The Israel Lands Administration will also act to take possession of lands that were acquired by Jews.

13. Jerusalem and the surrounding area

The project of populating and industrial development of the capital and its surrounding area will continue, for the purpose of consolidation beyond the area where Order No. 1 was applied.[2] For that purpose an effort will be made to acquire additional lands, and State lands will be used in the framework of the area to the east and south of Jerusalem that the government has decided to enclose.

14.

The government's decision of 13 September 1970 on the settlement of Nabi Samwil will be implemented.

15. A port south of Gaza

Further to the purpose of rapidly developing the Rafah Salient, the basic facts surrounding the proposal to build a deep-water port south of Gaza – physical data, economic worthiness and political considerations – will be examined, and after the findings are compiled and a concrete plan submitted, the government will decide on the matter.

16. An industrial centre for Kfar Saba

The conditions necessary for the creation of an industrial centre in Kfar Saba will be ensured, beyond the Green Line, as well as the development of Israeli industry in the Qalqilya and Tulkarem areas.

Appendix 3: Resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973

The Security Council

1. *Calls upon* all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, no later than 12 hours after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions they now occupy;

2. *Calls Upon* the parties concerned to start immediately after the cease-fire the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts;

3. *Decides* that, immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

Adopted at the 1747th meeting by 14 votes to none

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 4: Resolution 339 (1973) of 23 October 1973

The Security Council,

Referring to its resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

1. *Confirms* its decision on an immediate cessation of all kinds of firing and of all military action, and urges that the forces of the two sides be returned to the positions they occupied at the moment the ceasefire became effective;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take measures for immediate dispatch of United Nations observers to supervise the observance of the cease-fire between the forces of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt, using for this purpose the personnel of the United Nations now in the Middle East and first of all the personnel now in Cairo.

Adopted at the 1748th meeting by 14 votes to none

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 5: Resolution 340 (1973) of 25 October 1973

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 338 (1973) of 22 October and 339 (1973) of 23 October 1973.

Noting with regret the reported repeated violations of the cease-fire in non-compliance with resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973),

Noting with concern from the Secretary-General's report that the United Nations military observers have not yet been enabled to place themselves on both sides of the cease-fire line,

1. *Demands* that immediate and complete ceasefire be observed and that the parties return to the positions occupied by them at 1650 hours GMT on 22 October 1973;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as an immediate step, to increase the number of United Nations military observers on both sides;
3. *Decides* to set up immediately, under its authority, a United Nations Emergency Force to be composed of personnel drawn from States Members of the United Nations except the permanent members of the Security Council, and requests the Secretary-General to report within 24 hours on the steps taken to this effect;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council on an urgent and continuing basis on the state of implementation of the present resolution, as well as resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973);
5. *Requests* all Member States to extend their full co-operation to the United Nations in the implementation of the present resolution, as well as resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973).

Adopted at the 1750th meeting by 14 votes to none

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 6: The six-point agreement between Israel and Egypt, 11 November 1973

1. Egypt and Israel agree to observe scrupulously the cease-fire called for by the UN Security Council.
2. Both sides agree that discussions between them will begin immediately to settle the question of the return to the 22 October positions in the framework of agreement on the disengagement and separation of forces under the auspices of the United Nations.
3. The town of Suez will receive daily supplies of food, water and medicines. All wounded civilians in the town of Suez will be evacuated.
4. There shall be no impediment to the movement of non-military supplies to the east bank of the Suez Canal.
5. The Israeli check-points on the Cairo-Suez road will be replaced by UN checkpoints. At the Suez end of the road, Israeli officers can participate with the UN in supervising the non-military nature of the cargo at the bank of the Canal.
6. As soon as the UN check-points are established on the Cairo-Suez road, there will be an exchange of all prisoners of war, including wounded.

[English text from the website of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: mfa.gov.il. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 7: The 14 guiding principles of the Alignment's platform for the elections to the Eighth Knesset

(Ratified by the Labour Party Central Committee on 28 November 1973)

A. Introduction

1. The elections to the Eighth Knesset will take place after the Yom Kippur War, at the height of the political struggle for peace, along with the need for constant preparedness against the danger of the renewal of hostilities at the initiative of the Arab states. The lessons and conclusions that resulted from the circumstances and outcomes of the war, the disposition of the people and the society and the achievement of peace as a central objective must be reflected in all the sections of the Alignment's platform for the Eight Knesset.

B. Security

2. The Central Committee lauds the IDF's endurance and its victory over the armies of the enemy thanks to its might and the heroism of the fighters. The IDF prevailed over its enemies despite the advantages of the enemy in numbers and in arms and equipment provided by the Soviet Union.
3. The Central Committee shares the grief of the bereft families and expresses its identification with the prisoners and the wounded and their families.
4. Security requirements must stand at the centre of the concerns of the State, and no effort that is required to enhance the strength and capabilities of the IDF should be spared. The might of the IDF is a necessary condition for the strengthening of security and the achievement of peace.

C. Striving for peace.

5. Israel's primary objective is to achieve peace with the neighbouring states and to foster ties of partnership between the peoples of the region. Israel has striven towards that end since its establishment. It has not been achieved, due to the policy of hostility, war and boycott implemented by the Arab governments all these years.
6. And even today, after the war that Egypt and Syria initiated and waged against it, with the participation of other Arab states, Israel is all the more determined to advance peace. In that spirit, the government has taken several decisions since the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War:

    a) *To accept the ceasefire proposal and to maintain it on the basis of the principle of mutuality;*
    b) *To sign the six-point agreement with Egypt and to strive for a separation-of-forces agreement to stabilize the ceasefire;*
    c) *To express willingness to participate in the peace conference that is scheduled to begin in December 1973.*

7. The peace conference that is to begin in December is an event of great value in the history of the region, which offers a chance for a great transformation in relations between Israel and the Arab states. Israel's desire and expectation is that the negotiations between Israel and its neighbours at the conference will bring the desired peace.
8. At the peace conference and in all its international relations Israel will aspire for a peace agreement that will be achieved through negotiations without preconditions. Those negotiations must take place without pressures or attempts at coercion from any side.
9. Israel will strive for a peace agreement that will ensure:

    a) *The elimination of all manifestations of hostility, blockade and boycott;*
    b) *Defensible borders that will ensure that Israel can defend itself effectively against military attack or conspiracies for blockade, which will be based on territorial compromise. Borders of peace will replace ceasefire lines;*

        Israel will not return to the lines of 4 June 1967, which constituted a temptation for attack.
    c) *Preservation of the Jewish character of the State of Israel in order to achieve its Zionist objectives and its roles in Jewish immigration*[1] *and the ingathering of the exiles;*
    d) *The opening of a period of normal relations between Israel and the neighbouring states in the political, economic, social and cultural domains.*

10. The peace agreement with Jordan will be based on the existence of two independent states – Israel, the capital of which is united Jerusalem, and an Arab state to its east. In the neighbouring Jordanian-Palestinian state the identity of the Palestinian Arabs and the Jordanians can be realized in peace and good neighbourliness with Israel. Israel rejects the creation of an additional separate Palestinian Arab state west of the

Jordan River.

11. Any peace agreement will be signed with the authorization of the government and the Knesset.
12. Until a peace agreement Israel will adhere to the ceasefire as well as interim agreements agreed upon by Israel and its neighbours as provisional accords on the way to peace.

In the absence of a peace treaty or interim arrangements, Israel will continue to fully maintain the situation as determined by the ceasefire.

Action will be taken to continue and strengthen settlement[2] in conformity with the decisions that were periodically taken by the government of Israel, the primary consideration being the security of the State.

D. Relations with the United States

13. Israel values its special relationship with the United States and the large amount of aid it has given to Israel. Israel will strive to strengthen these relations in the future.

E. To the Jews of the world

14. Israel wholeheartedly values the mobilization of the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora and their standing by the State of Israel, and calls upon them to continue to stand by Israel in its struggle for peace and security and in its efforts to enhance its strength spiritually, materially and through large-scale immigration of Jews to Israel.

Appendix 8: The secret agreements of the Arab Summit in Algiers (26–28 November 1973)

(Published in An-Nahar*, Beirut, 4 December 1973.)*[1]

The Sixth Summit Conference in Algiers discussed recent developments in the Arab and international situation and the conditions of the confrontation with the enemy. Declarations were also made by the Arab kings and presidents, and the following decisions were taken:

First: The present objective of the Arab nation

The Conference resolves that the objectives of the present stage of the joint Arab struggle are:

1. The full liberation of all the Arab lands that were occupied in the aggression of June 1967 with no concession or abandonment of any part of those lands, or compromise over their national sovereignty.
2. The liberation of Arab Jerusalem, and no acceptance of any situation that would compromise full Arab sovereignty over the holy city.
3. Commitment to the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people according to decisions of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the only representative of the Palestinian people. (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan expressed reservations on this provision.)
4. The Palestinian problem is the problem of all the Arabs, and no Arab party whatsoever can renounce this commitment, as has been decided at previous summit conferences.

Second: The military area

1. Solidarity of all the Arab states with Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian people in the

joint struggle to realize the just Arab aims.

2. The extension of military and financial support of all kinds to the two fronts, the Egyptian and the Syrian, in order to strengthen their military capacity to enter the liberation struggle and to stand fast in the face of the massive supply and unlimited aid received by the enemy.
3. Support for the Palestinian resistance movement by all possible means, to ensure its active role in the struggle.

Third: The economic area

Taking note of the importance of the economy in the struggle against the enemy and the required use of all kinds of weapons and the concentration of all resources that will strengthen the capacity to fight, the Conference resolves:

1. To strengthen economic ties between the Arab states and to instruct the Arab Economic Council to create a plan to implement that task.
2. To continue to use oil as a weapon in the struggle, in view of the decisions of the Oil Ministers, and to repeal the embargo on oil exports to any state upon its commitment to support the just Arab cause. To create a committee under the purview of the Oil Ministers which will monitor the execution of these resolutions and the resolutions of the Oil Ministers on holding to a reduced level of production, so that there can be coordination between that committee and the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the oil states in all regarding the development of the positions of foreign states towards the Arab cause.
3. The need to strengthen and ensure steadfastness in the occupied territories.
4. The Arab states must repair the damage caused by the war, for this has influence on the war effort and the strengthening of the spirit of combat and ability to fight in the front-line states.

Fourth: The political area

Political action complements the military campaign and is considered an extension of it in our struggle against the enemy; as an outcome of the positions of foreign states towards the just Arab struggle the Conference resolves the following:

1. In the African sphere
    a) *The strengthening of Arab–African cooperation in the political area and to strengthen Arab diplomatic representation in Africa.*
    b) *The breaking off of all diplomatic, consular, economic, cultural and other relations with South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia by the Arab states that have not already done so.*
    c) *A complete ban on the export of Arab oil to those three states.*
    d) *The taking of special measures to continue the regular supply of Arab oil to the other African states.*

e) *The strengthening and expansion of economic, financial and cultural cooperation with the other African states, both on the bilateral level and on the level of the Arab and African regional organizations.*
f) *The creation of an Arab–African financial organization to take part in economic and social development plans and to provide technical aid to African states. Arab finance ministers will determine the organization's regulations and the amount of its capital.*
g) *The provision of immediate aid to the African people who have been harmed by natural disasters and drought.*
h) *Increased support for the African liberation movement both on the diplomatic and political levels.*
i) *In order to expedite the execution of these resolutions and the establishment of permanent cooperation between the Arab and African states, the Economic Secretariat of the Arab League is instructed to take practical steps to maintain contact with the Economic Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity and the Committee of the Seven States connected to it in order to hold periodical consultations on various levels as well as on the highest level between the Arab and African states.*

2. The non-aligned states
    a) *To act to implement the resolutions of the Algiers Summit of the Non-Aligned States for the boycott of Israel in the political, economic and military areas and to call upon Algeria, as the Chair of the Conference, to convene a special high-level meeting in order to implement the aforementioned Resolutions.*
    b) *To act in order to ensure the continuation of these states' support for the Arab struggle against Zionism, by all means.*

3. The Muslim states
    a) *To endeavour to convince the Muslim states that maintain relations with Israel to break political, economic and cultural relations with it.*
    b) *To endeavour to enhance the coordination of those states with the Arab struggle in all areas.*

4. Western Europe
    a) *To demand of the states of the European Common Market that they continue to develop their political position that was expressed in their Declaration of 6 November 1973.*
    b) *To demand of the states of Western Europe that they cease their military and economic support for Israel.*
    c) *To work for the repealing by those states of the embargo they had imposed on the export of arms to Arab states.*
    d) *To see to it that that they apply pressure on the United States to stop aiding the enemy.*

5. The Asian states
    a) *To continue with the effort among the Asian states that maintain relations with*

Israel so that they break political, economic and cultural relations with it and provide additional support to the Asian Arab states whose territory is under occupation.

6. The Soviet Union and the states of Eastern Europe
   To maintain contacts with those states in order to achieve:
   a) *The continuation of their support for Arab interests in all areas.*
   b) *The supply of weapons to the Arab states and fronts, which will permit the Arabs to stand up to the enemy as equals in quantity and quality.*
   c) *The breaking of Romania's political and economic relations with Israel.*

7. The People's Republic of China
   To continue the Arab contacts with the People's Republic of China and to ensure the continuation of its support for Arab interests and the reception of as much assistance as possible from it.

8. The United States
   a) *To take action so that the government of the United States changes its position of identification with Israel and to warn it of the dangers contained in the continuation of its present policy for its interests in the Arab region.*
   b) *To increase efforts to explain to the American people and the various communications media of the justice of the Arab cause and the dangers the United States' identification with Israel poses to the interests of the American people and to global security and peace.*

Fifth: Arab information

The Conference discussed the issue of Arab information abroad, and the need to strengthen it in the present stage, in coordination with the Arab embassies in foreign capitals, and the need to learn from their experience in this area. The following was decided:

1. Immediate subscription to an Arab propaganda[2] fund in response to the requirements of the present stage that has emerged from the October War, in the amount of 5 million dollars. The contribution of each Arab state to this sum will be in accordance with its means; then regular annual contribution of 3 million dollars to the fund, participation in which will be distributed among the member states in accordance with their shares in the budget of the Arab League Secretariat.
2. To recommend to the Secretary-General of the Arab League to expand the steps that have been taken in several foreign capitals by establishing information committees by Arab ambassadors in every foreign capital. These committees will plan Arab information activities and monitor the execution of their plans, the financing being from the Secretariat General of the League.
3. The involved Arab states will provide the information material required to respond to developments in a timely way.

Sixth: Arab Summit Conference

Arab summit conferences will be held on a regular basis in April of every year, and special meetings will be held if necessary based on the agreement of the majority of member-states, or at the request of one or more of the member-states, or of the Secretary-General.

Seventh: Follow-up mechanisms

1) The following mechanisms will implement the steps necessary to execute the resolutions of the Summit and the follow-up, based on their authority:
    a) *The League Council*
    b) *The Economic Council*

2) The Foreign Ministers will organize delegations to visit countries and international organizations, based on a plan they will elaborate, to explain Arab problems, to clarify the position of the Arabs and to gain support for our struggle in view of the Resolutions of the Summit.

Eighth: Arab relations

Knowing the scale of the responsibility placed on all the Arab states, and in order to mobilize all the forces and resources of the Arabs, the Summit Conference resolves to invest all the efforts necessary to clear the air between the Arab states and to eliminate all differences of opinion that exist between them.

Appendix 9: Israel–Egypt Separation-of-Forces Agreement – 18 January 1974

January 18, 1974

A. Egypt and Israel will scrupulously observe the cease-fire on land, sea, and air called for by the United Nations Security Council and will refrain from the time of the signing of this document from all military or para-military actions against each other.

B. The military forces of Egypt and Israel will be separated in accordance with the following principles:

1. All Egyptian forces on the east side of the canal will be deployed west of the line designated as Line A on the attached map. All Israeli forces, including those west of the Suez Canal and the Bitter Lakes, will be deployed east of the line designated as Line B on the attached map.
2. The area between the Egyptian and Israeli lines will be a zone of disengagement in which the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) will be stationed. The UNEF will continue to consist of units from countries that are not permanent members of the Security Council.
3. The area between the Egyptian line and the Suez Canal will be limited in armament and forces.
4. The area between the Israeli line (B on the attached map) and the line designated as Line C on the attached map, which runs along the western base of the mountains where the Gidi and Mitla Passes are located, will be limited in armament and forces.
5. The limitations referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 will be inspected by UNEF. Existing procedures of the UNEF, including the attaching of Egyptian and Israeli liaison officers to UNEF, will be continued.
6. Air forces of the two sides will be permitted to operate up to their respective lines without interference from the other side.

C. The detailed implementation of the disengagement of forces will be worked out by military representatives of Egypt and Israel, who will agree on the stages of this process. These representatives will meet no later than 48 hours after the signature of this agreement at

Kilometre 101 under the aegis of the United Nations for this purpose. They will complete this task within five days. Disengagement will begin within 48 hours after the completion of the work of the military representatives and in no event later than seven days after the signature of this agreement. The process of disengagement will be completed not later than 40 days after it begins.

D. This agreement is not regarded by Egypt and Israel as a final peace agreement. It constitutes a first step toward a final, just and durable peace according to the provisions of Security Council Resolution 338 and within the framework of the Geneva Conference.

For Egypt:
Mohammad Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy
Major-General

Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces

For Israel:
David Elazar
Lieutenant-General

Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces

[English text from the website of United Nations Peacemaker: peace-maker.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 10: Israel–Syria Separation-of-Forces Agreement – 31 May 1974

A. Israel and Syria will scrupulously observe the cease-fire on land, sea and air and will refrain from all military actions against each other, from the time of the signing of this document, in implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 338 (1973) dated 22 October 1973.

B. The military forces of Israel and Syria will be separated in accordance with the following principles:

   1. All Israeli military forces will be west of the line designated as Line A on the map attached hereto, except in the Quneitra area, where they will be west of Line A-l.
   2. All territory east of Line A will be under Syrian administration, and Syrian civilians will return to this territory.
   3. The area between Line A and the line designated as Line B on the attached map will be an area of separation. In this area will be stationed the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force established in accordance with the accompanying protocol.
   4. All Syrian military forces will be east of the line designated as Line B on the attached map.
   5. There will be two equal areas of limitation in armament and forces, one west of Line A and one east of Line B as agreed upon.
   6. Air forces of the two sides will be permitted to operate up to their respective lines without interference from the other side.

C. In the area between Line A and Line A-l on the attached map there shall be no military forces.

D. This Agreement and the attached map will be signed by the military representatives of Israel and Syria in Geneva not later than 31 May 1974, in the Egyptian-Israeli Military Working Group of the Geneva Peace Conference under the aegis of the United Nations, after that group has been joined by a Syrian military representative, and with the participation of

representatives of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The precise delineation of a detailed map and a plan for the implementation of the disengagement of forces will be worked out by military representatives of Israel and Syria in the Egyptian-Israeli Military Working Group who will agree on the stages of this process. The Military Working Group described above will start their work for this purpose in Geneva under the aegis of the United Nations within 24 hours after the signing of this Agreement. They will complete this task within five days. Disengagement will begin within 24 hours after the completion of the task of the Military working Group. The process of disengagement will be completed not later than 20 days after it begins.

E. The provisions of paragraphs A, B and C shall be inspected by personnel of the United Nations comprising the united Nations Disengagement Observer Force under this agreement.

F. Within 24 hours after the signing of this Agreement in Geneva all wounded prisoners-of-war which each side holds of the other as certified by the International Committee of the Red Cross will be repatriated. The morning after the completion of the task of the Military Working Group, all remaining prisoners-of-war will be repatriated.

G. The bodies of all dead soldiers held by either side will be returned for burial in their respective countries within 10 days after the signing of this Agreement.

H. This Agreement is not a peace agreement. It is a step towards a just and durable peace on the basis of Security Council resolution 338 (1973) dated 22 October 1973.

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): un.org/unispal. Accessed 22 September 2019. The text in the Hebrew version of this book also indicated that the document was signed by General Herzl Shafir for Israel and by General Adnan Tayara for Syria. –Trans.]

Appendix 11: Provisional Political Programme of the Palestine Liberation Organization

(Adopted by the Palestinian National Council at its 12th session, in Cairo, 1–8 June 1974)

The Palestinian National Council:

On the basis of the Palestinian National Charter and the Political Programme drawn up at the Eleventh Session, held from January 6–12, 1973; and from its belief that it is impossible for a permanent and just peace to be established in the area unless our Palestinian people recover all their national rights and, first and foremost, their rights to return and to self-determination on the whole of the soil of their homeland; and in the light of a study of the new political circumstances that have come into existence in the period between the Council's last and present sessions, resolves the following:

1. To reaffirm the Palestine Liberation Organization's previous attitude to Resolution 242, which obliterates the national right of our people and deals with the cause of our people as a problem of refugees. The Council therefore refuses to have anything to do with this resolution at any level, Arab or international, including the Geneva Conference.

2. The Liberation Organization will employ all means, and first and foremost armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian territory and to establish the independent combatant national authority for the people over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated. This will require further changes being effected in the balance of power in favour of our people and their struggle.

3. The Liberation Organization will struggle against any proposal for a Palestinian entity the price of which is recognition, peace, secure frontiers, renunciation of national rights and the deprival of our people of their right to return and their right to self-

determination on the soil of their homeland.

4. Any step taken towards liberation is a step towards the realization of the Liberation Organization's strategy of establishing the democratic Palestinian state specified in the resolutions of previous Palestinian National Councils.

5. Struggle along with the Jordanian national forces to establish a Jordanian-Palestinian national front whose aim will be to set up in Jordan a democratic national authority in close contact with the Palestinian entity that is established through the struggle.

6. The Liberation Organization will struggle to establish unity in struggle between the two peoples and between all the forces of the Arab liberation movement that are in agreement on this programme.

7. In the light of this programme, the Liberation Organization will struggle to strengthen national unity and to raise it to the level where it will be able to perform its national duties and tasks.

8. Once it is established, the Palestinian national authority will strive to achieve a union of the confrontation countries, with the aim of completing the liberation of all Palestinian territory, and as a step along the road to comprehensive Arab unity.

9. The Liberation Organization will strive to strengthen its solidarity with the socialist countries, and with forces of liberation and progress throughout the world, with the aim of frustrating all the schemes of Zionism, reaction and imperialism.

10. In the light of this programme the leadership of the revolution will determine the tactics which will serve and make possible the realization of these objectives.

The Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization will make every effort to implement this programme, and should a situation arise affecting the destiny and the future of the Palestinian people, the National Assembly will be convened in extraordinary session.

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Appendix 12: Seventh Arab League Summit Conference, Resolution on Palestine

Rabat, Morocco, 28 October 1974

The Seventh Arab Summit Conference after exhaustive and detailed discussions conducted by their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses, the Kings, Presidents and Amirs on the Arab situation in general and the Palestine problem in particular, within their national and international frameworks; and after hearing, the statements submitted by His Majesty King Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and His Excellency Brother Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and after the statements of their Majesties and Excellencies the Kings and Presidents, in an atmosphere of candour and sincerity and full responsibility; and in view of the Arab leaders' appreciation of the joint national responsibility required of them at present for confronting aggression and performing duties of liberation, enjoined by the unity of the Arab cause and the unity of its struggle; and in view of the fact that all are aware of Zionist schemes still being made to eliminate the Palestinian existence and to obliterate the Palestinian national entity; and in view of the Arab leaders' belief in the necessity to frustrate these attempts and schemes and to counteract them by supporting and strengthening this Palestinian national entity, by providing all requirements to develop and increase its ability to ensure that the Palestinian people recover their rights in full; and by meeting responsibilities of close cooperation with its brothers within the framework of collective Arab commitment;

And in light of the victories achieved by Palestinian struggle in the confrontation with the Zionist enemy, at the Arab and international levels, at the United Nations, and of the obligation imposed thereby to continue joint Arab action to develop and increase the scope of these victories; and having received the views of all on all the above, and having succeeded in cooling the differences between brethren within the framework of consolidating Arab solidarity, the Seventh Arab Summit Conference resolves the following:

1. To affirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to return to their homeland;

2. To affirm the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent national

authority under the command of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory that is liberated. This authority, once it is established, shall enjoy the support of the Arab states in all fields and at all levels;

3. To support the Palestine Liberation Organization in the exercise of its responsibility at the national and international levels within the framework of Arab commitment;

4. To call on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organization to devise a formula for the regulation of relations between them in the light of these decisions so as to ensure their implementation;

5. That all the Arab states undertake to defend Palestinian national unity and not to interfere in the internal affairs of Palestinian action.

[English text from the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL): unispal.un.org. Accessed 22 September 2019. –Trans.]

Notes

Introduction to the English edition by Noam Chomsky and Irene Gendzier

1 A version of this introduction was first published as ‘Exposing Israel’s Foreign Policy Myths: The Work of Amnon Kapeliuk’, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 54 (Summer 2013), palestine-studies.org.

2 Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli–Arab Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

3 See Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). See also Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Irvine Anderson, *Aramco, the United States and Saudi Arabia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1981); Michael Stoff, *Oil, War and American Security* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980); David Painter, *Oil and the American Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

4 A.A. Berle, Berle Papers, 11 May 1951, cited by Lloyd C. Gardner, *Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East After World War II* (New York: New Press, 2009). Zbigniew Brzezinski, on the invasion of Iraq, ‘Hegemonic Quicksand’, *National Interest* (Winter 2003/4). Kennan, cited by Bruce Cumings, ‘Power and Plenty in Northeast Asia’, *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1987/88). Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945–1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, 2006).

5 On Britain’s record, see Mark Curtis, *Secret Affairs: Britain’s Collusion with Radical Islam* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2010, 2018). On the US role, see Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil’s Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Metropolitan, 2005).

6 Irene Gendzier, ‘Why the US Recognized Israel’, Israel Occupation Archive, 9 November 2011; Irene Gendzier, *Dying to Forget: Oil, Power, Palestine and the Foundations of US Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015, 2017).

7 Reppa, *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationships and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin* (New York: Praeger, 1974). Jackson, *Congressional Record*, 21 May 1973, S9446.

8 US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–1960. Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958–60), p. 119.

9 7 March 1949, enclosure, Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, US Air Force to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on US Strategic Interest in Israel, in Records of the JCS, Part 2, 1948–53, sec. b, the Middle East, p. 181, Film A 368 B, Reel 2.

10 Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977* (New York: Times Books, 2006); Avi Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012); Raz, ‘The Generous Offer That Was Never Offered’, *Diplomatic History* 37:1 (2013): pp. 85–108.

11 Kapeliouk, chapt. 1. On the careful planning and systematic execution of the settlement project, see Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land: The War over Israel’s Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967–2007* (New York: Nation Books, 2007).

12 Éric Rouleau, ‘Une paix durable est possible si Israël évacue les territoires Arabes occupés et accepte un règlement du problème des réfugiés,’ *Le Monde*, 19 February 1970, p. 1. [The quote in the original French: ‘Il sera possible d’instaurer une paix durable entre Israël et les pays arabes, n’excluant pas des relations économiques et diplomatiques, lorsqu’une solution satisfaisante sera intervenue pour les deux seuls problèmes qui sont les causes du conflit actuel, les territoires occupés et les réfugiés palestiniens.’ –Trans.]

13 Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*. For the documents, see John Norton Moore, ed., *The Arab–Israeli Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,

1974), vol. 3, pp. 1103–11.

14 Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 1291.

15 Tillman, *The United States in the Middle East* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

16 *Newsweek*, 9 April 1973.

17 Bar-Lev, *Ot*, 9 March 1972, cited by Amnon Kapeliouk, *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1977; Weizman, *Haaretz*, March 29, 1972, cited by John Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs* (London: Frank Cass, 1973).

18 Message from Brezhnev to Nixon, 24 October 1973, Document 71, 'The October War and US Policy', Electronic Briefing Book (Washington, DC: National Security Archive), pp. 40–41. ['new and new territory . . .' appeared in the original; nsarchive2.gwu.edu. –Trans.]

19 Document 71, p. 40.

20 Nixon to Brezhnev, 25 October 1973, Document 73, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, pp. 41–2.

21 Document 73, p. 42.

22 Document 73, p. 42.

23 'Koskiusko-Morizet Call on Secretary', State Department Cable 211737 to US Embassy France, 26 October 1973, Document 75, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 43. [The French ambassador's name appears under two different spellings here. –Trans.]

24 US Mission to NATO Cable 5184 to State Department, 26 October 1973, Document 79B, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 45.

25 Yuli Vorontsov, Minister-Counsellor, Soviet Embassy, to Scowcroft, 10 October 1973, Document 25, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 19.

26 Document 25, p. 19. Note that the same source indicates that the Syrians were reported to have favoured a ceasefire in order to halt the Israeli advance.

27 Document 25, p. 19.

28 Department of State, Operations Center, Middle East Task Force, Situation Report #22, Document 27, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, pp. 20–21.

29 Document 27, p. 21.

30 15 October 1973, 'Armed Shipments to Israel', Seymour Weiss, Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State to Kissinger, Document 31, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 22.

31 October 20, 1973, Situation Room Message from Peter Rodman to Kissinger, Document 47, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 30.

32 October 20, 1973, Memcon between Brezhnev and Kissinger, Document 46, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 29.

33 October 21, 1973, US Embassy Soviet Union Cable 13148 to Department of State, Document 51, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 32.

34 Memcon between Meir and Kissinger, 22 October 1973, Document 54, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 33.

35 Department of State Operations Center, Middle East Task Force Situation Report #57, 'Situation Report in the Middle East as of 1200 EDT, 10/23/73', Document 59, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 35.

36 Memcon between Meir and Kissinger, 22 October 1973, Document 54, 'October War and US Policy', NSA, p. 33.

37 Document 54, p. 33.

38 See chapter 7.

39 Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land*, p. 5.

1. Between two wars

1 *Mapa ḥadasha, yaḥasim aḥerim* [New map, new relations] (Jerusalem: Shikmona, 1969). [In Hebrew only. –Trans.]

2 *Davar*, 10 August 1973.

3 '*Mitnaḥalim*': see the note on the two words for 'settler' in Appendix 7. –Trans.

4 Chapter 1 – '*Mesimot merkaziot*' (primary missions – literally, 'central' missions) – section 4 in the fundamental outlines (*qavei ha-yesod*) of the government's programme, which were ratified by the Knesset on 15 December 1969.

5 *Davar*, 25 April 1969.

6 *Mapa ḥadasha, yaḥasim aḥerim*, p. 179.

7 *Haaretz*, 23 August 1973.

8 *Maariv*, 26 September 1971.

9 This does not mean that the Nahal settlements were dismantled, but that many of them had been converted into civilian settlements by the eve of the Yom Kippur War. –Trans.

10 In the West Bank, near Bethlehem. –Trans.

11 *Davar*, 1 October 1968.

12 That plan was never ratified by the government, but was executed by it as if it were part of its policy.

13 Philip Gillon and Anan Safadi, 'The Hebron of Ja'abari – and Levinger', *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 25 February 1972, p. 3.

14 I was unable to locate the original recording or a transcript of this interview, so instead of the original English, this excerpt is a retranslation back into English from the author's Hebrew. –Trans.

15 That forgiving atmosphere also prevailed outside Israel. When the correspondent for the *Nouvel Observateur* in Israel, Victor Cygielman, reported Dayan's illegal activities in the realm of archaeology, the editorial board added in the margins of the article that 'the honesty of the statesman who came from the kibbutz, the trade-unionist minister, stands above all suspicion'. *Nouvel Observateur*, 20–26 December 1971.

16 Speech at the staff and command school (*Davar*, 20 August 1971). Dayan said similar words on several occasions and even from the Knesset podium (on 13 June 1973): 'The government of Israel must act as a permanent government in the Territories (*Knesset Records*, vol. 32, p. 3327).

17 Shimon Peres, '*Yoman ha-shavua*^{c}' [Weekly diary], Israel radio, 7 April 1973.

18 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 30 March 1973.

19 Order No. 25, issued 18 June 1967 by the military government in Judea and Samaria, states: 'No one shall conduct a business transaction regarding land, whether by himself or by means of another, whether directly or indirectly, except with the permission of the proper authority.' Article 3 of the order states: 'A business transaction regarding land that is forbidden or done in contravention of the terms of the permit will be essentially void and will have no judicial validity whatsoever except for the application of the criminal penalty.' The penalty was set at five years in prison or a fine of I£1,500.

20 See Appendix 2.

21 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 30 March 1973.

22 *Al HaMishmar*, 4 April 1973.

23 Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, dean of the Faculty of Law at Tel Aviv University, pointed out: 'What would we say to a proposal that would deny Jews in England, France, etc. the right to vote on the grounds that their true tie is to the Jewish people and their real capital is Jerusalem?' *Haaretz*, 13 October 1972.

24 *Haaretz*, 29 June 1973. Another formulation of the same idea from Dayan's lips: 'There is no more Palestine. Finished. I should have said I'm sorry, but I'm not sorry.' *Time*, 30 July 1973.

25 *Davar*, 2 April 1972. The attempt to reproduce this plan in Gaza by means of local council elections failed due to threats and the murder by the *fedayeen* organizations of some of the elected officials.

26 Speech at Tel Aviv University, *Haaretz*, 18 October 1972.

27 *Maariv*, 30 March 1973.

28 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 12 April 1973.

29 *Maariv*, 13 April 1973.

30 *Haaretz*, 10 May 1973.

31 In July 1973 a group of Israelis and their friends were arrested in Norway, and some of them were sentenced in a local court for the murder of a local waiter, Ahmad Bouchiki, in the town of Lillehammer.

32 *Maariv*, 3 May 1973.

33 Foreign Minister Abba Eban allegedly expressed reservations within a closed circle in the context of the electoral campaign then taking place in Israel, but when his words were published in the press he hastened to deny them, under pressure from Golda Meir.

34 In fact, this was not the first time Israel had hijacked a civilian aircraft. On 12 December 1954 a Syrian passenger aircraft was intercepted by the Israeli Air Force in an effort to secure the liberation of five Israeli soldiers captured while on a military mission inside Syria. That operation too was conducted by the military without authorization from political leaders. Two days later, Prime Minister Sharett ordered the plane released. Later, on 17 January 1955, when the matter was under discussion in the Knesset, he explained that 'this State has the choice to be a state of law or a state of robbery. The aircraft was not flying over our territory, and where it was flying it presented no threat to our sovereignty.' *Knesset Records*, vol. 17, p. 592.

35 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 24 July 1973.

36 Ratified by the Labour Party Central Committee on 11 September 1969.

37 Moshe Dayan explained on Israeli television on 10 August 1973 that top priority should be given to the construction of Yamit 'as a top-level military security line, like a stronghold on the bank of the Suez Canal'.

38 *Haaretz*, 4 September 1973.

39 *Al HaMishmar*, 9 September 1973.

40 *Al HaMishmar*, 5 September 1973.

41 *Maariv*, 16 November 1973.

42 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 9 November 1973.

43 *Die Welt*, 16 June 1973.

44 *Maariv*, 8 September 1972.

45 *Haaretz*, 26 June 1973.

46 *Maariv*, 26 June 1973.

47 *Maariv*, 10 September 1973.

48 *Haaretz*, 10 September 1973.

49 *Maariv*, 21 September 1973.

50 *Time*, 30 July 1973. And some believed that the status quo would last even longer. General (Res.) Aharon Yariv, former head of Military Intelligence, was asked, 'How long will the situation of no war and no peace last?' He replied: 'A generation and maybe even longer.' Interview with the Jerusalem Arabic newspaper *al-Anbaa*, 10 August 1973. [The quote from *Time* is an indirect quote from Dayan by *Time*'s diplomatic editor, Jarrod Schecter, who wrote: 'The next ten years, he predicted, will see the borders frozen along present lines – but there will not be a major war.' See 'Israel: Waiting in the Wings', *Time*, Monday, 30 July 1973. –Trans.]

51 *Maariv*, 5 June 1973.

52 *Haaretz*, 30 September 1973.

53 *Maariv*, 10 April 1973.

54 *Haaretz*, 25 June 1973.

55 *Maariv*, 31 August 1973.

56 It was not published until after the war (in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 15 February 1974).

57 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 16 September 1973.

58 Unsigned editorial, *Jerusalem Post*, 26 September 1973. [Full original English text of the editorial: 'Rosh Hashanah 5734 – a time when the Jewries of most of the Americas, of England and much of the rest of the Western world and the free world are enjoying unprecedented wealth and political power. A time when Jews – and a growing number of non-Jews – of Russia are continuing to set an example of courageous self-assertion which, we hope, will one day be recorded as the opening of a bright new chapter in the history of that long-tortured country. A time when Israel seems firmly entrenched in the life and concern of the Jews of the world. A time of booming economy in Israel. A time when our security situation never seemed better. Altogether, a Rosh Hashanah filled with a sense of great strength and hope.' –Trans.]

59 In Hebrew, literally 'those who see black'. –Trans.

60 *Hasbara* literally means 'explanation'. In this context: public diplomacy, public relations, propaganda. –Trans.

61 Harkabi worked diligently for years to gather expressions of denigration and hatred directed at Israel, the Jews and Zionism from Arab newspapers, journals and books, and he compiled them in his book *ᶜEmdatam shel ha-ᶜAravim be-sichsuch Yisra'el-ᶜArav* [The position of the Arabs in the Israel–Arab conflict], (Tel Aviv, 1968). He was the first to propagate the dubious theory about 'Arab anti-Semitism', which many in Israel have used after him. Accordingly, for example, the following appears in an article that appeared in *Sqira Ḥodshit* [Monthly review], a monthly publication for IDF officers published by the chief education officer of the General Staff: 'With the Six-Day War, the fact that the Arabs' hostility to Israel is simple anti-Semitism in its full emotional and ideological form penetrated into the general consciousness in Israel' (June 1972, p. 16). Those words derive directly from General Harkabi's doctrines. For Harkabi's scornful view of Arab soldiers, see chapter 4.

62 *Maariv*, 2 November 1973.

63 *Maariv*, 17 April 1974.

64 *Maariv*, 21 December 1973.

65 *Haaretz*, 1 March 1974.

66 *Maariv*, 27 December 1973.

67 *Haaretz*, 12 December 1973.

68 *Journalists' Yearbook* (Tel Aviv: Israel Journalists Association, 1964), p. 101.

69 For the wording of Security Council Resolution 242, see Appendix 1.

70 On 1 May 1968, only about half a year after the ratification of the resolution, Israel's permanent representative at the UN, Yosef Tekoa, informed the Security Council that Israel accepted the resolution, even though the wording of the announcement left room for different interpretations. The hawks in the Israeli government, [the right-wing party] Gahal and Dayan, strongly opposed acceptance of the resolution, because they interpreted it as requiring withdrawal from all the Occupied Territories – just as did the Arab states and most other countries in the world. Dayan declared the following: 'I have very strongly opposed in the past, and I oppose today – with more reason – a declaration that Israel accepts the Security Council resolution of 22 November. I opposed and will oppose acceptance of the resolution even as a basis for negotiations with the Arabs.' *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 15 August 1969. Israel subsequently announced its acceptance of the resolution on a second occasion, with clarity and with expressed willingness to fulfil its terms, when the government of Israel accepted the Rogers Plan in August 1970. Gahal left the National Unity government for that reason. Israel accepted the resolution a third time when it accepted Security Council Resolution 338 of 22 October 1973 calling for a ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War.

71 One of the instances in which Nasser expressed his ideas was in an important interview he gave to the special emissary of *Le Monde*, Éric Rouleau, on 19 February 1970, in which he said that it would be possible to make a lasting peace between Israel and the Arab states. Nor did he preclude the possibility of economic and diplomatic relations if Israel would withdraw from the Occupied Territories and agree to a resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem. This overture from Nasser was ignored in Israel.

72 That was the first time since the end of the Six-Day War that the government of Israel declared its willingness to withdraw its armed forces. It became possible after the Gahal's departure from the government. Prime Minister Meir had refused until then to use the word 'withdrawal', declaring many times that to demand of Israel that it declare its willingness to withdraw was an 'Egyptian–Soviet conspiracy' and that such a declaration would immediately be followed by the question, 'How far will

you withdraw?' – which she felt would have put Israel in an embarrassing position.

73 *Knesset Records*, vol. 59, p. 1303.

74 Senior *Newsweek* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave, who maintained close contacts with the Egyptian leadership, related in an interview with Yehoshua Ben-Porath (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, 28 December 1973), that in February 1971 he arrived in Jerusalem after Sadat had granted him an interview in which he stated, for the first time, that he was ready to recognize Israel and to live in peace with it. When he received an audience with Prime Minister Meir, he told her about the content of the interview with Sadat and the statements of two British diplomats who wanted to report to Israel that Sadat was serious in his intentions for peace. De Borchgrave said: 'Mrs Meir listened impatiently and did not let me finish my words. She stopped me and said: "If I am not mistaken, you have come to interview me. So please ask your questions . . ." I had no choice, I stopped my report and interviewed her. At the end of the interview, I simply observed: "Madame Prime Minister, I fear that your statements will sound obsolete when they are published, because in the meantime Sadat will give Jarring a positive answer and announce that he is willing to make peace with you." Mrs Meir replied in English, in an ironic tone: "That will be the day." That is: I do not believe such a thing will happen.'

75 *Maariv*, 2 April 1971.

76 Interview with the editor of *An-Nahar*, 7 September 1974.

77 *Newsweek*, 9 April 1973.

78 It was Moshe Dayan who immediately after the Six-Day War (in an interview with the BBC on 13 June 1967) uttered the famous phrase: 'I am waiting for a phone call from the Arabs. We will not take any steps. The current situation is very comfortable for us. If something is bothering the Arabs they can call us.' [I was unable to find a recording or transcript of the original BBC interview. –Trans.]

79 *Al HaMishmar*, 6 April 1973. The Meir government's negative stance towards Jordan's clear hints that it was willing to make peace was strongly criticized in the Israeli press. On 6 February 1973 the Labour Party weekly *Ot* wrote: 'We are demanding of Hussein that he basically submit unconditionally to Israel's dictates.' On 5 June 1973, an article in *Haaretz* stated: 'We are actually treating Hussein with no small degree of arrogance. Israel's claims about Hussein are hypocritical.' Even the humourist Ephraim Kishon, a fervent supporter of the government's foreign policy, published in *Maariv* (15 September 1972) a disparaging article under the headline 'Hints', about Hussein's courtship of Israel and Israel's chilly response, in the form of an amusing dialogue between Meir and one of her aides.

80 *Le Monde*, 24 November 1973.

81 *Der Spiegel*, 21 January 1974.

82 The first Egyptian confirmation of reports of the possibility of war in May 1973 appeared a year after the beginning of the October War, by Sadat himself, in an interview with the Lebanese weekly *Al-Usbuu^{c} al-cArabi* on 7 October 1974.

83 *Davar*, 20 April 1973.

84 *Maariv*, 5 June 1973.

85 *Maariv*, 20 July 1973.

86 *Haaretz*, 20 September 1973.

87 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 18 September 1973.

88 *Al HaMishmar*, 6 May 1973.

89 *Maariv*, 10 April 1973. Those words ran counter to General Tal's real view, which he put in writing in the same period, on the chances of war if the status quo between Israel and its neighbours continued.

90 *Al HaMishmar*, 10 May 1973.

91 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 4 June 1973.

92 Location of the opening quotation mark is conjectural. In the original the opening quotation mark is missing. –Trans.

93 *Al HaMishmar*, 10 May 1973.

94 *Davar*, 6 May 1973.

95 *Al HaMishmar*, 12 December 1973.

2. Irrefutable facts – disastrous interpretation

1 *Al-Ahram*, 18 November 1973.

2 The theory that this was a deliberate diversion by Syria in preparation for the war was never proven, but that is the effect it had.

3 Quoted in the interim report of the Agranat Commission of Inquiry into the failures of the Yom Kippur War, which was published on 2 April 1974 (in stencil), p. 10.

4 See chapter 4, p. 128.

5 *Al-Ahram*, 7 December 1973.

6 The evidence cited by Walter Laqueur in his book *Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics* to the effect that President Sadat had made the Soviets party to the war plans at an earlier date is not convincing.

7 Sadat claimed, in an interview with *Al-Anwar* (29 March 1974), that the Soviet ambassador in Cairo had tried to get

Egypt's agreement to a ceasefire on the first day of the war. 'At 8 pm,' said Sadat, 'that is, six hours after the campaign began, when I was in the operations room and the actions were under way in accordance with the plan that had been drawn, I was told that the Soviet ambassador was urgently requesting to meet me . . . I left the operations room . . . to meet him. I was surprised when the ambassador told me that Syria was requesting a ceasefire and that it had officially made the request to the Soviet Union . . . I utterly refused a ceasefire. I asked the ambassador to report that to his government and I immediately telegraphed President al-Assad. On 7 October I received a telegram from President al-Assad in which he denied that Syria had requested a ceasefire. The Soviet ambassador requested another meeting and repeated what he had said. In reply I sharply told him that Hafez al-Assad's answer was sufficient for me . . .' The Soviet ambassador essentially corroborated this in an interview with *As-Safir* (16 April 1974): 'On the sixth of October I reported to President Sadat about the appeal that had been made by the Syrian leaders to the Soviet authorities requesting intervention within twenty-four hours to bring about a ceasefire. The president of Egypt rejected the Syrian request and undertook to convince the president of Syria, Hafez al-Assad, to withdraw it.' The ambassador also indicated that he intervened repeatedly on the same matter on 7 and 9 October, but every time President Sadat found that the time was not suitable for a ceasefire – despite the fact that 'by President Sadat's admission the war had no purpose other than to bring about a change in the balance of power in the Arabs' favour and to allow the crisis to get out of the dead end'.

8 *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 March 1974.

9 In an interview with the Beirut newspaper *Al-Anwar*, 1 March 1974.

10 *Al-Hawadeth*, Beirut, 16 August 1974.

11 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, p. 26. General Sharon said on the same subject (*Maariv*, 25 January 1974) that he had met General Albert Mendler, the commander of the armoured forces in the Sinai, on the morning of the second day of the war, and asked him, 'Albert, why did you not deploy our forces?' he replied: 'I received an explicit order not to deploy them. An explicit order not to deploy the forces.'

12 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, p. 11.

13 Later, after the war, Justice Minister Y. Sh. Shapira said with irony: 'It was hard to invite us to come, we live far away, in Turkmenistan. Several hours' flight . . .'

14 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, p. 21.

15 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 3 October 1973.

16 'False Alarm'. Unsigned editorial. *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 October 1973.

17 *Maariv*, 4 October 1973.

18 *Davar*, 16 November 1973.

19 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 8 January 1971.

20 Indeed, US secretary of state Kissinger made clear in a conversation with Dayan during his visit to Israel on 22 October 1973 that if Israel had launched a preventive war, it would not have received the US aid that flowed to it during the war. [This footnote is unattributed. However, in his book *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter that Transformed the Middle East*, Abraham Rabinovich wrote: '[Kissinger] told Dayan that Israel had been wise not to stage a preemptive strike on Yom Kippur. If it had, Dayan would recall him saying, it would not have received so much as a nail from the United States.' (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 454. –Trans.]

21 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 7 December 1973.

22 The Egyptians and the Syrians had in fact set the attack for 14:00 hours, but that information did not reach Israel in time.

23 Moshe Dayan admitted after the war that the deployment of the air force would not have changed the situation: 'I do not think that if the air force had launched a preventive strike the outcome would have been basically any different, since all the missile batteries were in place, ready for them.' Speech to Israeli newspaper editors, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 26 December 1973.

24 At his press conference on 12 October 1973, Kissinger revealed that 'we asked our own Intelligence, as well as Israeli Intelligence, on three separate occasions during the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities, to give us their assessment of what might happen. There was the unanimous view that hostilities were unlikely to the point of there being no chance of it happening. Nor was the possibility of hostilities raised in any of the discussions with either of the parties that took place at the United Nations during the last week.' And, nevertheless, the US knew about the large-scale preparations on the border and their dangers; otherwise they would not have repeatedly requested assessments of the situation. [Although the quote from Kissinger appears in Hebrew in the original text of this book up to the word 'happening', in this translation the quote, in more complete form, is taken from the website of the Israeli Foreign Ministry: mfa.gov.il. –Trans.]

25 Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, *Al-Ahram*, 6 December 1973.

26 Such as Yaakov Shimshon Shapira (*Maariv*, 16 November 1973), and Natan Peled (*Maariv*, 7 October 1974). The latter stated explicitly that 'there were also discussions in which I felt that the decision had been made some time before the meeting of the government and that there was a foregone conclusion'.

27 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, pp. 13–14.

28 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, p. 24.

3. A war different from previous wars

1 The word 'yet', which is the key word in that sentence, as was indicated the next day in the press, was omitted from the

chief of the General Staff's statement included in *Maarachot* (published by the IDF), which was dedicated to full documentation of the war (see issue 232/233, November 1973, p. 18).

2 Title of the article by Ya'akov Friedlander, *Jerusalem Post*, 9 October 1973, p. 2. –Trans.

3 Report from Beirut by Thierry Desjardins, correspondent for *Le Figaro*, quoted in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 9 October 1973.

4 It was widely believed among political observers in Israel during the war, and even after it, that Moshe Dayan, before the planned talks with US secretary of state Kissinger on a regional settlement, which were to begin in November, after the election in Israel, was of the view that 'it wouldn't hurt' if the Egyptians were hit hard as a result of an aggressive initiative on their part. Under such circumstances the conditions of the partial settlement could be more favourable to Israel. That belief was not confirmed by any source, and those who held it based it, among other things, both on Moshe Dayan's opposition to a general mobilization of the reserves even on Yom Kippur, when it was clear that war was about to start within a few hours, as well as his words at a luncheon of the Editor's Committee at Beit Sokolov: 'I know those Arabs. If all the reserves were mobilized, Sadat would put off opening fire. The reserves would sit and sit and then go home.' *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 26 December 1973. The conjecture that Dayan knowingly declined to act to prevent the war even though he was sure it was about to break out was raised by Zvi Klein, in an article he published, entitled 'Milḥemet yom ha-kipurim: hafta^{c}a o malkodet' [The Yom Kippur war: surprise or trap], in *Medina, mimshal ve-yaḥasim beynle'umiyim* [State, government and international relations], published by Hebrew University, Issue 6 (October 1974), pp. 127–41. Zvi Klein's study caused a sharp controversy in the press between Dayan's supporters and his opponents. In any case Klein's theses remain conjecture and still require proof.

5 Although Israel declared independence on 14 May 1948, it is commemorated in Israel based on its date in the lunisolar Jewish calendar, 5 Iyar, so it is not always on the same date by the Gregorian calendar. –Trans.

6 Before the Knesset elections in late December 1973, the Egyptian army also directed propaganda to Israeli soldiers along the front line by means of signs and loudspeakers, calling on them to vote not for the Likud or the Alignment, but for 'lists that will promote peace'.

7 *Al-Mirsad* (Mapam weekly in Arabic), 27 December 1973.

8 This appeared in the weekly magazine *Haolam Hazeh* a few weeks after the war. See also her courageous words on the occasion of the first anniversary of the war in the *Haaretz* supplement of 17 September 1974.

9 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 5 March 1974.

10 Yaron Livay, *Haaretz*, 11 November 1973.

11 In Hebrew: *Siaḥ Loḥamim*, later published in English as *The Seventh Day*. –Trans.

12 Iqrit and Bir'im are two Arab villages in Israel on the Lebanese border, the residents of which were evacuated by the Israeli army in 1948. The houses in the villages were subsequently destroyed and the villagers were never allowed to return. These villages differ from most other Palestinian villages that were evacuated in 1948 in that after the war most of their residents remained within the borders of the State of Israel, where they have lived as Israeli citizens ever since. Their campaign for the restitution of their rights has received substantial support from Israeli Jews in the intervening years and decades. –Trans.

13 *Davar*, 3 February 1974.

14 Israel has never published numbers for its armed forces, but foreign sources estimate the number of its soldiers during full mobilization at about 300,000.

15 The reason was not only because of the reserve supply, which sufficed for several months, but also because of the fuel produced in Sinai, which supplied about two-thirds of the 9 million tonnes consumed annually in Israel. The weekly nondriving days imposed on Israeli car-owners after the war for a few months stemmed from political and psychological considerations – an act of solidarity with the countries that had suffered from the Arab oil embargo.

16 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 13 February 1974.

17 *Haaretz*, 13 December 1973.

18 *Haaretz*, 5 February 1974.

19 Only once during the war, on 14 October 1973, was a summary of losses reported, and it was partial: 656 killed. Regarding the missing it was reported that they numbered 50 (this was only soldiers who were known to have been captured). A second disclosure (not final) was made after the war, on 6 November: 1,854 killed and 498 missing and captured. The final number of killed and missing, which was published in March 1974, was 2,523, and that included all who had fallen after the ceasefire.

20 Egyptian announcements lost their credibility after the IDF crossed the Canal. Syrian announcements also gave a distorted picture from the moment the tide turned on the northern front. As well, some of the stories that were spread by Egyptian sources about their crossing of the Canal were not correct, such as the story about the sabotage, on the eve of the invasion, of facilities along the Bar-Lev Line that were supposed to set the Canal on fire in order to prevent an invasion. That plan had been attempted before but was abandoned as ineffective. After the War of Attrition, two ignition points had been set up in full view of the Egyptians for the purpose of deterrence, but they were not activated in the Yom Kippur War. ['Africa' was a term used by Israelis to refer to the Egyptian territory west of the Suez Canal occupied by Israel in the Yom Kippur War. –Trans.]

21 Israelis had been educated to believe that the IDF never withdrew. A commander of a stronghold at the Canal related after the war on Israel Broadcasting (1 March 1974): 'I thought that I would be put on trial because I gave the order to retreat, when it was no longer possible to defend the place. Because the IDF had never withdrawn.' The IDF command was faced with a more difficult dilemma when it became clear that the thirty-seven soldiers of the Mezah outpost at the south of the Suez Canal could no longer hold out and defend the position, after a heroic struggle that had lasted for a full week. On 13 October 1973, at 9:30 am, orders were given to the commander regarding surrender under the auspices of the Red Cross, but some commanders in

the rear claimed that surrender was not in keeping with the tradition of the IDF and that it could harm soldiers' morale. Half an hour later, a new order was sent to the besieged outpost that cancelled the order to surrender, stating that surrender still remained within the purview of the judgement of the outpost's commanding officer. The defenders of the outpost were embarrassed, even angry, that the decision was left in their hands. Lacking any alternative, in the end the decision was to surrender.

22 What is translated here as 'information officer' is *masbir* – literally 'explainer' – in Hebrew. –Trans.

23 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 9 November 1973.

24 *Maariv*, 17 December 1973.

25 *Haaretz*, 12 March 1974. Those surveys included only the Jewish population. Among the Arab population of Israel there was a real collapse in faith in information provided by the Israeli media.

26 *Al HaMishmar*, 11 January 1974.

27 A short telephone call from Prime Minister Meir is all it takes to stop the appearance on television of a political commentator she does not like.

28 One of the sure methods for preventing the publication of information in Israel was for government leaders to present it to the editors of the newspapers on the condition that it not be published. An example from the war was an overview of the situation on the fronts that Moshe Dayan gave the newspaper editors on 9 October 1973, not a word of which appeared in the press. That overview was published in full in all Israeli newspapers only on 15 February 1974.

29 *Haaretz*, 5 December 1973.

30 Hebrew: *ḥisul yisra'el*. –Trans.

31 Prime Minister Meir said during a political debate in the Knesset on 20 December 1973, the day before the opening of the Geneva Conference, that 'the meaning of the term "restoration of the national rights of the Palestinians" was defined at the Arab Summit Conference as the elimination of Israel'. General (Res.) Prof. Y. Harkabi also stated that 'the Arab objective remains as it was – as it was formulated at the Algiers Conference – to eliminate our existence'. *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 7 December 1973. And the words even reached into the literary realm. In a literary-political diary published by the poet Shlomo Tanai, we find this passage from 5 December 1973 (the day the item in *Haaretz* was published): 'Today a secret section of the discussions at the conference of the Arab leaders in Algiers was leaked, including a clause that the objective of the Arabs is to eliminate Israel. We already knew this before, but now it has been said in clear language, nearly without camouflage and without refined, diplomatic wording.' *Yoman be-ᶜet milḥama* [Diary in time of war] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1974), p. 71.

32 An example of this was a report published on the fourth day of the war on the official letterhead of the IDF Spokesman's Unit which stated that IDF forces were in control of the northern sector* of the Suez Canal all along the water line. The report was shown to General Yariv at a press conference that was broadcast on television the same day, and he declared before the eyes of astonished viewers that 'this document is not correct'. [*The Hebrew text of this book refers to 'the northern bank' (*ha-gada ha-tzefonit*) in this footnote, but since the Suez Canal runs north–south, what was probably meant was 'the northern sector' (*ha-gizra ha-tzefonit*) and the word 'bank' appeared due to a typographical or transcription or editing error. A 2011 Hebrew-language article from the Israeli news website Globes quotes the same words from General Yariv on the same occasion, but regarding the 'northern sector' of the Canal: '*Dover tzahal lo kol-kach shiqer be-milḥemet yom kipur*' ['the IDF Spokesman did not lie that much in the Yom Kippur War'], by Li-or Averbach, Globes, 10 May 2011. The article quotes an interview with Brigadier General Pinhas Lahav, IDF spokesman during the Yom Kippur War, who claimed that the report about IDF control over the northern sector of the Canal the veracity of which General Yariv denied was in fact an article by a military correspondent, not a communiqué from the IDF Spokesman's Unit. See globes.co.il. –Trans.]

33 Hebrew: *meḥdal* – literally 'omission', or failure to do something. That is the word that is translated as 'failure' throughout the remainder of this chapter. –Trans.

34 *Haaretz*, 8 October 1973.

35 *Maariv*, 30 April 1974.

36 The preoccupation with technical failures and not with the political outlook is reminiscent of the Lavon Affair. The essence of that episode was the desire to sabotage Egypt's relations with Britain and the United States in order to prevent the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt in the mid 1950s. The outlook of the Israeli leadership at that time was based on the assumption that Britain's withdrawal from Egypt would be a danger to Israel. To thwart the withdrawal, an Israeli network planted bombs in British and American institutions in Cairo and Alexandria (summer 1954), and they ended up being caught. Two of the accused were hanged and another committed suicide. The affair caused foment in Israel, but the central question, which shook the Israeli stage for years and even led ultimately to the resignation of the government, to new elections and a split in the Labour Party, was: 'Who gave the order?' The political 'philosophy behind the order' according to which the withdrawal of Britain from Egypt would be a disaster for Israel was hardly debated at all.

37 The seven Israeli journalists who authored the book *Ha-Meḥdal* [The Failure, also translated as 'mishap'; see below. –Trans.] wrote in the introduction, 'Some among us wrote at great length in our newspapers in recent years and were believed, and thereby unwittingly contributed to the complacency, contempt for the enemy, excessive self-confidence, disregard for reality and other components that came together to form what is today called the Failure. It is quite likely that we did not always do our duty as journalists and therefore we are no less – but also no more – responsible for what happened.' Those words appeared only in the Hebrew edition of the book, and not in the French edition (published by Hachette-Literature). [That sentence was in fact translated in an English edition of the book, as follows: 'Among us, some who over recent years had written columns that unwittingly contributed to complacency, contempt for the enemy, exaggerated self-confidence, blindness to reality – and all the other components that now add up to the "Mishap." Maybe we didn't always honor our obligations as news-papermen, and so

bear no less – but also no more – responsibility for what happened.' *Kippur: An Account of Israel's October 1973 War, by Seven of the Country's Leading Columnists and Correspondents*, by Yeshayahu Ben-Porat, Hezi Carmel, Uri Dan, Yehonatan Gefen, Eitan Haber, Eli Landau and Eli Tabor, trans. Louis Williams (Tel Aviv: Special Edition Publishers, n.d.). p. iii. –Trans.]

38 Speech at the HaKibbutz HaMeuhad (United Kibbutz Movement) Central Committee.

4. Myths confronted by cruel reality

1 Interview in *Dvar Hashavua*, 18 October 1974.

2 *Sqira Ḥodshit* [Monthly review] (a monthly for IDF officers, published by the chief education officer of the General Staff), June 1973, p. 21.

3 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 28 April 1971.

4 *Maariv*, 12 November 1973.

5 In a debate on Israel Broadcasting, 25 November 1973. [The words in the quote from Peled rendered here as 'the territories occupied in the Six-Day War, we did not strengthen the security of' do not appear in the Hebrew text of the book. They are translated from the French edition, where they appear in the sentence 'La guerre nous aura montré qu'en nous maintenant physiquement dans les territoires conquis pendant la Guerre des Six Jours, nous n'avons pas renforcé la sécurité de l'État.' (*Israël: La fin des mythes*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1975, p. 187). In the Hebrew text, one line from the quote from Peled appears twice and one line is missing. –Trans.]

6 *Maariv*, 10 February 1974.

7 *Al-Bayrak*, Beirut, 21 February 1974.

8 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 2 January 1970.

9 *Maariv*, 9 November 1973.

10 Lieutenant General Moshe Dayan related in *Yoman maᶜarechet Sinai* (Diary of the Sinai campaign) (Tel Aviv: Am Hasefer, 1966, p. 62): 'The Intelligence Branch is spreading the rumour that the Iraqi Army has entered Jordan. This is part of the deception plan to produce the impression that our activity is aimed at Jordan and Iraq. (In Operations they claim that Intelligence is so successful that they have begun to believe their own rumours.)' [The English quote is from the English edition of Dayan's book, called *Diary of the Sinai Campaign* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 67. –Trans.]

11 The Agranat Commission took note in its interim report of the exaggerated self-confidence of General Zeira, saying that 'he had a conspicuous tendency to decisiveness of command that was derived from great self-confidence and his willingness to make himself the ultimate arbiter in intelligence matters in the State' (p. 19).

12 From an interview with Abba Eban in *Dvar Hashavua*, 25 October 1974.

13 *Maariv*, 4 June 1971.

14 *Maariv*, 9 November 1973.

15 *Maarachot*, October 1967.

16 *Haaretz*, 13 November 1973. The next day that claim elicited a mocking reply in *Davar*, stating that those hints of General Herzog's were reminiscent of Nasser, who sought a scapegoat after the defeat of 1967.

17 It is interesting to note that, even in the Pentagon's intelligence agency, which had also cast doubt on the threatening nature of the Egyptian and Syrian preparations for war, three key members of its Middle East branch were transferred to other positions after the war.

18 Interview in *Maariv*, 25 May 1973.

19 *Haaretz*, 8 November 1973.

20 *Davar*, 6 May 1973.

21 'Rabin: 'We can no longer dictate terms by force', *Jerusalem Post*, 5 March 1974, p. 2.

22 *Maariv*, 25 May 1973.

23 Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Beyn yisra'el ve-ᶜarav* [Between Israel and the Arabs] (Tel Aviv: Maarachot, 1968), p. 101.

24 *Sqira Ḥodshit* [Monthly review] (April 1969), p. 7.

25 *Davar*, 10 August 1973.

26 *Bamahaneh*, 7 November 1973.

27 *Haaretz*, 26 April 1973.

28 Interview in *Maariv*, 10 May 1974.

29 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 29 August 1974.

30 Speech in the Egyptian People's Assembly, 11 December 1973.

31 According to many sources, the relative of President Sadat who was killed in the war was the president's half-brother, a pilot whose name was Atef Sadat. –Trans.

32 *Al HaMishmar*, 3 March 1974.

33 The Battle of Badr was fought on the 17th day of Ramadan, not the 10th. –Trans.

34 *Al-Ahram*, 18 November 1973.

35 When MK General (Res.) Ariel Sharon said, during a debate in the Knesset (22 January 1974) on the separation-of-forces agreement with Egypt, that 'the main objective of the Egyptians in the war was to capture the line of hills', Prime Minister Meir interrupted him, in a tone of amazement and anger, 'That's all?' To which Sharon replied, 'I said the main objective. Today the material is in our hands. I studied it well. I had enough time to study it. The main Egyptian objective in the war – and that was also the only objective on which the Egyptians were obstinate in a relentless war – was to conquer the line of hills. On that line we stopped the Egyptians.' Sharon believed that the high command did not understand that that was indeed the Egyptian objective: 'They were of the view that the Egyptians were heading for Tel Aviv or at least trying to conquer Sinai. The Egyptian objective, and this is a point I have heatedly defended in bitter arguments with Lieutenant General Bar-Lev and others during the war – was to capture a strip of 10–12 km east of the Canal and to consolidate themselves there for defence' (interview in *Maariv*, 25 January 1974).

36 *Haaretz*, 15 February 1974.

37 *Haaretz*, 30 December 1973.

38 Interview in *Maariv*, 18 January 1974.

39 *Maariv*, 30 October 1973.

40 In addition to the expeditionary forces of Iraq and Jordan, the armed forces of Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya (the Mirages!) provided military aid to Egypt and Syria, the real value of which was mainly in terms of morale, and which symbolized the unity of the Arab world at war with Israel.

41 *Sqira Ḥodshit* [Monthly review], June 1973, p. 41.

42 Interview on French television, 17 October 1973, quoted in *Maariv*, 19 October 1973.

43 *Al HaMishmar*, 5 December 1973. Incidentally, Israelis are in the habit of calling the Arab 'oil weapon' extortion, exactly as the Arabs do about the parallel Israeli weapon of the Jewish-Zionist 'lobby' in the United States.

44 Interview in *Al-Akhbar* of Cairo, 14 March 1974.

45 There is no precise information on the losses among the Palestinians. General Hofi, the commander of the northern front during the war, revealed that the IDF had killed 40 *fedayeen* during the course of the war (interview with *Haaretz*, 2 November 1973). Yasser Arafat related (interview with *Al-Musawwar*, 8 March 1974) that 870 Palestinians were killed in the Ramadan War. That number apparently includes *fedayeen*, soldiers of the 'Palestinian Liberation Army' who fought on the fronts ('Hittin' forces fought on the Syrian front and 'Ein Jalut' forces fought on the Egyptian front), as well as Palestinian civilians. Experts believe that Arafat's numbers were exaggerated, as were *fedayeen* announcements of their achievements during the war.

46 A survey conducted about three months after the war showed that 63 per cent of the Israeli public believed that a solution to the Palestinian problem was a necessary condition for peace with the Arab states (*Haaretz*, 18 January 1974).

47 See Appendix 11, section 2.

48 In the words of Moshe Dayan in a speech at the Technion in Haifa (*Haaretz*, 28 June 1973).

49 An example from an article that appeared immediately after the 1967 war, by Dr Amnon Rubinstein: 'Time is working in our favour. It is working in our favour because we have the strength. The more time passes, the more complete becomes the new reality that the IDF has created in the status quo . . . time is working in our favour, just as it is working in the disfavour of the Arab states . . . time will accustom the world to the new map of Israel. Experience proves that facts have normative power.' (*Haaretz*, 21 July 1967). The author changed his opinions with the passage of time, but many others held to them until Yom Kippur 1973.

50 *Dvar Hashavua*, 18 October 1974.

51 *Yedioth Ahronoth* 14 January 1975.

52 'UM' is the Hebrew acronym for the United Nations, in Hebrew: *ha-Umot ha-Me'uḥadot*. –Trans.

53 Besides South Africa, which sent medicines to Israel during the war, and Caetano's Portugal, which permitted the American airlift to transit on its territory, the Netherlands, which was subject to the Arab oil embargo, won Israeli sympathy, one of the expressions of which was a daily Dutch-language learning programme on IDF radio (*Galei Tzahal*).

5. The army and politics

1 *Dvar Hashavua*, 17 March 1972.

2 *Maariv*, 31 December 1971.

3 *Maariv*, 10 March 1972.

4 *Haaretz*, 10 February 1965.

5 From an interview in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 1 February 1974.

6 *Haaretz*, 22 December 1973.

7 A rank normally held in active duty by only one officer in the IDF: the chief of the General Staff. –Trans.

8 *Mashber ba-ḥevra ha-yisra'elit* [Crisis in Israeli society] (Jerusalem: Karta, 1973), p. 149.

9 *Maariv*, 10 October 1973.

10 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 20 July 1973.

11 Interview on *Galei Tzahal* (IDF radio), 15 September 1973.

12 Main editorial in *Haaretz*, 11 November 1973.

13 *Haaretz*, 18 November 1973.

14 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 23 November 1973.

15 *Maariv*, 20 January 1974.

16 For example, in the main editorial in *Davar* on 22 January 1974.

17 *Al HaMishmar*, 20 November 1973.

18 The Basic Law: The Military was passed on 31 March 1976. The text of the law states *inter alia* that 'the chief of the General Staff shall be appointed by the Government upon the recommendation of the minister of defence': knesset.gov.il/laws. –Trans.

19 The word here in the Hebrew text is *harta^{c}a* – deterrence, not *hatra^{c}a*– warning. Apparently, it was just a case of transposition of the Hebrew letters that correspond to 'r' and 't'. –Trans.

6. The diktat

1 *Al HaMishmar*, 17 October 1973.

2 *Jerusalem Post*, 17 October 1973. [Quote in context: 'President Sadat's speech of yesterday was seen as clearly revealing his ultimate aim: the dismemberment of the Jewish state. He spoke of two stages in Egyptian policy. First, to force a ceasefire with Israel undertaking to withdraw to the pre-'67 lines; and then to summon an international peace conference to discuss "restoring the rights of the Palestinians" – which is a euphemism for taking apart the State of Israel.' 'Israel observers: Sadat's aim: dismemberment of Israel'. *Jerusalem Post*, 17 October 1973, p. 1. –Trans.]

3 President Sadat counted the Egyptian losses as 'a little more than 6,000' (in an interview with the Lebanese *Al-Usbuu^{c} al-cArabi*, 7 October 1974).

4 According to Fred Hoffman, the Associated Press correspondent in the Pentagon (AP, 29 November 1973).

5 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 11 November 1973.

6 *Haaretz*, 9 October 1973.

7 *Haaretz*, 21 October 1973.

8 *Maariv*, 25 January 1974. Another version of his words on the same occasion: 'There's no hurry, because the ceasefire won't be declared any time soon.' *Haaretz*, 4 December 1973.

9 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 22 October 1973.

10 Interview in *Maariv*, 19 October 1973.

11 *Maariv*, 10 December 1973.

12 Interview in the *New York Times*, 9 November 1973. [Sharon is quoted as saying: 'We had to examine how serious was the Russian threat and how serious was the American pressure. Had we done so I think we would have found them not so serious.' Source: Charles Mohr, 'Israeli General Assails Superiors', *New York Times*, 9 November 1973. –Trans.]

13 See chapter 2, p. 72.

14 For example, the *Washington Star-News*, 5 December 1973, and *New Republic*, 11 December 1973.

15 *Washington Post*, 22 October 1973.

16 *Maariv*, 24 December 1973.

17 Moshe Dayan revealed in a speech he gave at a meeting of the Alignment Knesset faction that military aid from the US had permitted Israel to accelerate implementation of the multi-year plan for equipping the IDF, which had been decided on before the Yom Kippur War. That plan will be implemented such that by April 1975 the level will exceed by tens of percentage points the level that had been set for April 1978 in most types of munitions (*Davar*, 23 January 1974). The armies of Egypt and Syria were also better armed in terms of quality at the end of the Soviet airlift than they had been before the war, as the arms that they lost in the war were obsolete in many cases, and they were now replaced mainly by modern ones.

18 *Knesset Records*, vol. 43, p. 4,585.

19 *Davar*, 21 October 1973.

20 According to *Maariv* (21 December 1973), Kissinger said: 'We [the Americans] will break with you and you will fight your war alone.'

21 Security Council Resolution 339 passed on 23 October 1973 in New York. –Trans.

22 The Security Council's first resolution (338) did not touch on the modalities of supervision of the ceasefire, whereas the second one (339) spoke only about the dispatch of observers to monitor observance of the ceasefire.

23 That state of emergency had not been declared since the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963.

24 The countries that agreed to participate in the UN emergency force were Austria, Canada, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Nepal, Panama, Peru, Poland and Sweden.

25 According to the assessment of General Chaim Herzog, the Third Army could have been eliminated within two days and the entire Egyptian army within a week.

26 In *Maariv*, a terrified Israel is seen rushing to a shelter, and the caption reads: 'Kissinger's coming!'

27 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 16 November 1973.
28 *Knesset Records*, vol. 44, p. 4,596 (session of 13 November 1973).
29 *Haaretz*, 30 December 1973.
30 *Haaretz*, 26 February 1974.
31 See Appendix 6.
32 The English text is from the website of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: mfa.gov.il. –Trans.
33 *Sqira Ḥodshit* [Monthly review], January 1974, p. 4.
34 See Appendix 8.
35 The third 'no' of Khartoum was 'no to recognition of Israel'. –Trans.
36 See Appendix 9.
37 See Appendix 10.

7. The internal political arena: between continuity and change

1 Interview on Israel Broadcasting, 24 November 1973.
2 *Haaretz*, 2 November 1973.
3 From an announcement by a group called the 'Movement for Political Daring', published in December 1973.
4 Published as an advertisement in *Haaretz*, 9 October 1973.
5 Maarach (Alignment) was the name of the joint Knesset list consisting of the Labour Party and the smaller Mapam party. –Trans.
6 See Appendix 7.
7 In this context 'the Land of Israel' (*Eretz-Yisra'el* in Hebrew) means, for all practical purposes, Israel plus the West Bank and Gaza Strip: former British Mandate Palestine west of the Jordan River. (Although the Revisionist Zionists, represented by the Herut party, the senior partner in the Likud electoral list at this time, led by Menachem Begin, defined the Land of Israel as former British Mandate Palestine in its entirety, including the part of it that lay to the east of the Jordan River – that is, Trans-jordan, known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after 1949 – at least in principle.) –Trans.
8 Only among soldiers did the Likud surpass the Alignment. Nearly 100,000 soldiers and reservists (the latter were the majority of military voters) voted for the Likud, but that vote was explained by the desire of the soldiers to protest against the failures of the war that they had personally seen on the battlefield. The Likud won 41.28 per cent of votes in the IDF (as against 28.60 per cent among the general population), whereas the Alignment received 39.54 per cent of votes in the army as against 39.80 per cent among the population. This was the first time the Likud had surpassed the Alignment in the army. However, various data revealed that among the soldiers on the front lines – the combat soldiers – the percentage of votes for the Likud was much lower than its average in the army.
9 *Maariv*, 8 February 1974.
10 An exception occurred in 1972, when public opinion forced Justice Minister Y. Sh. Shapira to resign after a scandal surrounding the [state-owned oil company] Netivei Neft – but his departure did not last and he was reinstated by Golda Meir after three months.
11 This is a pun in Hebrew: 'hackneyed words' = *milim sheḥuqot*; 'exhausted reserves' = *milu'im sheḥuqim*. –Trans.
12 Allusion to the Battle of the Chinese Farm, fought between Israel and Egypt in Sinai, October 1973; it was called 'Chinese Farm' because Israeli soldiers saw farm equipment with Japanese lettering on it and thought it was Chinese. –Trans.
13 Uri Alon, *Pi ha-Aton*, the student newspaper of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 30 March 1974. [The name of the newspaper means 'the donkey's mouth' – an allusion to the Biblical story about Balaam's Ass. –Trans.]
14 *Maariv*, 25 November 1973.
15 One of the moving letters was that of Tikva Sarig, a bereaved mother from Kibbutz Beit-Hashita, which was published in several newspapers.
16 *Maariv*, 16 November 1973.
17 *Haaretz*, 19 November 1973.
18 *Maariv*, 6 March 1974.
19 *Maariv*, 8 March 1974.
20 Many in Israel still remember that, when the radio broadcast a mobilization order for three units on 1 April 1959 due to a technical error, Menachem Begin rushed to the Knesset podium and declared, even before he had verified what had happened, that 'if our mobilized army is called into action due to what has happened, all of us will stand behind it' (*Records of the Knesset*, vol. 26, p. 1,874: Evening session, 1 April 1959).
21 Associated Press, 6 March 1974.
22 Interim report of the Agranat Commission, p. 29.
23 The report of the Horev Commission, which investigated the Maalot disaster (published on 10 July 1974), found that the government had not received all the necessary information on the fateful day, and that Defence Minister Dayan had not transmitted to the government the letters written by the *fedayeen* in relation to the liberation of the hostages, which prevented the

drawing of a correct conclusion regarding the options it had. Some of the parents of the children who were slaughtered in Maalot demanded, after the conclusions of the report, that the defence minister be put on trial over his responsibility for the deaths of their children.

24 In a formal interview on Israel Broadcasting after the war (1 December 1973), she said: 'We did everything so that there would not be war. I can say with a clear conscience that I missed no opportunity for peace.'

25 In an interview in *Maariv*, 28 December 1973.

26 Also called 'Operation Kadesh' in Israel. –Trans.

27 In an interview in the Cairo periodical *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 10 December 1973.

Appendix 2: Conclusions and recommendations on the plan for action in the Territories in the next four years (the Galili Document)

1 The West Bank. – Trans.

2 The order that annexed Arab Jerusalem and the surrounding area to Israel and decreeing that Israeli law, justice and administration would apply there.

Appendix 7: The 14 guiding principles of the Alignment's platform for the elections to the Eighth Knesset

1 Hebrew: 'Aliyah'. Literally, 'ascent'. Although translated as 'Jewish immigration', the adjective 'Jewish' does not appear in the original Hebrew text, because in Hebrew the term 'aliyah', when applied to immigration, refers exclusively to the immigration of Jews to Israel. –Trans.

2 The English word 'settlement' is used here to translate two words that appear in this sentence in the original Hebrew text. They are: *hityashvut*, the root of which – parallel to its English equivalent – is the same as the root of the verb 'to sit', which means literally 'settlement', and *hitnaḥalut*, which is a more ideologically – and religiously – charged term with Biblical associations (see Numbers 32:18 and 33:54) and literally means to take possession of a piece of property (*naḥala*), especially in the form of land, as an inheritance. After the Six-Day War, the term *hitnaḥalut* came more and more to refer to Jewish settlement in lands occupied by Israel in 1967, especially the West Bank, and today that term refers almost exclusively to settlement across the Green Line. It is possible that the Labour Party chose to use those both terms in Point 12 in order to make it clear that they were referring both to settlement within and outside the Green Line. Accordingly, the words could also be translated as 'settlement and colonization'. –Trans.

Appendix 8: The secret agreements of the Arab Summit in Algiers (26–28 November 1973)

1 In the introductory paragraph on the first page of *An-Nahar*, Wafik Ramadan is credited with having brought the secret document from Algiers. Amnon Kapeliouk's Hebrew version has been checked against the original Arabic text of this document. –Trans.

2 Arabic: '*daᶜwa*'. Literally 'call' or 'invitation'. –Trans.

Index