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The Birth of a Nation



חינוך ונוער
Youth & Education



קרן קיימת לישראל
K K L - J N F

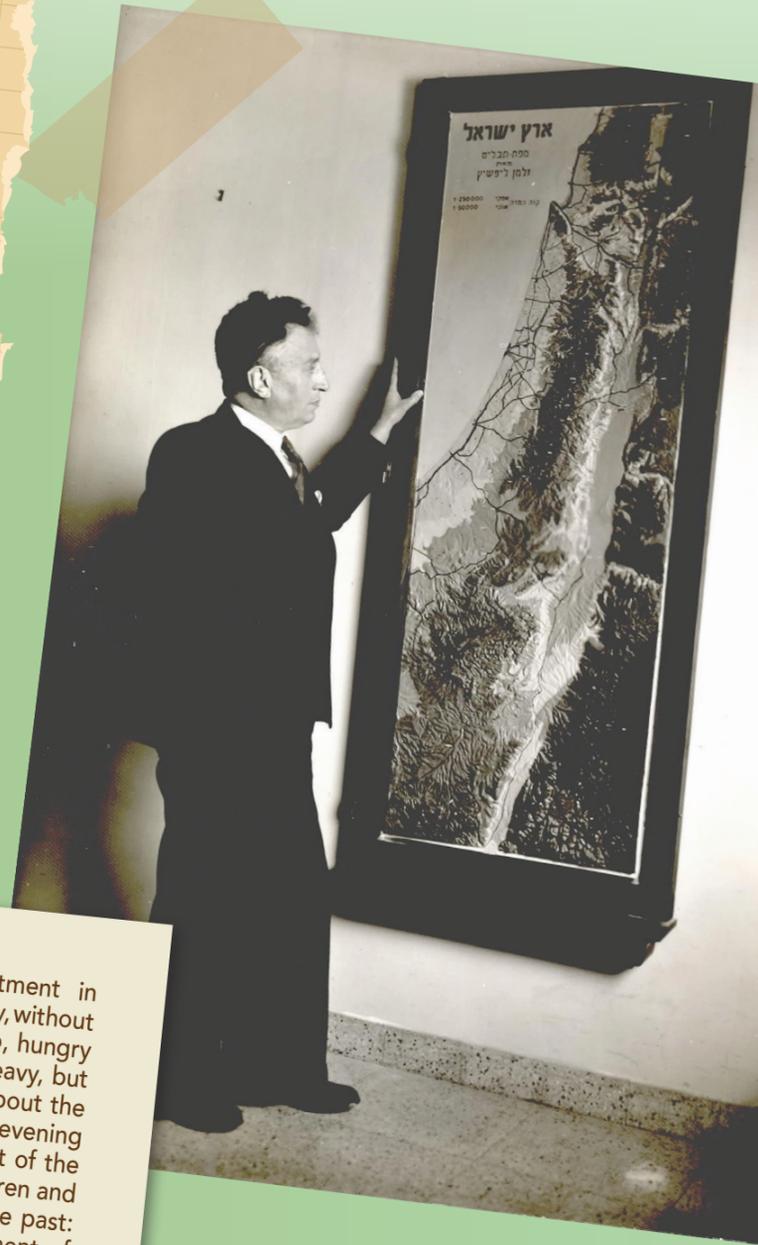
My Declaration

Avraham Granovsky



“ At the time of declaration of the state was I was in Jerusalem under seige and I wasn't able to come to the ceremony, but after a few days I was informed that I had to fly to Tel Aviv. We waited the whole day for the plane in the little airport in the Valley of the Cross, and in the evening we flew to Tel Aviv [...]. The elderly Eliyahu Berlin also came with me. The officials in Tel Aviv recieved us warmly and enthusiastically as the first messengers from the besieged Jerusalem. After a day or two Ben-Gurion invited me to his office in the Kirya (Quarter), where I signed the Declaration. ”

From a press interview



“ That evening we sat in our apartment in Jerusalem, it was dark without electricity, without the possibility of listening to the radio, hungry and thirsty. The general feeling was heavy, but hopeful. Although we were not sure about the Declaration, the rumor was that in the evening they would announce the establishment of the state, then I called my wife and my children and told them about an experience from the past: in 1911, 37 years before the establishment of the state, I was in a Russian prison because of Zionist activity. They accused me of the founding of a Zionist youth movement. I was interrogated by the secret police colonel. When the investigation, which lasted several nights in a row, was over a Ukrainian Colonel named Stadranko said in a mockingly sarcastic tone: "Listen, Mr. Granovsky, when you're in an independent Israel, remember me well". I remained true to my word and on the night of the Declaration of State I remembered the Ukrainian colonel. ”

From a press interview

Avraham Granovsky-Granot

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund, an economist and a lawyer, member of the Provisional Council of State (Chairman of the Economics and Finance Commission) and Member of Knesset for the Progressive Party. He also served as chairman of the committee supervising the new "Bezalel", the chairman of the board of the "Mekorot" water company and more. He spent his childhood in Odessa and was a frequent visitor to the home of Menachem Ussishkin, Zionist leader

and chairman of the JNF between 1923 - 1941. He immigrated to Israel in 1907 and studied at the Herzliya Gymnasia. In 1922 he was appointed by Menachem Ussishkin, as head of the Department of Finance and Economics at the JNF. When Ussishkin died he appointed Granot as Chairman with Berl Katznelson and Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, and then served as the sole chairman until his death in 1962. At the end of his term he drew up the agreement signed by the State of Israel and the Jewish National Fund, which sets the roles and status vis-a-vis the state.



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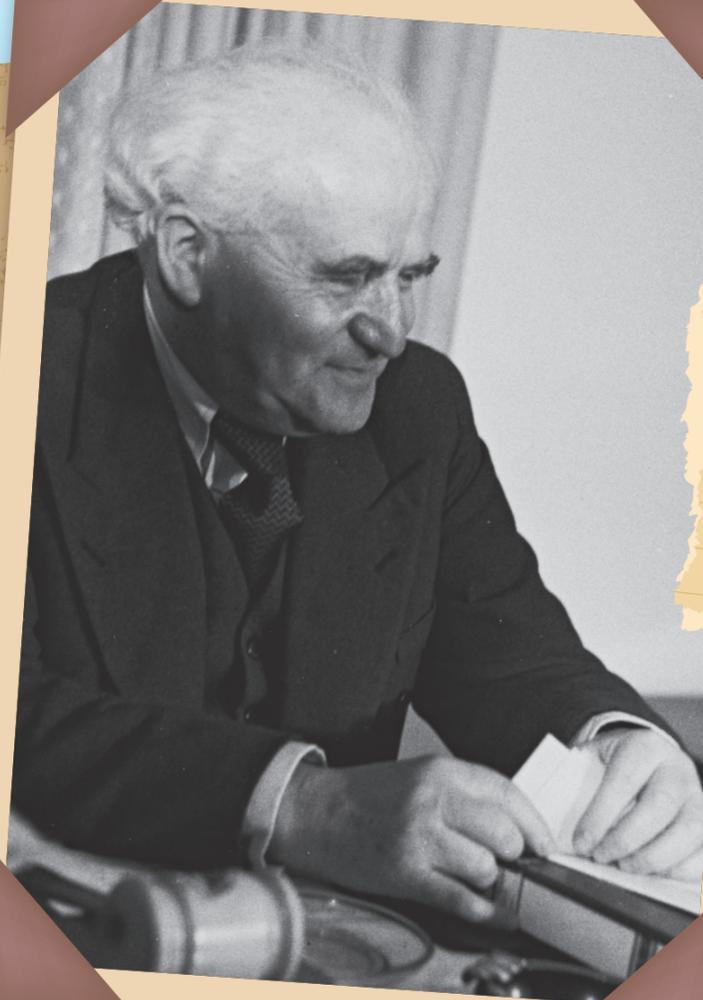
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My
Declaration

David Ben-Gurion



The text brought to the in the Peoples Council meeting on Friday morning was the version that was finalized on Thursday evening. Inside the meeting there weren't many arguments [...] previously there had been a committee that formulated the text and there was a debate on the expression "Rock of Israel" (Tsur Yisrael). Rabbi Fishman demanded Creator and Redeemer of Israel, while Mr. Zisling (United Workers Party) opposed the expression saying he did not believe in God. I explained to them that all of us believe in the Rock of Israel, as he understands it, and eventually the text of the declaration was approved unanimously. We dispersed and I went down to the red house for a staff meeting. All day I was busy with the affairs of the invasion. I knew it would really will be decided by war, and of course, if there is a state, it will be easier to win.

From a press interview

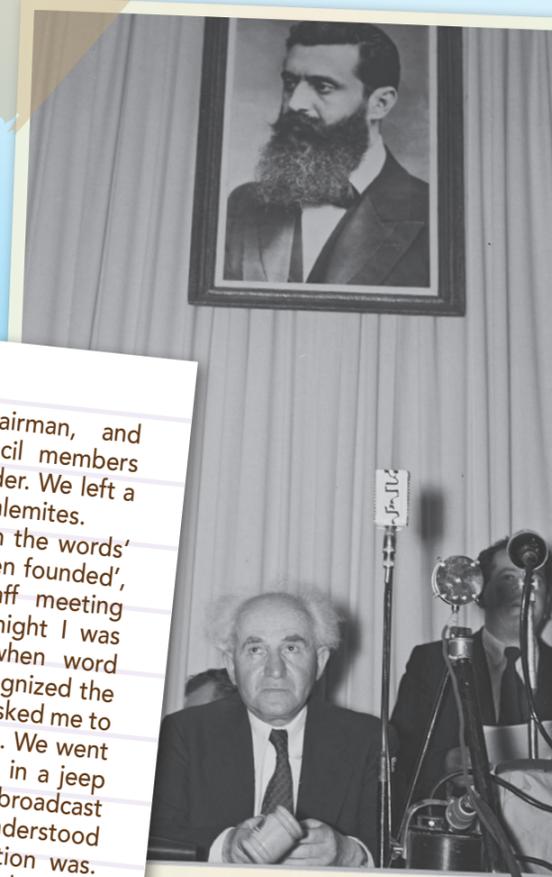
I signed first as chairman, and afterwards all the council members signed in alphabetical order. We left a blank space for the Jerusalemites. I finished the session with the words 'the State of Israel has been founded', and returned to the staff meeting in the Red House. That night I was awakened twice. Once when word came that Truman had recognized the State and once when they asked me to talk on the radio in America. We went to broadcast at Camp Yona in a jeep and pajamas [...] during the broadcast the bombing began, and I understood immediately what the situation was. When I returned I was told that Sde Dov (the airport) was bombed. I walked slowly home and then I saw: people are not afraid! The same faces I saw in England when during the Blitz. And I said to myself these people are steadfast!

From a press interview

David Ben-Gurion

Born in Plonsk, Poland, he immigrated to Israel in 1906 and worked as a farmhand and teacher. In 1915 he was deported by the Turks and came to Israel again at the beginning of the British Mandate. Ben Gurion was one of the founders of the Labor Unity Party, the Histadrut in Israel and the Chairman of the Jewish Agency. On 14 May 1948, he announced the establishment of the State

of Israel. In January 1949 he was appointed Prime Minister and defense minister in the first government. He led the country during the mass absorption of immigrants, major settlement initiatives and the signing of the reparations agreement with Germany, and laid the foundation for the IDF and the security apparatuses. Ben-Gurion worked on behalf of settlement in the Negev desert and lived there.





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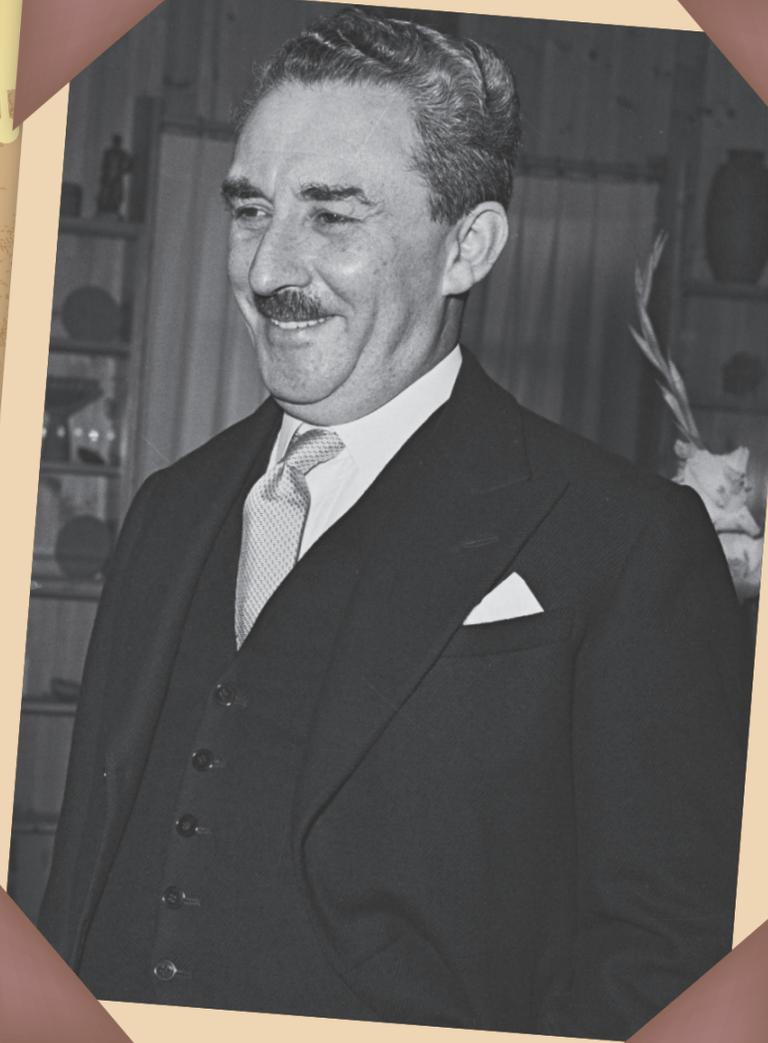
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My Declaration

Moshe Sharett



“What did I feel? - Of course I felt tremendous elation and great tension. I felt that the die was cast, and now we must go forward towards the unexpected. After the ceremony I went to my mother's house near the museum (now the Haganah house). A large crowd stood outside the house and I went to the balcony and said, "Be strong and be strengthened!" There was not a moment to spare. It was necessary to immediately summarize the Declaration to be sent by telegram to foreign ministers worldwide. We worked on it all of Friday into the night and even on Saturday morning. Yes, even on the Sabbath ...”

From a press interview

“What will be the day after the announcement? Who can prophesize and say? Obviously there will be terrible troubles that we will have to face. It is clear that someone in Washington will say "I warned you! You're currently strong but beware of relying on first victories [...]. You are assuming a very serious responsibility. Your war just started, who knows what will happen at the end? Carefully consider the matter." From that it is implied: "If there's trouble, do not come to demand help from us, because we warned you." The reality we face is very difficult, very serious, but we seem to have no choice and we must go forward.”

From the Mapai Party Speech, 05.11.1948

Moshe Sharett, statesman, leader of the Mapai Party, MK, Minister and Prime Minister between 1954 to 1955. He was born in Russia and immigrated to Israel with his parents in 1906. During World War I he served as an officer in the Turkish army. He was a central activist in the Mapai party. Sharett served on the editorial board of the "HaDavar" newspaper, the daily newspaper of the Histadrut. Following the murder of Arlosoroff he was appointed as head of the political department at the Jewish Agency, and was the main Zionist spokesman in talks with the British and the Arabs aimed at finding an agreed solution to the Land

of Israel problem. Sharett was also involved in the establishment of the Jewish Brigade in 1944. He was arrested in the "Black Saturday" operation in June 1946, along with other executive members of the Jewish Agency. He served as the Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government (1948) until 1956, when David Ben-Gurion retired to Sde Boker, Sharett served as prime minister. Following the Lavon Affair he was forced to resign, and Ben-Gurion returned to serve as Prime Minister. In 1956 he resigned his position as foreign minister server due to disagreements with Ben-Gurion. From the Knesset website





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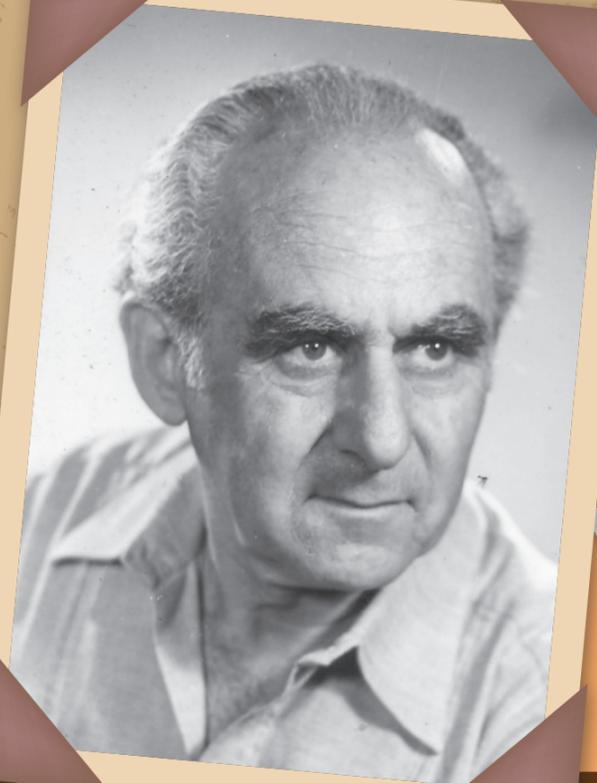
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*My
Declaration*

Otte Wallish



Otte Wallish is an Israeli graphic designer who designed many of the most prominent symbols of the State of Israel, including the calligraphic writing on the Declaration of Independence, coins, stamps, posters, logos, medals and banknotes. Born in Austria-Hungary Wallish immigrated to Israel in 1934 and opened an advertising agency and graphic studio in Tel Aviv. Appointed by Ze'ev Scharf, Ben-Gurion's secretary, to design and prepare the Hall of Independence for the declaration ceremony and design the Declaration of Independence scroll, Wallish procured the parchment and wrote it.

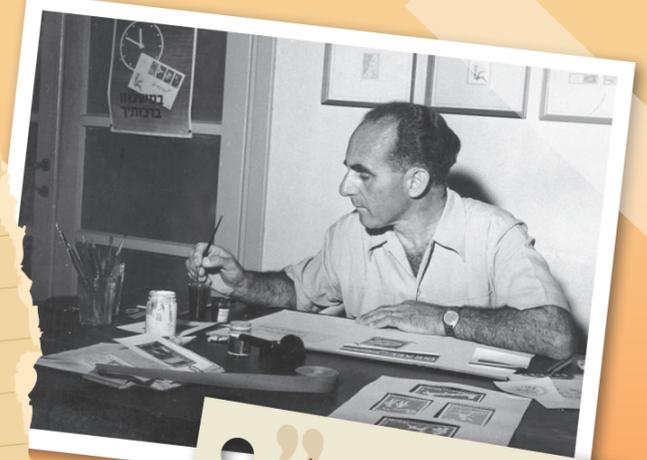
Wallish produced the first stamp series, "Doar Ivri" (Hebrew Post), which was prepared before

the establishment of the State, that was created in a spurt of feverish activity and in underground conditions. At the time of the stamp printing the name of the State of Israel had not been determined and the name "Doar Ivri" was chosen from options that included "Land of Israel" or "Judea".

After a this series of stamps Wallish went on to design many stamps covering diverse subjects. He was a partner in shaping Israeli penny coins, designed the first official medal. Wallish also created many posters and logos, including the Osem and Tnuva symbols, the Israel Medal of Freedom marking the first decade of the state and 50 and 100 mil banknotes.

Close to noon Thursday, May 13, 1948, Otte Wallish, graphic artist and advertising agent came into his office in Nahalat Binyamin Street in Tel Aviv. On his desk he found a note: "Come immediately to Sherf (Zeev Sherf, Ben-Gurion's secretary) at the Agency. Wallish, bleary-eyed after a sleepless night, was not enthusiastic about this urgent and enigmatic appointment. All he wanted was a rest. The past ten days were spent working feverishly on preparing a series of new stamps, nine in all, bearing the inscription "Hebrew Mail" [...] and Wallish spent the night completing the printing of the stamps. He was planning on peeking in at his office and go to sleep. Yet the short note dictated otherwise and a few minutes later Wallish climbed the stairs to the Agency building [...] He entered and was greeted with an impatient "At last!" and the two people in the room, Zeev Sherf and Shlomo Kedar quickly told him: "You have 24 hours to prepare the Great Hall of the Tel Aviv Museum for the Declaration of the State ceremony."

Based on the book '32 Minutes',
Pinchas Yurman



"I ran into some difficulties. On the walls, for example, hung a few paintings that were not appropriate for a Declaration of State ceremony, such as portraits of naked women. At the entrance to the museum stood a female torso and immediately I decided to cover it with a sheet of cloth. To cover the long wall behind the stage, I chose gray because I did not want a ceremony so serious to have conspicuous and loud colors. The gray also complemented the blue and white Israeli flag. We did not have time to find a large enough picture of Herzl, so I taped it on a larger background, and with the frame the picture was as big as we wanted it to be. At 11 o'clock the next morning the hall was ready to accept the attendants."

From an interview in Haaretz

"I was excited! I felt a strange emptiness of excitement in my stomach. In the past I took care of the technical and artistic arrangements for Zionist Congresses, and in recent weeks I prepared the JNF Hall for the assembly of the People's Council, but I've never had such an important task to perform in one day. At the museum they were ready for my arrival. I borrowed 100 pounds from the United Israel Appeal (Keren Hayesod) hurried to the warehouses of the main Hamashbir (the main wholesale supplier for consumers' cooperatives and labor settlements in Israel) to buy fabric and wood [...] within four hours the museum hall was a workshop, a nerve-racking competition around the clock, a stage, podium, covers, photos [...] I bought some strong lights and I borrowed a carpet from a commercial establishment of Stameff street.

I asked the United Israel Appeal for Herzl's picture and ran to wash the flags quickly at the Laundromat. Towards evening I was called again to Sherff, who told me to be ready to write the Declaration of the State for the ceremony. After a long search, I found a parchment, the kind used for lampshades. An examination at the Engineers House I found that it was strong enough but of course we did not have the text of the scroll, and people signed the blank parchment attached to a replicated version. In the weeks that followed the Declaration my assistant Dodi Sidner and I copied the text in Spanish antique lettering from an ancient Torah scroll, and sewed the three sections of the Charter. The stamp of the Star of David was made by two scribes."

Based on the book '32 Minutes',
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My Declaration

Zeev Scherf



Zeev Scherf, secretary of the People's Council and Provisional Government, Member of the sixth and seventh Knesset, he also served as Minister of Finance, Minister of Trade and Industry, Minister of Housing. Born in Bukovina, he was an active member of the Zionist youth workers group in Romania. In 1925 Scherf moved to Israel and joined Kibbutz Shefayim. After several years in service abroad, he returned and mission and served as secretary of the Workers Center (Merkaz HaPoel).

Scherf joined the Hagana and became commander of the Intelligence Service. He served as secretary of the Jewish

Agency's political department. As part of the preparations for statehood, Ben-Gurion appointed him Secretary of the Situation Committee for the Jewish National Council (JNC) and the Jewish Agency Executives to create the state apparatuses. He served in this capacity from October 1947 until the establishment of the People's Council. At the founding of the People's Council Zeev Scharf was appointed its secretary, and continued to serve in that capacity after the establishment of the State and the formation of the government. Sharaf served as cabinet secretary until 1957, in the Sharett and Ben-Gurion governments. In 1965 he was first elected as a member of the Knesset, in 1966 he was appointed Zeev Scharf

About the last meeting of the People's Council before the announcement: the meeting lasted a little more than one hour and the debate was not only short, there was the spirit that surrounded it all - a great spirit of unity, mutual patience and continence. When the meeting ended at around three there was only one hour until the Declaration of the State and all the members and guests rushed home only to prepare themselves for the ceremony and arrive on time. At the JNF building there were only the Secretariat employees who were preparing to print the final text of the declaration and the accompanying manifesto. Dorit Rosen (the secretary) reached out to the Anglo Palestine Bank administration (now Bank Leumi) and requested that the Declaration be kept in the bank vault in the basement, because we could not imagine that the Declaration and other material be destroyed, God forbid, in the event of bombing. The Bank made all the necessary arrangements to enable access to the safe prior on the late hours of the Sabbath eve. ”



“ We were all frantic, and clock ticked on mercilessly. The museum hall was too small for the people who had to be invited to the ceremony [...] Since the ceremony announcing the Declaration of State had been announced in the morning paper, many people had begun phoning and demanding tickets. As usual, when the time is urgent errors were made with the guest lists, but workers had to be firm, often with genuine regret. Eventually it became clear that there was no room for the Philharmonic Orchestra that had been invited to play the 'Tikvah' at the opening and closing of the ceremony. The question was solved by moving the orchestra to an upstairs floor. ”

“ (Ben Gurion) gave the floor to Rabbi Y.L. Fishman who made the Shehecheyanu blessing with a trembling voice choked with tears, "who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.." At that moment the museum hall was a synagogue and the crowd answered "Amen" aloud.

After the blessing Ben-Gurion stated that the members of the People's Council in Jerusalem, who could not make the event, gathered at the offices of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and were united in decision of the announcement, and he immediately went on to read the manifesto of the Provisional Council of State. When he reached the second section abolishing the law stemming from the White Paper " the audience seemed to hold its breath and then a storm erupted. It was true and present: we have a State. We have the ability to legislate our own laws and we can

abolish the limits on immigration [...] suddenly we discovered the meaning of the act that we had done with the establishment of the State.

There were huge demonstrations to protest the "White Paper", and we struggled to bring illegal immigrant ships and the illegal immigrants fought with their captors and there were endless meetings and declared days of fasting, and young men and women paid with their lives, and there were appeals to the British Supreme Court and people went to the gallows, and still the "White Paper" was the rule of law, until now, as the State Council concluded this bitter struggle - and the "White Paper" no longer exists. British naval ships can no longer stop ships with immigrants and illegal immigrants will not be deported and there is no quota of 1,500 immigrants per month - there is a "State". ”

