

Proclaiming Independence: Five Days in May from Ben-Gurion's Diary¹

AT EXACTLY 4:00 P.M. ON Friday, 14 May 1948, Ben-Gurion stood up in the auditorium of the Tel-Aviv Museum, rapped the gavel, and the assembled rose. The plan called for the Philharmonic, which was unseen on the upper floor, to play the Jewish national anthem. Anticipating the significance of the moment, the crowd spontaneously broke out with *Hatikvah* before the orchestra began to play. At the conclusion of the singing, Ben-Gurion announced: "I shall now read to you the Scroll of the Independence which has passed its first reading by the National Council." He thereupon began: "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people . . ." His reading was interrupted by loud and prolonged applause when he concluded the dramatic passage midway through the Scroll: "We hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called the State of Israel."²

On concluding the reading, he called on the assembly to stand as the sign of their agreement to the adoption of the Scroll of the Independence. When the audience was again seated, he announced that those members of the National Council who were in Jerusalem and could not come to Tel-Aviv had also ratified the document. Ben-Gurion then proceeded to read out the first proclamations of the new state including the abrogation of the British White Paper prohibiting Jewish immigration. All were immediately approved. The signing of the Scroll was undertaken by those members present on a portion of parchment that was to be appended to the "official" parchment that had yet to be inscribed. The meeting ended with the assembly on its feet as the orchestra played *Hatikvah* and Ben-Gurion declared: "The State of Israel is established! This meeting is ended." The proceedings took but thirty-two minutes.

The details of this dramatic and historic event are not found in the document presented here. Instead, there is a laconic description in two short paragraphs. One closes the simple notebook that had served as his diary for a period ending at that point with the terse announcement: “At four o’clock in the afternoon, we declared independence.” Notations after 4:00 P.M. were made in a fresh diary, which begins with an equally dramatic announcement: “At four o’clock in the afternoon, the State was established. Our fate is in the hands of the defence forces.” These texts in their separate notebooks are often taken to symbolize that proclaiming independence at once closed a chapter in the history of the Jews and inaugurated a new one.

Ben-Gurion records succinctly and without comment that, at a meeting on Wednesday, May 12, there was a debate about whether to declare independence and whether such a declaration should also indicate specific borders. The brevity of this notation bears no relation to the significance or duration of deliberations. Ten of the thirteen individuals who composed the highest executive body of the Yishuv [the Jewish settlement in Palestine] spent about 12 hours in continuous discussion. Two were in Jerusalem and one was abroad. Creating an independent Jewish state was the clearly the objective of the entire group. It was for that purpose that years of practical settlement and diplomatic activity had been carried out. The immediate catalyst for this discussion was the return from the United States on May 11 of Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, with the message that the US State Department wanted independence postponed. The vote was divided, with six for declaring independence on May 14 and four for supporting postponement. The division crossed party lines and customary alliances. Within the Labor party (Mapai), Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett voted for the Declaration and Eliezer Kaplan and David Remez supported delay. Ben-Gurion had to apply the full force of his personality and position to achieve this slight majority in favor. It was clearly his influence that made the difference at this critical moment in Jewish history.

The American threat conveyed by Secretary of State George Marshall to Moshe Sharett on May 8 hovered over the deliberations of May 12. Marshall warned that the United States would not rescue the Yishuv in the event of an invasion of regular Arab armies. This position was first presented in March at a time when attacks by largely irregular forces had already become particularly intensive and successful, claiming more than 1,200 Jewish soldiers and civilians—the highest monthly toll on the Israeli side during struggle for independence. At various times, Marshall and State

Department officials suggested that transfers of funds from American Jewry would be stopped. The American government did embargo the shipment of arms. Marshall's preferred plan was withdrawing the United Nations resolution of 29 November 1947 that called for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian states and the placing of Jerusalem under international control. Instead, Marshall proposed a UN Trusteeship for a limited time during which the fate of Palestine could be reexamined.

The vote of May 12 was the final rejection of the American plan. The duration of the meeting and the closeness of the decision reflect the reality that declaring an independent Jewish state, however deeply desired and justified, was a prospect that engendered great foreboding. Ben-Gurion's diaries reflect why. They are replete with information on the conflict with Palestine's Arabs and the preparations for the invasion of regular armies from neighboring Arab states, which was correctly anticipated as commencing immediately after the withdrawal of the British on May 14. Ben-Gurion systematically recorded information on the areas on which he focused his attention and energy during these days: reports from the battlefronts with special concern for the plight of Jerusalem and nearby settlements; the difficulties in organizing the armed forces with particular attention to creating an air force; the problems of securing military supplies and recruiting soldiers, as well as discussions on security and policy issues relevant to the war. These entries indicate that only the illusion and wisdom that come with hindsight may suggest that a Jewish victory was certain.

The deliberations concerning independence consume little space. Ben-Gurion does not detail his own concerns or whatever doubts or anxieties his colleagues expressed. He had earlier made up his mind that the fateful decision for independence had to be taken. From the end of World War II, Ben-Gurion had been preparing himself and the Yishuv for this eventuality. These efforts became ever more intensive after the UN resolution for partition, when Arab governments and organizations publicly declared their opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state and their intention to destroy it if it were created. Ben-Gurion noted on May 11 that Golda Meyerson [Meir] brought him a report of her latest meeting with Abdullah, King of TransJordan, which provided further evidence of the certainty of imminent attack.

Diary entries on the next day, May 12, indicate several key steps in preparing for war. He informed commanders that even TransJordan, the least hostile neighbor, planned to join in the attack; he established a small working group with a careful division of responsibilities for securing arms and recruiting soldiers; he set in motion actions to insure that the army

would be subordinate to the civilian authority of the state that was to come into being. With this done, he went off to persuade his colleagues to vote for independence.

Ominous portents of disaster provide the first entries for May 13, the day before independence. Most concern the catastrophic destruction of the Etzion Block, a group of settlements to the south of Jerusalem. The chilling accounts of casualties and capture as well as difficulties throughout the Jerusalem area are the focus of most of the day's entries. That night, Ben-Gurion prepared the final draft of the Scroll of Independence. The diary for May 14 begins with a report of a massacre of defenders in one of the settlements of the Etzion Block. It ends with Ben-Gurion wondering if Tel-Aviv will be bombed that night. That was the day the assembly in the Tel-Aviv Museum and the crowds outside and elsewhere in the country celebrated the birth of the State of Israel.

While noting these festivities, Ben-Gurion makes a rare entry describing his emotions on that occasion. He wrote that he mourned after concluding the ceremony even as he did when the UN voted for partition on November 29. The reason is apparent if not explicitly stated. Ben-Gurion had the awesome responsibility for leading the nation amidst somber reports of the human price that would be exacted for independence. It is one of the very rare occasions that he permitted himself to document his own emotions in a diary that is nearly totally devoid of personal thoughts and sentiments.

The rarity of exposing personal feelings is characteristic. These notebooks were never intended as private or intimate diaries in the conventional sense. They were working records designed for his own reference and for use by his colleagues. This intention is clearly evidenced by the insertion of indices to facilitate locating necessary items. He also often made copies by using carbon paper and distributing these records to colleagues. Particularly during travels, when he was concerned with the safety and confidentiality of sensitive information, he sent them by courier to avoid inspection by prying and hostile eyes. Others in the Zionist leadership shared this practice. It explains why there are lacunae for some periods and why some notebooks of close collaborators, such as Moshe Sharett, are found in Ben-Gurion's files and why portions of his diaries appear among Sharett's papers.

The value of these diaries is inestimable for reconstructing central events in the twentieth-century Jewish experience and in the history of the establishment of Israel. They begin in the spring of 1915, when he was 29, and terminate in the summer of 1971, when he was 85. They comprise about

25,000 pages written largely in Hebrew in his own hand. He usually used a fountain pen and wrote densely in simple notebooks with black covers. The notations were usually made the same day events occurred. Sometimes, he recorded reports as they were being made. On other occasions he wrote from recollection at the conclusion of the day's work. He entered conversations, statistics, observations and portions of letters or telegrams. It is a running account of the affairs of the principal leader of the Yishuv.

Although Ben-Gurion twice won the coveted Bialik Prize (1952 and 1971), an award granted for achievements in literature, these diaries were not written as *belles-lettres*. Nevertheless, they are on occasion dramatic as well as informative. This is one such instance. They offer an opportunity to look over Ben-Gurion's shoulder and to revisit and experience the process of creating the State of Israel from the perspective of an intensely active and engaged leader at the center of a momentous event.

NOTES

1. This document is based on the text as found in the Ben-Gurion Archives in Sede Boker. There is a published, annotated version in Hebrew which has some slight variations from the original text employed here. See Gershon Rivlin and Elhanan Orren (eds), *The War of Independence: Ben-Gurion's Diary* (Tel-Aviv, 1982) v1&2 [Hebrew].

2. The basic work for recreating the days preceding Israeli independence is Zeev Sharef, *Three Days* (London, 1962), translated by J. Meltzer. Useful background to the events described in the document are Netanel Lorch, *Israel's War of Independence* (Hartford, CT, 1968); Uri Milstein, *The War of Independence* (Tel-Aviv, 1989) v1 [Hebrew]; M. Avizohar, *Chimes of Independence: Memoirs (March-November 1947)* (Tel-Aviv, 1993) [Hebrew]; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground 1886-1948* (Boston, 1947); Gabriel Sheffer, *Moshe Sharett: Biography of a Political Moderate* (Oxford, 1996); Amitzur Ilan, *The United States, Britain and Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1979) [Hebrew]; Z. Ganin, *Truman, American Jewry and Israel 1945-1948* (New York, 1979).

— באחד ארבע גש. ארבעה הולח א הכנסת הכללית
 זכור זה הכנסת העליונה בארץ בלילה ולמחרת
 ארבע אה ועל בין היום 29 נובמבר

14.5.48, ארבע גש. באחד תלם.
 זכור זה הכנסת העליונה בארץ בלילה ולמחרת
 ארבע אה ועל בין היום 29 נובמבר.

Extracts from the two Ben-Gurion Diaries of May 14, 1948. The photograph at the top is of the last page in the first Diary. It concludes with the following notation: “One P.M. at the National Council. We approved the text of the Declaration of Independence. At four o’clock in the afternoon, we declared independence. The nation was jubilant—and again I mourn in the midst of the rejoicing as I did on the 29th of November.”

The bottom photograph is of the opening page of the second Diary. It begins with the following notation: “At four o’clock in the afternoon Jewish independence was announced and the state officially came into being. Our fate is in the hands of the defense forces.” *Courtesy of the Ben-Gurion Archives, Sede-Boker.*



Signing the Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948. Haim Moshe Shapira signs with Moshe Sharett on his right and David Ben-Gurion at his left. Zeev Sharef, the Secretary of the Provisional Government, is in the background.

Courtesy of the Israel Government Press Office.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1948

[Reports from the Battlefronts]

- Safed¹ is in our hands, Beit Machsir [an Arab village in the Jerusalem Corridor] is also ours. Perhaps a convoy will leave from Jerusalem today. Lots of weapons were captured in Safed.
- The Lehi² matter [the kidnapping] was taken care of by Shkolnik [Levi Eshkol]³; they promised not to act until the State is declared. All the hostages will be released.

[Organizing the Air Force]

- Staff meeting with Israel [Galili]⁴ and Yochanan [Ratner].⁵ Yigael [Yadin]⁶ reported on the [situation in] the Galilee and Jerusalem road.
- Aharon Remez⁷ (air service) [reports]: there are three Austers,⁸ two Bonanzas⁹ (small reconnaissance planes), a new Rapid,¹⁰ one broken Egyptian Rapid, one C-46,¹¹ one Dakota,¹² a broken Norseman¹³ (doubtful if we can fix it). Maybe two more Norsemen will arrive, maybe three C-46's from Panama (five have already left for Europe with cargo). The Constellation¹⁴ (four-engine passenger plane) is in Canada. Ten Messerschmidts¹⁵ in Europe. Our pilots are learning [how to fly them]. They think that inside the C-46 [the disassembled Messerschmidts] will be brought over. Nine broken down Austers, some can be repaired. Two damaged Polish [planes], maybe they'll make one out of them.
- The working conditions inside [the Air Service and staff] are difficult. [Remez] suggests setting up an air headquarters manned only by professionals. The headquarters will be supervised by one person who will fill the role of Supply Commander for producing airplanes, and another, the Air Commander who will be in charge of financial and organizational functions. On the other hand, [it will be necessary] to drastically reduce the air service on all fronts, otherwise there's a danger that not one plane will remain operable by May 15th.
- In the Saris¹⁶ area [Judean hills], a plane was hit by a large shell, maybe a 75 mm (so the Arabs apparently have gotten hold of anti-aircraft guns). One of our reconnaissance planes in the Jerusalem hills yesterday found no trace of the [downed] plane or its six passengers.
- The airport in Tel-Aviv won't be ready to receive planes for a long time, and the Ekron [Tel-Nof]¹⁷ [airport] has to be secured with defenses and a garrison. Aircraft from Europe and America have to be brought over more quickly. Zuckerberg [Emanuel Zur]¹⁸ suggests that if any money

is left he can bring over French fighter planes [with] French pilots.

- We paid for twenty Norsemen [planes] abroad, but only two have been brought into the country. Ten Messerschmidts were purchased. We still owe \$900,000 for them.
- Yigael [Yadin], Aharon [Remez], Israel [Galili] and I will discuss the structure of the air command.
- We'll suggest to Yisrael [Amir]¹⁹ and the air force people arrangements for the Air Headquarters: Yisrael will be director of the air force, Aharon (or someone else)—the commander. The commander is responsible to the director; top-level appointments will be brought before the director for approval.
- I called Zuckerberg [Emanuel Zur] over. He claims he can purchase in France (through his contacts with the Customs Office where registrations are made) fighter planes with one 20 mm (Hispano Suiza) gun in each plane, two 30 caliber machine guns, and [he can get] French pilots to [fly] them to the country. Each fully-equipped plane will cost about 10,000 Palestine Pounds—which can be paid only in Swiss Francs or American Dollars. He [Zuckerberg] is prepared to fly out tomorrow to arrange this. (Why does a Messerschmidt cost \$180,000?)
- Aharon [Remez], Zvi [Ayalon],²⁰ Yigael [Yadin], Israel [Galili] suggest that Eliahu Sacharov²¹ go abroad to speed up arrival of the planes.

[*Military Supplies*]

- Aharon [Remez] complains that the battalion has not been supplied with either clothing or equipment.
- [Efraim] Ben-Artzi²² brought up the question of motor vehicles: 800 are on the way, they'll be here within a month. We've rented 300, but we need another 250. They suggest we "borrow" 230 cars, 80 of them big ones. Confiscating cars, however, is said to harm the loan.²³ Eliahu [Ben Hur]²⁴ thinks we need another 400 vehicles, not 230.
- Ben-Artzi urges [we draw up a list of] preferences in unloading the ships: steel helmets, tents, and other equipment coming from America. He also wants to requisition all canned food for the army—to be sent to the fronts. There's a shortage of socks, shoes and blankets. Local shoes wear out quickly, instead of six months they last only two. Canteens are arriving from South Africa.
- I asked Ben-Artzi if he could arrange building supply depots in different sectors before the day of the invasion [in case we're cut off]. He doesn't have enough food (only 70,000 meat rations). He wants to

erect two bases, one in the Negev, the other in Haifa. We need to collect construction supplies (wood and building material for defense fortifications). There's enough personal equipment for soldiers (excluding socks and blankets). We can manage full food rations for a month. Fuel we can buy from Shell—but there are no oil drums.

- We have to call up people from “Solel Boneh” [national construction company] and “Tnuva” [national food suppliers].
- Eliahu [Ben Hur] suggests announcing over the radio that any person who has ever worked at military supplies should report for duty.

[*Army Matters*]

- Eliahu [Ben Hur]: It's been decided that police officers will go to a month-long platoon leaders course. [Bechor] Shetrit²⁵ objects. Have to check on this with Shitreet.
- [Moshe] Lehrer [Zadok]²⁶ wants soldiers just enlisted not to ask for special leave for financial reasons in the coming month. It was decided to report this to the “Committee of Four” (Shkolnik, [Binyamin] Avniel²⁷ [from the recruitment center], Lehrer [Zadok], and someone else from headquarters).
- Ben-Artzi reports that the army mail service has started operating. By the 20th of this month it should be running smoothly.

[*Security and Policy Review*]

- Meeting of the “Four”: This month, May 15–June 15, we can bring in 10,000 immigrants as we choose. They've given us two options. By the 25th of the month 2180 immigrants will arrive from Europe (770 legal ones), “Kedma” [the Zim Line ship] will bring in another 400. The day before yesterday another ship left Italy with 500 immigrants. All together 13,000. The “Illegal Immigration” people want 150,000 Palestine Pounds for the two ships.

[*Jerusalem and Jordanian Front*]

- [Mapai]²⁸ Central Committee meeting: I reviewed the security situation—achievements and dangers. In the middle of the meeting, Golda [Meir]²⁹ came in [from the meeting with Abdullah³⁰] and, in answer to my question, she handed me this note: “We met in friendship. He is very worried and looks terrible. He didn't deny that we had spoken and had reached an understanding on a favorable settlement in which he will rule the Arab section. But for now, he is only one among five. This

is the plan he proposed—a united country with local autonomy in Jewish areas, followed a year later by the country’s unification under his rule.”

- I immediately left for the Red House³¹ and summoned Yigael [Yadin], Ratner, and Israel [Galili]. I ordered them to convert all our units into a mobile force; speed up the takeover of the Jerusalem road and the Arab pockets among the settlements; and draw up a battle-plan in case of full-scale Arab invasion. Yigael raises these questions: Will we fight Abdullah once he crosses the borders of [Mandate] Palestine or the borders of the Jewish state? I answered that only the “Thirteen” [the thirteen department heads in the Jewish Agency who made up the pre-State shadow government] can decide this.
- This was also the same question concerning Beer-Sheba: Should we put off capturing it right away?
- The commanders will have to requisition arms from the settlements. For this we need an immediate order. We have to recruit the mobile “home guard” units. We also need to start conscripting people for work at [building] fortifications, enlisting all military experts wherever they are, and commandeering transportation (Ben-Artzi prepared buses for the battalions, and another 150 vehicles). In Tel-Aviv there are 250,000 gallons [of fuel], elsewhere 100,000 gallons. We have to supply all the brigades with maximum ammunition, food, etc.
- [Yochanan] Ratner: First of all, free our forces from holding operations. Increase mobility. Set up our positions near fuel supplies. Despatch commando units to harass the enemy and strike at his transportation lines.
- David [Shaltiel]³² arrived from Jerusalem—he wants to attack Jerusalem as soon as the Mandate is over. But this is also a political question. It’s obvious that we’ll have to attack on every front on D-Day [in 72 hours, May 14, 1948—the date of the British evacuation and intended proclamation of statehood]—but Jerusalem is different. It may anger the Christian world.³³ David [Shaltiel] [reports that he has] approximately one thousand armed soldiers (I estimate more than this).
- In the evening, a large “party” [meeting]: [Eliezer] Kaplan,³⁴ Golda [Meir], Shkolnik [Eshkol], Israel [Galili], the heads of the different branches: planning for the invasion. Yigael asks: when and where we’ll strike Abdullah’s forces: only in our country, in both parts of Eretz Israel, in Transjordan too? In Jerusalem we must capture all the vantage points—Sheikh Jarrah³⁵ when the British army pulls out.
- Will we have control of the Jerusalem road all the time [and be able] to

hold onto the vantage points? Yes. Will we be able to help Beit Ha'Arava [a settlement on the northern coast of the Dead Sea], and the Etzion Block³⁶ [a group of four settlements 20 kilometers south of Jerusalem]? Perhaps only by air. In the Negev—should we capture Beer-Sheba, which is outside [the proposed borders of] the State? Military contingencies will decide this. The Western Galilee—will we send a force there by convoy? We should capture Ras al-Nakura [on the Mediterranean coast at the Lebanese border].

- [Eliezer] Kaplan suggests arranging a cease-fire in Jerusalem, to release troops [for other fronts]. We also have to think about the continuation of daily production [in all basic areas of the economy].
- Golda asks if it's a good idea for us to wage war in Jerusalem in full view of the Christian world, considering Christianity's opposition.
- Yitzhak [Sadeh]³⁷ observes that our enemies are not united, and won't attack us all at the same time. This factor must be exploited. It will be to our advantage if Jerusalem remains quiet.
- David [Shaltiel]: The enemy in Jerusalem is weak, there are about 800 foreign troops and they're falling apart. Their fighting spirit is broken.
- I made two comments: 1) the destruction of the Arab pockets (Ramle-Lod, Bet-She'an, and Zarin [village in the Jezre'el Valley]) that present a special danger to Jewish settlements in case of invasion and would call for holding forces. 2) increased arming of Jerusalem even if the cease-fire continues, [because] of the importance of the city and all that it stands for, the 100,000 Jews dwelling there, and its encirclement by large Arab villages. A reinforced, armed Jewish presence in Jerusalem will pin down enemy forces and thus help the Negev immensely.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 1948

- Yosef [Avidar]³⁸ was released at one A.M. [The Lechi people treated him kindly]. He saw that they had an animal-like hatred for the British.

[Reports from the Battlefield]

- Staff meeting. Yigal [Yadin]: Early this morning the [Arab] Legion³⁹ began an attack [on the Etzion Block] with 1500 [troops], tanks and guns. We have [only] two Piats [anti-tank weapons] there, and 30 shells.
- The Cana'an police station [overlooking Safed] is in our hands. There are no Arabs in Safed. A large quantity of medical supplies was uncovered.

- Bet-Daras⁴⁰ [between Ashkelon and Ashdod] was bombed. 50 Arabs killed. Basheet⁴¹ [near Gadera] and Sawafir⁴² [near Ashkelon] were captured. The Arabs are fleeing in hordes from the surrounding area (of Majdal [Ashkelon]). We suffered five killed and fifteen wounded.
- It's necessary to issue an order to the brigades about the expected invasion from Transjordan.

[Military Supplies and Manpower]

- Lehrer [Zadok] questions the fact that [draft eligible] soldiers are being conscripted for work programs—they number in the hundreds according to him.
- A three-way meeting: Israel [Galili], Shkolnik [Eshkol], and myself [to discuss] a temporary work arrangement. Israel will take care of recruiting manpower, soldiers, skilled workers, and others. Shkolnik will be in charge of arms procurement, the port, transportation, supplies (with [Yosef] Jakobson),⁴³ and “Haga” [civil defense unit]. On this matter he will have to meet with Ratner and [Mordechai] Nimza-Bi,⁴⁴ to check the condition of bomb shelters and make sure that the Tel-Aviv municipality and other town councils [check theirs].
- Tonight we're waiting for an air shipment of 100 [machine-guns] (Vicars) with bullets, and tomorrow a ship with 200 Chatelleraut [machine-guns], six [cannons] and shells. In a few days another ship is due to arrive, on the 25th [of May], with 10,000 rifles, 1200 machine-guns, and ammunition.

[Principles for Organizing the Army of the Future State]

- At eleven o'clock the Defense Committee [entered]. Berl Raptor⁴⁵ opened with an attack in the style of “Al HaMishmar” [Zionist-socialist newspaper] about the Head of the Haganah matter . . . I stated that I still hadn't received the defense portfolio from the “Thirteen,” and I wouldn't accept it unless I was certain that: 1) our army is subordinate to the people, and only the people, 2) that everyone in the defense forces will operate according to a clearly-defined, officially-appointed chain-of-command, 3) that defense considerations will be the deciding factor in all defense matters.
- I acknowledged that, in certain circumstances, blackmail and lies are being used. I won't deny it, and be dragged into an argument over it—security considerations force me to keep silent.

[Preparations for Declaring Independence]

In the afternoon, a meeting of the People's Administration.⁴⁶ It was decided to declare statehood and a Provisional Government at four in the afternoon on Friday. Only [Peretz] Bernstein⁴⁷ suggested that we just declare the [Provisional] Government. Rosenblitt [P. Rosen]⁴⁸ and Shetreet proposed demarcating the [State's] borders—we rejected this.

THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1948

[Reports from the Battlefront]

- The situation at the Etzion Block is approaching catastrophe. The attack isn't over—was resumed this morning. Every unit [settlement in the block] is on its own—internal communications have been cut off. We had 550 people there. At Kfar Etzion alone there are 40 killed, maybe even 100 altogether. Arms and ammunition have been sent by plane, but it isn't clear whether they got through because the airfield is held by enemy tanks [Jordanian gun-carrying armored cars]. There are guns in the block for 400 people. There are also two Piats.
- A heavy attack is still in progress at Kfar Darom [a kibbutz near Gaza], [led] by an Egyptian force. On the Jerusalem road the situation is also difficult. There are large Arab forces in the Ramallah-Latron area.
- [I asked Yigael Yadin] what he suggests doing about the Etzion Block? He answered: not to send any more weapons or ammunition, and give orders to fight. [In a message to the Block] I added:

“The People's Administration and the entire Yishuv are filled with deepest concern and admiration for you in your battle against a vastly superior force. Your previous fighting not only added honor [to the Yishuv], but directly helped other settlements [to hold out] and indirectly saved Jerusalem. We are certain you will continue to defend yourselves bravely as long as necessary.”

- The question was raised whether to attack the Legion on its return from the Etzion Block. Israel [Galili] and David [Shaltiel] think it would be dangerous. There are only two small artillery pieces and two Piats with 25 shells.
- There was a lot of discussion about whether to attack the Legion and destroy it on its way back from the Etzion Block. Israel, Zvi [Ayalon], Ratner, and David were against an attack. Yigael [Yadin], Eliahu [Ben Hur], Lehrer [Moshe Zadok], Yosef [Avidar] in favor. In my opinion

it would be a fatal mistake if we let this unit of the Legion leave the country or roam freely inside it; and if striking at it in Jerusalem should endanger our position there, as Israel [Galili] thinks, [then] we must call up the “Kiryati,” “Alexandroni,” and “Givati” reserve [Brigades] to quickly capture the areas along the Jerusalem road so that we can send reinforcements to Jerusalem unimpeded. Yigal thinks that under the present circumstances we won’t be able to do this.

- We agreed to attack the Legion as it passes through Jerusalem, and Etzioni [the commander] will have to choose the right spot and decide if his forces are up to it.
- Efraim [Katzir]⁴⁹ arrived. He spent \$20,000 on chemicals; \$10,000 for 100 sniper-scopes, (a ship is bringing them over); four radars (still to be sent from America). Twenty of our boys are on a radar course there, cost—\$8000. They’ll come back to the country with two American instructors.
- Four-thirty. The Etzion Block has fallen. The pilot saw tanks in the courtyard, and picked up these words over the radio: “Kfar Etzion has fallen. A heavy battle at Massuot Yitzhak is going on. Put pressure on the [Jerusalem] command to evacuate. Send nails (air bombs) immediately, artillery and ammunition SOS to Massuot [Yitzhak].” The pilot saw large concentrations (of vehicles and Bren [gun] carriers) on the road.
- We had a meeting—Shkolnik [Eshkol], Israel [Galili], and I, and decided to give [the Etzion Block] freedom of action. If they can’t continue the fighting—let them destroy their weapons and hang out a white flag. We cabled Etzioni to contact the [British] army about evacuation.
- David [Shaltiel] returned to Jerusalem, [Rabbi] Fishman [Maimon]⁵⁰ arrived too. The plane left again for Jerusalem and took Golda, but turned back at Bab-el-Wad⁵¹ because of engine trouble. In the meantime a cable arrived from Jerusalem (probably sent before David [Shaltiel] came):

“Arab reinforcements in an armored unit are deploying in Jerusalem for a push south. Because of the cease-fire rules [in Jerusalem] there is no way of attacking them in our sector. Only air action is possible. Jerusalem is being emptied of Arab fighters, leaving for various fronts, under cover of the city’s cease-fire. We want permission [from the British] to take this opportunity to capture important objectives, even if they [the British] will be forced to open fire.”

- A new complication in the air command. Yisrael [Amir] doesn't agree to work at the Aviria [air command] except as commander. Yisrael Z. (Zavlodovsky (Amir)) agreed to work [in the air service] in the meantime without a specific title and without a formal appointment till Aharon recovers.
- Kiryati [M. Ben Gal]⁵² brought me the signed agreement of Jaffa's surrender to the "Haganah" commander. Gad Machnes⁵³ suggests Y. Chizhik [Horpi]⁵⁴ be appointed military governor of Jaffa. In defense matters he will be subordinate to the Tel-Aviv commander. In all other matters he will act through orders [issued] from the Peoples' Administration.

[Preparations for Declaring Independence]

- At six o'clock, a Peoples' Administration meeting to discuss the phrasing of the Declaration [of Independence] which Moshe [Sharett]⁵⁵ prepared.
- In the evening, I prepared a final edition of the draft [of the Declaration of Independence].

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1948

- General Staff meeting. At 2 A.M. a telegram from Fritz [Eshet]⁵⁶: waving a white flag at Kfar Etzion resulted in a massacre of the defenders by the Arabs. Massuot Yitzhak reported this through a survivor. Fritz is vehemently opposed to surrendering. "Laying down our arms will lead to disaster."
- At Latrun⁵⁷ our people were badly hit by artillery fire. One of our cannons was captured. We were forced to retreat.
- The "Alexandroni" Brigade captured the Arab sections of Kfar Saba,⁵⁸ advanced as far as Qalqilya,⁵⁹ and then returned to Kfar Saba. The attempt to enter Kfar Tira⁶⁰ [north of the Sharon Plain] failed. Casualties.
- Kfar Brir⁶¹ [east of Ashkelon] was captured by Nahum [Sarig]⁶² [that is—by the "Negev" Brigade]. Sixty Arabs were killed and weapons were taken. No news from the Upper Galilee.
- Yesterday there were talks with the Etzel.⁶³ They were offered [the capture of] Ramle⁶⁴ and Lejune⁶⁵ [near Megiddo, in the Jezre'el Valley] and participation in taking either Tul Karem⁶⁶ or Rosh Ha'ayin [east of

Petah Tikva]. They were enthusiastic—until they saw how many troops [they would have at their disposal], so they withdrew from Tul Karem and Lejune, and refused [fighting at] Rosh Ha'ayin and Wilhelma⁶⁷ [5 kilometers north of Lod] too. But they'll participate in taking Ramle. They requested food and ammunition.

- The disturbing problem—Bet Ha'Arava [isolated kibbutz near the Dead Sea on the route of the Arab Legion from Transjordan into Palestine]. A Dakota [airplane] was dispatched to Beit Ha'Arava—but the motor broke down and the plane turned back midway. Next, a Rapid was sent.
- There are 200 armed men at Atarot⁶⁸ [10 kilometers north of Jerusalem]. They're going to pull out tonight and redeploy at Neve Ya'akov⁶⁹—where 120 armed men are positioned.
- Yitzhak [Sadeh reports that] at 8:15 this morning they heard on the radio that the Ein Zur and Massuot Yitzhak people [of the Etzion Block] have retreated.
- He reminded me that we have to reach a decision on two basic issues: more authority for the regional commanders—provided that radio communication improves so we can receive quick and accurate information about the rest of the country. Only this way can we issue appropriate orders. And the second matter—that our main objective is the devastation of enemy forces, not the defense of settlements. We must get this [concept] across to all commanders: that it is imperative to have our troops concentrated.
- Yigael [Yadin] has asked for an order calling on the immediately evacuation of Atarot and Har Tuv.⁷⁰ Everyone agreed.
- Eliahu [Ben-Hur] demands that the public be informed of the danger of invasion, and the urgent need for [digging] entrenchments and [putting up] barricades. I drafted a public notice [on this] in the name of the General Staff.
- Yosef [Avidar]: The heavy artillery we received will perform well as anti-aircraft guns. The commanders have been given word that [alert] level “D” starts at four in the afternoon.
- Eliyahu: [We have] an armored battalion with one 6-inch mortar. There are 350 [people designated] for an armored battalion, [but] there isn't anything to train them with. We need a manpower branch, an operations branch at GHQ, a supply unit and training personnel.
- Lehrer [Zadok]: 3000 new recruits will be inducted in the near future—some were soldiers [in the British Army]. 1000 will be sent to

Shlomo [Shamir]⁷¹ [to the new “Seventh” Brigade], 1000 to Eliyahu for courses, 1000 to the training depot (as reserves). In all there are some 5000 ex-soldiers who have not been drafted yet. The brigade commanders should limit the number of recruits from agricultural settlements. It was agreed that recruiting officers will assign qualified personnel to the High Command.

- Yitzhak [Sadeh]: Discussed reserves for the “Negev” Brigade. We can produce 24 armored vehicles every two weeks. That’s enough for one battalion (450 people). (Yosef [Avidar] disagrees: they won’t make that many [vehicles]). There is already one battalion with eleven armored cars (and there are ten more police cars—but where are they?). Tomorrow morning we’ll discuss the “Negev” [Brigade]. There are about 70 jeeps. We should set aside 25 for the “Negev” Brigade—the machine guns we receive are destined for it.
- At eleven A.M. Katriel [Katz]⁷² reported that the Etzion Block has surrendered. The women were sent to Jerusalem (with the army’s help?) and the men were taken prisoner. Israel [Galili] reports that a [British] destroyer on patrol intercepted a ship carrying arms—the ship was later ferried north. Toward evening I heard that it’ll be towed into Haifa Port at midnight.⁷³

[*Declaring Independence*]

- One P.M. at the National Council.⁷⁴ We approved the text of the Declaration of Independence. At four o’clock in the afternoon, we declared independence.
- The nation was jubilant—and again I mourn in the midst of the rejoicing as I did on the 29th of November [the U.N. vote on partition].⁷⁵

[*With this notation, Ben-Gurion concludes one notebook of his Diary. It is as if, with the Declaration of Independence, a chapter in the history of the Jewish people has been closed. The following notations from the remainder of May 14 appear in a new notebook as if to signify that a new chapter in Jewish history has begun. This dramatic “coincidence” was not planned. Ben-Gurion usually left space near the end of his Diaries for indices organized by significant topics and chose the page for commencing these lists soon after beginning a new Diary. There were still two blank pages after the index in this Diary. Nevertheless, readers are often moved by the dramatic symbolism of closing one Diary and moving on to another at such a poignant moment.*—eds.]

- At four o'clock in the afternoon, Jewish independence was announced and the state officially came into being. Our fate is in the hands of the defense forces.
- Immediately after the declaration ceremony, I returned to Headquarters [the "Red House" by the Tel-Aviv waterfront] and reviewed the worsening situation. Disturbing news about Arab Legion armored columns and enemy concentrations at Mafrak [northern Trans-Jordan] and in Syria. Also in the Lod area. On the other hand, our forces have reached outlying settlements in the Western Galilee. Achziv⁷⁶ and Batza⁷⁷ have fallen [to us], so has the police school in Jerusalem and other strategic points in the capital.
- We decided to "requisition" rifles from agricultural settlements for the new brigade [the "Seventh"] and speed up the production of tank traps.
- Almost everyone on the General Staff is opposed to my plan of engaging a larger force in a more determined effort to capture the areas around the Hulda-Sha'ar Hagai section of the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem Road. The argument is that our forces are inadequate and we don't know the enemy's plans. Without the explicit support of "The Thirteen" (I'm not used to saying Government yet), I do not want to override the entire General Staff, though I do feel they have forfeited, and are still passing up, the chance for a victory that could determine the fate of Jerusalem—perhaps even the entire war.
- In the evening there was also bad news from the Negev.
- Will Tel-Aviv be bombed tonight?

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1948

- I was awakened twice during the night—[first] at one A.M. with the news that Truman⁷⁸ has officially recognized the Jewish State, and again at four thirty (I couldn't fall sleep during the interval). Our people in America want me to speak on the radio right away. I went with Yan [Ya'acov Yanai]⁷⁹ to the "Haganah" station at Camp Yona [today, Independence Park in Tel-Aviv]. My broadcast wasn't scheduled till a quarter past five, and as I was speaking, Tel-Aviv came under air attack—in the vicinity of the [Sdeh Dov] airport it seems. I ended the broadcast—not without difficulty—with the announcement that Tel-Aviv is at this very moment being bombed, and I headed for the airport. One barrack was in flames, several of the wounded were taken to Hadassah [Hospi-

tal], a number of aircraft had been put out of action and the Reading [Power] Station was hit as well. The [Egyptian] planes flew in low, and when our anti-aircraft guns, for some reason, broke down, they [the Egyptians] dropped their bombs. About four or five planes darted in and out. People in pajamas and nightgowns glanced out of every house—but they didn't seem unduly frightened.

- News of a different kind: the [Arab] Legion is pillaging Naharayim [the power station in the Jordan Valley]. The people there have not been harmed, but the Legion is threatening to bomb Kibbutz Gesher [in the Jordan Valley]. The Syrian army is concentrated around Bateicha [northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee] and is preparing to cross the Jordan River. There is a ship with Egyptian troops on board near Majdal [Ashkelon]. The English have perfunctorily asked the Egyptians not to proceed north. Army [intelligence] picked up a transmission this morning that the Egyptian army was going to invade at midnight tonight.
- [Moshe Zadok] Lehrer [came by]: What reinforcements did Shlomo [Shamir] get? Nothing, he wasn't ready. The "Golani" Brigade received 400 people in one week, the Palmach got 300 for the "Negev" Brigade. There are 500 or more getting ready for Shlomo.
- The distribution of forces: Palmach approximately 6000 troops, 1300 of them in the "Harel" Brigade [in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Corridor], 1300 in the "Negev" Brigade, 1200 in the north, 1000 girls; for "Golani" 3573, plus 522 paid recruits; "Carmeli" 2238; "Alexandroni" 3588; "Kiryati" 2504; "Givati" 3229; "Etzioni" 3166. Total, approximately 24,400 in the brigades. Aside from this: the instruction department—398, artillery—659, air force—675, engineers corps—150, military police—168, transportation—1097, total for departments and services—4161; in the training depot—1719. Sum total [for all units]—30,573.
- Our boys at the air field [Sdeh Dov in Tel-Aviv] shot down an Egyptian plane [in the morning attack]. The pilot is in our hands.
- I called Stone in [Mickey Stone-David Marcus]⁸⁰ and asked him how many troops he would need to take Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. He said he'd check with Yitzhak Rabin⁸¹ ["Harel" Brigade commander] and give me an answer at ten tomorrow.

NOTES

1. Safed—A mountain-top city in the Galilee. Safed had a mixed population at the outbreak of the War of Independence: 2000 Jews, 12,000 Arabs. The city was captured by Palmach forces after twelve days of bitter fighting (1–11 May 1948).

2. Lehi—Hebrew acronym for Freedom Fighters of Israel (also referred to as the Stern Gang); a virulently anti-British military organization founded in 1940. To prevent independent and unauthorized action, the Haganah seized Lehi ammunition. The Lehi responded by kidnapping Haganah officers. This incident was part of Ben-Gurion's campaign to assert state authority over all independent military groups. The attack on the *Altalena* and the disbanding of the Palmach were also parts of this policy.

3. Shkolnik, Levi (Eshkol) (1895–1969)—First Director of the Defense Ministry, 1948–1949; Minister of Finance, 1952–1963; Prime Minister, 1963–1969; Defense Minister, 1963–1967.

4. Galili, Israel (1910–1986)—Haganah Chief-of-Staff, July–December 1947; Ben-Gurion's associate in planning all military operations, December 1947–September 1948; played a key role in negotiating the absorption of Etzel and Lehi units into the IDF (Israel Defense Forces); Member of Knesset, 1949–1977; ministerial posts, 1965–1974.

5. Ratner, Yochanan (1891–1965)—Head of the Emergency Planning Branch in the Haganah, 1947–1948.

6. Yadin, Yigael (Sukenik) (1917–1984)—Operations Officer on the Haganah General Staff, 1946–1948; Chief-of-Staff, 1949; world-renowned biblical archaeologist; Deputy Prime Minister, 1977–1981.

7. Remez, Aharon (1919–1994)—Commander of the Israeli Air Force, 1949–1953; Ambassador to Great Britain, 1965–1970.

8. "Auster"—British-made, light-weight observation plane, nicknamed "Primus" (small, gasoline-injected cooking-stove).

9. "Bonanza"—American-made, light-weight observation plane.

10. "Rapid"—British-made, light-weight transport plane.

11. "C-46"—American-made, medium-weight transport plane.

12. "Dakota"—American-made, medium-weight transport plane.

13. "Norseman"—Canadian-made, light-weight transport plane.

14. "Constellation"—American-made, heavy transport plane.

15. "Messerschmidt"—German/Czechoslovakian-made, fighter plane.

16. Saris—Arab village, which was a major stronghold overlooking the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road and adjacent to a key water pumping station. Captured by the Palmach on 13 April 1948. Present location of the Jewish settlements Shoresh and Sho'eva.

17. Ekron (Tel-Nof)—Military base south of Rehovot.

18. Zur, Emanuel (1911–1991)—Manager of Lod Airport, 1948.

19. Amir, Israel (1902–)—Haganah commander of the Jerusalem region, 1946–1948; organized and trained infantry units, the border patrol, and youth battalions; commander of the Air Force, May–July 1948.

20. Ayalon, Zvi (1911–1995)—Appointed Deputy Chief-of-Staff, January 1948.
21. Sacharov, Yechezkiel (1907–)—Haganah Liaison Officer to the Mandate Authority; first Police Commissioner, 1949–1958.
22. Ben-Artzi, Efraim (1910–)—Deputy Commander of the Quartermaster Corps.
23. The Loan—“Solel Boneh” and the “Shelev Transportation Co-Operative” contributed 150 trucks for convoys in April. Haganah infantry units, deployed along the roads, requisitioned another 150 vehicles together with their drivers (see, Dov Joseph, *The Faithful City* (Tel-Aviv, 1960) 101–103).
24. Ben-Hur, Eliahu (1911–1987)—Staff Officer in charge of all training programs in the Haganah; one of the commanders involved in breaking the blockade of Jerusalem.
25. Shetrit, Bechor (1895–1967)—Chief Justice of the Peace, 1945–1948; member of the Provisional Government, Minister of Police and Minorities.
26. Lehrer, Moshe (Zadok) (1913–1964)—Staff officer in charge of Haganah manpower, 1948.
27. Avniel, Binyamin (1906–c.1988)—Educator and sociologist; Chief Recruiting Officer for the Haganah, 1948.
28. Mapai—Hebrew acronym for the Israeli Workers’ Party, the major political party of the Labor movement, and the dominant political party in Israel until 1977.
29. Meir, Golda (Meyerson) (1898–1978)—Acting head of the Jewish Agency’s Political Department, 1948; Minister of Labor, 1949–1956; Foreign Minister, 1956–1965; Prime Minister, 1968–1974.
30. Abdullāh Ibn Husseīn (1882–1951)—Emir and King of Transjordan from 1921 until his assassination in 1951.
31. The Red House—Building on Tel-Aviv waterfront housing the Haganah General Staff and High Command. Present location of the Hotel Sheraton.
32. Shaltiel, David (1903–1969)—Haganah Commander of Jerusalem during the siege, February–July 1948.
33. Jerusalem may cause anger in the Christian world—“During all the fighting [in the Old City], we had the additional handicap that our men were under orders not to hit any Moslem or Christian religious sites, while the Arabs had no such inhibition; nor were there any Christian sites in the Jewish Quarter” (Joseph, *The Faithful City*, 67)
34. Kaplan, Eliezer (1891–1952)—Treasurer of the Jewish Agency, 1933–1948; Minister of the Finance, 1948–1952.
35. Sheikh Jarrah—Arab neighborhood in northeast Jerusalem.
36. Etzion Block—Group of four kibbutzim 20 kilometers south of Jerusalem. At the outbreak of the war of Independence the Block came under prolonged siege, and on the very day before Israel’s statehood was declared, it was forced to capitulate to the Arab Legion: 240 defenders were killed, 260 taken prisoner, and the four settlements totally destroyed.
37. Sadeh, Yitzhak (1890–1952)—Founder and commander of the Palmach, 1941; acting Chief-of-Staff of the Haganah, 1945–1947; commander of the “Eighth” Brigade and armored forces in the War of Independence.

38. Avidar, Yosef (1906–1996)—Quartermaster General, 1948.
39. Arab Legion—The Jordanian army, created by King Abdullah, developed into a modern fighting force with the support of the British Treasury and the active assistance of British military advisors.
40. Beit Daras—Arab village between Ashkelon and Ashdod, abandoned during the War of Independence, present location of Moshav Givati.
41. Basheet—Arab village, 30 kilometers south of Tel-Aviv, abandoned during the War of Independence.
42. Sawafir—Collective name for three small Arab villages fifteen kilometers north of Ashkelon, abandoned during the War of Independence.
43. Jakobson, Yosef (1907–1994)—Haganah General Staff, 1946–1948; Intelligence Branch, Arab Section, 1936–1948; Head of IDF Purchasing Department, 1948.
44. Nimtza-Bi, Mordechai (1903–1949)—Haganah officer in charge of defense against air raids and gas attacks.
45. Raptor, Berl (1902–1989)—Staff Officer in the Haganah, 1938–1948.
46. Peoples' Administration—Following a decision by the Zionist Executive Council in early April 1948, the Peoples' Administration of thirteen members was to be decided upon the British departure from Palestine. This body would form the nucleus of the future government.
47. Bernstein, Peretz (1890–1971)—Economist; journalist; member of the Jewish Agency Executive 1946–1948; member of the Provisional Government.
48. Rosenblitt, Pinchas (Rosen) (1887–1978)—Member of the Provisional Government, 1948; Justice Minister, 1948–1961.
49. Katzir, Efraim (1916–)—One of the creators of the IDF's Research and Development Branch, May 1948; fourth President of Israel, 1973–1978.
50. Rabbi Fishman-Maimon, Judah Leib (1876–1962)—Member of the Jewish Agency Executive, and the Provisional Government; one of the framers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Mizrahi party (religious-Zionists).
51. Bab el-Wad—Entrance to the narrow valley road leading up to Jerusalem from the west.
52. Ben-Gal, Michael (1908–1992), Commander of the "Kiryati" Brigade and the Tel-Aviv region.
53. Machnes, Gad (1893–1954)—Haganah Intelligence officer, Arab section, 1948.
54. Chizhik, Yitzhak (Horpi) (1907–1959)—Top-ranking Jewish secretary in the British Mandatory Administration; District Officer of Tel-Aviv, 1945–1948.
55. Sharett, Moshe (Shertok) (1894–1965)—Head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, 1933–1948; Foreign Minister, 1948–1956; Prime Minister, 1953–1955.
56. Eshet, Fritz (1915–1967)—Operations officer, 1948; "Father" of the Israeli Artillery Branch; advisor to Ben-Gurion, 1948.
57. Latrun—Police fort strategically located at the western entrance to the Jerusalem Corridor. At the outbreak of the War of Independence, Arab forces

gained control of the position. Each attempt by the Haganah to dislodge them ended in dismal failure.

58. Kfar Saba—Jewish city 20 kilometers northeast of Tel-Aviv, bordering the West Bank.

59. Qalqilya—Arab city in the West Bank, 22 kilometers northeast of Tel-Aviv.

60. Kfar Tira—Large Arab town 25 kilometers northeast of Tel-Aviv.

61. Kfar Brir—Arab village eighteen kilometers southeast of Ashkelon, abandoned during the War of Independence.

62. Sarig, Nachum (1914–)—Palmach commander of the “Negev” Brigade, 1948, whose main task was to block the Egyptian army’s advance.

63. Etzel—Hebrew acronym for the National Military Organization, a clandestine Jewish military force that disbanded and integrated into the IDF after the establishment of the State.

64. Ramle—Arab city eighteen kilometers southeast of Tel-Aviv; major operations base for attacks on Jewish convoys on the road to Jerusalem; surrendered to the IDF in July 1948.

65. Lejune—Small Arab village in the Jezre’el Valley near the Biblical site of Megiddo.

66. Tul Karem—Arab city in the West Bank, sixteen kilometers east of Netanya, base for the Iraqi army during the War of Independence.

67. Wilhelma—Templar settlement (German-Christian pietist sect) five kilometers north of the present Ben-Gurion Airport, captured by the IDF during the War of Independence. Present location of the Moshav Bnei Atarot.

68. Atarot—Jewish settlement north of Jerusalem, abandoned during the War of Independence.

69. Neve Ya’acov—Jewish neighborhood in north Jerusalem, founded in 1924; destroyed during the War of Independence.

70. Har Tuv—Jewish settlement in the hilly area 20 kilometers west of Jerusalem, abandoned during the War of Independence.

71. Shamir, Shlomo (1915–)—Commander of the “Seventh” Brigade, and one of the commanders in the battle for the Latrun Police Station.

72. Katz, Katriel (1908–1988)—In charge of the Haganah’s clandestine radio broadcasts.

73. Ship carrying arms tugged into Haifa on 14 May 1948—Transporting artillery pieces to the Tel-Aviv port, the “Borea” was seized by the British and towed into Haifa. Only at midnight, as the British Mandate for Palestine officially ended, was the ship and its cargo released.

74. National Council—Recognized Jewish legal body during the Mandate to administer the affairs of Palestine Jewry; the official spokesman of the organized Jewish community in Palestine.

75. Ben-Gurion’s Diary from 29 November 1947—“Who can say, if among the revelers here [outside the hotel] that some will not be casualties [in the coming months].”

76. Achziv—Arab village, 35 kilometers north of Haifa on the Mediterranean coast.

77. Batza—Arab village in the Western Galilee, adjacent to the Lebanese border, abandoned during the War of Independence; present location of Moshav Betzet.

78. Truman, Harry S. (1884–1972)—President of the United States, 1945–1952.

79. Yanai, Ya'acov (1911–1996)—Head of Haganah Signal Corps, 1945–1948.

80. Marcus, David (Mickey Stone) (1902–1948)—Colonel in the U.S. Army in World War II; joined the Haganah in January 1948 as Ben-Gurion's military advisor; appointed commander of the Jerusalem front in May 1948; accidentally killed by "friendly" fire.

81. Rabin, Yitzhak (1922–1995)—Commander of the Palmach's "Harel" Brigade; Chief-of-Staff 1964–1968; Ambassador to the United States, 1968–1973; Defense Minister, 1984–1990; Prime Minister, 1974–1977, 1992–1995.