

Let us Secure the Lives of our Children and of Israel by a Just and Lasting Peace

Speech of Meir Vilner in Knesset -
October 10, 1973

OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR UNPRECEDENTED IN THE ANNALS OF THE KNESSET

Rowdyish behavior unprecedented in the annals of the Knesset occurred in the session on October 10, 1973, during the debate on the prime minister's statement regarding the Security Council Resolution of October 22, 1973. In the middle of the speech of MK M. Vilner the rostrum was stormed by MKs of the GAHAL (right-wing extremists) parliamentary faction, on their own initiative and on instruction from the MKs Menahem Begin and Haim Landau, and MK Meir Vilner was attacked by them. MK Keshet of Gahal, MK Drobles of Gahal and MK Yigal Horvitz of the State List and also other MKs of Gahal assaulted MK M. Vilner, took hold of his arms and tried to drag him off the rostrum, but M. Vilner fought them off. However, they continued rioting, seized M. Vilner's papers and tore them to shreds.

The ushers of the Knesset removed the rowdies.

The chairman of the session, Mrs. T. Sanhedrait, behaved infamously, displaying the greatest patience towards the fascist rowdies. She interrupted the session twice for five minutes and then finally... decided not to let M. Vilner finish his speech.

Among numerous Members of the Knesset the opinion was expressed that the assault was organized beforehand as a reaction to the great impression made by MK M. Vilner's speech last week, when his speech in the Knesset was broadcast over the radio and television.

SPEECH OF MK M. VILNER (Excerpted)

The Security Council Resolution, according to the proposal of the Soviet Union and the U.S.A., concerning the ceasefire and the establishment of a just and stable peace in the Middle East was received by the broadest masses in Israel with feelings of relief and satisfaction.

"It's good that at long last the terrible bloodshed has stopped." - "It's good that finally the road to peace will be found." This was the sentiment of young people, wives, mothers and fathers and brothers.

This was the bloodiest war in the history of Israel. Thousands of Jewish and Arab youngsters fell or were wounded in this war. A popular will exists to achieve not only the cease-fire but at long last a lasting peace, to remove at long last the nightmare of war from the life of the Israeli people. Therefore the popular will is the national interest of Israel - to advance with maximum speed from the cease-fire to the desired peace. And the Security Council Resolution 338 can indeed be an historic turning point.

But there are such persons in Israel who received the Security Council Resolution 338 with mixed feelings or even with overt fury. These circles, and unfortunately they are rather strong, wanted and still want to continue the war, as they themselves had expressed it: "till the end," "in order to annihilate the Arab armies," "in order to break their bones," "to occupy Cairo and Damascus."

Official circles too do not deny that yesterday's Security Council Resolution was not in accord with their own plans, has, in fact, foiled their plans. They stood in need of some more days of fighting - they say.

Members of the Knesset, with apprehension we hear the reports about the continuation of the battles on the fronts. Even after the Security Council decided upon the cease-fire, it has been found correct to sacrifice lives of the Jews and Arabs in a battle of prestige, in order to conquer yet another strip of land, which at any event we will have to return. Does this not contradict the declarations about concern for human life?

Cry: You shall not vituperate soldiers!

Meir Vilner: They are not to blame for anything. I defend them against the consequences of your policy.

Cry: You are to blame.

Meir Vilner: Those who have not prevented the war, are to blame, those who sabotaged the peace efforts.

Deputy Prime Minister, Y. Allon: Don't draw a comparison between the Arab aggressor and the Israeli defender with regard to the responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Keep your tongue!

Meir Vilner: One who occupies should better not talk about aggression. One who occupies lands of other states, like you, must be careful.

The public asks many questions. The public is not the same as it was before the war.

There is no credibility given to your policy, not only among Communists, but also among many people in Israel who are far removed from Communism. All these people ask questions which occupy them very much. They want to know how we have to proceed further, how we will prevent further wars.

If you had listened to us, if you had listened to all we told you all the time in the Knesset, our boys would not have been killed. You want annexation and not peace. This is what caused the renewal of the war.

I am opposing your policy of occupation and annexations. What is aggression if not this policy? Leave the territories outside Israel, and then Israel will live in security. Who says that you have to rule over Nablus, Jennin or Sinai?

I am ready to devote all in order to defend the security of Israel, but I am not ready that we sacrifice anyone in order to dominate other peoples.

Avner Shaki: We will not let you speak here.

Esther Raziell-Neor (Gahal): He must get down. Such things shall not be said here!

In the protocol of the Knesset the following is said then: "Members of Knesset Keshet, Drobles and others mount the rostrum and try to remove MK Vilner from the rostrum. MK Horvitz and other MKs of Gahal also. They attacked MK Meir Vilner, tried to drag him off the rostrum and tore up his papers."

The rowdies continuing their outrage, tried to attack bodily M. Vilner, but he himself, MK A Levenbraun (CP-RAKAH), deputy prime minister Y. Allon and the ushers prevented this and dragged them from the rostrum.

Chairman T. Sanhedrait: Members of Knesset, let us preserve the dignity of the Knesset. I declare an intermission of five minutes. After the intermission, to the surprise of many, the chairman, T. Sanhedrait, arbitrarily decided not to allow MK M. Vilner to continue his speech.

MK M. Vilner protested and announced that he had not finished his speech. He condemned the contravention of the Rules and the arbitrary behavior of the chairman, who yielded to the terror of fascists in the Knesset.

PROTEST AGAINST THE ROWDIES IN THE KNESSET

Immediately after the rowdyish attack upon MK M. Vilner the Communist parliamentary faction sent the following letter of protest to the Presidium of the Knesset, over the signature of MK Abraham Levenbraun:

We protest against the behavior of the chairman, Mrs. Sanhedrait, who instead of calling to order the rioters of the Gahal faction who mounted the rostrum together with MK Yigal Horvitz (State List) in order to silence by force a Member of the Knesset who had the floor, and in order to manhandle him physically, she deprived him without giving any reasons for it, and without referring to the Rules, of his right to continue his speech.