

DEC 2007

AMONG HIS LAST LETTERS

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Mr. Sharett, right, was Foreign Minister when Israel was admitted to the United Nations as a member on May 11, 1949. This picture was taken as the Israel flag was raised at U.N. headquarters. On the left is Mr. David Hacohen and next to him Mr. Abba Eban, then Israel's chief delegate at the U.N.

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his interlocutors with descriptions of the way of life of our settlers, of the endless provocations of our enemies and the murderous acts of the fedayeen gangs. He invoked the duty of any government to protect its toiling citizens. His fabulous memory stood him in good stead as he cited endless facts and figures, gave pungent illustrations of the points he made, then went over to the attack, denouncing the stubbornness and rigidity of the Arab rulers who stood in the way of peace, infringed basic moral principles of international relations, violated the U.N. Charter — dictators in backward societies who resorted to intrigue, conspiracy and the murder of their opponents to achieve their ends.

Like a taut string, he was strained to prove that his country's deed was a fully justified act of self-defence, that I knew that his attitude of expansionism. And he did this with it ever resorting to cheap polemics or to demagoguery — by the sheer power of informed argument and massive evidence. One by one he conquered the hearts of his opponents, restoring the confidence of our friends and crushing the enemies who had questioned our right to

upon I prepared the chapters about China and brought them to him. He read them without batting an eyelid and admitted that upon their publication a storm of criticism would greet him for hesitating to seek closer relations with China despite my repeated urgings to do so.

He insisted, however, that I publish the chapters even after I had pointed out that perhaps this might be unwise politically — an argument that afforded him a convenient way out, and one which anyone else would gladly have availed himself of.

And it took the greatest nobility of all to pass without bitterness the tragic test of reconciling himself to resigning the premiership at the peak of his public career and of his years, when not one of his colleagues stood up to fight for him, and he had to stand alone.

Such was Moshe Sharett. So was he in his private and public life, and so will he be remembered by the hundreds, perhaps the thousands, who have the honour of calling themselves his friends.

March 1, 1965.
Mr. Allen Murray Myers,
40 Exchange Place,
New York 5, N.Y.

Dear Allen,
From your letter of 4 February, which I regret not to have answered sooner, I gathered that you were blissfully unaware of the major event which blighted my existence of late. I refer to the fact that I, too, succumbed to the limb-breaking fashion, but I made a more thorough job of it than either you or poor Roslyn had done.

On December 14, getting up from the table in our kitchen, where Zipporah and I were having tea, I fell and broke my left hip. I was immediately taken to the hospital where I spent over a month lying in bed and writhing in pain most of the time. I was then released from hospital to come under house arrest, with pains considerably diminished in sharpness and frequency, and being able to sit and move about in a wheelchair. So now I spend most of the day at my desk, doing paper work, also receiving people of whom there is an endless stream, and even chairing meetings. Without entering into the details of my own ordeal I would like to go on record by stating that without Zipporah's unlimited patience, incredible endurance and constant encouragement I would have been completely lost reduced to a nervous wreck and condemned to helpless suffering.

My only ambition in life is now to be able to walk on two legs, which supreme goal I hope to attain some time in the summer.

And now to the main burden of your letter. I have already asked our Director of Information to send you some printed material which may be of help to you. As for me personally, I would summarise Israel's role in the

life of world Jewry under two heads.

(1) A permanently open refuge for all Jews who are both anxious and free to leave their countries of residence . . .

(2) A source of inspiration and guidance for the efforts of Jewish communities in various parts of the free world to resist assimilation and disintegration by re-invigorating and enriching Jewish life. A whole treatise could be written on this subject, but I would just illustrate my point by a reference to an agreement just concluded between the American Jewish Welfare Board and the Youth Department of the World Zionist Organization (alias the Jewish Agency) in Jerusalem, providing for the sending of batches of instructors from Israel to Jewish Community Centres in the U.S.A. for cultural work among the youth, also for the sending from U.S.A. to Israel of Programme Directors of Jewish Community Centres for courses of training, etc. Similar arrangements are already functioning between our Youth Department and other Jewish organizations in North and South America, Western Europe and overseas areas . . .

I do hope these brief observations will prove of some use to you. I could, of course, indulge in such generalities as Israel being the focus of pride for all Jews, an historic asset of tremendous importance, a revelation of the creative capacity of the Jewish genius, etc. All these, mind you, are perfectly true — but I thought it preferable to concentrate on two main concrete features.

With most affectionate regards to you and all yours from both of us, also with a special *gruss* from Aunt Frieda,

Ever yours,
M. SHARETT