

The Generals – Golda Meir

English Subtitles

Golda 01:00:00

Citizens of Israel, today the armies of Egypt and Syria launched an attack on Israel. Our forces were deployed as required. We have no doubt about our victory, but to our mind the renewal of Egyptian and Syrian aggression equals an act of madness.

(Yom Kippur War)

V.1

Golda Meir is identified, above all, with the tragedy of the Yom Kippur War, a war in which 2,700 Israelis were killed and 8,800 wounded, a war that left the country in a state of shock. All she had done till then seemed dwarfed, and what remained were only sights as these.

V.2

Golda's nomination as P.M. was accidental. In '69, with the sudden death of P.M. Levi Eshkol, and when she already retired from public activity, Golda was asked by her party to act temporarily as P.M. Golda was 71, not a healthy woman, and her nomination was intended to avoid internal struggles in the Labor Party.

01:01:50

(Lou Keidar)

I was working then at the Foreign Ministry and she was out of work but busy with her party, Mapai. So she says to me, "Do you know that Levi Eshkol died?" I said, yes, we all know". Then she says, "But maybe you don't know that I was asked to be the P.M." Good for you, I said, congratulations! "Yes," she says, "but I will accept it only if you come along." So I told Golda, don't blackmail me, don't threaten. So she says, "Now it's March, elections will be in October, and by then the party will decide whom they want for P.M.. Someone will show up and we'll be free to go, but I must stay there for 6 months, till the elections, and you'll be with me."

01:03:04

(Ovad)

Before she was elected we drove her in a car with open windows, it was a regular car. Her name started being mentioned and I remember that at the traffic lights people said, "Oh, here's the old woman. All the time in the hospital and now she'll be P.M.?!". She heard it all. Later on we said to ourselves, "old woman?!". She would work every day till 2 or 3 a.m.

01:03:31

(Herman)

I was worried it would be hard for her because of her health, but as a matter of fact she thrived. Someone said she had "psychosomatic good health". She simply thrived as P.M.

(News Anchorman)

For a long while, the future P.M. stood excited in front of a long line of photographers, before entering the President's House for her official nomination.

(Pressconference)

Q: People speak of hawks and doves... Would you call yours a government of continuity?

A: No doubt about it, it's not a matter of zoological analysis. Of course it's a government of continuity. The present government had enjoyed the support of the majority in the Knesset. Thank you. A disaster befell us, but there's no reason why this shouldn't be a government of continuity.

Q: Mrs. P.M., what are your feelings at this moment?

A.: I can only say I wish to whoever forms a government in the future to go about it with a lighter heart.

V. 3

With the establishment of the state, Ben Gurion appointed Golda as the first ambassador to Moscow. Golda, born in Kiev, hoped to create a link with the cut-off Soviet Jewry.

01:08:13

(Lou Keidar)

I thought it strange to send to Moscow - a definitely tough place - such an old and fat woman. To me she looked fat, since in Jerusalem everybody was hungry after the siege, and she was 50 and I myself only 35, so I saw her as very old.

V.4.

On Rosh-Ha-Shana 1948 Golda went to the big synagogue in Moscow to meet Jews. The rumor spread that an Israeli representative would come and it created excitement.

Havkin (the photographer)

This is the enlargement I made from the original; here is the original. This is Golda Meir, then Meyerson, this is her secretary and this is the embassy's first secretary. All around are Jews from Moscow and from other places as well.

(Lou Keidar)

They started to come, with children too, they came and came and the synagogue was filled up. Then the people started shouting and crying loudly and it was awful, all the people around me cried and so did I. It was awful. Only one person didn't cry, it was Golda. She sat there like a statue.

(Havkin)

What can people think when the Messiah comes? So everybody wanted to touch Golda Meyerson. There were rumors that she could bring salvation to the Jewish people.

Here's the ten-Shekel bill – Golda on one side, and on the other side, in my picture, you can see Golda. Here she is.

V.5.

Half a year later Ben Gurion called Golda back to Israel, to take up an executive task in the newly born state. In 1949 Independence parade Golda stood among the senior leaders as the Minister of Labor in Ben Gurion's Cabinet.

(News Anchorman)

“The Minister of Labor, Mrs. Golda Meyerson, inaugurates the new road.”

V.5a.

“My seven beautiful years”, this is how Golda called the years she served as Labor and Housing Minister. Years full of hectic activity: building, absorbing new immigrants and social legislation. Golda enjoyed her engagement in concrete projects fulfilled day after day. Inspired by Ben Gurion, she saw in the movement from town to country-settlements an essential aim. She was proud that her daughter Sarah was among the first settlers in the Negev, in kibbutz Revivim. Golda, herself a former pioneer in Merhavia, saw in it a continuity.

(Sened, Yonat and Alexander)

You felt proud to be a kibbutz member, especially if you went to the Negev, a place nobody knew about. We knew the biblical verse, “Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land”, and we knew how hard it would be, but behind it all was Golda, and she would help. This was really comforting.

Q: That means that Golda was actually attached to Revivim.

A.: She became very attached, since her daughter was here and because in 1952 her granddaughter was born here. She used to come a lot and had her own residence, where she liked to host world personalities.

Q: Who, for example?

A: For example her friend Isaac Stern. Whenever he came to visit her here he would give us a concert in the evening. I remember that in one of these concerts a violin string snapped and I remember him saying, very quietly, "In honor of the audience and of Golda I will start from the beginning."

01:13:13

Rostropovitch

I came to Israel of course after my concert was some reception....

01:14:52

(Sened, Yonat and Alexander)

We really liked her, her mother-like qualities. We didn't like her political views but her everyday simplicity. She walked like a queen with no crown. She didn't need one, the crown came from inside.

01:15:41

(Shulamit Aloni)

She was impressive in her truthfulness. Someone from the U.N once told me, "I don't understand what she says, but she says it in such a way that I'm sure she's right."

Q: But it wasn't hypocrisy, was it?

A: With her it was not. It was sincere, she wasn't pretending. For her we were always right and no one could tell us what to do.

01:16:05

(Herman)

She didn't read, she simply didn't read. I think that during all those years I stayed at her house I saw her reading a book only once.

Q: Which book was that?

A.: I remember it clearly because it was wrapped in the "Davar" newspaper and she left it on the table.

The book was called חולות לזהטים [Blazing Sands?]. It was about a general, I think he had only one arm and had many girlfriends he visited. The character was Dayan, and that's what she read. But I didn't see her reading books, though there was an impressive library there. It was her late husband's, who she always referred to as 'Meyerson', "These are Meyerson's books." Life took place mainly in the kitchen. She would come and eat something and then we sat and talked, and later on came her friends, sometimes it would be Zalman Shazar, sometimes Sapir, or Aran.

(Shulamit Aloni)

She quite enjoyed being the only woman. She liked to flirt and had much charm. No doubt she had charisma, she was influential, and an excellent demagogue.

(Victor Shem Tov)

I can describe to you briefly the first cabinet meeting, when she entered exactly on time and all the ministers stood up, which was not customary in cabinet meetings.

Golda marched from the door to her seat in well-measured steps, and with much confidence.

(Lou Keidar)

She entered precisely at ten, the ministers were already there, and the first thing she said was, “gentlemen, you may smoke”. Great joy. The second thing she said was, “but no newspapers.” Dayan, on purpose, whenever there was a cabinet meeting, he would read the paper. He couldn’t care less. So he didn’t like it, but he put the paper away. They all felt a change of tone after Levi Eshkol.

Victor Shem Tov

Levi Eshkol was a man of compromise. First of all, to try to reach an agreement, to talk. Golda came to the government intending to bring it back to Ben Gurion’s days, as if wishing to prove that she too knew well not what the people desired, but what was desirable for the people.

V.6

Elections for the Knesset were held in ‘69. During the 6 months between Golda’s nomination as P.M. and the elections, her public support rose from 3 to 80 percent.

(News Anchorman)

“Mrs. Golda Meir presented her cabinet to the Knesset”

(Golda:)

I hereby present the cabinet and ask for the confidence of the House. I know well before whom I stand and before what this government will have to stand in the future.

Q: How do you feel now, compared to 6 months ago?

A: It's not any easier. Now I know how hard it is.

(Victor Shem Tov)

I believe she wanted the job. She thought she could contribute something of her own while leading the policy of the State of Israel. She didn't estimate that there would be a war during her tenure. She thought she would devote all her time to internal problems, to closing social gaps, obtaining greater justice, because Golda was a real social democrat, following the European model of social democracy.

(Sinai – News Anchorman)

“P.M. Golda Meir, the Minister of Defense, The Minister of Finance and the Chief of Staff...”

V.7

Golda wished to focus on internal matters. But the attrition war along the borders forced her to engage in security affairs. Those were years of military vigor, when both the IDF and the Israeli public felt strong and self-confident, after the victory of the Six-Day War.

(News Anchorman)

“After the visit a meal was held for the guests at one of the bases. In high spirits, the P.M and the Defense Minister summed up their visit, their faces showing full satisfaction.”

Golda took her first trip as P.M to the U.S, to reinforce Nixon's government's support of Israel and to assure the supply of arms. Golda, who grew up in Milwaukee and worked there as a teacher, was received with admiration by American Jews, who saw her as one of theirs.

(News Anchorman)

"Mrs. Meir arrived at the White House in a special helicopter and was received with fanfares by the president of the United States, Mr. Richard Nixon."

(Zamir)

In matters related to the United States no one took steps without Golda's approval. When I invited the head of the CIA to meet Golda he saw it as a great honor.

(Kissinger)

She was a woman of tremendous inner strength...

V.9

In Israel, Golda engaged in the struggle on behalf of Soviet Jewry with deep personal identification. After worldwide mass demonstrations, hunger strikes, and helped by her American relations, Golda succeeded in bringing about a partial opening of the gates. The first wave of Soviet Jewish immigrants arrived to Israel.

(Russian Immigrant)

I am coming to my family...

(Kochavi)

Every day she would go to the airport to receive a Russian who was coming, an immigrant, this was the essence of her life. When I spoke to her she referred to the immigrants as the most important thing. But what about those who lived here, who grew up here, who were born here?

I must tell you that at that time Golda was extremely popular. And when I spoke against her policy, her behavior and all that, quite often women and elderly people would stand up and shout at me, "How dare you say such things about Golda?"

Were all panthers!

V.10

The intensity of the protests shocked the country. The authorities reacted to the Black Panthers with violence and arrests, without offering solutions.

(Golda)

I met with some of them. Usually, when young people enter my room to talk about something the first thing I ask is "What do you do, where do you work?" Simply in order to know with whom I'm sitting. They took it as an insult, "What do you mean when you ask where we work?" Why not? Why not?

(Kochavi)

It seemed to her that people came to see her as an employment agency, and she started asking one by one, "Where do you work? Where do you work?" Each one answered her, till she came to Rafi, who was about 14-15 years old, and asked him too "Where

do you work". And then we all burst out, "Why do you ask him where he works? If he were Russian, you'd ask him where he studies."

(Golda)

They were good kids once, I hope some of them will still be. Others, unfortunately, won't.

(Kochavi)

When we came and told her that we want a share of the national pie, this she was unable to understand. That we want to be part of the elite, to be partners in society, this she didn't understand. Every child today understands it, you don't have to be P.M. to grasp it.

V.11

After the death of Jammal Abdul Nasser in September 1970, his Deputy President, Annuar Saadat, became President of Egypt.

(Golda)

We wish him to lead his country onto peace, prosperity and life, to see in it his glory and the glory of his people and country, and cease the destructive routine that brings about disasters.

V.12

UN representative, Gunar Yaring, arrives to Israel. During that summer a cease-fire agreement with Egypt is signed, ending the attrition war. Soon after, many efforts of

mediation are made to bring about peace between Israel and its neighbors. Yaring came up with ideas for a settlement that would lead Israel to withdraw to the borders of '67.

(Golda)

We went to the talks with Yaring. They stopped and broke down the moment we were asked to agree in advance to withdraw, to commit ourselves without negotiations. We said we didn't accept.

V.13

Also Joseph Sisco, the assistant of the American Secretary of State, came to Israel with a proposal for an interim settlement based on partial withdrawal. Golda, backed by Dayan, refused this proposal as well .

(Dayan)

If you could explain what you mean by partial solution.

(Moderator)

Not to be so extreme, only one thing and that's it. This is my impression.

(Dayan)

What is the one thing?

(Moderator)

That you stand and don't move from your place. No concessions whatsoever.

(Dayan)

Israel's position is not that we stand and don't move, or make no concessions. The position is that without peace and without a settlement, and as long as there is no other settlement, we don't move. Move where? Move why? Why move?

(Shulamit Aloni)

In '69 she was already P.M. I said in the Knesset that we couldn't claim we liberated the territories and the land of Israel, because there were people living there for generations, for whom we are the conquerors. So she came up furiously to the podium and said, "How can you call the Jews conquerors?" Because according to her conceptions we are the ultimate victims and we cannot be conquerors.

(Golda)

I think that whoever lives here, whoever was in the country before the Independence War, we are all Palestinians. It's a fact, I have an old passport. From '21 to '48 I was Palestinian and I knew one thing – we are all Palestinians. There are Jews and there are Arabs. It wasn't Jews, Arabs and Palestinians. There was no such thing. I don't know what happened to those Palestinians from the West Bank till the 6-Day War. Where was the Palestinian entity?

(Victor Shem Tov)

Mistakes were made that show an unforgivable obtuseness in viewing the existing reality. Golda thought that the territories are ours, all the cards are in our hands, the state of Israel is a superpower and the Arabs won't dare attack it for many years. This

was her starting point in all problems connected to the political process and to security.

(Parade – 1972 - Dado)

Soldiers and officers, with this parade you are ending the greatest military drill the IDF has held since the Six-Day War.

Whoever saw your strength in this drill knows that IDF is ready for war.

(Golda)

If needed we will go, we will win once again, nothing will be solved by it, but if that is what they want, so be it...

V.14

Saadat continued warning and threatening with war, but Israel did not take him seriously. The U.S. as well didn't attach importance to his threats and didn't press on Israel to show more flexibility.

(Kissinger)

The Nixon administration at that period...

(Dinitz)

In a talk Kissinger had with Hafaz Ismail, Saadat's political adviser, he found an interesting point: if Israel recognized Egypt's sovereignty over all of Sinai, they would be ready to discuss with us security matters. Kissinger called Rabin and told

him that. Rabin said he needed the P.M.'s approval, he spoke with Golda and she replied immediately, "I am ready to recognize Egyptian sovereignty over all of Sinai, along with security agreements." This was a sensation. It was 7 months before the war. But we heard no more from Saadat.

V.15

In May '73 Israel celebrated 25 years of existence with the biggest and most spectacular parade in its history. The warnings recorded during that year about the war that may break out didn't undermine Israel's belief in the military superiority of the IDF.

News anchor: and something about the youngsters themselves, those exposed to danger.

(Zvi Zamir)

It was the army after the Six-Day War. It assumed that with its Air Force and regular forces it could contain the Syrians and the Egyptians, despite the huge intensification of both their armies. Golda couldn't discern it.

(Casals)

V.15

In August 1973, a month and a half before the war, Golda's old friend, the renowned cellist Pablo Casals came to Israel. Golda couldn't attend the event held in Jerusalem, and Casals gave her a private concert. Another friend of hers, violinist Isaac Stern, organized this exclusive concert, the last one Casals ever gave.

G – Thank you.

I.Stern – I am sorry P.M. that your official duties kept you....

...B.G. – And I am 87.

V.16

On September 25th, ten days before the outbreak of the war, King Hussein arrives for a secret meeting with Golda, at a Mosad installation near Tel Aviv. The meeting was documented and the rare cassette reached journalist Dudu Halevi.

(Dudu Halevi)

33:31:01

There was a date on it - 25.9.73. On the right or left-hand side there was a clock that showed the hour - it was 9 and some minutes. You could see a long conference table at the end of which sits a lady alone, next to her a battery of telephones, there's a background noise, the door opens and into the room comes His Majesty, the Hashemite King Hussein Ben Tallal, and the talk between them begins.

“Mrs. P.M., I've just returned from a secret summit meeting in Cairo, the war is immediate, I don't know the exact date, a matter of days or weeks.”

(Zvi Zamir)

He said something like “Keep in mind that both the Egyptians and the Syrians are undergoing a process of training and arms acquisition, which will lead to war. I fear it.

(Dudu Halevi)

In the film she seems surprised, not really knowing what to do, and she leans over the table and says, “ Thank you, Your Majesty, thank you”, and in fact a minute or three after he spoke and finished his coffee he stands up, shakes hands and leaves. The door opens and Israel Lior, the P.M.’s military secretary, and Eli Mizrahi, Golda’s political secretary, enter the room. Lior says that no army will launch an attack while its senior officers travel to Mecca for the **Hadj**, during the **Ramadan**. She’s clearly not pleased with what she hears, and says “Lior, I’m worried”, or something like that, “Why wasn’t Moshe here tonight?” She was probably referring to Dayan. And then she says, “Convey the King’s warning urgently to Moshe.”

(Zvi Zamir)

Golda spoke with Dayan and the Intelligence was also familiar with the issue. They repeated again and again, “It’s the same things he said in the past. Others too keep saying it. We don’t accept it, full stop, nor does the Defense Minister.”

Q: And you thought the opposite?

A: It doesn’t matter what I thought. There were reports saying that the Syrians and the Egyptians would attack together, that they would do it.

01:36:07

(Dudu Halevi)

You must understand Dayan’s and Zeira’s status at that time. Moshe Dayan was ‘Mr. Defense’, ‘Mr. Security’. He was the Defense Minister, he was all-powerful. He decided, and the state implemented.

(Lou Keidar)

On that Friday we returned from a trip to Europe, she and I, and the atmosphere was very weird. Galili, one of the ministers and also her friend, told her the situation was hard, nobody knows what will happen, there is a smell of war.

(Victor Shem Tov)

I got a call from the cabinet secretary, saying “Mr Shem Tov you’re invited tomorrow, Yom Kippur at 10:00 a.m., for an urgent cabinet meeting. It’s confidential and you mustn’t mention it.” I didn’t know what’s going on. In the last meeting Golda was very optimistic, she had to go to Vienna to meet Kreiski.

(Kissinger)

I was awakened on the morning of October 6th by a telegram...

(Victor Shem Tov)

I rush up the stairs to the meeting, somebody, an officer, tells me there’s going to be a war, I join the meeting, all the ministers are there, silent, nobody utters a word. The P.M. enters 15 minutes late, she’d been in the war room, and you saw a different Golda Meir, she walks slowly, more bent than ever, cigarette in hand, her voice monotonous, it was clear she hadn’t slept the whole night. Her first words are, “This morning, at 6 a.m., an absolutely reliable Intelligence information was received, stating that today at 6 p.m. war will break out on both the Egyptian and the Syrian fronts.

(Dinitz)

Dayan gave quite an optimistic report on the security situation, on the Egyptian fighting capabilities, and all those things we then called “the conception”. At 1:30 p.m. I had to leave for the airport, I had a plane at 2:00.

I sent Golda and Dayan an identical note, asking what was the first thing I must do in Washington. Both wrote me almost the same: make sure you get the items. Items meant weapons.

(Victor Shem Tov)

After less than half an hour, while the Defense Minister was still explaining why the reserve forces were not called up, despite the Chief of Staff’s opinion to do so, an officer comes in and hands him a note. At this moment we heard the sirens over Tel Aviv.

(Siren – War Breaks Out)

(News Anchorman)

Close to 2 p.m. the Egyptian and the Syrian forces launched an attack in Sinai and in the Golan Heights. Our forces are fighting back the aggressors.

(Soldiers)

It began with the aircraft attack, which brought us immediately to the frontline. Right away, within an hour, we opened fire and engaged in battle with the Syrians, with hundreds of Syrian tanks, we fought non-stop for hours, 40 hours...

They found out who was killed, it was the **Dep. Battalion Comm and the Dep. Company Comm** too. In short, the Company's command, there's no such thing anymore, you see.

(Kissinger)

We were genuinely surprised by the war...

(Dinitz)

Therefore, from the American point of view the airlift wasn't yet urgent till Tuesday, when for the first time I gave Kissinger the information I got from Israel about hundreds of planes and tanks, and thousands of fatalities.

V.17

During the first 2 days of battle 520 soldiers were killed, thousands were injured, and the fate of many others was unknown due to confusion.

(Dinitz)

And then there was a great shock, because it changed all their calculations and they realized it was not a repetition of the Six-Day War and that the airlift was crucial.

From Tuesday to Friday, a total of 3 days, we worked on the airlift, it was the largest airlift in American history, larger than the famous Berlin airlift, every 15 minutes an American aircraft and American pilots landed next to the battlefields. It wasn't simple.

(Rabin + Dado on the Golan Heights)

Could you say some words to the people of Israel?

We are now in the midst of the counter-attack. It's the start of the turning point; the defensive stage is ending. Now we begin to hit.

(Zvi Zamir)

During all this war 2 persons were as firm as rocks: Dado and Golda. In the toughest days of the war, and all the way through, Golda deeply believed that we'll ultimately beat the Egyptians and the Syrians and she was an outstanding support for Dado.

(Golda)

There's no doubt in my heart that victory will be ours. But the war hasn't ended yet. Our sons and daughters, soldiers and commanders, are on the northern and southern fronts, they're still fighting.

(Dudu Halevi)

We were facing a meltdown, an internal meltdown in which the Defense Minister and the whole leadership disappear and don't exist, they get completely depressed and hopeless. She remained as a rock, as a cliff made of steel.

V.18

On October 23rd, a cease-fire was declared as a result of American pressure. They wanted to prevent the Egyptian defeat. Golda flew to meet the soldiers on the front, on the Egyptian side of the Canal, where the cease-fire caught them encircling the Egyptian forces. Golda wanted to meet the soldiers face to face.

(Golda's Visit to the South Front after the Cease-Fire)

Well... any questions? Any comment?

- Why did we agree to the cease-fire when we have managed to encircle the Third Army? It's really annoying. We were winning and suddenly we have this 'hole' behind us.

- [G:] They suspected you're able to do that and so they declared a cease-fire.

- The fact that we're here now and they're on the other side, is there a chance of exchanging territories?

- According to our logic, and our logic is logical, we're here and they're there and all is mixed up, so suppose there's no peace yet...

- This is a treat!

- What a privilege...

- Cheers! - To you!

(Reporting News Anchorman)

"She asks them to take a picture with her, a family snapshot is taken on the sand hills, among clouds of dust, while Mrs. Meir awaits patiently till the last photographer perpetuates the moment.

Golda: It will be OK. It must be. Shalom.

(Aloni)

First of all she performed badly until the war, because had she listened to what she was told there wouldn't be a war.

Q: And during the war?

A: During the war she was a good grandmother, quite agitated, with that unforgettable saying that she doesn't forgive the Arabs for forcing us to kill them. Look, you can't make me say good things about Golda, except that she had that huge strength, which I would say, derived from ignorance and self-righteousness.

(Golda – After the December '73 Elections)

I'm honored to present to the House the designate cabinet members.

V.19

The elections that were put off due to the war were held 2 months after the cease-fire. Golda was reelected to head the government.

(News Anchorman)

Golda Meir - P.M., Moshe Dayan – Minister of Defense

V.19a

A government with an identical composition as the former one.

(Aloni)

As a mother of 3 sons, two of whom are serving in the army, I don't believe you, I don't believe your words, I don't believe your judgement, I don't believe your thinking and planning capacities. Once shame is gone, once there is no accountability, once you have destroyed concepts such as reward and punishment, once you showed that you are driven merely by personal, emotional impulses, and that only death will

release you from your chairs, I don't believe you, I don't believe in you. Those who see themselves as irreplaceable are the dangerous among rulers.

V.20

Da-Yan Resign!

The war undermined the feeling that Israel's existence is assured and shook the foundations of Israeli society. Soldiers returning from the front demanded Golda's and Dayan's resignation. Most of the public refused to accept the conclusions of the state inquiry commission, which laid the responsibility for the misdeed on the military, and not on the political leadership. As a result of public pressure, Golda was forced to resign.

(Anchorman)

6 days after the Agranat commission released its conclusions, Golda Meir resigned from office. She said in the Knesset that public protest had influenced her decision.

(Anchorman – Knesset)

The outgoing P.M., Mrs. Golda Meir, goes to the podium to deliver the government's announcement. Full attendance. The balconies are crowded with journalists, T.V. crews and the public.

(Golda)

Mr Chairman, Knesset members.

I hereby inform the Knesset, in accordance with article 40a-3 of the Basic Government Act, that I have submitted to the President today my resignation from the office of P.M.

(Sened)

After the Yom Kippur War she was a different person, not the same Golda. Not the same eyes, not the same proud gait, her head slightly bent, her gaze rather evasive, aloof, distant from everyday life. Something had happened that made all the rest seem worthless.

(Haya Ben Yosef Reading Her Letter)

“Dear Mrs. Golda Meir,

Shalom Golda,

I read in the paper about the decision to award you the Israel Prize and I was shocked. I have no doubt about your important contribution to the people of Israel and the state of Israel for many years. But all this stands overshadowed by your last performance, which brought about the catastrophe of the Yom Kippur War, when you lead the government in those years. How can you accept the Israel Prize after what happened? Have you already forgotten? Since my son was killed in vain, as a victim of your negligence, my world fell apart and my life is no life anymore. Therefore, Golda, I ask you to refuse to accept the prize.

With tears and sorrow, Haya.”

(Yossi Ben Yosef)

Q: How did she have the courage to write this?

A: This rumor, this news that Golda would be awarded the Israel Prize, it really enraged her, she couldn't rest since then and decided to write the letter.

(Haya Ben Yosef)

My feelings haven't changed. Since I knew he was no more, and until now, I go to bed with the same pain and I get up in the morning with the same pain, with the same pressure. Physically, many things have changed, but **Ahik** lives with me all the time.

(Victor Shem Tov)

On balance, between Golda's responsibility for the Yom Kippur War – and as P.M it was mainly hers - and her credit as Labor Minister, Foreign Minister, public figure and politician - all her great activity until she became P.M – the responsibility for the Yom Kippur War on one side, and all her credit on the other will never level, to my mind, in the history of our state. In other words, we owe Golda historical justice, not to erase her credit. But her role in the Yom Kippur War will not be forgiven.

V.21

In a dramatic and surprising step in Nov.'77, President Saadat arrived on a visit to Israel, following which a peace agreement was reached between Israel and Egypt. The P.M then was M. Begin, the Likud leader elected after a political upheaval. Golda took part in the ceremonies and received a courtesy visit from Saadat.

(Saadat's Visit)

Mr. President let us go on so that even an old lady like me...

V.22

On December 5th, '78 Golda passed away at the age of 80, after a serious illness that she had been suffering from for years.

(Herman)

Golda was a woman who lived according to her beliefs. She lived in unusual simplicity, demanded little for herself and was not interested in luxury, neither in clothes nor in personal possessions. Till her last day she was Goldi **Mabovitch, her childhood name**, from Kiev and Milwaukee who somehow – and indeed she didn't know how – happened to play a historical role, of which she was well aware.

(Sened)

Her granddaughter was a classmate of our son, who was killed at the age of 21. Suddenly we were told that Golda was coming in a helicopter, and I said why this honor, I don't want any high-rank visits, and someone told me, delicately, with understanding, she's not coming as a high personality, not as P.M., she comes as a grandmother whose grandchild was Yoav's classmate. I remember I felt ashamed of what I had said. She came in without bodyguards and she hugged me, and that hug was so true and her grief too... They said she came as a mother, and as a grandmother, but at that moment she was exactly at the right spot.

(Rostropovitch)

In this atmosphere to play in the memory of...

(From Golda's Will)

I am writing this on the eve of Rosh Hashana, October 3rd, 1967. A few years ago, before a surgery considered by doctors as serious, I wrote to my family that I forbid obituaries and naming anything after me. Since the surgery went well I want to repeat and emphasize this request of mine now to the party. I am sure it will be respected.

Golda Meir.