

Foreword

The Israel State Archives, Israel's national archives, is in charge of the preservation of documentation relating to its institutions. Millions of documents, photographs, audio recordings and films create a huge mosaic illustrating the building of the Israeli nation, from its founding document – the Declaration of Independence – to the present.

As a rule, only those who take the trouble to visit the Archives are privileged to see the treasures kept there, and such visitors are few. Most of the Israeli public does not even know of the existence of the Archives, and is unaware of the enormous volume of documentation held there about the people's national and personal past.

The *Blue and White Pages* exhibition at the Israel Museum presents to the public a small portion of the treasures of the Archives. It is an exhibition for the citizens of Israel and about them. Visitors to Israel too will learn much about the early days of the State and its development.

Among the documents displayed in the exhibition are laws passed by Israel's parliament, the Knesset, international agreements and records of government meetings at which fateful decisions were taken, handwritten notes which were discovered by chance and items from the routine business of government ministries. Beside them are found a selection of letters sent by citizens to the authorities and documents relating to the personal life of every citizen.

The variety of exhibits represents important subjects in the history of the State – the U.N. decision on the partition of Palestine; the Declaration of Independence; the Constituent Assembly and the state's main institutions; the War of Independence and the Armistice Agreements which concluded it; the reparations agreement with Germany and the trial of Adolf Eichmann; the Six Day War and the unification of Jerusalem; the Yom Kippur War and the peace treaty with Egypt; settlement in Hebron; relations between religion and state; controversial social, political and economic questions; the dispute over control of education in the immigrant camps; the "Black Panther" activists of the 1970s and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 – fragments of the past reflecting the making of history together with everyday life, as well as critical moments which changed the history of the State.

The exhibits were selected from the vast holdings in the Archives on the basis of historical and artistic considerations, in a fruitful collaboration between the staff of the Israel State Archives and the curators of the exhibition.

This catalogue presents a selection of the exhibits together with explanatory notes in Hebrew and English (see p. 5), and a full list of exhibits.

We hope that the exhibition, which provides a glimpse of the treasures of national heritage held in the Israel State Archives, will encourage citizens and visitors to search out and extend their knowledge of their personal and national history.