

## **"We will not be citizens of a fascist state purporting to be Israel"**

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"We will not be citizens of a fascist state purporting to be Israel" say hundreds of Israeli academics and public figures.

A protest rally against the government's "Loyalty Oath Bill" was held outside the Tel Aviv house. There Ben-Gurion read the 1948 the Declaration of Independence. There, today, the "Declaration of Independence from Fascism" was signed.

"We are citizens of the Israel which was depicted in the Declaration of Independence, a peace-seeking country based on the principles of equality and civil liberties. We do not intend to be the citizens of a state purporting to be Israel which stops being democratic and embarks on becoming a fascist state," proclaimed intellectuals, public figures, and Israel Prize laureates who gathered this afternoon for a protest rally against the "Loyalty Oath Bill" approved by the government. A protest rally was held on Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard, in front of the museum building where David Ben Gurion had read the Declaration of Independence in 1948.

Beneath the statue of Meir Dizengoff, first mayor of Tel Aviv, actress Hanna Meron read out from that Declaration of Independence: *"The State of Israel will be based on Liberty, Justice and Peace, as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or gender; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations"*. She noted that, sixty-two years later, the reality of Israel is very different than what the country's Declaration of Independence envisaged. At the end of the rally, a *"Declaration of Independence from Fascism"* was signed (see full text below).

Among participants in the initiative were Shulamit Aloni, Uri Avnery, Alex Ansky, Shery Ansky, Menachem Brinker, Ran Cohen, Ruth Cohen, Yaron Ezrahi, Galia Golan, Haim Guri, Sna'it Gisis, Yoram Kaniuk, Dani Karavan, Yehoshua Knaz, Elia Leibowitz, Alex Libak, Hanna Meron, Sammy Michael, Merav Michaeli, Sefi Rachlevsky, Gabi Solomon, David Tartakower, Micha Ullman, and many others.

Following is the full text of the Declaration of Independence from Fascism:

***A state which forcibly invades the hallowed realm of the individual citizen's conscience, and which imposes punishment on those whose opinions and beliefs do not fit the authorities' opinions and the prescribed "character" of the state, stops being a democracy and embarks on becoming a fascist state.***

***Behind these stairs where we stand, the state of Israel was proclaimed. The state which increasingly takes Israel's place – a state which fills the country with a variety of racist legislation, promoted by the Knesset and the cabinet – is excluding itself from the family of democratic nations. Therefore we, citizens of the Israel envisaged in the Declaration of Independence, hereby declare that will not be citizens of a country purporting to be Israel and which violates its basic commitment to the principles of equality, civil liberty and sincere aspiration for peace – principles upon which the State of Israel was founded.***