

ISRAEL

Date of Elections: October 28, 1969

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Israel, the Knesset, is unicameral and consists of **120** Deputies elected for 4 years.

The elections of October 28 were held upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature.

Electoral System

Every citizen, of either sex, may vote provided he has reached the age of 18 by the determining day — the last day of December of the year preceding the register year, which commences on the 139th day after the determining day. The law makes no other stipulation as to eligibility to vote.

Normally, electors must vote in the constituency in which they are registered. However, for the elections of 1969, the Electoral Law was amended to authorize sailors and passengers aboard Israeli ships to take part in the voting. In addition, special provisions were made to enable soldiers stationed on the frontiers to vote.

Every Israeli citizen of either sex and who has reached the age of 21 on the day of the admission of a candidates' list may stand for the Knesset. The following shall not be candidates: the President of the State, the 2 Chief Rabbis, the State Comptroller, judges and members of religious courts, rabbis and ministers of other religions while holding office for a remuneration, and, finally, State officials holding a rank greater than grade 5, and officers while serving or during a period of 100 days after they cease to serve.

A list of candidates may be presented by each Party represented in the outgoing Knesset or by 750 members of the electorate.

Deputies are elected to represent the entire nation, which forms one constituency, by closed party-list system with proportional distribution of seats between all lists having obtained at least 1 % of the valid votes cast.

The electoral quotient is obtained by dividing the total number of valid votes by the number of seats in the Knesset, i.e. 120, and correcting this figure to the nearest whole number. The seats not filled by this first operation are then allocated one by one to the lists classified in decreasing order of their surplus votes.

Several lists may combine, in which case the rule of 1 % applies to each, but the seats are allocated over all the combined parties which then distribute

them proportionally among themselves according to the number of votes received by each.

The seats won by each list are attributed to the candidates in the order in which their names appear on the lists. The next-in-line act as substitutes should a vacancy occur during a legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Israel's political life is characterized by the great number of parties which corresponds to the diversity of opinions within the country and is favoured by the existing electoral system.

At the last elections the public could choose between more than 16 lists, of which 4 were new.

However, 2 great parties are outstanding. The first, the Labour Alignment (*the Maarakh*) which includes the Labour Party (formed from the union of the *Mapa'i*, *Ahdouth Haavoda* and *Rafi*) and the Socialist *Mapam* Party, had 63 representatives in the Knesset during the previous legislature. Its main leaders are Mrs. Golda Meir, Mr. Ygal Allon, Mr. Abba Eban and General Moshe Dayan.

The second, the *Gahal*, is a nationalist movement of the right which combines the *Herut* and the Liberal Party led by Mr. Menahem Begin. Although of opposing tendencies, these two great parties were allied within the cabinet of national union formed in 1967 in conjunction with the National Religious Party and agreed to maintain this coalition until the settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Further to the right were the Free Centre (formed from the *Herut*) and a small group advocating the establishment of a "great State of Israel".

As their efforts to reach a combination had failed, the left-wing parties contested the elections individually. The most important was that led by Mr. Uri Avneri calling itself *Haolam Hazeh*, or New Force. The Communist Party remains split into two factions, one orthodox and said to be Arab, the *Rakah*, the other said to be Jewish and called the *Maki*.

The elections of October 28 revealed the relative stability of the electorate. Shifts occurred essentially within the two great parties. The gains of *Gahal* were closely linked to the losses suffered by the Free Centre Party which split from the former during the previous legislature. Similarly, the Labour Alignment lost several seats to the State List which grouped, under the leadership of Mr. Ben Gurion, the continuators of the *Rafi* after its fusion with the *Mapai* and the *Ahdouth Haavoda* within the Labour Party. However, generally speaking, the *Maarakh* Party is slightly weaker, whereas the *Gahal* has slightly strengthened its position within a more united right wing.

It will be noted that 66 % of those elected held seats in the previous legislature.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Knesset

Number of registered voters.	1,758,685
Voters.	1,427,981 (80 %)
Void or blank ballot papers.	60,238
Valid votes.	1,367,743

Party	Votes obtained	%	Number of seats in the Knesset*
<i>Maarakh</i> (Labour Party and <i>Mapam</i>)	632,035	46.2	56 (-7)
<i>Oahal</i> (Social-Democratic Party)	296,294	21.7	26 (+4)
National Religious Party (<i>Mizrachi</i>)	133,238	9.8	12 (+1)
Alignment-affiliated Arab Lists (<i>Maarakh</i>)	47,989	3.5	4 (=)
<i>Agudat Israel</i> (Orthodox Religious Party)	44,002	3.2	4 (=)
Independent Liberals	43,933	3.2	4 (-1)
State Party (continuator of <i>Rafi</i>)	42,654	3.1	4 (+3)
<i>Rakah</i> (Arab Communist Party)	38,827	2.9	3 (=)
<i>Poalei Agudat Israel</i> (Workers' Orthodox Religious Party)	24,968	1.8	2 (=)
<i>Haolam Hazeh</i>	16,853	1.3	2 (+1)
Free Centre	16,393	1.2	2 (-1)
<i>Maki</i> (Israel Communist Party)	15,712	1.1	1 (=)
Great State of Israel Party	7,591	0.6	- (=)
Peace Party	5,138	0.3	- (=)
New Israel (oriental communities)	2,116	0.1	- (=)
			120

* Gains and losses were calculated on the basis of the composition of the Knesset at the end of the previous legislature.

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men.	113
Women.	7

120