

JEWISH AFFAIRS

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CONTENTS

<u>New Hope for Peace in Middle East</u>	1
<u>Observations on the A/C Convention</u>	2
<u>Anti-Sovietism: A Government Policy</u>	5
<u>Rabbi Kahane and The Jewish Defense League</u>	9
<u>Events and Views</u>	10
<u>Communications</u>	11

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NEW HOPE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Statement of the Political Committee, CPUSA, August 6, 1970)

The crisis in the Middle East has in recent months become extremely grave and the danger of its explosion into all-out warfare, and with this of a U.S.-Soviet military confrontation, has become increasingly acute. Now, however, a possible way out of this grim situation has emerged, based on the U.S. cease-fire proposals.

The acceptance of these proposals by the UAR and Jordan on the one side and Israel on the other means that for at least ninety days the shooting will stop, and that during this period the two sides will hold talks with Gunnar Jarring on peace terms. This is a most welcome development. Especially significant is the agreement of the Israeli government to talk terms with Jarring, including withdrawal from occupied territories--a step which it has flatly rejected up to now.

The path leading in the direction of a peaceful settlement has thus been opened up. But there are many immediate problems to be overcome. More important, the basic differences remain to be resolved. The aggressive, expansionist line of the Israeli ruling circles remains unchanged. Hence the road to a political solution is a long and arduous one, and there are no guarantees that the ninety-day period will not end in the resumption of fighting.

It must be remembered that the primary source of the crisis is the escalation of aggression against the Arab countries by the Golda Meir regime. This escalation, launched with the encouragement and support of U.S. imperialism, included the bombing of targets in the interior of the UAR. The measures taken by the USSR to strengthen the Egyptian anti-aircraft defenses put an end to these raids and also rendered the Israeli attacks on the area bordering the Suez Canal much more costly.

But the daily Israeli bombings of the canal zone have continued up to this point. The Israeli leaders have insisted that they must retain air control of both banks of the canal. Without this they might be compelled to launch a new pre-emptive war against the UAR.

In this stand they have been supported by the Nixon Administration. In his television appearance on July 1, Nixon declared that U.S. policy was to "maintain the balance of power" in the Middle East--that is, to maintain Israeli offensive superiority. Toward this end the U.S. has continued to supply Israel with Phantoms and Skyhawks in the face of its already overwhelming air superiority, and is evidently prepared to go further if need be.

The aim of this policy, on the part of both U.S. imperialism and Israel's rulers, continues to be the destruction of the Nasser government. But this, it is becoming increasingly obvious, is but a sure road to nuclear war. Faced with the mounting strength of the anti-imperialist forces in the Middle East and the growing shift in the balance of forces against imperialism, combined with the strong, Soviet initiatives for peace, important sections of the U.S. ruling class have come to fear a new outbreak of full-scale warfare.

Hence the Rogers proposals and hence the pressure on Israel's leaders to accept them. But the policy of "maintaining the balance of power" has not been abandoned and the maneuvering toward this end will continue. The danger of sabotage of the proceedings from the U.S. end must therefore be guarded against.

The key to Middle East peace remains the U.N. Resolutions of November 1967. The chief roadblock to peace remains the refusal of the Israeli government to accept it in toto, specifically the refusal to agree to withdraw completely from the occupied territories and to a just settlement of the refugee question. A peaceful settlement is possible only if there is a reversal of this policy.

Within Israel there is a growing movement for such a reversal. The Israeli peace forces today extend far beyond the Communist Party of Israel, which at one time stood almost alone. They are growing in strength and in their ability to compel a break with the present policy of aggression and annexation.

For the people of this country the task is to oppose the continued arming of Israel for the waging of offensive warfare, and to demand that our government press instead for acceptance by Israel of complete withdrawal and resolution of the refugee question as essential conditions for an end to the conflict. Nixon must be made aware that the American people will accept nothing less than this.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE AJC CONVENTION

The American Jewish Congress held its national biennial Convention in Washington, D.C. on May 20-24 of this year. Occurring as it did in a critical period both in the U.S. and in the Middle East, the Convention's deliberations are of special interest.

The Convention was noteworthy in that it reiterated the AJC's opposition to the Indochina war. Its resolution reaffirmed "the right and responsibility of the American people to oppose this nation's involvement in Indochina." It called upon the U.S. Government to state that "it is prepared to engage in an immediate ceasefire." And it supported the legislation before Congress to deny further funds for maintaining troops in this area.

Among the major national Jewish organizations, the AJC has been one of the most forthright and consistent in its opposition to the war. Its President, Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, has been an outspoken champion of peace. Its reaffirmation of its position is important at a time when too many other Jewish organizations and leaders tend to shun participation in the struggle for peace for fear that participation might lead to curtailment of U.S. aid to Israel.

On the other hand, the Convention not only came out in full support of Israel's foreign policy and for increased U.S. military aid to Israel, but adopted a much more pronounced anti-Soviet stand than before.

The Convention resolution, as reported in the Congress Bi-Weekly, "viewed with alarm the threats to Israel's security resulting from two concurrent developments: first, the increasing intervention by the Soviet Union in the affairs of the Middle East, both by direct participation of elements of its military forces in the area,

and by its sponsorship of the most extreme factions among the Arab nations; and second, the reluctance on the part of the United States to act decisively in support of Israel's defensive efforts."

Rabbi Lelyveld, in his speech, talked of "the increasing boldness of Soviet intervention to give direct support to the Arab threat to Israel's existence." Abraham Avigar, Minister of Information, Embassy of Israel, went even further: "Soviet imperialism," he said, "is today the single most important factor blocking the road to peace in the Middle East... Russian pilots are protecting the skies of Egypt." He added: "The world must know, Russia must know that Israel will not be another Czechoslovakia."

No less severe was the assault on alleged persecution of Soviet Jews. Rabbi Lelyveld spoke of "the increasing intensity with which the USSR is suppressing the will to Jewish identity and substantively denying the right of emigration to Jews within their own borders." The Convention resolution "asserted that efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry must be treated as a matter of the highest urgency by the Jewish communities of the world."

The AJC has thus become a spearhead of the greatly intensified anti-Soviet campaign in this country and reflects the total adherence of this organization, as well as other leading Jewish organizations, to the aggressive policies of the Golda Meir regime in Israel, which has made the anti-Soviet drive a matter of official policy. This total adherence was challenged by Marc Rosenstein, President of the North American Jewish Youth Council, whose speech brought a breathe of fresh air into the Convention. He said:

"The American Jewish community's attitude towards Israel has been almost completely conditioned by the United Jewish appeal into one of absolute monolithic, undeviating support for the policies of the Israeli government. This is remarkable because, within Israel, there is certainly not such monolithic, across-the-board support of the Israeli government."

"It seems to me extremely unfortunate that the American community is unwilling even to discuss the positions which are openly debated in the Israeli community. We don't even know about such a thing as doves in Israel, and what their stand is, and what they have to say, and what the Israeli Left is all about."

He added that if the adults fail to come to grips with these problems "we shall have to... find our own solutions for ourselves, even at the risk of being condemned as New Left anti-Zionists." We are now condemned in this way whenever we express opposition to Golda Meir's policy..."

A challenge to the rigid, unbending support to the policy of the Israeli government, whatever it may happen to be, is much needed, and the fact that it is beginning to be offered by the Jewish youth is to be warmly welcomed. This is especially true now that a possible path to peace in the Middle East has been opened up through the acceptance of the U.S. cease-fire proposals, for the fruitfulness of this step depends above all on the readiness of the Israeli government to depart from its present annexationist policy.

In this connection, a challenge to the dangerous escalation of anti-Sovietism is especially necessary. This campaign serves only the purposes of U.S. imperialism. It is in the interests of neither the Israeli people nor the Jewish people in the United States. For Jewish progressives, such a challenge is a primary task.

The overall trend expressed in the Convention found its reflection in a very weak stand on Black Liberation. The resolution adopted went little beyond criticizing the Nixon Administration "for adopting policies inhibiting effective enforcement of existing civil rights legislation." On the mounting struggles of today--on the expanding struggles of Black workers against impoverishment, unemployment and job discrimination; on the growing opposition to the persecution of the Black Panthers and other militants; on the rising tide of the movement for Black representation--the Convention was silent. Nor did the recent killings of Black Americans or the threat of mass violence against the ghettos in the name of law and order, hold any interest for it.

But this is an inevitable consequence of placing pro-imperialist, racist Israeli government policy above all else. It is also a warning that if the AJC is to be an effective fighter for peace and human rights, it must give serious thought to abandoning its support for this policy. It is incumbent on the progressive forces among the Jewish people to help bring this about.

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ANTI-SOVIETISM: A GOVERNMENT POLICY

By: Ruth Lubitch

(Translated from Der Vig, organ of the Communist Party of
Israel, - April 1, 1970)

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The anti-Soviet chorus in our country is fully in tune. There is no noticeable dissent among the sinister forces of which this chorus is composed. However, a debate is going on as to who should be in the forefront of the anti-Soviet campaign, "who should do the yelling and when and what he shall yell," as Israeli government circles put it.

The Israeli Government wants to keep an effective control over all these anti-Soviet activities and incorporate them in a political plan.

A part of the campaign against the Soviet Union is conducted by Zionist organizations with the aid of the government in Israel, as well as in London, Paris, New York and other international centers. Premier Golda Meir has made declarations at conferences and gatherings of various organizations that the Soviet Union is the enemy of our country, of the people of Israel and of the Jewish people as a whole. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education petitions are being circulated to protest the alleged persecutions of Jews in the Soviet Union and exhibits are being displayed containing falsified documents of the lowest order.

This government-controlled anti-Soviet campaign is augmented by similar activities involving certain groups, organizations and individuals who find this a very profitable enterprise. Money is collected under the pretext of assisting the Soviet Jews and for organizational purposes.

Two poisonous individuals, the students Kazakoj and Sperling, who claimed that they "were driven by a burning desire to build Israel," were brought to Israel from the Soviet Union under the sponsorship of a member of the Knesset Chaim Landau. Immediately after their arrival they found a very lucrative occupation: they were sent without delay to the United States to slander their homeland. There it was made possible for them to obtain a university education at government expense.

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Mr. Landau has disclosed certain facts which other anti-Sovietees have tried to hide under a hypocritical propaganda barrage, asserting that they are concerned with the fate of Soviet Jewry. His contention is that in order to attain a greater credibility for the slogan "Let MY People Go," it is necessary to create the impression that the Soviet Jews are oppressed, that they live in poverty and hate their homeland.

A hue and cry must be raised that they are "deprived of their nationality rights." Landau would like to go even further than certain government people, who feel that Jews who arrived recently from the Soviet Union should be excluded from this campaign in order not to "jeopardize the sparse Jewish immigration from the Soviets." (Davar, March 12, 1970).

Liova Eliav, General Secretary of the Labor Party, has made some revealing statements in an article in Davar (March 13), defending his position that the anti-Soviet campaign should be directed and controlled through government sources. He wrote:

"Immediately after the Six-Day War I expressed myself on this matter in Davar, and I have not changed my stand. I am for the full presentation of the tragedy of the situation in all its bitterness. I am also convinced that the action must be subject to control. The situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union is ;serious and urgent, both for them and for us."

He also said:

"Our government's approach to this question would be of a different dimension if we had at the present time an Israeli embassy in Russia. Why? Because in previous years our embassy did much for the 'Jewish awakening in the USSR.'"

Eliav further states:

"Little is known of the achievements that were attained. The awakening of the Soviet Jewry did not come by itself. Textbooks were made available, classes in Hebrew were initiated, transcripts of radio broadcasts were distributed, and so forth. I do not want, and cannot go into detail about these matters. However, it must be stated that it would be dishonest and irresponsible to say that this work should be taken over by other sources because the (Israeli) Government remains silent."

Mr. Eliav has given us a tiny glimpse of the intrigues which are going on behind the scenes. His disclosures corroborate the accusations made by Soviet authorities that the Israeli Embassy was engaged in inflammatory and undermining activities in their country. Incidentally, we learned from his revelations how the "dramatic" letter campaigns on the part of certain Soviet Jews were arranged; how simple, innocent folk, who were trying to join their families in Israel, were, often without their knowledge, utilized as tools in hostile propaganda against the Soviet government under the slogan, "Let My People Go."

These inflammatory activities, which aimed to shatter the stability of the Soviet state, provoked there discussions about Jews and Zionism. It is understandable that Soviet public opinion became aroused. Soviet citizens as well as the Jewish masses are sickened by the unsolicited guardianship of the Israeli Premier, Golda Meir.

In certain Israeli circles a debate is going on as to how best to conduct this anti-Soviet propaganda, and we find Dr. Sneh among the debaters. He strives to give a political-ideological validity to the Soviet-baiting on the part of the Israeli government. According to his opinion, the agitation against the Soviet Union must be conducted in such a way as not to give the impression of being a part of the prevailing cold-war incitement to a global conflagration. The one thing that Sneh has in common with Messrs. Landau, Abba Eban, Eliav and others is that all of them would like to influence world opinion for the demand that the Soviet Union should accept "an exodus of the Jews from Russia."

Sneh would like to do the "dirty work" and at the same time win favor in the eyes of decent people. He suggests that the Israeli Government ought to seek allies for its anti-Soviet propaganda among the friends of the Soviet Union--among the Communist Parties, no less. Sneh's opinion is that in order to be effective the propaganda must be limited to accusations of alleged discrimination against Soviet Jews and charges that the Jews are deprived of the right to emigrate to Israel. According to his opinion, the agitation must not take the form of an all-out attack on the Soviet Union.

As we can see, there is a diversification of forces in the anti-Soviet camp. The Right wing (Landau) tries to appeal to the reactionary segment of world opinion with the slogan, "Let My People Go." Dr. Sneh wants to achieve the same goal propagandizing Left-wing groups and friends of the Soviet Union.

His intention is to sow discord and create differences of opinion--to steer these groupings into the anti-Soviet camp. The Israeli Government tries to hide the true character of this propaganda, According to Dr. Sneh and other "Soviet experts" it would be preferable to conduct the campaign "for the freedom of the Soviet Jews" along "humanitarian" lines. In such a manner they aim to gain the support of certain Left-wing forces.

Mr. Landau, who is a government minister and leader of the reactionary Herut Party, Moishe Sneh, leader of the Sneh-Mikunis splinter group, and Dr. Harael were participants in a forum which was held last March. From the discussion it became evident that Mr. Landau would like to unleash all the reactionary forces in the anti-Soviet campaign. Dr. Sneh promulgates a more careful tactic as the "more useful approach to this problem." On one point they are united. They both believe that there is, in the Soviet Union, "an awakening of the various nationalities against the Russification by the government." Therefore, they think "the time is ripe for action to save the oppressed Jews."

The effectiveness of this propaganda which is conducted through official and semi-official government circles, is very much in doubt. It would be very difficult for them to prove that their activities are not a part of the overall reactionary global struggle against the Soviet Union. Who would be so weak-minded and obtuse as to believe the vilifications of the Soviet Union conducted by Golda Meir and some members of her government? Who would believe their defamations that the Soviet Union is an enemy of the Jewish people, wants to destroy Israel and follows in Hitler's footsteps? It should be obvious to every politically knowledgeable person that this smear campaign is closely linked with the imperialist global struggle against the Soviet government, a struggle which strives to foment hatred against the Soviet system and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, between the youth and working people of Israel. Shouldn't it be clear that the slogan "Let My People Go," is being used by the Soviet enemies as a weapon to undermine and attack the Soviet Union and all Socialist countries and encourage the anti-Soviet and anti-socialist elements?

The Israeli government has taken the necessary steps to unite all anti-Soviet propaganda activities under the auspices of a single political body which will be placed under effective centralized control. The role of this body will be "to conduct a struggle on behalf of the Soviet Jews according to instructions of a special government commission."

On March 22nd of this year a cabinet meeting was held at which "a set of principles for the social activities in behalf of the Jews of the Soviet Union" was adopted. A special ministerial committee was set up to carry through this plan.

The Israeli Government must bear full responsibility for this turbid propaganda wave. It ill-behooves the Israeli authorities to express indignation about the negative reaction that the anti-Soviet vilifications cause among Jews and non-Jews all over the world.

All people with political understanding, all the forces in our land who struggle for peace and progress, must raise their voices in protest against these insidious activities.

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RABBI KAHANE AND THE
JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE.

(The following are excerpts from an article by Rabbi Robert Goldberg in The Star- a newspaper published by the Jewish Community Council of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.)

The Jewish Defense League is an organization which claims more than six thousand members in nearly twenty cities across the nation. Its leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane, an Orthodox Rabbi, from Queens, was formerly on the editorial staff of a weekly tabloid published in Coney Island, The Jewish Press. In his column, Kahane called attention to the Red Peril and gave special concern to the seductions of Jewish youth by the Left and to protecting American Jews from the "Black Nazis".

The literature of the JDL has two major themes: the Black threat and the Red Menace. Behind every outburst of campus upheaval or urban violence--he, Kahane, explains--is the motive of anti-Semitism, not ghetto conditions, Vietnam, poverty and other social ills. The demand for open admission to universities is regarded by the JDL as a sinister Black plot to let in more Negroes and reduce the number of Jewish students. In 1967 Rabbi Kahane co-authored a book, The Jewish Stake in Vietnam, supporting the war.

The reaction of the organized Jewish community to the JDL has been one of total opposition, with the exception of the United Zionist Revisionists of America, a small Right-wing group which Rabbi Kahane belonged to for years, and which identifies with Beigin and the Herut Party in Israel.

Rabbi Kahane poses as a champion of the Jewish workingman against the Jewish Middle Class and suburbanites. The analogy of the JDL's and Kahane's technique with the Wallace movement is hardly coincidental!

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EVENTS AND VIEWS

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C.L. Sulzberger of the New York Times could hardly be classified as a friend of the Soviet Union. But after a recent visit to that country he was impelled to admit that "the regime itself is not committed to internal anti-Semitism" and that "real anti-Semitism is concentrated among relatively few bigots." (New York Times, July 1, 1970.)

But for Professor Hans J. Morgenthau these conclusions will not do. In a letter to the Times, which he signs as Chairman of the Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry, he takes Sulzberger to task. He cites the publication of some books and cartoons of a presumably anti-Semitic character and argues that in a "totalitarian" country like the USSR such things would not appear if the government were not in favor of them. He maintains that "anti-Semitism is endemic...to the policy of the regime as such."

Aside from Morgenthau's erroneous conception of the Soviet Union as "totalitarian" it is, to say the least, naive to argue that every book, article or cartoon which appears there represents a conscious expression of government policy.

But his letter raises other questions. At one time he was much in the public eye as a vigorous opponent of the war in Vietnam. Today one hears little from him on this score; instead he has devoted himself to the current anti-Soviet crusade. We would only suggest to him that, having lived under Hitler, he should be aware of the poisonous nature of anti-Sovietism and should know that its purpose and effect today are no different than they were under Hitler.

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Der Veg, organ of the Communist Party of Israel, carries the following item in its issue of May 27, 1970:

"In an interview with David Ben-Gurion for Maariv of May 22, he was asked the question:

'There has been a long-standing controversy between yourself and Moshe Sneh. Has there been a change in your relations with him in recent years?'

Ben Gurion answered:

'I met Sneh and I said to him: Well, have you returned to being a Zionist? He did not deny it and I am satisfied with this. The truth is that I have always doubted the reality of Sneh's Communism. I mean that he became a Communist because he thought that the Soviets will come into our land and will need a person who knows the country. The truth is that he really does know the people and the country better than all the Communists put together!'

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We wish to call the attention of our readers to the excellent pamphlet, The Idea of a Palestinian State, by Dr. Emile Touma. Dr. Touma is editor of Al Ittihad, the Arab-language newspaper of the Communist Party of Israel. In the pamphlet, he deals with the proposals of Al Fatah and other Palestine liberation groups for a single Palestinian state in which Moslems, Jews and Christians enjoy full equality. He maintains that such proposals, though they represent a step forward, must nevertheless be rejected on the grounds that a solution of the Palestine question is possible only on the basis of respect for the rights of self-determination of both Israelis and Arabs. Palestine, he contends, must be recognized as a binational area, and solutions can be sought only through mutual agreement of both national groups. Dr. Touma argues his points cogently and lucidly. This is recommended reading.

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COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editorial Committee:

In catching up on some reading I looked over Jewish Affairs again, and once more, I am impressed with its content, so necessary and so timely. The ideas expressed by Meir Vilner are a valid criticism of the Israeli government, and the material in Shlomo Vilensky's letter is of the utmost importance in our progressive press, including the Daily World and the Morning Freiheit.

Too little is known about the growth of progress in the Arab lands. Also, little is known about the growth of the pro=peace movement in Israel, so urgent for their survival.

Indeed, this bulletin, Jewish Affairs, will fill a great void in the progressive movement of our country. I am enclosing a small contribution of \$5.00 toward the cost of publication.

Esther Carroll

Continued -

To the Editorial Committee:

I greet with great satisfaction the appearance of the new publication, Jewish Affairs.

It has been needed for a long time to give information and provide for an exchange of views, through the science of Marxism-Leninism, of issues and events relating to the concerns of Jewish people everywhere. There has been much erroneous and harmful thinking in the radical Left, influenced by Jewish bourgeois nationalism and political Zionism.

I hope for the success of Jewish Affairs in its mission to reach the overwhelming numbers of Jewish masses. Your publication can be of invaluable aid in giving to the Jewish community a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the important events occurring today.

Max R. Naiman, Retired President
City Committee of the
Jewish Cultural Clubs of Chicago

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COMMUNIST PARTY

To the Editorial Committee

In writing up on some matter I looked over Jewish Affairs again and was more than impressed with its content, so necessary and so timely. The ideas expressed by Max Naiman are a solid nucleus of the Jewish movement, and the manner in which Yonah's letter is of the most important kind in our progressive press, including the Left World and the Forward.

Too little is known about the growth of progress in the Arab lands. Also, little is known about the growth of the progressive movement in Israel, so much for their survival.

Indeed, this bulletin, Jewish Affairs, will fill a great void in the progressive movement of our country. I am enclosing a small contribution of \$2.00 toward the cost of publication.

Earle Carroll

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