

WHAT ORIENTATION FOR PALESTINE?

By Dr. Moshe Sneh

The resignation in December 1947 of Dr. Moshe Sneh, one of the vigorous younger Jewish Palestinian leaders and a former top Haganah figure, has profound implications for the realignment of the Jewish people following the UN decision on Palestine. The following article was originally published in Hebrew in Leachdut Haavodah, Palestine newspaper, of January 8, 1948. Dr. Sneh here continues his attack on the application of the Truman Doctrine to Palestine. This article appeared in the first issue of the organ of the recently merged left-wing Palestine parties, Hashomer Hatzair and the Achdut Haavodah Movement.—Eds.

HOW did they vote? On the surface everything appears plain and simple: the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated and voted for a Jewish state, while England withheld its vote. Thus was it recorded in the minutes of the historic UN session, thus was it printed in the newspapers in every language, editorialized about, and referred to in all the meetings of appreciation for those governments that voted on our behalf. Factually, it is true that all this happened—on the evidence of the vote alone.

When scrutinized more carefully, the actual relations appear entirely different. England certainly was not neutral, as would appear from her abstention from the vote. On the contrary, she exerted all her forces up to the last minute in her fight against a Jewish state. The Soviet Union, when it was convinced that the time was not yet ripe for a solution through a binational, Jewish-Arab state, did everything in its power, fought all the way for the creation of a Jewish state and for partition. But the United States maneuvered this way and that until she was finally compelled to agree on the plan. And actually as the vote approached and in the course of the voting her "yes" was reluctant, and immediately after the vote she reverted to her original position of "yes and no and maybe."

It is true that President Truman imposed his will upon the American policy. But his desire to be re-elected was the deciding factor for him and his party. . . . The stand of the Truman group was helped by the Soviet delegation's position. Their argument ran somewhat as follows:

Britain has long been discredited in the eyes of the Jews. If the United States too should go back on all the promises made to

the Jews, then Russia would emerge as the sole power defending Jewish rights. The Jews are, after all, still a factor to be reckoned with. They are an important factor in the Mediterranean. The world population of Jews is 11 million, one half of whom live on the American continent. Public opinion still shows an interest in the Jewish problem. Therefore, for the United States to vote against Jewish rights would not only antagonize the Jews, but also many democratic circles throughout the world. This doesn't pay. . . . Thus we can see that the United States' "yes" was an echo of the USSR's "yes."

It is true that the actual execution of the Truman Doctrine is not in Truman's power. The power of administering it and adapting it to the various parts of the world lies with the military, headed by General Marshall, and with the group of magnates of whom Secretary of Defense Forrestal is the head. This group has no stake in the coming elections. With respect to Palestine it has no other interest but the imperialist alliance with England, which depends upon intrigue with its feudal puppets. Despite all measures adopted, the fate of the Middle East is not yet securely in their hands. And the thought that the day might come when they might be forced to leave, disturbs their peace and pushes them in the direction of more intensive exploitation of oil resources, and more actively to fortify their positions. The agitation over the partition plan is aimed at hindering and delaying its execution. For a while approval of partition represented a breach between Truman's directives and Truman's Doctrine. But on the morrow of the vote the Truman Doctrine reasserted itself all the more energetically.

Therefore, to equate the position of the United States with that of Russia in relation to Palestine is to be guilty of a vulgarized over-simplification which misleads and tends to lull one into a false sense of security. The contention that "the United States and Russia supported us equally" is misleading because support that is not wholehearted, is not the same as wholehearted support. It is essentially not a question of a single act of agreement, but of a firm stand on carrying out the agreement. . . .

At Lake Success England abstained from the vote. In Palestine she is not abstaining. She is frustrating the decision. Naturally, serious doubts have arisen in

the mind of the British government whether it can succeed in nullifying the decision. Therefore Britain is trying to cut down the borders of the Jewish state, and to reduce its absorptive capacity and to curtail its power to support itself. The smaller, weaker and more shrunken the Jewish state becomes, the greater its need for protection, and the better chance for Britain to remain in the saddle. The accumulation of "incidents," the present bloodshed in Palestine, is very convenient for those who planned this curtailment and enslavement. As long as Britain is in possession of the mandate and bears "the responsibility to issue decrees and to organize," serious disputes with nations bordering on Palestine which might cause international intervention, are not in her interest. But these "incidents" which have continued for the past five weeks, serve an important purpose in the plan to destroy the realization of the UN decision. They weaken the *Yishuv*. They cause loss of life and of weapons by fighting as well as by government confiscation. They undermine the social order and economic capabilities of the *Yishuv*. And, most important, they prevent the organization of the Jewish state and the vital, fundamental preparation for it, a legal and open army.

This chaotic situation can last until the day when the mandate terminates, about May 15. When Britain's "responsibility" is terminated, she will not be alarmed if the fires of strife rage higher and if Arab invasion from neighboring countries will occur before the Jewish defense is organized. Then the British will have no responsibility, but a large portion of the British Army will still be occupying all the key posts in the country, since the date that the British Army must evacuate Palestine has been set for much later than the date for the termination of the mandate. On the latter date the UN commission will enter the country (and it is the British plan to delay as long as possible the date of the commission's arrival) and will not have any administrative power at its disposal. And in the midst of such a disturbed situation, and with no authority, the UN commission is supposed to establish two independent states and one international city with a single united economy!

The following possibilities are thus open to those who wish to nullify the decision:

To cut down the borders of the Jewish state by military force. (We've read in the London press that the Jews would be unable to defend the Negev and the Hulah, and would have to concentrate on defending the narrow strip of seacoast; we've heard the kind suggestions that we evacuate the Negev, etc.)

Or the commission might decide that it is not empowered to re-interpret the partition proposal. (The representative from

Denmark hastened to include this possibility among three, in a talk with the British press, prior to his leaving Europe.)

To appeal to the British Army kindly to remain in Palestine to "restore order."

Protracted discussion in the organs of UN, with the possibility that the entire matter of partition be taken up at the next UN session (which will take place after the United States election in the fall).

In a word, there are many ways to nullify the original decision.

Britain has thus far voided two distinct intentions of the UN. She has not cleared, and has done nothing to clear a port for the Jews for increased immigration; and she has caused the UN commission to arrive in Palestine too late, thus bringing to nothing the UN decision that a legal armed force immediately be constituted with the responsibility of executing the decision.

And the United States? She has exerted no pressure whatsoever against England to compel her to carry out the demands of the UN and to make possible legal Jewish immigration to Palestine. On the contrary, the United States is exerting pressure on the Jewish Agency to stop "illegal" immigration.

The United States is not helping the Jews to equip a legal, Jewish army. On the contrary, she is confiscating weapons assigned, as it appears, to any "illegal" Jewish militia whatsoever. America is sticking to its famous policy of non-intervention, a policy which always aids the aggressors, the destroyers of international agreements, and peace.

And what country has pointed to the

dangers that are involved in the aggravated situation existing in Palestine under British domination? Who has pointed out the need for intervention on the part of the Security Council, in order to protect and implement the decision of the UN Security Council?

The country which not only voted for, but was previously for, and is now for a Jewish state—must we not admit that that country is the Soviet Union? . . .

We can, in spite of everything, still overcome the canny plots and all the dangers. But we can do this only on condition that we know *who* our enemy is. Then we shall be able to destroy his plans.

It is not enough that we shall defend ourselves and have a certain success. Our enemy has taken into account our strength, our iron resolve to defend ourselves and to fight. Our strong stand against the Arab attacks does not destroy the devilish plans of the imperialist government. We are obliged to shatter the *whole* plot, and not merely to maintain our position in the various phases of its operation. It is our responsibility to begin the gradual assumption of self-government as soon as possible in all three provinces of the partitioned country: the east portion of Galilee, the coastal lowlands and the Negev. For this purpose we must have an armed Jewish force, legal and in the open. It is necessary to have freedom of movement and action in the framework of international agreements, and freedom to possess and import arms.

All these ends cannot be achieved under the British administration, which bosses and domineers the country. We are therefore obliged to develop a great political offensive against the British government, which opposes the will of the United Nations. Therefore we must come out with an official protest against Britain in the UN Security Council. We must therefore immediately demand, with no delay whatsoever, the intervention of the United Nations, before even the first stages of the plot of destruction are realized.

Through public pressure there is hope that the United States can be dislodged from its neutral position. The incentive of the coming presidential elections has not yet evaporated. The pressure of public

opinion, if we understand how to organize it effectively once more, can have a considerable result. And energetic support from the Soviet delegation in the UN also will compel the American government to put its cards on the table: does the United States really want to carry out the decision, or, on the contrary, is it prepared to help England destroy it?

The sooner we do this, the better our chances are that America will not be able to afford remaining too far outstripped by the Russian position, and that she will also help to *carry out* the decision. And on the other hand, the longer we delay our open protest against England, the fewer are our chances that the policies of the United States will serve our side.

Now, and without delay, we can put the alternatives before the United States: either agree to send an international armed force to Palestine with the participation of the Soviet Union, or else delegate full rights to the Haganah and arm it adequately to cope with the situation that will arise with the termination of the mandate. Only if we act now can we still be successful, for in a few months we may have missed the bus.

We can only succeed if we completely stop depending on treacherous Britain, if we stop being afraid of the friendship of the Soviet Union, if we exert pressure on the United States which is still vacillating, if we don't refrain from fighting for international aid. We can be successful if we stop pleading with the High Commissioner in Jerusalem and the Cabinet Ministers in London voluntarily to leave the Jewish state. We can be successful if we cease to concentrate our efforts on England's Foreign Ministry or Washington's State Department. We can be successful if the Zionist policy of being keenly partial to Britain is replaced, not by a strongly partial policy to the partners England and America, but by a policy truly our own, a truly internationalist policy.

No, the discussion about "orientation," that is, about the meaning of our political work, is not theoretical, not a discussion of the coming of the Messiah. It is a discussion of our tactics of yesterday and today. It is a discussion about the line that leads either to the realization of the political achievement we have reached, or to our losing it. The problem cannot be disposed of by hemming and hawing that "the United States and the Soviet Union both supported us, so why must we have an orientation?"

Our tossing vessel lies in the straits. Every shortcoming, every mistake on the part of the captain, can lead to disaster. It is not yet too late to straighten out our line.

(Translated from the Yiddish by Rae Lobel.)

Now Showing American Premiere

A New Soviet Color Film

"THE LUCKY BRIDE"

also complete program
SOVIET COLOR FILMS

Next Attraction:
"BOHEMIAN RAPTURE"

STANLEY 42nd St. & 7th Ave.
THEATRE New York City
Wisconsin 7-9686

Darryl F. Zanuck
presents

Gregory PECK
Dorothy McGUIRE
John GARFIELD

Celeste Holm • Anne Revere
June Havoc • Albert Dekker
Jane Wyatt • Dean Stockwell
Sam Jaffe

20th
CENTURY-FOX

in Laura Z. Hobson's
**Gentleman's
Agreement**

Produced by Screen Play by Directed by
DARRYL F. ZANUCK • MOSS HART • ELIA KAZAN

Doors
Open
8:30
BRANDT'S
MAYFAIR
Extra
Late
Show
Mighty
6th 7th Ave. & 47th St.