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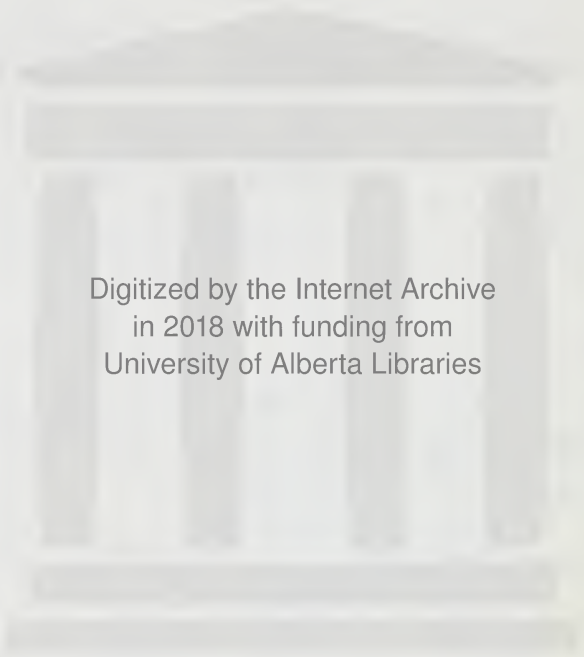
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THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL
HOLDS ITS 14TH PLENARY SESSION

On January 19-20, the Central Committee, Communist Party of Israel, held its 14th plenary session, with members of the Central Control Commission attending.

The meeting was chaired by Cde. Tawfiq Toubi, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the C. C. Secretariat.

Cde. Meir Vilner, Secretary of the Political Bureau, lectured on the following subject : "Toward the great occasion — the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution".

Following a debate which was summed up by the lecturer, the Central Committee endorsed the lecture and adopted a number of resolutions.

RESOLUTION OF THE 14th PLENARY SESSION OF
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL,
(19th - 20th January, 1967)

Towards the Historic Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the
Great October Socialist Revolution

I

1. On November 7th 1967, 50 years will have elapsed since the outbreak of the greatest revolution in the annals of humanity — the Great October Socialist Revolution. This 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution is indeed a day of great rejoicing for working people the world over, a festive occasion for the working people of Israel.

50 years of the October Revolution are 50 years of Socialism in active construction and the laying of foundations for Communism.

The Great October Socialist Revolution differed essentially from all previous revolutions in the history of mankind :

* All the revolutions that preceded the October Revolution replaced the domination of another exploiting class. The October Revolution overthrew — for the first time ever — the rule of the capitalists and the landlords, setting up in its place the rule of the workers and the peasants, abolishing the exploitation of man by man, cutting out the social roots of class exploitation and national oppression.

* All previous revolutions replaced rule by one minority with rule by another minority. As for the October Revolution, it gave birth to government by the majority of the people — the rule of the working class, the peasantry and all toiling people; it produced a regime that is the most democratic human society has known.

* All the revolutions that preceded the October Revolution failed to sever the roots of national oppression and discrimination.

The Socialist regime set up in the Soviet Union extirpated the social causes of national inequality, and ensured full equality of rights to all peoples.

The Socialist regime in the Soviet Union ensured the economic, social and political conditions guaranteeing women full and effective

equality of rights, opened up before the youth tremendous, literally unprecedented vistas, created a new man endowed with high social and moral qualities.

The successful march of Socialist construction in the USSR, its transformation from a backward land to a developed industrial country, the realization by the Soviet Union of the greatest Socialist cultural revolution history has known, the effective provision of the right to work, rest, free education and free medical care — all these proved to the peoples of the whole world the superiority of Socialism over capitalism, the correctness of the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin.

The victory of the Socialist regime in the USSR shows the working people of the entire world that under Socialism — as opposed to capitalism — there is no unemployment or hunger, the standard of living of all members of society rises constantly and the economy develops, untroubled by crises. The USSR has shown working people throughout the world that unemployment and poverty are no objective necessities but fruits of the capitalist system.

Construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union took place under extremely harsh historical conditions (both at home and abroad), in a backward country, after a trail of destruction had been left by a World War, a Civil War and foreign intervention, under the conditions of a menacing capitalist encirclement which lasted no less than 30 years.

In these 50 years, the homeland of the October Revolution — led by Lenin's glorious Party — has travelled a splendid road of achievements and victories. No difficulties or mistakes (some of them inevitable in view of the very difficult conditions in which Socialism had to be built in a single country, some of them due to the cult of the individual) can possibly hide the main and essential point — the general line of the C. P. S. U. which has remained correct throughout these last 50 years that have changed the face of our whole planet.

All honour, appreciation and respect for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, for the Soviet working class and the peoples of the USSR who — under the most difficult circumstances — were able, by dint of self-sacrifice, to build up a society that brought light to the exploited and oppressed of all lands and gave a powerful impetus to the world's revolutionary movement.

2. The Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the bloodiest of all wars man has ever fought, the Soviet Army's liberation of the peoples from the Hitlerite regime of terror showed all peoples the great strength and liberating mission of the Socialist regime.

The speedy rebuilding of the USSR's economy after the terrible destruction wrought it by the Nazi beasts, the impetuous development of that economy despite all difficulties, the tremendous successes achieved by Soviet science and technology in conquering outer space, the further strengthening of the USSR's defence potential — all these reinforce world peace and deter the imperialist warmongers.

The 50th anniversary of the October Revolution will be celebrated at a time when there exists a world Socialist system, counting 14 states — a third of the whole human race.

The USSR's victory over Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, the Soviet Union's political-moral, economic and military might, the assistance it gives all peoples fighting for peace, national liberation and Socialism — were a factor of major importance in the victory of a number of Socialist revolutions in Europe and Asia, as well as in the Latin-American country Cuba, the collapse of imperialism's colonial system, the liberation of many peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the establishment of a large number of independent states.

This new development gave a powerful impetus to the national-liberation movement, while several former colonies put into action social measures of a progressive nature, which placed them on the road of non-capitalist development.

The 50th anniversary of the October Revolution will be celebrated in a new international situation which has, to an overwhelming extent, been brought about thanks to the October Revolution and the historic victories won by the USSR — conditions where a world war is no longer inevitable but where there nevertheless persists a great threat to world peace as a result of American imperialist aggression (above all, in Vietnam), and the reinforcement of neo-Nazism in West Germany.

3. It is the USSR — the land of the October Revolution — that constitutes the main bastion for all the world's forces of peace, for all the forces of revolution. It is the Soviet Union which bears the brunt of the Socialist system's defence efforts, the main res-

possibility for the defence of Socialism and peoples' freedom in the face of imperialist aggression. The Soviet Union is the main force protecting world peace, peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems and the principle of peaceable negotiated settlement for disputes between states.

At their 1960 Consultation, the Communist and Workers Parties confirmed once again that the "recognized vanguard of the world Communist movement has always been, and will remain so in the future, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as the most experienced and best steeled detachment of the international Communist movement".

Historical experience goes to show that there is — and indeed cannot be — no such thing as anti-Soviet Communism and that proletarian internationalism contains within itself the most consistent defence of the peoples' national interests. It is therefore regrettable that the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party have taken the path of anti-Sovietism, jettisoned the internationalist principles of the October Revolution and, in their descent down the path of nationalism, have done serious damage to the international Communist movement, the cause of Socialism in China and throughout the world.

The Communist Party of Israel remains, as before, faithful to the principle of proletarian internationalism, proudly holding aloft the banner of solidarity with the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with all the forces of Socialism and peace the world over. In so doing, our Communist Party serves in the best possible way the interests of the Israeli working class and the national interests of Israel.

II

The Great October Socialist Revolution has brought the torch of liberation to the peoples of the East — among them, the peoples of the Middle East. As for the masses of the Jewish people in the USSR — the October Revolution freed them from persecution and anti-Semitism, from pogroms and the "Pale of Settlement". The Soviet Union was the very first country to outlaw anti-Semitism. During World War II, the USSR saved millions of Jews from extermination at Nazi hands as well as the Jewish community in Palestine from the threat of Hitlerite invasion and annihilation. Following World War II, the USSR took a clear stand in favour of the

peoples of Syria and the Lebanon and other Arab peoples in their struggle to rid themselves from the yoke of British and French colonial rule; it also backed the Jewish and the Arab peoples of Palestine in their fight to overthrow the yoke of colonial rule and came out in favour of their right to self-determination and national independence.

The Soviet Union conducts a principled Leninist policy — in the Middle East, as in all other parts of the world. The Soviet Union has always stood — without fear or favour — by the side of the Arab and Israeli peoples in their defence of their national independence. There is no anti-Israeli policy on the part of the USSR; it is Israel's rulers who pursue an anti-Soviet policy and it is they alone who must bear the blame for the fact that the outstretched hand of the Soviet Union is in fact rebuffed. This results from Israel's ruling circles' waging an anti-Soviet slander campaign and tagging up with the colonialist Western powers in their machinations against the cause of peace and peoples' independence, as well in the Middle East as in the international arena.

The Soviet Union fights to avert a new world war and to ensure peace in our area, to the benefit of all peoples. The USSR upholds the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people, just as she upholds the national rights of the State of Israel.

In struggling to prevent imperialist intervention in Syria's internal affairs and Israel's entanglement in a military adventure, the Soviet Union acts to the benefit of all Middle Eastern peoples, whose national security is endangered by imperialism's interventionist designs.

Just like the Arab peoples, the people of Israel have no loyaler friend than the Soviet Union. Friendship with the Soviet Union — where the working people are masters — is vitally important for Israel's working people, a supreme national interest for the Israeli people. Those who sow hostility and suspicion toward the USSR work, in actual fact, to the detriment of the Israeli working class and Israel's national state interests. A policy of independence from imperialism in both the world and Middle Eastern arenas would make for better relations between Israel and the Soviet Union.

III

The Central Committee, Communist Party of Israel, calls on Party members and sympathizers, members of the Young Communist

League of Israel, all working people and seekers of peace and progress in our country to publicly celebrate that memorable event — the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

To this end, the Central Committee resolves as follows :

- 1) The year 1967 shall, for the Communist Party of Israel, be a year of celebration of the Great October Socialist Revolution.
- 2) In 1967, the Party's political-ideological education shall centre on subjects connected with the history of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the achievements made by the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Soviet policy in the Middle East, Israeli-Soviet relations, the USSR's struggle to ensure peace in our part of the world and in the entire globe.
- 3) To hold a festive national Party conference to mark the October Revolution's jubilee.
- 4) The Party Press shall publish special festive issues to mark the event. Our Communist Press shall, in preparation for the occasion, publish special issues devoted to the topic. As from April 24th of this year (Vladimir I. Lenin's birthday), Party newspapers shall carry a permanent column devoted to the October Revolution's 50th anniversary.
- 5) The Party shall publish a book (in both Hebrew and Arabic) on the occasion of the anniversary.
- 6) The Party's District and Branch committees shall draw up District and Branch programmes for the October Revolution's 50th anniversary celebrations, to be put into effect both within the Party and in activity of a broader nature. Care must be taken to organize study-days, exhibitions, festive evenings and parties and other activities.
- 7) Party members shall actively participate in — and themselves initiate — activities carried out within the framework of the Israel-USSR Friendship Movement.
- 8) Efforts shall be made to achieve cooperation with other political forces and public figures as well as scientific and cultural personalities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution and associate the broadest possible sections of the Israeli public in marking this jubilee.

C O M M U N I Q U E

ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY
OF ISRAEL

The Central Committee, Communist Party of Israel, hereby announces that, in the past few months talks have taken place, on our initiative with the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group, with the objective to advance the cause of restoring unity to the ranks of Communists in Israel and to ensure cooperation and coordination in both working-class and general-democratic struggles as well as within democratic organizations.

The Central Committee notes with regret that the numerous and persistent efforts put in by our Party since the split to restore the unity of Communists in Israel, have been consistently brought to failure by the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group.

The Central Committee notes that, during the period of the talks, the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group adopted positions with regard to the Eshkol government which carried out anti-workers, anti-national and pro-imperialist policy, with regard to the Palestine problem and the Israeli-Arab relations, with regard to the fight for peace and against the danger of war and aggression in our region, with regard to the international and democratic organizations, with regard to Israeli-Soviet relations and the Soviet policy of peace in our region and with respect to a number of other questions — positions constituting a further material departure from the general line followed by the Communist Party of Israel, from proletarian internationalism and from the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The policy and acts carried out by the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group, as well as the above-mentioned talks, prove that their aim in carrying out the talks was certainly not to promote the cause of cooperation and restoration of unity of the Communists in Israel, but rather to utilise them badly in relations with fraternal Parties who showed perfectly serious concern in view of the split which occurred in the Communist Party of Israel as well as sympathy for the efforts being made to restore unity.

The leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group even refused to accept the proposal to publish a joint public communique to the effect that the joint talks aim at extending cooperation and restoring unity.

We call our comrades who, for long years, were active together with us within the ranks of the Communist Party of Israel, to seriously reflect on the path they have taken, to ask themselves what they have, in fact, achieved in obstinately persisting in the split and straying far from the Party's general line? No positive result whatsoever was achieved. On the contrary, the nationalist line adopted by the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group have caused grave harm to the Israeli working class, to Israel's national interests as well as to the struggle waged by Israel's Communists to bring about a shift in official Israeli policy toward peace, independence from imperialism, neutralism, friendship with the Soviet Union and social progress: serious harm was caused as well to the cause of Israeli-Arab peace. Imperialism and reaction are the only forces to have gained from the split and from the fact that the leaders of the Mikunis-Sneh group have abandoned the general line of the Communist Party of Israel.

We call upon comrades, with whom we fought together for many years, in order to advance the lofty goals of the Communist Party of Israel, to return to the general line of the Communist Party of Israel, thus helping to restore unity of the Communists in Israel.

We shall, as before, continue to strive for cooperation in the fight to defend the interests of the working people, on all fronts of public democratic struggles, and to safeguard the democratic organizations. We shall, as before, continue to strive for restoring the unity of Israeli Communists, on the basis of the general line of the Communist Party of Israel, as expressed in the joint pre-Congress theses worked out in preparation for the 15th Party Congress.

There cannot and, in fact, will not be such a thing as two Communist parties in Israel. These latest developments have still further borne out the correctness of the general line pursued by the Communist Party of Israel to which we remained loyal and which was and remains, the only foundation for restoring the unity of the Communists in Israel.

Appeared in "Zu Haderekh",
26.1.1967.

THE COMMUNIST PARLIAMENTARY GROUP CALLS ON ISRAEL
TO PERMANENTLY RETURN TO THE ISRAEL-SYRIA MIXED
ARMISTICE COMMISSION

The appeal issued by U. N. Secretary General U Thant for a special session of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission to be convened and the actual agreement of the Israeli and Syrian governments to hold such a meeting with the aim of threshing out various problems connected with the Demilitarized Zones on the Israeli-Syrian Armistice Demarcation Line — have been welcomed by all those concerned for the maintenance of peace in the area.

The Israel-Syria Armistice Commission has, to all intents and purposes, been paralyzed ever since 1957. It was then that the Israeli Government decided to boycott the Commission in protest against its rulings on the status of the above-mentioned demilitarized zones. Premier Levi Eshkol's Knesset statement of 17.1.1967, his reply of January 24th to the debate on the same statement, as well as all kinds of official statements and Press comment accurately reflect the menacing stance and raucous battle-cries of the extremist and militarist circles : they urge strong military action against Syria, for "Syria to be spoken to in a language she understands..." !

Communist M.K. Meir Vilner took the matter up in the Knesset debate of 24.1.67. We publish below excerpts from his speech :

M. Vilner : Let this new round of talks be the start for an agreement.

"Our (parliamentary) group calls on the Government to accede to the U. N. Security Council's demand and permanently return to the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission" — stated the representative of the Communist group, M.K. Meir Vilner, in the course of the plenary Knesset debate held on 24.1.67, in the wake of the Government's announcement concerning the security situation.

M.K. M. Vilner began by saying that throughout the years, within the Knesset and without, the Communist Party of Israel had always said the Government must return to the Armistice Commission and strive for the peaceable settlement of all disputed issues. That is why the Communist group also welcomed the recent initiative by the U. N. Secretary General in asking the governments of both Israel and Syria to refrain from military action of any sort as well as to immediately

and unconditionally accept General Odd Bull's proposal for the convening of a special session of the (Israel-Syria) Armistice Commission".

M.K. M. Vilner then went on to say that while, in his statement of the 17th inst., Prime Minister L. Eshkol did agree to this suggestion of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Observers, he followed this up immediately by the use of threatening language toward Syria — in both his Knesset announcement and his speech at the evening with University-trained professionals, members of Mapai.

Turning toward the Right-wing benches of the House, M. Vilner said: "We reject the virulent militaristic propaganda of Gahal's and Rafi's representatives in the Knesset, whom the very word "negotiations" scares out of their wits."

The speaker for the Communist group then voiced his concern at the danger of this special Armistice Commission meeting (which, because of the conditions set by the Government of Israel, would strictly limit itself to a single subject — the demilitarized zones) being a mere passing episode, immediately after which the border situation would go on deteriorating "on a large scale", as U. Thant had precisely warned. He nevertheless expressed the hope that the M.A.C. meeting would be an auspicious beginning of dialogue, which would be continued in the future.

M.K. M. Vilner also stressed that the whole tragedy of the security situation is epitomized in the declaration made by the Prime Minister at his meeting, a month ago, with a group of University professors — that during all his years in office he hadn't found his way to conducting a security (defence) policy that would in any way differ from the one pursued in the course of the 15 preceding years.

The representative of the Communist group then went on to explain that, just as there are powerful international forces desirous of seeing the situation aggravated and working to that end — who proceed from the selfish interests of the oil magnates and the maintenance of military bases as well as from the desire to overthrow the anti-imperialist regime in Syria — so, too, there are other powerful international forces (first and foremost, the Soviet Union) who are desirous of averting a conflagration and working to that end — for the peaceable, negotiated settlement of all disputes between states.

The speaker then dwelt on the need to brand recent acts of sabotage and terror, which serve the ends of those looking for something to pretext intervention by the U.S. 6th Fleet and British forces — and all this, to set off a pro-Western coup in Syria.

M.K. M. Vilner concluded by addressing his condolences to the relatives of the young man killed at Moshav (cooperative village) Dishon and to all the inhabitants of the village. He stressed that the one and only way to avoid additional victims falling on both sides of the border was to strive for the peaceable solution of the Israeli-Arab dispute and to strictly refrain from any acts of a hostile nature. A Samoa'-style raid across the border would only bring rejoicing in the hearts of the terrorists and of their masters on the other side of the Atlantic.

Representatives of all Knesset groups took part in the debate, which was summed up by the Premier, Levi Eshkol. When it ended, voting took place on the Premier's announcement and on the motions tabled by the parliamentary groups. By the votes of the Coalition groups, the Knesset endorsed the Premier's statement and rejected all the motions tabled by the Opposition groups. As for the Communist group it voted against both the Coalition and Right-wing motions.

The Communist group's draft summary motion as presented by M. Vilner :

1. The Knesset welcomes the U.N. Secretary-General's initiative for the convening of a special session of the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission and calls on the Government to make, for its part, every possible effort for the talks to lead to agreements conducive to reduced tension.
2. The Knesset resolves that the Government of Israel bring its delegation permanently back to the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission.
3. The Knesset resolves that Israel refrain from carrying out military actions of any kind across the Armistice lines and shall actively work for the negotiated and peaceable settlement of all disputed matters.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU
COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL.

LET US SAFEGUARD PEACE!

The Communist Party of Israel voices its anxiety and concern at the stepped-up tension and increasing number of incidents on the Israeli-Syrian border. The Communist Party puts the working people and the broad masses on guard : there is a grave danger of a conflagration breaking out that would seriously undermine peace and security.

At first sight, it appears that these incidents stem from the ambiguous situation obtaining in the demilitarized zones and a dispute as to rights over land and its cultivation. But what are the actual facts ?

* In an interview to "Davar" (6.1.67), Prime Minister Levi Eshkol denied that the recent shooting in the North had any connection with seasonal agricultural work and threatened Syria with military action.

* Tension is rising on the Syrian-Jordan border, too, while the Israeli Premier declared Israel would not stand idly by if the status quo in Jordan were upset.

* The Western powers have been lately stepping up their arms deliveries to those Middle Eastern states whose governments are hostile to the present Syrian regime.

* The Chairman of the U. S. Senate's Armed Services Committee has recently paid visits to Jordan and Israel and held talks with the leaders of both countries.

* Intensification of tension on Syria's borders with Israel and Jordan, coincided with exacerbation of the oil conflict opposing Syria to the British-American Iraqi Petroleum Company (I. P. C.).

All this goes to show that alien forces, Western oil and arms' magnates are behind the stepped-up tension.

Neither the people of Israel nor that of Syria have any stake in tension or war. The fact that tension has shot up precisely at this juncture and precisely on Syria's borders with Israel and Jordan shows that it results from the machinations of American and British monopolies seeking a pretext for armed intervention by the U. S. 6th

Fleet and British forces stationed in the Middle East — the aim being to seat a pro-Western Government in Syria with the help of Syrian reaction and safeguarding the throne of their stooge, King Hussein.

The American and British imperialists would very much like us to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them, that our sons should shed their blood to protect their control of the area's oil and their strategic bases.

The experience gained over many years by our people proves that the imperialists' traditional policy is one of "divide and rule" and that, in order to ensure the flow of billions of dollars' profits to their pockets, they are ready to let the blood of young Jews and Arabs.

Out of concern for the well-being and security of the State of Israel, the Communist Party of Israel calls on the working people and the popular masses to show vigilance and oppose any military action launched across the border. While coming out in favour of the safeguard of calm and security on the borders and for the peaceable solution of all specific problems under dispute, within the framework of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission: The Armistice Commission is today the only organized body in which representatives of the two countries can meet to thresh out disputed issues.

The Communist Party of Israel demands that the Government stop boycotting the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission, as urged by the U.N. Security Council and as required by the cause of peace and security for the Israeli people.

Let all the forces imbued with a desire for peace and a sense of national responsibility come together in the struggle to avert a military adventure against Syria!

Let us learn the lesson of Samo'a!

Let us concern ourselves with our national security and not with the profits of foreign oil corporations!

Let quiet be preserved on the borders!

We shall defend peace!

Published in Zu-Haderekh
and Al-Ittihad

Tel Aviv, 10.1.1967.

THE STATE BUDGET FOR 1967/68 — IL. 5.13 BILLION

Greater Restraint for the Workers and Greater Encouragement for the Capitalists

(from an article by Tamar Gozhansky - Zu-Haderekh, 28.12.66)

Minister of Finance. Pinhas Sapir, announced the continuation of the policy of economic "restraint", when on 20.12.1966 he brought before the Knesset the State Budget for 1967/68, totalling IL. 5.13 billion (\$1.71 billion).

In his programmatic speech, Sapir stressed again his pride at the Government's having "succeeded" in its new economic programme, in that it scotched "the exaggerated claims put in by the workers". A single example among many others: "industrial plants have sacked 4 to 5,000 workers, who have suddenly found themselves without work — while just a year or two ago, not only did it seem to them that their employment was absolutely guaranteed them, but that they could even advance exaggerated wage demands". It is the Government's official intention to pursue the policy of economic restraint, whose aim is none other than to slow up the pace of economic activity. The Government was forced to adopt this course because of the grave straits in which the economy found itself. The first figures for 1966 (from the booklet: "The National Budget for 1967"), show clear signs of a recessional situation, bordering on an economic crisis.

Indices of Economic Development in the years 1964-1966 (in percentages)

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>
Real Gross Product (annual modifications)	10	7	1 - 2
Gross Investment (annual modification)	21	-6	-14
Industrial Production " "	15	10	3 - 4
Labour Productivity " "	6	4	1.4
Percentage of unemployed in labour force	3.3	3.7	6.6
Real per capita available income (annual modification)	5	3.5	-3.4

We see that the present year has seen almost no increase whatever in the output of the entire economy, because of the sharp fall in investments (a drop of 14% as compared with 1965, and of 19% — almost a fifth! — below the figure for 1964), and the small size of the increase in industrial production. For all the rosy prophecies made for it, the policy of restraint has failed to bring about any significant rise in labour

productivity (and this despite increased production quotas) — which in 1966 went up by no more than 1.5%. The economic freeze did, however, show itself in a sharp drop of the standard of living in Israel : the percentage of unemployed in the total labour force doubled, while the per capita income (after deduction of price and tax rises) actually dropped by 3.5%.

The "National Budget for 1966" provided for a 7-8% boost in the real gross product, but the actual rise was quite insignificant — some 1 to 2%.

As for investments, which were to have gone up by 15%, they actually dropped by 14%.

Inflation and Debts

The inflated budget for 1967/68 (an increase of 11.5% over the preceding one) does, it is true, promise a certain increase in the appropriations for economic needs and social objectives (education, health, social welfare), but, nevertheless, Israel's economy will be subjected to grave dangers, due to the methods used to finance it.

The explanatory remarks to the draft budget (part A, page 38), state quite explicitly : "The estimate of State revenue for the year 1967/68 is based on the assumption of full economic activity. But the estimate of revenue will not be realized, to the extent that economic activity will prove to be more limited." And since it can be reasonably supposed that not even the injection of a certain sum of Government money into the economy will have it already working at full steam by next year, it can already be stated, with almost complete certainty, that the estimate of State revenue will, in fact, remain unrealized. What then?

The Government tells us that, in such an eventuality, it will take loans from the central bank (Bank of Israel) and from abroad. In other words, the Government intends to step up the issuance of printed money (loans from the central bank) and pile up its debts to other countries.

The Treasury's financial report for 31.3.66, puts the State debt at IL. 6.3 billion : IL. 2.8 billion on account of domestic loans and IL. 3.5 billion on account of foreign ones. The 1967/68 Budget, too, retains this trend of sinking ever deeper in debt.

The greater part of the 1967/68 Development Budget will be financed from foreign and domestic loans; the Development Budget will come to IL. 1,642 million, of which IL. 1,461 million (i. e. 88.6%) will be financed by loans. In previous years, the Government made

use of German Reparation funds and various Grants-in-Aid (mostly from U.S. sources -trans.), and was therefore not as dependent on loans. as it is now. Today, however, despite the huge amount of capital that has flown into the Israeli economy over the years, the Government is unable to finance development work from the regular Budget and is thus forced to resort to loans.

Loans, especially those from foreign sources, intensify our economic dependence on the providers of these loans (especially the U.S.) and compel the Government to devote a considerable portion of its budget to paying interest and refunding debts.

* * *

MK Meir Vilner: THE BUDGET OF AN INSOLUBLE CRISIS

We print below excerpts from the speech M. K. M. Vilner made as a contribution to the general Knesset debate on the Budget (as reported by "Zu Haderekh" and "Al Ittihad").

The nature of the 1967/68 State Budget is unmistakably clear. It is a budget aimed at taking money from the workers and the masses of working people and transferring it to the pockets of big capitalists — especially foreign ones. Far from doing anything whatsoever to resolve the problems besetting the national economy, it only aggravates them still further. The policy of economic "restraint" has not and cannot cure the economy of its ills and it has only resulted in a drop in the working people's standard of living, an economic recession and increased subservience to foreign capital.

The Minister of Finance sees as signs of the plan's success the fact that the workers are sometimes forced to give up part of their wages in order not to be dismissed ("The policy of restraint has inculcated in the public a different attitude toward the place of work..."), "the fact that workers in export plants decide to content themselves with only half the wage increment due them", ... "The workers will understand it is sometimes worth their while to do without the rise in salary, in order to retain their place of work" — P. Sapir dixit) as well as the fact that a campaign has been launched to raise production quotas, at the expense of the workers' sweat and health and lower the consumption rates of the workers and the broad masses ("We have learnt from experience that a large number of enterprises

can at one and the same time step up their output while decreasing the number of employees, even without any big investments in up-to-date equipment. A shift has begun toward correcting production quotas. . . ." — P. Sapir dixit).

While not proving at all the success of Finance Minister Sapir's economic programme, the above certainly does show up the overtly anti-labour and anti-popular nature of his policy.

Some disturbing developments in the economy

What is more, very disturbing developments have taken place in Israel's economy: the rise in the real gross product, which was 10% in 1964, dropped to a mere 1-2% in 1966. Gross investment in the economy, which in 1964 had increased by 21% actually fell in 1966 by 14%. As for the increment in industrial production which had totalled 15% in 1964, it hardly came to 3% in 1966.

The ranks of the unemployed keep on swelling

Unemployment is the gravest blow struck at the working people — both those engaged in manual and intellectual work.

In the booklet "The National Budget for 1967", page 11, we read: "The number of the non-employed from amongst those belonging to the labour force was, on an annual average, 62,000, as against 33,000 in 1965. The percentage of the non-employed from among those belonging to the labour force has therefore risen from 3.6% in 1965 to 6.6% in 1966."

When official sources have already come to the point of releasing figures such as these, we can well imagine what the situation is really like.

After devoting, in his Budget speech, a few cliché phrases of consolation to the tens of thousands of unhappy families whose bread-winners are unemployed, the Minister of Finance stressed (in order to avoid any possible delusions) that, far from being on the point of solution, the problem of unemployment will actually get still worse.

The spectre of hunger

In view of the danger of an economic crisis (if the policy of "restraint" will go on for just another a year), the unemployed workers' cry of distress and the struggle they are waging throughout the country and the resistance they are putting up — the Minister of Finance was compelled to restrain certain aspects of the policy of restraint, without in the slightest altering its basic direction.

The Government offers no answer to the question as how to resolve the unemployment problem, since it has no overall answer whatever as to how to cure the economy of its ills. That is why, after enumerating the partial cures which are but palliatives, Minister of Finance Sapir admits that the situation will get steadily worse : "The operation cannot help being painful and it is quite possible that the future holds in store for us even greater pains." (Page 8).

Who is to suffer the pains?

It goes without saying that the pain and suffering are reserved for the working class and all working people — in town and country; as for the foreign capitalists and their local partners, the new Budget has nothing but a large addition of fresh privileges.

M. K. Vilner condemned the Government for stating that, in the coming year too, it would not increase the area of living space built — which had been drastically reduced a year ago — and pointed to the crying injustice this was causing tens of thousands of families, still living in poor quarters.

The situation of the Arab workers

Data released by the Histadrut Executive Committee's Arab Department, show that there are now 7,000 Arab workers lately dismissed from work — out of a total 60,000 Arab workers; i. e. 12% of the Arab labour force have been put out of work in the last few months alone, whereas the total figure for all the country's unemployed is 6.6% (of the labour force) — so that in this sphere, too, there is no mistaking the discrimination based on national origin. In some places, too, the real extent of unemployment is many percentages greater than that suggested by official statistics. Nazareth has over 1,000 unemployed workers, while in the village of Oum el-Fahem, there are 1,000 unemployed workers out of 2,000 (i. e. 50% of the labour force). There are even some Arab villages in which the overwhelming majority of the workers are without jobs: in Dir-Hanna, for instance, only 7 workers still have jobs, out of a total 200.

Most Arab villages are without labour exchanges. Workers wishing to apply to an exchange have to travel twice a week to some other locality, and many don't have the money for the bus fare. Despite its promises, the Ministry of Labour fails to provide workers in

Arab villages with their quota of "emergency works" (15-24 days per month), since these hinge on the village's carrying out development work and on the inhabitants' shouldering a part of the costs. This condition cannot always be met as many Arab villages (through the Government's own fault) have no local council and no money either. Hunger, truly and literally reigns in a number of Arab villages, as it does in a great many Jewish localities too.

A "0.4%" appropriation

M.K. Vilner went on to say : "I should like to mention the Budget item for loans to the Arab economy, constituting in all and for all 0.4% of the entire appropriation for agricultural development. Last year, too, this item was a "zero" one-but it was then "zero point eight". This year, there has been a further reduction in the sum allotted to the development of the Arab economy (in Israel). No comments will be necessary if it will be remembered that Arabs constitute 11% of Israel's total population and a third of the whole rural community."

M.K. Vilner then went on to speak of the 1966 wave of rising prices which hit hard at the working people's standard of living. He denounced the Government's design for an additional boost in the prices of vital consumer goods, in 1967, too (by 5%, according to P. Sapir). In this connection, the Communist speaker severely condemned the very latest 20% rise in milk prices.

M.K. Vilner then went on to say the following :

The workers will not put up with it!

The Minister of Finance acknowledged in his Budget speech that "in 1967 there would be an average rise of around 5% in the Consumers Price Index". But, at exactly the same time, the Treasury tells us in the booklet "The National Budget" it has printed and given us, that the Cost-of-Living payment due for July 1967, will not be honoured. What insolent mockery of the wage-earning public — to declare in advance that prices will go up and then to state (in advance too), that this price boost would not be followed by payment of the Cost-of-Living allocation!

But it is the workers who will have the last say! Experience has shown that the workers have not and will not put up with unemployment, hunger, dismissals and skyrocketing prices. They fought back, forcing the Government to take certain steps — even if only very minor

ones. The greater the struggle, the broader and the more cohesive a Left-wing opposition — the more effective will this be. (Here, M.K. M. Vilner addressed himself to the Mapam parliamentary group). To be inside the Government means screening its policy and leaving the arena free for the social demogogy of the Right-wing opposition, which really has no plan other than that being executed by the Government. The only thing the Right-wing opposition wants is for additional spoils to be granted the capitalists and a further tightening of the working people's belts. And we warn: By its very own policy, the present Government is paving the way to the domination of the Right, a threat to the parliamentary forms of government and virulent militarism. To change that policy is the one and only way to guarantee that the Right finds its way barred.

Whom do taxes weigh on?

The Minister of Finance said that the Government would refrain from raising taxes in the coming year, but he added the rider: "unless emergency requirements dictate otherwise".

"The 1967/68 estimate for revenue from taxes runs into IL. 3.42 billion as compared with last year's estimate of IL. 3.25 billion" — says P. Sapir. The real difference, however, is actually much larger than the IL. 17 million indicated here, since the estimate for the current year was not realized, and taxes are increased in all kinds of roundabout ways.

Let us now see how taxes are distributed by social categories. From this point of view, the present Budget is certainly the worst ever: the distribution of income tax according to the various sources is as follows (in percentages):

	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1967/68</u>	
From wage earners	38.7	44	5.3 +
" self-employed	30.9	28.6	2.3 -
" commercial firms	26.4	23	3.4 -
" deductions from interest	4	4.4	0.4 +

There's a "progressive" social policy for you!

The rate of profit

The Government nevertheless does show generosity toward foreign investors and big Israeli exporters.

Nowhere, in all of Sapir's speech, is mention made of this fact. Why isn't the policy of restraint applied to these people? Why are inroads made only on workers' salaries? This Government is a typically capitalistic one — pursuing an economic policy that favours foreign monopolies and big Israeli capitalists tied to foreign capital, and harms the working people and all other popular strata (including the small and medium, national bourgeoisie) as well as the national economy and the cause of economic independence.

Bank of Israel Report No. 27 tells us that the banks' net (after tax deductions) profits for 1964 and 1965 were the following : IL. 93.2 million — general profit, and IL. 95.3 million — increase in self capital.

Encouragement of capital investments

The Minister of Finance told us in his Budget speech : "We are now considering an amendment to the Law for the Encouragement of Capital Investment".

"Bigger loans will be given enterprises in A-type Development Areas, which, together with the (Government) grant will account for 80% of the sum invested. In other localities, the grant and the loans will come to over one-third of the whole investment. The loans will carry a low interest rate — not more than 6.5% in A-type areas. Now the question being asked is why doesn't the Government itself set up the plant, since it can afford to supply 80% of the money needed for the purpose? And then the undertaking's profits would be the State's and would serve as a source of income, making possible further development !

A year ago, the Knesset decided to encourage exporters by providing incentives to the tune of IL. 30 million, but the Government flouted this decision of the Knesset's and spent instead IL. 75 million (50% more than originally laid down). As for the present year (1967) the Minister of Finance promises exporters incentives to the grand sum of IL. 230 million.

Here M. K. M. Vilner strongly criticized the draft Budget's pronounced inflationary trend and the predicted increase in the State Debt — especially foreign debts.

The Communist speaker then turned to the subject of military expenditure, on which he had the following to say :

"And lastly, I should like to say a few words on military appropriations. The Minister (P. Sapir) said that "the constant pre-occupation with the security of the State represents an expensive burden which nearly always conflicts with economic considerations and alters them". The published Defence Budget (as opposed to the part kept secret) doesn't give us a clear picture, but it is obvious these appropriations absorb a significant part of our natural resources. I shall content myself with one single example. The published Defence Budget for 1967/68 is 13 times greater than the one for 1955/56, while the general State Budget has gone up by only 8 times.

The size of the Defence Budget depends to a great extent on the policy pursued. All of us are for security but it should be clear that a policy of "God Save the King" is organically linked with that of "God Save the Oil" and "God Save the Bases" — and that policy costs a great deal of money!

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Eshkol competes with Labour Minister Allon in making statements to the effect that we shall not stand idly about in Jordan if King Hussein's pro-western regime is overthrown. If that is the Government's policy, then the Defence Budget is not a truly defensive Israeli budget but one of "regional (Middle Eastern) defence". It is this policy (with its train of inflated military appropriations and nuclear "option", too, as well as subservience to foreign capital) which is the chief culprit for our being farther than ever from economic independence — and this, despite the \$6 billion poured into Israel since the creation of the State (1948).

A policy of peace would greatly help the economy

Our position would be radically different, were a different policy to be pursued. If, instead of the present policy we would voice our solidarity with the Jordanian people against King Hussein who only represents a few feudal chieftains and a handful of American and British agents; if we would express our solidarity with the Arab peoples' struggle to defend their sovereignty, against the Anglo-American oil companies; if we would acknowledge the Palestinian Arab people's national rights — in particular those of the Arab refugees — so that the Arab peoples would recognize the State of Israel — we would then achieve peace and renew, once more, our economic and trade ties with the Arab peoples.

Apart from its repercussions in the political and military spheres, Israeli-Arab peace would have tremendous economic importance. It is toward this goal that a long-term economic plan for Israel ought to be based, and steps should be taken to have it put into practice.

The present international situation, with the presence of a powerful Socialist camp willing and able to aid all peoples and all states fighting for political and economic independence, opens up broad vistas for wise statesmen sincerely working for the good of their people.

Economics and politics are closely linked

A policy of peace, non-dependence on the Western powers and neutralism would open up for us huge markets in Socialist countries as well as in those of Asia and Africa.

Who said it is a law of nature or of God that there should be private banks? Why shouldn't the State derive income from nationalized banks? Who said big corporations had to be privately owned? Non-Socialist countries, too, nationalize corporations and channel their profits into the State Budget. By what right does the import-export business serve as a source of profit for a few dozen families, netting them hundreds of millions of pounds? Why shouldn't there be a Government Import-Export Authority? As for the Defence Budget, why shouldn't it be a genuinely defensive, Israeli budget, and not a regional defence one? Nationalizations and a cut in the Defence Budget — these are the real solutions; all the rest is but a frantic search that has been going on for the last 18 years without solving any one of Israel's basic problems. It is true that the economy's physical dimensions have grown, but it doesn't rest on firm foundations and is liable to collapse.

What should be done at once?

The measures to be immediately adopted are the following: increased appropriations for the Ministry of Labour (to provide sources of employment) and the Ministry of Housing, and the enacting of an unemployment insurance law. And while on the subject of unemployment insurance we mean, above all, that the workers must have work — of a permanent and productive nature.

* * *

Minister of Finance sums-up debate:

"The Defence Budget has swallowed billions of pounds"

The general Knesset debate on the State Budget was summed up by the Minister of Finance : Pinhas Sapir.

In parrying attacks from the Right, he revealed some interesting facts : namely, that military spending in foreign currency has shot up 16 times since 1954 and that Israel has even outstripped the U.S. (or at the very least caught up with her) in the percentage of the national product used for defence purposes.

Sapir went on to say : "I say this because every so often somebody comes up to the (Knesset) rostrum and asks : what have you done with the \$6 billion, since the establishment of the State ? Don't those who ask know that we have sunk at least a quarter of this sum in defence ?"

T. Toubi in Zu-Haderekh (4.1.67) writes on:

SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND SOVIET POLICY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Large sections of the Israeli public show considerable interest in the problem of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union. There is a great aspiration and a strong desire on the part of many people to improve relations with the USSR.

The Eshkol Government has made official pronouncements on its wish for a "dialogue", a "new spirit", and the development of normal relations and "mutual understanding". The Prime Minister also appears in the role of one who puts in a lot of "effort" and "hard work" in this direction, while at the same time complaining and claiming that : "It seems to me that, as far as we are concerned, understanding does exist, but that the other side (the Soviet) lacks the necessary comprehension in evaluating our situation and our real goals." (From L. Eshkol's address at "Beit Sokolov", the Israeli Journalists Association headquarters in Tel Aviv — 25.11.66).

Whether in Israel or abroad, the official propaganda mouth-pieces as well as the Government's official spokesmen pretend to be innocent saints and fling at the Soviet Union all kinds of accusations such as "discrimination", "a biased attitude", "lack of comprehension", and sometimes even more.

We remember the murky wave of anti-Soviet propaganda that bore down on us these past two months, following the stand adopted by the Soviet Union and its delegates at the U.N., against the threat of war and aggression in the area. The Prime Minister then charged the USSR with allegedly being responsible for the tension and troubles besetting the Middle East.

Mapam's leader M.K. Y. Hazan used the language of official propaganda in his assessment of Soviet policy in the area, contained in the Theses prepared for discussion in preparation of Mapam's Council meeting (Al Hamishmar, 23.12.66) :

"The present Government is marked by sincere efforts to better relations with the Soviet Union. It cannot, however, be said that the USSR is making the Government's task any easier for it : all the way from the economic boycott (of Israel) to the Soviet veto in the Security Council, when it was debating Israel's complaint against Syria. What we have here is a policy that is one-sided and

unjust toward us — essentially aimed at bringing about closer relations with the Arab states and cooler relations with Israel. The USSR persists in turning a blind eye to Israel's vital security problems, while continuing her exclusive support (military and political) for the Arab states. The problem of Soviet Jewry obviously has a great deal to do with it."

Not seeing any need whatsoever to demand a change in Israeli policy (which is in stark contradiction to the need for improved relations with the Soviet Union), M. K. Y. Hazan goes on to write : "We are certain the day will come when the Soviet Union will free itself of its unjust policy toward us, just as she freed herself from the degenerescence of its internal policy in Stalin's time."

Such assertions are nothing but an attempt to free Israeli policy for its responsibility for the present state of Israeli-Soviet relations: they completely ignore the decisively negative role played by Israeli policy in the whole complex of Israeli-Soviet relations, as well as wilfully distorting the true nature of Soviet policy in the Middle East.

We have said this more than once — and we say it again — that the Israeli Government's obstinate persistence in the role of self-appointed guardian of Soviet Jewry as well as the activities its representatives-cum-emissaries wage in the international arena with the aim of organizing pressure: the anti-Soviet slander campaign concerning the alleged discrimination of Soviet Jews and the denial of their rights — place serious obstacles on the road to establishing ties of friendship with the USSR.

In an interview he gave "Davar's" editorial board (9.12.66), Foreign Minister Abba Eban promised Israel would not let by any occasion of bringing up the Jewish subject, while simultaneously making strenuous efforts to improve relations with the Soviet Union, "and proof of this : Israel's stand on the issue of human rights. The fact is that this time we explicitly called the USSR by name when raising the matter of Soviet Jewry..." thus do Israel's rulers continue this dangerous game. They are convinced that by organizing international pressure and mobilizing a few democratic elements here and there, they will, in the end, bring their anti-Soviet crusade to a successful outcome. They just do not see the grave harm this campaign is causing Israel's interests.

B

That is one side, and the second one is that in the Middle East arena, the Government of Israel continues its pro-imperialist policy, opposed to the cause of peace and the Arab peoples' struggle for independence, liberation and progress — the Government thus places itself in a stance of direct opposition to Soviet policy in the Middle East.

Soviet policy in our part of the world is a component part of Soviet foreign policy as a whole; it has certain principled, stable and clear characteristics. Its goal is to ensure peace, help the peoples fighting against imperialist domination in the Middle East, consolidate their economic and political independence, promote their social development.

This principled policy of the Soviet Union's has provided a source of loyal friendship and support not accompanied by exploitation to the Arab peoples struggling against imperialism and the Arab states fighting against the imperialist inheritance, for social development of a progressive nature. The close ties of friendship established between the Soviet Union and the anti-imperialist Arab states serve, as always, the cause of peace and social progress. The interest of peace between Israel and the Arab states, too, benefits from these ties.

Official Israeli policy has placed itself (at least, objectively speaking) opposite and against the Arab peoples' liberation movement and taken an open stand against the anti-imperialist Arab states — and examples are numerous enough. Suffice it to mention the stand recently adopted by Israel's rulers toward Syria and their threats to topple the regime in Damascus, at the very time Syria was engaged in a hard fight with the Iraqi Petroleum Company (Western-owned). How then can the Israeli Government expect people to "understand" her better, when it is irrevocably wed to this pro-imperialist and anti-Arab policy ?

C

The truth of the matter is that what Israel's ruling circles are really after in the sphere of relations with the USSR (and the other Socialist states) is to get the Soviet Union to back Israeli policy in the Middle East. And then, so they say, understanding and friendship will reign.

On more than one occasion, both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have stressed that their efforts at engaging a "dialogue" with the USSR are aimed at inducing the Soviet Union to alter its allegedly "biased" Middle Eastern policy. A. Eban has lately said he is striving to get the Soviet Union to join in the Tripartite Declaration of the U.S., Britain and France (proclaimed May 1950 - trans.), aimed at safeguarding the Middle Eastern status quo. In his interview with "Davar", the Foreign Minister said we want the USSR to accept the status quo

Support for exactly what status quo do the Premier and Foreign Minister hope to obtain from the Soviet Union? The status quo of imperialist presence in the region: the status quo of imperialist control of oil resources: the status quo of ensuring the continuation of royal rule — including that of King Hussein, whose throne the Government of Israel has sworn to protect even if it means armed intervention: the status quo of denying the rights of the Palestinian Arab people and the continued existence of the refugee problem: the status quo of the Israeli policy of force toward the neighbouring countries?

As long as Israel adheres to the course of preserving the status quo which negates peace and the peoples' freedom — a status quo which the USSR and all the forces of progress fight against — as long as this will be official Israeli policy in the sphere of relations with the Soviet Union, the Government of Israel will get no sympathetic "understanding" whatever on the part of the USSR. Only a different Israeli policy will achieve this.

Soviet policy in the area respects the sovereignty and independence of all Middle Eastern states, including the State of Israel, and concerns itself, too, with their safeguard. This is a firm basis for the promotion of friendly relations between Israel and the USSR, and it has good prospects, inasmuch as the architects of Israel policy arrive at an understanding of Soviet policy in the Middle East and see that the traditional course they have been following will neither bring them nearer to peace with the Arab states nor to friendship with the Soviet Union.

D

Criticism of Soviet policy and demands for it to be changed is heard in other tones (although the actual content is identical) from members of the "Kol Ha'am" group — first and foremost, their chief spokesman, M. Sneh.

I do not intend to dwell on the open criticism voiced by "Kol Ha'am" and M. Sneh on the Soviet position and the Soviet delegate at the Security Council, Fedorenko, during the recent threat to peace and the danger of Israeli-aided imperialist aggression against Syria. I shall also refrain from going into the "contribution" made to the subject by the meeting of students from the Mikunis-Sneh group which stated that "the Soviet delegate's stand at the Security Council contradicts the USSR's policy of peace". (Kol Ha'am, 25.10.66).

In his article "Around Us" (Kol Ha'am, 13.5.66), M. Sneh raised some points concerning Soviet policy in the area. He noted: "It would be very unfortunate if imperialist pressure deters the Israeli Government from bettering its relations with the Socialist states. It is also necessary to rebuff the pressure the Arab rulers apply on the Arab states against extending their ties with the State of Israel. The cause of peaceful coexistence calls for an improvement in Israeli-Soviet relations, side by side with the normal and even friendly relations existing between Israel and the Western powers; as for Israel's ties of friendship with France, far from constituting an obstacle, they could actually be of use in bettering Israeli-Soviet relations. Peaceful coexistence also requires better relations between the Soviet Union and Israel, side by side with the ties of friendship in force between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries. Placing the one in opposition to the other, negates the principles of a policy of peace."

It would be interesting to know whom these charges are levelled at, while the Israeli rulers' pro-imperialist policy and role in the Middle East is altogether disregarded? At any event, they are not made against the Government of Israel. It is true these words were written 6 months ago, but they are still as vitally topical today as they were then. By thus portraying the complex of Soviet-Israeli relations, does M. Sneh advance, by even a single step, the public campaign under way in Israel to improve relations with the USSR? Isn't it obvious that this struggle has to be aimed against the Eshkol Government's pro-imperialist policy which remains, as always, an obstacle to the improvement of these relations? M. Sneh's assumptions merely serve to call forth doubts and criticism of Soviet policy in our part of the world as a policy supposedly contrary to the policy of peaceful coexistence, a policy allegedly operating under Arab pressure.

This kind of writing creates the impression that the USSR's ties with the Arab countries — which, as any democrat understands, promote the cause of peace and anti-imperialist struggle, as well as that of peace between Israel and the Arab states — supposedly contradict the Soviet Union's policy of peace and peaceful coexistence. What kind of understanding does M. Sneh show for peaceful coexistence and the struggle against imperialism when he writes, that the tightening of friendly ties between the USSR and the Arabs is contrary to the spirit of peaceful coexistence - i. e. to the interests of peace — unless it is accompanied by ties of friendship with Israel's rulers, who conduct an openly anti-imperialist policy? And how is it possible to ignore the part played by official Israeli policy in the Middle East, in putting obstacles on the road to improved relations with the Soviet Union? Whose goals, objectively speaking, does M. Sneh pursue in asking the Soviet Union such questions and casting doubts on Soviet moves in the region, other than those of the very same forces which are doing their best to weaken existing amicable ties between the USSR and the Arab countries — especially the anti-imperialist ones? It certainly does not serve the struggle against imperialism, peace or Israel's own interests. Far from promoting Israeli-Soviet relations, such an attitude only helps to strengthen, in one way or the other, the official accusations levelled at the Soviet Union.

E

In his article "Concentric Circles" (Kol Ha'am, 23.12.66), M. Sneh, inter alia, again treats of the position taken in the Middle East by the world's anti-imperialist forces, with a rather obvious allusion to the USSR. He once more casts suspicion on the Middle Eastern policy of the Soviet Union and the other Socialist states in writing as follows: "That is why we believe the correct stand for the world's anti-imperialist forces to take, whether vis-à-vis the Israeli-Arab conflict or other conflicts (even armed ones) in Asia and Africa, is not to take sides with any one, but to take a stand for peace between them, for the solution of the conflict through reciprocal agreement and through mutual recognition for the rights of the other party concerned. Such a stand would serve both regional and world peace."

Again, in just a few words, M. Sneh manages to compress a whole series of incorrect assumptions and grave charges concerning

the role the world's anti-imperialist forces (with the USSR as the main force) play in our part of the world — including the sphere of Israeli-Arab relations.

Again we are told that the stand taken by the world's anti-imperialist forces, which clearly include the Soviet Union, does not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East. And why is this so? Because they have "adopted a stand in the Israeli-Arab dispute". The question we should like to ask is the following one: if up till now these forces are not on the side of peace in the region, then on whose side exactly are they on?

M. Sneh's nationalist conceptions are the source of these incorrect and really false positions and assessments with regard to the part played in the region by the anti-imperialist forces.

M. Sneh artificially severs Israeli-Arab relations from the general picture: namely, the tremendous anti-imperialist struggle going on in the area; he is telling the anti-imperialist forces in effect that it is forbidden for them to adopt a definite stand and make the choice between anti-imperialists and pro-imperialists, between those who want back their trampled rights and those who refuse to acknowledge legitimate rights. When Chief of Staff Rabin menaces the Syrian regime, hasn't this threat really nothing at all to do with imperialist pressure and plots against Syria's anti-imperialist regime? Is this just a "conflict between two nationalisms" and nothing more? So, the Soviet Union musn't warn the Israeli Government and musn't adopt a definite stand on the dispute?! . . . Such is M. Sneh's brand of philosophy?

F

And when the Prime Minister says he is free to act if King Hussein is thrown off his throne — and that at a time when the Jordanian people's movement reaches its peak in a mass struggle against the pro-imperialist King Hussein — we are given to understand that the anti-imperialist forces must, on no account, condemn threats voiced by the Israeli Government — for that would be "taking sides in a dispute opposing two nationalisms" and would allegedly be detrimental to peace!

M. Sneh ignores the fact that, as far as its relations with the Arab states and peoples are concerned, the Israeli Government's stand in the Israeli-Arab dispute clearly puts it on the side of the imperialists and that of retarded social forces such as Arab kings

and feudal chiefs. And it is not just Arab chauvinists who ascribe this stand to the Israeli Government. If such, then, is the case, how can the world's anti-imperialist forces possibly avoid taking a clear stand against the Israeli rulers' pro-imperialist policy vis-à-vis the Middle East and the Israeli-Arab dispute? How can M. Sneh possibly expect the anti-imperialist forces — the USSR among them — not to take the side of the Palestinian Arab people and not to back its legitimate national rights denied by Israel's ruling circles? Such a stand is not worthy even of a democrat who honours the rights denied a people — not to speak of what a Communist's duty is.

In backing the anti-imperialist struggle, the Arab movement for national liberation, and the area's anti-imperialist governments, the anti-imperialist forces headed by the Soviet Union are fulfilling their duty toward peace, peoples' freedom, their independence and their Socialist future in the Middle East.

In pursuing this policy, the USSR shows true care and concern for the well-being, the security and the independence of all Middle Eastern peoples — including the people of Israel.

Even when criticizing the positions adopted by the Government of Israel with regard to the Middle East and warning the masses of the Israeli people against the dangers inherent in a continuation of the policy presently pursued by their rulers — even in this case, the world's anti-imperialist forces are actually serving the genuine interests of the Israeli people, by impressing on it the urgent need to act to eliminate this obstacle on its road to peace and security.

It is the duty of every democrat, every anti-imperialist and — it goes without saying — every Communist, to explain the above to the people of Israel and mobilize it for a struggle to change Israeli policy from top to bottom — for such is Israel's vital national interest and that is the way for it to arrive at peace with the Arab countries and friendship with the Soviet Union.

WORKERS' COMMITTEES HOLD DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF KNESSET BUILDING IN JERUSALEM

On Tuesday 24.1.67, in front of the Knesset building in Jerusalem, hundreds of members of Workers' Committees, elected committees of unemployed workers, as well as individual Jewish and Arab workers, held a demonstration against the Government's policy — a policy of mass dismissals and large-scale unemployment, of pressure on the workers to push down wages and slash at social benefits. The unemployed workers came to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nazareth, Beisan, Beersheba, Lydda, Taibeh, Umm el-Fahem, and other localities.

Several hours before the demonstrators' arrival, the police had already fenced off an area several hundreds of metres from the Knesset building itself and some hundred metres from the entrance to the Knesset courtyard. The demonstrators held up large posters with the following slogans, among other : "Employment is a right — not a favour!", "Down with unemployment and provide work for the unemployed!".

The unemployed chanted slogans such as "Bread and work!", "Against dismissals - work for the unemployed!", "Against wage cuts!", "Pay the cost-of-living allowance" — which despite the great distance were clearly heard inside the Knesset building.

Workers committees from the nation's capital met the demonstrators at the approaches to Jerusalem.

Several representatives of workers' and unemployed workers' committees addressed the demonstrators through a loudspeaker. For instance, Nissim Bracha, member of the Workers' Committee at the "Electra" plant asked : "Why do they sit so calmly and quietly in that House at a time when workers are being thrown onto the streets and their children are literally hungry for a piece of bread?" Yitzhak Elias, secretary of the Abir beer factory at Natanya, declared that the "unemployed workers would not sit about idly but would vigorously react against the Government's hostile attitude". Others to speak included A. Shechter ("Elko" - electrical appliances) and S. Geizler ("Amcor" - refrigerators).

Many of the demonstrators shouted their condemnation of the fact that the police had set up barriers and was out in full strength to stop the demonstrators getting too close to the nation's elected representatives. Members of the Knesset M. Vilner and T. Toubi

went out to the demonstrators, talked to them and promised them every possible assistance in their just struggle.

A delegation composed of Y. 'Ami ("Argaman" - dyers), H. Tatarka ("Elko"), A. Shcheik ("Ámcor"), Redko (Ashdod - development area and port town), Y. Etzion ("Egged" - Haifa, public transport), V. Ezraya (Jerusalem), A. Shmueli (unemployed from Bnei-Brak), 'A el-Diab (member of Nazareth Workers' Committee) and M. Hosri (Umm el-Fahem) was received by members of the Knesset's Labour Commission : M. Erem (Chairman), M. Vilner, S. Mikunis and A. Vartmann.

The workers' representatives unfolded before the Commission the very grave problems troubling employed and unemployed workers alike, put forward their claims and demanded that the Labour Commission act to solve these problems, ensure employment, put a stop to dismissals, immediately pay the unemployed a grant, stop the rise in the prices of vital consumer goods, etc.

All members of the Knesset's Labour Commission present made their views known on the subject, put questions to the delegation's members who gave them convincing answers on these points.

In his speech to the Commission, the spokesman for the Communist group, M. K. M. Vilner said : "We cannot agree to the theory that unemployment is a natural and inevitable thing, whereas the truth of the matter is that it is the fruit of a definite policy. The workers want nothing more than to work and they do not view the payment of an Unemployment Grant as either a permanent or a desirable solution. The provision of such a grant cannot free the Government of its responsibility to ensure work for all who seek employment". M. Vilner also dwelt on the lack of Labour Exchanges in Arab villages.

A similar delegation held a Press conference at Jerusalem's Journalists House and exposed the programme of the Workers Committees' Preparatory Commission. The Press conference was preceded by a meeting of the demonstrators, at which Jewish and Arab workers spoke — inter alia, from the following places of work : "Mehadrin", "Ta'asan", "Kav", as well as workers from Nazareth, the Israeli Triangle, etc. The decision was taken to pursue the struggle. The above-mentioned Preparatory Commission has already begun to prepare the demonstration which will be held in Tel Aviv in February. ("Zu Haderekh", 25.1.67).

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