

ISRAELI COMMUNISTS AND IMMIGRATION

By Samuel Mikunis

The following speech by Samuel Mikunis, general secretary of the Communist Party of Israel and Communist member of the Knesset, was made on July 18 in the Knesset in reply to the campaign of calumny instigated against the Communist Party of Israel, especially with regard to the problem of immigration. The campaign was set off by a statement in the Knesset by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett to the effect that Mikunis had publicly stated in Bucharest that his party was opposed to immigration to Israel until a people's democratic government was established there. Sharett denied that the government was considering any restriction on immigration. Mikunis contended that the bourgeoisie of Israel was responsible for the immigration crisis. It was the government, rather than the Communist Party, he maintained, that favored restriction of immigration. This has since been confirmed by a statement of the Jewish journalist, William Zukerman, who wrote: "Immigration has already been drastically cut. Only 16,400 immigrants arrived in June, as against 20,000 who entered in May and 30,500 who were taken in in March. The quotas for July and August are 14,000 and 12,000 respectively. It appears that immigration will be put on a permanent basis of 10,000 a month and will be regulated in accordance with the absorptive capacity of the country and not for political effects as a member of American Jewish editors have demanded recently" (Chicago Sentinel, July 28).—Editors.

UPON returning from my trip abroad, I learned with pain and bewilderment of the slanderous campaign against me personally and against the Communist Party of Israel. This hysterical episode was initiated by Foreign Minister Sharett and was sustained by the kept press, which has sold itself to the Wall Street money magnates.

The accusations against me and my party left me speechless. For they are figments of the imagination and do not contain even a kernel of truth. *I never made a speech in Bucharest, never gave any lectures there.* Quite obviously I could not have made the remarks attributed to me by Mr. Sharett. The cynicism of this attempt by Mr. Sharett who helped himself to a "quotation" of words supposedly spoken by myself, are indicative of his reliability. Such words were never uttered by me in Bucharest or anywhere else and are in total contradiction to the views of my party and to its world outlook.

We never said anywhere that the state of Israel is a vassal of America. It is a fact, however, that the Ben Gurion government is tying itself ever more closely to the chariot of American imperialism and thus puts the independence and sovereignty of Israel in danger. This is our firm conviction. The Ben Gurion government is steadily

making American political and economic penetration and intervention more real. The state of Israel and the Ben Gurion government are not identical. Governments come and governments go but the state of Israel will live forever. I believe that the working class and the masses of the people will fight against the policy of becoming a vassal of American imperialism, as they fought against their British oppressors in the not too distant past.

Furthermore, I never made the statement, attributed to me by Mr. Sharett that "There should be no *aliyah* (immigration) to Israel until a real democratic regime is established." It is totally irresponsible for an Israeli minister to indulge in hysterical and lying propaganda of this sort. Our opinion is that *aliyah* is *not* in contradiction with the struggle for a real democratic regime in Israel. What is clear, however, and this is becoming ever clearer to the broad masses of the people, is that the policies of the government, which are strengthening the bourgeoisie and Anglo-American capitalists in Israel while they cut down the workers' bread and living standards, necessarily aggravate the tremendous difficulties of providing for immigrants and do inestimable damage to the potentialities for housing and employment. These policies rob the working class of the gains it has won in the past few years.

Early in 1948, the leadership of the Jewish Agency forbade, on the basis of an order from Truman, the departure of 15,000 Rumanian Jews who were ready to leave for Israel. Only the democratic forces against whom the Americans are ranting, made it possible for these people to go, even though Truman and his friends in the Jewish Agency opposed this.

Representatives of the Israeli consulate, as well as the Israeli government itself, sabotaged the immigration agreement arrived at in Bucharest in August 1948. In accordance with it, thousands of young people could have come to our country. When 5,000 Jews arrived from Rumania at the end of 1948, they were given a cold and unfriendly reception by official circles. "Pauker-agents," they were called. Why? For the sin of having registered with the agency of the Rumanian Jewish community rather than with the Israeli consulate.

And who is calling for the halting of immigration, if not the bourgeois press in Israel? It is in government offices that plans are assiduously being worked out to restrict immigration. The regular attacks on Rumania, on myself and on the Communist Party of Israel are nothing more than an unsuccessful attempt to conceal the failures of the policies of the Ben Gurion government.

By throwing dirt at Israel's friends in the world democratic camp, by idiotically attacking my party, an attempt is being made to cover up the Anglo-American imperial-

ist blockade of our country, to conceal Israel's lack of talent in mobilizing friends throughout the world and in the Middle East, to divert public attention from the increasingly worsening economic situation, the sufferings of the new arrivals and the unemployed, to cut wages and lower the living standards of the masses, to raise taxes persistently at the expense of the broad masses of the people.

The American scribblers in the Israeli press are trying to persuade public opinion that we are opposed to immigration, and even more, that we are actively trying to halt immigration from a number of countries. It gives me great satisfaction to affirm that this lying propaganda against us did not succeed. The fact is that the *aliyah* from eastern European countries was not cut off. *Aliyah* continues and will continue despite the despicable campaign of calumny against the new people's democracies and despite any fantastic "quotations" that Mr. Sharett may dream up.

I believe that the *Knesset* is duty bound to reprimand the foreign minister. For his misquotations opened the door to an anti-communist devil's dance, which serves the interests of American imperialists and Israeli capitalists.

The working class and the masses of Israel know that the Communist Party of Israel contributed much toward winning our war for independence. My party mobilized substantial aid from the world democratic camp for the

struggle. We have not changed our orientation in the face of new responsibilities and tasks.

It is well known that, wherever we have appeared at international forums of the freedom loving and peace forces of the world, we have never failed to bring forward the heroic struggle and creative efforts of the Israeli working class and youth. We have always emphasized the need to strengthen friendship and solidarity of our country with the democratic world forces.

The Israeli working class and masses know that gigantic forces and true and devoted friends throughout the world stand at their side in their struggle against the penetration of American imperialism and to guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of our country, in our struggle for peace and a democratic regime. The entire anti-imperialist and democratic camp, at whose head stand the Soviet Union and the new people's democracies, are ready to help us. Israel came into being with their help. And we shall be able to achieve full national and social liberation with their help and through fraternal ties and cooperation with them.

No amount of anti-communist hysteria, of attacks against the left section of the working class can halt the great historic forward march of working class and creative mankind for a world free from capitalism and war, for a socialist world, including Israel.