

Documents

INTERVIEW WITH DR. SNEH

By L. Bruck

While Dr. Moshe Sneh, a leader of the Israel United Workers Party (Mapam) and a member of the Knesset, was in Paris attending the World Jewish Congress meeting held there in August, he granted an interview to L. Bruck, of the editorial staff of the Neie Presse, Paris Yiddish daily. The interview follows.—Eds.

1. How would you evaluate the international position of the state of Israel at the present moment?

Those in control of American policy are actually exerting strong pressure on Israel. American imperialism is striving completely to dominate the Near East, to eliminate British imperialism from its previous positions and to transform the countries of the Near East into a base for exclusively American domination from the political, economic and strategic viewpoints.

In the framework of this policy Washington seeks to make our young state one of its satellites. Pressure on Israel is expressed in a number of forms:

a) By the rearmament of neighboring feudal Arab states, which are incited to take revenge upon Israel, in order to force Israel to seek its security through a regional Middle Eastern pact under an American protectorate;

b) By the "internationalization" of Jerusalem. This means the creation of an American enclave in the country's heart;

c) By the annexation of the southern part of the Negev and of the outlet to the Red Sea near Akaba for the purpose of establishing an American base for the ports of the Indian Ocean;

d) By piling up for the state of Israel numerous economic and financial difficulties so that Israel should adopt the McGhee Plan, which is only a special edition of the Marshall Plan for the Middle East.

To make Israel its satellite, American imperialism is exploiting the tragedy of the Arab refugees in such a way that American banks can practically dominate the state of Israel, as well as the Arab states, under the pretext of "aid" for their rehabilitation. This is the real explanation of American pressure. Washington is trying to provoke an economic crisis in the state of Israel under the double burden of Jewish immigration and readmission of Arab refugees.

2. What is your attitude on the question of Arab refugees?

We have always demanded the right of peaceful Arab refugees to return to the country. We have connected this with our demand that in the Arab part of Palestine there should be created a democratic independent Arab state, which would be linked with Israel by an economic union and a treaty of friendship. In the framework of such a democratic solution the question of refugees could no longer be used as an instrument for foreign intrigues. It is characteristic that, when we proposed a year ago that the right of peaceful Arab refugees to return be proclaimed as part of a democratic entente between Jews and Arabs, the majority parties just about denounced us as traitors. Now, when America is demanding that we permit the return of Arab refugees, the government declares that it is ready to receive them. According to our proposal of a year ago, the return of Arab refugees could have been an act of good will on the part of Israel on the path to Jewish-Arab friendship; now it becomes an act imposed by the American government having for its purpose the economic subordination of the Arab states as well as Israel.

3. How, according to you, can Israel defend itself against the pressure of American imperialism?

Today we are an independent state and we are in a position to reject all American demands. It is evident that our resistance can only succeed if it is supported by help from sincere friends of our independence, that is, in the first place by the help of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies. We do not have the least confidence that the present government of Israel will put up effective resistance to the demands of American imperialism. The composition of the government—right wing social dem-

ocrats (Mapai), religious front, small bourgeois parties—determines in advance its political line of submission to the policy of the United States. That is why we are conducting a fight of unswerving opposition to the policies of the government inside and outside of the Knesset. The fight for the independence of Israel is tied to the fight for peace just as the act of dragging Israel into a regional pact under American control would be tied to the preparation for a new war by American imperialism against the Soviet Union, against the people's democracies and against the independence of all peoples.

We have just established in Israel a Committee for Peace which has affiliated with the World Congress of the Partisans for Peace. We are also in the process of enlarging the scope and strengthening the activity of the League for Friendship with the USSR. The popular masses have warmly—even enthusiastically—responded to the call of these two organizations. We hope to be able to create a mass movement in support of the fight to promote peace and friendship with the Soviet Union. Mapai recently attempted to split the League for Friendship with the USSR, but the result has been just the opposite. The League has been strengthened and the number of members doubled. Our view is that friendship with the USSR is a touchstone for every individual on the question of world peace; for every Jew who wishes to remain true to the real interests of his people and his country; and for every worker who wishes to remain faithful to the banner of genuine

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socialism. It is necessary to add that not only the Movement for Peace but also the League for Friendship with the USSR take part in and collaborate harmoniously with all progressive forces in Israel, both Jewish and Arab.

4. Can you say a few words about the economic situation in Israel?

It is evident that our economic situation is difficult. We have to meet the normal difficulties of a state as well as the war budget as long as the armistice is not transformed into a peace treaty. We have to accept hundreds of thousands of new immigrants (260,000 in the last 15 months). I should also add what I have often declared in the Knesset: government policy is tending towards reduction of immigration, to lower the standard of living of the masses and to penetration of foreign capital into the country.

Our economic program aims at the following objectives: nationalization of the land, of water sources, of natural resources (the Dead Sea), of electricity, of oil refineries and of foreign trade; radical recasting of the fiscal system by increase of direct taxation and suppression of indirect taxation and creation of the tax on capital; increase in the volume of trade with the USSR and with all European countries which would replace imports solely from Anglo-Saxon countries, which inevitably lead to the increase in the deficit of our trade balance; democratization in general of the whole economic system, as closely as possible in accordance with the example of the popular democracies and in the spirit of the pioneers of our renaissance.

5. What are the repercussions of governmental policies on the condition of the workers?

First of all the government is not capable of insuring employment for everyone, above all for the new immigrants. Secondly, we have already had cases of wages cuts (2.5 pounds per month). The Mapai majority in the Histadrut has accepted the reduction in salaries because, they say, prices have dropped. For the first time in Israel strikes have broken out against the will of the Histadrut leadership. At Tel Aviv the strikes included 4000 workers and at Haifa several thousands. Under pressure from striking workers, the Histadrut leadership has been forced to make a concession: it has set up a commission (with the participation of the opposition Mapam) to re-examine the cost-of-living index.

6. How would you sum up your opinion of the general situation in Israel?

No confidence in the government, confidence in the people. And that means confidence in the future.

Letters from Readers

More on Psychoanalysis

Editors, JEWISH LIFE:

George Stewart's articles *No Peace of Mind* in the March and April issues were stimulating and their basic theses irrefutable. Yet they raise points which must be challenged, at least to the extent of insisting that Stewart be called upon to amplify his attitude toward psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in general.

On two points, a progressive could hardly disagree with Stewart—one, his view that the attempt to wed psychoanalysis and religion is futile and dangerous, the other, his criticism of Freud's own attitudes on the nature of man and society. Further, progressives, or even mildly intelligent conservatives, could scarcely question the proposition that mental and nervous disorders, especially anxiety and insecurity feelings, are symptoms of a fevered age. Society is the basic cause of emotional conflicts, and in a double manner. Anxiety grows from the immediate troubles of our era, from fears of war, unemployment, loss of liberty. It grows also from reactionary methods of child training which inflict on the growing generation the outworn and unhealthy attitudes of the past.

Psychoanalysis is, of course, no cure for society's ills. Yet, the possibility of help through such treatment is a real question for many progressives.

While emotional conflicts have a deep root in society, they can often be resolved and channelized through a growth in understanding of one's self and one's environment. That understanding can grow through properly-applied analysis.

It is on that point that Stewart seems most unclear, and even slightly callous. To a layman, he seems to ignore the basic difference, one which is almost qualitative, between the neuroses of the age and the crawling, miserable anxiety pressures that afflict certain individuals.

The anxiety and nervousness of the age are something that all progressives feel with varying pressure. An understanding of these, coupled with work for civil liberties, better living conditions and a better world, is the best therapy. For such conditions there can be no cure-all.

But other difficulties go beyond. What of the young man worried sick about his sex problems? What of the frigid woman? What about persons whose lives are a morass of petty fixations, anxieties, worries, far beyond the normal reactions to a troubled society? Is it sufficient to give

them a volume of Marx and a bundle of leaflets? Surely, the purposeful existence of the good progressive will help, but the basic conflicts need special therapy.

That is what Stewart seems to ignore. For many individuals, such difficulties are subject to amelioration even within the framework of existing society. This therapy is expensive, yes, and the clinics are crowded. But, as is the case with physical medicine, the remedy is not less therapy, but more. A rational society would make the findings of neuro-psychiatry available to all who need them.

Does Stewart propose to junk psychoanalysis entirely? What are his views of psychosomatic medicine? What of the physicians who regard many physical ailments, such as coronary thrombosis or even defective vision as rooted in anxieties stemming from childhood experiences?

There are, indeed, obvious dangers for the progressive seeking psychiatric aid, and Stewart is quite correct in pointing them out. Through class bias, many analysts regard any left-wing viewpoint as *ipso facto* neurotic. Some analysts themselves are muddled. But others, while by no means progressives, have an under-

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