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COMMUNISM IN ISRAEL

BY
FAYEZ A. SAYEGH, Ph.D.
Counsellor, Arab States Delegations Office

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INTRODUCTION

Many Americans are nowadays concerned about the recent initiation of trade relations between the Soviet Bloc and some countries in the Middle East. Few, however, realize the strength of Communist-Marxist forces in, and the scope of Soviet relations with, one spot in the Middle East which intensive propaganda has portrayed as an "island of democracy" and as an "outpost of Western influence" in that vital region—namely, the state of Israel.

In order to obtain a balanced, comprehensive picture of the situation and strength of Communist and Soviet influences in the Middle East, therefore, Americans must have access to the facts, all the facts, about the strength of Communism in a state which America helped *bring into being* ten years ago, and which American philanthropy—in the form of public grants as well as tax-deductible private donations, running into hundreds of millions of dollars annually—has literally *subsidized* since 1948.[1]

The inquiry which we shall pursue in the following pages consists of two main parts. The first deals with the strength of Communist, Marxist and Leftist forces inside Israel. The second deals with the wide range of relations—political, military, commercial and cultural—between Israel and the Soviet Bloc.

The findings, which will be elaborated and documented in the two parts of our inquiry, may be summarized at this stage as follows:

First: *Concerning the strength of Communist and Marxist forces inside Israel:*

1. Israel is the only country in the entire Middle East in which the Communist Party is recognized by law, and

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1 Total financial aid received by Israel from the United States, between 1948 and 1957, exceeds $1,840,000,000.

Of this amount, the United States Government has provided $432,000,000. The remainder has come from tax-deductible donations made by American citizens and groups to a network of fund-raising Zionist organizations, and from sale of Israel Bonds.

Concerning **public aid**, the figures released by the U. S. Government for the entire period reveal that, by June 1957, Israel had received $432,000,000 in net aid: $265,000,000 in net grants, and $167,000,000 in net credits. (See U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Office of Business Economics, **Foreign Grants and Credits by the United States Government**, June 1957 Quarter, Fiscal Year 1957 Review, Washington, D. C., October, 1957, pages S-14, S-31 and S-51).

Private donations amounted to $900 million before 1956, $75 million in 1956, and about $100 million in 1957, according to the **American Jewish Year Book for 1958**, p. 146 — i.e., a total of $1,075,000,000.

Israel Bond sales have exceeded $335 million, according to a report by the Vice-President of the Israel Bond Organization which appeared in the **New York Times** of April 14, 1958.

operates freely and openly. (Chapter I, Section A).

2. In addition to the Communist Party, there are two left-wing Marxist parties in Israel—Mapam and Ahdut. (Chapter I, Section A).
3. These three parties jointly occupy 25 seats in the Israeli Parliament—out of a total of 120 seats. (Chapter I, Section B).
4. The two Israeli left-wing Marxist parties participate in the five-party ruling coalition. They have four ministers in the sixteen-man Cabinet. (Chapter I, Section C).
5. Over 88% of the rural settlements in Israelare organized on a communal-collectivist basis, and governed by Marxist principles. (Chapter I, Section D).

***Second**: Concerning Soviet-Israeli relations*:

1. Soviet support of the establishment of Israel in 1947 was crucial. It tipped the balance in the United Nations in favor of the Partition Resolution, by virture of which Israel was founded. (Chapter II, Sections A and B).
2. The first Israeli diplomatic envoy was appointed to Prague; the second, to Moscow. (Chapter II, Section C).
3. Israel was the first country in the Middle East to purchase arms from the Soviet Bloc. (Chapter II, Section D).
4. Israel was the first country in the Middle East to proclaim a "neutralist" foreign policy. (Chapter II, Section E).
5. Israel pledged in July, 1953, never to join any anti-Soviet alliance or pact. (Chapter II, Section F).
6. Israel's trade with the Soviet Bloc has been and continues to be vital for Israel's economy. (Chapter II, Section G).
7. Israel cherishes cultural relations with the Soviet Bloc and constantly seeks to expand them. (Chapter II, Section H).

These assertions are made on the basis of the most authoritative

and reliable documents available. The *primary sources* used in this study are the official publications of the Israeli Government itself. Of the *secondary sources* used, the majority are Zionist publications, writings of Zionist authors, and reports made by observers who are generally considered sympathetic to the cause of Israel and Zionism.

I. COMMUNIST-MARXIST FORCES INSIDE ISRAEL

A. Communist and Leftist Political Parties

Israel is the only country in the entire Middle East in which Communism operates freely, with the sanction of the law, and in which Communist organizations are permitted to engage openly in the full range of the state's political life.

This fact is seldom publicized in the United States. When it is reported at all, it is summarily dismissed and ignored. An illustration of the casual manner in which mere hasty reference is made to Israel's "monopoly" of legal Communism in the Middle East may be found in a recent book, *Israel & The Middle East,* which was hailed by the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, when it appeared in 1957, as a "painstaking and honest attempt to examine a very complex problem." While noting that "every Arab government has outlawed the Communist Party within its own country"[1] and that the Israel Communist Party "is the only legal Communist Party in the Middle East,"[2] the author, Mr. Harry B. Ellis, nevertheless follows the usual practice of writing about Communism in the Middle East as though it rested primarily in Arab society!

* * *

The political strength of Communism in Israel, however, is not confined to the orthodox Communist Party. There are two other leftist, fellow-travelling parties, known as the "Mapam" and the "Ahdut Haavoda - Poalei Zion".

Let us analyze the objectives and principles of these three groups.

1 Ellis, Harry B., **Israel and the Middle East**, Ronald Press Co., 1957, p. 239
2 **Ibid**, p. 154

The "Israel Communist Party":

This is the orthodox Communist grouping, which follows the usual lines and clamours for the usual catchwords which have now become universally familiar through the operations of Communist Parties in various countries. In an official publication of the Israeli Government, the program of the Israel Communist Party is authoritatively summed up in the following words:

> "Its aim—Socialism. Basing itself on the Marxist theory of class struggle and guided by the theory of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, the party fights for peace, the real independence of Israel, genuine democracy, civil and national equality of rights, and for the interests of the toiling masses."[3]

The "Mapam" and the "Ahdut" Parties:

The relationship of these two parties to Communist doctrine and practice is more subtle and less overt than that of the Israel Communist Party.

From an ideological standpoint, the Mapam and the Ahdut are tributaries of the same stream, and offshoots of one and the same movement. They have at times merged into one party, while at other times they have parted company with one another as a result of differences over practical issues.

Before the establishment of Israel, three independent groups, known as "Ahdut Haavoda", "Poalei Zion", and "Hashomer Hatzair", merged and formed a single party, to which the name "Mapam" was given. After the establishment of the state, this new political compound became the second strongest party in Israel. It was described at that time by Dr. Joseph Dunner, an American Zionist, as follows:

> "The distinguishing feature of Mapam since the merger has been its strong pro-Soviet orientation. It holds that . . . Israel . . . must rely on the Soviet Union and the 'people's democracies' of eastern Europe for support. Mapam takes credit for the flow of arms and ammunition to Israel from Czechoslovakia."[4]

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3 **Facts & Figures**, Israel Office of Information, N. Y., 1955, p. 19
4 Dunner, Joseph, **The Republic of Israel**, McGraw-Hill, N. Y., 1950., pp. 129-130.

After its successes in the first two parliamentary elections of 1949 and 1951 (where it gained 19 and 15 seats respectively), the Mapam Party underwent successive splintering. First, a faction seceded in January, 1954, and organized itself as the Left Socialist Party, merging in October of the same year with the Israel Communist Party. Subsequently, the Ahdut Haavoda abandoned the merged party in August, 1954, and reverted to its original name, while the Hashomer Hatzair retained the name Mapam.

The true character of these parties may be gauged from their own definition of their respective objectives, *as supplied by the parties themselves* to the Israel Office of Information in New York, and published in an official governmental publication in 1957 under the title, *Facts About Israel.*

According to this publication, Mapam defines itself as "a left-wing Zionist Socialist Party" and proclaims that "its programme postulates," among other things, "a line of neutrality on the part of Israel" and the "abolition of all military pacts and alliances."[5]

The Ahdut Haavoda, on the other hand, announces that it stands for "a neutralist foreign policy; opposition to foreign military aid and foreign bases;" and "friendship with all peace-loving peoples."[6]

For reasons of its own, the party omits from its definition of its program, which it supplied to the New York Israel Office of Information for publication in the United States, some elements which it did not deem necessary to conceal in another governmental publication issued in Israel, such as the fact that its program calls for support of the "world peace policy of the U.S.S.R." and of "Popular China."[7]

B. Communist and Leftist Parties in Parliament

Each of these three parties is represented in the Israeli Parliament.

The total number of seats they jointly occupy has *risen* from 20 (in the elections of 1951) to 25 (in the elections of 1955) out of a total of 120 seats.[8]

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5 **Facts About Israel.** Israel Office of Information, N. Y., 1957 (First Edition), p. 62
6 Ibid.
7 **Facts and Figures.** Government Press Office, Israel, 1955, p. 18
8 **Facts and Figures.** Israel Office of Information, N. Y., 1955, p. 17

Thus, today, the Communist and Leftist Parties jointly occupy more than one-fifth of the total number of seats in Israel's Parliament.

In order to assess accurately the strength of these Communist and Leftist forces in the political life of Israel, one must remember that the Israeli system of parliamentary elections is based on the principle of "proportionate representation."[9] This means that the electorate votes for parties, and not for individuals. When the results are computed, each party is assigned a number of seats proportionate to the votes it received; it, in turn, names the individuals who occupy those seats. The fact that the Communist and Leftist parties have won 25 seats out of 120, therefore, means that *over* 20 *per cent of the Israeli electorate have voted for the Communist and Leftist programs, and supported the Marxist-Socialist ideology.*

In recent months, it has become customary for Zionist apologists —who are no longer able to conceal the fact that a sizeable proportion of the Israeli electorate has voted for the Communist-Marxist tickets, and returned 25 deputies to the Israeli parliament— to endeavor to exploit this fact propagandistically before uninformed audiences. Contending that three of the six deputies representing the Israel Communist Party in Parliament are Arabs, many a Zionist has proceeded to allege that the bulk of the voters who elected them was Arab, and that therefore the strength of the Israeli Communist movement comes from the presumed support of the Arab population. What these Zionist spokesmen fail to indicate is that, in Israeli parliamentary elections, voters do not elect *individual deputies;* they vote for *parties;* and the party leaders, in turn, choose a proportionate number of representatives and assign them to the seats won by the party in the election. This is the essence of the system of "proportionate representation" which governs parliamentary elections in Israel. It follows, therefore, that the six individuals whom the leaders of the Israeli Communist Party have selected for occupying the six parliamentary seats won by that Party in the 1955 elections were not personally voted into office by the electorate; nor does the proportion of Arabs among them correspond to the proportion of Arab and non-Arab citizens who voted for the Communist platform. On the contrary, the assignment of some Arab representatives to

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9 Ibid.

some of the seats won by the Israeli Communist Party reflects the design of the leaders of that party to *appeal* to Arab voters, to exploit their grievances against the discriminatory policies of the Israeli Government, and thereby to gain support among the Arab voters in forthcoming elections.

C. Leftists in the Israeli Cabinet

Since the beginning of its political history, Israel has had coalition governments. At no time has there been in the Israeli Parliament a party sufficiently strong to form a cabinet without the support of other parties.

The present cabinet represents the coalition which has been in power since the elections of 1955, and in which five parties participate.

The two Leftist parties—Mapam and Ahdut—are among the five ruling parties, each of them being represented by two ministers in the sixteen-minister cabinet. Under the present set-up, Mapam has the portfolios of Development and Health, while the Ahdut has the portfolios of the Interior and Communications.[10]

Thus, one-quarter of the ministers composing the present ruling regime in Israel, and participating in its coalition cabinet, are representatives of the avowedly Leftist and pro-Soviet parties.

D. Communal and Collectivist Settlements

Communism is strongly entrenched not merely in the political life and institutions of Israel, but also in the economic-social structure of Israeli society. In fact, the political strength of Communism in Israel is *derivative*, reflecting the appeal of Communism as an ideology and a way of life to Israeli masses, and the influence of Marxist-Socialist teachings upon Israel's patterns of socio-economic organization. The political fortunes of Israeli Communist and Leftist Parties, therefore, must be viewed not as incidental or passing phenomena in Israel's political life, but as direct manifestations of a deeper and more lasting sway which Communism exercises over the minds, hearts and aspirations of large sectors of the Israeli people.

This aspect of Communist strength in Israel manifests itself primarily in the rural settlements, through which the Zionist experiment in Palestine was initially conducted and which remain until

[10] **Facts About Israel**, op. cit., pp. 55-56

today one of the main pillars of Israeli society. The overwhelming majority of these settlements is organized on a *communal, collectivist* basis, and governed by Marxist principles.

The most extreme, as well as the most widespread, type of communal-collectivist settlement is the *Kibbutz* or the *Kvutza*—but it is not the only variety. Other types include the "Moshav Shitufim" and the "Moshav Ovdim".

The "Kibbutz":

Officially, the Israeli Government describes and defines the Kibbutz as follows:

> "Kibbutz or Kvutza (plural: kibbutzim or kvutzot): Communal collective settlement.
>
> "All property is collectively owned and work is organized on a collective basis.
>
> "The members give their labour and are supplied in return with housing, food, clothing, education, cultural and social services.
>
> "There is a central dining room and kitchen, communal kindergartens and children's quarters, communal social and cultural centres and central stores."[11]

This brief, official description of the pattern of socio-economic organization which governs the Kibbutz may be supplemented by the reports of interested and sympathetic observers.

Collective ownership is fundamental. As Dr. Dunner observes in his book, *The Republic of Israel*:

> "Not only the means of production are owned in common, but all the personal things of life are also possessed by the group as a whole. Everyone draws his clothing from the common stock. His wants are satisfied in accordance with his needs. Everyone gets his tobacco or cigarettes from the common supply. He who requires more, gets more. Those who need less do not envy the others . . . He who joins a Kvutzah gives up his money, his private homes, furniture, books, clothing, all his earthly possessions. No individual accounts are kept."[12]

Collective ownership leads to other related features of com-

11 Ibid., p. 78
12 Dunner, op. cit., p. 142

munal organization. Thus, according to the same author:

> "No money whatsoever is used in the internal relations of the settlement . . . Only the external financial relations of the settlement are governed by customary capitalistic standards. The Kvutzah sells its surplus production for money . . . He who leaves the settlement for a vacation, a necessary journey, or some specialized education is given his expenses from the common treasury."[13]

Col. Gerald de Gaury reports that all products of the Kibbutz are marketed and sold by the community, either directly or through co-operative marketing organizations, and that "pay for work of a member outside the Kibbutz goes direct to the secretary of the community for the community."[14]

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, reporting on her visit to a Kibbutz, observes with evident enthusiasm that "no one receives any money for his work; indeed he has no need for money, for the community supplies him with everything from pins and toothpaste to clothes, food and medical care."[15]

In this communal setting, work is not conducted on a free and selective basis, but is assigned to each member by the community. Work is carried out, in the words of Dr. Dunner, "within the framework of a general plan devised by all the members in a sort of town-hall meeting."[16] A different system, however, is described by other observers. Thus, Col. De Gaury reports that "rosters for duties are posted by the secretary, and it is a law of the Kibbutzim that the duty must be undertaken before any complaint is made;"[17] and Mr. Ellis explains that the assignment of work for members of the Kibbutz is undertaken by committees acting on behalf of the whole community: "The chaver's [i.e., comrade's] responsibility, in turn, is to accept the work job assigned to him by the kibbutz as a whole, through committees elected for that purpose. Committee memberships are rotated throughout the kibbutz, as are work assignments generally, though certain jobs tend to be performed by those chaverim [i.e., comrades] with applicable skills."[18] He adds

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13 Ibid, pp. 142-143
14 De Gaury, Gerald, **The New State of Israel**, Praeger, N. Y., 1952, p. 206
15 Roosevelt, Eleanor, **India and The Awakening East**, Harper & Bros., N. Y., 1953, p. 43
16 Dinner, **op. cit.**, p. 16
17 De Gaury, **op. cit.**, p. 208
18 Ellis, **op. cit.**, p. 168

that the list of assigned jobs is displayed on the bulletin board outside the communal dining hall, and "each evening the chaverim read on that bulletin board their work assignments for the next day."[19]

There is little privacy in the Kibbutz. According to Mr. Ellis:

> "Privacy is avoided by the kibbutz, and to eat alone is considered anti-social. Thus meals are taken in common by members in a large dining hall. It used to be, in the early days of the movement, that members would meet in the dining hall at night to talk, and a chaver who stayed in his own quarters was regarded with disapproval. This now is less true. Indeed, as the kibbutzim grew more prosperous, living quarters became more expansive. Wooden barracks divided into single rooms, shared by a couple, began to give way to concrete buildings in which each couple had one large room, plus one very small one, and in some cases even a private bath and kitchenette. Here again was an erosion from earliest kibbutz principles, which held that showers should be taken in communal shower rooms. The edict against complete privacy still holds, however."[20]

The couple's room or quarters, however, do not house the children. "Children live apart from their parents in their own separate quarters, where they eat, sleep, and have classes," writes Ellis;[21] . . . "At four o'clock each afternoon the children go to the room of their parents for a two-hour period. This is the children's hour . . . When supper time arrives, the children go back to their own quarters, where they eat, and then go to bed."[22] He adds: "For one and one-half months after giving birth to a baby, a mother is exempted from work. Then gradually she works back into the organization, until, when her baby is six months old, the mother assumes her full work load. From that point on, except in cases of special need, she sees her child only during the children's hour."[23]

This institution is labelled by Dr. Dunner as "the most striking feature of the Kvutzah".[24] Whether "striking" or "strange" is the proper term to use in describing this practice is a matter of opinion.

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19 Ibid., p. 185
20 Ibid., p. 168
21 Ibid., p. 169
22 Ibid
23 Ibid., p. 186
24 Dunner, op. cit., p. 143

Be that as it may, there are other "striking" or "strange" features of Kibbutz life.

Col. De Gaury writes that, although "in the beginning members of some of the Kibbutzim did not solemnize and register their marriage before a Rabbi or solemnize it before witnesses . . . more and more members of the Kibbutzim now register their marriages with a Rabbi."[25] He adds: "In some new ex-soldier settlements where life is hard, accommodation limited and all the members below thirty, young members of both sexes share the hut rooms, generally in threes, but the tendency is towards marriage before a Rabbi or registration of it by him, as soon as a child is expected. The community, on application, provide a private room for the couple. The man then ceases to sleep in a dormitory with others, and his children are brought up and sleep in the communal children's quarters."[26]

According to Mr. Ellis: "Generally boys and girls are allowed to sleep in the same room until they themselves desire separate quarters and separate showers. In some kibbutzim sexual intercourse between unmarried youngsters, while not encouraged, is considered the affair of the young people themselves."[27]

"Moshav Shitufi" and "Moshav Ovdim":

While its system is the most extreme embodiment of communal organization in Israel, the Kibbutz is not the only type of settlement organized on a communal-collectivist basis. Other types include the "Moshav Shitufi" and the "Moshav Ovdim".

The former resembles the Kibbutz in that it is based on "collective economy and ownership;" but it departs from the Kibbutz in that each family has its own house and is "responsible for its own domestic services."[28]

In the Moshav Ovdim, "each individual farm is worked by the member and his family, but the produce is sold through a central cooperative, and purchases are undertaken cooperatively. Certain types of agricultural equipment are owned by the settlement as a whole . . . No transfer of a farm or acceptance of a new member is possible without the approval of the village council."[29]

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25 De Gaury, op. cit., p. 207
26 Ibid
27 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 169-170
28 Facts About Israel, op. cit., p. 80
29 Ibid., p. 79

Character and Role of Communal Settlements:

Having described the patterns of socio-economic organization which prevail in Israeli communal and collective settlements, we must now observe that these patterns are not incidental by-products of a process of haphazard growth. They are, in the words of the Israeli Government, reflections of "various social philosophies".[30] It is not without significance, therefore, that, having asserted that "ancient Jewish civilization was rooted in the land" and that "it was natural and inevitable, therefore, that the return to the land should have constituted the soul of modern Zionism," the Israeli Government proceeds to describe the prevailing methods of rural settlement as "the unique pattern of group settlement characteristic of Israel farming."[31]

It is customary for Zionists and pro-Zionists to speak of communal and collective settlement with pride and enthusiasm. Thus, Dr. Dunner, asserting that "the Kvutzah forms a unique achievement of Jewish colonization, indeed an original contribution of the Jewish homeland to agrarian reform",[32] enthuses: "Visitors to Israel are amazed to see in the midst of a capitalist economy these islands of collectivism based on solely voluntary efforts and maintaining the creative spirit of man."[33] He even suggests that it merits to be viewed as a model and an ideal: "Whether the Kvutzah type of settlement could be profitably emulated by other nations depends, of course, on the number of men and women who can free themselves completely of the idea of all private property and who at the same time are willing to work to the best of their ability irrespective of the quality and amount of work done by others."[34]

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, commenting on the Kibbutz, writes: "It is clear that agricultural communities such as this one are not merely economic projects to these people, but an entire way of life, of living and working together. They apparently take great hold of the young people who are captured by the communal idea."[35] Evidently, this appeal is catching—affecting Mrs. Roosevelt herself. For she speaks glowingly of the "crusading zeal and imagination" she

30 **Facts & Figures, (N. Y.) op. cit.,** p. 51
31 **Facts About Israel, op. cit.,** pp. 78-79
32 Dunner, **op. cit.,** p. 142
33 **Ibid.,** p. 144
34 **Ibid.,** p. 145
35 Roosevelt, Eleanor, **op. cit.,** p. 45

professes to have found on the farms; and, singling out the kibbutz, she confesses that she found it "particularly" interesting, and writes about its "extremely interesting" projects and the "heroic part" it played not only in peace but also in war.[36]

The enthusiasm of Israelis, and the excitement of Zionists and quasi-Zionists, over these common types of rural settlement which predominate in Israel neither conceal nor alter the fact that these settlements are organized on communal and collectivist bases and governed by Marxist principles. In fact, many a student of socio-economic systems has compared these Israeli communal settlements with the Kolkhozes of the Soviet Union—only to find that the Israeli type exceeds the Soviet type in the degree to which it realizes the communal principle.

Thus, the Zionist Dr. Dunner proclaims that "*the kolkhozes never supplied communistic principles in the relations of their members to the extent of Israel's Kvutzoth and Kibutzim*";[37] while Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, asserting that *the Kibbutz* "*is probably more strictly socialistic than the collective farms in Russia,*" explains:

> "In Russia, while all farmers are on collective farms most of them have a small plot of land. There they may grow what they like and sell it on the market. They also have separate homes and kitchens. In a kibbutz, however, everything is communal."[38]

Perhaps, then, the Special Study Mission of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U. S. House of Representatives was making a charitable understatement when it described the kibbutz, in a recent report, as "*a form of elementary communism*" and judged that it "*cannot be classified among democratic institutions.*"[39]

The relevance of these findings to our examination of the strength of Communism in Israeli society is reinforced by the fact that the *overwhelming majority* of rural settlements in Israel is communal and collectivist. Acocrding to official Israeli statistics, the total number of Israeli communal and collectivist settlements of the

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36 **Ibid.**, pp. 43-46
37 Dunner, **op. cit.**, p. 144
38 Douglas, Justice William O., **Strange Lands & Friendly People**, Harper & Bros., N. Y., 1951, p. 274
39 **House Report No. 2147**, pp. 30 & 32

three types we have surveyed is 507, while there are only 69 permanent settlements of more conventional types.[40] **In other words,** *more than* 88% *of the permanent rural settlements in Israel are communal and collectivist in organization.*

Nor is the impact of communal settlements upon Israeli life fully told by statistics alone. For the Kibbutz enjoys a special role in the shaping of Israeli society. Originally conceived as "an outpost of Zionist settlement in Palestine" and designed "to set the pattern for the future Jewish community of Israel',[41] the Kibbutz soon became "the instrument of Zionist settlement in Palestine"[42] and remained throughout the Mandate "the basic form" of such settlement,[43] coming later on to play "an indispensable role in the early days of statehood".[44]

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40 According to **Facts & Figures, op. cit.,** pp. 51-53, there were at last count 223 Kibbutzim. 259 Moshvei Ovdim, and 25 Moshavim Shitufim (i.e., a total of 507), while, of the conventional types,there were 29 Moshavot and 40 Moshavim (i.e., a total of 69). The Maabarot and Kfarei Avoda are not included in either category because they are transitional settlements which "will, in time, conform to the pattern of one or another type of established settlement" **(Ibid,** p. 53)

41 Weingarten, Murray, **Life in a Kibbutz,** The Reconstructionist Press, N. Y., 1955, pp. 7-8

42 Ellis, **op. cit.,** p. 58

43 **Ibid.,** p. 98

44 **Ibid.,** p. 172

II. SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS

A. Gratitude and Need

> "Israel does not forget the stand taken by the Soviet Union in the Assembly of the United Nations on the historic 29th day of November, 1947, nor does it forget the like stand of the United States of America. It remembers as vividly the aid it received from Czechoslovakia during the War of Independence, and the attitude of Poland towards Jewish emigration to Israel, manifestations which without doubt bespoke sincere sympathy with Israel's enterprise."[1]

These words, written by the Prime Minister of Israel and published in the *Government Year-Book*, give expression to the feeling of indebtedness, and the corollary sense of need, which have affected, and still affect, Israel's relations with the two Power Blocs, and which have determined Israel's foreign policy. Israel's special ties with the Soviet Union must be envisaged within this total context of Israel's national self-interest—past, present and future.

Why the indebtedness—as far as the past is concerned?

Why the need—as far as present and future are concerned?

And what type of foreign policy has the intersection of Israel's national interests, on the one hand, and the respective attitudes of the two Power Blocs towards them, on the other hand, brought forth in Israel?

* * *

The story of Soviet-Israeli ties begins at the very beginning of Israel's own history. In fact, it ante-dates the formal establishment of the state of Israel.

Its origin goes back to the fall of 1947, when the battle for the birth of Israel was being fought on the *international political* front at Lake Success. At that stage, Soviet support tipped the balance in favor of the adoption of the Partition Resolution by the U. N. General Assembly.

At the second stage, in the spring of 1948, when the main battle

1 State of Israel, **Government Year-Book, 1952**, published by the Government Printer, Jerusalem, pp. 22-23.

was *diplomatic*, prompt recognition of the new state of Israel, by the Soviet Bloc countries, was vital. For the General Assembly had recently re-opened the Palestine Problem; and the trend towards the repeal of the Partition Resolution was unmistakable. Diplomatic recognition at that time helped dissuade many delegations from supporting the repeal of the Partition Plan, and consequently served to establish and confirm the Israeli *fait accompli*.

In the summer and fall of 1948, Soviet support assumed a new character, consonant with Israel's need at the moment. The struggle was now being waged on the military battlefield. And Soviet aid, now *military* in character, proved decisive in determining the outcome of the hostilities in Palestine. It was therefore as vital for Israel as the political and diplomatic support rendered to Zionism in the two earlier stages.

Thus it was that, by virtue of Soviet political, diplomatic and military support, Israel's *establishment* and early *survival* were ensured.

Israel's resultant sense of indebtedness to the Soviet Bloc soon played a vital role in shaping Israeli foreign policy. Hence the rise of Israel's "non-alignment", "non-identification" or "neutralist" policy in world affairs.

Let us now examine, successively, the three forms of Soviet support to Israel in 1947 and 1948: political, diplomatic and military.

B. Soviet Political Support: 1947-1948

"This was surprising, encouraging, and even sensational news." Thus wrote David Horowitz, a member of the Zionist delegation to the United Nations in 1947, in his memoirs.[2] He was referring to the report, received on the eve of the opening of the debate on the Palestine Problem, that the Soviet Bloc would support the Partition Resolution. Describing the excitement which swept through Zionist ranks, and the atmosphere which prevailed in Zionist-Soviet meetings, he says:

> "The general atmosphere of these talks was friendly, and the Soviet envoys showed keen sympathy and understanding of our efforts and interests.
>
> "On one occasion Zarapkin got up and went out of the

[2] Horowitz, David, **State in the Making**, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1953, p. 239.

room for a few moments and returned with a bottle of wine and some glasses. It was at the outset of the U. N. discussions and the future was still beclouded. Consequently we were inwardly elated and delighted when Zarapkin filled the five glasses and, raising his own, gave the toast, 'The future Jewish state!'

"We responded by raising our glasses to the Soviet Union, and felt the episode to be a part of the unique evolution of the historic hour.

"Shertock (later Sharett) retailed the incident at an Agency Executive meeting the same evening and added: 'What's happened to us in connection with the Soviet Union is a real miracle!' . . .

"The unremitting aid that Zarapkin and Stein gave our cause, and their sharp, direct logic, played an important part in the long series of gains we made and in the sum total of our triumph."[3]

That Horowitz' excitement and "inward elation" were fully shared by his colleagues was understandable. For the Partition Resolution would have failed to obtain the sufficient number of votes at the General Assembly had the Zionists failed in their efforts to secure the support and votes of the countries of the Soviet Bloc.

Thus, the support of the Soviet Bloc, no less than the support of the United States, made it possible for the establishment of Israel to be recommended by the General Assembly, and for the idea of "Jewish statehood" to be endorsed by the United Nations.

In itself, however, endorsement of the idea of "statehood" by the United Nations would have remained purely academic, and practically ineffective, had it not been for the timely diplomatic recognition and the vast military aid which Israel received soon thereafter from the Soviet Bloc.

C. Soviet Diplomatic Support: 1948

Political support at the United Nations in November, 1947, was supplemented by diplomatic support, in the form of prompt recognition of Israel soon after its establishment in mid-May, 1948.

Not to be outdone by the Truman Administration, which had extended *de facto* recognition to Israel only a few minutes after its

[3] Ibid, p. 272.

establishment was announced, the Soviet Union went a step further and extended *de jure* recognition to Israel on May 17—thus becoming the first country in the world to recognize that state fully and officially. It was soon followed by other Soviet countries.

Israel's appreciation for this friendly Soviet act was manifested in the fact that the *first* formally accredited diplomatic representative of Israel was appointed to Prague, and the *second* to Moscow.[4]

D. Soviet Military Support: 1948-1949

Political and diplomatic support, however, was soon supplemented and indeed crowned by decisive military support.

Soviet Supply of Arms to Israel

The story of the flow of arms from Communist Czechoslovakia to Israel in 1948 was never fully told in the United States, even when it was taking place; and it has been virtually suppressed since then.

The fact that *Israel was the first country in the Middle East to receive arms from the Soviet Bloc* is thus either unknown or forgotten.

So, too, are the facts that this purchase of arms by Israel took place during the cease-fire ordered by the U. N. Security Council on May 29, 1948: that it was in violation of the essential terms of the Council's order, which had called upon the parties "to refrain from importing or exporting war material . . . during the cease-fire"; and that it was in further violation of the embargo of arms deliveries to the area, ordered by the Security Council in its resolution of July 15, 1948.

Equally forgotten or unknown is the fact that Israel paid for the arms it purchased from Communist Czechoslovakia in American-donated, tax-free dollars — given to Israel ostensibly for charitable purposes, but diverted by Israel to arms-procurement.

Although Israel has officially proclaimed its indebtedness to the Soviet Bloc for the far-reaching military aid it received during the Palestine War, Israeli spokesmen, in their utterances or publications in the United States, have been careful to conceal or camouflage the fact that their country had received such aid. Thus, Lt. Col. Moshe Pearlman, in his book, *The Army of Israel*—although he speaks of "the successful introduction into the country . . . of a considerable

[4] Zionist Review, October 15, 1948.

quantity of guns, planes, armoured cars, half track vehicles, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, petrol stocks, food, a few tanks, and machinery and materials for Israel's war industries" during the opening phase of the hostilities; although he also admits that "this equipment really made possible the emergence of the Haganah from a guerilla force to a fighting army" and "also enabled Israel to become self-sufficient in many types of weapons and ammunition"; and althought he further admits that "this material came from a host of countries and in a variety of ways"—dismisses the question of the source of this material with the evasive and laconic remark: "The full story cannot yet be told."[5]

Fortunately, however, the American reader is not entirely at the mercy of the Israeli propagandists' determination to supress facts and rewrite history. A number of authoritative reports—from Zionist sources as well as non-partisan observers—fill the gap and help set the record straight.

The well-informed Zionist journalist, Jon Kimche, wrote in his book *Seven Fallen Pillars*:

> "Israeli emissaries scoured the whole of Europe and America for possible supplies. American Jews contributed generous supplies of dollars and the arms merchants were prepared to deal for dollars. The Czechs were most helpful. A regular airlift began to operate from Prague to Aqir in southern Palestine. Rifles, ammunition and guns were now arriving . . . This change was still hidden from the eyes of the Arabs and the United Nations Assembly. But the British Government knew. The Foreign Office was receiving reports from Czechoslovakia, and from the R.A.F.'s reconnaissance Mosquitos which still roamed over the battle areas, taking photographs of the arrival of supplies in Israel."[6]

On December 14, 1948, the *New York Times* published a dispatch from London which read:

> "Replying to questions in the House of Commons, Hector McNeil, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that there had been a 'substantial increase' in the

5 Pearlman, Moshe, **The Army of Israel**, Philosophical Library, New York, 1950, p. 146.

6 Kimche, J., **Seven Fallen Pillars**, Secker & Warburg, London, 1950 pp. 249-250.

Israeli Air Force since the United Nations truce took effect in Palestine. *When asked specifically whether rifles from the Skoda factory in Czechoslovakia and Soviet Yak fighters were being used in Palestine, Mr. McNeil said that 'our information leads us to have no doubt that aircraft have been supplied from that factory.'*.[7]

On January 7, 1949, the *Times* published a dispatch from Clifton Daniel, then its correspondent in London, stating that the British Foreign Office had reported that "the Israeli Air Force had been tripled during the last six months and that large quantities of arms had been acquired, principally by smuggling from Czechoslovakia in violation of the United Nations arms embargo."[8]

Two days later, the *Times* published another dispatch from Mr. Daniel stating that, according to a British report, "the principal armament of the fighter wing of the Israeli Air Force consisted of Messerschmitts built in the Czechoslovakian Skoda Works."[9]

On January 12, 1949, a British Foreign Office spokesman declared at a press conference that "at least 90 per cent" of the arms "illicitly supplied to Israel had come from Eastern Europe."[10]

The *Times* correspondents in Vienna also reported on the illicit arms traffic from the Soviet Bloc to Israel. On December 20, 1948, a dispatch from Vienna revealed that a group of displaced persons, possibly financed in the first instance from the United States but certainly supported by the Russians in Austria, had been buying arms in Czechoslovakia and shipping them to Israel," and that, during the preceding six months, "three large transports loaded with arms and munitions from the Skoda Works had gone down the Danube to a Rumanian port under Russian auspices, and had been taken over there by an Israeli group." [11]

These reports from Israel, from London and from Eastern Europe were confirmed by reports from Washington also, where the United States Government had been apparently so concerned over these developments as to protest officially against them. A dispatch datelined Washington, September 2, 1948, in the *New York Times*, said:

7 **New York Times**, December 14, 1948.
8 **Ibid.**, January 7, 1949.
9 **Ibid.**, January 9, 1949.
10 **Ibid.**, January 13, 1949.
11 **Ibid.**, December 20, 1948.

"The United States apparently has made strong protests to Czechoslovakia in connection with the illegal shipment of airplanes and arms by air from that country to Israel.

"At the State Department today, it was said that *reports from the United States Embassy in Prague indicated that Americans had been engaged in this illicit trade,* barred by recent resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

"Furthermore, it was said that the Department approached Czechoslovakia July 28, with a view to secure cessation of this triffic." [12]

Further light on these transactions was shed three years later, in testimonies before the Israeli courts. The *Zionist Review* reported:

"Testifying for the defense in Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's criminal libel case against the Communist daily newspaper, *'Kol Ha'am'*, Samuel Mikunis, Communist member of the Knesset [i.e., Parliament], told the Tel Aviv District Court last week that he had received permission from Ben-Gurion in May, 1948, to leave Israel for East European countries in order to collect arms and muster aid . . . He told the Court that he had succeeded in obtaining aircraft and other equipment on his mission, receiving aid in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria." [13]

In an article on the Israeli army and its development, a knowledgeable American journalist, Don Cook, wrote about the major transition in the armament and equipment situation of the Israeli army in April and May of 1948 and stated: "By May, shipments of good Czechoslovakian rifles and automatic weapons began arriving in quantity . . . The story of the Jewish efforts to beat the United Nations arms blockade is in itself full of fantastic episodes."[14]

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 24, 1956, Secretary of State Dulles had this to say in reply to a question from Senator Sparkman:

"I might say, Senator, that the getting of arms from the Soviet bloc is not entirely a new development. Israel itself

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12 **Ibid.**, September 2, 1948.
13 **Zionist Review**, May 11, 1951.
14 Cook, Don, "Tough Little Army", **Saturday Evening Post**, February 18, 1956, p.94.

has in the past gotten substantial amounts of arms from the Soviet bloc." [15]

Communist military support to Israel, then, is a matter of *historical record.* One illustration from an eminent historical authority will suffice. The monumental series, *Survey of International Affairs,* published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, makes the following statement:

> "The Israelis disregarded their undertaking not to import war materials during the truce, and took ample advantage of that respite to rectify their almost total lack of combat aircraft, artillery, and heavy armoured vehicles, and their serious limitations in automatic weapons and ammunition.
>
> "The extent to which the Palestine struggle had cut across the normal frontiers of the cold war was illustrated by the fact that, *while the hard currency for these arms transactions was provided largely by the dollar contributions of United States Jewry, one of the most fruitful sources of supply was the state-owned armament factories of Czechoslovakia, where the Communists had seized power in the previous February.*" [16]

Soviet Training of Israeli Officers and Technicians:

Communist military support to Israel, however, was not confined to the supply of arms and ammunition. It also took the form of training soldiers, officers, and technicians for the Israeli army in Czech army camps.

According to a report from Prague, published in the *New York Times* of December 26, 1948:

> "Six hundred Jewish men and women, many of them trained for the Israeli army by Czechoslovak officers, are en route to Palestine, informed sources said today. Informants said approximately 1,500 others were awaiting transportation. Infantrymen, paratroopers, communications men, pilots and nurses were among those who left and are waiting to leave, informants said. Part of their training program was in Czechoslovakian Army Camps . . .

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[15] Transcript in **New York Times,** February 26, 1956.
[16] Royal Institute of International Affairs, **Survey of International Affairs: The Middle East 1945-1950,** Oxford University Press, New York, 1954, p. 277

"There was no estimate available of the number of Jews trained at these camps. Unofficial reports ranged from 'a few thousand' to 5,000." [17]

"Communist" or "Pre-Communist" Czechoslovakia?

It has become customary nowadays for Israel propagandists and Zionist apoligists to claim that Israel purchased arms not from *Communist* Czechoslovakia but from *Democratic* Czechoslovakia before it came to be ruled by a Communist regime. This effort to rewrite history is futile. For it is a matter of common knowledge that the Communist *coup d'etat* in Czechoslovakia took place in February of 1948, while the State of Israel came into being in May of 1948, and these arms deals were made later in the year.

Moreover, the Israel Government formally and publicly paid tribute to the aid it received from the Communist Government of Czechoslovakia, in unmistakable terms. In a note addressed by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Communist Czechoslovak Government on December 12, 1952, the Israeli Government wrote: "During its War of Independence, Israel received help from Czechoslovakia . . . *This assistance was rendered to Israel pursuant to the decision of high State authorities.*" [18]

Israel Still Ready to Buy Soviet Arms:

Moreover, it is not without significance that in the fall of 1955, when Israel's leaders were loudly assailing Egypt for accepting arms from Czechoslovakia, they were nevertheless repeatedly proclaiming that they were ready to seek and receive arms from any country, *including Communist countries,* if the West failed to provide them with more arms.

Thus, Mr. Sharett, then Foreign Minister of Israel, in an address delivered before the Israeli Parliament on October 18, 1955, declared that "we will not hesitate to obtain them [i.e., arms] from every possible source." [19]

In an interview with *U. S. News & World Report,* Mr. Sharett also stated that "we shall look for arms wherever we can find them." [20]

According to a report by Irving Spiegel, published in the *New*

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17 **New York Times,** December 26, 1948
18 **Israel Digest,** published by the Israel Office of Information, New York, December 26, 1952, Supplement
19 **Ibid.,** October 26, 1955, Supplement.
20 **U. S. News & World Report,** November 4, 1955

York Times, Mr. Sharett again confirmed that Israel would "seek and accept arms from any source in the world." [21]

A Special Study Mission of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U. S. House of Representatives, reporting that "leftist parties have taken the position that Israel should obtain Soviet arms," explained that "this position is not at variance with Foreign Minister Sharett's announcement in September 1955, that, if necessary, Israel will take arms from any source." [22]

E. Israel's Neutralism

We have already suggested that, partly as a result of its indebtedness to the Soviet Bloc for the political, diplomatic and military support rendered to the Zionist cause in 1947 and 1948, Israel formulated and pursued a policy of neutralism in world affairs. For, while it was obviously inexpedient for Israel to adopt an attitude of hostility towards the United States—whence it had received not only political and diplomatic support, but also sizable financial and technical aid [23] — it was equally inexpedient for Israel to show hostility to the Soviet Bloc. Israel's neutralism vis-a-vis the Eastern and the Western Blocs was thus an expression of its equal indebtedness to both sides.

But Israel's consistent adherence to neutralism throughout the ensuing years, even after its early need for Soviet political, diplomatic and military assistance had passed, must be attributed to more than mere gratitude for past favors. Other elements of Israel's situation have contributed to this phenomenon.

Obviously, the pressures of those sizable Communist and Leftist sections of the Israeli population, who were represented by 25 of the 120 seats of Israel's Parliament and by four of Israel's sixteen-man cabinet, [24] must have played a significant role in making Israel adhere to its early policy of neutrality.

Moreover, Israeli policy-makers constantly allude to their fear lest an anti-Soviet or an all-out pro-Western foreign policy on the part of Israel might lead to retaliation against Jews living behind

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21 **New York Times,** November 11, 1955
22 **House Report** No. 2147, p. 32
23 See **above,** Introduction, fn. 1
24 See **above,** Chapter I, Sections B and C. The Israeli cabinet crisis, which led to the resignation of Ben-Gurion in December 1957 and was resolved by the restoration of the coalition in January 1958, showed the magnitude of the influence over Israel's foreign policy wielded by the Marxist-Leftist members of the Israeli Cabinet

the Iron Curtain. Equally important is Israel's never-abandoned hope that the Soviet Union might still agree to the mass migration of these Jews to Israel, thus helping to realize Israel's greatest dream, the so-called "ingathering of the exiles."

Finally, some of Israel's vital imports—particularly oil—have been coming, in increasing volume, from the Soviet Union; and Israeli-Soviet trade relations play an important role in Israel's economy.[25]

Whatever the reasons, however, it is undeniable that *Israel was the first country in the Middle East to proclaim a neutralist foreign policy, and the only country in that region which has been undeviatingly neutralist throughout its existence as a state.*

In fact, Israel's neutralism ante-dated its very existence. David Horowitz, describing the response of fellow Zionist leaders to the initial Soviet support for Israeli statehood, states:

> "We knew that it was for us to turn the impossible into the possible, to achieve something that had never been done at any time before—to find a common denominator, at least in one part of the entire globe, between East and West. The single hope or prospect of attaining our objective was to form a partnership—nothing less!—on this issue between the United States and the Soviet Union." [26]

After describing the cordial sessions which the Zionist Delegation held with Soviet representatives, he writes:

> "At the same time we maintained close and cordial relations with the Americans. We often went straight from the U. S. delegation's office in Park Avenue to the Soviet Consulate, or vice versa . . .
>
> "We told both the Americans and the Russians that *our sole criterion was the Jewish interest. We . . . told the representatives of both governments that we sought whatever aid we could muster for our undertaking and the solution of our problem, and we should welcome any such aid from whatever quarter it came . . .*
>
> "So we became a kind of bridge or point of contact, virtually the only one, between the two world giants . . .

25 See below, Section G
26 Horowitz, State in the Making, op. cit., p. 239

Some times, in that atmosphere of cold war which had so lately begun, *we felt like tightrope walkers teetering over a deep chasm.*" [27]

"Tightrope walking" in the months immediately preceding the establishment of the state soon became, after the state was founded, Israel's official foreign policy.

Thus, a staunchly Zionist American who was Mr. Truman's first envoy to Israel, writes:

> "The assistance of Russia and more particularly Czechoslovakia during the Arab-Israel war was warmly appreciated . . . Israel sought to maintain an officially neutral policy in the cold war between East and West. This neutrality was expressed in numerous votes at the U. N., in the quiet way in which Russian and satellite 'elections' were reported on the official radio, even in the care shown by the pro-Government papers not to wound Iron Curtain susceptibilities."[28]

The author of the first full-length biography of Mr. Ben-Gurion describes the Israeli Premier's policy in the following words:

> "Handicapped as he was from the outset of Israel's independence by the realities of the East-West schism, Ben-Gurion nevertheless made valiant efforts during the first four and a half years of his Premiership to come to terms with eastern Europe.
>
> "In the early stages that group of states gave Israel every indication of support . . . Moscow in fact saw in Israel a bridgehead for Soviet penetration of the Middle East.
>
> "The Zionists in Palestine admitted to natural sympathies with the Soviet regime . . .
>
> "Ben-Gurion despatched a strong team of left-wingers as envoys to each of the eastern capitals . . .
>
> "He was sweet reasonableness itself in his statements relating to the Communist constellation. 'It is our policy to promote friendship and reciprocity with every peace-loving country,' he said, 'without prying into its internal

[27] **Ibid.**, pp. 272-274

[28] McDonald, James G. **My Mission in Israel.** Simon and Schuster, New York, 1951, pp. 283-284

constitution.' " [29]

Gerald de Gaury writes:

> "The basic principle of Israel's foreign policy was announced by the Government after the first general elections early in 1949. It was to be an independent foreign policy, based on loyalty to the United Nations and friendship with all peace-loving countries. *Israel was not to join any Power or group of Powers against another* . . . Her support of the action which the United States took in Korea, in conformity with the General Assembly's resolutions, was, on the other hand, balanced by *her recognition of the Central People's Government of China and her refusal to endorse American policy in Formosa.*"[30]

An Israeli writer describes the emergence of Israel's neutralism as follows:

> "Israel's foreign relations in their first phase . . . were dominated by the wish to avoid taking any side in the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union had acted as midwife and godfather to the new state; there was the tradition of Zionism as a world movement whose congresses were held by preference in neutral Switzerland; above all, there was the history of world Jewry, parts of which had so often been hostages to warring powers — as the two million Jews behind the Iron Curtain would be in case of another war.
>
> "The Israeli Foreign Ministry, it is true, frowned upon the term 'neutrality' . . . Foreign Minister Sharett himself preferred to use the word 'non-identification'. But the difference between the popular and the official definition of this position was one of emphasis rather than of basic purpose.
>
> "In the first glow of sucucess in 1948, with good wishes coming in from both East and West, Israel felt she could ask for economic and military aid from the Soviet as well as the Western world, and for freedom of communication and movement, to and fro, with Diaspora Jewry wherever it was. A vision arose of Israel as a bridge or link,

[29] Litvinoff, Barnett, **Ben-Gurion of Israel**, Praeger, New York, 1954, pp. 228-229
[30] De Gaury, **The New State of Israel**, op. cit., pp. 173-174

and this produced in turn the brief illusion that she could stand alone as providential arbiter between the two great hostile camps." [31]

If it is true that the "illusion", the messianic "vision", and the "bridge"-concept of Israel as a transcendental world reality, soon lost their appeal to Israeli leaders, it is no less true that the pragmatic, political neutralism of Israel has not been abandoned. The record speaks for itself—a consistent record of neutralism, officially proclaimed on the highest level of Israeli policy-making leadership, throughout the period of Israel's existence. The fundamental postulates of the neutralist policy of Israel have been affirmed and reaffirmed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on countless occasions, as the following excerpts show:

In a speech to Parliament on January 2, 1951, Ben-Gurion said: "The central political fact of today is the rivalry of two titanic Powers for world hegemony . . . But apart from great Powers and their vassals, there is a large company of free peoples . . . without prefabricated allegiances, determining their courses in every case on its merits . . . The State of Israel is of their number." [32]

In the "*Basic Program of the Israel Government*", as outlined by Ben Gurion in Parliament on October 7, 1951, and approved by Parliament the following day, we read:

> "The Government will foster friendly relations and mutual aid with every peace-loving State, *without enquiring into its internal regime* . . . The Government will cultivate trade relations with all countries on equal terms." [33]

In a review of the foreign policy of his Government, presented by Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Parliament on November 4, 1951, he declared:

> "We uphold the right of every nation to choose the way of life it prefers and we deny the right of any nation to *interfere in the internal affairs of other peoples in order to impose upon them a political and social order which they reject.*" [34]

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31 Ben-Jacob, Jeremiah, "Israel Experiments with Non-Identification", **Commentary** (published by the American Jewish Committee), January, 1954, p. 9

32 Ben-Gurion, David, **Rebirth and Destiny of Israel**, Philosophical Library, New York, 1954, p. 384

33 **Release** by the Israel Office of Information, New York, **No. RP. 32.**, Paragraph 3

34 **Release** by the Israel Office of Information, New York, **No. RP. 31.**, p. 6. Italics in the original

In an address which the Israeli Premier delivered before Israel's Parliament on February 4, 1952, he said:

> "Our problem is how to map our policy, external and domestic, now and henceforth. *The starting point must be not our attitude to any particular national ideology, but solely Israel's fundamental values, and its historical as well as its current urges* . . . The champions of the Cominform divide the world into two: one part—the West, of course—is black, and the other, which needless to say, is East, a dazzling light. We may reject this totalitarian approach, but let us be careful not to fall into the opposite blunder and blinker ourselves to shadows and shortcomings of the West as to illumination from the East." [35]

In an article on "Israel Among the Nations", written in August 1952, he announced that Israel was one of the countries which "belong to neither bloc". [36]

This same policy continues to be reiterated today by Israel policy-makers. Some of the more recent re-affirmations, made in 1956 and 1957, include the following:

In an article outlining the "fundamental principles" of Israel's policy, Ben-Gurion asserted that Israel "must maintain normal relations with all countries, no matter what their regimes." [37]

In December, 1956, he declared: "We will not conduct our re tions with the nations of the world—the larger ones as well as the smaller ones—with any regard for the internal policies of those nations. We aspire to establish cordial relations with all nations on the basis of equality and mutuality." [38]

Addressing Parliament on the Eisenhower Doctrine, on June 3, 1957, Ben-Gurion found it necessary to remove any doubt that might arise concerning Israel's adherence to the policy of neutrality, as a result of Israel's acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Emphasizing that "the fostering of close ties with a particular country stands in no contradiction with, nor should in any way diminish, the maintenance of normal relations with any other country," he reminded his listeners that "the Israel declaration does not denounce

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35 Ben-Gurion, **Rebirth and Destiny of Israel**, op. cit., pp. 391-393
36 **Ibid.**, p. 459
37 **Israel Digest**, June 15, 1956
38 **Ibid.**, December 14, 1956

any other country", and added: "We do not see any need, nor indeed do we feel that we may have any right, to interfere in the internal regime of any other country. Our only desire is to create international conditions which will strengthen our security, and which will assist us in realizing Israel's supreme ideal, namely, the absorption of immigrants." [39]

Replying to a question raised by a correspondent of Tass, the Soviet official news service, Mrs. Golda Meir, Foreign Minister of Israel, asserted: "Our policy is friendship with all countries regardless of their internal regimes . . . We are not aware that we have done anything to warrant the Soviet unfriendly attitude. We hope for a change for the better."[40]

The Israeli Foreign Minister spoke to Parliament in the same vein. Emphasizing that Israel is "not bound in any alliance", she asserted that "the fault is not ours" that the Soviet Union at present adopts an unfriendly attitude towards Israel, and added that "the explanation for the attitude of this power towards us is not to be sought in the stand or actions of the State of Israel".[41]

In a speech he made before Parliament shortly thereafter, Ben Gurion adduced the same argument in reply to his critics. According to an official summary of the speech, "the Prime Minister said that Israel had not violated any treaty made with the Soviet Union and had not broken off relations with her even though she had threatened Israel with destruction".[42] (The statement probably refers to the threats which the Soviet Union made during the Israeli invasion of Egypt the year before.) Ben Gurion added: "We want to maintain normal relations with the Soviet Union in spite of a number of things that we do not find very pleasant . . . We shall make every effort for normal relations with all countries without exception."[43]

Ben Gurion is indeed committed to the policy of neutrality not only in his capacity as the head of the Israeli Government but also in his capacity as leader of the Mapai Party, the largest in the Israeli Parliament. *For the Mapai Party proclaims in its official program, on the basis of which it ran for elections in 1955, that "its foreign*

39 Ibid., June 17, 1957
40 Ibid., September 16, 1957
41 Ibid., November 11, 1957
42 Ibid., November 25, 1957
43 Ibid., November 25, 1957

policy stands for non-identification with any bloc".[44]

In fact, it is significant that, *while the three leftist parties champion a policy of friendship with the Soviet Bloc, and the largest party—Mapai—calls for a policy of non-identification, not one of the other parties represented in the Parliament of Israel today includes in its official platform an appeal for friendship with the West.*[45]

F. Pledge of Non-Hostility

Early in 1953, a sudden crisis erupted which clouded Soviet-Israeli relations. It came as a result of the well-known case of the nine Soviet doctors, of whom six were Jewish, who were charged, in an official communique published in *Pravda* on January 13, 1953, with having "made it their aim to cut short the lives of active public figures of the Soviet Union through the sabotage of medical treatment." The publication of this communique heralded a bitter anti-Jewish campaign in the Soviet press. According to the *American Jewish Year Book*, this campaign "provoked a wave of indignation and protest throughout the world," and "had its most violent repercussions in Israel," where "extremists belonging to a secret and illegal organization exploded a bomb on the premises of the Soviet legation in Israel" on February 9, 1953.[46] "This act was condemned in no uncertain terms by the government of Israel, the Knesset [Parliament], and the press."[47] But "the Soviet Government refused to accept the apology and, without further negotiations, broke diplomatic relations with Israel" on February 11, 1953.[48] However, "on July 20 an agreement on the restoration of diplomatic ties was officially announced in Moscow and Jerusalem."[49]

The significance of this temporary break in diplomatic relations lies in the terms on which the Soviet Union consented to restore normal relations with Israel.

On July 6, 1953, the Israeli Government, officially requesting the resumption of diplomatic relations, pledged that Israel "would not be a party to any alliance or pact aiming at aggression against the Soviet Union." On July 15, 1953, the Soviet Government "ac-

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44 **Facts and Figures**, 1955 (N. Y.) **op. cit.**, p. 18
45 For an authoritative definition of their respective platforms, as proclaimed by the parties themselves, see **Ibid.**, pp. 17-20
46 **American Jewish Year-Book for 1954**, American Book-Stratford Press, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 273-276
47 **Ibid.**, p. 353
48 **Ibid.**, p. 277
49 **Ibid.**, p. 354

cepted these statements and agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations."[50]

That this crisis in Soviet-Israeli relations was temporary, and that the reconciliation which followed it was mutually satisfactory, is clearly indicated by the fact that in June, 1954, both countries agreed to elevate the level of their diplomatic representatives and to transform their legations to embassies.[51] As we have seen earlier, Israel's neutralism was not affected by this crisis; Iraeli policy-makers continued to issue public assurances to the effect that Israel adhered to its neutralist policy, just as they did after the second crisis in Israeli-Soviet relations, which followed Israel's invasion of Egypt in the fall of 1956.

G. Soviet-Israeli Trade

One of the outstanding characteristics of the post-Stalin era of Soviet foreign policy has been the initiation or expansion of trade relations between the Soviet Union and the countries of Asia and Africa. It was during this period that the Soviet Union established new commercial relations with some Arab States, particularly since 1955. But the initiation of economic intercourse with some Arab States has not, in the least, entailed the curtailment of Soviet-Israeli trade. On the contrary, the period has been marked by the *expansion* of Soviet commercial relations with Israel no less than by the *establishment* of such relations with some Arab countries.

* * *

One of the first consequences of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel in July, 1953, was the conclusion of far-reaching agreements, involving chiefly the exchange of Soviet crude oil, badly needed by Israel, for Israeli fruits. According to the *American Jewish Year Book for* 1955: "After the resumption of Soviet relations with Israel, several trade agreements were concluded. The export of Israel oranges and other fruit to the Soviet Union was renewed, while the Soviet Union began to deliver considerable quantities of crude oil."[52]

Nor have these trade relations diminished since 1953. Reviewing Soviet-Israeli relations for 1954 and 1955, the *American Jewish Year Book for* 1956 says:

50 American Jewish Year-Book for 1955, op. cit., p. 409
51 Ibid., p. 409
52 Ibid., p. 409

"Commercial relations were governed by a trade agreement signed in Moscow in December 1953. The Soviet government agreed to deliver 100,000 tons of crude oil to Israel, with an option for another 100,000 tons, and to buy citrus fruits and bananas to a total of $2,900,000.

"In February 1954 Israel took up the option for the second 100,000 tons of oil, and in subsequent agreements agreed to buy another 250,000 in exchange for fruit exports.

"Similar agreements were conculded between Israel and several satellite states.

"The statistics for 1954 showed a *triple increase* of Israel imports from the Soviet bloc. This trade continued in 1955 . . .

"In July 1955 the two governments concluded a shipping agreement granting each other preferential treatment in such matters as port and dock facilities and charges."[53]

The *American Jewish Year Book* for the following year (1957) adds this to the preceding information:

"During 1955-1956 commercial transactions with Israel continued, and in July 1956 the Soviet Union agreed to increase its oil shipments to that country. The agreement provided for oil deliveries amounting to from $18,000,000 to $20,000,000."[54]

H. Soviet-Israeli Cultural Relations

Another manifestation of the far-reaching program of Soviet-Israeli trade relations, which Israel maintains or earnestly seeks, pertains to cultural exchange. In this field, as in many others, Israel is mainly on the receiving end; more is received from the Soviet Union than is exported to it by Israel. This discrepancy between imports and exports was recently the subject of some frank discussion at the United Nations, when Israel, while complaining about "lack of reciprocity", expressed the hope that the situation would be soon rectified. In an address made before the Third Committee of the U. N. General Assembly, Israel's delegate spoke of the "wide

53 American Jewish Year-Book for 1956, op. cit., pp. 431-432
54 American Jewish Year-Book for 1957, op. cit., p. 316

and rich exchange in books, newsprint and the like" which Israel has "with many countries," and then proceeded to complain about the Soviet-Israeli phase of this exchange in the following words:

> "Israel has had a regrettable experience in this field . . . For a number of years, my Government assisted in the import to Israel of daily papers, periodicals, novels, technical books, records and the like in large quantities from the Soviet Union. Statistics for the year 1955 show that the import of books and newsprint alone from the Soviet Union exceeded IL. 100,000 and came third among book importing countries in Israel, coming only after the United States and the United Kingdom. In fact you could get Russian publications practically anywhere in Israel—whether in street corner newspaper booths or in specialized bookshops.
>
> "However, the important factor of reciprocity was lacking all along. We have conducted protracted negotiations, with the appropriate Soviet authorities, for allowing the import from Israel of books, periodicals, records and music-books to the Soviet Union—but all our efforts have been of no avail.
>
> "We fully hope that in the spirit of this resolution full and reciprocal cultural exchange will become a happy reality."[55]

* * *

This statement sums up, with respect to cultural exchanges, the sentiment of Israeli officialdom concerning Soviet-Israeli relations in general: namely, that if these relations are not happier than they are today, and if the exchange is not wider than it is, it is not because of Israel's reluctance to accept or hesitation to seek such expansion, but because of Soviet policy. The Israeli Foreign Minister put it very candidly when she said: "We are not aware that we have done anything to warrant the Soviet unfriendly attitude. We hope for a change for the better,"[56] The Israeli Premier, also asserting that "Israel had not violated any treaty made with the Soviet Union", proclaimed: "We want to maintain normal relations with the Soviet

55 **Israel Digest**, October 28, 1957
56 **Ibid.**, September 16, 1957.

Union in spite of a number of things that we do not find very pleasant."[57] But this attitude has perhaps been best expressed in an article which appeared in the influential English-language daily Israeli newspaper, *The Jerusalem Post,* criticizing a suggestion made by Dr. Nahum Goldmann (the American Zionist who is President of the World Zionist Organization, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Agency). Dr. Goldmann's suggestion, vague to start with, has become even more enigmatic since he made it, as a result of the countless interpretations, corrections and retractions which followed its articulation. Apparently he had counselled Israel to steer a course of greater friendliness towards the Soviet Union. *The Jerusalem Post* article said:

> "The real trouble with Mr. Goldmann's statement was . . . that he signally failed to explain what he thinks we should do in the name of neutralism, and that nobody has been able to discover a sensible answer to this riddle.
>
> "*He cannot mean official statements of desire for close friendship with both power blocs, for Israel has never failed to proclaim such sentiments.*
>
> "*Nor can he mean abrogation of treaties with Western powers in order not to offend the East, for Israel has no such treaties.*"[58]

[57] Ibid., November 25, 1957
[58] Jerusalem Post, November 10, 1957