

The Prague Trial

TO us as Jews and progressives the Prague trial in November was a blow because of its severe anti-Zionist character. It hurt above all every progressive Jew who is bound heart and soul to the liberating renaissance which is the Israel enterprise. An attempt was made at Prague to portray the national liberation movement of the Jewish nation as an international conspiracy whose purpose is espionage and subversion against the Czechoslovak State.

We reject in the clearest terms these imaginary accusations against the Zionist movement, its pioneers, its builders and its fighters. An attempt also was made in Prague to portray the Zionist movement as reactionary in its very essence. This was done in the name of Marxist-Leninist theory. But it is Marxism-Leninism which projects precisely the auto-emancipation of nations and national liberation movements. The Jewish national liberation movement, which is Zionism, occupies a most respected place among such movements because it is the liberation movement of the most oppressed and persecuted of peoples. This national liberation is the only one which achieved in the UN the recognition of both the East and West. Its ultimate goal—realization of national independence in the establishment of the State of Israel—was supported enthusiastically in the years 1947-48 by the representatives of the Czechoslovak Republic and its allies in the Soviet Bloc. It was in the name of these countries that Gromyko and Tsarapkin energetically supported the final goal of Zionism in the UN, the political realization of the national liberation movement through the creation of the State of Israel.

Czechoslovakia, whose government and rulers of 1948 are its government and rulers today, was the first to send arms to the Hagana in Israel when this voluntary people's army stood alone, besieged by British imperialism which wanted to destroy the hopes of the Jewish people through the aggression of feudal Arab countries. The present-day Czechoslovak Republic made possible the emigration of its Jewish inhabitants to Israel, and allowed these emigrants to take with them their capital on

the basis of clear and recognized agreements. The Czechoslovakia of today is the same which in the past supported the great Jewish migration from Poland in transit to Israel.

Now, those who arranged the Prague trial portray these activities of the Czechoslovak state, so deserving of praise, and its active support for the realization of Zionism, as betrayal and subversion. Not only this, but the bitter attempt was made at Prague to portray men accused of treason and subversion against Czechoslovakia, as Zionists, when they had absolutely no connection with Zionism and actually were sworn enemies of it over the years. Such an association is utterly without foundation and we protest it with all our might.

We repeat: the Zionist Movement is a progressive national liberation movement. It is the movement of ingathering of the exiles. Within the short space of the four years of Israel's existence, it brought three quarters of a million Jews into its midst, the remnants of Nazi destruction, the refugees of the fascist sword, the victims of the darkest orders in the world. It saved the Jews of Yemen and Iraq and is rescuing the persecuted Jews of the Kurdistan hills on whose border the Soviet Union, during recent years, has carried through an Armenian "ingathering of the exiles" of its own, and is realizing a sort of Armenian "Zionism" and the establishment of a national home for this persecuted and dispersed nation. Zionism gathers Jews and saves them from darkness and from the danger of physical destruction in villages on the borders of the Sahara desert, north of which the struggle of Tunisians and Moroccans for their national liberation goes on. This struggle is supported, and rightly so, by the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Republic, despite the clear-cut fact that the present social character of these nationalist movements is far from liberal and is certainly less progressive than the present social and political policies of the Zionist movement.

The Zionist movement has nationalized millions of dunams of land, has established tens of thousands of families in the most advanced forms of settlement in the world and is converting a rootless people into a working na-

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tion. Even if salient parts of its passing policy are politically reactionary, the essence of the Zionist movement is anti-imperialist. The progressive sectors of the Zionist movement carry on an unceasing struggle for an independent and progressive order and no temporary policy can succeed in masking the basic fact that the Zionist movement is creating the reality of liberation, independence, productivity and the establishment of a pioneer socialist workers' class.

In the State of Israel, Jewish statehood continues to flower. The dispersed of the four corners of the world continue to be absorbed. The broken men continue to be turned into creative human beings. In the State of Israel, in the very midst of the process of national renaissance, a sharpening class struggle is developing. A strong and conscious working class continues to grow, bound to its people and bound to the highest socialist ideals. Within its midst, great movements have arisen, devoted to the vision of peace in the world. A wonderful kibbutz movement, unique in the world, has grown up. These are the best guarantees for the deep understanding which exists in the hearts of the masses of Israel for the independence of the State of Israel. These are the strong forces for political independence which are, at one and the same time, loyal Zionist national forces.

Every true socialism is bound to its people, its internal developments and its historic aspirations. These facts cannot be twisted even by the one-sided policy of the present government of Israel. In the State of Israel, the struggle between progress and reaction continues and will go on to higher levels.

However governments come and go, the nation remains and goes forward. The people in Israel, people of toil and sweat, people of defense and pioneering, who build their homeland and their state under difficult conditions, and the millions of Jews dispersed around it in the Diaspora are not confused by false labels and calumny. They endured such things more than once in their past and they did not turn away from their path. Today, they fulfill a national, revolutionary and socialist task and will continue to fulfill it.

Never did socialist theory negate national independence because of a mistaken policy or reactionary errors by the temporary leaders of this independence. For this reason, the judges in Prague were forced to work hard in their

negation of Zionism and portrayed it in a basically false light.

It is not our task to suggest ways and means for Czechoslovakia to fight against its internal and external enemies. Like every other country, Czechoslovakia certainly has the right to defend itself against them. But this does not give Czechoslovakia the right to stigmatize the nature of the Zionist movement. We shall continue our loyalty and our help as progressive Jews to the strengthening of the State of Israel and the advancement of the Zionist movement in consonance with our highest social ideals.

At the Prague trial and in the comment of President Gottwald of Czechoslovakia after the trial, a serious attempt was made to differentiate between a militant anti-Zionist position and anti-Semitism. We are deeply concerned that in the course of the trial, the Jewish origin of some of the defendants was brought up, certainly not in consonance with Czechoslovakia's struggle to wipe out all vestiges of anti-Semitism. It must however be stated that today, the concepts of Jew and Zionist have changed and identify in their broad sense the inhabitants of Israel and its builders, as well as the masses of Jews in the Diaspora who are closely bound to the Zionist enterprise and to support of the State of Israel. These latter are the overwhelming majority of Jews in the world.

At Prague, no opportunity was given to defend the besmirched and slandered Zionist movement and its true adherents. (We are not concerned with the anti-Zionist defendants accused of "Zionism.") No place was given to revealing the depths of the Jewish tragedy. In every regime this tragedy takes on different form and character, but it remains a tragedy. Whatever the motivations were which resulted in tying the Zionist factor to the Prague trial, one thing is clear: This trial reveals once more the simple truth—that there is no other solution to the Jewish problem than the migration of Jews from all countries and all social orders to their own land. This is the Zionist demand. This is the socialist demand. We shall not abandon it.

More disturbing is the bringing of Mordechai Oren before the tribunal where his testimony, which we do not believe, was heard. A representative of the most progressive sector in Zionism, a leader, peace-loving and fighting for friendship between Israel and that world of which Czechoslovakia is a part, this man was

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brought before the tribunal. From his boyhood Oren has been part of the Zionist-halutz and socialist youth movement, a member of a kibbutz for twenty years, one of the leading personalities in the Israel labor movement. He has been known as a faithful son of his people and its workers for decades. All the accusations brought against him are without foundation. We must add our voices to those in Israel that he is entirely innocent of wrong-doing and demand his liberation and his return to his homeland and his kibbutz.

The New Defenders of Zionism and Jews

THE Prague affair has awakened waves of Zionist protest in the entire Jewish world. At the same time it has aroused a trend of protests of an entirely different character. These attempted "protests" are not against the anti-Zionist nature of the trial, but against Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union and take the form of super-attacks against "Soviet anti-Semitism." This competition of protests goes beyond any limits of Jewish responsibility. It is not from "love of Mordechai" and Zionism that these things are said, but from "hatred of Haman." And who has not joined the chorus? Among them are those whose core of existence for decades was slander of Zionism and even of the State of Israel. Men affiliated with the Bund, of whom only pitiful remnants remain, have joined the pack. They do not realize how ridiculous they are, for it was these very men who for years argued in the very same way as the prosecutor in Prague that "Zionism is no more than the other side of the coin of anti-Semitism."

The assimilated Jewish circles in their various forms, who suffer from the permanent fear that someone will identify them with loyalty to the Jewish nation, let alone with the State of Israel or the Zionist movement have rushed to join the defense of the honor of Israel and Zionism. Who are they to protest against the Prague trials? Not a few of them were among those who argued that Zionism sacrificed the six million Jews who were victims of Hitler so that blood would serve to grease the wheels of the establishment of the State of Israel. In actuality they have another motive which has no connection with Zion-

ism or with the future of the Jewish nation's independence.

It is easy in these days to give vent to emotions and it is even easier to join in the hysteria, but it is very difficult in these tragic days for Zionism as a whole to call for a balanced political approach.

It is political blindness for Zionism and the essential interests of the State of Israel to make generalizations and to extend the condemnations of the Prague trial to cover the entire policy of the Soviet Bloc regarding the most essential interests of Israel's political independence. It is worth quoting the wise words of Abba Eban on December 24, after the UN session ended, that there is no change in the policy of the Eastern Bloc with regard to Israel in the UN at this time. This policy is not only to be seen in the vote of the Soviet Bloc in the matter of direct negotiations for peace between Israel and the Arab States, which was negative at the Assembly Plenum for the formal reasons that until now they did not participate in the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission, and not for reasons concerning the essence of the question. This policy toward Israel must be viewed in the light of the vote with which defeat came to the proposal of the Philippines for the internationalization of Jerusalem, which would have recreated the situation of 1948. Moreover, in these very days the government of Bulgaria has announced that it will renew the emigration of its remaining Jews to Israel.

Israel has few reliable friends in the world. It is true that it has many doubtful "friends," whose support may reflect the political exigencies in that part of the world where Israel stands isolated and alone. Our reckoning with Eastern Europe is a long one and it is dangerous to the interests of the State of Israel to belittle this reckoning. Such belittling is against our Zionist and Jewish interests which demand that we look upon the Jews of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, as well as those in the Soviet Union as essential parts of our people. Anyone who works against this accounting works against the highest interests of world Jewry.

The matter is even more complicated. The road to understanding between our progressive Zionist and socialist liberation enterprise in Israel and between the Eastern world has become longer. It has become a tortuous and seven-fold more difficult road. We cannot al-

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