

## **II. WHAT IS GOOD FOR JEWS?**

*An Address*

*By Dr. Moshe Sneh*

**O**UR session today has already made clear that a profound change has occurred in Jewish life with regard to the unification of the Jewish people. There was a time when the thesis of a Jewish territorial state center in Israel divided the Jewish people. Today Israel has been transformed into a factor for unity among the entire Jewish people. And there was a time when the thesis of solidarity and community of the fate of all Jewish communities in all countries, the thesis of the oneness of the Jewish people, despite our dispersion, was a divisive policy in Jewish life.

Today this thesis of oneness has been transformed into a factor that cements and unites all parts of the Jewish people, except a few marginal elements of no serious weight. We are on the way to a great unity, and the World Jewish Congress has the privilege of demonstrating this. Congress is not creating this unity, for no loose organization creates historic, social changes. It can only reflect and confirm them.

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**DR. MOSHE SNEH** was an Israeli delegate to the World Jewish Congress. He was a top Haganah leader and resigned from the Jewish Agency last December in protest against its policies and is now a member of the United Workers Party.

The Congress demonstrates Jewish unity not only because Jews of 60 countries sit in one organization, not only because Jews of various persuasions and statuses—bourgeois and proletarian, orthodox and non-religious, Zionist and non-Zionist—gather in one conference room. We are not unified only because Jews of Israel and Jews outside Israel are as one people and are joined in one organization. We and you are united not only by a common national consciousness, but also because there is absolutely no division between the Jews of Israel and the Jews of other countries.

Whatever has come into existence in Israel to date—is this then final? No. Israel is a process of national territorial concentration of large Jewish masses. The Jewish state was not brought into existence as an end in itself. It was brought into existence first of all for one purpose, for the continuation of a large Jewish mass migration. And if there is an element that unites the Israeli with Jews of the rest of the world, it is this process of migration. This guarantees that the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the *golos* (diaspora) will never be separated. The bridge that leads Jews to Israel also unites Jews forever, unites those who live in Israel with those who will come there and with those

who will remain outside Israel. I mean that the great statesmen of the world, who supported us in our efforts to achieve independence in Israel, understood this deeply. And I want to cite only one sentence in the letter of recognition of Israel from Molotov to Shertok where the former very precisely and profoundly formulated his greeting of the fact that the Jewish people—not only the Jews of Israel, but the entire Jewish people—have set up the sovereign state in Israel.

### ***Unity Against Common Danger***

We are united in this Congress because over this hall hovers the consciousness and realization of a great danger. I say one danger, which threatens the state of Israel, because it has the same source as the danger to Jews outside of Israel. The state of Israel is menaced by the danger that its territorial integrity may be violated even after partition. The Jewish people of the world are menaced by a rising hatred of the growing hate-campaign. We have learned from our trials that he who sows hate wants to reap destruction. We are united in alertness to this danger and in the determination to resist this danger both in Israel and outside Israel. The highest commandment of the hour is to be united in the struggle for defense.

If we draw the substance from the speeches, debates and statements we have heard for 24 hours in this room, it is a call to the Jews in the entire world: Jews of the world, unite in order to save yourselves! Unite in order to save the Jewish state, which is in danger! Unite to support the provisional Jewish government! It is possible to be critical of this government's policy—I too am critical—but we must unite behind the government against every murderous attack of enemies who seek to undermine its authority and sovereignty. Unite to strengthen morally, materially and physically the Haganah, the Israeli army, whose soldiers in Israel were today sworn to loyalty to the Jewish state. Jews of the whole world, unite in a solid front to resist the new murderous attack being prepared against the peace of the world by ghosts who did not disappear after the second world war ended.

Unity is possible, unity is necessary. But this unity must be one of plan and action, not a formal unity that evades the painful and bloody questions we face. Unity not on the basis of no thinking, no analyzing, no influencing, no interference, no knowledge, in order to avoid struggle. Such unity is suicide. Unity is necessary for action, for struggle, on the basis of a unified plan. I want to reassure those who are disquieted. I do not mean that we should affiliate the Congress with one of the world blocs. That is simply nonsense. First of all, it is a lie that the world is dividing itself into east and west. It is a base lie because he who propagates it has the evil intention of dividing the world. The world is not divided in this manner. The world is divided thus: on the one side are the overwhelming majority of hundreds of millions of peace-loving peoples who want work, quiet, development, freedom, progress, peace; and on the other side is a small minority who exploit and oppress, who set

one against the other, and incite a new world war. That is the division.

### ***Who Are Our Allies?***

If the division is seen that way, as it actually exists, there can be no doubt that the Jewish people belong with the great majority of peace-loving, laboring people and nations seeking freedom. That does not mean—I want to reassure you further—that the World Congress must identify itself with a definite world view or with a definite ideology. Who demands that? Don't we know how heterogeneous the World Congress is? Who does not know that the Jewish people are as varied as all other peoples in the world? I am ready to accept the primitive Jewish criterion of the common man of which the Mizrachi rabbi from America had reminded us here, that the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish people should do only what is good for the Jews. I am ready to agree that the Congress should support only what is good for Jews, and to struggle against only what is bad for Jews. I will not examine his *tzitzis*, let him not examine mine. We came here in order to do what can be done in unity. What purpose is there, therefore, in trying to resolve differences that cannot be resolved? But let us apply the criterion, "good or bad for Jews," without compromise. Let us not be evasive or confused but honestly face the problem in every case.

I want to begin with consideration of Dr. Goldmann's position when he opened the debate. He holds correctly that the problem of Congress is Jewish policy, and that policy does not mean simply to present a memorandum, to hold a protest meeting, to adopt a resolution. Policy means first of all to seek allies. And he further says correctly that allies can be found only among true democratic and progressive forces. I ask only one thing, that we should decode this algebraic formula. We cannot adjourn this Congress with an esoteric formula. I will attempt as briefly as possible to indicate what all this means.

The danger on the Israel front consists of the fact that we are still at war, that we are in a dubious truce, that any day the warfare may be resumed, and that political intrigue can oppress and betray us. Is there still anyone around today who is uncertain as to who is our enemy in Israel? Is there one single Jew in the world who would dare to say that it is the Arabs, who have been incited and bribed and sent against us, and not British imperialism which is the enemy of Jewish revival in Israel? Imperialism is bad for Jews! Who will doubt that? Can anyone doubt that, if there is danger of reducing our borders, limiting our sovereignty, it is the military, imperialist, big industry clique in Washington that is preparing this slaughter? Who will deny this?

If we are honest and courageous enough to call a spade a spade, and not use coded formulas, we shall be able to designate not only what is bad for Jews, but also what is good for Jews. Last night we unitedly applauded Guatemala, a small country without great influence, because it stood by us. Did we then ask what kind of regime rules

there? Will we not utilize this friendship and repay it with friendship? In the same way we must ask ourselves who it was, besides Guatemala, of the three great world powers, the controllers of the relations of smaller states, which set itself with steel-like firmness in favor of Jewish independence in Israel, and for Jewish rights in Israel, from the very beginning, before the May 1947 session had sent the committee of investigation, and then stubbornly forced through the decision of Nov. 29? When America tried to reverse the decision, which great power did not permit the change? And when there was an attempt to exchange partition for a trusteeship regime, who prevented it? And now that an attempt is being made to wipe away the question of who is the aggressor and who is the defender, who prevented the whitewash? Is there one Jew who in his heart will not confess that it is the Soviet Union? I do not ask that the American rabbi express wonder at the socialist regime in the Soviet Union. Let him say who is good for Jews. Tell the truth, the whole truth, and call a spade a spade.

### ***On the "Golos" Front***

The same thing can be said about the *golos* front. I myself come from Poland. As a delegate from the Polish community I once helped build this Congress. After the war, I twice visited the rubble of Polish Jewry. I know something of the history of Poland and the Polish Jews. Unfortunately only a handful of the former Polish Jewry remains, but I saw that for the first time Poland has a regime which has set up the Jewish community on a basis of full equality. The former Poland had a long history of oppression. There were instances of high privileges for Jews, but equality there never was. For the first time equality is a reality there, for the first time the regime suppresses anti-Semitism. And let us not complain here that the Polish people have not yet freed themselves entirely from anti-Semitism. A regime cannot do more than root out anti-Semitism both through punishment and education. And there is taking place in Polish society not only the suppression of every anti-Jewish expression, but also education against anti-Semitism. Let us not say that there Jews are menaced as Jews. At the celebrations of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, rabbis carrying the Holy Scrolls marched at the head, and the celebrations were greeted by representatives of the Polish government and army. I do not say that we should here go into a general analysis of this regime. I want to affirm only one thing, that the regime of the people's democracy is good for Jews, and therefore must be supported.

I mentioned Poland as an example. Rumanian Jewry is in a difficult situation after all it has gone through. But Jews are secure in Rumania for the first time in the history of that country—they have not only security of limb, but also of organization. In Jassy I attended a Zionist mass meeting of thousands of Jews of all political hues, from the right to left Poale Zion. Neither is it true that emigration is not permitted. In Poland a decree was issued against

emigration, but an exception was made of Jews so that emigration to Israel was permitted. It is necessary to see the reality of Jewish life as it is, bad features and good.

### ***Common Enemy of Israel and "Golos"***

A representative of British Jewry did not have to pass over in secrecy the growth of anti-Semitism in Britain. It is no accident that the same Attlee-Bevin regime that has been transformed into the enemy of world Jewry on the Israel question, tolerates in its midst the Mosley movement and excesses. The same regime that ordered the bombing of the synagogue "Oyr Zaira" in Manashiya, near Tel Aviv, tolerates arsonists of synagogues in England, rejects the demands of the delegations of the Jewish Board of Deputies and the trade unions, and passes over on the agenda the decision of the last annual labor convention to limit the freedom of the Mosley movement. That is bad for Jews, but I don't say this against England in general or against the west in general. For there are progressive and democratic forces in Britain that are opposed to the Mosley movement and that struggle against it. I know that today they are still weak. I know that today Bevin can still easily defeat them at the labor conference.

But that alone is not enough to condemn the entire British nation, or to be against peoples which find themselves geographically in the west. I have faith in the British nation just as I have faith in the Polish. But in Poland democracy has already come to power, while in England the people still have to achieve it. Correct Jewish national policy means to orient and rely upon and to establish ties—as Dr. Goldmann himself said—with those who guarantee us democracy and freedom, and there are such in England and in America. But we must designate them correctly.

Of course there is a growth of anti-Semitism in America, not only among the people, but also in the legislation of Congress. The most recent law to admit over 200,000 DPs into America was denounced not by a Marxist, but by Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, by Pres. Goldman of the Bnai Brith, by Rabbi Irving Miller and by Judge Meyer Steinbrink as a law in conformity with the old nazi racist ideology. This growth of anti-Semitism is certainly part of the attempt to revive the heritage of Hitler, to follow an anti-communist world policy. This is what Hitler began with, and now it is being revived. And no sooner is it revived, than it is used with effect against the Jews. Such a policy is bad for Jews. We must oppose such a world policy, but not against America, not against the American people, not against American democracy. There are also among the American people tremendous democratic forces. There is a movement that has the courage to fight against the wild incitation against Russia, that seeks peace with Russia. And the same movement simultaneously fights against race discrimination against Negroes and Jews. Such a movement is good for Jews.

Dr. Goldmann said that we must seek allies. I say, of course. I only want to name them. And let anyone here stand up and say that these I have named are not the allies.

I have heard it said that we, the poor Jewish people, should not mix in the great diplomatic struggle around Germany. Of course we must involve ourselves, because we are directly concerned! If Germany is again revived as a big military power, then it means that the nazi menace in Europe is renewed, that an armed fortress is being built in Europe of our enemy, our deadly enemy, such an enemy as we've never had in our history. Can we really be unconcerned about it? And if there is a proposal to revise the borders for the benefit of Germany, can I say it doesn't matter to me?

Rabbi Marcus said correctly that there are some exceptional situations where we have to butt in. I will give you an example. If there is an attempt to throw back into Germany the Jews who are now living peacefully in Lower Silesia, the Jewish people cannot agree to this. And if, God forbid, our DPs, our rescued remnant of wretched refugees, should remain under German rule, can we be quiet about it? We know from opinion surveys that the Germans have remained anti-Semitic. The problem of Germany is a Jewish concern. Let's take another example. If a pogrom takes place in Morocco, was it not provoked by the same evil forces that are attacking us in Israel and are bombing Tel Aviv, under decrees from the same powers? Our fight is indeed one front!

Therefore let us work for unity of the Jewish people, for unity of action, for unity on a practical plan to defend ourselves, to tie in with true allies without fear of naming them, and for application of the one criterion of the welfare of the Jewish people. Let us not fear certain circles who will frown upon us; let us not accommodate ourselves to the reactionary psychology which now rules a great part of the world, to the incitation against the eastern world; nor swim with the stream, because Jews will not be saved by readiness to follow reactionary psychology or swimming with the stream. Jews may very well perish unless they resist hysteria, together with all others who resist the plan to divide the world into two parts. Not only should we not

tie ourselves to one bloc. We must also fight against the move to divide the whole world into two blocs.

Just as we have reached the point in Jewish life where the Jewish individual has begun to understand that he cannot defend himself without relying on the whole Jewish community in his country; just as we have reached the point where every Jewish community within one country understands that it must meet and collaborate with other Jewish communities, because in unity it will be easier for it to defend itself and to defend the Jewish people; so must the Jewish people of the world understand that it cannot legislate itself, but must unite with all other oppressed peoples that are fighting for freedom, with all other progressive and peace-seeking movements, with all freedom-loving forces in the entire world, in the east and in the west, in the south and in the north. We must lean on all freedom-loving forces, and first of all mobilize our own. And we will fight through to a new and better future.

The World Jewish Congress must become the organizational form and the expression of such a united democratic Jewish people's policy—a policy of defense, of resistance, of cementing and securing and broadening Jewish existence and Jewish sovereignty in Israel, of securing Jewish existence wherever we find ourselves, of open, courageous, democratic activity.

The World Jewish Congress must adjust itself to a democratic policy and to democratic organizational forms; must strengthen its ties with national representatives, strengthen control by democratic elements over its management. If the Congress will fulfill all these obligations, then it will together with other institutions, Jewish and non-Jewish, together with the government of Israel, together with the Zionist organization, together with international organizations which fight for human freedom and for human rights, make its contribution in such a huge concert of forces to the securing of the future, peace and existence of the Jewish people, and make a significant contribution to peace and freedom for all humanity.