

THE MORNING FREIHEIT'S "BALANCED" APPROACH

By Joseph Levy

Paul Novick, editor of the Morning Freiheit, published on January 3, 1971 an article on the Leningrad trial, which opens with the following statement: "The Morning Freiheit has taken in the Leningrad case--as it has in all other important matters--a balanced view, seeing the complete picture." (Emphasis his.)

In the light of this assertion, it is well to recall a New Year's editorial which appeared in his paper on January 1. We read there:

The last days of the past year brought significant gains for justice and humanism. The death sentences imposed on two Jews in the Leningrad trial were removed. The Basque fighters in Spain will not be killed. These are two different matters. These two extremely important events, which deserve a broader analysis, can only be recorded here. We are doing this with a feeling of relief, hoping that justice will be done everywhere.

By linking the Leningrad case to the Burgos trial the editorial maligns the Soviet Union, seeking to establish a common denominator between the Socialist USSR and fascist Spain. The vague sentence, "These are two different matters," has been presumably added in order not to alienate discriminating readers who have not lost faith in socialism and their friendship for the USSR, but then it is hoped that "justice will be done everywhere"--in the Soviet Union and in the Spanish fascist dictatorship.

This is truly an insidious distortion of the facts. In Burgos there were tried before a military court 15 Basque freedom fighters, who have devoted their lives to the liberation of their homeland from Franco's fascist tyranny and to the struggle for freedom and socialism. The Basques have for decades offered the stiffest resistance to the Spanish dictator, which has caused the enraged Franco to conduct a genocidal campaign against this national minority. He has declared the Basque Province a "treasonable territory" and aims to destroy their national identity and culture. The use of the Basque language is illegal in Spain.

The severe sentences imposed on the 15 freedom fighters, six of whom were condemned to death, led to wide mass actions, campus upheavals and a wave of strikes in Spain and to mass protests all over the world. News commentators in the U.S. pointed out that this trial caused the sharpest crisis in the history of the Franco regime. It was the upheaval at home and an aroused public opinion abroad that compelled the Spanish dictator to commute the death verdict.

In Leningrad there were put on trial eleven conspirators who planned to hijack an airplane and flee to a country whose rulers declare that the Soviet Union is their worst enemy. In drawing a comparison between the Basque freedom fighters and the group that tried to hijack a Soviet plane, the editor of the Morning Freiheit surely did not present to his readers an "objective, complete picture."

Some aspects of the Leningrad case have remained untold in the Morning Freiheit. The New York Times correspondent, Henry Giniger, has disclosed in a report from Paris (February 5, 1971) that two of the eleven defendants in the Leningrad trial, Mark Dymshits and Edward Kuznetzov, had been in direct contact with Israel. Giniger related that according to information received by the New York Times, Dymshits admitted in court that he had consulted Israel on the plan to hijack the Soviet airplane and to fly it to Israel. Kuznetzov and a witness, Gilya Butman, corroborated his testimony. Dymshits, who is a pilot, said that he was instructed not to implement the hijacking plan until Israel had been consulted by the "Leningrad Center" (presumably a Jewish group in Leningrad that has direct contact with Israel.)

According to Giniger's report, Dymshits stated in his testimony that they were advised by the Israelis to give up the hijacking plan. However, it is interesting to note that some Right-wing members of the Knesset stated in a parliamentary debate that the Soviet Jews have the right to hijack airplanes. These statements were never refuted by government ministers. The silence of the high Israeli government officials is particularly reprehensible considering the fact that Israel and the Soviet Union were among the 72 countries who had signed, a few weeks before, an international pact condemning hijacking as a menace to international aviation and providing severe punishment for the culprits.

Though the Morning Freiheit did not publish the Giniger report, it did print on January 1 a statement by Golda Meir in which she said that a "universal humanitarian awakening" helped to bring about a commutation of Dymshits' and Kuznetzov's sentences. Mrs. Meir should be reminded that the "universal humanitarian awakening" of which she spoke does not extend to the policies of Israel that include the torture of Arab prisoners who are being held without trial, the demolition of Arab houses and other mistreatment of the Arab population in the occupied territories.

On December 29 the Morning Freiheit published a special dispatch from its Israeli correspondent, I. Lipsky, which was prominently displayed in a box on the front page. It was headed "All Communist Parties Get Urgent Appeal from Israel." The text was as follows:

Tel-Aviv December 28, 1970-- The Israeli Communist Party, led by Mikunis, Sneh and Esther Vilenska, has sent off cablegrams to all Communist Parties, asking them in the name of socialism, friendship for the Soviet Union, justice and humanism, to appeal to the Supreme Soviet for the annulment of the death sentences imposed on the two defendants in the Leningrad case and the verdict received by the other defendants.

One of the biggest public demonstrations ever seen in our city took place yesterday, December 27. The slogan of the demonstration was to save the lives of the two sentenced to death and to abolish the verdicts passed on the eleven Jews in the Leningrad trial.

A few days later (January 5, 1971) the Morning Freiheit printed a correction to this news item, noting that appeals were made not to all the Communist Parties of the world, but only to the Communist Parties of Italy, France, England, Spain, China, Sweden, Holland, and Canada. However, the editors did not consider it necessary to correct another false statement in Lipsky's dispatch, namely, that the 11 defendants in the Leningrad case were not all Jews. Two of them were non-Jews. This is a crucial point, which should not have been ignored by a responsible publication, because the ultra-reactionary Jewish Defense League and other Soviet haters spread the big lie that only Jews were tried in Leningrad in order to make it appear as an anti-Semitic act.

This dispatch contains another gross misrepresentation. We are told that there exists in Israel a Communist Party led by Sneh, Mikunis and Vilenska. The truth is that this is a renegade group which has been rejected by the Communist parties the world over. This chauvinistic clique conducts a virulent anti-Soviet campaign. It gives its tacit support to Mrs. Meir's aggressive policies by abstaining from voting when these policies are challenged in the Knesset. (This group has one representative in the Knesset: M. Sneh)

Mikunis and his friends have supported the aggressive 1967 War as a "war of self-defense." On the question of peace negotiations the Sneh-Mikunis group claims to support the UN Resolution of November 22, 1967, but it distorts the real meaning of this document in such a way as to allow Israel to hold on to the occupied territories, or a great part of them, as well as to disregard the rights of the Palestinian Arabs.

The Sneh-Mikunis followers, as other revisionist renegade groups, are using the slogan, "Humanistic Communism" to undermine the vigilance in Socialist countries against counterrevolutionary subversion (CIA agents have used this misleading slogan in their counterrevolutionary activities in Czechoslovakia.)

In the anti-Soviet hysteria that raged during the Leningrad trial, the organ of the Mikunis-Sneh clique, Kol Ha'am, reached a high pitch of irresponsible journalism. On the first page of this publication there appeared a cartoon depicting a Soviet gallows (on a Stalin background) with a star of David in its noose. The Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronot reported on December 12 that the Soviet flag which was burned in front of the Finnish Embassy in Tel-Aviv came from the Club Ahava, which is sponsored by Sneh-Mikunis group. Spokesmen for the group tried to deny their affiliation with the club, but they couldn't hide the fact that their party meetings are held in the club headquarters on Brenner Street. Yet this infamous cartoon and the flag-burning incident were not mentioned in the Morning Freiheit.

The real Communist Party of Israel is never mentioned in the Morning Freiheit. This party, led by Meir Vilner and Tawfiq Toubi, is recognized by the world Communist movement as the only Communist Party of Israel. It has three deputies in the Knesset. Its influence among the Jewish and Arab masses of Israel is growing. It is in the forefront of the economic struggle of the Israeli workers and has been influential in the creation of a broad peace movement in Israel.

The Morning Freiheit has embarked on a course of catering to elements who are influenced by Zionist propaganda and have turned away from the class struggle. At the same time it does not want to alienate those readers who believe in socialism and are staunch friends of the Soviet Union. Such a course leads to irreconcilable contradictions and confusions.

Thus, in an editorial of December 27, 1971 we read: "Recently the Soviet Union had the experience of having one of its planes hijacked in which a young hostess lost her life. Its rigorous attitude to hijacking is therefore understandable." Then comes the following: "However, in the Leningrad case, not only were there no casualties, but there was no actual hijacking--merely a plan that did not come off..." The demagoguery of these two statements is obvious. We are told that the Soviet Union's "rigorous attitude toward hijacking is understandable," but the full extent of the treasonable crime committed by the defendants is concealed.

The editorial states: "Simple justice demands that consideration be given to the request by such responsible Jewish leaders as Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, President of the American Jewish Congress, and others to annul the death sentences and for the moderation of the verdicts generally." But it fails to mention that Rabbi Lelyveld and the AJC are eager participants in the Zionist attacks on the USSR.

The editorial declares: "For many years the Morning Freiheit has rejected the charge that a kind of official 'Soviet anti-Semitism' exists in the USSR. We still do." But this is followed by the comment: "It would not surprise us if questions are now being

raised as to whether the atmosphere created (in the Soviet Union) by the anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic hysteria of the Ivanovs, Yevseyevs and others did not contribute to the severity of the sentences."

The ambiguity is obvious. First we are told that the existence of official "Soviet anti-Semitism" is rejected. But then it is insinuated that such an "atmosphere of anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic hysteria" has been created in the Soviet Union as to render it impossible for the defendants in the Leningrad case to get a fair trial. The editorial concludes with a call for "socialist humanism" in the Leningrad case. The implication is that it is lacking, a false idea frequently employed by the C.I.A. and counterrevolutionary forces to subvert duped, vacillating, revisionist elements in the socialist countries. Such is the "balanced" approach of the Morning Freiheit, which always ends in an anti-Soviet stand.

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From DER VEG

(The following items are translated from the progressive Yiddish weekly, Der Veg, published in Tel Aviv. For the information of our Yiddish-speaking readers, air mail subscriptions to it are available at the rate of \$12.00 a year. Write to: Der Veg, 61 Maze Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.)

SOVIET JEWISH MIGRANTS TO ISRAEL AWAIT RETURN TO USSR

(January 13, 1971)

Twenty-five Soviet Jewish families, who emigrated in the past year to Israel, are now in Vienna awaiting permission to return to their Soviet homeland. They were compelled to leave Israel illegally, having no other way to get out of the country.

A journalist of the Austrian newspaper, Volkstimme, interviewed these emigrants (January 1, 1971). He was told that the Soviet authorities are now considering their re-entry appeals and are making the necessary preparations for their repatriation, such as finding housing and jobs for them.

Some of the interviews divulged that even now the local Zionist organizations in Vienna are exerting a great deal of pressure on them, attempting to prevent their return to the Soviet Union.

One of the most repugnant things to the emigrants was that they were constantly subjected to questioning by Israeli authorities about Soviet military matters and military installations in the Soviet Union. No less annoying were the demands that they should cut themselves off from everything and everybody in the