Meier Yaari:

The Logic of Our Time

From Merhavia

AN article by Moshe Sneh entitled "The Logic Of These Days" has appeared in *Hador* (Mapai daily newspaper,) and *Kol Haam* (Communist daily newspaper). This article, whose publication was delayed by the Editorial Board of *Al Hamishmar* (Mapam daily newspaper) for clarification, curiously enough found its way to the public and the above mentioned newspapers. I have been requested by Sneh to put his appeal against the decision of the Editorial Board on the agenda of the Central Committee.

Moshe Sneh tries his best to prove that the Jewish aspect of the Prague Trials is above any criticism. He attempts to prove that at Prague there was no intention to incriminate Jews like himself, but only the Jewish bourgeoisie, and those of bourgeois origin. According to Sneh, it was they and only they and their Zionism which was condemned. As a revolutionary worthy of the name, he of course refused to identify himself with this bourgeoisie, which, to use his language, "is like the bourgeoisie of every other people and presents its class interests as the general national interests, and tries to drag the working class into its reactionary 'national' forces and to divert the solidarity of the workers from proletarian internationalism." After these stirring words Sneh quotes from Marx, Lenin and Stalin. These quotations are all correct and valuable -at the right time, and in the right place. Let us examine the arguments of Sneh in the light of what happened at the Prague Trials.

Was it so necessary for the defense of Czechoslovakia against internal traitors and spies connected with provocateurs and spies from abroad, to emphasise the Jewish origin of assimilated Jewish Communists who had betrayed their own people and who hated Zionism even before they betrayed their Party and their State? Was there anything in their Jewish origin which could serve to explain the treachery of Slansky and his comrades? All who have ears and eyes will pay close attention and will understand the remarks of *Rude Pravo* (Czech Communist Party Newspaper) that these criminals were not "from the seed of our people but individuals without a people." Slansky and his comrades were condemned as being completely rootless and comparable to gypsies, not because at one time or another they were Zionists but on account of their Jewish origin. Was only the Jewish bourgeoisie condemned here? Is it possible for us as pioneering Zionists and revolutionary Socialists and as workers, most of us coming from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois origins, to pretend that this does not affect us? We will leave aside the absurdities of this accusation for even Marx was of bourgeois origin, and all the Fathers of Socialism were of bourgeois origin including Lenin. One thing at any rate is clear to all members of Mapam: the emphasis on the Jewish origin of the accused was not only likely to create deep qualms among the Jewish masses, but, to the best of our understanding, did not serve the Communist Party and Czechoslovakia, and on the contrary caused them considerable harm. The emphasis on Jewish origin did not contain within it anything which could be of help to Czechoslovakia in its struggle against enemies from within and without.

Is There a Special Liberation Movement for the Jewish Bourgeoisie and a Special One for the Proletariat?

I now touch on a very serious question both from a theoretical and a practical point of view. Is it permissible for a member of the Revolutionary Left in the Zionist Movement to claim, as Moshe Sneh claims, that the Jewish bourgeoisie in the National Liberation Movement has one interest and only one and that is to represent its class interests as the general national interests? If we examine to the full the meaning of this definition, then it becomes clear that there is no possibility of cooperation between ourselves and the Jewish bourgeoisie in the National Liberation Movement; and all forms of cooperation are to be condemned, as they contradict the principles of international proletarian solidarity. This is the logical conclusion which flows from the above definition and the joy and happiness of *Kol Haam* is

quite understandable. From this the conclusion can be reached that instead of cooperation with the bourgeoisie in the framework of the Zionist Movement, while at the same time fighting against the reactionary tendencies which appear within it, we have to regard the bourgeoisie as "our" reactionary forces and nothing more. We have to separate ourselves from it completely and totally and to regard it as the class enemy and nothing else! From this explanation, there follows an additional conclusion—that all those who preach national cooperation with the bourgeoisie for the sake of upbuilding the country are committing themselves to the possibility of "dragging the working class into a position of solidarity with the national reactionary forces." In order to strengthen this over-simplified generalization and in order that nobody suspect the author of differentiating between different kinds of bourgeoisie, he attempts to drive in the final wedge by quoting Lenin: "the bourgeoisie of oppressed peoples always exploits the slogans of national liberation as a means of deceiving the workers."

To what were the Fathers of Socialism referring when they condemned the bourgeoisie? They taught us that it is impossible to regard all the bourgeoisie—petty, middle or big—as belonging to one Bloc of Reaction. If such were their attitude, Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin would not have been able to consider as progressive, a National Movement, led also by the bourgeoisie. If Sneh will want to go the whole way, then he will have to include his teacher and our revered friend Yitzhak Greenbaum and even himself and his past in one and the same reactionary network. Why does he not suspect Yitzhak Greenbaum, who as is known, belongs to the bourgeoisie of an oppressed people, of being guilty of "exploiting the slogans of National Liberation as a means of deceiving the workers" during the whole of his struggle with the Polish reactionary chauvinists? The author, however, does not go quite so far as this in denying himself and his past and pursues a liberal attitude of affection and appreciation for his own political development. He tells us how he "grew out of the ranks of a general, bourgeoisie, democratic National Movement to working class consciousness." It appears, then, that if the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations exploits the slogans of National Liberation for purposes of deception, then at any rate we have been blessed with an exception and his name is Dr. M. Kleinbaum, today Moshe Sneh. In this rare case, membership of the "National" bourgeoisie did not prevent his belonging to the democratic and progressive bourgeoisie. In the meantime, he managed to rise to the rank of revolutionary Socialist and to adopt an orientation based on the revolutionary world.

It is a fact that Lenin and Stalin knew how to distinguish between the reactionary and the revolutionary bourgeoisie. Sometimes they even went very far in granting credit, although it sometimes happened, that the bourgeoisie more than once disappointed them. A bitter disappointment, for instance, was the Mufti and again, Chiang Kai-shek.

If it were generally correct and justifiable to support the national struggle of other peoples, then it would certainly be justified if we, the most oppressed of all peoples, were to receive such aid. Apparently, however, Moshe Sneh does not think so. Precisely with our bourgeoisie he tends to deal so severely and this is the lesson which he learned from the Prague Trials. Despite the general shock aroused in our party, by the total negation of Zionism in this trial and in the statements of communist leaders, Sneh found the occasion convenient to dissociate himself from the Zionist bourgeoisie as a whole.

There will be many who will be tempted to learn from this:

(a) that they have no place whatsoever with this bourgeoisie in our National Liberation Movement and that the national cooperation with them must cease:

(b) that this attack on the Zionism of the Jewish bourgeoisie is justified because the latter exploits the slogans of national liberation in order to divert the proletariat from international solidarity.

Leaving the Zionist Organization

It is possible to develop further the logic of Sneh and no doubt there will be many who will do so without his permission. They will see in his ideas a clear suggestion to leave the Zionist Organization which, according to Sneh's understanding, was the only target of the Prague Trials; he certainly was not the target. How could he offer such suggestions when a large part of the 400,000 signatories to the Peace Petition are themselves part of this bourgeoisie and the Peace Movement in Israel and in other countries justifiably appeals to them.

But if in opposition to my suggestion for a resolution, Sneh himself brought to the Standing Committee of the Party Council a resolution which sought to delete any mention of our participation in the Zionist Executive, then the matter becomes exceedingly serious. Until now, I knew that the Zionist Organization and the Zionist Executive dealt with these tasks and undertakings as a result of historic necessity, activities which by their very nature are progressive. The reactionary tendencies which from time to time attempt to distort the progressive character of the Zionist Organization have not been ignored. We have not blinded ourselves to the reactionary forces which plotted to turn the Zionist Organization into a tool which would serve the class interests of the bourgeoisie. We knew that from time to time the Israel Government succeeded in harnessing the Zionist Organization and its Executive to a political policy which stands in contradiction to its progressive character and mission. We have always fought against this. There was a time when Mapai joined with us to condemn the class interests which were opposed to us. Today, however, Mapai finds in our condemnation of reactionary tendencies ample excuse to isolate us from the Zionist Executive and from the absorption of halutz youth.

Since Yaari's article appeared, Sneh has publicly advocated secession from the Zionist Organization.

The consequent conclusions which flow from the opinions of Sneh, namely that we should leave the Zionist Executive, fills us with deep anxiety. Here is the beginning to a two-sided situation. On the one hand, the reactionary forces and the reformists are trying to exploit the Prague Trials and the groundless accusations against M. Oren and R. Benshalom in order to expel us from the Zionist Executive, to exclude us from the process of the Ingathering of the Exiles and from our part in the settlement of *halutz aliya* and the conquest of the land. All this conspiracy is directed against us because of our struggle against the reactionary forces in the Zionist Organization. On the other hand, accusations appear from within our own ranks, which also attempt to exploit our struggle against reactionary forces in order to question our active participation in the national cooperation and our membership on the Executive of the Zionist Organization. The fact that this accusation has been levelled precisely in the wake of the Prague Trials arouses deep anxiety.

There is a certain logic in the opinions of Sneh, from which we will not be able to escape. It is possible that he has not yet exhausted the logic of his conclusions but it is up to us to reject with all our vigour his suggestion that if the Zionist Movement was slandered, this was first, deserved owing to its bourgeois reactionary character, and secondly that this was not directed against us.

The Communist Party and Zionism

Is Sneh however so certain that these allegations were not directed against us? After saying what he had to say about the bourgeoisie, Sneh attempts to comfort his people. There suddenly appear rays of hope and consolation. Therefore do not fear, Sons of Jacob: if you will only dissociate yourselves completely from "your" reactionary forces, then everything will be allright, because there is nothing to fear if the people become enveloped in your own patriotism. This consolation was drawn, according to Sneh's words, from scientific Socialism. From the latter, he succeeded in learning that international solidarity is the guarantee of true national interests and of patriotism. Is there anyone amongst us who would seek to deny this elementary assumption? No, such a person could not be found. Yet despite this, we see how Sneh succeeds in turning this truth into a half-truth, how he uses it as justification of the Prague Trials against Zionism.

For a whole generation we have agreed that orientation towards the revolutionary world goes hand in hand with true patriotism and pioneering Zionism. The rescue of the remnants of our people by the Red Army and the attainment of our independence with the decisive political and military help of the Socialist countries serve to strengthen this assumption. But what has all this to do with the question? What connection is there between Gromyko's Declaration and the justification of the verdict on Zionism as given in the Prague Trials? Here Sneh succeeds in making a gigantic leap and attempts to prove that because the Soviet Union rescued the refugees and helped in the attainment of independence, therefore the Prague Trials did not evince enmity towards the State of Israel, nor even a negative attitude towards the National Liberation Movement of our people. Here are his very words: "Any explanation that the Prague Trials allegedly prove that Communism is the enemy of our National Liberation Movement

is nothing but a slanderous lie." He condemns this argument as "the lying generalizations of Israel reactionary forces, which are intended to turn the masses of the people against the Peace Camp and the Socialist world." It appears from what Sneh has written that only the enemies of Peace and Socialism are capable of identifying the total negation of the Zionist Movement in this Trial with the national struggles of the Jewish People. There is apparently tucked away in Sneh's suitcase a liberation struggle of the Jewish People which is not identified with the Zionist Organization and which was not attacked in the Trial.

Is Mapam also Guilty?

Now that the conspiracies of the reactionary bourgeoisie have been uncovered, it appears all at once that in reality Sneh dissociates himself also from that part of the resolution of the Mapam Council which dealt with the attitude of the Prague Trial to Zionism, a section which was formulated with the active participation of Peri and Riftin, which even Sneh himself supported and which was not publicly rejected by them. In this section of the Party's resolution, which did not arouse any criticism on the part of those who raise their hands against the resolutions as a whole, our deep anxiety is expressed about the worsening of the attitude of the revolutionary world towards our National Liberation. Perhaps Sneh will also surprise us on this point by telling us, in copies to hundreds of *haverim,* that only because of solidarity towards the outside world did he support and vote together with all of us regarding the damage done to Zionism at this Trial, but that within the Party his heart is not altogether with the resolution and he dissociates himself from it? Did "Logic Of These Days" come to tell the world where the true Moshe Sneh stands?

A serious question stands before us like a nightmare. As most of the *haverim* in Mapam are partners in this "lying generalization," namely dissociation from the anti-Zionist accusations of the Trial, what then is Sneh's verdict on us? Perhaps we ourselves, members of the Peace Movement, intend to turn the masses of the people against the Peace Camp and world Socialism? It is surely impossible to imagine that Sneh and his friends have reached such a conclusion!

The balance of Meir Yaari's answer to Sneh will appear in the April issue of Israel Horizons.

Charles A. Cowen Dies in Tel Aviv

We mourn the untimely death in Tel Aviv of the veteran Zionist and devoted friend of Hashomer Hatzair, Charles A. Cowen. Mr. Cowen had been actively associated with the Zionist movement since its beginnings in America and was the first Educational Director of the ZOA and a member of its National Executive in 1906.

His devotion to the principles of *Halutziut* brought him to support actively Hashomer Hatzair. Mr. and Mrs. Cowen had spent the last 11 months in Israel and visited many of our Kibbutzim. They had decided to make their home in Kibbutz Kfar Menahem.

Mrs. Cowen who now is en route to America plans soon to return to Israel to live in Kfar Menahem.

The Editorial Board of Israel Horizons joins the many friends of Charles A. Cowen in Israel and America in expressing their heartfelt condolences to Ida Cowen.

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Meir Yaari:

A Charter of Historic Struggle

THE self-identification of Moshe Sneh with the verdict of the Prague Trials against the State of Israel is serious. A few days ago, I made a speech in the Knesset against the new "Coalition of Reformism and Reaction." I do not believe that I glossed over the dangers or covered up the wounds. I declared war without mercy against the policy of unity with the social-reactionary forces and against the enslavement to America which characterizes the Ben Gurion Government. But Sneh's article together with his speeches exploits the Prague Trials for the purpose of placing the full responsibility upon the Ben Gurion Government, and we find in his article certain justification of the accusations made at the Prague trials against the State of Israel.

This is Sneh's conclusion: "The reining of the Israeli Government to the American Zionist saddle, the malignant anti-Soviet and anti-Communist speeches of Sharett, Eban and Ben Gurion, inevitably led to what they did." If the Zionist Organization is condemned as being a pro-American network and if Zionism is put on one plane with Titoism and Trotskyism—what has Sneh to say to all this?

At the trial, the State of Israel was presented as a center of imperialist espionage and plotting in the Middle East—as if this were its only role, as if it had ceased to be a center for the rescue of Jews and for their absorption into the homeland, as if it had ceased to be a center for hundreds of thousands of Jews, classless and without a future, who are now being turned into productive workers. What is Sneh's reaction to all this? It is that all the responsibility for these accusations is not placed on the prosecutor, but on this temporary policy.

He quotes Stalin to the effect that "the national question should not be seen as something completely isolated from that which is of a permanent character . . . the national problem is completely determined by the existing social conditions, by the character of the regime and in general by the social development." An additional reinforcement for this quotation is found by Sneh in the attitude of the fathers of Marxism to the question of Poland's liberation from Czarist domination. At one time, they supported the separation of Poland from Czarism and at another time they were opposed to separation—everything in accordance with the progressive or reactionary function which separation from Czarism was likely to fulfill at the given period.

For the sake of what, you will ask, is such a comparison made between the history of Poland and our War of Independence? Does Sneh quote Stalin in order to tell us that sometimes it is possible to lend support to our political independence and that at another time the absence of such support is justified, with everything in accordance with "the character of the regime," in other words, with the temporary policy of this or that government? What will happen if Sneh does not succeed in crushing the Ben Gurion Government in the next two or three years? Will he advise the Communist world that our national independence should be abandoned completely? And perhaps it will be explained to us why it is permissible to treat us differently from the way in which people in larger nations, such as the Chinese, French, etc., are treated.

It is inconceivable that the revolutionary powers would pursue such a relativistic policy. Would they allow themselves to consign to eternal damnation with such ease the French state because of the reactionary policy of this or that government and despite the fact that everybody agrees that France is a center of the Atlantic Bloc and the headquarters of Ridgway?

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Mikunis (Israel Communist leader) declares that all who say that Oren is innocent are worthy of Oren's fate. [A poem in *Kol Haam* proclaims to us that the end of all Oren's defenders will be in a "forest of *Oranim*" (Pines).] Mikunis prophesies that only with the death of Zionism would Socialism be victorious here. We hear from Communist statesmen "a generalization of truth" that all shades of Zionism have been uncovered as Imperialist

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This is the final installment of the answer of Meir Yaari (Mapam member of the Knesset and leader of Hashomer Hatzair) to Moshe Sneh.

agents and even worse than this. We find *Kol Haam* shrieking that the majority of the 232 who voted for the resolutions of the Party Council have joined the camp of the reactionary imperialists. On the other hand, Maki praises those 49 who voted against the resolutions.

But unfortunately there was ample reason for them to rejoice on their reading the explanation of Moshe Sneh. His opinions seek to show that there was no such thing as an attack on our National Liberation Movement at the Prague Trial. Apart from Sneh, there is probably no one else in Mapam who would dare to argue that if Zionism was slandered at the Prague Trial, this did not incriminate the Jewish National Liberation Movement! I can myself imagine that one fine day Mikunis will declare himself the representative of the "Israel" National Liberation Movement and will set up such an organization in opposition to Zionism. I can also imagine how Mikunis will boast about his patriotism, which will be none other than anti-national, parochial cosmopolitanism. But I cannot reconcile myself to the fact that Sneh is quite explicit that there is a certain Jewish National Liberation Movement which the Prague Trial did not condemn and he hints, to all those who are prepared to follow his temptations, that he has a Liberation Movement "of his own," which was not affected by the Prague Trials and which is not part of the Zionist Movement.

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Removing The Barriers

We have never underestimated the great part—and to many the decisive part—played by the Ben Gurion Government in the change of attitude towards us by the Communist world. Up till now we assumed that the gap was of an ideological nature and existed between the pioneering Zionist Mapam and the Communist world as well. This gap consisted of the fact that the revolutionary world rejected and rejects today the necessity of our territorial concentration in the Homeland from all countries and from all regimes. We mapped out a path which, from its very nature, is neither easy nor short, but is capable of advancing us toward the elimination of this barrier, until the revolutionary world would recognize Zionism as the solution of the Jewish problem and Mapam as the standard-bearer of the realization of Socialism in our country and in our people.

Recently, however, Sneh has been giving vent to dangerous utterances. He turns a blind eye to this barrier which is rooted in the anti-Zionist tradition of the revolutionary world. With amazing simplicity he tells us that until the State of Israel so bitterly disappointed the revolutionary world, the latter was rapidly approaching an acceptance of the Zionist solution. In his opinion, there was even a time when they believed in the all-world character of the Jewish People, and as a proof of this he mentions the telegram of greetings sent by the Moscow Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to President Weizmann and the participation by Communists in the World Jewish Congress, etc. With the same simplicity, he asserts that it was the Soviet Union which gave us the State of Israel. Who more than Sneh knows that this was the work of generations of pioneers, of the fight against the White Paper, of the successful War of Liberation—all of which preceded the political aid of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies?

Even at the time when the Socialist countries opened their gates to Jewish emigration and the attitude to Israel was most friendly, the Communist leaders even then rejected Zionism as the general solution of the Jewish problem. The anti-Zionist articles of Ehrenburg and Attolina, the anti-Zionist definition in the Soviet Encyclopedia and the anti-Zionist campaign of the Jewish Press in Poland and Rumania, all appeared precisely at the time when emigration from these countries had reached its height. All these expressions of anti-Zionism existed before the Ben Gurion Government had deserted its policy of neutrality. It is true that the position deteriorated, particularly recently, and that the policy of the Ben Gurion Government has played an important role. But the rejection of Zionism has always existed and it is impossible under any circumstances to put the whole blame on the present day policy of the Government.

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Factors Which Are Not Directly Dependent On Us

It cannot be also ignored that the actual process of the territorial concentration of an extra-territorial people, which is bringing to Israel human and material forces from both East and West, may give rise to disquiet and suspicions even if unjustified. These suspicions increase with the sharpening of the Cold War. Even if our Government continued to pursue a policy of non-identification, our being in ac-

tual fact a point of concentration for human and material forces from East and West would create tension in our relations with the Socialist countries. Let us assume that our Government would refuse to accept grants from the United States. Would those hundreds of millions of dollars which for years have flowed from the pockets of American Jews of all classes and which are "kosher" in the eyes of Mapam and even in the eyes of Moshe Sneh as the Mapam spokesman on budgets in the Knesset—would these dollars be "kosher" to the same extent in the eyes of the Communists? We sit together with these same Jews in the Zionist Organization and until the Prague Trials I did not hear anybody expressing doubts as to the advisability of our participation in the Zionist Executive. Until now we all knew that the Zionist Organization, to the extent that it deals with Jewish immigration and its economic and cultural absorption, fulfills a constructive and progressive function. To the extent that it identifies itself with the pro-Western policy of the Ben Gurion Government, we dissociate ourselves from it and carry out a vigorous struggle against it.

Because of the reasons given above—(a) the anti-Zionist tradition; (b) our position as an extra-territorial people gathering in its exiles from East and West in a period of the sharpening of international relations and the Cold War; and (c) to a very serious extent, the pro-imperialist policy of the Ben Gurion Government—the Communist world has recently decided, and perhaps even only very recently, to wage war on the Zionist Movement and indirectly on the State of Israel and to regard them as a tool in the hands of the American imperialists. And we, despite the increasing Cold War, will not cease to turn to American Jewry, nor cease to require the aid of Jews wherever they be, in order that they may help in the saving of Jews for immigration and absorption in the Homeland.

As for the future, nobody suggests that we should sit still and do nothing while the attitude toward our Liberation Movement becomes increasingly more severe. There is a way which is capable of bringing about a new reconciliation between the Communist world and our national enterprise. This way, which bears the stamp of the Borochovist prognosis, is the way of stubborn and continual struggle. The Mapam program gave as conditions for the speeding-up of the process of rapprochment—the continuation of territorial concentration, the struggle for political and economic independence and against the enslavement of our country to American imperialism, the strengthening of international solidarity between the workers of the Arab and Jewish peoples and the consolidation and growing strength of Mapam.

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The Link With World Jewry

The lesson of the Prague trial should have caused people like Moshe Sneh to undertake a thorough soul-searching and to recognize that the way is indeed a thorny one. Yet precisely because of this bitter lesson, he decided to provide us with consolation and condolences. He possesses secret weapons. The fall of the Ben Gurion Government will be the cause of this miracle. It is enough to present the crushed pro-imperialist Government on a tray and everything will be merry for the Jews.

Despite all this, the thought does not cease to bother me that even after the destruction of the Ben Gurion Government we will not be able to forego the mobilization of material and human forces from the East and the West. Even after the collapse of the Ben Gurion Government we will not cut the bond between ourselves and six million Jews in America, and we shall still need their help. After the overthrow of this Government, international tension will not lessen nor will the Cold War end.

Even if Mapam would succeed in guaranteeing the official neutrality of the State of Israel, this center, the name of which is the State of Israel, this homeland of an extra-territorial people spread over the whole world under various regimes, would continue to maintain spheres of activity both in the East and in the West and therefore would not cease to arouse suspicion and disquiet.

Our ship is in the midst of the sea and fights mighty waves. At this moment it is a sacred duty to seize the helm with force and decision. And while the ship has not yet reached shore and cannot yet cast anchor, only those who know how to adjust their will to the will of the whole and to represent the whole are entitled to steer.

Great is my desire to fight for the soul of people and not against it, but now if we are fighting against waves of destruction, we will not be able to allow someone to command both sides, the side of leadership and the side of opposition. Every honest person is obliged to understand this and to incorporate it in his heart; and to all who are ready to share the burden our hand is outstretched.