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## WHAT NEXT IN ISRAEL?

The first months of 1949 were indeed of grave importance to the State of Israel. The balloting is over and instead of a provisional government, Israel now has a permanent government growing out of the recent elections. The prolonged negotiations with the representatives of Egypt on the Island of Rhodes fortunately brought about the signing of an armistice. There is every sign on the horizon that the war is ended on all the other frontiers with various Arab states. Treaties with Trans-Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria are in the making. The State of Israel will probably be admitted to the United Nations. The transitional period of the new state has apparently come to an end. Israel is an established state with all its implications for the future of the Jewish communities of the world.

The first Government of Israel celebrated the successfully accomplished elections by granting an amnesty to its political prisoners. A similar act is in itself not an unusual step and has many historical precedents. What is rather unusual is the fact that the amnesty applies to the imprisoned members of the fascist gang accused of planning and executing the assassination of Count Bernadotte. Imagine the indignation of the Jewish people all over the world if a *non*-Jewish government had granted amnesty and released from prison notorious fascists involved in murder and other infamous practices!

While granting freedom to the fascist assassins, the Israeli Government has not yet taken any steps to alleviate the lot of the Arab refugees whose homes are in territories included in the State of Israel.

Stipulations for solving the Arab refugee problem are long overdue. Ultimately the mere fact of existence of this problem will prove detrimental to Jewish development in Israel.

There is still another grave problem facing Israel today. It is that of the new state's position with regard to the great powers of the world and to the struggle between the East and the West dominating the political life of the present historical period. Now that Israel has been approved for membership in the United Nations and that a government has been formed expressing the majority won by the Zionist-Socialist parties in the recent elections, it appears to be of importance that Israel take a definite stand in the East-West controversy, in which the very existence of democracy is at stake. It is our deep conviction that Socialists all over the world should take an active part in this contest between the democratic and the totalitarian forces. The powerful and influential Socialist parties in Norway and Denmark have now finally decided to abandon their traditional policy of neutrality and to join the discussions on the Atlantic Defense Pact. Swedish sentiments also appear to be undergoing radical changes. If this is the case with democracies close to the Soviet Union, the State of Israel's "neutrality" would indeed be difficult to justify.

But whatever policy the State of Israel will follow both in its domestic development and in its foreign

affairs, it is evident that Israel is in no position to influence in a positive manner the conditions in the Jewish communities all over the world—provided of course that the vast majority of the Jews outside the State of Israel will not sacrifice their vital interests for the benefit of the 700,000 Jews at present in Palestine. After all, the physical power of an independent Jewish sword wrought by Israel is negligible compared with the armed forces of the world powers. At present, just as before the establishment of an independent Jewish state, not arms but the moral force of justice and righteousness can defend the upward of 90% of the Jews who are scattered among various people all over the world as national minorities. The Socialist movement—the historical crusader for a new way of life based on justice, humanity and brotherhood,—can alone solve the Jewish problem by introducing social security and equality coupled with the respect for human rights, democracy, and freedom for all people regardless of their race, nationality, or religion. To injure or to offend the moral laws of humanity and decency, to indulge in power politics for the sake of Israel, is therefore detrimental to the real interest of the many millions of Jews who live outside the State of Israel. The sooner the Jewish communities all over the world will realize this simple truth, the better are the chances not only for their own advancement, but also for the existence and peaceful development of the State of Israel.

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