

NEW PHASE IN ISRAEL

By Dr. Moshe Sneh

The mere fact that our state exists does not mean that we are really independent. Nowadays there are many states that are nominally independent, but whose resources are nevertheless exploited by foreign capital. Foreign powers control every action of their governments, and the territory of these countries are freely used as bases for foreign armies and airfields for foreign aircraft. The Arab states that surround us are good examples of states of this sort. We in Israel dare not follow the example of Iraq or Syria, but must endeavor to be the first really independent state in the Middle East.

Clearly this ambition of ours for independence will conflict with the aims of American imperialism, which has its own ideas. Nowadays imperialism of the American brand does not have to occupy countries by armed force as empires were built in the old days. It dominates areas through its economic power. Once it has acquired economic control it is only a short road to complete political and, if necessary, military subjection. Pious declarations of neutrality by a state have little effect against the onward advance of American imperialism.

Furthermore, so long as a nation does not control all its natural resources, independence is a myth. The British administration left us a legacy of foreign concessions that are bound up with the basic industries of our economy. The Dead Sea Potash Works, the Palestine Electric Corporation, the Haifa oil refineries, and even our national bank are all tied up with foreign interests. We have not only not made any effort to date to extricate our national economy from these fetters, but we have actually tied our economy up further by accepting conditions in the American Loan which opens the way for economic dependence.

It may be that the implementation of a Mediterranean or Middle East pact will be delayed for some time yet, but the idea of these pacts will certainly not be dropped altogether. It may be that the Pacific pact will come first, or perhaps Britain and America will have first to unravel their own conflicting interests. A hint has already come from President Truman that maybe a Marshall Plan extension is not the right approach to the particular conditions of the Middle East area. There is talk instead of a development plan. Whatever particular form the approach will take, there is still no doubt that the United States is looking toward the State of Israel to advance its interests in the Middle East.

Though Middle East developments are moving slowly, pressure on Israel is increasing. Apart from the usual forms of financial pressure, other means are being employed as well. Israel has been awarded some territorial concessions, but in turn has had to give up large areas of western Palestine to satellite states of Britain and America. Nor should we ignore the importance of the recent revolution in Syria. The new dictator of that country, Colonel Zaim, has not given himself the title "Franco of the Middle East" without good cause, as with every passing day the fascist character of his régime becomes more apparent. Now Zaim, who is a full American agent, plans to make his army the second strongest in the Middle East, after that of Turkey. The ex-Mufti of Jerusalem operates from territory under American influence, and from time to time he receives tokens of American friendship, such as the invitation for him to appear before the U.N. Conciliation Commission, which was sent by the American member, Mr. Mark Etheridge. All these events are increasing the pressure on Israel so that the new state should realize the need to accept American "protection." All that is wanted is for Israel to take its place in the American scheme for the Middle East.

It is not sufficient just to recognize the danger. One must take measures to strug-

gle against it. This is no more an impossible struggle than were our previous struggles against British rule and Arab invasion. We can win if we inspire the masses of the people to play their part in fighting the menace. We have also to strengthen our friendship with all forces that are ready to support our fight for independence, foremost among them the Soviet Union and the Popular Democracies. The more we strengthen our friendship with those who are fighting imperialism the more we shall increase our strength to oppose imperialist pressure against us. It is also essential for us to make contact with those amongst the oppressed Arab peoples who are struggling for liberation.

The struggle for our independence is not only a matter of foreign policy; it also affects our internal affairs. It retards the development of local production, because Israel becomes a market for American exports. In the wake of this economic dependence comes the lowering of the standard of living of the people, hampering further our ability to take in immigration and the work of construction.

We have now entered a new phase, in which the struggle for our real independence becomes more difficult. When we fought the Arab aggressors we could rely on a united front. Now, as we struggle against imperialism, the Right Wing sections of the population are no longer our partners; on the contrary, capitalism in Israel seeks to secure itself, and believes it can do so best under American "protection."

We recently celebrated our Independence Day. This was more than a holiday for us, for it was also a reminder that we have still to continue to struggle for independence.

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