

GROMYKO'S RAY OF LIGHT

By Itzik Feffer

ANDREI GROMYKO'S speech at the special session of the UN General Assembly aroused the greatest interest among the Jewish people of the entire world. In no corner of the earth did the Jewish masses fail to respond to the Soviet delegate's statement. Gromyko's speech once again made plain to the world the meaning of Soviet justice, the Soviet national policy, the Soviet struggle for peace. From America and England, from Palestine and Africa, from Canada and Mexico, from Cuba and Brazil, from Ar-

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gentina and France, from Poland and Bulgaria—wherever Jewish masses live—came praise and recognition for the land of socialism, that does not deal in empty promises and declarations, but is guided by the interests of all nations, the desire for a durable and just peace.

The turmoil about the Soviet position on the Palestine problems began some time before Gromyko's declaration. Arab reactionaries spread many provocative rumors about the "pro-Jewish" position of the Soviet Union; reactionary Jews continually clamored about its "pro-Arab" position. Other rumors circulated about "secret agreements" with England. A Soviet representative only need say hello to an

Arab diplomat to start a tumult in the Jewish yellow press that "the Soviets betray the Jewish people." And on the other hand, if a Soviet representative says a few words to a Jewish leader, the reactionary Arab press goes into a devil's dance about "the Jewish hand of Moscow." People who view international affairs from the outlook of atomic and dollar diplomacy, will not and cannot understand the essence of Soviet policy in general and Soviet policy on the Palestine problem in particular. The Soviet government has neither a "pro-Jewish" nor a "pro-Arab" position. The Soviet Union has a Leninist-Stalinist position, supporting all nations that struggle for a better life, for an anti-fascist, democratic and just peace.

Gromyko gave much attention to the British mandate for Palestine. So long as the British mandate is not abrogated, there can be no talk of a just solution of the Palestine problem. British imperialism has converted Palestine into a base for its experiments in police rule. Recently, Palestinian earth has been sprayed with Jewish and Arab blood more than once. Palestine has been turned into a sort of bandwagon onto which one jumps either on the eve of elections to wheedle a few more votes, or when a great thirst for oil and a few extra pounds sterling arises. . . .

Those political and organizational leaders who think it possible to greet Gromyko's declaration on the one hand, and to hang on to the British mandate and support the old British policy in Palestine on the other, are treading a false and anti-Jewish path. The leader of the Jewish Agency, Ben Gurion, for instance, thought it necessary to preserve the British mandate, at least in part. Several weeks earlier, Moshe Shertock, the political leader of the Jewish Agency, had declared that "Palestine lies in the political and geographic sphere of England and America." Dr. Abba Hillel Silver greeted Gromyko's statement warmly, but he cannot part with the mandate. . . . What does this mean? It means that to this day, certain leaders of the Zionist movement have not grasped the danger that threatens long-suffering Palestine under British imperialism. And if some of them have grasped the danger, they shut their eyes to it. They don't want to give up the tradition of knocking on the sealed doors of British imperialism.

Why Forward Was "Surprised"

In this respect, Chaim Lieberman's contortions in the none-too-fresh atmosphere of the none-too-aromatic Jewish daily *Forward* make a very peculiar impression. First of all, he performs mental gymnastics to show that with Gromyko's speech, the Soviet Union approached a position for which he had been campaigning for many years. It is characteristic that Chaim Lieberman is completely silent about Gromyko's assertions about the Palestine mandate. Lieberman took the trouble to discuss the anti-imperialist position of Gromyko's speech. But with not a single word does he mention the "achievements" of the *Forward* colleagues, the British Laborites, nor the American speculations about Palestine. He tries ingeniously to by-pass the great crimes

committed in Palestine by the imperialist forces. In what respect, then, did the Gromyko speech "surprise" this *Forward* clique? In a small matter: the Soviet Union reaffirmed once again its national policy in a concrete situation! This surprises the *Forward*, because for many years it had been spreading all the nasty slanders and provocations it could muster against the Soviet Union.

The *Forward* wonders, for instance, that Andrei Gromyko should speak about a Jewish people. . . . Why did not Gromyko check his speech with the *Forward*, which has been blabbing about the "destruction of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union"?

This paper keeps on pumping its readers full of nonsense about the Jewish people being proscribed in the Soviet Union. And then Gromyko comes along and speaks about the Jewish people with such sympathy as no representative of any other state so far expressed. No use, Gromyko simply does not read the *Forward*! And the *Forward* gang will under no circumstances remove the cotton from their long ears!

In the Stalin constitution the Jewish Autonomous Region is writ in golden letters! During the war years, the major Soviet newspapers published reports about the meetings organized by the representatives of the Jewish people in Moscow.

Soviet Policy on Nationalities

No other government but the Soviet valued so highly the contribution of the Jewish people in the Second World War. No other government concerns itself so much about the well-being of its peoples as does the Soviet. It is clear why this is so—it is a people's government. And it is no accident that Gromyko took up the defense of the hundreds of thousands of Jews, who are wandering through many countries without a home, yearning for a roof over their heads. On the same German earth in the Anglo-American zones where, according to all rules of justice they should by now be breathing freely, they still experience moments that remind them of the not-too-distant past. . . .

Andrei Gromyko's moving words about the suffering of the Jewish people and about their rights stem from the whole Leninist-Stalinist national policy, and can be surprising only for those who in the course of many years thought and spoke differently; for those who deliberately hid the truth of Soviet policy from the broad masses and instead issued slanders and provocations against the Soviet Union.

What is the essence of Gromyko's speech? The essence of Gromyko's speech consists of its anti-imperialism, of its call for friendship among nations! Gromyko calls for a rapprochement between the Jews and Arabs of Palestine. Instead of the contact which some Palestinian leaders established with Anglo-American imperialist elements, Gromyko called for strengthening of contact between the two peoples that live and work in Palestine. Some Palestinian leaders, both Jewish and Arab, do not care to break with British imperialism, and in this lies the danger for both peoples.

In the Soviet Union very many peoples live and work side by side, without a sign of antagonism. On the contrary, one people helps another to advance and develop. How much warmth and loyalty did the Great Russian people show for the Ukrainians, White Russians, Jews and other peoples under German occupation? The Georgians and Armenians, whom tsarism kept in constant strife against each other, live in utter friendliness in one family. All the nations of the Soviet Union recently celebrated the national holiday of the Oirat people in the Altai Mountains.

Is it then so impossible for Jews and Arabs to live together in Palestine? With the brilliant example of the Soviet Union, no one will be fooled that such co-existence is excluded. If the external influences toward international antagonism would only cease their intrigue, the Jews and Arabs would get together and build a common democratic state. The Jewish and Arab progressive elements have already begun discussions to this end.

Forty thousand Jewish and Arab workers recently carried out a united strike against their common employers. This is not the first, nor will it be the last, joint action. No matter how Jewish and Arab reactionaries exert themselves to set their peoples against each other, there will remain a ferment of mutual sympathy of peoples deep within the masses, who are exploited and robbed in equal measure by foreign and domestic oppressors.

Reactionary Orientation

The leaders of the reactionary Arabs could find no more suitable forum than the meeting of the United Nations to spread anti-Semitic poison. As arguments against partnership with the Jews, the Mufti's heir first reminded the world that "the Jews killed Jesus" and then complained that the present-day Jews are really not Jews but Mongolians and therefore have no historic claim to Palestine. The declarations of the Arab diplomat called forth a sharp protest among the progressive Arabs.

Well, and in Jewish circles aren't there some who declare all Arabs to be fascists and enemies of the Jewish people? What Emil Ghouri often blabbers at the sessions of the United Nations, meets with rather energetic opposition from progressive Arabs. Reaction remains reaction in all languages! And whoever orients himself toward reaction must be fought! Anti-progressive ideas expressed in Hebrew are thereby not made *kosher*, any more than progressive ideas become *trafe* because they are expressed in Arabic.

Despite the great tragedy that overtook the German Jews, there apparently still are German Jews in Palestine who, according to the *New York Times*, condemned the declaration of the Palestinian leader, Goldie Meyerson, simply because it expressed friendly feelings toward the Soviet Union in the name of Palestine's Jewish masses. "We have to look to the west, not the east," said the leader of the German Jews. And one well-known leader of the right wing of the Zionist movement maintained that the Palestine working class is part of western Europe. After the British Laborites

swindled their electors so thoroughly with the promise of pie in the sky, the bonds to the old boss remain so strong that some people feel it almost impossible to sever them, the attacks against the Jews in Palestine notwithstanding. . . .

And in America there are still naive people who "think" that Gromyko's speech could have been delivered by the delegate of the United States, Warren Austin. Sholem Asch shows greater understanding when he reports, "The silence of my government is but a sign of our slide down-hill since the death of Roosevelt."

Such a speech as Gromyko made about the Palestine question could only have been delivered by a representative of a new world, a representative of a truly just country, a representative of a great free nation. No one but the delegate of the Soviet Union, could speak so sharply about the paramount enemy of mankind—about fascism, about imperialism. No one could speak with such love about a people that had suffered most from fascism. No one could so clearly enunciate the principle of cooperation among nations.

Cutting the Palestinian Knot

Obviously, Gromyko's speech did not satisfy everyone. The Arab nationalists would have liked to convert Palestine into an Arab country without considering the interests of the Jews. Jewish nationalists would have liked to transform Palestine into a Jewish country, disregarding Arab interests. The Soviet Union maintains that a dual state should be established where the interests of both peoples will be guaranteed in equal measure. And if it proves impossible to create a dual state, Gromyko stated, only then will it be necessary to discuss the division of Palestine into two states, a Jewish and an Arab. In all events, the fate of the two peoples must be solved by the peoples themselves, and not through a foreign force. This is the essence of the Soviet proposals.

Not only the progressive Jews, but the whole progressive world welcomed Gromyko's declaration. The true friends of real democracy always knew and believed that the Soviet Union would remain at all times and under all circumstances true to its principles. Gromyko's speech was welcomed joyfully because it came at a time when the Palestine problem was so knotty that even the greatest optimists were beginning to lose hope for a solution. With characteristic clarity the Soviet Union let it be known that the Jewish people can achieve their goal only in collaboration with all freedom-loving peoples, and that the path to the goal lies through freedom and democracy, and not through "contracts" and other "commercial deals" with imperialist cliques. Marching in the front ranks with all progressive elements of all nations, and fighting against both internal and external reaction, the Jews of Palestine, with the support of all progressive Jews, will take the place they have long earned because of their labor and their achievements, because of their participation in the struggle against nazism,

because of the suffering they have experienced and are experiencing at the hands of the British and Anglo-Jewish mandate supporters.

Andrei Gromyko's speech pierced the dark mist around the Palestine problem like a "ray of light," as H. Leivick expressed it. In acclaiming this "ray of light," however, we cannot overlook the dark clouds spreading over the

world, the dark clouds which bear the prosaic name of "imperialism." Unfortunately, not all who praise the "ray of light" from the Soviet side, grasp this fact. . . .

Whoever wishes a truly democratic solution to the Palestine problem, must support the Soviet position, that puts an end to fumbling and supports the demands of democracy and humanism.
