

## REVELATIONS OF M. SNEH'S PATH

Selected from Israeli press by Rina Barzelay

("Zo Haderekh", March 27, 1972 . )

"The only thing I regret is that I went too far in total denial of zionism — a thing which has neither theoretical nor practical justification from any serious angle of vision. For this I express my regrets".

M. SNEH - from his testament, published in the reactionary evening paper "Yediot Ahronot", March 9, 1972.

### About the testament

The political testament of the late Dr. Moshe Sneh is a highly significant document. The turning in the ideological and political path of Sneh had already begun close to the six-day war, and in recent years there was no doubt left that the leader of Maki (the Mikunis-Sneh group - IB) wishes to pave the path for a more complete return to his source. It appears that Sneh sensed before undergoing the fateful operation, that he would not have the necessary time for completing this process, and hence, in his testament, he desired at least to outline the theses for this turning. Indeed, in this testament there is also a great effort made to explain the difficult period in his life, the period when he put himself into the grave conflict with the nationalist idea, with those who were realizing it... And if, referring to that period, there is some implication that some reservation relating to zionism still persisted, in the concluding chapter Sneh virtually guides his comrades to return and join the zionist movement.

The daily "Al Hamishmar", organ of the Mapam party, March 12, 1972.

### Salute to Commander Amram

Moshe Sneh was interred not as the chairman of Maki, nor as the

[ 35 ]

former leader of zionists in Poland, but as Commander Amram . His comrades-of-arms of the Hagana (military arm of the Jewish Agency, the forerunner of the Israeli Government-IB) saluted their former commander, as he was interred according to Jewish orthodox rites...

Mark Segal in the daily "Jerusalem Post", mouthpiece of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, March 5, 1972.

### Lecturing to Israeli army officers

Moshe Sneh frequently met with Israeli and foreign youth. In recent years he frequently appeared before Israeli army officers and encountered attentiveness and appreciation.

Itzhak Shor in "Al Hamishmar",  
March 2, 1972.

### To Eshkol : "Unleash military reaction ! "

Before the six-day war Sneh urged Eshkol (then Israeli Prime Minister - IB) to unleash a military reaction "even for only one day", in order to demonstrate Israel's strength before her neighbours. He asked, speaking in Polish to Hartman, to report to the Prime Minister that "no intervention from the side of the Soviet Union is to be feared: The mustachoeed one (Stalin) and the frost must not be feared now; the troika will not wish to get involved". I was with him on a tour with editors of the press on the first Sunday after the six-day war. On the liberated Mount Scopus, a hoarse and tired Uzi Narkis (Israeli army officer, in command of the attacking forces; later military governor, Jerusalem area - IB) welcomed us and explained the war situation. Sneh pressed excitedly his hand: "Uzi, I congratulate you ! " Since then he supported the line according to which not one single metre of land must be returned without a peace contract which would ensure safe and recognized frontiers and decent neighbourly relations.

H. Kna'an in  
the bourgeois daily Ha'aretz",  
March 2, 1972

[ 36 ]

"Let my people go ! "

When Levi Eshkol replaced David Ben Gurion as Israeli Prime Minister, Sneh met him in Tel Aviv in the home of Meir Hartman, his Zionist friend from Warsaw days, and made suggestions as to how the new government could act for enabling Jews to leave the Soviet Union.

M.K. - Ha'aretz", March 5, 1972.

The regret

When I asked if he regretted his book on Questions of the Jewish National Problem, he replied: "If in the Jewish question I dare to reject the doctrine of Marx, Kautsky, Lenin and Bauer, do you believe that I will waver from self-criticizing any erroneous hypotheses in my little book?"

H.K. - "Ha'aretz", March 5, 1972.

The Zionist leaders' party

After the division of the Communist Party of Israel, Moshe Sneh's return started. When, three years ago, he celebrated his sixtieth birthday, his former friends, together with whom he had been active in the Zionist movement, arranged a cordial party, in the course of which government ministers, bosses of parties and Zionist leaders extended their hand to the person who was liable to become a personality of the first rank in the leadership of the State of Israel.

H.K. - "Ha'aretz", March 2, 1972.

Unbroken connections

The personal relations between us were not totally torn and did not become embittered even in the years when he was in the camp which opposed the Zionist front (and perhaps I did not wish to believe that he was really there), so that there could arise no difficulty in the renewal of mutual relations when the time would come.

... I appreciated any length of path which he walked from time to time towards his spiritual home, and I knew that in his heart he had already joined the torn ties.

During a friendly talk at a certain public debate, I asked him: "You speak about permanent frontiers somewhere between the 1949 lines (established under the auspices of UNO by agreement between the neighbouring Arab countries and Israel after the 1948-49 war - IB) and the 1967 lines (cease-fire lines after the aggressive June 1967 war - IB). but where ought this line really to be established ? "

Moshe Sneh raised a pair of laughing eyes and replied: "As near as possible to the cease-fire lines ...". His reply did not surprise me.

Eliezer Livne - Ha'aretz", March 8, 1972.

The splitter who was elected by anti-communist votes

After Itzhak Grunbaum had left Poland, Kleinbaum (previous name of Sneh - IB) became the virtual leader of the Zionist movement in Poland and he was named "Klein-Grunbaum"... From then on until the outbreak of the world war, Kleinbaum was the leader of the Zionist Central Committee in Poland...

Dr. Kleinbaum joined Mapam-Ahdut Avoda and later the communists. But this was not his natural party...

Even before the six-day war Moshe Sneh, the leader of the Communist party (reference is to the Mikunis-Sneh group - IB), appeared to us as a nationalist Jew and not as a yes-man who dances according to the pipe of the Soviet Union. He also led to the division within the Communist Party of Israel and compelled Meir Vilner with his comrades to leave the Party. Before the last elections we, a group of his friends, who were as far from communism as heaven from earth, promised him to assist him discreetly. Thanks to this he really gained one mandate in the Knesset (Israeli parliament - IB). Several thousands of Zionist Polish Jews had voted for him...



Dr. Kleinbaum-Sneh brought the communist party of Israel (Mikunis-Sneh group - IB) to a situation, when it really is a Jewish-nationalist-communist party...

His father had been a hassid (adherent of a Jewish sect - IB) of the rabbi of Worek. Kleinbaum-Sneh himself was a hassid of the rabbi of Gur...

With the death of Dr. Moshe Sneh the last Mohican from among the zionist leaders of Polish Jewry has passed away.

Moshe Ron, in the daily "Letzte Naies",  
March 10, 1972.

Herzl Rosenblum - among those who assisted him to be elected

In 1965, after prolonged internal struggles, Sneh brought about the split in the Party (the Communist Party of Israel - IB)...

Since the split M. Sneh executed a turn-about: He appeared in an ever increasing nationalist, ever increasing anti-Soviet stance...

"On the eve of the last elections", the correspondent of "Naie Presse" quotes the journalist M. Ron, "we, a group of friends, among whom there were the editor Herzl Rosenblum (venomous anti-communist editor of the evening paper "Yediot Ahronot" -IB), Dr. David Lazar, the late Shlomo Grodzenski and other zionists, colleagues and friends of Dr. Sneh's still from his days in Poland..." promised to help him secretly in the elections to the Knesset. And thanks to this he really got a mandate...

"Naie Presse", Paris, March 15, 1972.

### Revisionism

In recent years M. Sneh started to develop theories of his own, demanding sharp revisions in Marxism-Leninism, which aroused strong opposition not only in left circles in Israel, but also in other

countries. He began to attack with ever growing sharpness the Soviet Union, appearing against the position of the Soviet Government in the matter of the Israeli-Arab conflict. In his last theses he virtually pushed Maki (the Mikunis-Sneh group - IB) into adopting the annexationist policy which conforms to the policy of the Prime Minister G. Meir, the War Minister, Moshe Dayan and others who do not want to return the territories occupied in the 1967 war.

Y. Lipsky (the editor-in-chief of the Mikunis-Sneh group Yiddish-language paper "Fraï Yisroel") writing in the Canadian "Wochenblatt", March 15, 1972.

### Anti-Sovietism

In the last years it seems that he was undertaking a new self-examination. Though he did not return to the bosom of zionism and did not join any zionist party, many of his speeches and reflections views were zionist in content, and he measured himself against and struggled against that power, in which he had believed with closed eyes a few years before.

Yigal Allon, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister  
speaking on the Israeli Radio, March 1, 1972.

### On his way back

What he did in his last years was nothing less and nothing more than virtually turning back to zionism, while keeping aloof from it in terms; and this was stronger and deeper and perhaps even moving: a return to the sources of Judaism, either in the form which we heard from his own mouth in the (radio) programme "House of my father", when he spoke not only personally nostalgically but also with fullest respect for the religious Jewish way of life - or on his last way, in his great Jewish testament, which is certainly free from any stain of tactical considerations or any wish to flatter and soften hearts, for I am referring to a testament.

Dr. Israel Aldad (notorious fascist),  
"Yediot Ahronot", March 10, 1972.

### Better zionist than many a declared zionist

Moshe Sneh was not the only Jew who has returned to himself and to his nation after years of denying the Jewish nation (see his book which was his entry ticket when he joined the Communist Party of Israel), in the name of the triumph and of the needs of revolution. But unique is the gladness which overcame the House of Israel when this man returned - a gladness which in itself is perhaps a chapter in history. Not that this people - a people of Jewish robbers - (this is an ironic allusion to the alleged softheartedness of Jews - IB) has forgiven him for his years of denial. But more than that: it remembered his glorious past which had preceded his denial. A great prodigal son has returned.

... Sneh's return to himself was primarily a de facto return, and less a de jure return. To the explicit name of zionism he still did not come back, though in respect of content and significance his words and his deeds were much more zionist than those of many a declared zionist.

Israel Gur, "Yediot Ahronot"  
March 10, 1972.

### A good and true zionist

He was a good zionist. A true zionist. I wondered at his approaching communism, but even at that time he was a Jew in his innermost heart. Perhaps that conception of his was more political than essential. It is good that in the last years there began within him a return to the Return-to-Zion (movement).

... At a certain time of his life he thought that he had to fight for the causes of the world, but latterly he returned to the Return-to-Zion. It is a pity that he did not live to see the day of completion of his return.

Dr. Wahrhaftig, Israeli Minister for Religious Affairs  
writing in the "Hatzofe", organ of the Religious-  
National Party, March 2, 1972.

### More zionist than zionists

Until his last days, M. Sneh conceived the idea of a new democratic world-wide Jewish rally and organization, for he thought that the support to Israel and the links with her on part of the Jews in all parts of the world is much wider and surpasses the existing frames of the zionist movement and of the World Jewish Congress.

Tuvia Mendelson, in "Davar", Israeli semi-  
official daily, March 2, 1972.

### The eulogies were meant for his failures

It is hard to know if Sneh comprehended, in the last years of his life, his own situation.

Again he had become the favourite of the press, the pampered child of radio and television. Members of the Establishment went out of their way in order to assist him and raise his position.

But there was something humiliating in this situation.

For the man whom the kings of the Establishment wished to honour, was not a man who had succeeded, but one who had failed. And because of his failure he became their favourite.

That Sneh who repented of his "misdeeds", that Sneh, who curses communism, that Sneh who sacrifices on the altar of zionism, that Sneh who denies everything he had said throughout the 15 most important years of his life - that was the person whom they liked.

The Jew within him, and also the zionist within him were profounder than the communist within him. Perhaps he really had never been a communist at all.

Uri Avneri in "Ha'olam Haze", popular  
Israeli weekly, edited by him, March  
8, 1972.