

February 1, 1972

TO: All Clubs  
FROM: Office Manager, National Office

Comrades:

Due to mistakes in our office, the editorial from the Morning Freiheit on the protest demonstration at the Israeli U.N. mission was sent to you without being accompanied by the reply from the National Jewish Commission entitled: "Apologists for the Meir Regime's Policies".

Also, the underlining in the Freiheit editorial was not part of the original and was included by error.

Comradely yours,

David Buxenbaum

DB/bb

TO: ALL CLUBS  
FROM: NATIONAL JEWISH COMMISSION

APOLOGISTS FOR THE MEIR REGIME'S POLICIES

On November 23 some hundreds of New Yorkers demonstrated before the Israeli UN Mission. Organized by the Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East, the demonstration called for a peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict on the basis of full acceptance by both sides of the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967. It called in particular for commitment by the Israeli government to withdraw from the occupied territories as an indispensable condition for a settlement. In addition, it protested the criminal activities of the fascist Jewish Defense League.

A counter-demonstration was staged by the JDL and after the demonstration the JDL thugs succeeded in attacking and beating up a number of individual demonstrators in true gangster fashion.

The demonstration was widely greeted as a courageous initiative in calling to public attention the fact that it is the Israeli ruling circles which are obstructing a peaceful settlement through their persistent refusal to accept withdrawal. But what was the reaction of the Morning Freiheit to this initiative? Not only did it flatly refuse to support the demonstration in any way, but it afterwards published an editorial condemning it.

On what grounds was the action condemned? First, on the grounds that the demonstration was directed against the Jewish Defense League which is strictly an American phenomenon; hence there was no reason to demonstrate before the Israeli UN Mission.

To begin with, the main target of the demonstration was not the JDL but the question of Middle East peace and the responsibility of the Israeli government for ensuring it. But this question could not be raised without coming to grips with the JDL as the most deadly enemy of peace. Moreover, the idea that the JDL has nothing to do with Israel is totally wrong.

The JDL has its roots in and direct ties with similar ultra-Right, fascist groupings in Israel. Kahane himself commutes between the United States and Israel, where he is also engaged in organizing the JDL with at least the tacit approval of the Israeli authorities. Uzi Burstein writes in Zo Haderekh, organ of the Communist Party of Israel:

"The new world"--the rabbi Meir Kahane--has come to Israel, where during the last year a number of evident fascist organizations have sprung up, like mushrooms after rain. The arrival of the rabbi Kahane from the USA had been prepared by the establishment of organizations of the so-called "Jewish Defense League" in Israel and also by the establishment of additional fascist organizations, such as DB (Dikui-Bogdim, Hebrew for "suppression of traitors"). These organizations are mainly composed of members of Betar (youth organization of the extreme Right Herut Party) and of Herut. Their heroes are Menahem Begin and Ezer Weizman.

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"These organizations have set themselves the aim of creating a regime of terror and fear in Israel; to attack public meetings, demonstrations, clubs of any party or organization which opposes occupation and struggles for peace. The members of the fascist organizations are busy training in judo, karate and methods of violence, wrapping their activities in a veil of mysticism of underground work, though the authorities and police do not impede their activities; on the contrary, they draw encouragement from the permissive attitude of police and the judicial bodies in this country, as happened at the trial against members of Betar who had attacked the offices of the Communist Party of Israel, and as happens whenever they attack meetings and demonstrations of fighters for peace. (October 20, 1971.)

In the face of all this, should we not protest to the Israeli government against its toleration and encouragement, hand in hand with the U.S. ruling circles, of the fascist gangsterism and warmongering of the Kahanes and their followers? Should we not raise our voices against the menace to peace in the Middle East and to world peace created by the growth of these fascist elements? The Morning Freiheit, it is clear, thinks we should remain silent.

The editorial also argues that the JDL is isolated and that to picket the Israeli

Mission is gratuitously to give it allies. But is the JDL really isolated? Are the leading Jewish organizations and spokesmen seriously conducting a struggle to put this gang out of business and to have these hoodlums brought to book for their crimes? On the contrary, despite verbal condemnations, many of the "respectable" Zionist forces are quietly tolerating and even supporting the JDL. In fact, Kahane was permitted to address the recently-held convention of the Zionist Organization of America. And even after the latest and worst outrage--the murder committed in the bombing of the Hurok offices in New York--this situation remains basically unchanged.

But more important, this is in reality an argument against picketing the Israeli Mission for any reason whatever, on the grounds that it will antagonize people and isolate the picketers. And this is precisely what the editorial does maintain.

Thus, it objects to the demonstration on the grounds that it raised the question of Israeli aggression, thereby closing the door to mobilizing broad masses of the Jewish people for peace based on the UN resolution. We should organize, says the editorial, not a few hundred but truly large masses. And for what purpose? To "struggle against chauvinism and annexation and for the existence of Israel." Here the editorial begins to expose the real reasons for its opposition.

The demonstration posed not vague generalities about annexation but a very specific demand: that the Israeli government commit itself to withdrawal from the occupied territories--all of them. To this demand the Meir regime is vehemently opposed--and so is the Morning Freiheit. Instead, they speak of "withdrawal to secure and recognized borders." This is what the Morning Freiheit means when it speaks of "supporting the UN resolution." But what this really means is no advance commitment to withdrawal, and hence no genuine acceptance of the resolution, which places such a commitment as a necessary preliminary to the negotiation of secure and recognized borders.

In short, the Morning Freiheit objects to the demonstration because it objects to its purpose, because it does not hold the Israeli rulers responsible for the present impasse and seeks instead to place the blame on the Arab states. Hence the chauvinist query in the editorial: Why demonstrate only at the Israeli Mission? Why not also at the missions of Iraq, Sudan and Syria--states where Jews and Communists are persecuted?

But this is entirely beside the point. When President Nimeiry executed Sudanese Communists there were protests and demonstrations against these acts. Here, however, we are concerned with protesting the aggressive, annexationist policies of the Israeli government, for which none of these other countries bears the slightest responsibility. The editorial, on the contrary, advises: Leave Israel alone. Go picket the Arabs. They are the criminals. This is the voice of rank apologists for Israeli aggression. It is the voice of anti-Arab chauvinism.

Finally, the editorial speaks of "not repeating the mistakes of 1929." In that year, it may be recalled, there took place a series of armed attacks by Arabs on Jewish settlements in Palestine, in which a considerable number of Jews were killed or injured. The Communist Party took the position that, regrettable as these attacks were, the real source of the problem was the Zionist policy of buying up lands for Jewish settlements and evicting the Arab peasants from these lands--of seeking to build a Jewish state at the expense of the Arabs in Palestine.

In this position the Party was almost alone, and Jewish Communists and progressives who fought for it were subjected to severe ostracism and attack within the Jewish community. But the Party never repudiated its basic position, although it was recognized that tactical errors of sectarianism and rigidity in dealing with the situation were committed and should be avoided in the future.

The Morning Freiheit, however, wants to draw lessons of a quite different character, namely, that we should not publicly take positions which the masses of the people overwhelmingly reject at the given moment. Thus, it is argued, we should not brand the Israeli ruling circles as aggressors, since no one will buy this and we will only end by isolating ourselves and forfeiting all opportunity of influencing others. In other words, our stand on questions of principle should be determined by tactical considerations. But this is the very essence of opportunism, of capitulation to the

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enemy. It leads not to combatting the poisonous influences of reactionary Jewish nationalism and Zionism among the Jewish masses, but to oneself succumbing more and more to these influences.

This is precisely what has happened in the case of the Morning Freiheit. The extent to which this process has gone is demonstrated by this editorial, which disgracefully attacks the very forces that do conduct a struggle.

There is, we believe, an important lesson to be learned from recent events: that if the existence of the Morning Freiheit is to be preserved it will have to abandon its present policies on these and related questions. In Israel the renegade Mikunis-Sneh group hoped to buy "respectability" among the Jewish masses by going in the direction of Jewish nationalism; today it is disintegrating as an organized body and its mass influence has become negligible. On the other hand the Communist Party of Israel, led by Vilner and Toubi, which heroically stood up virtually alone against the 1967 war, is steadily overcoming its isolation and growing in influence and numbers.

The road from demonstrations of a few hundred to actions by tens and hundreds of thousands lies in the course taken by the demonstrators, not in the opportunist capitulation and apologetics advocated by the editorial.

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