

**NOTE OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
OF THE USSR G.M. MALENKOV TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (B),
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR J.V.
STALIN. September 18, 1948**

Comrade Stalin.

Before you left, you instructed to prepare an article about Israel. The case was somewhat delayed due to the absence of Ehrenburg in Moscow. The other day Ehrenburg arrived. Kaganovich, Pospelov and Ilyichev had a conversation with him. Ehrenburg agreed to write the article and objected to the article getting a few signatures.

I am sending you an article by I. Ehrenburg "About One Letter." If there are no other indications on your part, we would like to publish this article on Tuesday, 21.IX, in the newspaper Pravda.

G. Malenkov

ABOUT ONE LETTER

I received a mail from Munich from Alexander R. He writes:

"You may be surprised by my appeal, but I have read several of your books and I am addressing you as a writer, help me to understand the difficult question for me. I am a German Jew, of course, an anti-fascist, a medical student. In 1938 I managed to get to France; when the Nazis broke in, I went into hiding, then I was in the "Maki" for two years - I fought in the guerrilla group "Gabriel Peri". I returned to Munich after the win. I confess to you, I was naive - I thought that fascism was destroyed. Now I have to experience daily insults. When Hitler was in power, I believed it was a temporary eclipse, and I considered anti-Semitism a sign of the "brown plague." But why do I have to read disgusting inscriptions on the walls now? Why should I listen to students shout to me, "Get into Palestine"? Why didn't my friend be accepted into the profession and openly say, "Jews don't belong here"? You can't imagine how intolerable these insults are. I yearn for the simplest, the right to exist without the shameful stigma. The Nazis put a yellow patch on their chests, now everything is thinner, but the same. Under the protection of Americans, the same Nazis sit in all responsible places. You probably know about it, and I'm not writing to complain or inform. I want to know how the Soviet Union treats the state of Israel? Is it possible to see it as a solution to the so-called Jewish question? For me, it's not abstract reflections, it's a matter of my life. I read in your novel "The Tempest" terrible descriptions of the murder of Jews in Auschwitz and elsewhere. My whole family died of the Nazis. How can we ensure that these horrors do not happen again? Yesterday I heard a colleague of mine say loudly, "We need to finish off the Jews." I've never been a Zionist, but I'm starting to believe in the idea of a Jewish state. I expect you to answer- You are the writer of the country that I believe with all my heart...

I think that the question posed by a correspondent I don't know is not only of his interest, not only to Jews, but to all people of reason and conscience. So I decided to answer not with a private letter, but with a newspaper article.

Alexander R. asks how the Soviet Union treats the state of Israel. This question can be answered briefly: the Soviet government was the first to recognize the new state, vigorously protest against the aggressors, and when the Israeli army defended its land from the Arab legions commanded by The British officers, all the sympathies of the Soviet people were on the side of the offended, not on the side of the offenders. It is as natural as the fact that the Soviet people sympathize with the patriots of Vietnam, not the French pacifist, the patriots of Indonesia, and not the Dutch punishers.

However, it is possible to answer the first question of Alexander R. more extensively. Representatives of the Soviet Union in the United Nations said that our people understand the feelings of the Jews who survived the greatest tragedy and finally got the right to exist on their land. Wishing success to the workers of Israel, the Soviet people do not turn a blind eye to the tests that await all honest people of the young state. In addition to the invasion of the Anglo-Arab hordes, Israel knows a different invasion, less loud, but no less dangerous—the Anglo-American capital. For the imperialists, Palestine is, first of all, oil. The competition of predators - Standard Oil, on the one hand, “Anglo-Iranian oil company” and “Shell”, on the other - interferes in the life of the fragile state. The interests of the Potash Palestine Company, the Kirkuk-Haifa oil pipeline issue, the American concession projects and military bases are what threaten Israel in the wake of King Abdullah’s thugs. The head of the State of Israel is not the representatives of workers. We have all seen how the bourgeoisie of European countries with their great traditions, with their old statehood betrayed national interests in the name of the dollar. Can the Soviet people expect that the bourgeoisie of Israel will be more conscientious and visionary than the bourgeois of France or Italy? unlikely. We trust the people, but if in Israel the people fight and fight bravely, it does not mean that the people there govern.

There are many workers, urban and rural in the State of Israel. They bear the brunt of the country’s defense. At the same time they have to fight against the greed of their bourgeoisie, for which war, as well as for any bourgeoisie, is, first of all, profit. No wonder the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Israel Mikunis recently said: “We have no property tax, no tax on profits, we have industrialists unabashedly raised their young ladies.”

I believe that the advanced people of Israel, its workers will find the right way in extremely difficult conditions. I am convinced that socialism will win all over the world, and it will win in Palestine. But if I believe in the future of Israel, then the second question of my correspondent, who asks whether the creation of this state is a solution to the so-called Jewish question, I must answer negatively.

I have always thought and continue to think that the “Jewish question” can be resolved everywhere only by a general social and therefore spiritual process. It can be allowed not by utopians, and not by diplomats, but by workers of all countries. I admired the courage of the Israeli fighters when they repelled the attacks of British mercenaries, but I knew that the resolution of the “Jewish question” depended not on military successes in Palestine, but on the victory of socialism over capitalism, on the victory of the high international principles inherent in the working class over nationalism, fascism and racism.

The obscurantists have long invented fictions, wanting to present the Jews with some special beings, unlike the people around them. The obscurantists said that Jews live separate, separate lives, not sharing the joys and sorrows of the peoples among whom they live; obscurantists assured that Jews were people deprived of their sense of homeland, eternal tumbleweeds; obscurantists swore that the Jews of different countries are united by some mysterious connections. All these inventions found their extreme expression in Hitler’s vile book *Mein Kampf* and were repeated by the SS, who buried the old Jews alive in the ground and threw them into the pits and in the furnace of the infants.

Yes, the Jews lived separately, separately, when they were forced to do so: the ghetto was the invention not of Jewish mystics, but of Catholic surasures. In those days, when people’s eyes were covered with religious fog, there were fanatics among Jews, as they were among Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Muslims. And as soon as the gates of the ghetto opened, as soon as the fog of the medieval night trembled, the Jews of different countries entered the common life of the peoples.

Yes, many Jews left their homeland, emigrated to America. But not because they emigrated, that they did not love their land, but because violence and insults deprived them of this beloved land. Some Jews sometimes sought salvation in other countries? Didn’t the Italians, Irish, Slavs of the countries under the oppression of Turks and

Germans, Armenians, Russian sectarians do so? Jewish workers, like all others, are firmly attached to the land on which they were born and raised.

Jews live in different countries, many live on the land where their ancestors came from time immemorial; the first Jewish monuments in Tunisia, Georgia and Italy belong to ancient times. The obscurantists say that there is some mystical connection between all the Jews of the world. However, there is little in common between a Jewish Tunisian and a Jew living in Chicago who speaks American and thinks American. If there really is a connection between them, it is by no means mystical: this connection is generated by anti-Semitism. If tomorrow there was some kind of mentible, who would declare that all red-haired people or all snub-nosed are subject to persecution and should be destroyed, we would see the natural solidarity of all redheads or all snub-nosed. Unheard of atrocities of the German fascists, proclaimed by them and in many countries carried out the total extermination of the Jewish population, racial propaganda, insults first, the furnaces of Maidanka then - all this gave birth to a feeling of deep connection among the Jews of different countries. It is the solidarity of the offended and the indignant.

During the war, the beautiful Polish poet Julian Tuwim wrote an article entitled "We Polish Jews." He wrote about his patriotism: "I am Polish, because I was told in Polish in the house, a Pole, because I was fed Polish from infancy, because my mother taught me Polish poems and songs, because when I was shocked by the first tremor of poetry, it erupted in Polish words. Pole, because I confessed in Polish in the anxieties of first love and in Polish babble about her happiness. The Pole is also because birch and willow are nicer to me than palm trees and cypresses, and Miscavige and Chopin are more expensive than Shakespeare and Beethoven, for reasons that I cannot explain by any reason. Pole, because he was born and raised in Poland, because in Poland I was happy and unhappy, because from my exile I want to return to Poland, at least somewhere else I would be granted heavenly bliss. Pole, because I want to be swallowed up by the Polish land after my death, not the other one." Julian Tuwim goes on to explain that he was connected to the Jews: "Blood is of a two kind: the one in the veins, and the one that flows from the living. The study is the first to refer to the field of physiology. The one who attributes blood, besides physiological, some other properties, some mysterious force, the one as we see it now, sizzes cities, cuts people and, finally, as we will soon see, leads to the death of its own people. The other blood is the one that the leader of international fascism sharpens from the veins of humanity to prove the triumph of his blood over my blood, it is the blood of innocently ruined millions, the blood of the Jews, not the "Jewish blood." Why do I say "we are Jews"? Because of the blood."

Of course, there are nationalists and mystics among Jews. They created a programme of zionism, but they did not populate Palestine with Jews. The Jews inhabited Palestine by those ideologies of hate, those adherents of racism, those anti-Semites who drove people from their homes and forced them to seek - not happiness, but rights to human dignity - for the thirty lands. We all remember the epic ship Exodus, which brought refugees from West Germany to Palestine, people who accidentally escaped the furnaces of Auschwitz and came under fire by British soldiers. The State of Israel resembles this ship, the ark, the raft on which people are held, caught by the bloody flood of racism and fascism.

Why is my correspondent Alexander R. ready to see salvation in Israel? Because the people who have deprived him of his homeland continue to host Bavaria, because German racists have found solid patrons - racists from New Jersey and Alabama; because for a Bavarian Jew, Hitlerism is not only a terrible memory, it is something alive, protected, cultivated. Perhaps, under such conditions, Alexander R. has no choice but to bypass the slingshots placed by various "observers" and get into Israel. But if it is a resolution of alexander R.'s personal drama, it cannot be a solution to the drama of Jews living in different countries, where money, lies and prejudices rule.

Eli Mignot, a member of the French parliament, replies to the Israel Gazette: "Only reactionary Zionist circles can it occur that the state of Israel will become an attractive

force for Jews all over the world. French Jews are French citizens, they merged with the French nation, fought together and worked together. For them, as for all The French, the future is to defeat the remnants of fascism, to treason, injustice and exploitation.”

The largest number of Jews live in the United States. When I was in America, I saw zaatlantic racists insulting the dignity of Jews, Blacks, Chinese, Italians. Everyone understands that American Jews are at risk of growing racism in the United States, and everyone understands that the salvation of American Jews is not in the state of Israel, which could not accommodate even a small part of them, but in the victory of progressive America over America racists.

The Zionists say that the tragedy experienced by European Jews in recent years is due to the fact that Jews lived scattered among other nationalities. Let's remember - in the autumn of 1942, the hordes of Hitler broke into Egypt, they were not far from Palestine. Even if there were an independent Jewish state then, it would not be able to contain the onslaught of Rommel's armored divisions. What saved the Jews of Palestine? Stalingrad, the victory of the Soviet people over the Nazis, because instead of going to Jerusalem Hitler had to deal with defensive structures.

The Soviet people in a fateful duel defeated the enemy of all nations—bloody German fascism. Thus the Soviet people saved the freedom of Europe, saved the lives of millions of Jews. I was in Wroclaw recently. There, the Jews invited the participants of the World Congress of Cultural Figures. Polish scholars, Negro writers, Brazilians and Czechs came. One pioneer girl addressed the Soviet delegate with the following words: “Tell the Soviet people that we, the Jewish children of Wroclaw, carry flowers to your countrymen who sleep in a mass grave. Tell the Soviet people that we know who saved us from death.”

Yes, there is only one solution to the “Jewish question” - the victory of the advanced forces of mankind. If we allow for a moment a terrible picture and imagine the triumph of the world reaction, it is safe to say that the state of Israel will turn into a new Auschwitz or Maidanek.

In various countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe before the war reigned fascism. Jews there were persecuted—it is enough to recall the “Iron Guard” or the pogroms in the former Poland. The Nazis came. They encouraged looters from the scum of the population, they organized a mass murder of Jews. But under the pressure of the peoples, with the help of the Soviet army fell fascist rulers, ran across the ocean gentlemen, dreaming of the revival of pre-war orders, all these semi-liberals, half-volunteers. The authorities took over the workers. And so I saw with what zeal, with what patriotism Jews in different countries of popular democracy rebuild destroyed cities, work, study, write books, plant trees. In Poland, where before the war pilsudchi were mocked by Jews, there seems to be no city now where there would be no “Street of Ghetto Heroes”, because the heroic struggle of Warsaw Jews against the occupiers became the pride of the entire Polish people. When the fascist scum tried a few years ago to arrange a pogrom in Kielts, the people's power punished them as enemies of Poland. The Bulgarian people managed to defend themselves against mass sending Bulgarian Jews to the “death camps”; After September 9, the people's courts condemned the Bulgarian fascists, who smeared their hands in Jewish blood. Now Bulgarian Jews, many of them former guerrillas, together with the entire Bulgarian people are building their new democratic state. Their future is not overseas, but in the forests of Sofia, in Plovdiv or in Rusa.

In Tsarist Russia, the government caste, wanting to protect itself from the wrath of the people, portrayed Jews as the culprits of poverty, discord, disorder. Black-residents staged bloody pogroms. The dignitaries came up with more and more restrictions. But even then the Russian people were not involved in these atrocities. Maxim Gorky in the article “On anti-Semitism” correctly noted that the terrible contagion of anti-Semitism did not hit ordinary Russian people. The best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia loudly opposed anti-Semitism: remember “I can't keep quiet” Leo Tolstoy, the sarcasm of Saltykov-Shedrin, Pirogov's noble speech and Korolenko's heartfelt words. Maksim Gorky fought passionately and unapologetically against anti-

Semitism, calling it a “disgusting abomination”. The first bill to ensure the equality of Jews was introduced to the State Duma by representatives of the working class of Russia.

The Tsarist government artificially separated Jewish workers from their Russian comrades; but labor, struggle, blood of stiles and demonstrators were stronger than all prohibitions, all prejudices. Advanced Jewish intellectuals lived a common life with all over Russia, participated in the revolutionary movement, contributed to the cultural development of the country. The homeland for them was also at that bitter time homeland: they loved their native cities and towns, green Belarus, the spills of Dnipro, all our great and beautiful country.

The founder of our state V.I Lenin repeatedly in angry articles and speeches smeared anti-Semitism, calling it a disgrace. The October Revolution brought freedom and equality to all citizens of the Soviet country, among them Jews. Some of them consider their native language Russian, others Ukrainian, third Jewish, but all of them consider the Soviet country their homeland and they are all proud that they are citizens of the country where there is no more human exploitation of man. In 1931, when a terrible cloud was found on Europe - two years before Hitler’s seizure of power, Stalin, anticipating the atrocities of cannibals, said:

“National and racial chauvinism is a relic of hateful mores inherent in the period of cannibalism. Anti-Semitism, as an extreme form of racial chauvinism, is the most dangerous relic of cannibalism.” When cannibalism tried to devour Europe, the Soviet people, led by Stalin, crushed cannibals. Soviet Jews, together with people of all other nationalities, selflessly defended the high ideas of our society, defended their native land. Girls, teenagers, old people left the ghetto of Vilna and Minsk in guerrilla groups. Even more expensive became for every Soviet Jew native land: he remembers the death of the innocent victims of fascism, he remembers the hard battles, the fallen heroes; he is associated with every Soviet man of combat friendship, he is associated with every inch of the Soviet land expensive graves.

Let my correspondent Alexander R. think about the events of the last decade, and he will understand that the “Jewish question” can be solved by one thing: the destruction of the “Jewish question”.

We are sympathetic to the struggles of Israel’s workers; on their side of sympathy not only Soviet Jews, but all Soviet people - we have no supporters of Glabb Pasha. However, every Soviet citizen understands that it is not only the national character of the state, but also its social structure. The citizen of the socialist society looks at the people of any bourgeois country, including the people of the State of Israel, as travelers who have not yet emerged from the dark forest. A citizen of a socialist state will never be able to seduce the fate of people who editse the yoke of capitalist exploitation.

The fate of jewish workers of all countries is connected not with the fate of the state of Israel, but with the fate of progress, with the fate of socialism. Soviet Jews now, along with all the Soviet people, are rebuilding their socialist homeland. They’re not looking at the Middle East, they’re looking to the future. And I think that the working states of Israel, far from the mysticism of the Zionists, seeking justice, are now looking north to the Soviet Union, which is ahead of humanity for a better future.

Ilya Ehrenburg On the paper note: “Comrade Stalin agrees.”