

and continuing the campaign against socialism, utilizing the new avenues opened by glasnost. The renewed Zionist activities have manifest themselves in various forms and permeated different facets of life in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. For example, there has been a marked increase in media reports favorable to Israel. Even more alarming was the mid-February assassination of Yevgini Yevsiyev, chairman of the Soviet Committee against the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations with Israel.

### Soviet Jewish Immigration

The most crucial of the repercussions of the changes in Eastern Europe on the Middle East, is the mass immigration of Soviet Jews to occupied Palestine. A basic component of the Zionist project has been luring Jews from around the world to immigrate in order to colonize Palestine. Large numbers of immigrants bolster the Zionist state and open new horizons for its expansion, whereas emigration threatens the state's very existence.

In this context, the massive new immigration of Soviet Jews will undoubtedly alter the balance of forces in favor of Israel and make the prospects for peace less tenable, especially when these new immigrants are settled in the 1967 occupied territories. Despite Israeli government attempts to downplay the possibility that the new immigrants will be settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Knesset in March allocated \$100 million for expanding settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem, where 200,000 settlers are already living.

The problem does not lie in the Soviet policy of easing emigration, which is part of the overall restructuring and openness trend. In the past, the vast majority of Jews who decided to leave the Soviet Union chose to go to the US. The new mass immigration to Israel is the result of a carefully designed plan agreed upon by the Zionist movement and the US. While the US administration agreed to drastically cut back the granting of visas to Soviet Jews, Israel continues to demand that the Soviet Union not issue them passports; rather they emigrate with a document that includes an exit visa and travel visa to Israel only, for-

cing them to go there. This coercion is reminiscent of the thirties when Jews fleeing from Nazi terror were refused entry to the US upon the request of Zionist leaders, in an effort to route them to Palestine.

It is ironic that the US administration, which poses as the champion of human rights and always presses the Soviet Union to allow Jews to emigrate, now, when this permission is granted, slams the door in the face of the emigrants.

Still, Zionist officials are not satisfied. The Jewish Agency has submitted an official request for direct flights from the Soviet Union to Israel to avoid the stop over in transit countries (Austria, Hungary and Rumania) in order to prevent any of the emigrants from «escaping.»

The changes in Eastern Europe are an uneven process, the outcome of which is not yet totally clear. While some of the changes in these countries are not in the long-term interests of the people, in the Soviet Union there is still hope of salvaging socialism and

restoring its viability in the eyes of the people. The mistakes committed in the process of building socialism have turned off the peoples of Eastern Europe to socialism as such, whereas the process of restructuring and openness in the Soviet Union was begun as a positive initiative to renew socialism.

However, Gorbachev's recipe for realizing this end has served to relegate the revolutionary forces in the developing world to a lower priority. The results are very clear, for example, in relation to Cuba: Where there was once an outlet and firm source of support for Cuba in the face of the US attempt to choke it economically, this is less true today. In the Middle East, the shift in the Soviet role, and the new relations between Eastern Europe and Israel, will tip the balance of forces further against the Palestinian struggle and strengthen the Israeli position. Bearing in mind Zionism's historically reactionary international role, this is not in the best interest of the Soviet Union or any other socialist country. ●

*Bush and Shevardnadze: Did they agree on the Middle East?*

