

ISRAEL — AN ANTI-COMMUNIST BULWARK? IS THIS THE ROAD TO SECURITY?

By Walter Zander

In the search for political reorientation it has now been suggested that Israel should proclaim herself as an “anti-communist bulwark.” The suggestion comes from America, It is sponsored by the “Save the Middle East from Communism” Committee and is apparently supported by some influential Zionists. Its purpose is to identify Israel with the American opposition to Russia and Communism, and to secure sympathy and support by this currently popular line.

The anti-colonial movement : This view, however, misses one factor of fundamental importance. The world does not consist of two camps only. Besides the West and the Soviet Union there has developed among Asian and African peoples over more than fifty years an independent revolutionary movement seeking freedom from Western rule. Its origins are older than the Russian revolution.

Arab nationalism can be traced to the eighties, if not to the middle of the last century, and the Indian movement for independence at least to the beginning of this century. Since then the movement has spread over vast parts of both continents. Large territories have secured national independence. Almost everywhere in Asia and Africa the West is in retreat and the process of transformation is still in progress. The anti-colonial movement has proved to be one of the strongest forces of our time.

The rise of the Asian and African peoples is a historic event of the first magnitude, comparable with the expansion of the West which began 450 years ago.

Even if all results of the Russian revolution were now to be undone, it would not be possible to restore Western domination over Africa and Asia.

For at present the national issue is the most urgent concern for the peoples of the Middle East. Compared with this, Russian Communism appears to them remote and of secondary importance. Anti-Communism, therefore, has a different meaning for the West, where national aspirations have been fulfilled for generations, and for the East, where the emergence of national communities is still in progress and the wounds sustained in the process are still throbbing,

In the West, it means the preservation of an established way of life; in the East, it is suspected, first and foremost, as a device for the obstruction of freedom, or even for the restoration of Western privileges.

Growth of neutralism : In the early years after the Balfour Declaration the Jewish National Home depended largely on British Imperial power and, later, on support from the United States. Although these associations, seen in a longer historical perspective, are almost incidental - the Jewish people are linked to Palestine since the days of antiquity - Israel appears to the Asian and African nations as a protégé of the West.

“Israel as a bulwark against Communism” will mean to all of her neighbours and indeed many others: “Israel bent on the restoration of Western supremacy” which gave her protection in the past and may protect her again in the future, and this would bring upon her not only the present hostility arising from the Palestinian issue but the dislike of all those who, wherever they may be, fight for the end of the colonial and imperial system.

Whilst the Soviet Union encourages the national movements of the colonial peoples, they on their part have been reluctant to identify themselves with Russia. In fact, of the many newly established states - from Indonesia to Morocco - scarcely one has so far joined the Soviet camp, and the circle of neutralistic states is increasing. The struggle for the soul of the uncommitted nations is still in the balance. The West has been careful to avoid any step which may have irrevocable consequences, and Israel was certainly right not to rush in.

Broader foundations: *The road to Israel's security does not lead through the restoration of lost Western positions. Broader foundations have to be found. The recent shift towards the United Nations ought therefore to be welcomed as a first step in the right direction.*