

BOROCHOV

For Our Day

The Socialist-Zionist View of the Jewish People

by

**Dr. Raphael Mahler • David Flakser
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With an Introduction by

Avraham Schenker

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BER BOROCHOV

Baer Borochoff

INTRODUCTION

—AVRAHAM SCHENKER
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BER BOROCHOV was one of those infrequent personalities who all too briefly move across the pages of history and leave a lasting imprint, whose impact is often not discerned by the general public for many years. In the brief span of thirty-six years, he packed in many lives. But the thread which connected all of his activities was the recognition that the Jewish people could re-enter the mainstream of history only by integrating itself into the struggle of all mankind for a more just social order.

His thinking and his research, his observation and his activities, led him to the great synthesis of Socialism-Zionism. He rejected self-denial as a Jew who is intimately part of a world people. To achieve a socialist order and to dissolve the Jewish people in the process was an objective impossibility to him. Therefore, he opposed all those who negated the peoplehood of the Jews and sought the way to bring the Jewish *nation* into the struggle for a democratic and socialist world order. This way led him to the fundamental premise of the Zionist movement—the territorial concentration of the Jewish people in its own land. But unlike the mystics and the religious fatalists, the politicians and statesmen, he placed his emphasis on the common people—the Jewish worker or the Jewish worker-to-be. Neither God nor some Great Power was going to hand the Jewish people its destiny on a platter. The people itself, by self-awareness and self-recognition, was going to remake its structure and character and was going to stand the “inverted economic pyramid” of the Jews dispersed throughout the world on its feet instead of on its head. Together with the other oppressed and freedom-seeking peoples and nations of the world, the Jewish people-nation would then move on the high road towards a more just social order.

Did Borochov anticipate the developments of our own day—

the destruction of six million of the Jewish people by the fascist aberration of the capitalist world, the great alliance of the Soviet Union with the West against the Nazi-Fascist Axis, the rise of the State of Israel in the wake of World War II, the phenomenal spread of Socialism through the world, the gradual closing of the gates to Jewish immigration almost everywhere except Israel, the brutal degeneration of the Stalinist period in the Soviet Union and the conscious destruction of Jewish culture and peoplehood in the second largest Jewish center in the world? Borochof was one of those rare individuals whose thought anticipated their era. He always underlined the relationship between thought and action and best exemplified the link in his own life. Some of these developments he specifically foresaw. For others he laid the basis for analysis and understanding.

He died before the Soviet Union was established. He had no direct experience with a socialist system. His analysis of the Jewish reality in the capitalist world was sharp and revealing. Yet his genius led him to reject an automatic solution of the Jewish problem through the realization of socialism. His brilliant analysis of the isolating and the assimilatory factors in Jewish existence have proven meaningful for a socialist society as well as the capitalist world Borochof knew. For it is clear that the Jewish problem has not disappeared with the political victory of socialism, just as it has continued in varied and more subtle forms in the Western world and in its classical outline in the lands just arising from feudalism and colonialism.

No serious movement can last for long without a vision and a theory which lights its path in history and guides its way in times of crisis. Such a period of crisis has now enveloped all progressive-minded Jews. The problems which confront democracy are different from those which Borochof encountered and enlightened only in context and historical development.

The synthesis of Socialism and Zionism which is the great cornerstone of Borochof's teachings has valid answers to these problems: It affirms the peoplehood of the Jews everywhere; it sees the ingredients for Jewish survival and continuity in socio-economic terms; it rejects the religious reactionary outlook for Jewish existence; it endorses the great achievements of the pioneering-progressive forces in Israel; it focuses the Jewish future on Israel without negating the essential need for widespread organizational, educational and political work in the Diaspora, and, finally, it seeks to integrate the mainstream of the Jewish future into the world-wide movement for self-determination and brotherhood for all peoples.

Borochov learned from himself. He abhorred dogma and sought a method of analysis of Jewish life which led to practical action. He had drawn on the great teachings of Karl Marx and remained faithful to his method. Before his death in 1917, he proclaimed the need for re-examining his own judgments. He modified his strict deterministic view of almost automatic territorial concentration of the Jewish people in their homeland. He came to the conclusion that the Jewish worker had not only class functions but also the task of building the land and not abandoning the constructive functions to the Jewish bourgeoisie. He took Theodor Herzl's dictum: "If you will it, it will be no legend," and changed it to: "Create facts, facts and again facts—This is the cornerstone of political wisdom." He proclaimed and foresaw the synthesis between class struggle and constructive settlement activity which is the source of working class strength and hegemony both in the World Zionist Movement and in the State of Israel. He was not always right in his judgments. But he showed the way to correct them. In this lies the importance of Ber Borochov's teachings.

The essays included in this brochure are intended to present the background and content of Borochov's teachings and activities for Socialists who may never have heard of him, for Zionists who may consciously or unconsciously have forgotten him and, above all, for open-minded Jews who are seeking a way which includes Jewry, Israel and the world. The writers have spent many years in the midst of both the theoretical and practical aspects of the Borochovist prognosis and consider themselves active Socialist-Zionists.

Dr Raphael Mahler is one of the outstanding Jewish historians of our time. He presently resides in Jerusalem and is in the midst of writing a monumental *History of the Jewish People* of which four volumes have appeared in Hebrew and the first also in Yiddish. He is a lecturer at the University of Tel Aviv and has published many historical works in many languages. He is a member of the executive committee of Mapam in Israel and of the World Bureau of Mapam Organizations.

Daniel Ben-Nahum is an outstanding theoretician of Hashomer Hatzair and Mapam. He is a member of Kibbutz Bet Zera in the Jordan Valley. He has written and lectured extensively on Jewish sociology and economics and is on the staff of Givat Haviva—the Institute for Advanced Studies of Kibbutz Artzi-Hashomer Hatzair.

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Dr. Mahler's essay was originally delivered as an address at the 1957 Ideological Conference called by the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem. It was printed in English originally in *Israel Horizons*.

Mr. Ben-Nahum's essay originally appeared in Hebrew in the daily newspaper *Al Hamishmar* in Israel.

Mr. Flakser's essay is a condensation of material which originally appeared in expanded form in *Israel Horizons*.

BER BOROCHOV—FATHER OF SOCIALIST-ZIONISM

—RICHARD YAFFE

—Managing Editor of Israel Horizons

IT was Ber Borochof, dead since 1917 at the age of 36, who provided the synthesis of Socialism and Zionism in his historic doctrine of nationalism, the earliest successful effort in the direction of evolving a theory of nationalism on the basis of dialectical materialism. Thus, he is the father of Socialism-Zionism, and all socialist trends within the Zionist sphere stem from his writings and tireless organizational efforts, including those sectors which are now busily rewriting and reinterpreting both basic socialism and Borochovism to provide a new "synthesis" which distorts the meaning of both words.

Prior to Borochof, there was a seeming unbreachable gulf between Socialism and Zionism created by Marx himself who, throughout his life span, considered the Jews not as a people but as a "caste" which would disappear with the capitalist order. His complete lack of understanding of the national aspirations of the Jewish people is a matter of record, and it is this which is used in large part by Jewish anti-Socialists to deny his genius and his whole work, the validity of which needs no defense at this late date.

There were some tentative approaches toward a Socialism-Zionism synthesis beginning in the late 1880's, but these made little headway. Later, it became even more difficult ideologically as Jewish Socialist movements began to grow, particularly in Eastern Europe, conditioned not only by Marx's view of the Jewish problem but also on Lenin's thesis in 1903 that "the idea of a Jewish 'nationality' has a definitely reactionary character . . . (and) is a denial of the interests of the Jewish proletariat, introducing within it directly or indirectly a feeling which is hostile to assimilation, a ghetto feeling." This line of reasoning provided the motivation within large sectors of Jewish socialist ranks for the hostility to Zionism.

In the meantime, however, another and what was to prove a far-reaching development, was taking place in Southern Russia. There, under the leadership of the young Borochof, groups organized under the name of *Poale Zion*—Workers of Zion—based their ideology on a unity between Socialism and Zionism. It was in those days, in the early 1900's now commonly referred to as "the period of theoretical chaos," that the ideology of Socialism-Zionism was slowly and laboriously evolved through endless discussion, pamphleteering and in the early press of the movement.

It was in this period that Borochof's genius flowered, both as a theoretician and worker, writer and organizer. It is not within the scope of this introduction to Borochof's basic writings to detail the growth pains of Socialism-Zionism. It is sufficient only to point to the results of Borochof's work and that of his followers who have kept his torch high: The pioneers in Israel who played such an important role in the building of the State and then in its preservation; the establishment of the Histadrut Haovdim, the Israel Federation of Labor, which encompasses more than 90 per cent of Israel's working manpower; the setting up of youth pioneer training groups throughout the world for the Socialist-Zionist task of Jewish emancipation; the kibbutz movement with its more than 200 flourishing settlements and particularly Kibbutz Artzi, the federation of Hashomer Hat-zair collectives, and many more accomplishments too long to list.

It is a tribute to Borochof's theoretical and practical insight that despite the aforementioned dicta set down by Socialist thinkers, the leaders of the Soviet Union were forced to revise their approach to the national question as it concerned Jews and encourage the program of territorial concentration within its borders. This gave rise to a series of plans in this direction. The most important of these was the now-forgotten "Jewish Republic" in the Crimea which was widely publicized as the solution of the Jewish problem in its own times, and the more recent establishment of the autonomous region of Biro-Bidjan.

That these failed was due to the incomplete acceptance by the Communists of Borochof's Socialist-Zionist synthesis and a negation of his thesis that there can be no half way solution to the proposition that if the Jews are a people, they must have a land; not just any land, but a territorial concentration point where *all* Jews, not just Soviet Jews or even Socialist Jews, can come. That the Soviet Union and other lands in the Socialist sphere have reverted to the old antagonism against Zionism as a whole, without regard to its component progressive parts, and are again denying the nationhood of

the Jewish people, is a tragedy of our day.

As for the man Borochov himself: He was born on June 21, 1881, in the town of Zolotonoshi in the Ukraine. The constant pogroms and attacks against small towns and villages forced many Jews to move to larger cities, and two months after Ber's birth, his parents settled in Poltava. For some unknown reason, the Czarist regime chose to exile revolutionists to that city, and some of the outstanding intellectuals of that time were sent there. They exerted a profound influence on the youth of the city.

Poltava was also one of the first Zionist centers, containing a branch of the "Lovers of Zion," (*Hovevei Zion*) a forerunner of the World Zionist movement. Borochov's father, Moses Aaron, was among its active leaders. The practical work for Zion evoked an interest in Jewish culture, schools and libraries, and enriched Jewish life in Poltava.

Ber Borochov's parents were cultured people. His father, who later spent his declining years in New York, was a Hebrew teacher whose long hours left little time for the education of his son, but Ber's mother, Rahel, spared no effort to educate the boy. With her help, he learned to read Russian at the age of three, and was at home in Hebrew as well.

At eleven, he entered the *gymnasia* (high school), and before he was graduated he already had an excellent command of Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, philosophy and economics. His instructors were as appreciative of his intelligence as they were critical and hostile to his lack of discipline. Punishment was frequent and once, to escape the lash, he decided to go to Palestine. He earned enough from tutoring his more backward fellow students to get as far as Nicolayev, a day's travel. There, penniless, he turned to the local rabbi who convinced him to return home.

There was no doubt that Borochov was by far the most deserving of the gold medal offered by the *gymnasia* to its most outstanding student. Because of the anti-Semitism prevailing in the school, he failed to get it. He therefore refused to enter the University lest he meet the same discrimination. It was at this point that his active political life began.

In 1900, he joined the Social Democratic Party, becoming almost at once an organizer and propagandist and almost as speedily—within a year—being expelled for his budding views on nationalism. He organized a club with Socialist-Zionist leanings, then became a traveling lecturer for the Zionist organization, addressing himself

mainly to Jewish workers. It was then that he made his first attempts to formalize his thoughts on the integration of Socialism and Zionism and in 1903 at the age of 22 he made his literary debut in an essay, *The Nature of the Jewish Intellect*.

He joined the Poale Zion Party officially in November, 1905, after the Sixth Zionist Congress, when the burning issue was Palestine versus Uganda. His opposition to any other territory but Palestine found expression in his famous essay, *To the Question: Zion and Territory*. At the Poltava convention of the party in the same month, Borochof helped formulate the Poale Zion program. The young party could not unite all the various ideologies within the grouping and it was not until December, 1906, after numerous splits, that the first convention of the pro-Palestine Poale Zion took place. The program it adopted at this gathering guided the party until the Bolshevik Revolution.

Founded University

It was at this time that Borochof wrote his *Our Platform* and also *The National Question and the Class Struggle*.

He was arrested in 1906 by Czarist police and while in prison founded a "People's University." Many Ukrainians in jail with him fell under the spell of his theories on anti-nationalism, and later a number of Social Democratic Ukrainian groups called themselves "Borochovists" and adopted many of his teachings. He soon escaped from prison and made his way to Minsk where he began to write in Yiddish. Constantly spied on by police, Borochof was forced to leave Russia in the latter part of 1907.

From then on, he became a wanderer: To Cracow, the Hague, Vienna, where he edited the Poale Zion organ *The Free Word*; to England, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, dividing his time between literary work and party activity. He paid his way by acting as a correspondent for European and American Jewish newspapers, as a collaborator in the Russian Jewish Encyclopedia, as author of the monumental works *The Tasks of Yiddish Philology* and the *Library of the Yiddish Philologist* which still constitute the basis for this branch of Jewish learning.

With the outbreak of World War I, he came to America, again dividing his time between literary and political work. He edited for a while *Der Yiddisher Kaempfer* (the Jewish Militant), organ of Poale Zion, helped in the formation of a democratically constituted World Jewish Congress and edited its publication.

In his fight for democracy within Jewish life he spared no one. He castigated the timid psychology of the wealthy assimilationist along with the cosmopolitanism of the anti-Zionist Socialist. That American Jewry was represented at the Paris Peace Conference was due in no small measure to Borochof's active pen and tongue.

He was harsh with his party as with any one else, criticizing its orientation to bourgeois Zionism; a criticism which, by the way, is unfortunately valid today. While in America, he served on the staff of *Die Wahrheit* (The Truth), and introduced a new Yiddish orthography which is in standard use.

When the March Revolution broke out in Russia in 1917, Borochof could no longer remain in exile. The Poale Zion Party there also demanded his return. His wife, Luba, who later made her home in Palestine, pleaded with him not to go, but he went, saying: "I am a soldier—I must answer the call!"

On his way to Russia, Borochof stopped off in Stockholm and helped prepare the memorandum containing the Poale Zion demands before the Dutch-Scandinavian Socialist Conference, to which he was a delegate. From there he proceeded to Russia to attend the Third All-Russian Poale Zion Convention.

The Conference elected him a delegate to the Conference on Nationalities, and there he delivered two addresses: *The Federation of Nationalities in the New Russia* and *The Language Problem*. His proficiency in the problem of nationalism resulted in his selection as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of the Russian Republic.

In the course of his party's preparations for these responsible tasks, Borochof traveled day and night as its emissary. On one of these trips he caught a cold which developed into pneumonia, resulting in his death in Kiev on December 17, 1917.

By 1926, the gap between Poale Zion, which continued to follow Borochof's teachings, and the *Yeusektzia*, the Jewish section of the Soviet Communist Party, had become so deep that the Poale Zion Party was outlawed.

The Mapam Party in Israel, composed of a segment of the earlier Poale Zion Party, the Left Poale Zion, in addition to Hashomer Hatzair, reaffirmed in its ideological platform at its last National Conference in Israel, the program of Borochofism and its diagnosis of the Jewish national and class question and its solutions with the necessary corrections resulting from the changed world conditions since Borochof's time, including the now-historic importance of the kibbutz movement, the stimulation of pioneering, immigration, etc.

In his short span of 36 years, Borochoy not only formulated and helped put into practice the basis of Socialism-Zionism, but left a monumental heritage of literary work: More than twenty complete books, uncounted numbers of pamphlets and thousands of speeches—enough for an ordinary lifetime. But Borochoy was not an ordinary man, as we shall now see.

BOROCHOV FOR OUR DAY

—DANIEL BEN-NAHUM

BER Borochof's great intellectual undertaking—to base workers' Zionism on socialist principles—is the cornerstone of the Socialist-Zionist world outlook. Without this achievement it is impossible to picture the development of the entire Israeli Socialist-Zionist workers' movement as an independent force and as a factor in the history of the Jewish people, just as it is impossible to picture the international workers' movement without the tremendous works of Marx and Engels. Similarly, the special importance of Mapam in the workers' movement in Israel and in the diaspora lies in its position as the heir and the faithful carrier of the *essence* of Borochof's teachings—the synthesis between Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, and the theory of socialism. Of course, Marxism is not today what it was fifty years ago, nor is the Jewish people what it was then. Yet the synthesis of Socialism-Zionism which Borochof conceived stands up in the face of changing events. Reality has proven it to be more than a surface concoction but rather a solid fundamental conception. Moreover, it has shown an organic cohesion capable of producing new ideas and thinking.

* * *

We cannot evaluate Borochof's work without considering the background of his era. Two great movements contended stormily in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe at the time. These were the national movement in the form of Zionism, and the socialist movement whose outstanding proponent in the Jewish Pale in Russia was the Bund, the Jewish Socialist Movement.

Zionism called on the Jew who had left the ghetto and was now oppressed, pursued and repressed, to a self-recognition of his worth and his honor. It demonstrated the unity of fate and struggle of the Jewish people throughout the world. It raised high the vision of national liberation in an independent homeland.

The Bund directed its class struggle to the Jewish worker. It raised him from the lowest depths, led him in battle with the hated

Czarist regime and inculcated within him the ideas of international socialism. Between the two movements and the two visions which competed for the soul of the younger generation, there was a fundamental hatred—an abyss seemingly without a bridge. Groups of Poale Zion (Workers of Zion) which sprung up in the areas of mass Jewish life attempted to space this actually-imaginary gap between Zionism and socialism. In Russia and in Poland, in Galicia, in the United States and in many other countries, Poale Zion protested against the Bund's rejection of the Jewish problem, of the tragedy of a people without a land. They rejected the assimilationist aims and the national apathy which were widespread among the leaders of the Bund. The latter, on the other hand, criticized the "bourgeois outlook" of the Zionist leaders who did not want to hear of classes and class antagonisms within the Jewish people.

Meanwhile, groups within Poale Zion itself created their own schisms through differences of opinion and ideological "nuances." The path of this young movement seemed to be lost in its own clouds. Various half-baked theories spread within it, to mislead and condemn it to error and confusion. In those days of crisis and indecision before the Seventh Zionist Congress, (the Congress which split over the Uganda-Palestine question) on the verge of the 1905 Revolution, Borochof appeared in this confused and chaotic movement and placed upon it the authority of his clear and logical thought. His intellectual temperament, his analytical powers, his convincing explanations and his attractive personality concentrated and organized about him the faithful, the "orthodox" Palestine-centered Poale Zion, and converted them from a disorganized group into an organized, widespread party under his leadership at the Poltava convention in February, 1906. From this convention came the founding of the World Federation of Poale Zion (August, 1907) and the blossoming of the workers' movement in Palestine, beginning with the Second Aliya, the emigration to Palestine following the abortive revolt against the Czar in 1905.

With what strength did the young Borochof succeed in creating this first association? At that time, he was not known as a leader among the Poale Zion. Actually, he had grown up outside the framework of Jewish life, far from the centers of the Jewish workers' movement. In his youth he was not even well acquainted with the culture of his own people, not only in Hebrew but even in Yiddish (of which he later became one of the greatest researchers and philologists). For some years he had stood outside the life of the movement, which he

had joined in 1901. But little by little, he developed and crystallized his independent outlook.

His first appearance among his people was in a polemic against territorialism. This came about in a speaking tour before the Seventh Zionist Congress, in which he came into close contact with the masses of Jews and, for the first time, was revealed as a talented lecturer. Territorialism, which promised an immediate solution to the people who were then in the midst of severe economic difficulties and under the terror of pogroms, attracted many adherents, particularly among the Poale Zion. The failure of Zionist diplomacy, the complete freezing of immigration and settlement in Palestine, the very admiration for the deceased Herzl and all those who raised the Uganda plan* helped the propaganda of territorialism.

The territorialist element in Poale Zion early organized itself as an independent party (the Socialist-Zionist Party—"S.S.") in the latter part of 1904 and amidst the stormy atmosphere of the pre-revolutionary days achieved considerable success among the Jewish masses. At its head stood some excellent ideological and organizational forces. In contrast to the wide-awake, seemingly realistic approach of territorialism which proclaimed "practical" solutions and possibilities, the Palestine-centered Zionists tried to awaken the profound sentiment for the homeland and renewed the ancient oath, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." But there was no possibility of winning with such outmoded weapons against a strong, well-equipped opponent. Borochov decided to make use of a new weapon, the weapon of Marxist analysis. He attacked the weak link of the territorialist ideology—its accidental and sporadic basis. Lacking in this ideology was a link between the present in the diaspora and the territorialist programs of the future. Such a link must be part of an actual process rising from the very depths of social life and not a fine plan created in the minds of wise individuals.

Borochov saw the organized movement only as a midwife of history, and not as its creator, in the sense of making something from nothing. He showed that immigration to Palestine, the Zionist realization, is an actual social process which had begun previously and which could be accelerated, directed, advanced and eased in its realization, "whereas territorialism is nothing more than intellectual adventurism which wants to exchange social processes and the ultimate develop-

* Uganda, in Africa, was offered as a homeland for the Jews, in place of Eretz Israel—Palestine. "Territorialists" were those who argued that Jewish statehood could be fulfilled in any territory, not necessarily Palestine.

ment of historic aims for accidental conjunctures of events and possibilities.”

Borochoy's powerful logic appears here as a stronger support for Socialist-Zionism than the ethical emotional pathos of Nahman Syrkin, (later the leader of the American Labor Zionists) who, at that period, left the Zionist movement for a number of years. In the heat of his struggle against territorialist adventures and the utopianism of official Zionism which placed all its hope on diplomacy and looked forward to a “charter,” Borochoy rejected any reasoning which could be interpreted as emotional or subjective, and emphasized the objective factors submerged in the Jewish reality would make the realization of Zionism a *stychic* process, i.e., an inevitable result of the dynamics of history.

The profundity of Borochoy's concept which based Zionism on a *stychic* process is being confirmed in the reality of our own day. However, in order to prevent the distortion of this theory into a passive longing for that process, Borochoy ends his essay *Our Platform* in the following meaningful words:

“Utopianism always suffers when it strives to ignore the historical processes. Utopianism wishes by means of human endeavor to create something not inherent in social life. Fatalism, on the other hand, assumes that the effective participation of human will is impossible with regard to these historical processes, and thus it drifts passively with the stream. Utopianism knows of no historical processes. The utopians fear to mention the phrase ‘historical process’ for they see in the so-called historical (*stychic*) process fatalism and passivity. The fatalists, on the other hand, fear the conscious interference with the historical process as a dangerous artificiality. The fatalists forget that history is made by men who follow definite and conscious aims. Utopians forget that the results of human activity coincide with human aims and purposes only when those aims and purposes are well adapted to the historical necessities of life.”

Borochoy elevated the debate with the territorialists to a principled ideological level with the force of his socialist world-outlook. Even in his early essays in which he polemicized with territorialism (*The Question of Zion and Territory*), he made the first attempt at a historical-materialist explanation of the history of the Jewish people in order to prove the assumption “that the history of Israel like the history of all mankind must and can be explained in a materialist fashion.” Yet he clearly rejected the vulgar materialist explanation, saying that “the stomach and the pocket as well as man's fear for his

own skin are not materialist explanations.”

The catastrophic concept of the future of the Diaspora which Borochof expressed in his first essay, (*Problems of Zionist Theory*, 1903) was corrected and completed later when he saw Zionism as an *extended* historic process, realizable step by step, growing in the soil of the distress of the masses and carried by the strength and self-recognition of the pioneering elements among the people until it is converted in an all-encompassing people's movement. Such a process stems from the dynamics of Jewish reality and is part of the social-historic world development towards the democratization and the liberation of oppressed peoples.

* * *

Borochof was among those who brought about the decisive defeat of territorialism at the elections to the Seventh Zionist Congress. This was the Congress at which the Territorialists, those believing that Zionism could be fulfilled in any territory, were excluded from the World Zionist Organization and at which an “Organizing Committee” of the Russian Poale Zion was chosen to prepare the founding conference of this party. But once again the internal split appeared. The majority of the Organizing Committee leaned to the “Sejmists”,* a group which saw the party's immediate and most important aim as the achievement of the “national-political autonomy” of the Jewish People in the diaspora. They postponed the realization of territorialism until after the “Sejm”, the parliament of all of Russian Jewry, would be chosen and would be armed with the governmental privileges and instruments which would enable it to achieve territorialism in the place and at the time it would choose.

This plan, which today seems so visionary and far-fetched, amazingly matched the striking hopes which many at the time of the 1905 revolution placed on the new and democratic Russia, which would fulfill the desires of all the oppressed. Similarly, the Territorialists had blossomed in an earlier period which was filled with an atmosphere of despair, helplessness and fear in which the masses were ready to follow any adventurist program so long as it promised *immediate* succor.

The Sejmists primarily attracted the intellectuals who were influenced by striking ideas full of militance but completely impractical of execution. Borochof, who supported the demand for national autonomy in the diaspora, protested against the idealistic, utopian

* Sejm is the Polish word for parliament.

distortion of the movement's program and its diversion from its primary goal. Making use of the Marxist analysis, he laid bare the emptiness of the "striking" proposals which set the Jewish problem and its solution "on its head," i.e. through cultural renaissance and formal legal guarantees, and not "on its feet," i.e. by creating a material basis for Jewish cultural and political life and even for Jewish socialism.

The final break between Poale Zion and the Sejmists took place at a regional conference of Poale Zion at Berdichev, following a decisive ideological debate in which Borochov participated. It was only after such ideological struggles that Borochov was able to crystallize the Palestine-centered Poale Zion on the basis of a socialist world-view which saw "the organized and self-conscious Jewish working-class as the basis of the national liberation movement"; on the acceptance of the land of Israel "as the only territory in which the territorial autonomy of the Jewish people would be achieved through the class struggle of the Jewish working class"; and on the demand for "immediate practical work" in Palestine.

But a number of ideological questions remained unresolved.

* * *

At that period, the theory of non-proletarianization was widespread within Poale Zion. (In various forms, this theory exists in our day, too.) This theory asserts the impossibility of the transition of the poorer elements among Jews to the working class. This transition, it states, is possible only as a result of the realization of Zionism. Borochov was not satisfied with this theory and, as he himself writes, as a result of his opposition gave up his activity in the Poale Zion movement for a short time.

Borochov was aware of the distress of the Jewish petit bourgeoisie, the stratum which constitutes the majority of the Jewish people. He wrote that "the Jewish petit bourgeoisie was improverished at a faster and more intensive rate than any other petit bourgeoisie, and therefore the urgent need for proletarianization ripens and is not satisfied in quantity or quality." Borochov viewed this fact as a tremendous impetus towards the territorial concentration of the Jewish people in Palestine. But it did not suffice to explain the objective interest of the Jewish working class in the realization of Zionism and consequently establish the basis for the synthesis of Zionism and Socialism.

Borochov saw a contradiction between the proclamation of Poale Zion as a workers' party and the theory of non-proletarianization. He concluded that workers' Zionism stems first of all from the *class* needs

of the Jewish worker which are not satisfied in the diaspora because of the anomalous structure of the Jewish working class and the limitations of its strategic base which are a result of the ex-territoriality of the Jewish people and its complete dependence on other nations.

The future of the revolutionary class struggle of the Jewish worker is tied to the normalization of his "strategic base" and the national conditions of production, which will be achieved only through the process of territorial concentration of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. *The Jewish working class can reach socialism only via the long road of realization of Zionism*, he found.

However, the realization of Zionism—i.e. the national liberation of the Jewish people—will not be possible without the class struggle of the Jewish worker. "The liberation of the Jewish people will come through the Jewish workers' movement or it will not come at all. But the workers movement has only one road before it, that of class struggle." (*Our Platform*)

The class struggle of the Jewish worker and the national liberation of the Jewish people are mutually and inseparably intertwined.

National independence, or in Borochof's words "national territorial autonomy," is a preliminary stage, a preparatory stage for the social revolution of the Jewish people. This is the seed of the Borochofist synthesis between Zionism and Socialism, between class struggle and national liberation.

Many viewed this theory as a "temporary necessity" in order to pave the way of the party to the Jewish workers. But its value is much greater. The shrinking of the base of the Jewish labor movement in the diaspora has become evident in all of its severity and is in large measure the cause of its decline to a degree which Borochof himself did not foresee.

It has become clear that the Jewish working class cannot separate itself from the conditions of existence and the fundamental weakness of the entire Jewish people. "The fact that the Jews are dependent on the nations around them more than any other people" determined the fate of the Jewish working class alongside the rest of the masses of Jews when Nazi fascism flowered and took control of Europe.

Under "normal" conditions, the concentration of Jewish workers, both in the lands of advanced capitalism as well as in the lands of socialism, in the "end-stages of the process of production" (a concept established and developed by Borochof), in the exchange of goods and in white-collar occupations (clerks, free professions, etc.), continues. The theory of non-proletarianization did not withstand the test

of history. It cannot be said that in the socialist countries and even in the advanced capitalist countries there exist in our day any serious impediments to the transition of the Jewish masses, or of the Jewish youth, to the working class, in the classic sense of the term, i.e. to the class of wage workers. Even in the United States, according to Lestchinsky, 60% of Jewish employed are wage workers (in contrast to 88% of the general American population).

The Jewish petit bourgeoisie has practically been eliminated as a class in the socialist countries. But has the *Jewish anomaly* disappeared as a result? Not at all. The Jewish problem, from an economic point of view, expresses itself in those countries in an *abnormal proletarianization*, to use Borochov's formulation. The Jewish workers are squeezed into certain occupations and so cannot penetrate into the fundamental branches of production (agriculture, mining, heavy industry, shipping, etc.) as a result of the ex-territoriality of the Jewish people.

Certain researchers, among them former Borochovists, make special note of the fact that the gap between the occupational structure of the Jews and their neighbors continues to narrow in the advanced capitalist countries, at the same time as the mechanization and the rationalization of production increases the percentage of workers in commerce and in services at the expense of workers in agricultural and industrial production. But this assumption of the narrowing gap between the Jewish and the general economic structures is superficial. The decline of the percentage of workers in the basic industries is a normal phenomenon so long as it is not accompanied by a *decline in the productivity* of these branches which constitute the *basis* of the economy, but rather by a constant rise in productivity. This basis is practically non-existent among the Jews, since as a national-social entity, they are entirely and unilaterally dependent on other entities. This anomaly of the Jewish people and of the Jewish working class has not lessened with the lowering of the percentage of workers in the basic industries. The socio-economic difference between the Jews and other peoples, which prevents the complete disappearance of the Jewish masses and which everywhere awakens the *Jewish problem* anew, remains in effect. The "gap" between the Jews and their neighbors not only remains but increases as the few places which the Jews occupied in agriculture and industry are eliminated.

Borochov's theory on the levels of production has importance also for the analysis of the basic changes in the Jewish economy which have taken place in the State of Israel. Israeli economists have trans-

ferred, uncritically and unchanged, the division of the national economy commonly accepted among bourgeois economists into the branches of production, services and distribution. Such a division is not meaningful for Israel because it does not reflect correctly the advances or the failings in the process of normalization of the Jewish national economy. For example, the concept "services" including such occupations as longshoremen, sailors, railway workers, public construction, etc., are basic industries for Israel, whereas the development of certain areas of production such as the exaggerated increase of small industry or various finishing industries closely related to speculation and black-marketing are of no value and do not reflect normalization or economic independence. Economic and statistical science which ignores the problem of *levels of production* encourages, consciously or unconsciously, the unhealthy and often injurious development of Israel's economy without a firm foundation.

The theory of levels of production fits the *halutzic* (pioneering) goal which puts the emphasis on expanding the *basis of production*: agricultural settlement, exploitation of minerals and power resources, development of industry "in depth" to the primary levels, transition from the production of goods to the production of the instruments of production. In short, overcoming the diaspora character, whose stamp is recognizable in the excess growth of "the final branches in the process of production and the turnover of goods," in the exaggerated drive towards white collar occupations and in the splintering of industry into small enterprises incapable of competing on the world market.

Borochof's formulations of the road to normalization of the Jewish economy in Israel remain pertinent for our day. No less important now is his premise that class struggle is the highway to the realization of Zionism. This formulation is diametrically opposed to the bourgeois class conception which views the class struggle of the worker in Israel as a destructive and obstructive factor. He is also opposed to the viewpoint, prevalent within Mapai circles, concerning the necessity for class "peace" which pervades its economic, cultural and trade union policies.

The Borochovist conception guides the United Workers Party (Mapam) on its path of class struggle bound to the interests of the working class and the poor, which is the only way towards the expansion of immigration and settlement—towards the realization of **Zionism**.

Poale Zion could not have progressed without adopting fundamental axioms on the national question. Borochoy's teachings on this question form the basis for his entire ideological structure. They include the ideological axioms of Socialist-Zionism and serve as the essential intellectual weapons in its struggle with its opponents.

Both the cosmopolitan assimilationist, the Jewish radical who denies the existence of any national problem and views it as a bourgeois invention, as well as the Bundist who sees only a simple problem of "national culture," will certainly reject the radical, territorial solution of the Jewish problem. These mistaken viewpoints of the national problem as a whole must be contradicted in order to construct a correct outlook and achieve a proper solution to the Jewish problem. Nevertheless, Borochoy's teachings have a general value which transcends the Jewish people and its problems. His essay entitled, *Class Moments in the National Question* (later published under the title *Nationalism and the Class Struggle*) was one of the earliest and most profound attempts at a Marxist analysis of the national question in which the essential tie between the national liberation struggle of oppressed peoples and the revolutionary class struggle was formulated.

From the basic Marxist assumption that the development of production and the economic conditions are, in the final analysis, the factors which determine the process of history, Borochoy reached the conclusion that even such a general phenomenon in the history of mankind as its division into different social entities—peoples and nations—is explainable by the different conditions of production (territory, language, culture, etc.).

This led to the formulation of a *people* as "a society which developed on the basis of common conditions of production." These conditions differentiate, relatively, one people from another and at a higher stage of historic development help in the further crystallization as a *nation*. At the dawn of mankind natural, geographical and anthropological conditions resulted in the formation of tribes and peoples. With development and man's increasing mastery over nature, the importance of the socio-historical conditions which are created in every society in the process of production were increased. These conditions include the relations of production at the given time, the status of any social entity among the social entities around it, the standard of development of the forces of production, the social and economic structure, language and cultural uniqueness, the special forms of the political superstructure, the customs, the habits and the mores.

The natural and the socio-historic conditions of production explained the abundance and the varied nature of the national types. Borochoff specifically differentiates between *internal* historic conditions which appear in a certain society and the *external* historic conditions which are the result of its relations with other societies such as the relations of enslavement and dependence of oppressed peoples to their overlords.

Under a feudal regime, peoples are divided from each other externally but are not yet crystallized internally. The development of merchant capitalism integrates the peoples internally and creates a national market, or in Borochoff's phrase "organized and concentrated conditions of production." The peoples become *nations* capable of national self-awareness. At the end of this process marches the bourgeoisie.

The national conditions of production are common for all classes to the degree that the process of production is mutual, despite the sharp antagonisms among them. Nevertheless, the class interests vary according to their position within the process of production.

The national interests of the *feudal class* are bound to the maintenance of their land rents which are the sources of their income and their hegemony. Their fanatic nationalism is fundamentally conservative and reactionary, since its aim is to harness or revive the declining past. To the degree that national liberation movements come into conflict with the foundations of feudal property, this class becomes their enemy and even assists the foreign ruler. The *great bourgeoisie* is cosmopolitan since its aim is the conquest of the world market. "It is never just chauvinist, but imperialist" (Borochoff—*National Question*) since it transcends the national conditions of production. The nation serves the great bourgeoisie as a springboard in its thrust to the broad world market. Despite its nationalistic feelings, this class is destined to national betrayal in order to assure its profits.

The nationalism of the small and middle bourgeoisie is fed by its struggle for the internal market. This explains its devotion to the national language and culture. It occupies the leading place in national liberation movements who fight for the liberation of the national market which has been cut up and crushed by foreign oppression. Yet the petit bourgeoisie is never free from aggressive-chauvinist aims even when it fulfills a liberating function.

Does the working class also have national interests? The socialist world tended to view the national struggle as "the struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves" (*Stalin-Marxism and the Na-*

tional Question—1913). They attributed the mass participation of workers in the national liberation movements to the occasional success of the bourgeoisie in seducing the working class into the national movement whose national struggle then took on, *externally*, an “all peoples’” character (ibid.) Borochof states that the class interests of the proletariat demand the removal of national oppression and normalization of the national conditions of production. Therefore it takes part in national liberation movements and even *takes the lead* in them.

National independence is not the end goal for the working class but a stage in the advancement of its class struggle, the acquisition of a normal “strategic base” which is basically revolutionary and bound in international solidarity to all enslaved peoples and classes. Borochof thus placed the progressive-proletarian nationalism opposite the chauvinist-bourgeois nationalism and viewed the task of the working class as *the pioneer of the liberation of oppressed peoples*. This innovation which Borochof introduced into the international workers’ movement has not yet attained sufficient recognition.

Each class in the nation is interested in changing the conditions of production from its own viewpoint. Yet they are partners in the same struggle for a certain period of time. This temporary solidarity in the national liberation struggle does not have to modify the class struggle or the class consciousness or interfere with the independence of the proletariat. When the goal is attained—normalization of the conditions of production and the “strategic base”—the unnatural and self-imposed solidarity between antagonistic classes disappears and in its place forcefully rises “the healthy class structure and the class struggle.”

In broad outline, these are Borochof’s teachings on the national question which in the past fifty years have proved their value and validity. The naive cosmopolitanism which prevailed in Marxist thinking of that time has practically disappeared. The national question and the struggle of oppressed peoples have been recognized as the foremost factors in the fight for socialism. However, the confusion and the failure to distinguish between reactionary and aggressive bourgeois-feudal chauvinism and progressive workers’ nationalism has frequently led the working classes and the progressive sectors astray in the wake of the chauvinist bourgeoisie.

Borochof’s teachings cast light on one of the most complicated and complex problems of our time.

Borochof accomplished much ideological and organizational work

during the stormy days of the 1905 Revolution. Many theories, ideas and slogans were tested in the gigantic struggle between the old order and the revolutionary movement. Gangs of the "Black Hundred" operated in the Jewish sections with the help of the police and the army. Czarism attempted to put out the fire of the revolution with Jewish blood. The founding conference of the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' Party-Poale Zion convened in the shadow of the counter-revolutionary terror. The conference did not succeed in completing its deliberations and chose an "Ideological Council" to formulate the party program. Borochof wrote his essay *Our Platform* as the summation of the work of this Ideological Council. It attempted to answer the questions, "What is the Jewish national question?" and "What is its meaning for the Jewish working class and how does it propose to solve it?"

The Jewish national problem in the diaspora is unique in essence because of the lack of one of the basic conditions of production: a territory. In place of this primary positive foundation for independent national existence, the position of the Jewish people in the Diaspora has been established by the *negative* factor of *external isolation*. The idealist conception bases the existence of the Jewish people on spiritual factors—the national will to exist, autonomous religious-national institutions and others. This conception ignores the fact that in those periods in which economic development brought about far-reaching assimilation, the power of the mighty, deep-rooted cultural "superstructure" of the Jewish people failed to stem this tide.

According to Borochof, Jewish history in the diaspora, in its broad outlines, is a result of the interaction of two factors: the assimilatory factor and the isolating factor. The factor for assimilation has its source in the exterritoriality of the Jewish people and in its territorial, economic and political ties with the peoples among which it lived. The isolating factor has its roots in the fact that the lack of an independent national economy makes existence as a people impossible unless it acquires an economic function unfulfilled by its neighbors within the surrounding society, which is useful to the ruling classes of the territorial peoples. Since the primary levels of the process of production are occupied by the majority inhabitants, the Jewish group which stands at a gradually higher level of development naturally finds its place in the distributive processes and in the final levels of production.

It was precisely the "national exploitation" of the Jews by the feudal class which resulted in the economic and cultural development

of the Jews (and to a certain degree, in manifestations of assimilation) during the Middle Ages. Later, the economic development of the majority people brought about the gradual elimination of the Jews from their positions, their concentration in ghettos, their expulsion or even their physical extermination (during the period of merchant capitalism).

During the period of the bourgeois revolution (with the development of industrial capitalism), the Jews left the walled ghetto for the "world of free competition" and increased tremendously the assimilatory factor in the life of the Jewish people.

In the present era of monopoly-finance capitalism (and, we may add, the global struggle between regimes), once again the factor of isolation has come forcefully to the fore in the life of the Jewish people, endangering its very physical existence. "The sickness of the reactionary society born of capitalism continually raises the national problem in general and the Jewish problem in particular in cruel and uncontrolled forms." (*Our Platform*) "The inclusive, increasing national competition does not assimilate the Jews, but to the contrary, expands their national experiences . . . crystallizes the universal Jewish nation and the universal Jewish problem." (*ibid*). Our own era moves the Jewish people—and the non-Jewish world as well—to a clear-cut territorial solution of the Jewish problem.

Borochof saw in *migration* the principal channel for the changes which occurred in the Jewish reality during this era. Today we can conclude that the decisive majority of the Jews live in "new" countries in which sizeable Jewish communities were established during the past hundred years, while only a small minority has inhabited its lands of domicile for many generations.

Borochof discussed the problems of Jewish migration in a special study (*Organizing Jewish Migration and the Congress of Migration*, 1911). There have been trends and parties among the Jewish people which viewed migration—except for *aliya* (immigration) to Eretz Israel—as the great hope for a radical solution of the Jewish problem through proletarianization and agrarianization. On the other hand, the theoreticians of the Bund (V. Medem) ignored the tremendous importance of migration in the lives of the Jews and viewed it simply as "the people's tragedy." Borochof correctly established the function of migration as a positive factor for the Jewish people, which does not, however, provide a *radical* solution.

Jewish migration streamed first of all to the most developed capitalist countries (principally the United States, as well as England,

France, Germany, Belgium, etc.). This enabled a large portion of the Jewish population to rise to a higher level without changing their occupations (*ibid.*). Jewish migration, therefore, does not bring about a fundamental change of values in the life of the Jewish people. It disperses the Jewish masses into great centers (polycentrism) where they are unable to remove themselves from their specific diaspora conditions of production, from the one-sided crowding into light industry, commerce and the free professions. Immigration into the United States was, in fact, accompanied by mass proletarianization. But Borochoff foresaw that "the foundations of the immigrants to America are not firm" (*ibid.*), Jewish workmen would be "pushed" out of their positions by industrial development, "to the extent that the percentage of constant capital exceeds the variable capital, Jewish labor is lessened." (*Economic Development of the Jewish People.*) This historic development will, therefore, result in the de-proletarianization of the masses of Jews in the countries of immigration. And ultimately, as the competition in commerce and in the white-collar branches sharpens, they too will have "to think about new places of domicile."

At the peak of Jewish immigration to the United States, Borochoff set down a pessimistic prognosis for its future: the more-developed capitalistic countries—and above all the United States—would shut their gates to immigration in general and would not be interested in the specific occupational makeup of Jewish immigrants in particular. Jewish immigration would be forced to turn to semi-agricultural and agricultural countries (Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Australia, etc.), but these, too, are destined to close their gates. The further dispersion of the Jewish migration does not solve the Jewish problem quantitatively or qualitatively, but simply spreads it throughout the entire globe.

He goes on: The closing of the lands of immigration which takes place at the same time that the need for emigration sharpens will increase Jewish distress immeasurably. The great *stychic* stream of Jewish migration will then turn to Eretz Israel, where a fundamental change of values in the life of the Jewish people will take place and it will be turned into a normal people with its own independent national economy.

Borochoff's prognosis, therefore, viewed the realization of Zionism from a distant perspective as the result of the continuous and long-range processes of "Jewish dynamics." He did not see a contradiction between the realization of Zionism and the Jewish migration of that period to other lands. The territorial concentration in the Land of

Israel *crowns and concludes* the great Jewish wandering of recent generations.

Thus Borochov's conception is Zionist maximalism; he "negates the Galut (exile)" in terms of the *future*, and for the *present* he rejects utopian acceleration of history and emphasizes the importance of the work in the Diaspora alongside the work in Eretz Israel.

The development of Jewish migration and of young Jewish centers during the last fifty years has proved the clear-cut validity of the Borochov prognosis. The gates of the lands of immigration were barred to the Jewish people in the midst of the most difficult period in its history—between the two World Wars. The great Jewish community in Europe was cut off at the mercy of its hangmen, without refuge or escape, and the terror of reality far exceeded the black vision of Borochov. Eretz Israel became the sole escape, the sole life-determinant of the Jewish people, the consequence of *historic necessity*.

Did Borochov put his entire faith in the *stychic process* alone, as many have claimed? In general he did not ever ignore the need to *anticipate* future events, to do organic preparatory work, to "consciously intervene" in the process of history. He saw the task of the Zionist Organization and of the Poale Zion in directing and paving the way for the historic process.

In our own day, the revival of the illusions of the "eternity of the Galut (exile)" and the negation of Zionism as a total and all-inclusive solution to the Jewish problem underlines the Zionist importance of the Borochov prognosis.

Nevertheless, Borochov, like other great socialist thinkers, was not lacking in errors. Correct and far-seeing as his prognosis was for the future, he often erred regarding the immediate steps of the Zionist workers' movement. These mistakes were not accidental. Their source was in the conditions in which the Russian Poale Zion grew and was forced to struggle with its opponents in the Jewish workers' movement, lacking the possibility for free development in unripened external and internal conditions and without any experience in the Palestinian reality.

Borochov projected a "division of functions" between the working class and the bourgeoisie in the realization of Zionism. According to this division, the direction of the economic factors and the organization of the forces of production remained in the hands of the bourgeoisie until the social revolution and the conquest of power by the working class. The liberating function, the continuing democrati-

zation of the political regime and the struggle for independence was the task, primarily, of the working class. The differentiation between "creative" and "liberating" factors and the negation of the economic-settlement function for the working class in Eretz Israel were among the "children's diseases" of the Jewish labor movement in Palestine which infected not only Poale Zion, but even the anti-Marxist Hapoel Hatzair (Young Worker). Borochof later abandoned this conception and sharply opposed it in the light of the experience of the Palestine labor movement and the kibbutzim (collective settlements) particularly.

In connection with this conception of the "division of functions" came also the labelling of the World Zionist Organization as "an instrument of bourgeois policy" and not as an alliance among classes, parties and various trends within the Jewish people "towards the goal of the territorial solution of the Jewish problem in Eretz Israel," similar to fronts for national liberation among other oppressed peoples. This conception, together with the negation of the pioneer-constructive tasks of the workers' movement in Eretz Israel, brought about the departure of the Russian Poale Zion under the leadership of Borochof from the World Zionist Congress. The Left Poale Zion maintained this anti-constructivist and anti-Congress tradition until 1938, going even further than Borochof and rejecting any ties or coalitions with "bourgeois Zionism."

Borochof, in defining the Jewish working class as the pioneer of the national liberation of the Jewish people, saw only the Jewish working class in the diaspora. The Jewish working class in Palestine was then in its infancy. Borochof exerted his greatest efforts in order to draw the Jewish workers' movement *in the diaspora* to a Zionist-territorialist solution, and his comrades and disciples followed in this path.

But it was not the Jewish working class in the diaspora but the Jewish petit bourgeois masses shifting towards proletarianization which was most sensitive to the yoke of national oppression and decline. "The most oppressive weight of national competition, tied in with isolation and organized and unorganized governmental and social ostracism falls on the Jewish petit bourgeoisie." (*Our Platform*). It is no wonder then that in precisely this stratum of the people was the drive for *aliya* to Eretz Israel and the conscious and unconscious striving for a revolutionary change in the conditions of existence, greatest. The Bund never differentiated between the Jewish great bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeoisie and the masses ripe for pro-

letarization. They viewed the bourgeois sector as a single reactionary group. Borochov differentiates and emphasizes the latter stratum which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people and views it as the source and the reserves of the working class. But he failed to draw conclusions from this analysis.

The children of the petit bourgeoisie were also the pioneers of the territorial concentration of the Jews. They sensed earlier and more profoundly the command of the "historic necessity" and with their emigration to Eretz Israel brought about a fundamental change in their social situation. The Jewish workers, for their part, saw their prospects in the class struggle *on the spot*, so long as they were not dropped out of the productive process. Most of them were unable to grasp the anomaly of their "strategic base" and its difficult consequences.

The Jewish working class in Europe remained under the anti-Zionist influence of the "Bund" for a long time. Even that important portion of the Jewish workers—largely in America—who leaned towards Labor Zionism did not realize its future goals personally. The development of the Jewish working class in reality, therefore, did not establish a direct transition from the diaspora to Palestine, neither for the Jewish workers nor for their employers. The process of establishing and realizing a new Jewish working class in character and structure is complicated, painful, full of contradictions and travail. The concrete reality, too, is much more complicated than the theoretical prognosis.

The United Workers Party (Mapam) in Israel has adopted Borochov's teachings as its theoretical basis for the national problem, for the Jewish national liberation movement—Zionism—and for the independent future of the working class within it. But it has not accepted every sentence written by Borochov in a dogmatic fashion. It considers it an obligation and a right to develop Borochov's creative Socialist-Zionist inheritance in an independent fashion precisely because of its loyalty to the spirit of this great teacher.

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

—RAPHAEL MAHLER

IN the discussion about the problems of the existence of the Jewish nation and the rebuilding of Israel through the Ingathering of the Exiles which took place during the 1957 Ideological Conference in Jerusalem, a tone of voluntarism could be heard. The tendency to make the problem dependent on the will of the people stood out. No attempt was made to view the problem from a realistic viewpoint, i.e., to examine the reality upon which we build and work.

Certainly no one can minimize the value of the will and the awareness of our people in the past and in the present. The history of Israel is a tremendous phenomenon revealing this will and awareness, as well as a deep sense of national existence, even though this national feeling took the form of a leaning towards religion, particularly in the past. At no period in history did we maintain our existence mechanically or automatically. National history, as the history of society generally, does not occur of itself. It is a long chain of directed actions and efforts which in a period of crisis achieve self-sacrifice and heroic deeds. The particularly unstable conditions of our people in the past, after the uprooting from our homeland and the dispersion among the nations of the world, necessitated unyielding stubbornness and unceasing effort.

The great artist of Jewish historiography, Graetz, established an important rule in his book in which he sharply criticized his precursor Yost. "Yost," says Graetz, "did not believe in miracles, neither miracles which denied the laws of nature nor even the historical miracles that are the result of enthusiasm and will power, and which occur through a unique chain of circumstances, as a result of pressure and counter-pressure, of action and counter-action."

Indeed these emphatic words of Graetz deserve to be set down as a rule and should be engraved on the consciousness of our people, especially at this time, so that they may serve as a guiding light in the achievement of our goal. Without the supreme effort of our people in the diaspora and in its homeland, without its unlimited

self-sacrifice, we shall be unable to accomplish our gigantic task—the building of this Israel and the maintenance of our culture in the diaspora.

Will-power alone, powerful as it may be, is not enough. Awareness alone, profound as it may be, is not enough either, if the national reality does not match the desired goal. Graetz hints at this in the above-mentioned extract: Among the factors for the existence of a nation he lists that “unique chain of events, action and counter-action.”

This very same thesis was pointedly developed by the founder of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, who was, by the way, one of Graetz's friends. (They became friendly once at a summer resort.) Marx's version says: “It is not enough when will reinforces reality. It is of importance that reality reinforces the will.”

Modern Zionism came about for no other purpose than to provide a solution to the Jewish problem of the diaspora, the same problem once known as *Die Juden Frage, die Juden Not*. Yet nowadays, the general opinion seems to be that it is superfluous to analyze the Jewish reality, especially in the Western democracies, while there is consideration about the future of our people and planning for Israel's upbuilding. Whoever is asked to make such analysis is thought of as preaching a solution to the Jewish people which has no urgency and can even be done without. Yet the truth is that despite the fact that from several aspects it may seem that the tranquility of the Jewish people in the diaspora has a solid basis, the real and essential situation of our people in the diaspora has never been more difficult than it is today.

This is true, first of all, from the economic aspect. In this category there are well-known facts that need no elaboration. Who has not taken notice of the amazing changes in the condition of American Jewry during the past fifty years? Let us compare today's situation with that of the beginning of the Twentieth Century when, according to reliable statistics, 60% of all American Jews were engaged in industry, i.e., most of them were workers. Actually, though they were concentrated in the traditional Jewish industrial branches, such as the needle trades, hatters, furriers, etc., they were workers, real manual laborers.

In those days Yiddish poetry developed and flourished. At that time, Rosenfeld and other poets sang about the plight of the Jewish worker. But all this passed as the morning dew and the white cloud. Already, in the years between the two World Wars, the percentage

of Jews employed as industrial workers in Central Europe declined, whereas the percentage of those active in commerce and the free professions rose.

Only Poland was an exception. There, discrimination and the pressure of the policy of eliminating Jews from commerce and trade led to an increase in the industrial and craft sector of the Jewish economy. According to the 1931 census, 42% of Polish Jews were engaged in industry and 37% in commerce. In other words, the proportion of the industrial and craft sector rose above the sector of commerce and trade.

In the United States, as early as the middle 1930's the occupational distribution of the Jews was entirely different than at the turn of the century. The great majority of American Jews earned their livelihood from commerce and the percentage of those active in the professions had increased many fold in those thirty years.

Developments after World War II point towards a steady increase in this area. With regard to American Jewry, there is no need to amplify this obvious trend. An American Jewish working class is largely non-existent, with the exception of Metropolitan New York and there, too, a steady decline is evident. In the garment workers' unions, which were founded and developed by Jewish workers, the Jews constitute a minority. What is worse is that as a generation goes, it is not replaced by the new generation, since the sons do not adopt their father's occupations.

In most American cities, the Jews have become a middle stratum of merchants and small businessmen. The smaller the city, the smaller the proportion of Jewish workers. In Chicago one can still find some Jewish workers, whereas in Los Angeles they are fewer in number, and in San Francisco they can hardly be found.

A parallel process, although different because of the different regime, took place within the same years in the Soviet Union. This is especially surprising in view of the fact that during the first twenty years after the Revolution, the Jews attained important achievements both in industrialization and agrarization. The Jews penetrated, perhaps for the first time in the history of the diaspora, into a number of branches of heavy industry such as heavy machinery production.

Approximately 300,000 Jews (11-12%) were active in the U.S.S.R. during the early 1930's in agriculture, both as individual farmers in suburban areas as well as in concentrated settlements in the Ukraine and the Crimea. Then suddenly, according to the 1939 census (the year of the outbreak of World War II), the proportion

of those engaged in agriculture decreased to 5.8% or 174,000 individuals. The post-World War II period brought a complete end to any agricultural activity among the Jewish population in the Soviet Union. A sharp decline was also noticeable in the field of manual labor.

Despite the fact that we have no official statistics available, we know from reliable reports that the class of manual laborers among Soviet Jewry has shrunk to a minority. The great majority of Soviet Jews earn their livelihood as clerks, largely as salesmen, in state-owned stores, or as small shopkeepers (also state-owned), or in second-hand shops (a return to the occupation of their fathers during the Middle Ages?), in soft-drink establishments, barbershops, etc. There are also some artisans and some are employed in public services. Those employed in industry occupy positions as engineers, technicians and plant managers.

To sum up, the Jewish people in the diaspora has reached the lowest degree in the proportion of its productive foundations and the process of deproductivization continues.

Regarding agriculture, it may be said without exaggeration that never before in the history of the diaspora has the proportion of Jews working in this sector dropped so low. Even before the French Revolution, when it was forbidden for Jews to acquire land, approximately one-third of the entire Jewish population in Poland lived in rural areas. The tendency towards agriculture among this group was very strong, even though it was not the main source of their income. Today, however, there is not a single country in the world where agriculture is a really important sector in Jewish life.

The parallel in the process between the capitalist and socialist countries is clearly evident. The only difference is that in the socialist countries this process is openly proclaimed, whereas in the capitalist countries it assumes the form of a social rise, as it were. But let us not be misled and find comfort in this. Some say, "What is there to complain about? We should rather be pleased with this, since it follows the trend in the population at large." Those who claim this ignore the obvious fact that whereas among the nations of the world social advancement is a matter of a single class, with us it is a matter of the people as a whole. The entire people, so to speak, rises on the social ladder and the consequence is that a constantly widening social gap develops between the Jews and their neighbors.

This situation has the possibility of hampering the future of the Jewish people, if only from an economic viewpoint, not to mention

anti-Semitism. Jewish concentration in limited branches of the economy, without attempting to penetrate basic branches, potentially limits the possibilities of future development. It contains the danger of an economic bottleneck which is apt to show its signs especially during periods of crisis.

Yet no propaganda for increased productivization among the Jews has any realistic chances of success in the diaspora. Perhaps ORT will succeed in building here and there a few more agricultural and trade schools. But this fact will not change the basic socio-economic structure of the Jewish people. It is doubtful whether anyone still believes that we are making any important strides toward any kind of productivization in any country of the diaspora. The dispersed Jewish people will not return to manual labor after their success in rising on the social scale, unless forced (*has v'halila!*) by the whip of compulsion.

From the political point of view, the situation is considerably worse, taking into account the civil security of the Jews in the diaspora. I believe that anti-Semitism is mainly a political phenomenon and its motivating forces are politically reactionary factors. The driving force behind anti-Semitism is the policy arising from the economic relations described above, which creates much inflammatory material for every possible reactionary outbreak.

The question remains: If anti-Semitism should come—and we have no guarantee that it will not—what influence will this unique socio-economic structure exert among the Jews?

A frightening feeling stems from the strange similarity between the proportion of Jews in the free professions in New York today and the proportion in Berlin of the early 1930's. In both places, the proportion of Jews among lawyers was approximately 50%. The percentage of Jewish physicians in New York is considerably greater than it was in Berlin of that day. The social system has not been cleansed of that frightening phenomenon.

In America, too, we are witness to the activity of these economic and social factors in the spread of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic tendencies among the population and discrimination in practice in governmental institutions is the price the Jews pay for their unique social status.

I recently spent two and one-half months in Poland. Intellectuals with whom I spoke told me that they frequently heard Polish workers complain: "Why do we not see any Jewish workers?" And a simple cleaning woman asked me: "Why do only we have to do this work?"

Why don't we see Jewish women, or at least one Jewish woman, that will do this type of work?"

We have already heard about edicts in the Soviet Union, which have not yet been confirmed but which may be believed, to the effect that no national group within the Soviet Union will be entitled to have more students in the universities than they have miners in the mines. We know for a fact that there are no Jewish miners in Polish mines nor in the Don Basin mines—nor in the Pennsylvania mines. In Pittsburgh, the greatest center of heavy industry in the world, Jews are not to be found in this industry. The Jews of Pittsburgh are occupied, like their fathers, in shopkeeping—large stores, to be sure—and if they are working at all in manufacturing, it is once again in the garment trade. Nothing has changed, not even alongside of the great furnaces which belch forth smoke day and night.

We must not conclude from this that it is necessary to begin immediately to propagandize and frighten American Jewry or any other Jewry that it is in danger. But it is our duty to alert the Jews of the diaspora to an awareness of the potential dangers, even if they are not imminent.

We may ask ourselves: What do the problems of our unique socio-economic structure have to do with the question of our existence as a nation?

It is advisable to adopt a realistic approach to this question. I agree with Prime Minister Ben Gurion that we would not have been able to exist in the diaspora for 2,000 years without our tremendous will and our deep belief in our future—in the coming of the Messiah. But there was also an economic factor which made this possible—the fact that we fulfilled a unique economic function.

It was not just a coincidence that during the lengthy period from the Middle Ages and afterwards until the days of the Nazi conquest of Poland, the Jews fulfilled such a function. Already in the days of Charlemagne the Jew was the synonym for a merchant, and in Poland—to the very eve of the catastrophe—the Jews were equated with dealers in merchandise. According to official statistics, 60% of all those engaged in commerce were Jews, and in areas densely populated by Jews, not less than 75%.

This economic function served as a factor for the continued existence of the Jewish nation. We were separate from our neighbors in our own eyes as well as in theirs. And may I comment here on Yeheskiel Kaufman's argument that historical materialism tries to interpret history from an economic viewpoint and wants to attribute

the existence of the Jewish people in the Middle Ages solely to commerce. Yet, he says, common sense would tell us that commerce was a binding rather than a separating factor.

I fear that Kaufman did not penetrate to the depth of the matter. Although the Jews did engage in commerce and thus had to come in contact with the rest of the population, it was not, however, a contact between equals, between similar public entities. The Jew was always on the other side of the barricade—or of the counter. He was always the tradesman, the innkeeper, the tavern-owner, and the Gentile was the peasant. Even if the contact was frequent, it was not likely to result in assimilation.

It is always worth remembering under what circumstances we existed in the diaspora for 2,000 years as a culturally-creative people. We lived under feudal or semi-feudal regimes. There is as yet no evidence of a Jewish community under another regime, neither feudal nor semi-feudal, in which the Jews existed as a culturally-creative people in the diaspora.

Today we live under different conditions. There is no longer a sizeable Jewish community living under a feudal, a backward capitalistic or a semi-feudal regime. The Jewish communities are today divided between modern capitalist countries, except in South America (which is not feudal in the sense that Eastern Europe was in its time) and socialist countries. In other words, not only has the Jewish *shtetl* (small town) disappeared from the world; the feudal or semi-feudal regime which gave rise to this *shtetl* no longer exists, or at least does not exist where Jews live.

This is the source of the crisis in Jewish culture in our time. There is no longer a unique Jewish economic function, and therefore assimilation begins. Certainly in Western Europe, the cradle of modern capitalism, assimilation began 150 years ago. Does this mean that we have already reached the final stages of our assimilation? Is there no more hope left for the Jews to exist as a unique entity in the Diaspora? Not at all. It is true that we have reached a degree of assimilation which eats away at our peoplehood everywhere in the world. But we have not yet reached disappearance, for reasons we shall discuss below.

There are objective factors that do not permit the Jewish people to complete the process of assimilation; i.e., to achieve total absorption. It would be worthwhile to make a clear distinction between the two concepts—assimilation and total absorption. Assimilation is into the mainstream of the majority nation. Total absorption (*tmiah* in

Hebrew) means the loss of all national striving—a national death.

There is no single country, either under capitalist or communist regimes, where the Jews have reached the point of total absorption. Even in the Soviet Union, where during the past forty years the process of assimilation has been carried on at a much faster pace than in the capitalist countries, we do not find a state of total absorption. This is no accident but a direct consequence of the unique economic foundations of the Jews.

Although the Jewish economic function has been concluded and eliminated from the world, the special economic structure of the Jews in the Diaspora remains in existence. One may safely ask, is the economic structure of the Jews in America similar to that of the entire population? The answer would be no. The same holds true in Poland, for example, despite the great differences between the regimes and conditions of the two countries. A widespread comment in Poland is that before the war the Jews controlled the reins of commerce and the Poles the reins of government. After the war the situations were exchanged: The Poles took over commerce and the Jews the government. In other words, now as then, the Jews are considered a separate group entity. And this special economic structure does not allow the Jews to assimilate completely or become totally absorbed.

It is worth exploring in detail such phenomena as the *internal* assimilation of the Jews. They are known on both sides of the ocean. There are social clubs in the United States where Jews meet only with their own kind. This is not a process of Americanization through contact between Jew and native American; this is the self-Americanization of Jews among themselves. A similar phenomenon recently became apparent in socialist Poland. Jewish officials who have reached high government and party positions gather among themselves for social purposes. It is true that there was Jewish assimilation in Poland: daughters were named Christina, after Jesus Christ, and much effort was exerted to obscure signs of Jewish origin; yet this was an "internal" assimilation—without any real social intercourse with the majority nation.

We could easily imagine a complete Jewish assimilation in America—assimilation to the point of absorption—if the economic-occupational distribution of the Jewish community paralleled the general population distribution. But a people which is made up *entirely* of businessmen and professionals cannot completely assimilate from a social point of view.

The same can be said about the Jews in the Soviet Union. Our

case against assimilation could not stand up if the Jews had advanced with the same process of productivization which began there at the beginning of the 1930's, and if they had integrated themselves socially and economically within the rest of the population. The reality is the exact opposite. This is not an accident but a parallel development; there is a causal relationship between the phenomenon of a unique economic structure and the fact that Jews assimilate yet are not totally absorbed.

What do we learn from this? Two things, both positive and negative. We must not delude ourselves. Even if we invest extraordinary efforts, we would not succeed in reviving Jewish culture in the Diaspora to its former high state. It will not again become a creative, productive Jewish culture. The truth is bitter, but it must be proclaimed. What we can still achieve today in the Diaspora is that the Jews shall be *consumers* of culture.

Is there anyone who believes that an Avraham Shlonsky or a Natan Alterman* will arise in the Diaspora? There is no longer any hope that a Jewish author will arise in the Diaspora who will write a historical novel in Hebrew. It is no accident that among the Yiddish writers in the United States—and may they have long years, for all are in the upper or past middle age—there is hardly a single one who was not born across the sea, who is not an “import” from Europe.

I remember the late Chaim Zitlowsky who said that a “Culture of Judaism” can be created in the English language, but not “Jewish Culture.” It is possible to establish theological institutions where one can study Hebrew literature, poetry of the Middle Ages, Bible, philosophy and perhaps even contemporary Hebrew poetry. But there will not be the dwelling places of a creative learning, with the possible exception of the fields of theology and Jewish wisdom (*hahmat Yisrael*). And certainly activity and creativity in these fields alone do not yet constitute Jewish culture.

Here we touch a problem which does not apply merely to the present situation, but also to periods of the flowering and heyday of Jewish culture in the Diaspora. Even those who wove dreams regarding the future of Jewish culture in the Diaspora failed to realize—even where it existed under feudal conditions—that it was, unwillingly, limited in scope and did not embrace all areas of life.

It can be said that our modern Yiddish culture—with the sole

* Among Israel's foremost poets.

exception of YIVO (Yiddish Scientific Institute)—was a *belle-lettristic* culture. Can the entire Jewish people live on *belles-lettres* alone? Even in the best periods, conditions in the Diaspora did not encourage a full cultural existence. Technology did not enter into its culture. And because heavy industry, electric power and mining were not Jewish fields, the resultant cultural life was limited. Today, we do not have the hope of even such a limited culture which flowered and gave rise to Sholem Aleichem, Peretz and others.

What must we do? While we have no hopes of reviving a worthwhile Jewish culture in the Diaspora, it is our duty to invest every possible effort to preserve what we do have, for it is our very being. But there is also another conclusion. I am in full agreement with Dr. A. Tartakower who says that there are not two solutions to the Jewish problem. From a historical point of view, there is but one fundamental and all-inclusive solution—the “ingathering of the exiles” and the building of Israel. Anyone who will propose another solution will only bring us a palliative prescription and not a real answer. The fact of the matter is that there is no way out of the Jewish economic plight in the Diaspora. This applies as well to those American Jews who today are “well off,” well-fixed and sure of themselves. There is no solution for this situation either in the capitalist or in the socialist regimes.

Of course, there is a period of quiet now and let us hope it will continue for a long time. But who can assure us that there will not be an outburst of reaction, particularly in the event of a world war waged in the name of fascism against socialism; and fascism in America, as the magazine *Commentary* has noted, can very well arrive under the guise of democracy.

There is no direct danger now. But there is not a Jew in the world who can live in such comparative peace and security as did the Jews at the start of the twentieth century, for example. If there is such a Jew, he is deceiving himself or creating a “suppression,” as the psychoanalysts put it. The tragi-comedy we witnessed of Jewish millionaires in North and South America sympathizing with or even joining the Communist Party originates in that feeling of insecurity. This is an effort to forestall both possible threats: *who knows what the morrow will bring*—they say in their hearts—*perhaps the communists will take power or, on the other hand, anti-Semitism will grow. Say what you wish about the Communists, they certainly fight anti-Semitism.*

So it becomes clear that from a political point of view there is no

solution to the Jewish need other than through the "ingathering of the exiles." Yet from a cultural point of view, can we allow Jewish culture in the Diaspora to die out after two thousand years of suffering and after so many and such fine individuals died for *Kiddush Hashem*—the death of martyrs?

There are possibilities of continuing the existence of Jewish culture, but there can be no solution of the problem without a basic change of its conditions. First of all, let not the "quick-cure" doctors, to paraphrase the prophet Jeremiah, claim that since we existed for 2,000 years in the Diaspora there is no reason why we will not continue to exist in the future. Yes, we shall exist, but it will be a degenerating existence which will last for decades (no one can guarantee centuries); an existence of economic, social and cultural degeneration. Prof. Tartakower correctly pointed out that the Jews in the Diaspora are turning into a kind of "marginal man." I would say that there is a danger that a new edition of Hellenistic Jewry will emerge; a Jewry that does not know a thing about itself. Therefore, it is essential that the Jewish people reach a point of self-awareness, from the economic, political and cultural aspects, in order to change its situation.

You may complain: I start with a molehill and end with a mountain; I start with materialism and economics and end with the dissemination of self-awareness and education. It is precisely here that I go in the footsteps of socialism. Marx makes the distinction between a proletariat as a class in itself and a proletariat as a class in its own eyes. The same can be said about the Jewish people. Unfortunately, the Jewish people in the Diaspora is, for the present, only a "people in itself" rather than a "people in its own self-awareness." It is not permeated with an awareness of its situation, nor does it recognize its great creative potential, whether in economic or in cultural creation which can be developed only in Israel. The people must attain an awareness of these powers so that it may put them to work. This is the only realistic way and there is no other.

Of course, enlightenment and education are not enough, even though education is the prime requisite. The important thing is the direction of this education; not just any Jewish education in the Diaspora, but schools which educate the youth toward pioneering and *aliya* to Israel.

This is a long historic process. But there are no short cuts in history. This is not minimalism—it is realism. Just as the working class is not satisfied solely with socialistic education but builds socialist in-

stitutions and fights the class struggle, so the Jewish people in the Diaspora has to educate itself towards a national struggle, must be alert to all that happens in Israel and must adopt a political stand—both a general progressive political stand as well as a correct national political stand.

We must *also* establish economic institutions as well as begin an *aliya*, especially among those classes which have little to lose because they are not too well off. This means those lower middle-class Jews who will not particularly worsen their situations when they emigrate to Israel. As the number of Jews who emigrate to Israel grows, from whatever class, the ties between the Diaspora and Israel will be strengthened and made closer.

The path is long and difficult. It requires a supreme effort, yet it is the path which leads to the glorious and desired end, for it does not negate the processes of history, but is the stuff that history is made of.

THE PERSISTING JEWISH ANOMALY

—DAVID FLAKSER

DURING my early school days, one of my teachers made a half-jesting, half cynical remark: "All peoples are equal, but the Jewish people are more equal."

She meant that the same scale used for measuring Jewish problems is not always that used for non-Jewish ones. This is because Jewish life, its economic roots (or rootlessness), the Jewish economic middle position and Jewish traditions and experiences separate Jews into a special group in all countries of their dispersion.

By saying that we are "a little more equal," or different, my teacher also sought to negate the common belief best expressed in the Jewish saying: "*Vee es kristelt zich, azoi idelt zich*"—"As Christians do, Jews do." Many Christian practices have been taken over by Jews. Large sectors of American Jewry take pains to conceal their identity. They like to keep up with the Joneses. They take pleasure in adopting as many Christian customs and holidays as possible. Christmas has become almost a Jewish holiday to them. The influence of their environment is great. It is external, however. When one regards the economic activities of the Jewish masses or considers the economic structure of the Jewish people in all countries where they are dispersed, including the United States where there are no anti-Jewish laws and where Jews believe themselves free citizens in the economic field, Jews are far different.

By saying that we Jews are "a little different," I do not mean to advance the chauvinist slogan that we are the "chosen people." The differences developed under socio-economic conditions in the course of many historic periods reflect the economic activities, and specifically the economic middle position the Jews occupy and have occupied during the dispersion. The exception, of course, is the trend toward normalization of Jewish life in Israel.

The sooner these special characteristics of Jewish life are recognized and the proper objective conclusions drawn from them, the sooner will be abandoned "Charity Zionism," or a special American Zionism which is the expression of sympathy to needy brethren who,

nebech, must flee from their homes to Israel. We in America are moved only insofar as we must extend our aid. We ourselves are, after all, in a fortunate position: Thank the Lord, we have our livelihood; America is not an exile for us; we are not hounded; we all have free rights; we are proud citizens of our land.

Moreover, the "Sympathetic Zionists" forget one thing—the necessity of taking stock of what is meant by *galut*—exile. Does *galut* mean only oppression and discriminatory laws? Or does *galut* mean the abnormality of Jewish life whose *base* lies in the economic structure of the various Jewish communities?

If one assumes *galut* means only oppression, suppression and anti-Jewish laws, the sense of not "feeling at home" in the various lands where Jews live now or lived in the past, it would appear that even in one and the same land, and at one and the same time, Jews can be *both* in *galut* and outside *galut*.

When we speak of the Babylonian exile, we cannot label those times when the Jews had full freedom and a broad self-government with the word *galut*. During that lengthy period, Jews encountered varying times, including times when they felt at home and knew no oppression. The greatest cultural landmark of Jewish history, the Babylonian Talmud, after all was created in the Babylonian exile. According to this approach, one can use *galut* only for periods of oppression.

When Jews were essential for the development of commerce in the time of Charlemagne (768-814 C.E.) who had organized a centralized empire in the midst of a decentralized feudal world and where commerce helped strengthen the central power, Jews received special privileges and Charlemagne even helped to establish Talmudic academies on the banks of the Rhine in order to help develop Jewish centers. Under the above interpretation, this would mean that these Jews were not in *galut*, and only when the central power was weakened and the feudal forces and the church raised their heads again and the Jews were once more under oppression which increased steadily—only then could we say that Jews were in *galut*.

Such an approach which ignores the socio-economic factors that Jews, sooner or later, constituted a special abnormal economic grouping would mean denying historical truths.

The complete freedom, the economic prosperity and cultural blossoming of the Jews in Arabic and early Christian Spain also did not mean *galut* in these terms. According to this perverted interpretation, the *galut* in Spain began only with the oppression of the Jews

which reached its climax with the expulsion during the Inquisition.

When the Polish kings attempted to attract Jews in order to develop their towns and their commerce and gave them special privileges, broad autonomy and self-government which was in fact a state within a state, the Jews in Poland, according to the above theory, were not in *galut*. But when Polish anti-Semitism re-raised its poisonous head, only then did the Jews of Poland enter a *galut*.

Jews are going through good times in America. They are free citizens. They have a good livelihood. Then how is it possible to call this heaven-blessed land, this land where *halah* is eaten in mid-week, a *galut*? The real roots of *galut* lie first of all in the abnormal Jewish economics. In our country, this means that Jews are more and more concentrated in communications, distribution and in the professions, and less and less in industry, in directly productive activity. Times change, social formations shift, but Jews continue to occupy the middle positions in the various societies: feudalism, commercial capitalism, industrial capitalism, and even under socialism. Everywhere in all eras and in all lands of the dispersion, in better or worse times, the same tendency appears among the Jewish masses: they concentrate in the in-between branches of the economy, a result of historical and socio-economic conditions.

About fifty years ago, the great Jewish Marxist theoretician and founder of Socialist-Zionism, Ber Borochof, foretold the truths which are today, particularly in America, sharper, more prominent, and even more apropos than in the times of his theoretical prophecies. Borochof's founding of Socialist-Zionism established the necessity for a Jewish territorial concentration in the Land of Israel, not alone because Jews were oppressed as a national minority in the various countries in which they found themselves. First of all, Borochof analyzed the specific attributes of the Jewish economic position which are the main reason for all abnormalities. For Borochof, Jewish territorial concentration in the Land of Israel was primarily an instrument for normalizing Jewish economic life in order to create a normal existence in all other aspects.

On the other hand, the so-called "Marxist" opponents of Socialist-Zionism, especially the Jewish Communists, utilized the dialectic as a kind of magic rope for performing dialectic tricks further obscured by magician's patter, and thereby did not wish, and were not able, to see the unique Jewish problems. They hid their hatred of Jewish workers and folk interest behind falsely interpreted Marxist phraseology. Theoretically they juggled phrases and refused or were unable

to understand that Marxism is the opposite of dogmatism, that it must be applied to differing conditions and that first of all it requires the seeking out of the economic factors within Jewish life.

The opponents of Socialist-Zionism have laughed cynically at Borochovism. The Jewish masses, they said, would not go to the "Palestinian wastelands." They would move to America and to the more highly industrialized country and there become "proletarianized." A normal, healthy Jewish working class was to be created.

But this is what Borochov said almost half a century ago in the time when the majority of Jews were still concentrated in the old Russian Empire: "The special condition of the Jews finds its expression and its outlet in the growing Jewish emigration which is turning in the first place to the lands of great industrial capital."

But to what degree is this a solution for this special Jewish problem?

"The Jewish emigration in this direction does not solve the national problem. It simply transports it to new places where there quickly appears the permanent companions of the Jewish anomaly." (Borochov: *Projected Program of the Jewish Socialist Workers Party—Poale Zion*).

A mass of two million Jewish immigrants poured into America in the years 1880 to 1920, consisting of *luftmenschen** from the poverty-stricken Jewish small towns. This mass at the beginning actually became proletarianized, largely through becoming wage workers.

But this was a temporary proletarianization to bide the time until they were acclimatized. Later they were to return under other circumstances to the economic middle positions.

"The desire to rise characterized the Jewish working masses. Tailors, shoemakers, cigar makers threw their work aside and with the greatest exertion and the bitterest sacrifices strove to achieve a *tachlis*—to become insurance agents, dentists, doctors, lawyers and more often self-employed business men. Thus the makeup of the Jewish working class was constantly in a state of flux. . . . All of these unique phenomena of the Jewish workers' life have their roots in the general historic attributes of our economic position."

All those who close their eyes today and simply refuse to see the specifics (quite often because of reasons of comfort) are not able to understand Jewish life with all its complicated problems.

* *Luftmenschen*: Literally, those who earn their living from the air, or by their wits; persons without trades or skills.

In what sense are the Jewish people unique? In order to find the answer, we have to look into two sources: The history of the *galut* and the present economic and social position of the Jewish people in all the lands of the dispersion. This does not exclude the most prosperous Jewish community, the U.S.A.

How do the economic differences of the Jewish masses in America express themselves?

If we were to cut a cross-section of ten thousand Poles or Irish or Italians or any other ethnic group in America and dissect their economic positions, we would obtain more or less the same proportions as in the general economic life of the country. Of course, we do not speak here of newly-arrived immigrant masses. These generally become wage workers in a factory or on the land. Later, having spent some time in the country and learned its language, they gradually become acclimatized. They begin to become psychologically, socially and politically a part of the country, and then begin to utilize all of their possibilities. Some become businessmen, independent entrepreneurs; some begin to go over to the middle class, and a much smaller part even to the upper middle class. A certain proportion send their children to study and to take their place in the free professions. The greatest majority, however, remain wage workers. The immigrant mass which originally consisted of proletarians begins to create class differentiations. It becomes an integral part of the land.

The middle class of every ethnic group in America never exceeds its proportion in the economic grouping of the general American population.

But if we should take a cross-section of ten thousand Jews and dissect it into its socio-economic components, we would obtain an inverted pyramid. Among all other ethnic groups, like the entire general American population, the greatest majority consists of wage workers and farmers; a smaller grouping occupies the middle positions and the professions and a still smaller part belongs to the economic peaks which control the basic industries of the country. Jews however are largely a petit bourgeois people. The broadest portion of the Jewish population occupies the middle positions in the American economy. The Jewish economic positions are largely in communications and distribution as well as in those professions which are a part of that class.

As early as 1790 when there were no more than 2,500 Jews in the entire country, "they made up one class—a middle class." (J. R. Marcus: *Early American Jewry*.)

Jews are largely an urban element, and not only urban but metropolitan. More than 80 percent of the Jewish population (i.e., four out of the five million Jews) lives in cities with a population of more than 100,000. Half of the Jewish population in this country lives in two cities, New York and Chicago. Jews make up only 3.5 per cent of the general population.

At a time when the proportion of the general population in commerce and in the professions totals 13.8 per cent, the percentage of Jews in commerce and in the professions is approximately 40 per cent.

Even in the difficult crisis years of the early 1930s until 1935, 20 per cent of the commerce in the industrial city of Detroit was in Jewish hands at a time when the Jews totalled no more than 5 percent of the general population. In the past twenty years, years of prosperity, the proportion of Jewish business men has grown tremendously.

Of fourteen cities (outside of New York) which were surveyed, the figures show that 75 to 96 per cent of all employed Jews were in business or in the professions.

In New York City, a larger working class has remained temporarily, made up mostly of an immigrant element. Children of these immigrants are to a lesser degree employed as wage workers and by the third or fourth generation the proportion of wage workers becomes insignificant. The ideal of a Jewish worker can be formulated as follows: "My child will no longer be a worker. He will become a businessman or a professional." Thus, in New York City, the number of Jews in commerce, owners of smaller or larger factories, or in the professions reaches two-thirds of the Jewish population.

From the same study of the fourteen cities outside of New York, we discover that in the years 1935-1945 the average proportion of Jewish professionals was 15 per cent, or an increase of 4 per cent in comparison with the previous decade. In the decade between 1945-1955 the number of Jewish professionals increased even more markedly.

In New Orleans, with an average small Jewish community of 9,200, the number of Jewish professionals increased in the last decade from 15 to 21 per cent.

In San Francisco, eighteen of every 1,000 Jews are lawyers or judges and sixteen of every 1,000 Jews are physicians. In the general population in the same city there were five judges and lawyers and five doctors per 1,000 population.

In the industrial steel city of Pittsburgh, there were fourteen lawyers and judges and thirteen doctors among every 1,000 Jews,

while in the general population there were four lawyers and four doctors.

A study of New York City shows that one out of six Jews over eighteen years of age either attended or completed a school of higher education. In other cities where the number of foreign-born Jews is much smaller, the percentage of Jews who complete a higher educational institution is much greater. When one compares these figures with the general population in America which shows that there is only one university graduate per twenty citizens, one sees clearly the continual growth of the proportion of Jewish professionals.

Even in the somewhat outdated information of a study made twenty years ago of the number of Jewish students in the American universities, we note a typical Jewish phenomenon at a time when Jews numbered only $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the general population, the percentage of Jewish students in all higher educational institutions was above 9 per cent. The proportion of Jewish students studying in schools of dentistry reached 26 per cent; in schools of law, 25 per cent; in pharmacy schools, 23.3 per cent, although in recent years there is a tendency toward fewer Jews in pharmacy; in medical schools, 16.1 per cent. The proportion of Jewish students in medical and other professional schools would probably have been even higher if not for the special anti-Semitic discrimination which still governs a number of universities, particularly in their medical faculties. Because of this discriminatory practice, a number of Jewish students study in European universities. Their exact number is unknown.

The income of Jewish professionals is also higher than the average income of non-Jewish professionals. In an entire list of cities, the income is as high as up to 25 per cent above the rest.

While Jews are broadly represented in the professions, it is interesting to note that they make up a smaller proportion in those professions which are closely tied to the basic industries of the country. The number of Jews in agronomy, engineering and similar professions is quite small in comparison with the number of physicians, lawyers, dentists, etc., and one seldom sees a Jewish engineer in the great industrial enterprises. The Jewish professional is tied to and is an integral part of the Jewish middle class.*

* Most analysts of the American Jewish scene lump into the middle class all higher income workers who should be placed instead among wage workers. They also err in placing the small, self-employed enterprisers, such as peddlers, into the ranks of the working class when in fact, from an economic viewpoint, they are more properly in the middle class. Actually, from an

Jews are typically petit bourgeois. There were opportunities and Jews had the necessary abilities and experience to penetrate more and more into the American upper class, yet they are almost unrepresented in industrial and finance capital. Jews are not noticeable in those economic positions which control the main sinews of the economy. They are not represented in heavy industry, such as steel, metallurgy, coal and other mining industries, automobiles, railroads, machine industry and other similar basic branches of the American economy.

Jews have almost no representation in the gigantic insurance institutions which control many other enterprises, especially real property, except as insurance agents—a typical middle class position. Jews are represented to a very small extent in the banking business. A statistical report dated 1936 shows that from among 420 bank directors in the city of New York with its great Jewish population, only thirty-three were Jews. Outside of New York the influence of Jews in banks is practically non-existent.

Many years ago Borochov wrote: "Today there is not even one serious observer of Jewish life who can fail to see that the economic foundations of Jewish existence are not normal, but what this anomaly consists of is still far from clear to these researchers."

Those Jewish researchers who devote themselves to gathering facts concerning Jewish economic life gather and classify these facts in a scientific way. But when they draw conclusions from them, they become apologists and continually excuse themselves by saying: "What is so abnormal about Jews entering more and more into the economic middle positions of the American economy? What is so bad about Jews going into the professions? These are quite honorable occupations and we Jews are honorable citizens of our free country." The apologists gather facts concerning the Jewish community *in America* and thereby fail to see the Jewish community as a whole. They see only the individual, the honorable citizen. They do not see and refuse to see the national and social problem of a typical Jewish diaspora economy.

With the exception of a number of Jews who are represented in the poultry and egg farms (and who are actually owners of egg factories rather than typical American farmers), Jews are hardly represented in American agriculture. Concerning this the apologists have

economic standpoint, a person's position in society is determined by his economic, not income, position, and therefore a high paid wage worker is not of the middle class.

a ready excuse: "How could the constantly growing Jewish masses in America take their proportional place in American agriculture when the general farm population gets smaller and smaller? In 1870, 50 per cent of the general population was engaged in agriculture and today only 17.5 per cent of the population is involved in farming. This is precisely the period when the Jewish community in America grew to its present figure. It follows that at a time when the general farm population was in the process of growing smaller, the newly arrived Jew could not take his rightful place in agriculture."

This sounds quite logical—on the surface. But the apologists forget that in the same period America became a land of strongly concentrated great industry. The Jewish masses did not find their place in all these growing heavy industries either.

The number of wage workers in comparison with the general population is continually growing with the development of American production. At the same time, the number of Jewish wage workers is shrinking. With the increasing proletarianization of the American people, an inverted process takes place in Jewish life—a growing de-proletarianization.

Jewish life in America is beginning to take on similar forms to those in pre-Hitler Germany, where the 600,000 German Jews found themselves in the ranks of a competing German middle class.

The Jewish immigrant masses, especially those who came from East European countries and who were largely a declassed element coming from the poor *shtetl* (small town) immediately and quickly were proletarianized and became wage workers. They contributed a great deal to the development of light industry in America. They built trade unions, they created workers' cultural organizations, the Jewish labor press, Jewish labor parties, Jewish fraternal organizations and Jewish workers' children's schools. They took part in and led many heroic class struggles. They were even an important factor in helping to organize American workers in general. But in the midst of this feverish activity of the Jewish working class there took place (and it still continues) a counter process—the deproletarianization of the Jewish masses.

A number of the organizations which were created and built by the Jewish working class still parades today as workers' organizations, but the majority of their members are no longer workers. The Jews strove to become economically self-sufficient, strove to become business-men or professionals: "My child in America will not darken his years in the factory."

There developed the old pseudo-aristocratic East European *shtetl* attitude to physical labor. Among quite broad sectors of the Jewish population, one looks down on someone who is affianced to a worker. Physical labor to this group has become a shameful thing. And all this takes place in a land where creative work is highly glorified.

This phenomenon is not encountered in any other ethnic group in our many-peopled land.

With the quick development of American productive capacity, with the growth of the number of wage workers, with the increasing concentration of monopoly capitalism, the petit bourgeois has ceased to play an independent role in economic life. The middle class becomes more dependent. Many more powerful economic forces control the nerve centers of the entire economic structure.

The position of the Jews as a group within the ranks of the general middle class becomes in certain times a very delicate and specific problem. In moments of economic and political crises, in times of public upheaval, the uniqueness of the Jewish economic middle positions becomes more noticeable and sharper; the separate corners of Jewish economic activity become a good object for anti-Semitic attacks. Such tragic events have been repeated too often in the distant as well as in the more recent past. One must be socially blind not to understand this.

A number of researchers, especially among the non-Jews, have concerned themselves with the role of the Jews as petit bourgeois and about the position of the Jewish petit bourgeoisie in the middle class.

It is interesting to note that while the Jewish researchers are apologetic and actually are afraid to make a correct diagnosis, the non-Jewish researchers make an earnest attempt to draw objective conclusions. Thus the researchers Simpson and Yinger analyze the situation in *Racial and Cultural Minorities in America*: "The middle class position and the position of the Jews within the middle class deserve special attention. Jews have risen faster than other ethnic groups and this rapid upward circulation has created hostility towards them on the part of both the non-Jewish 'native' middle class and the immigrant groups which have been slower to develop a middle class."

The authors of this important work see the Jewish problem in its full sharpness. They see the Jewish economic positions and the hostile attitudes of the environment much more clearly than many Jewish public leaders who attempt to close their eyes because an

objective analysis might make for a very sad appraisal.

Another non-Jewish researcher, Carey McWilliams, in his important work *A Mask for Privilege* is objective in his research and in his diagnosis makes a perhaps unconscious Marxist analysis of the position of the Jews in the American economy, of the role of the Jews as a middle class people functioning within the general middle class. He writes, "In fact, the economic impasse which Jews now face in America is remarkably similar to that which they faced in Europe prior to the Second World War. In the steady concentration of wealth and economic power in modern industrial nations, as this concentration progresses, the amount of the national income left for the middle class after monopoly has extracted its share becomes the prize of an ever fiercer struggle. The exposed economic position of the Jew is then subject to increased pressure from three directions: from above (monopoly); from below (the working class) and from within, the middle class itself."

This tragic role of the Jewish middle class positions should have served for the Jewish masses, and especially for their responsible public leadership, as a required lecture for drawing the proper conclusions. The historic development of the Jewish people in all of its diasporas and the conflicting positions of the Jews in America have a lot in common.

McWilliams quotes from Waldo Frank:

"As Waldo Frank has so well said, the position of the Jew consists in the fact that he is allied with an agonizing and desperate middle class. Whenever that class flourished, the Jews functioning in it were tolerated in it. Now that it drops and its spoils dwindle, it turns like a threatened beast against its weaker neighbor."

Of course this is not a matter of blaming the Jewish grocer for being a grocer and not going to work in coal mines. Nor is it a matter of blaming the Jewish lawyer for not becoming a land worker. Such an approach is childish and naive. Every individual seeks his economic place and tries to better himself in the best way that he can. Each one seeks to utilize all of his abilities and possibilities for economic security. This is not a problem for the individual, but is a broad and constant Jewish social problem which is characteristic for all the diasporas. But we must have complaints against those public leaders who wish to do away with the entire problem through apologies or excuses, or who attempt to deny historic problems, which fact places a great responsibility, at least on the more progressive leadership.

Borochoy, who did not look upon Marxism as a petrified dogma

but as a research method to analyze the complicated social problems of life, must be considered as the greatest socialist theoretician on the national question in general.

Many Marxist thinkers created theories about the national question. But not one of these theories was able to give a fundamental solution for the Jewish problems from a social-scientific standpoint. All were riddled with internal contradictions. The theorists were not able to place themselves on the proper objective level in order to consider the specific positions of Jewish participation in the economies of the countries of the diaspora.

All these theories could not grasp the fact that the specific Jewish situation was not only a result of good or bad regimes, but that its roots historically and socially were economic in nature. Not one of the Marxist theoreticians on the national question saw that the only way out of Jewish uniqueness lay in a fundamental social and economic reconstruction of Jewish life which could only be realized through territorial concentration. They did not realize that the struggle for socialism is not carried on in a vacuum but within certain national boundaries. They did not see that socialism can be realized only within the framework and under the conditions of normal self-developing nations.

Borochoy, the anti-dogmatic Marxist, did not utilize Marx's approach to the national problem but rather used Marxism as a research method to the Jewish reality. Only in this fashion was he able to create a natural synthesis between Socialism and Zionism as the Jewish national liberation movement.

Borochoy's thesis went as follows: the liberation of the peoples and the normalization of abnormal peoples is a pre-condition in the struggle for the coming socialist society.

This opinion has been confirmed historically.

Borochoy's analyses of the national question in general and of the Jewish problem in particular have been confirmed in the light of the great historic events of our days. The emphasis of the international class struggle has for the last few decades been transferred from the political class struggle of the factory workers in the highly industrialized and developed countries to the global struggle of the nations for their normalization, their freedom and their independence. At the beginning of the century, the factory stood at the center of the international class struggle, led by the growing industrial workers' class. But economic struggle, whether for shorter working hours or for higher wages, actually became a political struggle. These struggles were steps

which were supposed to lead the workers' class to its final and decisive struggle for socialism.

What do we see today? The economic struggles of the working class in the highly developed industrial countries are less and less bound to the political struggle for socialism.

The center of the international class struggle has been moved to the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, to the struggle of the nations for their social and national freedom. The fight for national freedom and sovereignty began first in Europe and later was transferred to the nations of Asia and Africa.

The struggle of the Jewish world people for territorial concentration, for the normalization of Jewish life, is not an isolated phenomenon. The 2,000-year Jewish dream of a return to Zion had always been a Jewish national dream. This dream was able to reach the starting point of its realization only in a time of complicated anti-imperialist contests.

Borochov's theoretical prophecy that the struggle for national freedom is a precondition in the struggle for socialism has been completely confirmed in the light of historic developments. Coming back to the Borochovist assumption, we see that the normalization of the Jewish people through territorial concentration in the Jewish homeland is an inseparable part of the great world-wide struggle of larger and small peoples for freedom and independence.

What was Borochov's approach and interpretation to Zionism and how did he view the struggle for socialism, both of which he had synthesized in his theories?

According to Borochov, Zionism as a political movement could arise only in a certain period of general and Jewish development. Zionism as a social-political solution did not arise merely because a clever leader such as Herzl and others had thought up a clever idea or a clever program which was supposed to solve the problem of Jewish dispersion. Rather, it was the historic conditions which called forth the Zionist movement, and the same historic and social-economic conditions will create the groundwork and prepare the objective and subjective factors for the realization of Zionism.

Utopian socialists did not consider socialism as the outgrowth of a historic development. Their socialism was entirely dependent on the good will of its proponents. Since the socialist society is more rational than any other social system, it will appeal to human intelligence which will then found socialist settlements. The important thing is to work out a good plan for such settlements.

Herzl's approach to the realization of Zionism was also one which did not see the objective social-economic conditions for its realization. Herzl, too, thought that everything was dependent on the subjective will of his adherents. For Herzl, Zionism was a grandiose plan for a national public undertaking. Its realization was dependent only on our own will and our will was dependent only on our subjective strength. But the will for the return to Zion had existed in all generations and in all diasporas and, according to Herzl, it would be able to prepare the land and pave the road. Herzl's well-known aphorism, "If you will it, it is no legend," expresses the essence of his entire world outlook, which was a purely voluntaristic undertaking.

Borochoy as a Marxist could not imagine that a national revolution such as the reconstruction of Jewish life could be a purely mechanical communal undertaking. For Borochoy the realization of Zionism was tied up with a certain period in which historic and social-economic conditions would ripen the necessary objective and subjective factors for its realization.

Borochoy's theory of a *stychic* process is the very foundation of his analysis of the Jewish national and social freedom movement. It is the basis of his social scientific synthesis between Zionism and Socialism. As the greatest theoretician on the national question who in his own time was completely rejected by the official socialist movement, Borochoy prophetically anticipated the organic unity of class struggle and socialism with proletarian nationalism. He therefore also considered Zionism in the light of the Marxist dialectic. Borochoy's analysis of Zionism was tied up with a social-economic historical determinism. Its realization was tied to unavoidable conditions whereby Jews were pushed out of their economic positions. Even their constant migration to new diasporas did not and would not solve the fundamental problems of the Jewish anomaly.

The Marxist theories of economic determinism are based on historic and economic necessity. The transition from one social-economic formation to another is carried through the class struggle and is accelerated through *stychic* processes: All social orders have within them the potential forces which will destroy them. Within them are hidden the potential of a new society.

In this way economic determinism, which Borochoy describes as the *stychic* processes, worked so that the primitive communal societies should develop into patriarchies, from a nomad economy to agriculture; later to the slave and feudal societies with their decentralized kingdoms.

Even during the feudalism of the Middle Ages there developed the forces for its destruction. Commerce developed which gradually destroyed the boundaries of the local feudal economies. Cities were developed which brought about the weakening of the political power of the feudal lords and strengthened the power of the private entrepreneurs. This gave a further push to the development of commercial capitalism. This capitalism outgrew the overlordship of absolutism and led to the Industrial Revolution. Development of commerce and industry needed broader freedoms. As a result there came the bourgeois revolutions. In most of the developed countries, bourgeois democracy arose. Socialism must be borne in the womb of the capitalist society as a result of the contradictions which appear through the industrial capitalist development. These *stychic* processes are accelerated through class struggle and are, according to Marxism, dictated by a certain economic determinism and are applicable to the social-economic processes and historic conditions of the Jewish people.

Borochoy saw the realization of Zionism pushed forward through internal and external *stychic* processes which prepare certain subjective and objective conditions. The social-economic positions of the Jews in the diasporas must lead to a situation with the passage of time when they must become more and more territorially concentrated in the Jewish homeland. Of course, this *stychic* process does not take place of itself. Because it creates the subjective factors towards the realization of Zionism, it calls forth the volunteering and the necessary enthusiasm for the ideas which are historically underlined by the *stychic* process. Borochoy, as a Marxist, therefore looked upon the realization of Zionism as a historically necessary and unavoidable process in the struggle for Jewish national survival and for creating a base for socialism in a normalized Jewish life.

The driving force from one social formation to another is, according to Marx, the class struggle caused by the changing conditions of production. Struggle goes on over the ownership of the means of production. But this struggle is not carried on in limbo but on a specific territory in a certain social-political unity. Among dogmatic Marxists this territorial unity is the sole identifying feature of a national entity. If a national folk group does not have one of its normal attributes which define a nation—a territory, an economic unity, a language or a specific culture and past—or if it fails to have its own economic base, it cannot be defined as a national entity.

According to Borochoy, when a people does not have one of these attributes—its own territorial base—it means only that this

people does not live under normal conditions of production. This means that it must call forth the forces for its normalization. Two eyes, two hands and two feet are the identifying features which define the human being. But a man with a bad eye also goes under the definition of "human being" and the lack of a normal economic base for the Jewish people can only call forth the historic necessity for its normalization.

Borochov wrote:

"The class struggle assumes the character of a social problem wherever the development of the forces of production conflicts with the state of the relations of production, i.e., when the state of the relations of production is no longer suitable to the further development of production. . . .

"Similarly the national problem must be recognized as a conflict between the development of the productive forces and the state of productive relations."

Further, Borochov states:

"The class struggle is waged over the material wealth of the classes, i.e., over the ownership of the means of production. These means of production may be material or intangible. The national struggle, too, is waged over the material wealth of the conditions of production, the territory and all the products of the material culture."

Accordingly, Borochov sees the national struggle as an important phase of the general class struggle. Despite the fact that a trend towards class consciousness and towards national consciousness tend to obfuscate each other, "it also happens that the interests of the members of a nation which finds itself in abnormal production conditions are actually in harmony."

Borochov draws a sharp difference between national and nationalist interest, between nationalism and chauvinism. While the national interests are always identical with the interests of the working people, the ideology of the nationalists becomes a cover for chauvinism and is a spiritual weapon in the hands of the ruling class. Borochov, however, warned against the influence both of bourgeois Zionism, which had a tendency to becloud the class consciousness of the Jewish worker, as well as against the mechanical dogmatic Marxists who negated and obscured the national consciousness of the Jewish masses and negated the Jewish national liberation movement which set as its goal the creation of a normal territorial economic base for the Jewish people. Borochov therefore warns against both tendencies:

"When consciousness is obscured, whether class consciousness or

national consciousness, the effect is always harmful, whether it arises from class or national demagogy. It does not matter whether it is the national or the class interests which are thus obscured. Both types of confusion of consciousness are harmful and reactionary.”

In our own times, we see how a large portion of those who call themselves Socialist-Zionists obscured their class consciousness and thereby betrayed the interests of the working class. On the other hand, we see how the Jewish Communists who consider themselves fighters for socialism obscured their national consciousness. Borochof's synthesis between the struggle for socialism and the struggle for a national liberation movement of the Jewish people warns against “both types of confusion of consciousness as harmful and reactionary.”

Borochof's definition of people and nation is therefore considerably different from that of other Marxist theoreticians:

“A society which has developed throughout under the same conditions of production is commonly called a ‘people.’ The same society which is in addition united by a consciousness among its individual members of a kinship arising from a common historic past is commonly called a ‘nation.’ Thus a people becomes a nation only at a higher level of its development. The feeling of kinship which is created as a result of the common historic past and which is rooted in common conditions of production calls itself ‘nationalism.’” (Borochof, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*).

The early days of the Jewish labor movement were under the influence of mechanical dogmatic Marxism which thought that the struggle for national social and economic reconstruction diverts the attention from the struggle for socialism. It was then necessary to show theoretically that Jews were a world-wide national entity. It was necessary to show that not only do Jews have a common past, but that also the Jewish present was in all eras in all lands of the dispersion very similar. This expresses itself in the abnormal production conditions of the Jewish people.

The conditions of production of the Jewish people or their role and their participation in the economic structure of various countries and under various socio-economic formations is and has always been an abnormal one. Throughout the entire diaspora history, regardless of country or economic system, Jews always found themselves in the economic in-between positions of the non-Jewish national economies. The majority of the Jewish people economically and consequently socially and politically in all periods have been caught between the millstones of history. The social processes in the various diasporas

flamed up, from time to time, into wild anti-Semitism caused by national competition. This creates the eternal tendency to exploit the Jews as a scapegoat in internal social conflicts.

The opponents of Borochovism, both from the bourgeois elements as well as from the socialist sources whose thinking is dominated by mechanical, dogmatic Marxism, always argued that the exposed position of the Jews in the lands of their dispersion was only a result of reactionary regimes. If these regimes are overthrown, then all problems will be solved. As proof, they said: Look at East Europe where the majority of the Jewish people is concentrated. The Jews constitute a declassed mass. As soon as these declassed Jews from the East European countries come to America or to other more advanced industrial countries where Jews have equal opportunities, we see how the Jewish immigrant, who only yesterday was a storekeeper or a *luftmensch*, became proletarianized.

It is true that the Jewish masses did really become proletarianized. They built the needle trades and many other industries. The Jewish immigrants became wage workers. They showed that the production conditions of the Jewish immigrant are the same as any other immigrant. They became the same as the other parts of the population. Jews ceased to be a people exclusively of the middle class.

Borochov considered the situation of the Jewish population from a Marxist viewpoint. This means that he first analyzed the socio-economic positions of the Jews responsible for the eternal Jewish anomaly. The sickness consists of the abnormal Jewish economic base in all countries of the Jewish dispersion. The further development of the economic and social-political conditions pushes the Jews out of their positions. This creates the objective and subjective factors for a fundamental solution through the normalization of the Jewish economic base.

Such a normalization of the production conditions of the Jewish people is possible only through a territorial concentration, and such a concentration can only take place in the historic Jewish homeland.

Borochov appeared on the arena of Jewish public and political life in an era of flourishing movements for liberation among the many peoples in the Eastern European lands, especially Russia. This was the time of the first Russian Revolution, in 1905. For the oppressed masses, especially for the Jewish people, a ray of possible freedom appeared. They saw the possibility of throwing off the old life, ridding themselves of the autocratic regime in which virtual slavery made life—especially Jewish life—unbearable. To fight against these con-

ditions was possible only under the flag of an "ism." The many different theoretical discussions in this era found open ears and open minds among the spiritually hungry masses. This period of throwing off the remnants of the dark ages in Jewish life was also the time of the great cultural awakening in all phases of Jewish cultural creation. This era marked the theoretical and practical paths in which later Jewish life developed.

In contrast, our own time tends towards shallowness in social thinking. Theoretical discussion in public life are things of the past. People fear any theoretical analysis of social problems. Social movements have entered a phase of blind traditionalism. Any deepening of theory throwing light on future historical paths is rejected. We are now over-practical and material minded.

Quite different was the era from which the Jewish prophet-socialist Borochof arose. The start of this century was a time in Jewish life when social ideas were more than dreams or aspirations. There was a need for practical realization of these dreams. Social theories were the spiritual driving forces towards finding a solution to the problems which plagued the Jewish masses.

People could seek solutions to their problems only within the different socio-political trends. These solutions were connected with revolutionary actions, and these, in turn, were impossible without a revolutionary theory. The theoretical discussions in Jewish public life and among Jewish workers occupied the focal point of attention among the militant masses.

Many others spoke about and defended the pairing of Socialism and Zionism. In fact, many theories of national survival of oppressed peoples were clad in socialist trimmings. The Socialism and Zionism of the non-Borochovists were purely utopian, although they grew out of specific historical needs. But they did not see the socio-economic and political forces necessary for their realization.

Karl Marx, himself a product of the environment at the beginning of modern capitalist society, could not see the national problems in all their implications. Therefore, Marx did not understand the development and outlook of the complicated national problem. He negated the struggle for national independence for many smaller nationalities. Still more, Marx negated the Jewish national problem from which he was entirely estranged. The Jewish money lender of the Middle Ages was the typical representative, to him, of the Jewish people.

Borochof, in analyzing the Jewish economic middle positions

within the general economic structure, and in noting the economic driving forces, transformed utopian Socialist-Zionism into a social-economic science. Borochov confirmed the organic unity of socialism and proletarian nationalism.

The non-Borochovist socialist parties, especially the Bund, sought to attach patches of nationalism to their "socialism." These socialists were eternally apologizing because they, as socialists, were occupied with the Jewish national problem which, according to dogmatic Marxism, was considered as something belonging only to the bourgeoisie. Others, the nationalist-chauvinist elements, decorated chauvinism with a thin veneer of socialist phraseology.

In those days, many socialist labor leaders were faced with the eternal problem of how to connect the class struggle with the national interests. Those who looked at the national interests from a bourgeois viewpoint quite often betrayed the essential interests of the working masses, while others could not see that the struggle for national liberation, and for the normalization of a people through territorial concentration, is a part of the class struggle. As a result, they often played into the hands of the worst enemies of the Jewish people.

Borochov led a pitiless struggle against the opportunists of the Right and Left. He continuously showed that the Right elements of Labor Zionism betrayed the interests of the working class and were carried along the path of petit bourgeois chauvinism. On the other hand, he fought continuously against the dogmatic, mechanistic Left for their betrayal of the best national interests of the Jewish working class and of the Jewish people as a whole. Of these elements Borochov wrote:

"One who has no feeling for national self-respect can have no feeling for the self-respect for his class." (*National Weakness and Self-Help*).

And here is what Borochov said of the same problem in his *Class Struggle and the National Question*:

"The dimming of self-consciousness—class or national consciousness—is always harmful regardless of whether it arises from class demagogy or national demagogy. Both are dangerous when either the national interests or the class interests of workers become muddled. Both types of confusion concerning identification with class or nation are dangerous and reactionary."

Opportunists of the Right have always tried to put forward the nationalistic consciousness at the expense of class consciousness. They were always ready to sacrifice the interests of the working class by

speaking in the name of "all" the people. The opportunists of the Left were always ready to sacrifice the interests of the people when it seemed to them that this would dim their class consciousness. That is why the opportunists of the Left never realized that the interests of the people are never in contradiction with the interests of the working class. To the contrary; they are identical.

The historical events of the past half century in Jewish as well as in general life proved many times the eternal truth and constructiveness of Borochov's attitude toward the national problem we have witnessed many struggles of oppressed peoples for their freedom and independence as pre-conditions of the struggle of the working class for a new socialist society. The center of the class struggle of the not-yet sovereign peoples in Europe before and after World War I, the awakening of the peoples of Asia and Africa in our present era, all these historic events prove that the Borochovist analyses of the national problem were correct. They also prove the bankruptcy of the theories of the dogmatic Marxists who negated the national struggle, especially of the smaller peoples, and still more the Jewish people which had to fight for its right to its historic homeland in order to begin the realization of the Ingathering of the Exiles.

All these events merely underline the validity of the Borochovist theories which were expressed under circumstances which seemed hair-splitting to many "practical" people. The historical necessity, the real needs of the struggle for national liberation, forced many labor leaders to retreat from the accepted orthodox dogmatism that the national struggle of the Jewish working class and the efforts for the reconstruction of Jewish life through a territorial concentration in Israel were no more than a bourgeois hallucination.

The struggle for normalization of the Jewish life through territorial concentration, the 2,000-year Jewish dream of the Return to Zion, could only be realized in the context of the general people's struggle for freedom and independence and against colonialism.

Only in the light of Borochovism is it possible to have a healthy and positive attitude to Jewish and general life in the various communities. Only when we draw the necessary conclusions can we understand the great importance of Proletarian Zionism, of *halutzit* (pioneering), of preparing at least small sections of the Jewish youth for its historic national obligations, for active participation of the youth in the upbuilding of Israel, for their taking part in and carrying through the national and social changes in Jewish life, to become fellow builders of a progressive, working Israel.

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