

THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES SEEN TODAY

We start at a highpoint of the socio-national liberation of our people. As we define this development, it means — attaining socialism through Ingathering the Exiles of our people.

Nowadays, decisive factors are born out of a polarization of opposites; attainments and possibilities are confronted with objective conditions which cannot be ignored. In order to judge this polarization at its true worth, there is no better way than to compare the grandiose immigration plans of some time ago, with the real chances of bringing to Israel a third and a fourth million Jews.

Twenty years ago, Mapai's leaders were led astray by the Biltmore plan, a plan proposing a yearly immigration of one million Jews and the creation of a Jewish State upon all of Palestine's territory; this, with the help of the victorious Western powers. We were attacked then as "minimalists" because we asked for "only" 250,000 immigrants per year. A few years later, in 1948, the State of Israel was created. Only a scarce fifteen years have passed since then. During this momentous era of mass immigration, one million immigrants were brought to our country, not one million per year, as per the Biltmore plan, but about 75 thousand per year. Only nowadays has immigration reached the million mark.

Twenty years ago I wrote my theses for a Party Congress, under the name "The Opening of An Era". They were written under the influence of two of the greatest sociological writers of the Jewish Diaspora, Jacob Leschinsky and the late Dr. Ruppin.

Dr. Ruppin declared, even then, that assimilation would become more intensified in the Western Diaspora in only a few generations' time. He took particular notice of mixed marriages among Jews in the Western countries. At that time, East European Jewry still existed, according to that particular social constellation which has been so ably depicted by Ber Borochov.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Dr. Ruppin and Leschinsky still maintained that the proletarianized middle class was the mainspring and the most dynamic element of the Jewish Diaspora. The offspring of this class became most prominent, at that time, in the socialist movement as well as in the Zionist Pioneer movements. About fifty percent of the East European Jews were numbered among the worker elements.

As Borochov said, the strategic economic base of the main classes, typical of the Jewish masses at that time, was abnormal, lacking productive occupations. This base shaped Jewish life as a whole. It was the task of Socialist Zionism, according to Borochov, to normalize this social character, through territorial ingathering of our people in Palestine. This was Borochov's prognosis.

The great majority of the Jewish working class in the Diaspora did not accept the burden of this task. This was undertaken, rather, by the Pioneer Zionist movements, by the many-faceted Histadrut, and by the Zionist Movement as a whole. Thus, a strategic base for the ingathering of 650 thousand Jews in Palestine was created, and because of this we were able, in 1947, to get UN approval for the creation of an independent, free State of Israel.

After the war, we brought to Israel the remnants of European Jewry. To this immigration may be added the partial or total evacuation of Jews who were, as a matter of fact, victims of war — the Jews from the Arab countries: Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco. These two elements balanced each other in reaching

the sum total of one million immigrants who came to Israel since the state was created.

What is happening now? Last year, in one of the committees of the Jewish Agency Immigration Dept., Dr. Shragai, head of this Department, told us that he does not believe that more than half a million Jews would come to this country in the next few years, or are even candidates for immigration. These candidates are in countries from which Jews are forced to evacuate. The question is, of course — what will happen after this last half million comes to our borders?

The main problem is: shall we be able to bring about a speedier ingathering of the fourth and fifth millions, under present conditions, and according to the systems by which immigrants are recruited — not to mention the way they are settled in Israel?

The social stratification which was so typical of the past, has changed immeasurably. We refer not only to Eastern Jewry but even to those Jews who dwell today in London and New York. This was Leschinsky's opinion, expressed in his book "The Jewish Diaspora." London and New York Jews fit the same social pattern which was "so fitting" to the Diaspora. From among the small percentage of workers and destitute middle classes, came those who created the base for our national revival. In this respect, there was no difference between the Jewish Brigade volunteers who came to Palestine from the U.S., and their counterparts from Poland and Lithuania.

What does Leschinsky say now: — that in London, for instance, only twenty percent, instead of the former sixty percent, are wage-earners; that social differentiation among Jews is fast disappearing; that London, Paris and New York Jews have come to comprise a single bourgeois class — and almost all their children study at colleges.

The new bourgeois class does not wish that its children should become pioneers. Most of these Jews

are prepared for any effort, in order to prevent their children's emigration to Israel. This is, generally speaking, also the attitude of Zionist parents. They are only interested that their children should climb the social ladder, become industrialists or members of the "respectable" free professions.

This has brought about a condition where the situation of North American Jewry is almost identical with that of the Jews in the USSR. True, no bourgeois social class exists in the USSR; However, we read that the Jews, who represent there only about one percent of the total population, comprise about ten percent of the professional intelligentsia, (300,000 among three millions). If we add to this their dependents, we discover that the Jewish Diaspora in the Soviet Union is the most centralized one of all. It is concentrated mainly in the big cities, in the free and intellectual professions and as clerks. In other words, they have sunk to a nadir of centralization and isolation, estrangement and particularism — according to the old Borochoy equation. This means that the anomaly still exists in the Soviet Union, the Jewish condition for which Borochoy offered a single solution: territorial concentration in the historic homeland of our people.

This goes to show that in place of the classic socio-economic structure of the Jewish people, which held sway until the start of the Second World War, a certain uniformity may be found nowadays in the Western Diaspora, where the majority of the Jewish people is now concentrated. There appear gradually all the characteristics of the most rootless and isolated social strata in these countries, a class of shopkeepers and professional intellectuals.

If we do not undertake drastic steps, the continual assimilation and trend toward bourgeois occupations of the Jewish people may bring a temporary halt (between

one cataclysm and another) to the flow of immigration to our country.

The present developments among Argentine Jewry prove the proposition that in order to awaken the Jewish national revival, there must be a backbone — in other words, a pioneer movement. The greatest part of the Jewish Diaspora has not awakened yet and is not yet able to draw conclusions from what is happening. They still try to adapt and assimilate, without being able to make the jump from mastery of the language to full national assimilation.

From among five and a half millions Jews in the U.S., a nation open to free emigration, only a slightly higher number came to Israel than from the USSR, a country which limits emigration of Jews exclusively to very old relatives of Israeli Jews. It is, likewise, an undisputed fact that only 4000 among 500,000 British Jews migrated to Israel in the last ten years. Whitechapel's Jews are better acquainted with another kind of "emigration": — from their slums to the more respectable London suburbs. About 80 percent of Whitechapel's Jews moved, in the course of the last forty years, from hovels and tenements to better neighborhoods.

The State of Israel represents, for these Jews, a factor which heightens the respect of their gentile neighbors for them. Therefore, they did not oppose their sons' volunteering to fight in our War of Liberation. However, only a desperately few British Jews are able to contemplate with equanimity the possibility that their children should emigrate to Israel in order to live there permanently, especially if this involves a life of pioneer agriculture and physical labor.

There is but one continent — South America — where Jews have integrated least of all, and still remember the hard lives they led as small shopowners and workers. They feel insecure, as the result of the social ferment and revolutionary spirit emanating from

Fidel Castro's Cuba, as well as from the renewed and virulent antisemitism, cultured by the Nazi emigrants, which endanger the very existence of this Jewish Diaspora.

It is but small wonder therefore, that in South America the Jewish middle class sends some of its sons as immigrants to Israel. These Jews have refrained from attempting complete adjustment and assimilation. Nonetheless, the day is still far ahead, when these masses shall feel the wish to emigrate to Israel en bloc.

Another kind of example is found in two countries, Cuba and Algeria, where the Jews had to leave for quite different reasons. Up to now, it was assumed that Jews who find themselves in economic or social trouble become, automatically, the most likely candidates for emigration to Israel. That is why we were almost positive that the Jews who found themselves forced to leave these two countries, because of national or social emergency, would learn the radical lesson of bitter experience and come en masse to Israel.

That was also the premise of Fidel Castro's socialist regime — which is, by the way, the only country in the world which stamps the passports of Jewish emigrants with a "repatriation" stamp. Things worked out in a quite different manner.

The Jewish population of Cuba was 12 thousand strong, and about 9,000 of them left the island; 3,000 remained. From those who emigrated, only 700 came to Israel. It is said that about half of those who stayed here are pioneers — members of communal settlements of Hashomer Hatzair and other kibbutz movements.

Most of Cuba's Jews were Zionist, and contributed financially to the development of Israel. However, rich Jews do not come, as a rule, to this country. They relied on Florida banks rather than development in order to secure their riches.

In other words: Cuba's Jewry turned its back upon

us because it thought it still had a choice.

The situation of the Algerian Jewry was similar. At first, most Jews blindly followed the French colonialists. A Jewish minority identified itself with the FLN. However, even this minority, together with the majority, emigrated later to France.

When this evacuation took place, and thousands of Jews had to leave behind almost all their belongings, taking with them only a few suitcases, the choice before them was — Israel or France. It was possible to ensure their getting indemnization for their losses, in Israel as in France. Yet the fact is that almost a hundred percent of them chose the most abominable conditions in the slums of Paris and Marseille, instead of planned, generous conditions in Israel. Again, the same story: they had a choice between a proud, noble way out and a sad and sordid one. They chose the latter, not wishing to throw their lot in with that of Israel. A hundred thousand Jewish refugees left Algeria. Only four thousand of them came to Israel.

Whatever immigration there is, comes mostly from countries where danger threatens. However, no oversimplification is intended. There are Jews from Algeria and Rumania, Cuba and Morocco, who have true and sincere feelings for Israel, and identify themselves with our State. But this volunteer element is insignificant, compared to the mass.

Generally speaking, the following scheme might be drawn up: a) First, there are those countries from which the Jews are allowed to emigrate freely. The immigration from these countries is but a mere trickle. b) Then — those countries from which the Jews escape, but are free to choose their destination. There, the stream of immigration is still feeble, inasmuch as it lacks a pioneer spearhead. c) For the time being, those countries from which we free helpless Jews supply the greatest part of mass immigration. Nowadays,

it seems that fear of antisemitism, by itself, is not enough to drive the Jewish masses to emigrate to Israel, if they have another choice.

Leschinsky writes that in the U.S. there are some 60,000—100,000 Hebrew-speaking Jews. This is no alternative for those millions who spoke Yiddish and had a culture of their own in that language years ago — particularly so, since most of the Hebrew-speaking elements are religious or traditionally-educated in hundreds of institutions and Yeshivas — as for instance, New York's Yeshiva University, with 15,000 students.

In all those educational institutions, from those affiliated with Agudat Israel to those of Hadassah, one and the same line is taught: namely, the "equality" of two cultural Jewish centers, an American one and an Israeli one. Only on this basis are the official educational leaders of American Jewry prepared to declare how proud they are of Israel, and to assist her both economically and politically. Leschinsky waxes enthusiastic over the fact that orthodox Yeshivas teach Hebrew and that hundreds of these Yeshivas have sprung up in the last years. It seems that these religious institutions have a typical Diaspora-like patience. Whoever is ready to wait for the Messiah, can afford to wait another indefinite number of years in the Diaspora.

D. Ben-Gurion sees the immigration of Zionists to Israel as a necessary condition for the continued existence of the Zionist movement. He demands the personal example of Zionist leaders. It is true that most of these leaders do not emigrate. But this is not the point. We must ask ourselves what basic drives strengthen this Zionist atrophy and the "do nothing" policy of Zionist leaders. It is not far from the truth to say that these are: the lack of a pioneer regime in Israel, the resultant weakening of the pioneer movement, and the structural faults in American Jewish public life.

American Jewry, ten times larger than that of England, still lags behind the latter in emigration to Israel. It never tried to organize as an independent community, nor did it ever have a single national leadership of its own. For American Jewry, it was enough to maintain orthodox, conservative and reform synagogues, with American-style rabbis, who supplied the worshippers a bit of "Yiddishkeit", while imitating crudely the ways of the Catholic or Protestant clergymen in their neighborhood.

The lack of national organization and leadership is at the root of the American Jewish malady. Similarly, the lack of a single strong labor party plagues the workers of the U.S. Both these faults helped along a further development among the Jews: their deproletarianization and national disintegration.

Borochov's perspective of Jewish isolation and concentration in free professions and commerce, is accelerated by the Jews' being isolated, more and more, in separate metropolitan suburbs — with all that this implies and the dangers it entails.

Doubtless, Hebrew education and teaching of the Hebrew language — and Yiddish education, as well — are excellent ways to strengthen the national consciousness of Diaspora Jews and their relationship with Israel. However, this activity can only help the Ingathering of the Exiles, provided a strong and organized pioneer movement supports the national reawakening.

This is what is starting to happen in South America. A predominant role was played by the pioneer youth movements in the creation of the "Tarbut" school-system, in Eastern Europe, between the two world wars. No similar development is to be seen in the U.S. despite the fact that one and a half million Jews live in primarily Jewish neighborhoods and in spite of religious ministering.

Are assimilation and national and social conformity a development that cannot be stopped? Is there no

other way? To answer these questions, we should stress the fact that assimilation is not identical with complete national integration. Jewish concentration in suburban centers may help them to organize a community-life of their own, to become independent, strengthen their national consciousness and their contact with Israel — and ultimately to help increase immigration to Israel. There is little doubt that these conditions have not yet been exploited sufficiently. Assimilation to "eternal Diaspora life" is not immune to change.

A fitting historical example: Among the German Jews, before Hitler, we saw a true national revival, in the wake of 150 years of assimilationism. The early 19th century, with the first glimmerings of emancipation, was the time of the greatest assimilation, of Moses Mendelsohn, whose daughters were converted to Christianity.

Yet, in spite of the fact that 30 percent of the Jews of that time intermarried with gentiles, a spirit of national awakening and social humanism became part and parcel of that Jewry, and its leadership. This may be ascribed, in no small degree, to the many immigrants who streamed into pre-Hitler Germany from Eastern Europe. Far more went to the U.S. — but yet, the results were quite different. The finest German Jewish youth were swept up in the national revival. They turned their backs on riches and social climbing. They created a pioneer vanguard of thousands. Thanks to this national revival, some 70,000—100,000 German Jews were brought to Israel, and thus saved.

The first wave of German Jews came to this country even before the Nuremberg Laws. The rest were not willing to accept the obvious lesson. Among those who came to this country in the years 1933-34 were intellectuals who would have been able to carve themselves a career elsewhere, and escape in due time. But they chose the hard road of physical labor in villages

or cooperative settlements. Their response to conscience was typical of the Zionists in Germany, who were predominant in the World Zionist Movement from its inception.

Theodore Herzl drew his conclusions on the path to be taken by German and Austrian Jews from the Dreyfus case. Couldn't this apply to North and South American Jews today? There is no need for a cataclysm in order to change men's hearts and minds. Happenings not unsimilar to the Dreyfus case are quite frequent in these countries nowadays. There is no reason why a strong Zionist movement should not be created there, as the vanguard of a national revival.

The question is: why does this not happen, in spite of Israel's existence? We always believed and still believe that the creation of the state would enhance and strengthen the Zionist solution, for those Jews who are unable to assimilate and are driven here — as well as for those who come of their own free choice.

There is only one possibility to increase the Jewish population to three or even four millions and to settle 6—7 million dunams of Israel's 20 million dunams. That is renewed large-scale immigration of pioneers, who would become the vanguard and backbone of a great, popular movement of immigration. We should remember that even in its heyday, the pioneer movement was a minority. But it was an elite minority capable of leading mass immigration. This pioneer minority was the spearhead of the Zionist worker parties, the kibbutz movement and the federation of labor — the Histadrut.

The alliance between the pioneers and the Zionist leadership was stubbornly held to by H. Weizmann, M. Ussishkin and A. Ruppin. It drove forward the development of the country and helped guarantee the controlling position of labor. This worker-pioneer force organized the 650 thousand Jews then in Israel against the White Paper of the British Mandatory Government.

Thanks to this force, the State of Israel was created and the War of Liberation was won.

The alliance between the pioneer movement and the Zionist leadership turned the pioneer immigration into the beginnings of a mass immigration. It strengthened the pioneer regime of Israel's first days, and gathered in the survivors of the Holocaust, thus completing the settlement of the first million Jews and making a good start towards the immigration and settlement of a second million.

Fifteen years have passed since then. We see how immigration and absorption conditions have changed for the worse. This is due, first of all, to the fact that the government has turned away from the worker-pioneer regime. Present policy has not been able to neutralize the role of the kibbutz movement, but it has been able to weaken dangerously its role as the leader and backbone of mass immigration to Israel.

Without its pioneer nucleus, immigration becomes an automatic function, designed primarily to save people in trouble. The pioneer movement, while fighting for its life, is still an element of ferment giving the Jewish masses national consciousness and the strength to stand up against their oppressors. In South America, the pioneer movement prepares the ground, even today, for mass immigration.

Weizmann and Ruppin were neither workers nor pioneers. Yet, in their days, the best of nationally held land was not sold to speculators, nor was there a trend, as there is under Levi Eshkol, to auction off public property. Not then, but under the Mapai-led government, was the labor educational system disbanded.

There are several conditions for the ingathering and settlement of the fourth and fifth million of Jews in Israel.

- a) A pioneer regime, which shall encourage the development of agriculture and industry; a regime of maximum productivity of the whole population.

- b) A regime of workers' hegemony and social equality, working towards the fulfillment of socialism in our country and the ingathering of our people from abroad.
- c) The synthesis of class-struggle and national development.
- d) A regime of integration of the various ethnic groups into the united whole; a supreme effort to heighten the material, cultural, educational and civic levels of Oriental Jewry, who now comprise a majority of Israel's working class — and about half its population.
- e) A policy of national and civil equality between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority; lessening military tensions; and earnest efforts towards true peace between Israel and the Arab countries; integration of Israel within the economic, political and cultural framework of the region.

IN CONCLUSION

EVERY DAY COMPELS US TO RE-EVALUATE THE IDEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES WHICH DETERMINE OUR MISSION AS AN ALTERNATIVE AMONG THE PEOPLE AND WITHIN THE CLASS, AND THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH WE BASE OUR PATH TO SOCIALISM. THESE ARE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES :

- a) THE CONTINUATION OF THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES, TOWARD THE TERRITORIAL CONCENTRATION OF A MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE IN A SOCIALIST ISRAEL.
- b) CLASS STRUGGLE INTEGRATED WITH CONSTRUCTION.
- c) THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKER-PIONEER HEGEMONY, AND FOR A DEMOCRATIC REGIME.
- d) LOYALTY TO SOCIALISM, TO PEACE AND TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS.
- e) THE STRIVING TO ESTABLISH SOCIALISM IN OUR COUNTRY BY MEANS OF A DEMOCRATIC DECISION.
- f) THE DETERMINATION TO STRUGGLE, TOGETHER WITH OUR IDEOLOGICAL ALLIES, TOWARD THE CREATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE FORCE, CAPABLE OF FIGHTING EFFECTIVELY FOR THE VICTORY OF OUR PATH WITHIN THE PEOPLE AND CLASS.
- g) THE STRENGTHENING OF THE KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT AS A DEDICATED VANGUARD FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIALISM IN OUR COUNTRY; AND SUPPORT FOR THE STRUGGLE OF THE ENTIRE WORKERS-SETTLEMENT MOVEMENT.

IN THE HOPE OF CREATING SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE FORCE WE UNITED, IN 1948, WITH ACHDUT AVODA. WE ARE STILL WILLING TO JOIN WITH ANY LABOR PARTNER WHICH WOULD HELP IN ESTABLISHING AN ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL FORCE. BUT WE MUST REMEMBER ONE THING: MAPAM WILL CEASE TO BE MAPAM IF IT NEGLECTS THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM, PEACE AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS. LIKEWISE, IT WILL LOSE ITS RIGHT TO EXIST IF IT TURNS AWAY FROM PIONEER ZIONISM. LOYALTY TO OUR ALTERNATIVE PATH IS THE JUSTIFICATION OF OUR IN-