

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL

May 10th has been chosen as the date of the official celebration of the third anniversary of the State of Israel.

Three years is a very short span of time. It was not a sufficiently long period to cool off the heated heads and the exaggerated expectations of the Zionist troubadours of independent Jewish statehood. The three years of Israel's existence certainly did not shatter the deep belief of the Jewish Socialists under the banner of the Bund that the Jewish brand of nationalistic aspirations—Zionism—does not represent the solution of the Jewish problem, that only the universal victory of libertarian Socialism will once and for all solve our problems and provide conditions for a peaceful co-existence and cultural advancement of the Jews as a national entity among other nations.

But three years of existence could not help but enhance the State of Israel as a new reality that weighs upon Jewish life everywhere and is particularly important for the upward of one million Jews gathered within the boundaries of the new state. According to the statistical data issued by the Israeli Government,

almost one-half of them are new settlers, who flocked into Israel during the three years of independent Jewish nationhood. No doubt a remarkable achievement. However, not only their well-being, their cultural and spiritual advancement, but the very existence of the whole Jewish community there (not to mention the tightness of the ties binding them with the majority of the Jews that will always remain outside the State of Israel) depends upon the policies of the new state.

This interdependence that binds together the Jewish community the world over, including the Jews of Israel, urges us on the occasion of the third anniversary to call attention to some sore spots in the development of Israel.

The Jewish-Arab relations did not improve during this period, though every responsible leader of the new state realizes that without a peaceful solution of the Arab-Jewish feud no durable peace is possible, and the community's chances to develop an efficient economy are nil. The recent fracas, the constant shooting and brawls on the Israeli-Syrian boundary is a case in point. Obviously, the drainage work of the swamps near the Sea of Gallilee which evoked the bloodshed on

both sides could take on such exaggerated significance only in an atmosphere of chauvinistic nationalism, where both sides are brandishing their swords and inveighing against each other. The still unsolved problem of the many hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees, who are prevented from returning to their homesteads and villages and whose property is as good as confiscated by the conqueror, incites the hatred of the whole Arab world against the Jewish state, and adds oil to the already brightly-burning fire.

In spite of the three years that elapsed since the State of Israel was established, Yiddish, the Jewish language, is still being forcibly silenced and boycotted by the official representatives of the Jewish state. We still remember the utterance of the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, that "the sound of Yiddish offends his sense of hearing". How could it be otherwise under circumstances where the youth of the country loses not only its contact with, but also its respect for all the moral and ethical values that preserved Jewish existence during all these past centuries. It is sufficient to quote the following lines from the "Hadoar", a Zionist periodical, of May, 1950 (הדואר, ג' סיון, תש"ו) on the

state of mind of the Jews in Israel: *"The majority of the youth have for the first time faced blood-shed. They tasted war and all it stands for. They made peace with the idea that Jews must behave just as Gentiles, that there is no other way out, that the exaggerated moral values of the Jews resulted from abnormal conditions of life in the Diaspora . . . Therein lies the source of the Israelis' exaggerated negation of all that is Jewish outside the State of Israel. More than ever before, the Israeli recruits seem to feel that Jewish life outside of Israel is of no value, that the rupture between them is steadily growing. It is a growing tendency to stake the future on military power exclusively and to consider all other means to establish peace with scorn and contempt"*.

These are some of the reasons, but by no means all of them, why the Jewish Labor Bund as well as the entire anti-Zionist camp in the U. S. did not share the expectation of The New York Times editorial of May 4, 1951, which proclaimed on the occasion of the arrival of Ben-Gurion: *"We are sure that Premier Ben-Gurion will find a receptive and sympathetic audience wherever he goes throughout the United States"*.