

CHAPTER 1

A CHALUTZ (PIONEERING) REGIME.

1. THE TASKS OF SUCH A REGIME

A chalutz regime is dedicated to guaranteeing: a) The fullest possibilities for the new immigrant to integrate himself in the life of the country. b) Maximum occupational productivisation. c) Maximum absorptive capacity of the country.

The present historical forces at play demand the creation of certain conditions for the productive absorption of the new immigrants. These can be summed up in the slogan, "The maximum number of Jews on the minimum area of land". In order to achieve such conditions, a chalutz-regime must have as its task the mobilisation and fullest possible development of all the physical, intellectual and moral forces at the disposal of the Jewish people. The establishment of a chalutz-regime was accepted by all three workers parties as one of the basic tenets of the coalition government, in which we have participated during the two years of its existence .

The term "chalutz regime" includes: 1) A greater degree of occupational productivity. 2) The maximum diversion of national, public and private capital to the requirements of absorption, production and development. 3) Encouragement of the workers' independent economy and coo-

peratives in agriculture and industry. 4) Education based on the ideals of physical labour and technical instruction to encompass tens of thousands of new immigrants. 5) A policy of full employment as a permanent factor in the occupational productivity of the country. 6) Rigid observance of the principle of non-discrimination in regard to country of origin. 7) The maintenance of a healthy relationship between agriculture and other branches of the economy. 8) The rejuvenation of waste land in all parts of the country, but particularly in the Negev, and the settling of a maximum number of Jews on a minimal area by means of the full exploitation of the five million acres which comprise the State of Israel.

2. THE TASKS OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN GUARANTEEING THE CONTINUED INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

During the period of the coalition government previous to the one in which we are now participating, the opinion was formed from time to time that we are approaching the limits of our country's absorptive capacity. We have not forgotten the speeches against immigration made in those "idyllic days" by the then Minister of Trade and Industry and leader of the General Zionists, Dr. P. Bernstein. We still remember the prophecies made even by leaders of MAPAI that we now reach the limits of our absorptive capacity. In his introduction to the Government Yearbook, published at that time, the Prime Minister wrote what can be considered as a prophetic essay. In his introduction, he envisages a kind of cultural centre which would embrace, at most, 25% of our people. Its function would be to disseminate Israel's culture in the countries of the Diaspora, where the majority of the Jewish people would continue to live. I have already described in my general introduction how

the Diaspora has ceased to be considered Galut (Exile), and how the communities have been "liberated" from the problem of dual loyalty in order that they be able to dwell in their various countries with undivided hearts.

Parallel to this show of friendship towards the assimilated "Friends of Israel," there began an increasingly strong attack on the Zionist Movement. Its very right to existence was questioned and Zionists in the Galut were sneeringly referred to as moralisers and preachers. The impression gained was that the MAPAI leader had set his heart on divesting the Zionist Movement of its function as a connecting link between the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Had the origin of such views arisen in more humble quarters, they would have been regarded as simply eccentric. It is clear, however, that this strange phenomenon has its own hidden logic. If, among leading circles of the previous government, the view that we are approaching the limit of our absorptive capacity was widely held, it follows logically that the tasks and functions of the Zionist Organisation are also coming to an end.

What is the character of the Zionist Organisation today? Prior to the foundation of the State, the Zionist Organisation was the "State on the Way". For today's Zionist, convinced of the historic necessity of bringing the Jewish people to Eretz Israel regardless of country of origin or type of government prevailing, the Zionist Organisation has not completed its task with the concentration of a mere 15% of our people in Israel.

In the same way as the Zionist Organisation, prior to the foundation of the State, was the "State on its Way," so today does the Zionist Organisation fulfill the same function in regards to the "Ingathering of the Exiles." Its task is to

guide this process until a majority of our people is settled in its Homeland.

I am by no means sure that the Zionist minimalism which was so prevalent in the days of the previous coalition, has been completely vanquished. So long as the attacks against the Zionist Organisation continue and the attitude towards Zionists in the Galut is a disparaging one coupled with a constant doubt of the Zionist Organisation's right to exist, there can be no guarantee against surprises in the future from this quarter.

3. THE COALITION BETWEEN MAPAI AND THE GENERAL ZIONISTS — A PERIOD OF LOW EBB

The experience of our people's history shows that those who minimize the absorptive capacity of our country are usually very vociferous in the intervening periods of calm. A short period of time has but to elapse following the last catastrophe and already there are those who claim with certainty that it can never happen again. Little more than 10 years have passed since the Nazi holocaust. The remnants of our people have been absorbed in Israel or have found refuge in other countries and already, there are many who believe that the time has come to forget the past and to dream of a rosy future. Ignoring the past is a malady which has attacked whole communities in the prosperous capitalist countries. Apathy and indifference to the plight of the Jewish masses is also observed from time to time among Israeli-born youth, particularly of the "Canaanite" type. Whereas it is possible to understand the psychological and social background to the indifference of middle-class Jewry in certain countries, or the factors creating a certain degree of indifference on the part of sections of Israeli youth to the fate of world Jewry, one can only regard with astonishment the

apathy which seized leading members of the Histadrut and the working class in the days of the previous coalition.

We well remember the imaginative mood of those same leaders in the latter period of the last war and immediately afterwards, when we were faced with the task of rescuing the remnants of our people. Those were the days of fierce competition as to who could formulate the boldest plan for absorbing the immigrants. The minimum yearly quota which was mentioned was nothing less than a million immigrants. In the Zionist Executive I was condemned as a minimalist and accused of lack of faith because I dared to suggest a yearly quota of 250,000, a quota which, incidently, was never reached even in the peak days of immigration after the foundation of the State.

In 1954, ten years after the Nazi catastrophe, one of the former maximalists, Finance Minister Levy Eshkol, presented the Knesset with a 6-year plan of immigration, absorption and development to be effected between 1954 and 1960. The program promised us a Jewish population of 2 million by 1960, at the same time cutting down immigration to the minimum. Practically the entire growth in population was to come from natural increase. The funds allocated for colonisation sufficed only for strengthening existing settlement. Everything was based on the assumption that we had reached a stage of stabilisation and now all that was required was the finishing touches.

4. MILLIONS OF PROSPECTIVE IMMIGRANTS

Once again we are witnessing catastrophic upsurges in the life of our people. Following their liberation from the yoke of colonialism, a wave of chauvinism has swept over the Arab peoples. Racial intolerance has increased and threatens the very existence of some 700,000 Jews living in an

area stretching from the Middle East to the western tip of North Africa. Of these Jews, practically 100% are prospective immigrants.

The revelations of the Stalinist terror severely shook the socialist countries. The bitter fate of the Jewish minorities in these countries was revealed to the whole world. In the first part of these theses I devoted a special section to the position of the Jewish minorities in the socialist countries and the conclusions to be drawn: namely, their right to self-determination and return to their historic homeland. It is no exaggeration to say that the major part of the 3½ million Jews living in the socialist countries are prospective candidates for immigration. We firmly believe that a change in attitude to the Jewish minority, such as has occurred in Poland and to a certain extent in Hungary, will sooner or later take place in the Soviet Union. The demand "Let My People Go" will one day be a living reality. It is no dream, but a living possibility, that in the coming decades millions of Jews from the Arab countries, the socialist states and other Jewish communities will make their homes in the motherland. The coming decades may well bring us close to the full realisation of territorial concentration. The realisation of the Zionist aim, namely, the assembling of the major part of the Jewish people, is no longer a remote vision but already appears on the horizon of the historical period which lies before us.

5. THE RATES AND CHARACTER OF MASS IMMIGRATION

We are living in a period of mass immigration from various countries. It is largely a stychic, automatic process which must be channeled into the framework of organised planning. The rate of immigration will be determined by

two considerations: 1) The ability of the immigrants themselves to become productively integrated; 2) the productive absorptive capacity of the country. The demand for planned immigration is not always pleasing to the ear of preelection propagandists. At no time has there ever been any contradiction between mass immigration and its constructive planning. Even after the Nazi catastrophe we did not hesitate to demand that mass immigration be carried out in a planned and organised fashion. Today we likewise regard this as a fundamental precondition for the continuation of immigration. In reality the discussion between ourselves, who believe in mass immigration within a framework of organised productivisation, and those who conceive of immigration as nothing but a huge catastrophic upsurge allowing no planning whatsoever, has largely lost its point. The former maximalists reached a point during the term of office of the previous coalition government, where excessive planning seemed to have done away with immigration altogether. With various ups and downs the yearly rate of immigration since the foundation of the State has averaged about 90,000.

Fresh views are now being heard and it is becoming the fashion to foretell the mass immigration of millions of Jews in the very near future. All those who in the past lived from hand to mouth have learned that the historical forces acting on the Jewish people and directing their eternal wanderings can be compared to a volcano which slumbers in moments of quietness only to finally erupt with horrifying force. The process of the "Ingathering of the Exiles" is going on full force. Although recently, difficulties have arisen in absorbing the new immigrants and there are even signs that the rate of immigration is being slowed down, these are merely temporary difficulties and everything indicates that the present flood of immigration will not dry up but on the contrary, will become even stronger.

6. THE TURN OF EVENTS SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRESENT COALITION

In the last two years a change for the better has undoubtedly taken place. Under the present coalition, mass immigration is being renewed. Development schemes have been initiated in previously barren areas. Both town and rural population in the Negev is increasing; new branches of industry are being opened; general efficiency and output are on the increase. Agriculture is benefitting from various credit concessions and is beginning to free itself from the curse of inflated and monstrous interest rates manipulated by the money speculators; fruit plantations and industrial crops such as cotton, sugar beet and ground nuts have been increased in area. The area under irrigation is constantly growing and consequently the land is being worked more intensively. Quite obviously, the fact that the present coalition is centered around the three working class parties has left its mark on the country's progress. The present government has shown infinitely greater initiative in the sphere of development and construction than its predecessor.

Since Levy Eshkol's 6-year plan, all of us, including Eshkol himself, have learned a great deal. New factors which apparently were too obscure for Eshkol in 1954, have now come to light. A population of two million has practically been reached, three years in advance of the plan and today Eshkol is openly talking of preparing the ground for the third million.

The present government has brought with it a new spurt of energy. The various development regions are absorbing tens of thousands of immigrants and new agricultural settlements are being established there. The Jordan water pipe line has not yet been finished, as this is an undertaking which will require a number of years for completion, but various

other irrigation schemes have been put into working operation. Efforts are being made to populate the southern areas and the Negev, and there can be no doubt that from this point of view, the present government with the three working class Zionist parties at its head, has justified its existence.

The events which have taken place during these two years have struck a death blow to the intentions of the former government to freeze the progress of the "Ingathering of the Exiles". The force of reality was sufficient to destroy the illusion that it is possible to call a halt to the march of events and deal only with that which already exists. The ice has been broken and we are face to face with the possibility of absorbing millions in the coming years. All this demands a fresh approach. It entails taking into consideration different factors from those which served as a basis for Eshkol's plan in 1954.

Unfortunately, no real fundamental change has taken place. We are still far from having a chalutz regime of the type which the authors had in mind when they drew up the fundamental principles of the present coalition. Furthermore, the main ministries dealing with economic affairs have not completely freed themselves from the woeful inheritance left by the former MAPAI-General Zionist coalition. We must make it clearly understood that the continuation of immigration will not be possible if the main principle on which the present coalition was based — the establishment of a chalutz regime — is not put into effect. It is not sufficient merely to send the immigrants to the Negev or to the development regions, but efforts must be made to guarantee them a livelihood, both in the new and old development centers. From this point of view there is a wide gap between reality and plan. As far as providing permanent and productive work for the new immigrants, we are still living from hand to mouth. The old and well worn methods of

absorption will not succeed in establishing hundreds of thousands of new immigrants in productive occupations, both in the town and in the country.

Contradictory declarations have recently been made by the different ministers in charge of economic affairs. All of them, presumably, represent that same government which recognises the priority of chalutz settlement. Yet while one demands priority for industrial development and another draws up a plan for settling a hundred thousand immigrants in the Negev during the next five years, the author of the 1954 six-year plan, Levy Eshkol, the Finance Minister, who is the most important of all the economic Ministers, is careful not to commit himself to any constructive program whatsoever. Even now, his policy is mainly concerned with strengthening the existing settlements and including new immigrants in them. At a time when fresh initiative is so urgently needed in the sphere of new colonisation, he continues to be satisfied with the minimum. We have not heard of any new development programs in preparation for the tens of thousands of new immigrants waiting to come to Israel. This omission is by no means accidental.

7. LAND FOR THE THIRD MILLION

In order to productively absorb the third million in the course of the next ten years, it is essential to prepare at least an additional 250,000 acres of land from those areas which come into consideration for agriculture purposes. It is no secret that the major part of the land suitable for agricultural use is already being farmed or is about to be allocated. It has been estimated that the reserves of land suitable for agriculture without prior reclamation or improvement amount to about 100,000 acres. In the past, allocation of land was not completely free of wastefulness and abuse,

an example being the allocation of land and loans to officials who continued to receive their quite adequate salary from the colonisation authorities. Although the needs of our people are so great and the amount of suitable land available so limited, it has not all been allocated to those who are prepared to work it. The late Yitzchak Yitzchaki carried out a thorough investigation of the use to which agricultural land was put in the vicinity of the towns and, as is well-known, the disclosures were very grim. The press has also, on various occasions, published accounts of land speculations carried on in the outskirts of the large towns, activities with which a number of respectable banks were connected. Hundreds of thousands of acres of good agricultural land were exploited for building, often of a speculative nature, despite the needs of agriculture and of the large majority of city populace.

Before many years will have passed the results will be felt by all sections of the community. The amount of land suitable for agriculture, without basic preparation and improvement, is steadily decreasing. Once again we are faced with a situation in which there are no adequate land reserves for further settlement. It will become imperative, with or without the pipeline from the Jordan, to reclaim those areas which have not yet been put to use and which are mostly in the Negev and the hills. The Jewish people in Israel and in the Galut must recognise and take into account the new land situation. The problem lies at our doorstep. We know full well that no branch of economic life which can give a livelihood to large numbers of immigrants in the shortest possible time dare be neglected. The working class Zionist parties must choose between a return to chalutz methods of immigrant absorption or the prospect of the major part of the new immigrants settling in Tel Aviv and Haifa, a process which will undoubtedly be accompanied

by an increased flow of farm settlers to the towns. If this will happen, and the danger exists, there will be no avoiding a serious crisis in the absorption of new immigrants and also in the settlements themselves.

8. THE LACK OF A CHALUTZ FOUNDATION

We have already reached the stage of being unable to control or channelise the automatic mass immigration which is today pouring in from North Africa and the Peoples' Democracies. We are also hopeful of immigration from the Soviet Union. The Jews who will come from that country will have been subject to a process of deproletarianisation even more accelerated than in Poland. The Jews in the Soviet Union are now experiencing the taste of social degradation after 40 years of a steady improvement in their standard of life and in their social status.

From these Jews and their children, we in Israel will demand a return to labour. This demand will be presented to them by political parties, many of whose members have deserted or are deserting manual work. We will be demanding of the Jews of different countries and regimes a willingness to undertake chalutz tasks at the same time as the general educational institutions in Israel are pervaded by the exactly contrary spirit and the chalutz youth movements are barred from working in them. We will be preaching chalutzit (pioneering) to young immigrants from Hungary and Poland, while Histadrut and government employees educate their children to more "respectable" professions than work on a tractor or in a workshop. *Let there be no illusions; antisemitism and numerus clausus are sufficient to remind the Jews of Poland and the Soviet Union that they are living in foreign lands, but this in itself will not bring about that deep and radical change in the outlook of the new*

immigrant, expressed in an inclination toward work and chalutz settlement.

9. WHO ARE TODAY'S PIONEERS ?

For tens of years enormous efforts were made to educate the youth, to imbue it with that moral and intellectual understanding which will enable it to see into the future and put into personal application the conclusion to be drawn from the historical forces operating on the Jewish people and society in general. Our movement succeeded, particularly in the years following the Nazi catastrophe, in creating a type of chalutz youth whose moral and intellectual qualities enabled him to anticipate the dreadful calamities which befall our people from time to time, and by his personal example to pave the way for the productive absorption of the Jewish masses. We have every reason to be proud of the fact that the educational movement of Hashomer Hatzair in the Galut produced its greatest number of chalutzim in the years following the Second World War. These immigrants turn their backs on studying and the personal comforts of their parents' prosperous homes, and build their lives afresh in the border settlements. Their spirit of perseverance is greater than ever before. Chalutzim from our movement in the South American countries, who began coming to Israel after the Second World War, now account for 10% of the total membership of the Kibbutz Artzi. Despite the fact that we stand at the head of all the chalutz youth movements of the Zionist working class parties, both in Europe and in America, it is our duty to warn and warn again that unless a change toward the creation of a chalutz regime is initiated, the crisis which has attacked the kibbutz movement as a whole will not bypass us; indeed, the first warning-signs are already present. Chalutz youth from

the Galut will not for long be prepared to ignore the bitter fact that the students and school-age youth in Israel have turned their backs on pioneering and in doing so are encouraged by the school authorities themselves. The school system today is such, that the chalutz youth movements of MAPAM and Achdut Haavoda are boycotted, while at the same time nothing is done to ensure that the "recognised" youth movements build chalutz groups.

From all that has been said above, it becomes clear that the leaders of MAPAI in the government, and in the Zionist Organisation have embarked on a policy of colonisation mainly for those who are penniless or of backward origin, while at the same time making sure that the children of Histadrut and government employees for the most part find their way to professions free from all possible contact with physical labour. The stream of immigrants who have already passed through the process of deproletarianisation in the Galut discover that here in Israel manual work is also not a tradition of generations, but merely a transitory phenomenon, as in all countries of typical Jewish immigration. The transition from village to town is becoming more and more frequent and one can already observe how the new immigrants are replacing the older ones in factories and other places of work. Let us not deceive ourselves; if the chalutz spirit is replaced by the immigrant spirit, the Jews from Arab countries will also not be prepared to remain on the lowest rung of the ladder. Despite cases of discrimination in employment and housing these Jews will also eventually learn a trade, move into a more comfortable dwelling and begin to enjoy a higher standard of life. Is it not natural that under similar conditions, they should also seek easier work? In one respect we will never be able to compare with America; we will never have Negroes and Puerto Ricans. We will have to solve our problems for ourselves.

Banal as it may seem these days, the truth remains that Zion will be redeemed by labour or it will not be redeemed at all! In days gone by this was a recognised fact for every worker in Eretz Israel; the whole content of working class Zionism was to create from the various scattered Jewish communities, a people living of its own labour. There was, and still is, difference of opinion as to how this aim is to be achieved, but until the foundation of the State, this concept was the basis of all the working class Zionist parties. I am not certain if those responsible are fully prepared to admit it, but since the foundation of the State there has developed a conscious tendency to foster "a cult of the State", based, of course, on its present make-up. These people believe that the present State, which is a compromise between classes, represents the full and complete realisation of their ideals and visions while we, in our innocence, thought that the State of Israel is but an instrument for the creation of a productive Hebrew nation and for national and social liberation in its homeland.

Those who have made the State into the final be all and end all, must tell us the secret of how they will pave the way for millions of additional Jews. Israel consists of five million acres of land, and most of that suitable for agricultural settlement is already populated. We are now faced with the task of wresting additional areas of settlement from the Negev and the hill country. We have a right to be told from where the pioneering forces needed for such a task will come. Do they really think that water pipes, however wide, can by themselves fructify the Negev without the active participation of our working and student youth? Further colonisation will be many times more expensive than that in the 750,000 acres now under cultivation. Who will bear the brunt of this mighty effort! Who will shoulder the responsibility?

MAPAM must vigorously renew the struggle for a firm chalutz core in the productive absorption of the third million during the coming few years, and in the redemption of another 250,000 acres for future intensive colonisation. In order to achieve this chalutz aim, MAPAM demands a change in the educational system. We demand that everything be done to prevent the constant stream of youth to unproductive occupations. Every effort must be made to bring tens of thousands of working and student youth, together with the mass of immigrants themselves, to productive branches of the economy.

At a time when the immigrants from the Socialist countries are facing difficult problems of adjustment and the prospect of a temporary crisis is already in view, the Jewish problem in those countries is growing sharper. Sooner or later we will have to absorb a large part of the Jewish minorities of those countries. The way these first immigrants from the Socialist countries are absorbed will determine the future of the millions who are waiting their turn. Will the country as a whole, the Zionist organisation, the Histadrut and the chalutz organisations succeed in absorbing the major part of the immigrants in productive occupations and in the settlements? This is the central problem and on its solution is dependent the whole future of the "Ingathering of the Exiles." In the years when good land was still plentiful the leaders of Israel imagined that they could settle whole immigrant communities from Morocco, Iraq, Yemen and Egypt in the new development areas, without ensuring a backbone of chalutzim and kibbutzim. The country resounded with slogans of the need for more instructors and sons of the old existing settlements who would be willing to work among the new immigrants and serve them as a living example. Those who volunteered to help for a year or two were acclaimed as the finest symbol of cha-

lutziut. The glory of the Sdeh Boker episode did not last long however. New immigrants are constantly arriving and being settled in the new development areas without any mention being made of youthful volunteers from the old settlements of MAPAI accompanying them. It appears that this job is being done by fully paid instructors, many of whom have themselves left kibbutzim. The 300 instructors who spent two years assisting the new settlers and who were raised to the pinnacle of chalutz fame did not succeed in making history, despite their undoubtedly admirable efforts.

The simple and most obvious remedies were ignored: the chalutz youth movements, including those of MAPAI, have been and are being bypassed with an obstinacy worthy of a better cause. For a variety of reasons the attempt to persuade even a few thousands from the many tens of thousands of working youth organised in the youth section of the Histadrut to join border settlements or to go to the Negev, was unsuccessful.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE COLONISATION AND THE PARTY TRUSTEESHIP OF MAPAI

Colonisation of the immigrants in the new development regions is gradually assuming a character of administrative colonisation directed from above. The new immigrant settlements are forced to join the MAPAI moshav movement, but a party card, even a MAPAI one, is not enough to build self-dependent moshavim and kibbutzim such as Nahalal, Degania, Ein-Charod and Mishmar Haemek. The price we paid for administrative colonisation in the past was a high one and we are paying it now a second time.

The United Workers Party (MAPAM) is what its name implies. It unites within its ranks representatives of all the

different strata of the rural and urban working class. The party preserves unity and equality among all the organised sections within its ranks, whether from town or country, from kibbutz or moshav. We are proud of the fact that thousands of members of both old and new moshavim have faith in our party and fight under its flag. In this chapter we shall devote special attention to the kibbutz movement in view of the prevailing tendency, since the foundation of the State, to relegate the kibbutz to a secondary position and even to hinder its progress. In our view, the kibbutz movement must serve as the chalutz backbone of a broad mass colonisation movement. MAPAI is satisfied if several hundred youngsters from its kibbutzim serve as temporary instructors for a year or two in the immigrant settlements. The real task, however, is to settle kibbutzim side by side with the new immigrant settlements in the development regions. MAPAI contents itself with a system of management from above, a handful of volunteers and the rest, paid instructors. We put forward a policy of mutual help between settlements on the basis of comradeship. Without the continuation of mass colonisation of a dynamic and forceful nature, the kibbutz movement will not be able to play its role as a chalutz foundation. It is not enough merely to record the fact that the moshav olim (immigrant moshav) has become the form of colonisation adopted by the majority of new immigrants. We must draw the necessary conclusion. It is our duty to assist this movement in every possible way and to save it from administrative and political trusteeship. We must fight for its independence and the full right of its members to choose their own social, organisational, cultural and political forms.

To our regret, the moshav movement is dominated by a type of administrative dictatorship consisting purely of MAPAI instructors and officials. Other parties, although

participating in the Jewish Agency Executive and in the coalition government, are not allowed the possibility of working in the movement. The difference in administration between the Noar Oved (Histadrut youth section) and the moshav movement lies largely in the fact that in the former there is a "gentlemen's agreement" between MAPAI and Achdut Haavoda; in the latter MAPAI rules supreme. Those unceasingly demanding freedom and democracy for the workers of Poland and Hungary do not hesitate in applying every means of administrative and material pressure in order to maintain their stranglehold on the moshav organisation. The Moshav Organisation Central Committee, unlike the Kibbutz Artzi or the Kibbutz Hameuchad, can dispense with a fixed budget because all the resources of the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut are at its disposal. Less than ten agricultural instructors have been sent by the Jewish Agency to assist the young kibbutzim while among the moshavim there are 150 such instructors, all on full pay, and needless to say, members of MAPAI. Financial and other help is not always given on the basis of social and economic necessity, but not infrequently for purely political motives.

There are, however, sections of the Zionist movement which earn a greater degree of consideration from MAPAI. The moshavim of the religious groups, of the General Zionists and even of Cherut have nothing to complain about. Only members of MAPAM, and perhaps Achdut Haavoda, find themselves unable to acquire a quota of land for the purpose of organising a new moshav. MAPAI takes good care to tread carefully when it is dealing with right-wing groups who have big Zionist supporters behind them.

We have done everything in our power to help our members in the moshav movement and encourage them in building self-supporting settlements, but we will not rest until the bureaucratic party domination of the moshav move-

ment has been broken through. On more than one occasion MAPAI has learned that the use of fear can, at the best, be only a temporary measure. Will MAPAI learn its lesson in time? We on our part are prepared to cooperate with every party which seeks to strengthen the colonisation movement in all its forms, but at the same time grants full independence and freedom to the settlers.

11. AN UPHILL STRUGGLE

500—600 mil. Israeli pounds (at present-day value) have been invested in the 25,000 to 30,000 agricultural (family) units comprising the new settlements. In order to consolidate these farms another 300—400 mil. Israeli pounds are needed. At present there are 93,000 settlers in the various moshavim and 85,000 in the kibbutzim. These figures refer to both old and new settlements.

In economic importance and in the amount of food supplied to the population, both movements are approximately equal, with a slight advantage in favour of the kibbutzim. According to authoritative sources, the value of the agricultural produce (excluding citrus fruit) of the kibbutzim amounted in 1955 to 125 million pounds, while the value of that of the moshavim in the same year was 100 million pounds (also excluding citrus fruit). These figures do not include the value of industrial production in the kibbutzim which amounted to many millions. Industry in the moshavim is barely existent. Despite this superiority, the kibbutz-settlements are very heavily in debt because of the policy of discrimination practiced by the colonising bodies.

I am by no means certain that a further investment of 300—400 million pounds would be sufficient to ensure the full consolidation of the new settlements. The investments

made to-date show that to settle a family on the land costs two or three times more than it did before the foundation of the State, in the hey-day of self-dependent kibbutz and moshav colonisation.

These figures show that, problematic as mass-immigration without a chalutz basis may be, the situation is far more difficult when that same basis is lacking in colonisation. The mass-colonisation now being carried out is ostensibly intended for those without any means of their own, but the sums needed would indicate that it was intended more for the middle classes. If 25—35 thousand pounds were needed to settle one agricultural unit on the good land which became available after the War of Liberation, automatic mass-colonisation to-day and in the near future will devour unbelievable sums, if not accompanied by a strong chalutz element. The land and geographical conditions will be infinitely more difficult to cope with than in the past. Almost three billion dollars have been poured into the country by way of Zionist funds, foreign government grants and investments, with the result that we now have reached a population of two million. The question in all seriousness arises: where will we find the right human material and the enormous sums of money needed to colonise the millions of dunams of land needed for the absorption of millions of additional Jews, land which to-day is to be found in the hills, sand dunes and in the wastes of the Negev?

Much has been done in the last two years in order to increase production and to reduce imports. Progress has been made in increasing the proficiency of labour and output in agriculture and industry. The fact remains, however, that our total production is insufficient to maintain the present population. In so far as absorption of immigration and security are concerned, we are even more dependent upon outside help. It is not surprising, therefore, that although

exports have increased in the last two years very considerably, the gap between exports and imports was not narrowed, but on the contrary, grew larger. Each year we find ourselves with a larger deficit in our trade-balance. In view of all this we must ask ourselves again and again: what will be the fate of the third million, waiting at the gates of Israel? *If the third million to be absorbed will turn mainly to the large towns, thus reducing the percentage of those engaged in productive occupations even more and if an adequate proportion, particularly among the youth and the intellectuals, is not absorbed in agriculture, both in the Moshav and in the Kibbutz, then there will be a real danger of the way being blocked for the fourth million.* Automatic mass-immigration without a chalutz basis will not only be incapable of increasing the productive capacity of the country, but will even cause a fatal drop.

12. MOBILISING THE PARTY

The time has come for the party to mobilise its full strength in the struggle to insure a regime of chalutz character. The question of the chalutz character of the working class and colonisation movement is a problem which the whole party must tackle and not merely those members who are themselves living in agricultural settlements, namely the members of the Kibbutz Artzi and the thousands of MAPAM sympathisers in the moshavim. Our party stands on the basis of Chalutz Zionism and it is this which moulds the character of the party as a whole, including those living in the agricultural settlements and those in the towns. *Our firm conviction is that without a chalutz regime in matters affecting absorption and immigration, education and the system of colonisation, not only our prospects of further development and of colonisation are in doubt, but the*

achievements of the previous generations will also be endangered.

It is our duty at the Party Convention to draw attention to the dangers threatening the kibbutz movement. I have already mentioned the 4,000 families which the kibbutzim took upon themselves to absorb. I also pointed out that the success of this daring scheme is by no means certain. The kibbutz movement was required to absorb thousands of immigrant families straight from the ship without any serious selection. These immigrants lack even the minimum preparation for kibbutz life. Due to age and other reasons many of them have only limited working ability. Shortly after the Second World War an attempt was made to direct to kibbutzim the immigrants who came through Teheran who were mostly young and unmarried people. Very few, however, stayed in the kibbutzim. It is reasonable to assume that the present scheme would be attended by greater success if the absorption of the new immigrant families in the kibbutzim was accompanied by a strong flow of chalutzim both from Israel and the Galut countries. Those who are responsible for colonisation, however, show a preference for temporary solutions. While sending thousands of new immigrant families to the kibbutzim without adequate conditions for their absorption, the attempt was made to engulf the kibbutz movement in a sea of hired labour. As a result of these measures, the natural reserves of the kibbutz movement dwindled and almost ceased to exist. The stream of student and working youth which did so much to enrich the kibbutzim became much weaker and in the Galut, the results were that the training-farms for chalutzim were closed down. The "advantages" of such a policy are clear. Harmonious relations are thereby established with the leaders of the American Women's Organisation "HADDASSAH" who are

so worried lest their children be ensnared in the chalutz net. The youth in the Galut is relieved of the duty of chalutz immigration and in its place various schemes are substituted, such as "A Year's Work in Israel", tourist visits etc. This whole policy deals a terrible blow to the chalutz basis of mass-immigration and colonisation and to the chalutz character of the regime. Let it be stated clearly: *Past experiments prove clearly that Zionism cannot be based solely on mass spontaneity nor can it be built upon persecution and catastrophies. As a movement paving the way for the Jewish masses it must anticipate these catastrophies and lead the masses by fostering those elements capable of facing the dangers awaiting the Jewish people. These elements are in the chalutz movements. This is the conclusion which must be drawn by the Party and explained to the public.*

13. THE STRUGGLE OF THE KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT

No purpose will be achieved by ignoring the great dangers besetting the kibbutz movement. The crisis has appeared precisely at a time of new records in production and development. The estimates of agricultural production in 1952 give the following picture:

	Million Pounds (Israeli)	% of Jewish Farming
Kibbutzim	48.5	32.7
Worker and immigrant moshavim	37.1	25.4
Middle-class moshavim	14.5	10.1
Private and administrative farms	46.8	31.8
Total	146.9	100%

The figures for 1955 show that the percentage of the kibbutz movement in Jewish agricultural-production (excluding citrus fruits) has risen to 35%. The kibbutz movement is responsible for a higher percentage of the total agricultural production than any of the other forms of agricultural settlement. This fact is stated not in a spirit of idle boasting but in order to disprove those critics who doubt the productive capacity of the kibbutz economy.

I do not intend to deal here with the internal problems of the kibbutz movement. These will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Kibbutz Artzi National Council. In this context my aim is to examine the degree of integration achieved by the kibbutz movement in the process of immigrant absorption and construction of the country. From this point of view the following sum total of achievements stands out conspicuously: In the course of several decades the National Institutions used the kibbutz movement as an instrument for absorbing immigration, redeeming barren land, training groups for the Hagana, providing suitable personnel for the Histadrut and State apparatus and finally, as a steady source of officers and commanders for the Israeli Army. In addition to the above, the kibbutz movement supplied the country with most of its young writers. The kibbutz movement served as a source of inspiration for the leading intellectual and political forces and this source is far from being dried up. Proof of this are the wide-spread literary and publishing activities of the various kibbutz movements, each one with its own particular approach. This was a well whose waters were drawn from enthusiastically but, sadly, without much consideration or gratitude.

The allegations made by MAPAI leaders against the kibbutz movement have not been forgotten. The independence and ideological stability of the different kibbutz currents were a thorn in their flesh. Sdeh Boker, which had

isolated itself from the rest of the organised movement, was hailed as a shining example of freedom from the spiritual slavery of collective ideology. Despite the numerous attacks and condemnations in times of trouble for the kibbutzim, these very same slanderers made full use of all possible help which the kibbutz movement was able to offer. Have these people ever asked themselves what would have happened to the country as a whole if the kibbutz movement had failed in its function and fallen apart? The Polish poet Mickiewicz once wrote about his lost motherland: "Oh, my Motherland, only those who have lost you, will know how to love you." *The kibbutz movement is not a never-ending source from which one draws constantly without returning anything for future use, without reinforcing it or guaranteeing reserves.*

Unbelievable as it may seem, a large part of the kibbutzim doubled and even trebled the number of families living in them, without any significant investment whatsoever on the part of the colonising organisations. The kibbutz movement was made into a colonising agency on the basis of the sweat and labour of its own members. As an example of the supreme exploitation of the kibbutz's resources, the following figures taken from Histadrut sources are indicative:

THE GROWTH OF THE KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT

120 kibbutzim from the year of establishment to 1955

<i>No. of units absorbed according to budget</i>	<i>No. of units in settlement</i>	<i>No. of units absorbed without budget</i>
7,012	15,357	8,345

After deducting approximately a thousand units for the absorption of the second generation we find that the kibbutzim invested more than 150 million pounds in absorbing new immigrants and in expanding their farms. This was

achieved partly by the use of internal reserves and partly by becoming heavily mortgaged to the banks. All this is exclusive of the high expenditure in money and work devoted to military security, expenses which of course give no returns. Every kibbutz and particularly those on the borders, are overloaded with the burden of security and defence. In former years, city youth undergoing military training was directed to the kibbutzim for a year's work in agriculture, in the framework of NACHAL. The present tendency is to cut down this scheme from year to year. City youth is being gradually relieved of any chalutz responsibility before returning from service. Thus one more scheme, which could have been of great value both from the chalutz and security points of view, disintegrates.

The public should become aware of the full meaning of what we have just stated. *The kibbutzim would not have become involved in their present economic difficulties had the colonising bodies financed the various investments needed for immigrant absorption, farm expansion and security arrangements which the kibbutzim had to earn over and above their budget allocations.* The reason for the enormous burden of debts and interest which the kibbutzim, even the most developed ones, are labouring under, stems directly from the colonisatory and security functions which have been foisted upon them and which unavoidably led to their present financial difficulties.

The moshav movement rejected the idea of absorbing new immigrants without being granted the necessary allocation for their absorption. Had the kibbutz movement received the necessary budgetary allowance for each additional family, or even part of the budget, the kibbutzim would not have become enslaved to the banks and its members would not have to devote so great a portion of their labour paying interest. Administrative convenience always leads to the path

of least resistance and results in kibbutzim being given development loans with interest linked to the cost of living index, which is not very much less than that demanded by the money speculators. Economic and social reasons force the kibbutzim to enlarge the outdated framework granted them at the time of their establishment by the colonising authorities. The kibbutzim are forced to exploit every source of credit. Every new family absorbed spells fresh economic perils for the kibbutz, and it is not surprising that even old and well established kibbutzim, which have broken records in agricultural production, find themselves walking a tightrope in their efforts to maintain economic balance. Despite all efforts there are no miracles in economic life, but iron law which demands its pound of flesh. The plundering of the chalutz forces must end. *At least part of the investments made by the kibbutzim for the sake of border security and internal growth must be returned to them, in order that the people living in kibbutzim may have some reward for their labours and be able to aspire to further achievements.*

The various economic branches of the settlements must be expanded in order to absorb their sons returning from the army and their newly established families. This requires additional investments and even the most successful settlement is unable to double the number of families out of its own income. *The present regime, which forces the kibbutz to struggle bitterly in order to maintain its existing level, hinders natural growth and denies the means of further development. It is this regime which bears the main responsibility for the weakening of the chalutz basis of immigration, absorption and mass colonisation.*

The arrival of the third million under conditions much harder than in the past demands a clear answer to the question — who will form the backbone of future mass colonisation? We have already stressed that colonisation in

the form of cooperatives (moshavim) is capable of serving as a framework for mass settlement on the land, but at the same time we are convinced that without a strong kibbutz backbone the whole future of such colonisation is in jeopardy. A regime which is not chalutz in character, and at times even anti-chalutz, endangers not only new colonisation but threatens the ability of the existing settlements. The exclusion of the kibbutz movement from the sphere of further development and conquest of wasteland is bound to adversely affect the moshav movement as well. *The kibbutz movement is strong enough to fulfil its historic mission. Let us hope that the powers that be will not reduce it to the status of merely a temporary measure, thereby casting doubt on the necessity for its continued existence.*

Such attempts to reduce the status of the kibbutz are, today, a real danger. This is known and felt in the kibbutzim of all the working class parties, MAPAI, MAPAM and Achdut Haavodah. The MAPAI kibbutzim feel this antagonism even more strongly than we do and they openly admit that their movement has been relegated to a status of minor importance. All the kibbutz movements are united in the belief that not only the fate of the movement is at stake but also the future of immigrant absorption and colonisation — indeed, the very character of the State itself. Despite this common recognition, the various kibbutz movements have been unable to join forces in overcoming the difficulties besetting them. Complete unity is not essential for a united struggle on matters of common interest; talk of an all-embracing unity, in effect, reduces the possibility of even limited cooperation. *The kibbutz movements must make it abundantly clear to the three working-class Zionist parties in the coalition and to the government as a whole that, although much more has been done in the sphere of immigrant absorption and colonisation than was done by the*

previous government, the most important promise has not been fulfilled. The government has not established a chalutz regime. It has not guaranteed the existence of a firm chalutz and kibbutz foundation for the productive absorption of the immigrants in town and country.

The Third Convention of our party will have to examine our political line in the Histadrut and in the country as a whole. The degree of success of this government, and the problem of joint responsibility among chalutz working-class parties, will also be examined. The convention will have to examine the extent to which the present government has carried out its obligations to set up a chalutz regime and to mobilize chalutz forces for the accomplishment of their historic tasks.

CONCLUSIONS

- (1) In order to ensure the fullest possibilities for the absorption of the immigrants, and to enable them to become integrated in the life of the country, it is essential to establish a chalutz regime as stated in the original programme of the present government;
- (2) A chalutz regime will have the task of taking firm steps to further our economic independence as a working nation, living on the basis of its own labour;
- (3) A chalutz regime must guarantee maximum settlement of Jews on a minimum area and the fullest exploitation of the five million acres which make up the State of Israel;
- (4) Such a regime must ensure a greater degree of productivity in the occupations of its citizens and a reduction of the exaggerated numbers employed in social services, "middle-man" and other unproductive occupations. From the present low level, of less than 40%, of the population

engaged in productive occupations, we must reach the same level of 55—60% attained by all normal countries;

- (5) A chalutz regime must guarantee a sufficient number of persons working in agriculture in order to ensure a maximum local supply of agricultural produce;
- (6) In order to guarantee the productive absorption of the third million it is necessary to prepare an additional 250,000 acres of land in the coming ten years, and to strengthen the absorptive capacity of the country in productive occupations, both in town and country. Likewise, every effort must be made to help the new immigrants in overcoming the problems of adjustment to new conditions;
- (7) The majority of new immigrants will not be absorbed in agriculture. The Histadrut and government must develop basic industry, a task which private capital is incapable of fulfilling;
- (8) The growing difficulties of redeeming and colonising waste and desert land demands the existence of a strong chalutz element, especially in view of the fact that these are the only remaining reserves of land;
- (9) Notwithstanding the importance of other branches of economy, the preparation of land for further settlement in the near future is the vital link in our country's progress and in accelerating the process of Ingathering of the Exiles. The preparation of land is so essential that no price can be too high. Hundreds of thousands of acres must be made ready for agricultural production in order to supply food for the millions of Jews who are waiting to come to Israel;
- (10) The work of construction and upbuilding which we will have to face in the coming few years, demands a decisive change in the educational system catering to student and working youth. Student youth must be directed

to productive branches of the economy and particularly to agriculture. Full support and encouragement must be given to the chalutz youth movements. The cooperative and collective agriculture of Israel will for many years require the maximum concentration of the physical, moral and intellectual forces of the younger generation in order to fulfill its historic mission — that of preparing the ground for the close settlement of millions of new immigrants from Dan to Eilat;

(11) Instead of introducing religious worship into the State Schools under the guise of fostering "Jewish Consciousness", our education must be permeated by a "chalutz consciousness", which will foster a love of labour and a willingness to conquer the desert and build settlements in the Negev and on the borders;

(12) The government will be betraying its most sacred obligation of establishing a chalutz regime, if it will not restore to chalutz agriculture its rightful place among the student and working youth of Israel and among Jewish youth in the Galut. The various training farms in the Galut must be encouraged and the number of agricultural schools in Israel increased;

(13) Labour leaders in Israel and the many hundreds of Histadrut officials must set an example and encourage their children to join the chalutz youth movements and the settlements in the Negev and on the borders;

(14) Close cooperation between the different streams in the kibbutz movement must be fostered in order to struggle successfully against the discrimination shown by the colonising authorities;

(15) The maximum amount of national, public and private capital must be devoted to the needs of absorption and development;

(16) The import of luxury goods must be limited and the smuggling of capital from Israel combatted;

(17) Taxation in the form of property taxes etc., must be increased in order to mobilize additional sources for full employment;

(18) Education, directed to fostering an appreciation of labour, and technical instruction must encompass tens of thousands of new immigrants in order to secure their productive integration into the life of the country and so increase the percentage of those engaged in actual production;

(19) Full employment must be attained as a means of productivising the country, integrating the various communities and securing economic and social progress for the backward sections of the population. Tens of thousands of new immigrant families, most of whom hail from the Arab countries, have not yet found permanent work and housing. They are being condemned to a life of degeneration; and in their bitterness and despair they form an easy target for the propaganda of Cherut and MAKI. The possibility of acquiring permanent housing is conditional on various payments which are beyond the pocket of the poorer section of the community. Housing has to be provided for all, without discrimination, on the basis of suitable loans. Permanent housing has to be provided for those with small means and for the thousands who are in need of support;

(20) Every encouragement must be given to the economic enterprises of the working class and to the working class cooperatives in agriculture and industry;

(21) The principle of non-discrimination on the basis of ethnic and community origin must be strictly observed in the allocation of work and housing as in all other aspects of public life.