

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY AND HEGEMONY.

We now reach the last chapter, which deals with the struggle for working class chalutz hegemony aiming towards the realisation of socialism. The slogan of working class chalutz hegemony is accepted by all the working class Zionist parties, MAPAM, MAPAI and Achdut Avoda. Each party, however, gives its own interpretation. MAPAI tends to understand working class hegemony as being MAPAI rule in cooperation with the bourgeoisie. Unity between MAPAI and the bourgeoisie is on a much firmer basis than that party's cooperation with Achdut Avoda and, particularly, with MAPAM. Cooperation on the part of MAPAI with the other two working class parties has a temporary air. It is a conditional cooperation. MAPAI with difficulty reconciles itself to its partners' political and organisational independence. MAPAI regards itself as the only legitimate representative of the working class vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie. Our existence is considered an anomaly which has to be dispensed with, by means of gentle persuasion or by means of not so gentle pressure.

This attitude on the part of MAPAI seems to me to be the reason why the basic programme of the present coalition, headed by the three working class parties — did not ensure cooperation and equality of status between the different

parties. At any rate, the fact is that during the last two years MAPAI has behaved towards MAPAM, and sometimes toward Achdut Avoda as well, as if it was fully prepared to maintain the coalition without us.

What is MAPAM's attitude to working class hegemony and what interpretation do we give to this slogan? *Working class hegemony means the united front of the three working class Zionist parties, thus guaranteeing a chalutz and progressive regime dedicated to the process of "Ingathering the Exiles", and the realisation of working class rule and socialism.* A united front of the three working class Zionist parties has, up to now, been possible in the Knesset, owing to the fact that a majority of voters cast their votes in favour of these parties. Such a united front could have in former governments also played a decisive role.

We were not opposed to the participation of bourgeois sections of the community in the past governments. *The unhindered progress of the "Ingathering of the Exiles" requires the full mobilisation of the forces latent in the Jewish people, both in Israel and in the Galut. The successful execution of such a policy makes it necessary for governmental power in our country to have the broadest possible social basis.*— Under what conditions? Cooperation with bourgeois elements must not serve as an obstacle in the establishment of a progressive chalutz regime.

After they had accepted the coalition's basic programme, which had been drawn up by the three working class Zionist parties with the aim of establishing a chalutz progressive regime, we welcomed the participation of the Progressive Party and even of the National Religious Party. The religious bloc has recently begun to exploit the weaknesses of MAPAI and is embarking on a campaign of clericalism which oversteps the status quo which we accepted at the time of the establishment of the coalition. The

religious bloc's onslaught on the freedom of conscience of the non-religious majority, arouses great anger among broad sections of the population. Their attempts to stop all traffic on Saturdays, which is so necessary for the masses, are intolerable. MAPAI's willingness to make concessions in the sphere of education, and the attempt to introduce religious worship in the general school system under the guise of "Jewish Consciousness", both demand maximum alertness by our party in the struggle for the freedom of the non-religious section of the community. The religious elements must understand that they will not be allowed to overstep the limits imposed upon them by their participation in a progressive government led by three working-class parties. We have no wish to be involved in an anti-religious war in a country which is striving to integrate different Jewish communities, but we will firmly resist all clerical interference with the freedom of conscience of the large non-religious majority of Israel's citizens.

The present period is one which demands the maximum mobilisation of all the means at the disposal of the Jewish people, in order to productively absorb Jews coming from the various countries and regimes. We appreciate that this requires a coalition which will represent the different classes and sections of the community, but on the condition that they all agree upon the necessity of a chalutz and progressive regime.

To our regret, the bourgeois parties in the coalition, and particularly the religious party, do not always respect the progressive character of the present government.

The realisation of a progressive chalutz regime is possible by means of a broad coalition in which the hegemony of the working class is guaranteed; it is also possible by means of a working class government without the participation of the bourgeois parties. Furthermore, it can



be assumed that in a later stage of the process of the "Ingathering of the Exiles", and to the extent that we will have progressed towards political and economical independence, the sharpening class conflicts will strengthen the necessity for a workers' government.

In our era a workers' government is not automatically identical with the rule of socialism. If the establishment of a workers' government is eventually achieved, it will no doubt bring us closer to the establishment of socialism, but it, too, will have to be content with strengthening the progressive chalutz regime in which classes and the class struggle continue to exist. It, too, will have to encourage the productive absorption, both of labour power and of private capital. *Our convention must above all ask itself, to what extent the progressive coalition government with the three working class Zionist parties at its head, has tied its existence and carried into operation the programme on which it was based.*

There are circles in our party which are deeply disappointed with the coalition government and there are those who are opposed to MAPAM's continued participation in it. On the other hand, there are members of the party who tend to gloss over many incidents, be they trivial or serious, and are in favour of remaining in the government at any price. The decisive factor for them is that the government is actively engaged in absorbing immigrants and developing new urban and rural areas of settlement. Then again, there are many who come face to face with the suffering and disappointment caused the working masses by reformist and bureaucratic methods of administration. Out of their own experience, they feel the results of MAPAI's abandoning several of the fundamental principles of the present coalition. These members of the party weigh our participation in the government very carefully. Whatever the true estima-

tion may be, it is our duty to make an honest comparison between the achievements and the failures of the coalition and to arrive at a considered judgment of the first two years of its existence. We have already stated in a chapter devoted to problems of the chalutz regime, that despite all the failures of the present government and the disappointments it has caused us, it is infinitely better than its predecessor, which was based on a coalition between MAPAI and the General Zionists. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook three negative facts: a) The present government, and particularly the main party at its wheel, did not fulfill several of the main principles accepted as the foundation of the present coalition; b) The government did not see to it that cooperation between the various parts of the coalition, and particularly among the working class parties, would be in a spirit of equality, as was promised by the Prime Minister at the time of its formation; c) The government did not allow MAPAM to share fully in the responsibility for the government's policy and decisions.

We shall not content ourselves merely with the above mentioned generalisation of good and bad but we will try to make a more detailed comparison between the achievements and failures of the government.

The main achievements of the government are as follows:

- a) The renewal of immigration which has reached 100,000 in the course of the current year. This includes tens of thousands from the socialist countries, in addition to those who continue to arrive from North Africa.
- b) To this government's credit must be recorded the settlement of large sections of the immigrants in new areas of absorption. Great financial and administrative efforts were



made in order to settle a considerable number of immigrants on the land. The 4,000 families sent to kibbutz settlements represent part of this achievement in the productive absorption of the immigrants.

c) The housing programme for the next few years will provide accommodation for tens of thousands of immigrants and will do away almost completely with temporary work camps and other forms of temporary housing. This programme bears witness to the great constructive initiative shown by the government.

d) While absorbing approximately 100,000 immigrants a year in all parts of the country and also in new centres of absorption, the government and the national institutions continue to liquidate the existing "maabarot" (temporary housing camps — tr.). It has been estimated that during the present government's term of office almost all the existing maabarot will be wound up and their inhabitants transferred to permanent housing. This undertaking is not completely free, however, from serious deficiencies, such as discrimination on the basis of country of origin in allocating houses and lack of consideration in regard to the impoverished sectors. I dealt with this in detail in the summary of the chapter entitled "A Chalutz Regime". Despite all this, one cannot deny the fact that great work has been done during these years in teaching the new immigrants a trade. Much work has also been done in acquainting the new immigrants with the Hebrew language and, in general, in integrating them within the life of the country. The enrootment and training of the new immigrants who have arrived since the foundation of the State, is becoming conspicuous in the changing composition of the trade unions, the increasing part played by new immigrant settlements in agriculture and

side sends large shipments of arms to Syria and Egypt and the other to Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

#### 9: AFTER THE GOVERNMENT'S PARTIAL AFFILIATION TO THE EISENHOWER DOCTRINE

In order to add fuel to the fires, our leaders declared their adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine. This perfectly futile act of ours brought the Soviet Union's wrath to boiling point. Soviet propaganda raised us to the rank of instrument No. 1 of American imperialism. There was no limit to its threats and slander. In their eyes we appeared as Enemy No. 1 of the Soviet State. The Zionist danger now serves them as a pretext for a sort of new doctrine. It is almost possible to say that in opposition to the Eisenhower Doctrine, there was put into operation in Syria, a Soviet Doctrine. Pro-Soviet Syria is today no more neutral than Pro-American Jordan and their common feature is that they are all arming against us. *The time has come when, once and for all, we must understand that a policy based on Sinai, or similar campaigns, will not, in the long run, add to our security or future existence. The opposite is true. Such a policy can only increase the arms race and reduce the prospects of peace.*

MAPAM has never suggested peace at the price of foregoing part of our territory, but for us it is clear that no peace guaranteeing our present borders can be attained by means of campaigns such as the Sinai one. We do not live in a vacuum. One cannot gamble and always expect to win. If there will be a "third round", even ending in an Israeli victory, we will not have advanced an inch towards the hoped-for peace.

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industrial production and by the increased activity of the new immigrant in public and political life.

e) Improvements have been made in the methods of tax collection. Tax evasion on the part of the rich has been reduced and certain adjustments in taxes have been made in favour of the poor.

f) Cultivation of citrus fruits and industrial crops has increased. The irrigation network has been enlarged, bringing about an intensification of agriculture. As a result of these measures, Israel's agriculture is rapidly approaching a state of being able to supply all the needs of the population, while the export of agricultural products, and particularly of citrus fruits, has increased.

g) In the course of the two years that this government has been in power, exports have greatly increased, and the first ten months of the current year have witnessed a further considerable rise.

h) Despite the enormous expenses involved in the Sinai Campaign and the absorption of mass immigration, the danger of rapid inflation has been avoided and the government has balanced its budget.

Finally, despite all the dark prophecies, the present government, with the three working class Zionist parties at its head, has held firm and has succeeded up to now in patching up the differences which have on occasion come to the fore.

With all due credit to these achievements, the final balance-sheet is dependent on the degree to which the main principles of the government's basic programme are put into operation and on the degree of unity pervading the coalition and the working class parties in it.



In order to reach a fair balance, we must also disclose the government's failures, the most conspicuous being :

- a) The present government has not watched over our political independence with the same zeal as in the early years of the State. It increased our dependence on the West. As a result, tension between ourselves and the Socialist bloc increased, the neutral countries regarded us with suspicion and the barriers between ourselves and the Asiatic peoples strengthened. This change for the worse in governmental policy, increased the threats to our very existence. The Sinai Campaign and the Eisenhower Doctrine increased our dependence on the West to an alarming degree and aggravated still further our relations with the Socialist bloc.
- b) This government has inadequately fulfilled its chief obligation to establish a chalutz regime in the country. While making efforts to productivise the new immigrants, the regime is helpless in coping with the strong deproletarianisation which is taking place in both town and country among those sections of the community that have been longer in the country. The flight from village to town is increasing, as is the flight from productive work to office work, trade and other unproductive occupations. As a result of this tendency, there has been no rise in the percentage of those engaged in productive occupations, which in our country is less than 40% as compared to 55%—60% in capitalist countries with a normal economy.
- c) The policy of deviating from chalutzit has left its mark, particularly on the educational system which is completely under the control of State institutions. Instead of educating working and student youth towards agriculture and other productive occupations, the educational methods introduced into the State schools, led to most high school

graduates entering those professions typical of the Jews in the Galut, such as office work and the free professions. This deviation has also found its expression in the attitude to the chalutz youth movements, which form the main reserves of the kibbutz movement. The youth movements do not get the recognition and support in the schools to which they are entitled and as a result there is a danger that the sources for replenishing the chalutz settlements will be dried up.

- d) The majority in the present government has consistently ignored the demands for social equality and justice, and the promise made in the government's basic programme to secure a fair division of social and financial burdens among the different classes. The majority in the government continues to seek a remedy for our economic and financial problems by unfairly burdening the working masses. The attempts made to freeze wages, various manipulations of subsidies, in order to avoid a rise of wages through rise in the cost-of-living index, are all part of the same sad picture. At the time of the Ata strike an attempt was made to abandon the security of the workers, by surrendering to employers' demands to have a free hand in dismissing workers with years and years of hard work behind them, on the pretext of "efficiency dismissals". The attempts made by MAPAI leaders and those economic ministries under their control, to solve all the country's economic problems at the expense of the worker, placed added difficulties in the way of cooperation between the workers' parties. The plague of unemployment and the wage cut in public works; the rise in prices and the quick enrichment of the big merchants, banks and monopolies, all increased the difficulties. The deviations from chalutz principles and the vital needs of the working masses, give additional impetus to

the process of deproletarianisation of the older sections of the community and the drop in social status of the new immigrants, the latter being particularly noticeable among those coming from the Eastern countries. Only too frequently they are the last to get permanent housing and the first to suffer unemployment.

e) The weakening of the workers' feeling of security and the continual drop in social status of the lower income groups serve as a fruitful source of exploitation for reactionary propaganda and provides an excellent basis for the demagogic incitement of Cherut on the one hand, and of MAKI on the other.

f) All the above mentioned phenomena lead to a dangerous weakening of the chalutz basis of the process of the "Ingathering of the Exiles".

g) The weakening of the chalutz elements affect the whole character of the country's colonisation, the stability of working class settlement and its ability to achieve fresh conquests. Working class settlement loses its independent character and comes under administrative control. The resulting bureaucratic degeneration greatly increases the cost of agricultural settlement.

h) The weakening of the chalutz and kibbutz elements in recent colonisation, places a question mark on the latter's whole future and on our ability to provide a minimum agricultural background to the 3rd million immigrants who are knocking at our gates.

i) Future colonisation will be more difficult in view of the fact that the best land, which did not require extensive preparation or reclamation, is already populated. The necessity of concentrating our efforts on Negev and hill settlement, demands the restoration to the chalutz

will be carried out in the framework of the 3rd million must have, as its basis, the chalutz-kibbutz movement. The neglect shown by MAPAI leaders and government and Histadrut officials to the chalutz youth movements in the Galut, and their training farms, must cease. The educational and colonisation authorities, both of the State and of the Histadrut, are urgently called upon to create those educational conditions which will ensure that the cream of our working and student youth will turn to chalutzit, work, agriculture, conquest of the Negev and the waste lands and to the kibbutz movement which is dedicated life and soul to the fulfilment of these noble missions.

The non-chalutz educational system; the neglect of chalutz training of Galut youth; the direction of the main body of student youth to office work and the free professions; the withholding of the most minimum budget needed for the consolidation of the kibbutz economy to enable it to fulfill its security functions and to embark on fresh conquests; all taken together, place an intolerable burden on the existing kibbutzim and weaken their natural reserves. The whole future of immigration is threatened unless it will be accompanied by a strong chalutz element, a firmly enrooted agricultural sector, and unless the kibbutz movement is given the conditions to allow for further exploits of conquest of the wasteland. Without doubting the importance of the speedy development of all branches of production in both town and country, MAPAM regards the guaranteeing of an adequate agricultural background for the absorption of the 3rd million as being the crucial question. MAPAM must sound the alarm and struggle for the realisation of the leading principle of the basic programme adopted by the present coalition, namely, the establishment of a chalutz regime.

The unhindered progress of the "Ingathering of the Exiles" also demands a just policy towards the Arab minority in



our country. The promise of justice and civil, economic, cultural and social equality for the Arab minority, which was included in the coalition's basic programme, has not been fulfilled.

We demand the complete abolition of military administration. Despite the promises made in the government's basic programme, the severities of military administration have not even been lightened. The Arab minority continues to be kept in a state of second-class citizenship, which causes both national and personal humiliation. This attitude to the Arab minority is a serious obstacle in the way of building a bridge to the Arabs in the neighbouring countries, a bridge, which could reduce tension and pave the way to peace negotiations. The discrimination against the Arab minority, despite the loyalty which the Arab citizens of Israel have shown to the State in all the years of its existence, breeds despair and irridentism and is conducive to MAKI propaganda which seeks to create a veritable abyss between the two peoples.

j) The deviation from a policy based on friendship between the two people, plus the activist line adopted in security matters, have both made their contribution in widening the gulf, which in any case exists, between ourselves and our neighbours. The Arab reactionaries, MAKI and the Big Powers fighting for hegemony by means of "divide and rule", are in any case, all actively engaged in widening the gulf between the two peoples. *MAPAM must struggle within the government and in the country as a whole, for a change of policy, aimed at reducing tension between Jews and Arabs, friendship between the two peoples, the striving for peace and independence and neutrality of our country.*

I have mentioned above the achievements and failures of the present government, the hopes which we had and

the disappointments we suffered, as partners in the coalition.

Many of the above demands are directed more toward the Histadrut and progressive opinion in our country, than to the government. Their basis, however, lies in the promises made in the government's basic programme. The major part of these demands may be found in the individual programmes of the three working class Zionist parties, although among them are demands and slogans which represent the specific mission of MAPAM in the national and class sense. *We must clearly differentiate between those demands directed to the coalition, and to the 3 working class parties at its head, and those which we make on ourselves in our endeavour to form a revolutionary alternative for the working class of this country.* No other party or current, will, for example, fulfill, at the present moment, our special mission of deepening the friendship between the Arab and Jewish peoples and strengthening our solidarity with revolutionary world socialism.

The majority of the voters expects this government, and the working class parties leading it, to fulfill their finest national and social aspirations. The majority of voters to the Knesset places its faith in the working class Zionist parties and in their promise to establish a progressive chalutz regime under working-class hegemony. Despite the fact that this government has achieved much more than its predecessor in the up-building of the country and in various other spheres which I have mentioned above, we cannot overlook the non-fulfilment of the main clauses in its programme. The government *did not establish* a chalutz regime, nor did it guarantee a chalutz foundation to the process of the "Ingathering of the Exiles". The vital interests of the working masses in town and country have in no way been adequately defended. The



government did not do everything in its power to ensure a regime of social justice and equality. Insufficient efforts were made in combatting racial and ethnic discrimination. Our dependence on the West was increased and parallel with this, our isolation among the Asiatic peoples.

MAPAM, as a working class Zionist party, must tirelessly strive to consolidate working class hegemony, defend the just interests of the working masses and strengthen the chalutzic core of the "Ingathering of the Exiles". *In order to achieve these aims, we have maintained a policy of cooperation with the other working class parties. Only the fulfilment of this task grants the working class Zionist parties the right to stand at the head of the people and its government.*

*The special mission which MAPAM, as a revolutionary socialist party, has assumed, justifies its existence as a revolutionary alternative way for the working class. Our loyalty to chalutz Zionism, our ceaseless struggle for the workers' interest, our perpetual striving for our country's independence and neutrality, our fight to establish friendship between the Jewish and Arab peoples in the State of Israel and between our country and its neighbour, our struggle for workers' rule and the realisation of socialism, our ceaseless fostering of solidarity which world socialism, and our unique contribution to the development of the kibbutz movement and the Histadrut, form the basis of our special mission on behalf of the nation and the working class movement. We strive to achieve the full national and social liberation of our people, in an unpartitioned Israel, by cooperation with the other working class parties. Our special historic mission as an alternative for the working class we are prepared to fulfill, with the cooperation of other working class parties or, if needs be, by ourselves. As a revolutionary chalutz party, we shall*

*travel the long road ahead of us with or without partners, although we sincerely hope that our journey will be marked by close cooperation with the other working class Zionist parties.*

Our struggle to achieve these aims is the central problem facing the Third Convention of the United Workers Party. I have subjected to a thorough and detailed analysis, all the achievements and failures resulting from the coalition's two years in office. *Although several of the main clauses in the government's programme have been sadly neglected, and equality among the various partners in the coalition has not been maintained, MAPAM least of all having reason to be satisfied with its status, I have not changed my opinion that every effort must be made to maintain the present coalition and that our struggle for a progressive policy must be carried on from within.*

However, for the sake of the present coalition we will not abandon our independent mission on behalf of the nation and the working class. We will struggle within the coalition for the full realisation of the government's basic programme. Despite our will to maintain maximum cooperation with the other working class parties, we cannot be certain that the majority in the present coalition will not place us in a position which renders this impossible.

*We will struggle with all our strength for the maintenance of working class solidarity in the Histadrut and in the country as a whole but, under all circumstances, we will do everything to strengthen the consciousness among the public, that MAPAM is loyal to its independent mission on behalf of the nation and the working class.*