

leaders have ceased considering themselves as the heads of the workers' struggles. Instead they are giving increasingly greater help to those carrying out this Government's anti-worker and anti-pioneering economic policies.

It has been a long time since we last heard of the Histadrut leading a strike. We have grown accustomed to seeing the Histadrut leadership preventing strikes and applying sanctions against them. But there are strikes or the threats of strikes to which their ears are more attuned. Towards these strikes of 'our own people' from the higher bureaucracy they use gentler methods of persuasion. The same is true when the strike is led by a rebellious Mapai politician. But when the strikes are organized by production workers, the Mapai leadership knows how to show its fist. If there were really justice in the Histadrut we would have to put the Mapai majority on trial, since the wage-freeze contradicts the Histadrut convention resolutions, which declared that wages would have to rise together with increased production and productivity.

I have already mentioned the statistics of the Bank of Israel proving that a long list of private firms and banks ended the past year with a balance showing profits of 20 percent and more. This freedom to amass profits reflects the famous liberalism which is now being introduced in place of the austerity of the pioneering regime. Why we need these high profits by the employers on the one hand and the wage freeze for the workers on the other, in order to meet the competition of the Common Market countries, are questions which only Minister Eshkol and his comrades can answer.

We consider Mapam's struggle against this policy and the economic discrimination against the workers to be our central political task at the present time. We shall do everything we can to bring into the struggle other elements in the Histadrut and the country.

## THE SOCIAL AND ETHNIC GAP

When I first came to Israel I was one of workers on the Tiberias-Zemach road. I lived in lower Tiberias and had the opportunity to observe the life of two communities, the Ashkenazic community (European) and the Sephardic community (Oriental). Even then there were differences in the traditions and customs of each group, but they did intermingle with one another. Social integration progressed more rapidly in those days than today. All were united by the common problems and troubles facing them, namely, poverty and distress. There was an equality based on scarcity. Even the elite of both communities integrated socially as well as economically — bankers, scientists, scholars as well as the ordinary man.

A large immigration from the North African countries began with the establishment of the state and the percentage of Oriental Jews rose steadily. In 1936 they were 23% of the Jewish population; by 1948 they reached 30%; and by the year 1960 their numbers grew to 50% of the total population of Israel. Taking into consideration the natural increase in population, this percentage will continue to grow. (More than 50% of the families of the Sephardic Jews number 5—10 members per family).

Herein lies the problem: From a demographic point of view the Sephardim represent the major basis for natural growth. However, this natural increase will be paid for by a painful widening of the social gap. There is no doubt that ethnic discrimination exists within Israel. This today is a more serious problem than in the days before the establishment of the state.

This is social and class discrimination in essence, and ethnic discrimination in form. It resembles in many

ways the racial discrimination that exists toward the Arab minority in Israel. The difference is that racial discrimination towards the Arabs reaps rewards for the social demagogy of Maki (Israel Communist Party), whereas the ethnic discrimination against the Sephardim reaps rewards for Herut (extreme right-wing party).

Essentially the Sephardic intelligentsia, fighting ethnic discrimination, should be the first to oppose racial discrimination against the Arab minority. Who should know better than themselves how inter-dependent these discriminations are. If you will, this is the task of Mapam, to differentiate between the natural ferment within the Sephardic communities and the workings of chauvinistic incitements against the Arabs. Accent should be placed on the common denominator that exists in the fight for the integration of the Jewish ethnic groups and the struggle for the brotherhood of nations.

The common denominator of the two problems is that the Arab worker must live in a hut or hovel on the outskirts of Jewish towns where he must seek his work, and the worker of the Sephardic community is packed into a crowded slum such as Wadi Salib, which remains a core of tension within Haifa. After serious incidents in Wadi Salib and other places, the Ezioni committee was established. Here are a few excerpts from its conclusions :

"Incidents such as took place in Wadi Salib, must serve as a warning that there is no room for indifference, but a need for acute awareness in inter-community relations. The country must place at the head of its list of urgent problems the removal of the "maabarot" (temporary immigrant camps) and slums, and the improvement of the cultural level of the under-privileged groups. Topping the scale of priority projects for the national and local administrations must be constant concern for the integration of all the com-

munities into the economic, social and cultural life of Israel.

Hasn't the government learned its lesson yet, and reached the same conclusions as were reached by the Ezioni committee? We are witnesses to the desperate struggle being fought by slum dwellers in Tel Aviv whose land was sold from under them at exorbitant prices to a corporation which plans an entertainment center on the site of their homes, costing millions and perhaps tens of millions of pounds. This land is the stage for a devils dance of land speculation involving astronomical sums. Slums have been destroyed with the help of eviction notices. Policemen were recruited to aid the land speculators in order to evict the dwellers into the streets. Almost incredible! Women and children tried, empty handed, to defend their homes against the policemen and their clubs, against the threat of expulsion.

This is an excellent example of how the problem of slum dwellers is solved in Israel. These dwellers are primarily, if not all, members of the Sephardic community. Tens of thousands of them live from public welfare work projects and the dole.

The situation is not much better among the members of some two hundred Moshvei Olim (Immigrant small-holder settlements), of whom 70% are from the Sephardic communities. I have already had the opportunity to express my opinion on the administrative, economic and political oppression that exists in these settlements.

In practice, they are directed by more than a thousand administrative directors of the Jewish Agency, faithful to the dictates of Mapai, and its moshav movement. However, things are beginning to change. Here and there, forces attempt to break the bonds. These forces, pressing to the fore, are primarily the younger generation returning from the army. Mapam is ready to lend a helping hand to this new force, to the best of its ability.

There is a trend among moshav members to abandon the moshav in favor of metropolitan slum areas, (from the frying pan into the fire). One of the main reasons for this migration is the lack of proper educational facilities on the moshav, whereas in the cities, even in the slum areas, at least elementary education is guaranteed. However, our attention is brought immediately to the fact that many of these children never reach the higher grades. The percentage of Sephardic children in the first grade is said to be about 50%, but by the 8th grade there remain only 20%.

In 1962 only 500 of the tens of thousands of students in the various universities of Israel were children of the Sephardic community; most of these drop out before completing their studies. This is the situation 15 years after the establishment of the state.

When the Minister of Education was asked his opinion on the rising number of dropouts, his answer hinted at the presence of inferior hereditary traits. In Beersheba, an experiment was made in the sixth grade, separating the more gifted from the less gifted children. This separation is almost identical with ethnic discrimination. The question we must ask is this: Must 50% of the Jewish population, because of presumed hereditary failings, be doomed to live on the level of wood cutters and water carriers.

There is the age-old tribe of Yemenites who, coming from the Middle Age type regime of the Imams brings to us a wonderful tradition of Law and Study, which has remained the birthright of the folk for thousands of years. We have always been amazed at this tribe, both industrious in labor and constant in study. And yet the children of these Yemenites are among those who do not reach the 8th grade.

The man of conscience and heart who asks himself where the answer lies, need not resort to reasons of nature and heredity. He will place the blame on housing conditions and material distress. He will place

the blame on the fact that children of 11—12 are called upon to help support their families. (These are families of numerous children and crowded living conditions). The blame must be placed on the anti-pioneer, anti-social regime growing within our country. This regime encourages the enriching of a minority — in other words capitalist liberalism, and the freezing of the wages of the working class, the majority of whom are Sephardim. This is not only freezing of the working man's wage but also ethnic discrimination in standard of living, housing, culture and education.

Our party sees the ending of discrimination first of all as a social and class problem. We are convinced that we will not attain complete integration without closing the social gap, without paving the way for complete social and class equality. Without integration of the various ethnic groups we cannot assure a proper continuation of the Ingathering of the Exiles.

With this goal in sight, we proposed in Knesset a law on the abolition of the ethnic social gap and the guarantee of legal conditions suitable to the Ingathering of the Exiles. This law is intended as a legal support for the integration of the various Communities. We will not allow this battle to be the private monopoly of party leaders from the Sephadic communities. We regard this one of the basic goals of our party regardless of the ethnic origin of its members.