

tions on the Arab population, which prevented workers from seeking employment in Jewish-owned establishments. And they made only half-hearted gestures toward ending wage differentials even where mixed labor was employed, as on the Jaffa dock.*

One new development has been the formation as part of the Palestine Labor League of the Union of Working Fellaheen in the State of Israel. The statement of its objectives did not, however, mention the waging of economic struggles, but placed chief emphasis on promoting co-operative marketing and purchasing and co-operative enterprises.²³ In the summer of 1949 this union sponsored the establishment of the first Arab kibbutz, called Uhuva (Brotherhood).

Despite the hostility of the Histadrut leadership, the Arab Workers' Congress, upholding the principle of working class unity, has addressed repeated appeals to the Histadrut urging the creation of a single Jewish-Arab trade union federation. It is clear that the separate organization of Jewish and Arab workers can no longer have even the specious justification of expressing two separate economies. For developments since the birth of Israel have been rapidly binding the country in a single economic framework even though there are still differences between its Jewish and Arab parts. The advance of industry, the sharpening of the class struggle, the lifting of nationalist prejudices from the minds of both Jewish and Arab workers as they confront common problems will break down artificial barriers and hasten the process of unification. Such unity is as necessary for the Jewish as for the Arab workers of Israel.

*In December, 1946, average daily wages of Arab industrial workers in Palestine were 34 per cent of the wages of Jewish workers; in transport Arab average daily wages were 54 per cent of Jewish wages.**

XI. The World of Israel

The door of the inner room opened and a young man came out. He wore an open khaki shirt, khaki pants, and ankle puttees.

"That's Yigal," said the plump Palmach girl.

I walked over and handed him the note—the precious note signed with a name that carried authority. Col. Yigal Alon, commander-in-chief of the Palmach, smiled and held out his hand.

"I've been trying to get to you for weeks," I said. "I wanted to spend a little time with a Jewish general."

He smiled again. "Jewish, yes, but general?" He made a deprecatory gesture. Technically he was right. The highest rank in the Israeli army was colonel, except for the Chief of Staff, who was a brigadier. But an Israeli colonel had the responsibilities of a major-general or lieutenant-general in another army. This whole business of rank was very new and the Palmach, the mobile assault troops who were the flower of the army, didn't care much for it. Before this all the officers were simply called commanders, as they had been in the illegal Hagana days.

"Let's eat," Yigal said. Rank or no rank, everybody called him Yigal. It was after two of a hot mid-July day. I had been waiting three hours after hitchhiking from Tel Aviv on the rear seat of a courier's motorcycle to this former Arab village of Yazur where the Palmach staff had its headquarters. We went to the mess-hall where officers and men ate together. Obviously, this Yigal was no ordinary military man. Relaxed, informal, humorous, he acted more like the captain of the team than a member of the General Staff of the Defense Army of Israel. And he looked more like the kid from Genosar kibbutz in the Jordan Valley than the conqueror of eastern

Galilee, Safed, Lydda, and Ramle. He was twenty-nine and had won the greatest Jewish military victories since Judas Maccabeus.

He was to go on later in the year to win even brighter laurels as the commander of the Negev operations that drove the Egyptians out of all Palestine except for a small coastal pocket. Though his name is virtually unknown outside his own country, Yigal Alon was the outstanding commander in Israel's war of independence.

CITIZEN SOLDIERS

Yigal asked me to return the following afternoon when "we'll try to cook up something interesting." It marked the beginning of four memorable days with the Palmach staff. Though a foreign correspondent, the only one on the scene, I was allowed to be present during the planning of a delicate operation. It culminated in an attempt to capture Arab-held Latrun, which controlled the main road to Jerusalem—an attempt cut short by the beginning of the second United Nations truce. During those four days there came to El Quebab, another abandoned Arab village to which we moved, Israel Galili, former commander-in-chief of the Hagana, whom Prime Minister Ben Gurion had kicked upstairs to the post of Assistant Defense Minister. Like Yigal, Galili was a member of Mapam. And there came others of the brilliant officers of the Israeli army: Colonel Yigal Yadin, the tall, suave, thirty-two-year-old Chief of Operations, who a little over a year later became Chief of Staff; Col. Michael Bengal, military commander of the Tel Aviv district, who was still in his twenties; and the founder of the Palmach, Col. Yitschak Sadeh, a sparkling youngster of fifty-eight. During those four days, and on other occasions as well, I also came to know at first hand the rank and file of what was then predominantly a democratic people's army.

Tsva Hagana Le-Yisrael (the Defense Army of Israel) grew out of the Hagana, which means defense. The Hagana was founded in 1920 for the defense of settlements against Arab attacks. From the outset it was conceived of not as a special military formation, but as a citizens' militia in which virtually all able-bodied men and women would participate. In the building of the Hagana, labor Zionists of various trends played the principal part.

Hagana's functions were not purely military, but were an

integral part of Jewish pioneering effort, and this helped infuse it with a democratic spirit. Boys and girls, after graduating from high school, were required by the Vaad Leumi (National Council) to spend a year in Hagana. They were usually sent to agricultural settlements, which served as training centers. The young people would devote part of the time to working in the fields and the rest to military training. The system was voluntary in the sense that the Vaad Leumi had moral rather than legal means of enforcing it.

Almost from its inception Hagana was illegal and had to procure arms in subterranean ways. But during most of its history the British authorities, viewing it as useful in curbing the Palestine Arabs, tolerated Hagana; and in the Arab revolt of 1936-39 and in World War II they co-operated with it. However, the wartime co-operation was studded with repression, and in general it may be said that the British White Paper of 1939 marked the end of the honeymoon for Hagana. In the postwar period, when Hagana became part of the nationwide resistance and independence movement, the British persecuted it savagely as a "terrorist" group.

Hagana did not of course play an independent role, but was an instrument of Zionist policy. Its own democratic structure could not negate the basically pro-imperialist premises of that policy; and Hagana became, like the Histadrut, a means of mobilizing the masses behind the Zionist program and of educating the youth in its spirit. As late as March, 1946, the memorandum submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry by the Jewish Resistance Movement, speaking for Hagana, declared: "We do not know of any contradictory interest between us and England. We are not interested in weakening the position of England in the world, in the Middle East or in Palestine."¹ Nevertheless, in the conflict that erupted out of the White Paper, Hagana became to some extent a channel through which the people pressed the Zionist leadership toward a tougher attitude to the mandatory power.

Palmach was organized as the mobile striking force of the Hagana, specially trained and at all times ready for action. The Palmach had its own staff and was allowed considerable autonomy within the Hagana. On a June day in 1948, sitting in his attractive two-room apartment on Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard, the man who is considered the father of the Palmach and was its first

commander-in-chief, Colonel Yitschak Sadeh, told the story of that extraordinary group of Palestine Jewry's fighting youth. Sadeh is a towering, impressive figure, with a spade-shaped beard and sage, humorous eyes behind tortoise-shell glasses—a modern Joshua. He it was who organized and commanded the first armored brigade in the Israeli army.

The origins of the Palmach go back to the *plugot sadeh* (field troops), special squads of Hagana members formed in 1937 by a British intelligence officer, Captain Orde Wingate (later General Wingate of World War II, who won fame in the Burma fighting). Sadeh helped Wingate train these squads which operated at night and used offensive guerrilla tactics against Arab rebels. One of the earliest recruits was Yigal Alon, then seventeen years old, but already a veteran member of Hagana. When the Palmach was organized in 1941, it perfected Wingate's tactics and also received commando training from British officers at a school established at the kibbutz Mishmar Haemek.* Palmach members acquitted themselves brilliantly on various secret assignments in World War II. However, Colonel Sadeh said, "We had little confidence in the British, and during the World War, when so many Jews went into the British army, we retained our own organization." After the war, the Palmach became the spearhead of Hagana's military operations against the British.

The Palmach was the most advanced section of the Hagana not only in a military sense, but politically as well. In fact, it was no accident that the Palmach was peculiarly the creation of the Left forces in the Zionist movement, especially of Achdut Haavoda, which favored a more militant policy toward Britain. And most of the Palmach officers and men were drawn from the Left-wing kibbutsim. The democratic practices of Hagana were even more highly developed in the Palmach, which imbued its members with a sense of personal responsibility, comradeship, and devotion to the people. "We trained our members not only to fight," Colonel Sadeh said, "but to work. We also educated them culturally. Some of the

*The hit of the 1948 theatrical season in Israel was a play, *Hoo Halach Besadot* (*His Path Lay Through the Fields*), based on Palmach life at Mishmar Haemek. It was a dramatization of a prize-winning novel with the same title by Moshe Shamir, a member of that kibbutz.

best of the new Hebrew literature has been created by members of the Palmach. The Palmach developed an entire life and spirit of its own, with its own songs and even its own vocabulary, which contains many Arabic words."

Naturally the political outlook and democratic spirit of the Palmach did not endear it to the Zionist high command. They starved the Palmach financially. In addition, the policy of appeasing Britain, which the Jewish Agency pursued so long, "definitely handicapped us," Colonel Sadeh said. "It also prevented the Jewish forces from seizing British arms and in general didn't help prepare for the war that broke upon us in December, 1947."

When that war came, there was no real Jewish army. There was the semi-military Hagana with its Palmach striking force, and there were the politically dubious Irgun and the Stern group, whose military prowess, especially in the Irgun's case, was proved by later events to have been greatly exaggerated. The only fully trained and mobilized units were those of the Palmach, numbering about five thousand youths and girls. The equipment of these combined forces was pitiful. At the time when the Jewish state was proclaimed there were still not enough rifles to go around.

It was the agricultural settlements, with their tenacious and aggressive defense, and the striking power of the Palmach that gave the Yishuv the time it needed to whip an army into shape and forge a unified command. So heavy were the Palmach's losses that a year later few of the original five thousand were still alive and physically fit. One of those who worked closely with the Palmach and admired it greatly, though he did not share its political philosophy, was the American officer, Colonel David Michael Marcus, who gave his life for Israel.

Such a fighting force was not only feared by the enemy, but was a thorn in the side of those who wanted to build the army of Israel in the image of its government. In general the social conflicts within the Yishuv were reflected in the army and gave the government leaders many anxious moments. The Palmach spirit was infectious and the Palmach itself became the vanguard of the fight for a democratic army. In the struggle that developed Prime Minister Ben Gurion virtually liquidated the Palmach. But no one could liquidate the breakthrough of the main road to Jerusalem, the

victory in Eastern Galilee, the capture of Lydda and Ramle, the expulsion of the Egyptians from the Negev, and the other superb achievements of the Palmach. Long before its dissolution it had become an audacious legend, the pride and glory of the Yishuv.

How explain the phenomenon of the Jewish victories over five invading states? Behind those victories lay the following factors:

1. The greater part of the Jewish able-bodied population had had some training in the use of firearms and in rudimentary military tactics. A considerable number had also had more extensive training in the British and other Allied armies in World War II.

2. The Yishuv possessed in the Palmach a military force which made up in skill and daring for what it lacked in numbers.

3. Every agricultural settlement was transformed into a miniature fortress.

4. The human material in the Israeli army was exceptional, physically and morally. This was in contrast to the impoverished, illiterate peasants who had been dragooned into the Arab armies.

5. The morale of both soldiers and civilians was unusually high. The Jews knew what they were fighting for, the Arabs did not.

6. The civilian population was mobilized behind the war effort to a very high degree—higher than in our own country in the anti-fascist war.

7. The technical facilities and know-how that are part of a more highly industrialized society gave Israel a decided advantage over the inefficient, corrupt, semi-feudal Arab states.

8. The Palestinian Arabs let down the Mufti's gang and the foreign invaders by refusing to fight the Jews and later by manifesting considerable opposition to the war.

9. Disunity and rivalry among the Arab states prevented them from co-ordinating operations and employing their full strength.

10. Firm, consistent political and moral support by the Soviet Union and the people's democracies played a major role in enabling Israel to stand up against the machinations of Anglo-American imperialism. And the arms supplied by Czechoslovakia proved decisive in making it possible for Israel to hold off the invaders and ultimately drive them from most of Palestine.

WOMEN OF ISRAEL

One of the phenomena of Israel that soon catches the visitor's eye is the role played by women in the country's life. This has been part of the pattern of Jewish national development in Palestine. The women among the first settlers had to work side by side with the men and share in all the hardships. From the pioneering traditions that molded the Yishuv there developed a relationship in which the woman was the more or less equal partner of the man. This relationship and the attitudes flowing from it, which are so contrary to Jewish religious tradition and practice, have become part of the mores of Israel even though the reality often falls far short of this ideal.

Large numbers of married women work for wages outside the home. For those with children this is made possible by a wide network of excellent nurseries, kindergartens, and children's homes—far more extensive proportionately than those in the United States. As for the woman who keeps house and looks after her children, she is regarded as performing an important function, though this is not usually held up as an ideal career. The inclusion of workers' wives among the Histadrut membership, while diluting the trade union character of the organization, has its positive side in that it gives social standing to the work which women do in their homes.

In the kibbutsim the liberation of women has been made more complete than anywhere else in Israel. They are freed from domestic burdens by the fact that the household is communal, and the children are cared for in their own communal buildings in which they eat, sleep, play, and go to school. As a result, the women work at most of the tasks performed by men and enjoy equal status in the life of the kibbutsim. All this of course affects only a very small percentage of Israel's women.

Women also play an important role in public life. The most prominent example is Golda Myerson, a leading figure in Mapai, who was Israel's first minister to Moscow and later became Minister of Labor and Social Insurance in the first elected government. Among the 120 members of Israel's first Knesset were eleven women. This contrasted with America's Eighty-First Congress, which had only nine women among 531 members. One of the most prominent

leaders of the Communist Party is a woman, Esther Vilenska, who was for several years the country's only woman editor-in-chief of a daily paper, the Communist *Kol Haam*. In 1949 she became the party's sole representative in the executive committee of the Histadrut. Women played a leading part in the founding of the Histadrut and have been members of its executive committee from the beginning. Compare this with the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., neither of which has a single woman on its leading body.

In Israel's liberation war young girls in uniform with rifles or Sten-guns slung over their shoulders were a familiar sight. In the early months of hostilities many women were killed or wounded fighting side by side with the men. Later, women were withdrawn from front-line duty and organized in a separate auxiliary force called Chen, a contraction of Chayal Nashim (Women's Army). The members of Chen performed tasks similar to those of the Wacs in the American army. In addition, many women made outstanding contributions in various civilian forms of service. Certain exceptions were made to the ban on women in combat duty, the most notable being in regard to the girls of the Palmach.

These positive trends should not obscure the important exceptions and the underlying shortcomings in the status of women in Israel. Arab women are still not far removed from the feudal era as far as their situation in the home and in society is concerned. Medieval too is the position of most women among that large segment of the Yishuv's population which consists of Oriental Jews. In orthodox non-Oriental families women also suffer many disabilities imposed by Jewish religious law and custom.

In addition to these glaring examples of oppressive and discriminatory treatment, women as a whole in Israel have by no means attained full economic, social, and political equality. At the beginning of 1948 the average wage of adult women workers in industry was somewhat less than two-thirds that of men.² The failure of most political parties to give women adequate recognition and to defend their rights has produced the strange phenomenon of separate women's slates in elections. Thus, despite the important advances they have made, the majority of Israel's women, like those of other capitalist countries, suffer not only exploitation as workers, but the entrenched discriminations directed against their sex.

The women of Israel are articulate about their rights and are highly organized. The largest organization is the General Council of Women Workers (Moetset Hapoalot). It is an integral part of Histadrut nationally and of every local Histadrut council. In addition to its trade union activities, the Council of Women Workers conducts training farms and vocational schools for girls and hostels for women immigrants. The Council is also the sponsor of the Working Mothers' Association, which had a membership of 45,000 at the beginning of 1949. This group operates nurseries, kindergartens, youth clubs, children's camps, etc. Nearly all the funds for the social service activities of the Council are provided by the Pioneer Women of America, a Labor Zionist organization.

Similar institutions have been established by the Women's International Zionist Organization (W.I.Z.O.), which has affiliates in more than fifty countries, the largest being in Israel. Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi have women's groups which have established institutions of their own, adding a strong religious ingredient. A more recent arrival on the scene is the Progressive Women's Organization, which has also set up kindergartens and children's homes.

The women's organizations, though officially non-partisan, are, like almost everything else in Israel, oriented toward one or another political party. The General Council of Women Workers and the Working Mothers' Association are dominated by Mapai. W.I.Z.O., whose membership is drawn largely from bourgeois and middle-class women, was sympathetic to Group A of the General Zionists and now leans toward the Progressive Party. The Progressive Women's Organization is close to the Communist Party.

A progressive organization of Arab women, the Association for the Awakening of Women, was formed in Nazareth at the end of 1948. This was the first such group which included women of various religions. In 1949 a women's section of the Histadrut's Palestine Labor League was also set up.

The women of Israel have more than an average interest in the defense of peace in Israel and in the world. However, both before and after the creation of the Jewish state nationalist and Social-Democratic influence caused their organizations to avoid identifying themselves with the world movement of more than 80 million women united in the Women's International Democratic Federa-

tion, which was one of the sponsors of the 1949 Paris Peace Congress. But the more progressive Israeli women have found ways of expressing their solidarity with this movement. A delegation of Mapam women attended the W.I.D.F.'s second congress at Budapest in December, 1948. Mapam and Communist delegates to the 1949 convention of the General Council of Women Workers joined to support a proposal that the council affiliate to the W.I.D.F. This was opposed by the Mapai majority. Subsequently the council's executive committee rejected affiliation.³ This did not, however, deter the more advanced women of Israel from taking steps to establish organizational ties with the W.I.D.F. Two Israeli women, one of the Mapam group and the other representing both the Progressive Women's Organization and the Nazareth Association for the Awakening of Women, attended the meeting of the W.I.D.F. council at Moscow in November, 1949, as well as a conference in December of Asiatic women in Peking.

RELIGION

Every Friday evening in Tel Aviv all busses grind to a halt and remain motionless till the stars come out the following night. However, should you insist on going to another part of the city on Shabbat, the Sabbath, do not despair: you can travel by taxi—for more money, of course. On Saturday, which is the day of rest, all theaters, movies, and other amusement places close down, and with the exception of a few restaurants and a limited number of drug stores (whose addresses are published in the newspapers), no places of business are open. This is of course no worse than Sunday in certain parts of the United States. More serious are other encroachments of clericalism on secular life. During Israel's war, despite a serious meat shortage, the import of non-kosher meat was forbidden. It was also made illegal to transport non-kosher meat from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—unless you happened to be a Christian. Jewish dietary laws are observed in all government-operated hospitals, prisons, and other institutions, as well as in the institutions of the Histadrut's Kupat Cholim. Under pressure of the religious hierarchy the dietary laws were introduced into the army despite the hardships and increased expense involved. Cook-

ing on the Sabbath is also forbidden in the armed forces: the Israeli G.I. celebrates his day of rest by eating his food cold.

About one-fourth of Israel's Jewish children are educated in parochial schools, which receive funds from the government. Of the nine members of the cabinet in the first elected government, two are leading rabbis, and a third, Moshe Shapira, Minister of the Interior, Immigration and Health, is also a graduate of rabbinical seminaries, though he does not practice his profession and is presumably a lay representative of the largest religious party. The proposed constitution provides for religious courts "exercising jurisdiction in matters of personal status and of religious foundations and endowments."⁴ "Matters of personal status" has in the past been interpreted to include "marriage and divorce, wills and inheritance, the position and property of minors, lunatics, etc."⁵

There is no civil marriage or divorce in Israel. For that matter, there can be no religious marriage unless it is performed by an Orthodox rabbi, the only kind officially recognized. The late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, for example, ardent Zionist though he was, could not have performed a marriage ceremony in Israel because he was a Reform rabbi. This also means that a Jew cannot marry a Gentile unless the Gentile becomes a convert to Judaism. Recently a Jewish woman married a non-Jew at a registry office in Paris. The couple then decided to settle in Israel. An Israeli district court annulled the marriage. The offense had been double: marriage to a Gentile and failure to have the ceremony performed by the accredited religious authorities.⁶ Rabbinical law also imposes various disabilities on women. A woman cannot get a divorce or write a will without her husband's consent.

All this might give the impression that the majority of the Jewish population of Israel are devout believers. The truth is almost the direct opposite. In the first election the United Religious Front polled only 12 per cent of the vote. Allowing for religious persons who voted for other parties, it is probable that no more than about 20 per cent of the Jewish population can be called religious. "For those who have come here during the last three decades, and they constitute the great majority," wrote Gene Currivan, Tel Aviv correspondent of the *New York Times*, "nationalism seems to have a greater hold on them than practical religion. . . ."⁷ In fact, it can

be said that the Jews of Israel by and large pay less attention to religious observance than those of America.

However, institutionalized religion is entirely Orthodox; Reform Judaism and other such variants are almost non-existent and are denied official status. There are two main currents among orthodox Jewry: Zionist, represented by Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi, and non-Zionist, represented by Agudat Yisrael and Poalei Agudat Yisrael. The Mizrachi group is more modern in its outlook, less rigid in its orthodoxy, and at the same time more aggressive politically. The Agudat Yisrael group is fanatically fundamentalist and until recently refused to be an official part of the Jewish community or to co-operate with secular organizations.

Though religion has no great hold on the Israelis, institutionalized religion and its hierarchy have a considerable hold on Israel. In fact, it cannot be said that the Mizrachi-Agudat Yisrael dream of converting Israel into a theocratic state is without substance. What this means politically may be judged from Mizrachi's partiality to the Right, including the Irgun in its heyday. A distinction should of course be drawn between the Mizrachi leaders, whose power is out of all proportion to their following, and many of the religious workers in Hapoel Hamizrachi and Poalei Agudat Yisrael, whose social aspirations are closer to those of the other workers.

Zionism itself, which drew much of its ideology and political argument from the age-old religious nexus with Palestine, permitted the obscurantists to get one foot in the door at the outset. Before long Mizrachi was acting as if it were master of the house. And in Mapai the theocrats found an "opponent" ready to meet them more than halfway.

With the establishment of Israel the clerical trust launched a new offensive. When "Socialist" Ben Gurion led the United Religious Front to the altar after the first election, it marked an important triumph for the effort to make religious law the foundation of the Jewish state. "Aggressive secularism has been defeated," rejoiced the Mizrachi daily, *Hatsofeh*. "...The Ministry of the Interior has been placed into faithful hands which will see to it that tradition and religion have their proper place in the life of this country."⁸ And four days later: "The present government coalition will therefore hold firmly together so long as the majority

within it will co-operate in the application of the holy laws of religion in the daily life of this country. A pure Sabbath, the application of religious laws in court, the ensuring of kosher food, the granting of the proper powers to the religious authorities and to the religious schools are the minimum demands of the United Religious Front."⁹

The encroachments of ecclesiastical reaction have led to sharp controversy in the Knesset, in the press, and among the general public. The only parties in Israel that have insisted on full freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state are Mapam and the Communists. However, many members of other parties, as well as non-affiliated citizens, also chafe under the tyranny of the clerical cabal and oppose any enhancement of their power.

Thus Israel has become a small but important front in the world battle for the separation of church and state. This world conflict developed historically as part of the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudalism, in which science served as the weapon of the new nascent class against superstition and obscurantism. Though the Jewish rabbinate never acquired the power and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church, its control of Jewish secular life was down to the end of the eighteenth century no less absolute. Today the issue in Israel is fundamentally no different from that in countries where the Catholic hierarchy seek to dominate government and frustrate the democratic aspirations of the people. In Israel this issue is an integral part of the fight against the government's entire foreign and domestic course. It is part of the people's thrust toward genuine independence and social progress.

EDUCATION

In 1944-45 only 2.9 per cent of the Palestine government's budget was spent on education. Nearly 18 per cent was spent on police and prisons.¹⁰ This disparity increased in the postwar period. And throughout the years of British rule no system of universal compulsory education was established.

How grossly inadequate provisions for Arab education were is indicated by the fact that in 1943-44 only 33 per cent of Arab children of school age attended school. About 18 per cent were at government schools, and the rest at other institutions, chiefly Moslem

and Christian.¹¹ This low proportion was not due to any lack of desire for education on the part of the Arab population; on the contrary, each year thousands of applicants were turned away because of lack of facilities to accommodate them. After thirty years of British rule 70 per cent of the Arab population were illiterate.

The Jews would probably have fared no better had they not, with the help of contributions from abroad, established their own schools, religious and secular. After World War I the Zionist Organization assumed responsibility for most of the schools of the Yishuv. In 1932 this responsibility was turned over to the Vaad Leumi, which sixteen years later passed it on to the government of Israel. In recent years about three-fourths of all Jewish school children attended the Vaad Leumi schools. The rest were at schools of Agudat Yisrael, at various religious institutions in which instruction was devoted almost entirely to sacred books, at a number of schools supported by non-Zionist Jewish groups abroad, and in private schools. Despite the traditional Jewish emphasis on education, more than 10 per cent of children of school age, chiefly in poverty-stricken families, were receiving no schooling whatever.¹²

Under the Mandate four-fifths of the funds for the Jewish educational system came from special taxes levied by the local Jewish communities and from fees paid by parents.¹³ Thus most of the expense was borne by the Yishuv itself. Jewish parents who wanted more than an elementary school education for their children had to pay fees in addition to the regular school taxes. Obviously this system weighed most heavily on the poorest sections of the population. Moreover, salaries were so inadequate that teachers' strikes, with consequent idleness for the pupils, were frequent occurrences.

The political divisions in the Yishuv have also been reflected in the sphere of education. Vaad Leumi schools were of three types: general schools, comprising more than 50 per cent of the pupils; Mizrachi schools, and Labor schools, each of the last two having between 20 and 25 per cent of the pupils.¹⁴ Each type developed its own curriculum and maintained its own administrative setup. Religious study occupies the central place in the curriculum of the Mizrachi schools, though secular subjects too are included. In the general schools instruction is also in a religious spirit, though more specific religious practice is left to the home. In the Labor

schools the Bible is also the principal historical text, but the approach is nationalistic rather than religious, with varying emphasis on the progressive social elements in Jewish history. These schools, most of them located in the kibbutsim and moshvei ovdim, also reflect the conflicting trends within labor Zionism.

Kindergartens occupy a larger place in the educational scheme of Israel than in our country, and they are relatively more numerous. They cover the three- to six-year-old age group, thus also taking the place of what in America are called nursery schools. Even on a casual walk through the streets of Tel Aviv you encounter an astonishing number of public and private kindergartens.

Surprisingly enough, the creation of the Jewish state introduced virtually no change in the educational setup. And it continued to bear many of the stigmata of the days when the Yishuv was more a colonization project than a nation. The budget for education announced for the year from October 1, 1948, to September 30, 1949, was cast in the British mold: the appropriation amounted to only £1,600,000. This aroused the ire of even the Right-wing *Haboker*, which pointed out that this sum was only 4 per cent of the total budget.¹⁵ And the main burden continued to be placed upon the local taxpayers and the parents. Not till September, 1949, was a law enacted providing for the gradual introduction of compulsory free education. The existing divisions in the school system have, however, been retained. The compulsory system also includes the schools of Agudat Yisrael.

In contrast to Jewish communities in other lands, the Yishuv has placed little emphasis on education beyond high school. In large part this was inevitable in a pioneer country. Jewish Palestine needed workers and farmers and fortunately was able to draw its doctors, dentists, and other professionals from among new immigrants. The only professions that were to some extent fostered among the youth were teaching, engineering, and architecture. There are several teachers' colleges, and the Haifa Technical Institute provides comprehensive courses in engineering, architecture, and nautical science. In part, too, the failure to encourage higher education reflected the exaggerated worship of physical labor and the fear of stimulating that concentration in the professions which was characteristic of Jewish life elsewhere.

At the same time a barrier grew up between the Jewish community and what was regarded as its greatest cultural ornament, the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. The university, supported mainly by funds from abroad, was often criticized on the score that while it was a distinguished center of learning and research, it was a school for the intellectual elite and was remote from the practical needs of the Yishuv.

With the establishment of the Jewish state and the vast increase in population have come new complex problems that are breaking down the old attitude toward higher education. And the Hebrew University, which became a bloody battlefield in the liberation war, has drawn closer to the people. The opening in 1949 of medical and law schools marked steps toward greater integration of the university with the country's expanding needs.

MINORITY JEWS

Walk along Tel Aviv's main street, Allenby Road, toward the sea. A block from the sea Allenby is intersected by Hayarkon Street. Turn right on Hayarkon and you come to Tel Aviv's leading hotels and bars, the haunts of foreign tourists and journalists. But if instead you turn left on Hayarkon and walk several blocks, you come to the opposite social pole: the Yemenite community, the dark-skinned Jews who don't look "Jewish," small, slender folk crowded into wooden huts and one-story cheap cement houses that seem more weary than the people.

The Yemenites represent the bottom rung of the ladder—the poorest, the most oppressed, the most "alien." In Israel class divisions are supplemented by divisions based on national origin, and often the two merge. At the top are the Russian Jews, those who came to Palestine in the decade prior to World War I and the immediate postwar period; the political leadership of the country and its institutions is still largely in their hands. Next to them are the German Jews, who have been prominent in business, the professions, and under the Mandate in government service. Third in rank are the Polish Jews, numerically the largest group in the Yishuv. They are followed by the Jews from Rumania, Hungary, and other European countries. (The Jews from the English-speaking countries are too few in number to rate a specific place, but

their general status is high.) Then comes the abyss in which are the various Oriental communities.

At the end of 1946 the Oriental Jews constituted 22.3 per cent of the population of Jewish Palestine. Of these 10 per cent were Sephardim, 4.8 per cent Yemenites, and 7.5 per cent from other Eastern communities.¹⁶ The Sephardim are at the top of the hierarchic ladder that exists among the Oriental Jews too. They include descendants of Spanish refugees who came to Palestine generations ago, as well as more recent arrivals from Turkey, the Balkans, and parts of North Africa. The rest of the Oriental communities have been more directly influenced by Moslem culture. Ranking just a cut above the Yemenites are Jews from the other Arab states, from North Africa, Iran, Bokhara, and Turkestan. One might add that the cultural gulf between them and Occidental Jewry hardly buttresses the idea of a single Jewish world nation.

There is a perceptible chill in the relations between Israel's Oriental Jews and those who are products of European culture. This is particularly marked in the prevailing attitude toward the Jews from the Middle Eastern countries—a distinctly chauvinist attitude. The story is told of a famous Hebrew writer that he once remarked: "The reason I dislike Arabs is that they remind me so much of the Oriental Jews."

The Yemenites are the "Negroes" among the Jewish population in more ways than the color of their skin. They are the hewers of wood and drawers of water, those who do the hardest and most menial work for the smallest pay. Yemenite women are more numerous in domestic service than those of any other community. The Yemenites also happen to be one of the most attractive groups in all Israel. Physically most of them are decidedly good to look at, with their chiseled and delicate features. Many are gifted in music and the dance; others are highly skilled artisans in silver and weaving. Living in hovels, they are nevertheless scrupulously clean. The Yemenites have a distinct culture that reflects not only the Arab and Moslem environment from which they come, but the fact that for centuries they were cut off from all other Jewish communities and their very existence was unknown. Their native language is Arabic, but their men are learned in Hebrew and in

Biblical studies. As a group the Yemenites are deeply religious and intermarry little with the other Jewish communities in Israel.

Coming as they do from one of the most backward absolute monarchies in the world, the Yemenites, like most Oriental Jews, have not as yet been involved in any large numbers in the labor and progressive movements of Israel. There are Yemenites in all three workers' political parties, but it is a tragic fact that the only organization that has made real headway among them and among other Oriental Jews is the Irgun-Freedom Movement. The Irgunites have exploited the Oriental Jews' hatred of the Arab countries from which they fled as well as their justified resentment at the discriminatory treatment accorded them in the Yishuv. These "Arabized" Jews of the Middle East and North Africa constitute the largest reservoir of potential future immigration into Israel. This and their high birth rate will increase their proportionate weight in the population, so that in a generation or two Oriental Jews and their descendants may become a majority.

XII. Unfinished Business

The nub of the issue in regard to Israel is this: will formal independence mask a new colonial enslavement, or will the bones of freedom be given flesh and blood? In other words, will Israel be an imperialist or an anti-imperialist base? All other problems must be judged in relation to this central problem.

One of the misconceptions that Israel's government is helping to demolish—a misconception, especially prevalent in labor Zionist circles, including Mapam—is that strong trade unions, widespread co-operatives, and a modern industrial society guarantee that Israel will be a progressive factor in the Middle East and in world affairs. We have seen that these achievements did not in the past prevent Jewish Palestine from serving as an instrument of imperialism, nor will they in the future. What is decisive is foreign policy. A foreign policy that strengthens imperialism weakens Israel and its progressive potentialities. Conversely, a foreign policy that weakens imperialism strengthens Israel and enhances its progressive role.

The war of liberation weakened the position of British imperialism in the Middle East and temporarily upset the predatory calculations of the United States. But this war marked the beginning, not the end, of the fight for independence. It could not finally decide this question because politically it was led by class forces which even before the conclusion of hostilities sought to come to terms with imperialism—a betrayal that in 1948-49 the forces of the Left were strong enough to retard, but not prevent. With the establishment of the first elected government, a new phase in the liberation struggle opened. For Americans, whose understanding of Palestine has in the past been befogged by illusions and sentiment-