



The Jewish Labor Movement and European Socialism

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From its beginnings, the Jewish labor movement was bound up with the history of European socialism. Its continuous organizational existence dates from the end of the 1880s, at the time of the formation of the Second International at the Congress of Paris in 1889. But its origin goes back practically to the time of the official dissolution of the First International. In May 1876, there was established in London the Hebrew Socialist Society (it called itself in Hebrew: *Agudat ha-Socialistim ha-Ivrim*). This was the first socialist association of Jewish workers. It is worthwhile to dwell on this society in particular, not so much because it was the first but because it showed a number of symptoms of substantive problems which were to manifest themselves fully in the Jewish labor movement when it came of age. Fortunately, the list of its members has been preserved, together with its constitution and program (written in the original in Hebrew and Yiddish) and the minutes of its meetings during the eight months of its existence. All these have been compiled under the title, *Pinkas*, in accordance with the best traditions of Jewish 'societies' (Hevroth).

The leading spirit in the formation of the society was A. S. Lieberman (1844[1842?]-1880), who is considered as the pioneer of Jewish socialism and in a sense also a precursor of the Jewish labor movement, although there were many contradictions in his thought. At the beginning of the 1870s Lieberman was part of a secret, revolutionary-socialist circle of Jewish youth in Vilna, Lithuania. There the idea crystallized that it was necessary to preach socialism to the Jews in their own languages, Yiddish and Hebrew. To escape imprisonment, Lieberman fled the country, and for several years he was active in London, Berlin, Vienna, and again London in an effort to establish a Jewish socialist organization. His main practical achievement after the dissolution of the Hebrew Socialist Society was the publication of a few issues of the first socialist periodical designed for Jews (in Hebrew): *Ha-Emeth* – The Truth. In London, Lieberman was connected with the Russian social

revolutionary journal, *Vpered*. He was given encouragement by the editor, P. Lavrov, the well-known theoretician of Russian Populism, while the managing editor, V. Smirnov, played an important role in initiating the founding of the Hebrew Socialist Society.

Of the society's 30-40 members, apparently not a single one had been born in England. The members were Jewish immigrants from various countries, most of them from different parts of Russia: Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine. They were workers, craftsmen, particularly in the clothing trades. There were also a few intellectuals, like Lieberman, who became workers when they immigrated. The society tried to form trade unions of Jewish workers, but it is characteristic that the declared purpose of the society was not local, but the uniting of the Jewish workers "to fight their exploiters" and the preaching of socialism among them wherever they were to be found. The platform and the discussions, as reflected in the minutes, reveal a hodgepodge of ideological elements coming from a number of socialist streams, echoes of ideas that had been bandied about at the First International, laudatory remarks about Bakunin and his merits as a socialist, together with views which had their origin in the ideational world of his unmitigated rival – Lavrov. Of the name, Karl Marx's – a London resident – the minutes make no mention, although the influence of his thinking is easily seen. Far removed from the English labor movement and permeated with Russian-style revolutionary socialism, they understood, albeit unwillingly, that London was not Russia, and they showed a tremendous interest in German Social Democracy.

At the same time, we find the members raising the basic question of whether the society really had a *raison d'être*. The salvation of the Jewish people would come about only as a part of the salvation of mankind, we read in the society's platform. Was it in the spirit of socialism, which proclaimed the equality of all mankind, to maintain a special Jewish association? Perhaps this was not in conformity with the class principle? Would the socialists in the various countries evince sympathy for the society and its objects? Both the questions and the answers given to those who expressed doubts and reservations reflect different viewpoints with respect to the nature of the connection between a socialist world-view workers, and between the ties with the general labor movement and the consciousness, however thin, of Jewish belonging and identity of what this entailed in practice. The explanation of one of the members is narrowly empirical: the Jews are living in London among themselves;

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therefore, and for the time being, one should work among them. Another member (he, too, a former member of the above-mentioned revolutionary circle in Vilna) goes beyond the utilitarian position and gives subjective expression to the feeling of self-respect, to the natural aspiration for equality, and even to a certain grasp of the essence of the Jewish collectivity: social societies exist in every nation, and socialists of the Jewish nation likewise want a society that bears their name. Lieberman touched on these questions at a number of meetings, and he broadened the picture. True, the class division was what counted, and for socialists there were no national distinctions. But the complete brotherhood of all men would come about only under the socialist banner; so long as the existing system prevailed the Jews would always be persecuted, they would always constitute an abnormal group. It was the Jewish bourgeoisie that was the enemy of the Jewish workers, but precisely for that reason the latter had to unite and organize themselves, for they alone and no one else could and should fight against their enemies. In other words, it is precisely the idea of class auto-emancipation that gives rise dialectically (Lieberman does not use the term) to the justification for a special Jewish cohesion within a socialist framework. There is also something common to all Jews. In answer to the argument of one of the members (in the course of a debate on the holding of a meeting on *Tisha b'Av*, a day of fasting and mourning) that Jewish socialists should have nothing to do with any part of the old tradition, Lieberman said that that was not necessarily so. Until the advent of the socialist revolution, the political freedom of every nation was a matter of importance. *Tisha b'Av* commemorated the loss of independence by the Jewish people, which had been mourning this for over 1,800 years. For the time being, its value for Jewish socialists was no less than it was for the rest of their people. As for international solidarity, Lieberman described the program (unfortunately this is not given in the minutes) the Jewish workers in each country ought to adopt in order to unite among themselves, on the one hand, and to work in harmony with the socialist parties in all countries, on the other.

These ideas and viewpoints do not add up to a systematic philosophy, and owing to the paucity of the sources we do not now whether there was one. Probably not. But closer examination may enable us to detect here the beginning of a new chapter in a historical development, which opened with the period of Jewish emancipation in Europe. The question was: how would the Jews be incorporated in the general society – by gaining equality (civil or social) with the loss of their independent national

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identity, or through equality which allowed for difference? In the seventies this was mainly a matter of ideational difficulties for a few Jewish socialists of the type of Lieberman and his colleagues. With the appearance of a mass Jewish labor movement the question assumed new aspects – political and organizational – and in effect constituted the chief background for the *reciprocal relations* between European socialism in all its branches and the Jewish labor movement.

In surveying the problems involved in the influence of European socialism on the Jewish labor movement and of those by which European socialism was faced as a result of this development, two semantic explanations will be of help. One of them has to do with the adjective "Jewish" in the expression "the Jewish labor movement". The other concerns the geographical-territorial scope of the movement, which was an international in miniature, as it were, and the explanation of the significance of this fact in the context of our subject.

The adjective "Jewish" as used in "the Jewish labor movement" has two connotations, corresponding to two stages in the history of the movement or, perhaps it is more correct to say, to two tendencies which frequently operated side by side. Actually, we can make a terminological distinction and say that in the beginning this was a movement of "workers-Jews" – a definition which applies both to Russia and the United States. Jewish workers established their own organizations because they lived together, worked together, and spoke the same language; and by organizing they wanted to satisfy various needs, whether economical-occupational or cultural-educational. Neither the workers themselves nor the intellectuals who were connected with the Jewish environment, who joined the workers and frequently served as organizers and guides, intended at the beginning to establish an independent Jewish labor movement. The influence of socialism was decisive in these organizations; most of them arose to begin with under the inspiration of its ideas. In Russia this inspiration assumed the coloration of a blatantly revolutionary mood. The Jewish labor organizations received socialist doctrine as revelation, as a messianic vision which had been nourished to some extent by Jewish eschatological traditions and universal ideas of redemption. The universal ideal was the vision, and the workers' international was the method of achieving it. The idea of the common struggle of the toiling masses of all nations and tongues abolished, as it were, the reality of national differences and of the particular national aspirations, not only potentially – in the future order of things – but also actually, by the force of the image of the spiritual and even

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organizational fusion of the workers of all lands in one world movement, of which the International was both bearer and symbol. The second legacy – alongside universalism – of European socialism to the Jewish labor movement was the theory of the class struggle. This idea instilled in those who accepted it first of all a feeling of self-esteem, the motivation for organization and activity, and a new world view. The theory was acquired mainly from popularized pamphlets explaining the ideas of Marx, Lasalle and others. But the rather weak abstractions necessarily sought support in actual life. And in actual life the Jewish workers generally worked for Jewish employers, although usually not for big capitalists (as described in the pamphlets), but – especially in eastern Europe – for medium-sized and petty enterprises. In this actual life there was also a large measure of endless hours of work, low wages, degradation, and all sorts of exploitation. Against this background, the concepts of "capitalist exploitation", "class enemy" and "the class struggle", assumed the form of a belief in an unbridgeable conflict between Jewish workers and Jewish capitalists. In real life there was also a great mass of Jews who did not fit in either of these two categories. This problem was solved by the conception of the structure of society which declared that anything outside of "bourgeoisie" and "proletarian" was destined by the "historical process" to disappear and so need not be taken into account. According to these ideas, the reality of the existence of the Jewish people seemed to melt away, the inner ties within Jewry were severed, and they would not be restored – particularly since religion was losing its significance as a factor lending uniqueness of the Jews as a whole.

Such an approach emerges from the first document of the first Jewish labor movement organized in Russia – *Four Speeches of Jewish Workers* (in Russian) at the clandestine May Day rally in Vilna in 1892. We read:

"And we Jews, too, 'Russian subjects', renounce our own holidays and fantasies which are useless for human society; we join the socialist ranks and we adhere to their holiday... which will exist forever, for its goal is to raze to the ground the pillars of the old world... and to establish on their ruins a world of peace for all... And as for our holidays which were bequeathed to us by our fathers, they are destined to disappear together with the old régime".

And an echo of these words seemed to resound from across the ocean. An editorial in honor of the first of May, 1894, published in the Yiddish socialist monthly, *Zukunft* (which had first made its appearance in New York two years before), had this to say:

"Adieu, holidays of religion, and adieu, national festivities... let us raise a glass to the freedom, equality and happiness of a nation whose birthplace is the world, whose religion is brotherhood, and whose Torah is science". According to this approach, the Jewish origin of the workers in their organizations is an objective fact which in no way determines their aims or goals. When Abraham Cahan came as a delegate to the Congress of the Second International in Brussels in 1891, it was as the representative of "Yiddish-speaking workers' organizations" in the United States. For many years thereafter most Jewish socialists in that country took pains to designate themselves in that fashion, in order to emphasize that their organizations had nothing to do with Jewish identity in the broad sense. And Jewish Social Democratic circles in Vilna by 1891-1892 no longer regarded the Jewish labor movement as an independent factor with equal rights in the general labor movement but rather as a sort of appendix to it.

Only in its second stage did the movement of Jewish workers become a "Jewish labor movement", that is, it saw specific significance in the Jewishness of the movement, and it laid out for itself special tasks in the strength of this fact – not only social, political and economic tasks, but also those of national significance. In the United States this was a long drawn-out process, which we shall refer to in another context. In Russia this tendency developed gradually but steadily until it crystallized fully in the period of the first Russian revolution. The growth of the new consciousness was linked up with the patterns of European Marxist thought as formulated by Plekhanov. But essentially it constituted an independent attempt to comprehend the special situation of the Jewish working class within Jewish existence in general. The new standpoint was put forward in a little pamphlet by S. Gozhanski that appeared at the end of 1893, "A letter to Agitators", and more fully in a lecture delivered by V. Martov (later the leader of the Menshevists and sharp opponent of the Jewish labor movement) at a secret meeting in Vilna on the occasion of May Day, 1895.

The premise is that the Jewish working class has special tasks of its own, and that to achieve them it must establish an organization of its own. The reference is to a struggle for equal civil rights for the Jews in Russia. This aim would be achieved only if the Czarist regime were over-thrown and a constitution obtained, and only if indissoluble ties were maintained with the general labor movement. There was no automatic connection, however, between the solution of the question of general freedom in Russia and the insuring of this special aim. For it was not inconceivable that the Russian proletariat, if circumstances required, might sacrifice those demands

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that applied to the Jews alone, such as freedom of religion or equality of rights. The Jewish proletariat therefore had to constitute a power in its own right and to wage a "political-national struggle". The fostering of the socialist class consciousness of the proletariat was combined with the fostering of its national self-consciousness. These in effect were the main ideological assumptions of the *Bund*, whose founding convention took place in the fall of 1897 in the same city of Vilna. They expressed a realistic revision of the abstract internationalist approach which brushed aside the tangible significance of differences and contrasts between nations, including contrast between workers of different nations. The essence of the revision lay in the awareness of the difference and the special interests of the Jewish workers – both as workers and as Jews – and of the fact that these must find clear and organized expression in the general labor movement. Internationalism is not perceived here as something fixed and definite, but as a yearned-for goal, with the factors that make for separation not ignored, but with an effort being made by both sides to overcome them. There is a limit to the degree of confidence that the Jewish proletariat can have in the general labor movement with respect to the satisfaction of its special needs and the fulfillment of its special ambitions, and that is the extent of its self-confidence and the cultivation of its independent power. This would facilitate the fostering of internationalism – in a partnership of equality – in the general labor movement, which in the face of reality is obliged to act not only in accordance with principles but which is also influenced by extraneous considerations.

It is not our purpose here to consider all the factors that led to this development. But as far as our subject is concerned, we can say without hesitation that if the rise of the labor movement among the Jews was ideologically a product of the influence of European socialism, this is not true of the crystallization of the Jewish labor movement as a force in itself. The most important piece of evidence on this point is to be found at the congress of the Second International in Brussels in 1891. A. Cohen, a representative of organizations of "Yiddish-speaking workers" in the United States, moved the following question for the agenda: "What shall be the attitude of organized workers in all countries to the Jewish question?" The stimulus for this question was the intensified persecution of the Jews in Russia and particularly the expulsion of the Jews from Moscow. The congress decided to strike the question from the agenda. It did not resolve that it was the duty of the socialist parties to fight against anti-Semitism or to put forward as a programmatic demand the equality of political rights

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for all citizens without regard to religion or nationality. Instead, the congress denounced both "anti-Semitism" and "philo-Semitism". The resolution also included the following statement: "The Jewish-speaking workers have no other means of liberation except unity with the Socialist-labor parties in the countries they inhabit". That sentence can only be understood as meaning that there is no place for a Jewish labor movement with goals of its own, and that in fact is how it was interpreted (with approval) by *Vorwärts*, the German Social Democratic organ. The resolution in general – according to the testimony of the leader of one of the groups there – caused resentment in Vilna. Perhaps they took some comfort from the sharp criticism of it by Plekhanov. Meanwhile there occurred the pogrom against the Jews of Lodz, a concomitant of the strike of May 1892 in that city. There were also recollections of the positive attitude evinced by the executive committee of the revolutionary organization, *Narodnaya Vola* ("The People's Will") towards the pogroms in Russia in 1881-1882. The ideology of the Jewish labor movement thus appeared, from the historical aspect, as an expression of the need and the desire for self-defence through organizing, and for independent activity to fight discrimination and persecution, out of a feeling of being somewhat isolated from the environment. This task was destined to assume a new expression after the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 and in the wave of pogroms in 1905 and 1906, when organizations of Jewish workers became the leading element in the armed "self-defence" against the pogromists. The International never repealed the Brussels resolution, but after 1900 both the Bureau of the International and its congress in Amsterdam (1904) denounced the Russian government's persecution of the Jews and discrimination against them in the law.

The Jewish labor movement in Russia took on its full significance at the turn of the century when it arrived at the distinct recognition of the need to combine the national with the socialist element in its ideology and program. There is no single model here, but a wide variety of organizations, streams and views, and even with sharp struggles being conducted between them. This testifies not only to how deeply the national idea had penetrated Russian Jewry, but also to the great spread of socialist ideas and revolutionary activity among broad classes of the people. The *Bund*, which had played a cardinal role in the founding of Russian Social Democracy and which constituted the strongest organized force within it, in 1901 put forward the demand for cultural-national autonomy for the Jews. In 1898 Nahman Syrkin published a pamphlet, *Die Judenfrage und der sozialistische Judenstaat*, in which he established the basis for

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socialist Zionism. In 1905-1906, a series of new parties arose. There was Poale Zion, which stood for the establishment of a socialist Jewish society in Eretz-Israel. There was the Socialist Zionist Workers Party, which advocated a Jewish territorial concentration, but not necessarily in Eretz-Israel. (It also played an important role in the revolutionary period of 1905-1906). The Socialist Jewish Workers' Party (known by its Russian initials, SERP) put forward the demand for personal-national autonomy. All these parties recognized the need to take part, in practice, in Russian political life. From the ideological aspect, Poale Zion and the "Socialist Zionists" (the Territorialists) based themselves on Marxist axioms. The analysis of Jewish economic life and, in particular, the study of the special situation of the Jewish proletariat, served as the point of departure for their programs. In SERP, the majority tended towards the socialist conception of the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

But the idea of Jewish nationalism, not only in its Zionist and territorialist versions, but even as formulated by the *Bund*, met with sharp opposition in the socialist movement. The *Bund* (and SERP too) based its program on the theoretical works of the leaders of Austrian Social Democracy, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. Yet Bauer – an assimilated Jewish socialist – objected to the application of the principle of autonomy to the Jews, since in effect he denied the national character of the Jewish communities. The toughest struggle took place within the Russian Social Democratic Party, a struggle that reached its climax at the second convention, when the *Bund* left the party, to return after three years. Here too particular weight attached to the opposition of assimilated Jewish Social Democrats (e.g., Martov, Trotsky) to a national conception of the Jewish question. But it was Lenin's position that was of special significance. Much has been written on the subject, and here we shall only note a few points. The *Bund* proposed a federative structure for the Social Democratic Party. Lenin, who favored extreme centralism in the party, objected. But the debate on the structure of the party was linked up with a dispute on the Social Democratic program on the Jewish question, on national-cultural autonomy, and on the Jewish national idea. A draft resolution which Lenin prepared (not later than July 30, 1903) for the second convention of the Social Democratic Party speaks of "national culture" in connection with the Jews. According to elementary logic, it would thus appear that the Jews were a nationality. But less than three months later, in an article entitled "The Position of the Bund in the Party" (published in *Iskra* on October 22, 1903), Lenin declared that the idea of Jewish nationalism is reactionary and false, and he

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puts the concept of Jewish "nationality" in quotation marks. In this article, "Concerning the Bund's Decision" (February 1, 1903) he says that there is no "greater foolishness" than to determine in advance whether the evolution of the Jews in free Russia would be as it had been in Western Europe, or not. But in the other article mentioned, "The Position of the Bund in the Party", Lenin no longer has any doubt that in Russia too the assimilation of the Jews is both necessary and desirable. There are more contradictions and zigzags that can be discovered here, but what stands out is the utilitarian and capricious approach in deciding the nature and future of a national group, with reliance on quotations from Renan, Naqker, Kautsky, and, in a later period, Bauer. Gozhanski never dreamed that the eventual renunciation of the special demands of the Jews which he advocated would even be applied to the right of their group existence as such. The struggle over the *Raison d'être* of the Jewish labor movement, which in this case was represented by the *Bund*, took the form of a struggle over the right of the Jews and the Jewish proletariat to determine themselves the question of their continued national existence.

A second semantic explanation is called for here, namely, the *geographical* concretization of the concept, "The Jewish labor movement"/ Technically this can be done very simply, by giving a concentrated itemization of the countries in which all sorts of workers' organizations arose, developed and crystallized in the period between 1880 and 1939: trade unions, political parties, mutual assistance societies, cooperatives, kibbutzim, cultural and educational organizations, newspapers, schools. An almost complete list (and one quite impressive in its scope) for the period before World War I includes Czarist Russia, England, The United States, Rumania, The Austrian Empire (particularly Galicia), France, Canada, Bulgaria, Ottoman Turkey (mainly Salonica), Holland, Argentina, and Eretz-Israel. For the period between the two World Wars, that map would have to be brought up to date, to take account of the geopolitical changes that occurred following the break-up of the Habsburg Empire, the revolutions of 1917 in Russia, the achievements of independence by Russia's border areas (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia), as well as the growth of new Jewish settlements in South American countries.

The details of the history of the Jewish labor movement in each of these countries were of course bound up with the social and political texture of the particular country, and was influenced by developments in the general labor movement there and, more

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particularly, by the developmental trends of the various Jewish settlements as units in themselves and from the aspect of their relations with non-Jewish society. At the same time, we are likely to err, it would seem, if we take the fact of the geographical fragmentation as our sole guide when we come to consider comprehensive questions of the type which become focused in the dynamic contact with European socialism, from the ideological, programmatic, and even institutional points of view. For an examination of the genesis of the territorial-geographical diffusion in the end leads us back to the recognition of the need for some degree of integration, that is, of conceiving the Jewish labor movement as a *universal* historical phenomenon. There exists a real, material background against which the multi-faceted unity of the movement took shape: the process of Jewish migration, which practically assumed the dimensions of an exodus. The mass Jewish migration began in the 1880s and it grew greater and greater as World War I approached. The countries abandoned were Rumania, Galicia, and Russia. The driving force was economic distress, but no less important was the influence of political pressures and legal discrimination: in Russia – the pogroms, restrictive laws, official persecution and the spread of public Judaphobia; in Rumania – the legal status of the Jews, who were considered "aliens"; and even in Galicia there were many indications of political and economic anti-Semitism. The emigrants made their way westward to England, to Argentina, to Eretz-Israel, but mainly to the United States. The number of Jewish immigrants to the United States alone in the period between 1881 and 1910 is estimated at 1,560,000, and only a relatively small proportion – in comparison with other ethnic groups – returned to their country of origin. The decisive fact was that the Jewish immigrants retained their group identity. They concentrated mainly in certain cities and neighborhoods (New York's East Side and London's East End are today only a historical reminder of this fact). They made a special place for themselves in certain branches of industry or even created them (the clothing industries), and they developed different forms of communal life. The process of adaptation to the new environment, which continued steadily, took place concomitantly with the cultivation of a network of independent institutions – and this too served to prevent assimilation. Nor were the Jewish workers dissolved in the "American Melting Pot". The Jewish labor movement in the countries of absorption was thus, in effect, an immigrants' movement, both from the aspect of its social theme and from that of the composition of its leadership and the continuity of the immigration. For two generations it

preserved both its distinctiveness in regard to the American labor movement and its attachment to the labor movements in the countries of origin. The Jewish labor movement in the United States was in fact a channel of influence of European socialism. Most of the pioneer organizers of the Jewish workers in the United States were intellectuals who left Russia after the pogroms and who had been influenced there by the revolutionary Populism of the seventies and eighties. Among them were those who before coming to the United States had been active in Jewish labor organizations and in Jewish socialist newspapers in England, which in general served as a way station for immigrants to the United States. Some of these became workers themselves, while others resumed their studies but did not sever their ties with the movement. Among the first arrivals were members of the *Am'Olam* group, which had been organized back in Russia. In the spirit of the agrarian socialism characteristic of the *narodniki*, they tried in America to establish agricultural communes, which did not last very long. This group later contributed many active workers to the Jewish labor movement. Some of them were attracted to anarchism, which as a result of the conditions of immigrant life exerted considerable influence during a certain period among the Jewish workers in general, both in England and the United States. The activity among the Jewish workers was influenced by the trade unions of the German workers in the United States. The German socialists also held a decisive position in the Socialist Party. With its help the United Hebrew Trades was established in New York in 1888, with a socialist program. This combination of trade unionism and socialism was also a feature of the Jewish labor movement in the United States later on, and distinguished it from the dominant trend in the American labor movement, as embodied in the American Federation of Labor whose slogan was "pure and simple unionism". The large wave of immigration from the period of the first revolution and the pogroms in Russia brought immigrants who, unlike the previous wave, included many skilled workers who had already gone through the experience of activity in the *Bund* and other labor parties, and of participation in the revolutionary movement. These brought with them something of the militant spirit of their country of origin as well as a broader grasp of the Jewish content that should be instilled in the labor movement. Revolutionary activity did not have much chance of success in the United States, but ideological and social radicalism left their mark on the movement even after trade union militancy had dissipated, leaving its traces by bequeathing liberal and reformist tendencies even to the second and the third generation of immigrants

who, as a result of the social mobility and the economic opportunities, were able to abandon manual labor.

Similarly, the Eretz-Israel labor movement (the development of which requires separate treatment), whose foundations were laid in 1904-1905, bore many signs of the European socialist heritage.

The link of the Jewish labor movement with the immigration process impressed on it a special character, from the ideational aspect, such as is not found in any other labor movement. In the first place, the very existence of the process of immigration and the evaluation of its nature and prospects served as basic premises of the Zionist and territorialist parties in various countries (England, Argentina, the United States, and others). Poale Zion also organized a world union. Even the Jewish labor movement in the United States, owing to its special interest in Jewish immigration, generally took a stand different from that of the American labor movement in general, which favored immigration restriction. The *Bund*, too, which was represented in the International as part of the Russian Social Democratic section and which enjoyed a prestigious position there, could no longer ignore the immigration question, and at the congress of the International at Stuttgart in 1907 succeeded in blocking an extreme resolution advocating immigration restrictions.

Both the immigration question and the efforts of the Jewish labor parties to get the International to admit a world Jewish section helped to put the Jewish question, as an international question before socialist public opinion. Likewise, the ground was prepared for a change in the attitude of the Socialist International towards the end of World War I and thereafter with respect to the subject of the national rights of the Jews in the countries where they were living and even with respect to the Zionist-Socialist ideal.

European socialism in its different varieties tended, when it penetrated the Jewish environment, to serve first of all as the inspiration for cosmopolitan and assimilatory tendencies among a good part of the Jewish intellectuals. Yet the socialist vision and the humanitarian aspirations which derived from socialism aroused broad sections of Jewish society to social consciousness and public activity, advanced the democratization of Jewish internal life, and varied and intensified the forms of organization within it.

When the Jewish labor movement became a mass movement and spread to different countries it in effect evinced specific forms of the forces of constancy which have

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operated in recent generations to preserve the group distinctiveness of the Jewish people. At first, the Jewish labor movement drew its ideological inspiration from the different trends of European socialism, but once it became independent, it began to participate in shaping the latter's character. This applies first of all to questions directly connected with Jewish life. But the Jewish labor movement also made a unique contribution to socialist ideology and to the methods of realizing it in the spirit of social progress – and this contribution was made in particular by the experience of the labor movement in Eretz-Israel.

Source: Moshe Mishkinsky, “The Jewish Labor Movement And European Socialism”, *Journal Of World History*, II (1968).



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