

Immigration

Perspective

has to be the basic task of Israel and Zionism»(quoted by Kanaan, pp.115-6). Desperately seeking more immigration, Ben Gurion told a cabinet meeting on August 15th, 1948: «Generations have not suffered and struggled to see only 800,000 Jews in this country. It is the duty of the present generation to redeem the Jews in Arab and European countries»(quoted by Alfred M. Lilienthal, *What Price Israel?*, 1969, p.197).

In August 1949, Ben Gurion said to a group of US Zionists visiting Israel: «Although we realized our dream of establishing a Jewish State, we are still at the beginning. Today, there are only 900,000 Jews in Israel, while the greater part of the Jewish people are still abroad. It consists of bringing all Jews to Israel»(quoted by Lilienthal, p.191). To

the Zionists, this meant forcing Jews to come to Israel by any means. In this vein, an editorial in *Davar*, the newspaper of the governing Mapai party (Labor), stated: «I shall not be ashamed to confess that, if I had power, as I have the will, I would select a score of efficient young men - intelligent, decent, devoted to our ideal and burning with the desire to help redeem Jews, and I would send them to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of these young men would be to disguise themselves as non-Jews and, acting upon the brutal Zionism, plague these Jews with anti-Semitic slogans such as 'Bloody Jews,' 'Jews go to Palestine,' and similar 'intimacies.' I can vouch that the results, in terms of a considerable immigration to Israel from these countries, would be ten thousand times larger than the results brought by thousands of emissaries who have been preaching for decades to deaf ears»(quoted by Lilienthal, pp.207-8).

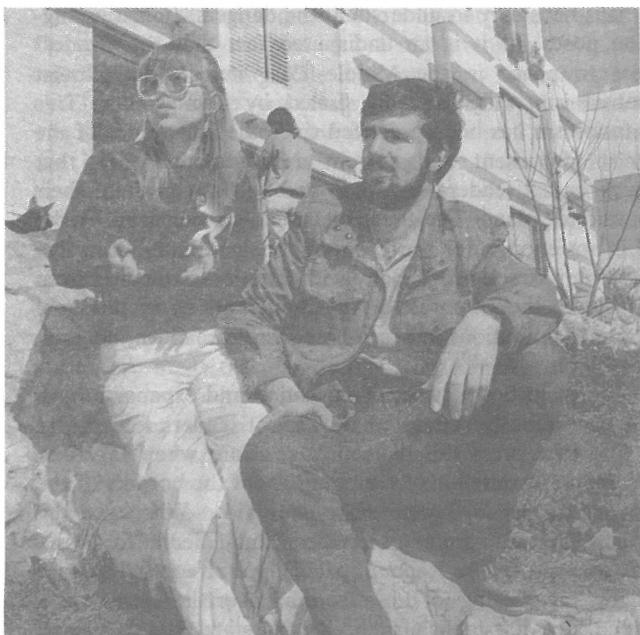
In fact, Zionist leaders spared no efforts to achieve the liquidation of the diaspora, sometimes by propaganda about a better future for those who come to Israel, at times by terrorist acts for those who refused. Submitting a report to the Zionist-controlled American Jewish Conference about how to deal with Jews who refuse to immigrate to Palestine, Chaplain Klausner said: «I am convinced that the people must be forced to go to Palestine. They are not prepared to understand their own position nor the promises of the future. To them, an American dollar looms as the greatest of objectives. By 'force' I suggest a program. It is not a new program. It was used before, and most recently. It was used in the evacuation of the Jews from Poland and in the story of the 'Exodus»(quoted by Lilienthal, p.194).

Having failed to secure massive immigration of Ashkenazi Jews from Europe and America, the Zionist movement began to exert heavy pressure, including force, on Jews living in Arab countries. In Baghdad, Zionist agents planted bombs in coffee houses and bookshops to force the reluctant Iraqi Jews to emigrate. In June 1953, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tewfiq Sweidi told Alfred Lilienthal: «At the end of the first 11 months only 30,000 (Jews) had registered for emigration. One of the buses carrying Jews to the airport was bombed - Zionists were accused of this act - and within two months more than 80,000 had expressed a desire to depart»(Lilienthal, p.199). Ilan Halevi writes: «between 1948 and 1967, one million 'Arab Jews' came from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to Palestine,» as a result of the Zionist campaign(*A History of the Jews, Ancient and Modern*, 1987, p.197).

Immigration limitations

After the influx of Arab Jews, which occurred mainly in the fifties, Zionist immigration began to stagnate. In spite of their appeals, Zionists were unable to fulfill their aim of «ingathering all Jews;» only a fraction of Jews in the world chose to live in Israel. True, there was an upsurge of immigration after the Israeli victory in the 1967 war, but it soon began to decline due to a number of factors, in particular after the 1973 war. In the context of the general unwillingness of Jews living in Western countries to immigrate to Israel, much of the subsequent discussion of immigration has►

Soviet Jewish immigrants outside their West Bank settlement



Zionist settlers march in the occupied West Bank.

