

APPROACHES TO ZIONISM

By PAUL NOVICK

Thirty-five years ago, on April 2, 1922, the Freiheit was born. The Editors of JEWISH LIFE greet the Morning Freiheit on this birthday and pay tribute to the service which that paper has performed for the American people and our Yiddish speaking citizens in particular. Below is a significant excerpt from the report delivered by Morning Freiheit Editor-in-Chief Paul Novick to the newspaper's national convention in Jan.—Eds.

IT MUST be said that in regard to Zionism, the Morning Freiheit as well as progressives generally, have made serious errors. . . . But it is true that sectarian slogans were advanced, that correct positions were ineptly formulated. It is true that in the twenties and for a long time afterward, a struggle was waged against Zionists in general, without distinguishing between one Zionist faction and another, between one Zionist leader and another. The same stamp was affixed to everything: imperialism.

There is no question that from the very beginning of the Zionist movement, many spokesmen of political Zionism cooperated with imperialism or let themselves be used by it. But it is just as certain that the masses of followers of the Zionist movement in old Russia and Pilsudski Poland saw in Zionism a way out of their woeful lot and thought it would bring a solution for the Jewish people. Events

have shown that our position that Zionism cannot solve the problems of the Jewish people was and has remained correct. That is another question. But the feelings and convictions of the masses of Zionist followers, even if they are not justified, must, we believe, be taken into consideration. These were masses of people who were being oppressed!

In the American Zionist movement there are many leaders who would like to cooperate with American imperialism and who keep repeating that Israel is an "outpost of the West" upon which Washington can really depend. This position, which is dangerous for the Jewish people, as well as for the State of Israel itself, must be fought. But it is clear that the masses who follow the Zionist movement are less concerned with political Zionism than they are with helping Israel. Many of them, not being involved with the building of Jewish culture in this country, either in English or Yiddish or Hebrew, seek in Zionism an expression of Jewishness, of identification with the Jewish people. The Morning Freiheit has a negative attitude to this sort of identification but that is hardly a reason for being antagonistic to these Jewish masses.

There are in the Zionist movement reactionary and chauvinist tendencies, such as the Herut (extreme right wing Israel party) and there are more or less progressive tendencies which are



Paul Novick

opposed to the cold war, even if this opposition is not completely consistent or is passive: the Hashomer Hatsair (left wing Zionist group). One can believe, as does the Morning Freiheit, that their complete orientation on Israel is harmful to the work for a healthy Jewish life in America. One can show, as does the Morning Freiheit, that Zionism and the State of Israel are not solving the problems of the Jews in the lands in which they live. Actually, American Zionists have largely recognized this fact and have given up "Kibbutz Galiyot" (ingathering of the "exiles" to Israel). But all this belongs in the sphere of difference of opinion, of conflicting principles, and should not express itself in antagonisms.

That it is possible and necessary to work together not only with the masses of Zionists but with their leaders, was proved by Andre Blumel, leader of the French Zionists, and the role he played against German rearmament. . . . Here in America, the voice of Rabbi

Abba Hillel Silver is often heard on the side of peace and co-existence, even if not always in a consistent manner. The position of Dr. Nahum Goldmann for peace between Israel and her neighbors is often one which should be supported by non-Zionists.

The Morning Freiheit, learning from these experiences, believes that the approach which regards Zionism as some kind of international conspiracy or world menace is destructive. . . .

In our report to the Morning Freiheit convention five years ago it was stated: "Our attitude toward the State of Israel has not changed since the period when we fought for a just solution in the UN and sought to mobilize help for Israel in the war which was forced upon her." Today we emphasize again: our position has not changed at all! . . .

(Translation from the Yiddish by Max Rosenfeld)

CELEBRATE
35th Anniversary
of the
MORNING FREIHEIT

Speakers
Musical Program

Sat., April 13, 8 p.m.

Carnegie Hall

57th St. & 7th Ave., N.Y.C.

Admission, \$1.15, \$1.50, \$2.30