

tential for continued independent living in the community. Although offering certain distinct advantages, the unique nature of joint sponsorship has led to major funding problems which, unless solved in the near future, will lead to the program's demise. A renewed emphasis upon the program's original goals and objectives and a re-

newed commitment to a community action methodology on the part of the program's elderly board of directors offer, however, hope that the program will be continued in some fashion. This remains to be seen, and the outcome should prove instructive to other communities offering or contemplating similar cooperatively-sponsored programs.

Poverty in The Third Jewish Commonwealth: Sephardi-Ashkenazi Divisions

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FOR 3,300 years—from the time of Joshua to today—Jews have lived in the land of Israel. After the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in the fifth century B.C.E., the First Commonwealth was destroyed and the people of Israel were spread around the Mesopotamian Valley. When the Roman legions attacked Jerusalem and crushed the Second Commonwealth in the year 70, they exiled what remained of the Jewish people to other lands of Roman conquests such as Turkey and Greece and then spread them all over Europe. Over the centuries, faced with constant calamities, pogroms and persecution, many Jews eventually fled to the Western Hemisphere.

However, for the last 35 centuries, a small remnant of the Jewish people have always remained in the land of Israel. Their continuity was never broken. But the majority of the Jewish people were dispersed around the globe: the Sephardi dispersion, which dates back to the First Commonwealth when Israel was attacked by the Babylonians, and the Ashkenazi dispersion resulting when the Second Commonwealth was conquered by the Romans.

With the return of the two groups to Israel, beginning in mass numbers in

1948, the Jewish people commenced the Third Commonwealth. But the Third Commonwealth is by no means a fact that can be taken for granted. We're still in the middle of the experiment. Surprisingly, a lot of people take Israel for granted and it cannot be.

After two thousand years of dispersion, the Jewish people inevitably picked up many of the characteristics of the people in the various host countries where they lived. The Jews of the first exile, the Sephardim, lived among the Arab lands of the Mesopotamian Valley—Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt. Over the centuries, and not through intermarriage, their skin took the color of the people who lived in those regions. Living in Middle-Eastern societies and culture, they adopted a different approach to life from that which people in Western society have known. For example, there was a very strong accent on religion, on fatalism, and on the patriarchal rather than a matriarchal type of family structure. They were familiar with non-democratic, non-participatory forms of government. The Jews of the second exile, the Ashkenazim, dispersed among the European countries, picked up a different approach, different sets of skills and values—with emphasis on technological innovation and industrialization.

Over half a million of exiles returning to Israel came from the Moslem countries, the largest group that came back after the War of Independence. The Nazis had murdered half of the Jewish exiles from the Second Commonwealth. The returning Sephardi Jews were either chased out or ran for their lives from the Moslem countries

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after the 1948 war, and when they came back to Israel they were settled in places that had to be settled for strategic reasons at that time, namely the development and border towns. I call this the "disadvantages" of coming early. One of those disadvantages was that you got settled—you were not a participant in the settlement process. There's a big difference between being settled and being a participant in the settlement process. That was not so much the case with later waves of immigrants—the Ashkenazi from western countries and especially those immigrants today from the Soviet Union, both of which have had more participation in the decision related to their place of settlement. Sephardi Jews were at a major disadvantage, coming mostly from urban Moslem ghettos, when they were settled in agricultural settlements and in development towns, areas that had been established for securing certain regions geographically.

If one travels from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem at night and looks across at the ridges of the hills when going through the corridor—what Israelis call "The Corridor"—twinkling lights will be seen on both sides. These are settlements that were initiated in the hills as soon as the Corridor was freed to help assure the security of the passage-way between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Now, one can not make a living there. It's barren; but it had to be secured even at the expense of about eighty percent of the people living there having been "on welfare". Today, their situation has improved somewhat, but they are often referred to as "the forgotten Israel."

So we see that the people who came early after the War of Independence were settled in outlying districts, primarily; they were not settled in the major urban areas. Finally, we also see that the doctors and the social workers

and the teachers and the professionals did not go to the development towns and these outlying districts. The good ones—especially—did not go and even today we are still seeking ways to prod and coax professionals to leave the comfort and facilities of the urban centers.

These are what I call the "disadvantages" of coming early. Most Sephardim didn't have a choice. The first disadvantage was that they came from Moslem countries, which did not prepare them for competing with the Ashkenazi way of life. The second disadvantage was they were settled in outlying areas, cut off from the mainstream. And the third disadvantage was they did not have the professional facilities that were available to people in the urban centers. So the Sephardim were at a triple disadvantage from the beginning.

Now the people who came later received and are receiving more benefits, the advantages of coming later. They are getting, as we are able to build better and better housing, larger housing, of better standards, better quality, and often in urban areas. The irony is that the recent immigration is now from Western countries, primarily from Russia and the free countries.

So, you have a different approach to these two populations. Each wave that comes over gets better treatment, the later the wave, the later the immigration, the better the treatment. That's not a process of premeditated discrimination. That's a process of our industrial growth, our economic development, the Jewish Agency's capacity to expand, and the level of United Jewish Appeal contributions.

But, because the Sephardim came earlier, and because they were at these three disadvantages, we have had a backlash and a boiling-over about every two years after we have had a war.

After each war, conditions improved, and with those improvements, expectations rose. When they are unmet, there is social tension. Two years after the Sinai Campaign in 1956, we had a riot in Wadi Salib, a slum-gulley outside of Haifa, where Sephardim rushed into Haifa smashing windows and looting stores. About two years after the Six-Day War, we had a riot in Musrara, a Sephardi slum quarter in Jerusalem. Very few people outside Israel may know about it. There was a Commission report, under the chairmanship of Chaim Adler of the Education Department of Hebrew University. Adler said much the same thing that the Katz Commission was to say a few years later. But hardly anything resulted from this study—few outside of Israel even knew about it—and that was only in 1968. Then came the War of Attrition, followed in 1971 by the emergence of the Black Panthers in Jerusalem. I predict that approximately two or so years after we get some peace and quiet on our borders, there will be a blow-up again.

The problem is that every time there is a blow-up, it has an intensity much greater than its predecessor, because there is always a cooking underneath. When Jews are in trouble, they pull together. When they feel out of physical danger, then social problems manifest themselves.

Now every society has poverty, and to give us some proportion, there's probably more poverty in New York than there is in Israel. The difference is that for us it's the very fabric of Israeli society, and that we, as Jews, have a responsibility for the existence of that condition. It must be seen as part of the immigrant absorption process; an incompleting process that we never finished, and now it must be rectified.

The Black Panthers were a group of 20 young adults: Sephardi kids from

Musrara and Katamon, part of the growing Israeli streetcorner subculture, and only a surfacing bubble of social problems which had festered over the years. At that time, I was Director of the Welfare Department in Jerusalem. We gave these kids a clubhouse to get them off the street and into productive activities. Within the larger group there was a nucleus of about seven or eight who were extraordinarily intelligent, not bookishly, but with *sechal*. They saw that what was happening to them was also happening to a lot of kids with similar immigrant backgrounds throughout Israeli society. So they defiantly took the name Black Panthers and hoped to be the spokesmen for these kids and their families. The truth is that there were no significant, effective spokesmen for the underprivileged Sephardi population. Many of those who had "made it" economically turned their faces from the others.

There's a whole obsession about how these Sephardi kids got the name Black Panthers—that radicals gave it to them, that my social workers gave it to them, that they were provoking trouble. And it wasn't so much the word Panthers that annoyed everyone, but the word "Black." It was considered blasphemy. Reference to blacks and whites in Israel in 1971 was viewed as threatening to the whole purpose of Israel's being—the in-gathering of the exiles and the coming together of the two diasporas.

What happened was classic: the classic mistakes between police authorities and dissidents. The youths needed a license to demonstrate. The police deliberated what to do. Should they give these Black Panthers a license to demonstrate or not? And they decided not to give them a license. And then the kids, being bright and sophisticated, decided fine, they'll demonstrate anyhow in front of Teddy Kollek's office. The police knew what was happening,

and the night before the demonstration they decided to arrest the ring-leaders for "questioning." Of course, this move guaranteed, overnight, the success of the Black Panthers. By the time of the rally the next morning, I think there were more officials and media people present than Black Panthers. With their own hands, the "establishment" created the Panther "movement", and then everybody wanted to hear who the Black Panthers were and talk with them. Most important of all, the foreign media projected the issue, without dilution, to foreign audiences and Israel's image was tarnished.

Nevertheless, that's when our consciousness was really raised about poverty. Consequently, the Prime Minister set up a Commission on Disadvantaged Youth, and Israel Katz, who was then director of the National Insurance Institute, was named chairman. The Commission was made up of about 139 experts from many different fields—Housing, Education, Welfare, Income Maintenance, even the Army. It produced within two years a three-volume report on the "social state" of Israeli society, the first of its kind. It was a tremendous achievement.

I was a member of that Commission. My main criticism of our work was that we had too much of everything—with no sense of priorities, with 139 experts, each one dreaming what he would like to do with an ideal Israeli society. But you cannot create social policy on the basis of everybody pouring out his dreams—you must have priorities. One piece of the report must interweave with another piece of the report. Despite this criticism, we did write a report—the first of such magnitude in Israel.

We found three groups in trouble:

1. *Young couples:* Most of these were poor young couples, Sephardim, who could not and cannot get hous-

ing because the average cost of public housing went up forty percent between 1967 and 1972, while the average wage during the same period went up by twenty percent. So these young couples cannot save, they cannot get mortgages, and rentals are scarce. They have served and suffered in our wars and we could not guarantee a basic right to housing.

2. *Large families:* There is a schizophrenic policy toward large families. There are over 100,000 large families in Israel, many of them Sephardim, poor, and living in overcrowded housing conditions. Most of the fathers are working full-time, but their low-income jobs and size of their families have created overwhelming problems. A group of us decided to establish a citizens' lobby of large families to improve services and help the government determine a policy concerning large families in Israel. So an Association for the Rights of Large Families was recently formed. In Hebrew, its name, *Zahavi*, means "our gold," because we believe that our children are Israel's gold. *Zahavi* appeared before the Finance Committee of the Knesset and requested that mothers of large families get privileges equal to those of working women, such as tax deductions and insurance, because in Israel, a woman working outside of the home is highly valued. But a mother who works in her home? Some members of the Finance Committee saw the point, and even realized that children were a form of internal immigration. They asked how these parents, mostly Sephardim, can possibly support their families. "Can't you control yourselves," they asked. "How are you going to be able to give them education and housing!" This is schizo-

phrenic. On the one hand, Israeli society pays constant lip service to the view that we must increase the population if we are to survive. On the other hand, large families are frequently identified with the poor and uneducated, offspring of parents with insufficient sense to limit the number of their children so that they can give more to those they already have.

Now, our position was that if you want abortions and if you want family planning, go that route. But, if you don't want it, then you have to go in another clear direction, but you cannot stay in the middle. So the poor, marginal, large families, most of which are Sephardim, are stuck with all the problems of large families, without a clear national policy. It may be on the way, however, since the Knesset has subsequently allowed a special benefit to non-employed mothers.

3. *The Aged:* A very interesting situation has developed regarding the aged. Malben, an agency of the Joint Distribution Committee, took upon itself, when the State was created, the task of caring for the immigrant aged. But in taking the burden off the cities and towns, local municipalities never satisfactorily developed programs for their aged. And then when some of the leadership—the elder statesmen—became chronically ill, they began to understand that the problems of the aged had not been handled properly. Recognizing the need for indigenous, local programs, Malben now has set up a fund to help the cities develop their own services to the aged. It's a formidable task. Among the aged, the Sephardi population does not have the help of sophisticated *landmanschaften* or restitution payments.

The Katz Commission found that the gap is growing. Sixty percent of all the kids that enter elementary school are from large, Sephardi families. But only 37 percent of all students entering high school are Sephardim; and 12 percent of all students entering university are Sephardim. Only four percent graduate and obtain degrees; and only two percent go on for Ph.D.'s.

We found that in 1964, of one hundred recipients of the matriculation—the high school diploma—3.7 percent were Sephardim. In 1974 it was 6.1 percent. If you project those figures at the same rate into 1984, you will have 9.5 percent of those receiving diplomas being Sephardim. To show you how serious this gap is, only ten percent of all Sephardi serving in the Army completed twelve grades. In 1973, in Tel Aviv, only four percent of all the twelfth grade students were Sephardim.

The Katz Commission also found that 20,000 youths were not working and not learning. And, we found another 20,000 who were clearly failing in school. They are the potential breeding-ground for the idle street corner society and conditions that produce Black Panthers. Can the Jewish people afford such a waste of human potential?

We found that 200,000 Jewish children—that is, one out of every four—were living in overcrowded quarters. This is the equivalent of three or more people to a room. Imagine what this means. If we move 10,000 of those kids a year out of overcrowded housing, it will take us 20 years to do the job! Ninety percent of those 200,000 disadvantaged children are Sephardim.

These are all problems of what I call "the oldtime immigrants." The job has never been finished. We've never had time to breathe and go back to them. We quickly put a roof over their heads,

we tried to get them jobs, and get their kids into school, and then we moved on to the next wave of immigrants. We never got a chance to go back, and that is where we are now. The backlog of the unfinished business with the "old-time" immigrants must be confronted. The alternative is dismal.

In 1974, some 135,000 people were on welfare in Israel, either receiving public assistance or other social service. Eighty percent of all juvenile delinquents are Sephardim and, of all the delinquents, 70 percent cannot read or write!

Another manifestation of this problem is the growing rate of teenage prostitution in Jerusalem. I'm not talking about girls of 18 years or over: that's their chosen business. But under the age of 18, that exploitation. I'm referring to twelve-, thirteen-, and fourteen-year-old girls. After the Six-Day War, when Jerusalem was united, the city overnight became a tourist center. The city expanded from a population of 250,000 to over 300,000 today. And so overnight you had young girls being lured by quick money into teenage prostitution. We were not ready to handle the problem, because we had little experience and few of the proper social services. The early pioneers believed that strong labor unions and monolithic workers' medical services would save us from the social problems of less egalitarian societies. They were wrong. Indeed, what has happened is that with all our problems, with all our growth, we have not developed a good infra-structure for social services, and many immigrants have fallen behind. We need mechanisms for helping them to catch up.

There have been two parallel developments or networks for our social services. On the one hand, Israel has a strong tradition of volunteer women's organizations, philanthropically fi-

nanced abroad, that developed, for example, under the leadership of Henrietta Szold. And then there are services provided either by the Jewish Agency or the government. However, there is no real overall strategy, or master plan, linking the two networks. The women's organizations work traditionally with the healthy, attractive kids—orphans, dependent children, immigrant children, but normal and "saleable." The government and the Jewish Agency tackle the pathological, the delinquent, the prostituted, the retarded, the difficult cases. Sometimes the two spheres overlap but there's no one policy that coordinates both of them. This can be wasteful and in a country with limited resources, we will have to take a closer look at this issue.

I think we also misjudged the relationship between poverty and the gap between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. It's a sensitive issue. But it's related to poverty, and we misjudged it. Indeed, it used to be taboo to mention Sephardim with poverty; but they're almost identical terms. We can't deal with our attitudes and human interplay unless we confront our perceptions of each.

Finally, we must recognize the impact of inflation, very, very serious inflation, and then the devaluation and the lifting of subsidies on basic foods. All of these moves hit the low-income groups very hard. Mechanisms have been instituted for adjusting the income of the very poor, but these procedures are only partially compensating for the loss of income caused by inflation and devaluation, and they usually "arrive" long after the crunch.

The Yom Kippur War side-tracked attention from the Katz Report, but Prime Minister Rabin has begun to focus on it. He established an Interministerial Committee to try to get some reports on what could be done by the various Ministries about each of the rec-

ommendations, and is now trying to set some priorities. That is where things are now.

But, in the interim, something else has happened. There were the attacks on Kiryat Shemona, and the attack on the poor Sephardi school children from Safed who were sleeping in the Ma'alot school. These terrorist attacks hit two tender cords. One was the feeling of insecurity and actual physical insecurity of the Sephardim living in the outskirts. And the other was the poverty and deprivation of the Sephardim living in these undeveloped development towns.

What this meant to the poor Sephardim was that they had a sense of being neglected for years; they were the forgotten Jews of Israel living in the outskirt development towns.

This feeling of neglect was epitomized in Mitspe Ramon, a stagnant development town along the old road to Elat, where last fall, the residents of the town declared a one-day strike. Every single individual in that town just sat down and didn't do anything. The whole town struck. Their laundry list of grievances reached the point where they felt they had to tell the rest of Israel that they did not want to be forgotten. We're going to hear an awful lot from these "forgotten" people in development towns, unless we get back to them.

Unfortunately, what often happens is that we are all reacting instinctively to the tragedies in the development towns. But it's worse to make promises you can't keep immediately; it adds to people's frustrations. Nor does it help, when everyone is talking about special services and incentives for newly-arriving Soviet Jews. The emphasis on the Russians just exacerbates the Ashkenazi-Sephardi division, and adds flame to the fire.

But—and this is critical—the Sephardim are not saying it's either us or the

Russians. What they're saying is that we need a better balance in allocation of resources, priorities and programs. And things *are* improving slowly. For instance, before the Six-Day War, only six percent of housing expenditures went to oldtimer housing. Last year, 20 percent of housing expenditures went to oldtimer housing. So we are getting, however slowly, a balancing-out of social services.

The human problems I have been describing have now extended themselves to Zahal—Israel's armed forces. The very security of the people of Israel is now linked to the education and development of our Sephardi youth. It's become that serious.

People in Israel used to talk about "two flags"—you know, that you must choose between guns or butter, welfare or defense. Well, it's becoming quite apparent that you can't talk anymore about "two flags." The two are now inseparable for the future of the people of Israel.

It's a matter of numbers and quality. The Israeli soldier, despite the myth of the insuperable Jewish fighting man, is lodged with our Sephardi population. They are the majority population, and provide 70 percent of the manpower for the Army. So what we do to bridge the social gap now is directly related to maintaining the strategic capabilities. Studies have been made about the relationship between social background and activity under fire. We have learned now that the two are related. And, there is also some disturbing evidence correlating educational achievement with the ability to adapt to advanced technological weaponry.

So we cannot afford now to say, one flag or the other. It is outmoded: it's just not true. There's an immense job to be done, and we're looking for partners. Time and economic growth

will not close the gap. A special effort is needed.

This challenge is implicit in the conclusions of the Katz Commission report:

There is an increasing refutation of the assumption that economic growth and social services . . . would limit social distress and facilitate its elimination. Not only will time fail to "do the rest," but gaps will become more acute, without an energetic policy directed to the reduction of social distress.

Despite the seriousness of these social problems and, ironically, because of our new sensitiveness to them and the emergence of lobbies, and of new Sephardi leadership and coalitions, we are now entering upon one of the most promising and exciting periods in Israel's development. There is no doubting that the present allocation of resources already reflects the expansion of previously neglected and new programs for the disadvantaged.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that three major routes will have to be taken to break or to significantly disrupt the cycle of deprivation that now threatens to engulf a second generation of Israelis.

The first route involves greatly widening the web of services to the disadvantaged so as to prevent their falling into serious social difficulties and the withering of talent due to lack of opportunity. These services must be offered on a more universal basis rather than waiting to develop ad hoc programs for human residuals and drop-outs as has often been the case thus far.

We will need to expand and strengthen, therefore, our day care and pre-school programs, extend the number of required years of high school education so as to enable matriculation, provide more pre-University preparatory programs, and more educational scholarships to the disadvantaged. Mortgages, on reasonable terms, and clear criteria for obtain-

ing them will have to be provided to young couples and to large families living in difficult housing situations. New legislation now being considered in the Knesset will, it is hoped, soon provide universal medical insurance to the entire population, including about 20 percent of the poor and elderly who are presently not covered by any scheme, and to the chronically ill and crippled whose hospitalization and home care are covered only in the early stages. Outreach programs for youth, employment placement and follow-up, integration in urban public schools, social work and psychological counseling to children and families in public schools, in the Army, and elsewhere, must eventually become common-place services. Professional manpower training is essential.

These are all examples of preventive services and of spreading the net of programs wider so as to help stabilize and support families in trouble.

The second route that we will have to take may be more difficult to implement because of political rather than economic considerations. Nevertheless, we must rationalize our present welfare network by reweaving it after nearly 30 years of ad hoc, eclectic planning, and irrational, costly division of functions and resources and coalition log-rolling. We will have to reorganize our present resources to meet today's needs and develop a longer-range master plan for human services. The Prime Minister's Report on Disadvantaged Youth related directly to this problem, when, for example, we suggested the unification of all income maintenance programs under one roof, with a uniform set of eligibility criteria, and one administrative staff, instead of the present three or four agencies now involved in this task.

This will not be an easy thing to do and there is already evidence that such juggling of Ministry responsibilities

could result in coalition crises, but we must find a way to bring about important organizational reforms.

Finally, we are going to have to develop new programs and strategies for the human services. With the talent available in Israel and abroad, we will have to work on new models of social services. There is every possibility that, given the proper level of resources and Jewish imagination, we can break the cycle of deprivation in Israel, and offer some interesting insights to other countries also groping with similar problems. The Jewish Agency, for example, is engaged in and contemplating some

imaginative work together with the Hebrew University in the child welfare field, and I'm convinced that its new reconstitution will lead to important pilot projects in a number of crucial social problem areas in Israeli life.

We are, I believe, at a decisive period in the history of the Third Commonwealth. We are at a second stage, where the quality of life in Israel has been irrevocably linked to the survival of the State, and where the urgency and excitement of meeting the challenge now is comparable to the establishment of the State itself.