

# Definitive Split On in Mapam

By AL FINDLEY

The long expected split in Mapam—Israel's pro-Stalinist party, distinct from the Israeli Communist Party—has finally taken place.

Mapam (the abbreviated name for United Workers Party) was founded seven years ago by the union of Hashomer Hatzair, Achdut Avoda, and the Left Poale Zion, joined also by the pro-Zionist wing of the CP and by "populist" elements typified by Moshe Sneh. It is now virtually reduced to the Hashomer Hatzair elements.

**It has long been obvious that a major split was looming between Achdut Avoda and Hashomer Hatzair, and the events leading to this development have been discussed in LABOR ACTION several times. Splinters have been breaking off from Mapam ever since the beginning of the Stalinist campaign against the Jews in general and Zionism in particular.**

The arrest of Mapam leader Oren in Czechoslovakia, the anti-Semitic trials in that country, the case of the Jewish doctors in Moscow provided the background for these splits. These events made it extremely difficult for any Jewish group to balance its avowed pro-Russian attitude and its basic Jewish positions.

## SNEH TO CP

The first two splits came with the resignation of two Mapam members of the Knesset (parliament), Lifshutz and Lamdan, who placed their main emphasis on Zionism. Then followed the expulsion of Sneh and his followers, who weighted the scale overwhelmingly in favor of Moscow, for example justifying all that the Stalinists did in Prague.

A week ago Dr. Sneh announced his intention of joining the Communist Party (Maki) in a brochure entitled "Summaries on the National Problem in the Light of Marxism-Leninism," which he submitted to the secretariat of his group for approval at its convention next month. He states that the differences between the parties have disappeared. And he is absolutely correct. Sneh has steadily moved to a full Stalinist position, though the CP has not budged.

**The CP has published its secretariat's welcome to Dr. Sneh. There are reports that many of his followers, especially in the youth, will oppose entry into the CP.**

In Mapam circles this news has been greeted with pleasure. A Mapam spokesman stated that it would help the party fight the "silent followers" of Dr. Sneh who still abounded in the movement.

## THE JUGGLERS FUMBLE

The two main groups left in the Mapam, Hashomer Hatzair and Achdut Avoda, continued to juggle in their program their pro-Zionism, their pro-Stalinism and elements of socialist ideas. In a juggling act where two partners fail to synchronize, mishaps are bound to occur. In the last years Achdut Avoda and Hashomer Hatzair have been voting differently in the Knesset and acting almost as separate parties.

The current split situation began when Achdut Avoda published its own paper *Lamerchav* because the Mapam organ *Al Hamishmar* did not permit full and free discussion of its views. The paper refused to publish a resolution on Israeli security voted by Kibbutz Meuchad, etc.

The Hashomer Hatzair majority leadership of the party prohibited further publication of a rival organ. Then began

a series of proposals and counter-proposals. For a while *Lamerchav* was suspended while negotiations took place.

Hashomer went so far as to alter its procedure for discussion and propose that a representative of the minority be allowed to go along with the majority spokesman in the discussion. To preserve unity the Hashomer leader said he "proposed freedom of debate and agreement on many issues, conditions which no other minority succeeded in obtaining." (Quoted in *Israeli Horizons*, Sept. 1954.)

The aim of Achdut Avoda was to reorganize the party as a federation of equal groups, with parity on all questions and on the press. Hashomer wanted to use its slim majority to continue its control of the organization.

**Hashomer proposed that on four basic questions, on which their views were not fundamentally different, mutual agreement be reached. These four questions were: (1) Relations with the CP. (2) Attitude toward Russia. (3) Security of the state. (4) Joining the government. There was to be a delay on reaching a decision on the admission of Arabs into Mapam.**

The minority demanded agreement on "the great political problems of our time, including the four above, plus foreign policy, political organization of Arab workers, etc."

## PROGRAMMATIC DISPUTE?

In the latter part of August a final conference was held and the representatives of Achdut Avoda walked out, leaving Mapam to the Hashomer.

There are of course conflicting claims as to who represents the majority. Each side claims 70 per cent. As far as we can judge, the Mapam followers in the cities (not too numerous) split evenly. On the kibbutzim (farm collectives) everyone has to go with his own kibbutz. The Hashomer Hatzair has a larger organization than Achdut Avoda's Kibbutz Hameuchad. The Erem group of the Left Poale Zion went with Achdut Avoda and have a majority of that small group.

The newly independent Achdut Avoda-Poale Zion party held its first convention in the beginning of September. It hailed Russia as a "ray of hope," expressed its sympathy for Russia and its allies, but demanded recognition of the Jews as a nation and called on Moscow to allow emigration of Jews. The speakers called for a coalition of all Zionist-socialist parties. Speakers asked a return to the policy of "non-identification" of the state of Israel with either power bloc, although it said the party will be with the camp of "social progress," etc.

As can be seen from the above summary, given the agreement stated on the four basic questions and the postponement of the Arab question, there is little or no important programmatic difference between the new AA-PZ party and the decimated Mapam. That has always been true. There are real differences, but they are differences in attitude rather than differences in formal program. These mani-

fest themselves in day-to-day problems particularly.

Programmatically, Hashomer and Achdut Avoda agree in considering Russia a socialist state leading the struggle for peace and progress. The basic programmatic document concretizing this agreement was the Haifa program, which was a compromise between the two groups.

The Hashomer Hatzair had proposed conditional *anschluss* with the Cominform, while the Achdut Avoda merely proposed greater cooperation with the Cominform. While Hashomer condemned Tito, the Achdut Avoda program was loud in its silence on that question. Hashomer favored abolition of factions in the party and the admission of Arab workers. Achdut Avoda opposed admission of Arabs, stressed the "Zionist" character of the party, and favored the continuation or groupings in the party.

This pro-Stalinist program was adopted after the Russian campaign against the Jews as "cosmopolitans," "rootless traders," etc. The program as finally adopted called for "eventual" affiliation to the Cominform and the "future" admission of Arabs into a single party.

## ALTERNATIVES

Despite abolition of factions, Hashomer did in fact continue to act as a faction through control of its settlements. The Achdut Avoda also later created their de-facto faction by splitting the Kibbutz Hameuchad and transforming it into a homogeneous ideological unit.

**The leader of Hashomer is right when he says that for years the opposition had considered the Haifa program a "mistake," a "failure," etc. However, given their basic approach, they were easily led to agree then, and the platform of their new party continues the same general political line. Despite their complete programmatic subordination to the Stalinists they remain emotionally anti-Stalinist. That is their main contradiction. How they solve this problem will to a great extent determine the future of their new party.**

They face the alternatives of joining the Mapai, remaining independent, or reuniting with Mapam, and this choice will not be decided by such secondary questions as joining the government, or "activism" versus "active defense."

Their basic theoretical failure lies in the fact that, like the Mapam, they see only two contenders for power in the world, the Stalinist camp on the one side and the capitalist camp on the other. They fail to see the independent working class as a real alternative to both. They are thus pushed to hail the Russian barbarism as "socialism" and keep their criticism to private gatherings.

Once the glimmer of a Third Camp position enters their thinking, the possibilities of their development as an independent tendency would appear. Otherwise they can only differ with Hashomer on Zionist questions; but even Hashomer has a more consistent conclusion from premises that both groups share, i.e., friendship for the Arab workers, etc.

## HASHOMER'S PROBLEM

The Mapam (what is left of it) has announced that it will now proceed with the immediate acceptance of Arabs into the party. It is hard to foretell how many Arabs, and of what caliber, will be induced to join a Zionist-dominated party. The problem has been seriously posed to their leaders but has not yet been answered clearly.

Will the Hashomer (now left holding Mapam) return to its original position of 1951 before it accepted the compromise of the Haifa program? The series of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist acts of the Stalinist bloc would seem to rule this out.

However, Hashomer has always acted as if it were not aware of what was going on in this respect, except on certain holiday occasions and when it is attacking the CP, and even on such occasions it is the fault of the Jewish Stalinists and not the true leaders of the CP. ("The tsar is good but he has bad advisers.") The assumption is always near the surface that Russia will return to its 1948 pro-Zionist position. Faith is also buoyed up by the "liberalization" of the new Malenkov regime.

Should the Hashomer return to its original position of 1951, which was held jointly with Dr. Sneh, the organization can logically develop only in the direction that Sneh has traveled since then. But there is sometimes a big gap between logic and events in a living political movement.

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