

E P I L O G U E.

After some forty years of Israeli Independence - ou` soit disant tel - everybody with a modicum of ability to grasp reality, must admit, that the idea of a Zionist Israeli Nation, in the sense envisioned by the Founding Fathers and Mothers, embodying all or almost all of world jewry was never more than a chimera. It was against everything we know about human nature. We jews lived in the Diaspora some two thousand years, and generally speaking, until Hitler's Holocaust we lived more or less comfortably and without major catastrophes or upheavals. Simply put we were accepted, and if not always cherished at least tolerated as second class citizens, as we were in the Arab world for centuries until recently. The old Latin proverb sums it up best: UBI BENE, IBI PATRIA.

To have assumed or hoped that world jewry in general and American jewry in particular will pack up and move to Israel, lock stock and Cadillacs, was a pipe dream. This was simply not in the cards.

As for the old and frequently trotted out scare stories of hoping for mass Aliya from the West due to another Holocaust, God forbid, is nothing short of pathetic. As the Russian example proves, mass Aliya happens only when the circumstances in GENERAL changes in a country so drastically that the situation for jewry is changing with it, either for the better or for the worse. In Russia the situation changed for the better making Aliya easier. In America the situation would have to change for the worse, with antisemitism being OFFICIALLY encouraged or at least condoned. If and when that happened, God forbid, Israel wont last two weeks without American help in that sea of Arabs. Surely no American jew would be mad enough to exchange POSSIBLE death for CERTAIN death by going on Aliyah under those circumstances.

When it is said and admitted that the original version of the Zionist dream was not in the cards, it must also be said and admitted that the present variety was likewise not foreseen, and more importantly, did not have to happen because this was

not in the cards either. To have ended up after thousands of years in the Diaspora with the Israel of here and now, of neither fish nor fowl neither socialist nor capitalist neither religious nor secular hybrid/hermaphrodite, is a TRAVESTY which could have been easily avoided if handled with our much vaunted jewish flair and intelligence we're justifiably proud of. Nobody in his righth mind expected or envisaged from a people/race who contributed for centuries in every country they lived, not only their share but more, to art, science, medicine, literature, you name it, to end up with a country which is the result of NEGATIVE selectivity of world jewry, to put it delicately.

The obvious question is : WHAT went wrong? To use an old cliché, there is enough blame to spread around to cover everybody who was and is anybody in world jewry.

It is obvious that Western jewry in general and American jewry in particular handed over the responsibility to the WRONG, that is UNQUALIFIED people, who might have had the goodwill - and the wrong vision? - but not the skill and the necessary background for this Herculean task of building a Nation from the ground up, literally and figuratively.

For a jew of Mitteleuropa the ultimate insult was to call another jew a "Galicianer" or "Polnische". Galicia was a part of Poland. The Galicianers were the least sophisticated, least educated, least competent jews in Europe segregated in their ghettos and little Stetls. To put it plainly they were the laughing stock of European jewry walking around in their black caftans and fur trimmed hats (Streimele) adopted from the Polish aristocracia.

By some grotesque stroke of Fate these Galicianers became the MANDARINATE and Bureaucracia of Israel and the unofficial motto of Israel became: We want Jews WITHOUT money (from the East) and money WITHOUT jews (from the West). To use the old cliché: The rest is history. Once these primitive Eastern Jews were in charge they used every trick in the book to keep Westerners out which was not very difficult. What came natural to them, like flying to the Dutch, was to reinstate their Kafkaesque Polish bureaucracy,

kicking the populace around as they were kicked around in Poland. The only complicating difference was that the Westerners wanted no part of this and "voted with their feet" which suited the Eastern bureaucracy just fine. The Oriental jews were welcome, not only because they could be kicked around even easier but because they were needed to do all the heavy and dirty work the Eastern Jews considered beneath their dignity to perform.

It is an old truism that if you open a restaurant with the ambiance of a "greasy spoon" with food to match, you'll attract only two kinds of customers, those who are used to eat in a greasy spoon only and those who cant afford anything better. And this is where world jewry in general and American jewry in particular committed its targic mistake and therefore has to accept its part of the blame for not saying loud and clear: HEY! Wait a goddamn minute! We DONT want a "greasy spoon". We want a nice clean restaurant where we too want to eat. Of course the logical answer to this was, Welcome! Get your ass down here and become part of the Management! And of course this was where they had Western Jewry by the short hair because they knew that Western jewry has no pow'ful hankerin' to come to that miserable little country which has nothing to offer but "blood sweat and tears." So am I contradicting myself? Nope. Building a nation, also called pioneering, is not for everybody, but as the PEACE CORP proved it beyond doubt, there ARE tens of thousands of talented, dedicated, skilled and YES idealistic and relatively young people, who are not only willing but eager to to respond to a challenge, above and beyond of "making a good buck" IF they are motivated skillfully, and lets not forget APPRECIATED by the "natives" instead of treated like dirt on arrival and being told not only by body language but in very plain words: go back home! Nobody called you! Am I making this all up? Here is a charming little episode as described by my former colleg^{ue} and friend Jay Shapira in his book FROM BOTH SIDES NOW pp 47.

Dramatis personae: Jay Shapira, his wife Naomi and the Bank Manager.

Jay: You'll recall that we're having a problem obtaining mortgage.

Manager: Yes.

Jay: Thank you. As you know we arrived from the United States only a short time ago and... Manager cutting in: Then go back to the United States. Nobody sent for you."

Now, unlike me, Jay has excellent Zionist credentials. He was an emmissary of Israel for several years here, which is in plain words a RECRUITER for new immigrants. Beside he is an observant jew also unlike myself. If HE is not a good enough new immigrant I dont know WHO is.

If Western jewry would have accepted the challenge in a significant number of spending a LIMITED time, say a year or two on a sabbatical in Israel to teach the Israelis of how to do what needed to be done - which was everything - Israel today would not be what it is, just another Levantine Third World Country.

What Western jewry in general and American jewry in particular did do was let itself be tactfully blackmailed into making the same tragic mistake rich parents are doing since time immemorial, BUYING off the "kids" with money. You need money? Here, now get out of my hair! Israel of course was only too happy to oblige. Did they at least ask occasionally, Nu, what did you do with all the money we sent you chevreh? If you did, the answer was ready: its none of your damn business! We're a sovereign country and we dont owe anybody an acoounting, adding for emphasis: if you want to tell us how to spend OUR money get your ass down here and MAYBE we'll tell you. And NO Western jew had the balls EVER to answer: Now, just a goddamn a minute chevreh. If we give you all that money we have the perfect righth, nay the duty, to have a look at the books. Not even in the Holy Land is everybody holy, as a matter of fact we know that you have your share of ganefs(crooks), nor are all of you financial wizards. We want to make sure that you're spending our, pard'd me, your money not only well but wisely. You dont buy this? Do you remember the story with the old man with the coffee and the parrot?

Another aspect of this delicate subject regarding the non-involvement of American jews I find a little ironic, is the way American Jewry, which was in the frontline of Civil Rigths Movement on the side of Blacks from day one, NEVER found it necessary or obvious to say ONE blessed word - as far as I'm aware of it - for the "blacks" (Schwartzim) of Israel. Howcum that no American Jewish Organization have said something, like: Wait a minute. Wasnt it bad enough that that this unfortunate people had to live as second class citizens when they lived in the Arab world, they are considered and treated as second class citizens in their OWN country also? Why? Are they dumber then the Ashkenazim in general and the Galicianers in particular? Nope, they are not dumber. They might be more IGNORANT but dumb and ignorant is not the same. Dumb people cannot be educated but the ignorant can be - and should be. It was not so long ago that the Sephardim were the intelligentsia of world jewry in Spain, untill their expulsion in 1492. Didnt American jewry notice that the Sephardim were relegated to the dirtiest and lowest paid jobs, and that they lived in the Mabarot (tent cities) and other slums decades after they arrived in Israel? If they didnt it, was surely a case of "none so blind as those who dont want to see."

Nobody will EVER convince me that Israel couldnt have been the Singapore of the Middle East, nor will anybody ever convince me that we couldnt have come up in all world jewry with a jewish Harry Lee Kuan Yew regardless how brilliant a statesman he might be. And when it comes to natural resources, compared to Singapore which even have to import water, Israel is still the Land of milk and honey.

Did Israel past the point of no return? Yes and no. It is an old truism that it is easier to do something RIGTH from the start then to bollix it up and then try to fix it. Israel will NEVER be what it COULD have been, but it still could be something better then what it is. All it has to do is turn over a new leaf, get rid