

Agricultural Struggle- Peula for New Zealand

Goals:

1. The chanichim will understand the processes that has happened in Israeli agriculture in the last decades and how Israeli agriculture has changed (changes in the economy, privatization, new laws)
2. The chanichim will get to know the farmer's struggle with its different stages and understand that Israeli agriculture is under a constant attack over the last decades
3. Chanichim will try to understand the social environment that is created without agriculture.
4. Chanichim will learn about the connection between agriculture and the value of labour to Zionism

L'M: A year and a half ago, it was decided at the 10th veida of NOAL that the movement would renew its support for Israeli agriculture. From that day until now the farmers have been faced with a constant struggle. The struggle for the future of agriculture in the country. So far we have supported the local demonstrations. Today there is a rise in demonstrations and public pressure towards the Law of Amendments (a huge law with a big list of hard to change amendments on other laws) which doesn't include support for agriculture in the 2017/2018 budget. This is after negotiations between the farmers and the minister of finance broke down a few weeks ago. There have recently been big protests about this law. It's important to note that the struggle succeeded in uniting most of the farmers and agricultural organizations in Israel. We see the struggle for Israeli agriculture to be an expression of Zionist values such as labor and connection to the land.

Guf Peula:

Opening sicha:

- Have you ever grown a plant? How did it make you feel when it grew?
- Did you care if the things you grew weren't the biggest or best?
- Have you ever eaten something that you've grown? Was it different than eating something you bought at the store?
- Have you ever done something in the ken or at machaneh that was connected to agriculture and growing things?
- Are labor and agriculture connected to any of the values of Habo? Which ones?

Say: Today we are going to talk about the place of agriculture in Israel. Let's start by understanding how Israeli agriculture is connected to Zionist values.

1. Labour as a Zionist Value: Read the short Gordon text.
2. Sicha:
 - a. What is he saying about the Jewish people?
 - b. What is the connection between labor and Zionism?

- c. How do you think people felt when they worked the land in Israel for the first time?
 - d. Is it important for Jews to work the land in Israel? (*connection to the land of Israel, Jewish labor*)
 - i. *Jewish Labour and connection to the land in Israel is an important element of Zionism*
3. What would Israel look like if it was based on the value of Labour?
- a. They should draw or make out of sticks- what are things that would exist in an Israel based on the value of Labour?
 - b. Give them some suggestions: *Kibbutzim, cooperatives that help kibbutzim when they have a bad harvest, most of the food that people eat comes from Israel, People are proud of the farmers and the image of Jewish Labour*

Say: This really was the reality in Israel. Kibbutzim were foundational to the state, even though they weren't the majority of the population. Farms and farmers were valued, and there was a sense of pride in Jews producing their own food. We are going to look at a timeline now of what has been happening with agriculture in the last few decades.

Before we start, what do you guess? How would people relate to Jewish agriculture as the world changes? Make guesses based on what you know about New Zealand.

4. Hang the timeline on one of the walls of the room of the struggle of the farmers over the past decades. The timeline is composed of articles, laws, parliamentary debates and editorials by farmers and politicians. Tell the chanichim to walk around and read the timeline and answer the following questions:

- 1. What happened to Israeli agriculture?
- 2. What are they fighting for? Why?

5. Return to the circle for discussion:

- a. Do you see a pattern here?
- b. Why is Israeli Agriculture important?
- c. Has labour already accomplished its goal in Israel? People came back to their own land and connected to it. Maybe now we don't need to keep working?

6. Israel without agriculture?

Say: Agriculture only makes up 2.1% of the Israeli GDP, but there is a pretty persistent struggle here for keeping agriculture alive. We are trying to understand why agriculture is so important, is it just a source of livelihood for the farmers or is there something else here? We will also ask- Who's problem is this anyway?

Spread around the room slogans and pro and con statements about Israeli agriculture over the last two years. The chanichim should each choose a sentence which they agree/identify with. Chanichim will prepare a one minute speech for or against Israeli agriculture, according to the sentence they chose.

(sentences: Agriculture is Zionism, Agriculture is expensive and doesn't pay off, the farmers aren't making enough money because each one only cares about themselves, It's better to build real estate instead of agriculture, Agriculture allows Israel to be self sufficient and not rely on other countries and more...)

Discussion:

1. Which speeches or arguments did you relate to the most?
2. What do you think should be the future of Israeli agriculture?
3. What should be done to take care of Israeli agriculture today?

7. Why should you, as a chaver/a in HDANZ, care about the threats against Israeli agriculture?

Read the Veida resolutions

Discussion:

1. Why would NOAL choose to side with the Israeli agriculture? Which values does this express?
2. Do you think this is connected to HDANZ's values? To svivaniut and Zionism?

Sikkum in your own words: The agriculture struggle is also a struggle for Zionism, for the relationship between a people and its land. In this peula we met the policies of Israeli governments over the years which said that agriculture is not relevant or profitable and is not worth the money and the state is not responsible for protecting farmers and agriculture. Agriculture is vital for the existence of the state of Israel and the Zionist enterprise as a whole. The struggle for Israeli agriculture continues today, with protests and rallies.

Alu vehagshimu!

Veida Resolution for NOAL's 10th Veida

Agriculture

The movement sees the agriculture in the country as necessary to keep the character of the state, its independence and its food security. The movement calls for the Israeli government to act to strengthen agriculture, develop it and to expand the share of Israeli laborers amongst the agricultural work force. The movement supports the struggle for the existence of the country's agriculture. The movement will educate toward the importance of agriculture and encourage chanichim to experience agricultural work.

From HDANZ's constitution:

ZIONISM The Movement recognizes Israel as the Jewish state and its right to protect its borders in a morally responsible manner with respect to shivyon erech ha'adam. The Movement believes chalutzick aliyah is the ultimate form of aliyah, with the intention of Tikkun Yisrael in a socialist framework. The Movement strives to live up to the ideals of both the old and new Kibbutz movements. The Movement strives to educate its chaverim in knowledge of the Hebrew language, as we recognize this as a tool in bringing Jews together. This will manifest itself by learning and using as many Hebrew words as possible during the day to day running of the movement in hadracha, machanot and ken activities.

Svivatanut

The understanding that human beings are part of nature and the ecosystem and consequently we have a collective responsibility towards the protection and rehabilitation of our environment.

Agriculture is Zionism

Agriculture is expensive and doesn't pay off

It's better to build real estate in Israel instead of agriculture

Agriculture allows Israel to be self sufficient and not rely on other countries

Israel should import more of its food

There is no reason the Israeli Agriculture should be protected

Israeli agriculture would
succeed if it were meant to
succeed- there is no use in
protecting it

Labour is an important
Jewish Value

Israeli agriculture is
important to the character of
the state of Israel

More Israelis should be
involved in agriculture

Labour is an important value
of HDANZ

Israeli Agriculture needs to
be protected

Agriculture is an important
way for people to be
connected to their land

The Jewish people has been completely cut off from nature and imprisoned within city walls for two thousand years. We have been accustomed to every form of life, except a life of labour- of labour done at our behalf and for its own sake. It will require the greatest effort of will for such a people to become normal again. We lack the principal ingredient for national life. We lack the habit of labour... for it is labour which binds a people to its soil and to its national culture, which in its turn is an outgrowth of the people's toil and the people's labour.

Now it is turn that every people have many individuals who shun physical labour and try to live off the work of others... We Jews have developed an attitude of looking down on physical labour.... But labour is the only force which binds man to the soil... it is the basic energy for the creation of national culture. This is what we do not have, but we are not aware of missing it. We are a people without a country, without a national living language, without a national culture. We seem to think that if we have no labour it does not matter - let Ivan, John or Mustafa do the work, while we busy ourselves with producing a culture, with creating national values and with enthroning absolute justice in the world.

Our Tasks Ahead - 1920- A.D. Gordon

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Israel before the 80s

Tnuva

The narrative of Tnuva – established as a Cooperative Society in 1926 and over the years becoming the largest food corporation in Israel - is interwoven with the story of the State of Israel. It was established through an agreement between 13 producers who decided that a shared company would help them to promote their produce.

Tnuva developed and grew in parallel to the Jewish settlement in the country, while taking upon itself national-social roles. Following the establishment of the State of Israel Tnuva fulfilled an important role in the development of Israel's economy. From 1936-1939 Tnuva was the main supplier of food in Israel, when, due to the Second World War, food imports were not able to reach Israel's ports.

Tnuva closely accompanied all the historical milestones in the history of the Yishuv and the State. During the War of Independence, when Jerusalem was under siege, Tnuva sent truck of food to help residents there. After the establishment of the state, upon the arrival of hundreds of thousands of new Olim, Tnuva increased its dairy production in order to make products available to the new populations at a lower price. Hundreds of refrigerated trucks transporting fresh produce, bearing the Tnuva logo, made sure that every settlement and district across the country were reached every day, throughout the year.

The first 30 years of Israel's existence saw Tnuva greatly expand in size and reach, with branches of stores, farms, and factories in all areas of Israel.

With the rise of consumer culture in Israel in the 70s, Tnuva expanded its range of produce, introducing chocolate milk and dairy desserts. Production volume and sales steadily increased, and Tnuva became the largest food cooperative in the Western world.

Subsidies and government planning

Israel's first agricultural crisis was due to overproduction of certain fruits and vegetables (which were considered more cost-effective) and a lack of fruits and vegetables which were considered less cost-effective. As a result, the "Agricultural Planning and Establishment Committee" was created. The goal was to organize the producers, and decide in a centralized and orderly manner what farms needed to produce in order to feed the growing country.

So it was decided to "increase quotas" to encourage farmers to produce the food required to feed the country, and not to flood the market in fruit and vegetables, which leads to lower prices and even wasting food (when picking becomes more expensive than sale).

All farmers who were expected to produce the less cost-efficient food received subsidies from the state. The purpose of the subsidy was to maintain order in the economy and maintain regular supply of food available. With the subsidies even food products with relatively low economic value (grapefruit, onions, potatoes) could still be available to families throughout the year.

The Water crisis of the 90s

In response to several years of drought, the Minister of Agriculture decreased the water allowances for the agricultural sector, limiting them to 30% to 70% of the water that had been available to them in the past. The instability of water availability made it hard for producers to plan their crops and harvests ahead of time. The effect was felt most strongly by smaller, family farms, and led to many of them abandoning their production.

Change in the dairy market- Move to big producers and closure of family dairies- 1998

Taxation regarding the distribution of farmers: the sale of the dairy and milk quotas

12/07/1998, 18: 34 Boaz Meckler CPA

Israel's dairy industry is directly affected by changes in dairy policy and especially in the EU, the US, Australia and New Zealand.

Significant policy changes regarding:

1. Opening markets and reducing marketing restrictions.
2. Moving to larger production units and dairy barns.
3. The outcome of the above clauses will be a decrease of manufacturer price to a level of 32-35 cents per liter of raw milk.

Israel's dairy industry must adapt to changes in the world economy in order to survive and stand in a position that would allow competition with the world's dairy farms, in both domestic and export markets.

The Israeli government has consciously created these new policies to compete in the global market, which place a larger burden on dairy farmers in a way that renders them inefficient. Every year the cost of producing raw milk rises 2% and additional duties requiring environmental investments are placed on dairy farmers without any compensation.

Milk quality requirements, although they require significant investments in mechanization and milking interface, while reducing revenue for manufacturers, the quality of the product still is not meeting the standards.

Conversation on quotas of foreign workers 2006

In Moshav Shekef the gate is locked "we need more foreign workers"

No one enters or leaves this moshav, not even students. "We're fighting so they don't destroy our livelihood", say the farmers that demand more foreign workers. The ministry of agriculture: we're aware of the shortage, this will be discussed when a new government is formed.

טובה דדוןפורסם: 04.05.06 , 20:04

"The government needs to decide if it wants to destroy the agriculture in the state of Israel and the farmers with it. It's not reasonable that there is a need for 50 thousand foreign workers and the state only allows for 26 thousand. Every year they lower the numbers".

Tnuva's Bankruptcy 2007

Tnuva is privatizing

Real arguments, financial interests, power struggles, and a lot of money are involved in the real debate about privatizing tnuva, the milk industry is boiling.

Next wednesday the board of Tnuva will convene, it holds 60 members, on the agenda "public offering", putting Tnuva in the stock market.

Opportunist investors are buying shares for rock bottom prices from over indebted farmers, and purchasing control of Tnuva, soon, he estimates, the milk quotas will be cancelled, the production lines will close and thereafter the cowsheds and milking farms.

"We cannot privatize or offer Tnuva to public shares", Malul says, "the planning in the milk industry will end and the production of milk in Israel will be hurt severely."

A small movement by Tnuva will destabilize the foundation and the milk council, after that we will see an economic avalanche and hundreds of milk

producers in kibbutzim and moshavim will go bankrupt.

Fight against the reform in the henhouse market 2011

The chicken growers against the shed reform

The chicken growers organization joins the resistance against the henhouse reform, but disagrees with the animal rights organization demands to make the cages larger. Meanwhile the chickens suffer.

| 15/12/2011 17:03

The heads of the organization claim, that implementing this reform with these harsh demands, takes giant investments that the growers cannot handle. The help the government is offering is miniscule and not reasonable, and could destroy the industry. So far the organization supported the reform, hoping the government will improve the aid to growers for the purpose of implementing it.

The reform requires tearing down most of the chicken sheds that exist today, and building new ones in their place. "Upgrading the chicken and egg industry is necessary" the secretary of the chicken growers organization said, but he claims this reform as it is being offered puts the growers in an impossible situation.

The organization has sent a list of demands to improve the reform, but the ministry of finance opposes it.

Anonymous, the leading animal rights group in Israel has sent this message "we are partners in resisting the reform in it's current structure, that hurts both the farms, and 8 million animals a year, transitioning to "flying cages" can help the farmers bear the weight of the reform costs, and also have better conditions for the chickens.

Change in the Agriculture Ministry's attitude towards arab farmers in Israel 2012

For the first time ever: Arab farmers receive quotas for milk and eggs

The office of planning and development in the agriculture ministry published a notice that 12 arab milk farmers received permits to produce half a million litres of milk a year for each cowshed and 24 chicken growers will soon receive permits to produce 250 thousand eggs a year each.

18.03.2012 18:46

The farmers protests after the elections march 2015

A convoy of several hundred tractors choked up Road 443 and plowed through Jerusalem to the Knesset on Monday where farmers protested against what they see as the government's "abandonment" of the agriculture industry.

Accusing the government of "destroying agriculture in Israel" the demonstrators, led by the Farmers Federation of Israel, demanded policy changes in their sector..

Among the focal points of their complaints was the middleman involved in business with retail chains, the reduction of government support for the agriculture natural disasters fund, the import of tomatoes from Turkey, the expected increase in water prices for agriculture and economic policies related to foreign workers.

Farmers Federation of Israel president Dubi Amitai criticized the import of Turkish tomatoes to cope with vegetable shortages, arguing "the Israeli government provides a safety net for the agriculture of

[President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan – instead of farmers within our borders.”

2016 The Fishery struggle

Farmers: Eliminating Fish Import Taxes is ‘Anti-Zionistic’

By Dror Halavy

Wednesday, July 27, 2016 at 6:39 am | ו"א תמוז תשע"ז

Fish on display at the Machaneh Yehudah Market in Yerushalayim. (Gitty Golds)

YERUSHALAYIM - Nearly 1,000 farmers and fish growers protested Tuesday afternoon in 100 degree heat against the government’s plans to open the fish market to duty-free imports. Joining the protesters was former IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi, who said that he was “an old time *moshav* person who clearly understands the differences and similarities between security and agriculture.”

"the fish farmers that fought the lowering of import taxes achieved a settlement with the government.

The background to the fight was the ministry of finance’s decision to open fish import before passover. From a test ynet did, the prices of frozen fish from china actually rose, during the holiday itself - meaning the buyers enjoyed low prices for a short time anyway.

"The government favours the importers and not the manufacturers."

Lowering the tax on meat import 2016

Tnuva Workers Rail Against Meat Import Changes

By Dror Halavy

Thursday, September 29, 2016 at 4:10 am | ו"ו אלול תשע"ז

A statue of a cow painted in the colors of dairy firm Tnuva’s logo stands outside the company’s logistic center in the southern town of Kiryat Malachi. (Reuters/Amir Cohen)

YERUSHALAYIM - Five hundred workers of the Tnuva company protested outside the offices of Finance Minister Moshe Kachlon against his plans to open up the Israeli market to fresh meat slaughtered abroad. According to the workers, they have been informed by employers that in the event duties are lifted on fresh meat, as Kachlon is planning, some 200 workers will be let go.

4/12/16 Hundreds of farmers protested across the country "the government is making farms close"

The Israeli Farmer's Union sent tractor convoys to five major intersections throughout the country to protest harmful agricultural policies. Israel's agriculture is in a crisis and the protesters hope to bring the farmers into the national spotlight.

Dec 4, 2016, 8:33AM
Israeli Agriculture

Hundreds of farmers set out this morning to Israel's highways to protest the government's policies that, according to the farmers, hurt them. The protests took place at five different intersections throughout the country, blocking the roads with signs reading, "Putting agriculture on the nation's daily agenda."

According to the farmers, their protests are in response to the government's one-sided policy regarding opening up free imports, high agriculture water prices and profit margins. "The Israeli Farmer's Union demands that the government immediately and without delay take care of these agricultural issues once and for all," stated the protest's organizers. "This is the first step."

This morning, hundreds of farmers escorted by tractors and trucks moved in a slow procession between two major intersections in Northern Israel. The protesters stood with their produce and explained the farming situation to those in the area. Vegetables were thrown onto the road and scarecrows were erected featuring taped on faces of Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon and Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Uri Ariel.

“We are protesting because the State of Israel created a budget and threw the North and agriculture into the trash,” explained Zamir, a farmer from the Upper Galilee. “Water prices, foreign workers’ management and worst of all, the wild imports. They’re making money while breaking our backs; we cannot sell at the current prices and so we are forced to close.”

Zamir said that most of the farmers who showed up to protest are older since younger people don’t go into this line of work anymore. “There are barely any young folks because there is no future here, they see no future here,” he said. “The system is economically collapsing and agriculture is crashing. We will drive our tractors to wherever they’re needed.”