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The Jewish Labor Bund

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The State of Israel

May 15, 1948, will certainly mark a date of great importance in the history of the Jews. On this day the Socialist Government of England ended its rule in Palestine and turned over, according to its promise and on its own volition, the further responsibility for this troublesome scrap of land to the United Nations.

Almost the same hour an independent Jewish state called Israel was proclaimed in Tel-Aviv. President Truman immediately recognized the Jewish State. After a few days the second great world power, Soviet Russia, also bestowed the new State with its recognition. Other countries swiftly followed suit.

A wild wave of joy and excitement swept the Jewish communities in the United States and the world over. Even though the united Arab nations replied to the proclamation of the Jewish State by declaring war and by immediately invading Palestine, these hostilities were not able to abate the joyous sentiments of the majority of the Jews.

We frankly admit that the rank and file of the Jewish Socialists under the BUND banner cannot rejoice with the majority of the Jewish population. Heavy misgivings assail us as to the immediate future of the 600,000 Jews in Palestine as well as to the repercussions of the Jewish State on the whole of Jewish life outside it. What the Jews in Palestine need is not the right to bleed and die under the banner of their own independent state, but to live in peaceful cooperation with the Arabs so as to assure and enhance their cultural and national advancement. We doubt the ability of the United Nations to bridle the nationalistic fanaticism of the aroused

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Arabs, worsened by the propoganda of their reactionary Muftis. The present state of affairs, in which the life and the future of the 600,000 Jews in Palestine became an object with which the great world powers play their imperialistic game, is foreboding indeed. No matter how courageous the Jews of Palestine fight, the odds against them are overwhelming: A Jewish island of 600,000 people surrounded by an Arab ocean of 30,000,000 can hardly survive.

The composition of the provisional government of the new State of Israel is anything but reassuring. Against the opposition of the Jewish workers organized in Histadrut, and heedless of their warnings, representatives of the notorious Jewish terrorist groups with familiar fascist tendencies are included in the government. Such appeasement of fascist trends had always led to fatal results, wherever it was tried. It is liable to lead to the same bleak developments inside the Jewish State.

The midget Jewish State in Palestine has already become the main attraction of Jewish life everywhere. Hundreds of millions of dollars, not to mention the tremendous amount of spiritual effort, are already elicited from the Jewish communities and poured into the Jewish State in Palestine. The necessity of waging war is prone to increase the scale of all kinds of donations and activities for the sake of an independent Jewish State. The impact of such generosity on the Jewish communities outside Palestine cannot be but devastating. The diversion from their actual needs, the frustrated hopes which will inevitably replace the present state of bliss, the apathy which will sooner or later come in the wake of the present excitement, are the dreary consequences which the Jews everywhere will have to pay for the present nationalistic paradise they cherish.

Jewish Socialists never shared the opinion of Zionists that an independent state in Palestine would solve the Jewish problem. Nor do we share it today, after such a state has been established. We have always believed that the only solution for the Jews, as well as for mankind in general, is the reconstruction of the world on a socialist and democratic basis. Our belief remains unshaken even now, when the Zionists achieved, at least temporarily, their goal. During half a century the BUND movement tried to win the Jewish working

population for the international struggle for Socialism. Non-Jewish Socialists rather than the Jewish nationalists were for half a century our nearest allies. The establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine does not reconcile us with Jewish nationalism and cannot change our traditional attitude. We belong to the international Socialist camp and we will remain there.

But first of all and above all it is our duty as Jewish Socialists, faithful to our Socialist tradition and our Socialist inheritance, to do our utmost in order to stop the war which is now ravaging Palestine. An end must be put immediately to the gory war. Only the nationalist-minded elements in both camps—the Arab as well as the Jewish—are intoxicated with hatred toward the so-called enemy.

The Jewish population, as well as the Arabs, must not sacrifice their lives on the shrine of nationalism. The Jews as well as the Arabs need peaceful relations based on equality, on mutual respect for the rightful aspirations of both nationalities of Palestine. An independent Palestine—a common state of the Arabs and the Jews which may guarantee both nations the widest autonomy for their further national and cultural development and unite them for the well-being of all the inhabitants of the land,—that is the real goal to strive for.

The Jewish DP's and the War in Palestine

Every war has its conscientious objectors. No matter how small their number, they are more than just a legal nuisance for government authorities. They are a moral reminder for all of us. Conscientious objectors are an indication, as well as a promise, that sometimes in the future the better nature of human beings will make wars impossible.

Be it as it may, the opposition shown by the Jewish DP's against being forced to participate in the Palestine war has nothing to do with this moral question. Rather the principle of their elementary human rights is involved here.

We received authentic reports from the Jewish DP's in the various camps of Germany, Austria, and Italy to the effect that Zionist agents of the Jewish State in Palestine, supported by well-known Jewish relief organizations operating in the DP camps, are doing their utmost in order to enlist Jewish DP's for the Palestine war. The dubious legal aspects of such a procedure are evident. Nevertheless, it is not our intention to indulge in mere juristics. What is truly unbearable and really unbelievable is the cruelty, the coercion, and the terror employed to force the Jewish DP's to enlist. Every one of these unhappy veterans of Nazi bestiality who dares to refuse the call to arms by the Jewish State

is being denied his meager ration of food and thus actually exposed to starvation. Word has reached us that Jewish DP's objecting to their transportation to the Jewish State of Israel are exposed to beatings, detention, and all kind of persecutions by the self-appointed Jewish police, composed of elements from the notorious terrorist groups in Palestine now operating on behalf of the Zionists in the DP camps. The Zionist authorities of the DP camps are using all their influence to drive the opposing DP's out of their jobs and working shops. Quite often they are doing everything in their power to prevent Jewish DP's with legal visas into other countries to depart, not to mention their efforts to bar Jewish DP's from receiving visas into countries other than Palestine. Jews trying to escape are being ferreted out from their hideouts and forced into military formations against their will. The despair and anger among these victims of ill-conceived Jewish statehood is spreading like wildfire. According to a recent report, unrest and hostility between the Zionist mobilization drivers and the Jewish DP's are the order of the day.

We do not deny the right of convinced Zionists to donate for the Zionist cause, even to sacrifice their lives by participating in the Arab-Jewish war. What we do vigorously deny is their right to compel others to follow suit. To enlist Jewish DP's against their will is

particularly cruel. Those who went through the whole ordeal of Nazi persecution are more than anyone else entitled to decide about their own lives and their own destiny. It is an ugly maneuver to use the plight of the Jewish DP's as a whip to drive them into participating in bloody fighting. They have had enough of their share in the gory events which resulted in the annihilation of six million Jews by Nazi-Germany. They are entitled to a peaceful new start in life. The BUND members among the Jewish DP's are also victims of Zionist persecution, even though their opposition to the Zionist ideals is well known.

We deem it wise to emphasize that reports about these incredible deeds of the Zionist agents reached us not only from our BUND comrades among the Jewish DP's.

We call the attention of public opinion to the unbearable situation which has been created in the Jewish camps by these illegal and inhuman steps on the part of the Zionists. We call upon all the agencies concerned with the protection of human rights everywhere to investigate this flagrant case of depriving human beings of their elementary privileges. We protest vigorously against the agencies of the Joint Distribution Committee in the DP camps, which, according to our knowledge, are denying food-rations to those DP's who rebel against Zionist coercion.

BUND Address at the SP National Convention

at READING, N. Y.

At the recently-held National Convention of the Socialist Party USA, Dr. Emanuel Scherer addressed the delegates on behalf of the Jewish Labor BUND. We bring below excerpts from Dr. Scherer's address:

***The struggle and the achievements of the BUND since its very beginning more than fifty years ago, and particularly its great success in pre-war Poland under the severe conditions of reaction and anti-Semitism are worth to be recalled at this Socialist Convention. For this struggle of ours and its achievements not only reflect the past activities of our party, they were—and

still are—the proof of what strength and vitality evolves from socialism when it properly combines the care for one's own people with the spirit of true international brotherhood and solidarity. We, Jewish Socialists, belong to one of the most oppressed communities in human history, a community always either actually stricken or mostly directly threatened by anti-Semitism. Subsequently we have been—and still are—living in conditions extremely favorable to various brands of nationalism. Nevertheless, we never did—and do not now—compromise with nationalism, be it even of pure, genuine Jewish make.

Even Hitler's unparalleled massacre of six million of our kin could not eradicate from our souls the faith in true international socialism. Our comrades are unbroken in their spirit and are resolved to do their share in the world-wide fight for our and everybody's freedom, for our and everybody's justice, *for your and our* democratic liberitarian socialism.

With this attitude, we are perfectly conscious of taking a stand that is at present very unpopular with the Jewish people. Some Jews—a small minority—are misled by that poisonous mixture of totalitarianism, social radicalism, and specific Jewish *chauvinism* which is the current face of Jewish Communist propaganda. Others—representing a much greater number of the Jewish community—have become hysterized followers of the most nationalist brand of Zionism, blind to the perils of their path. Under these circumstances our internationalist sentiments have to be strong indeed not to be engulfed by any kind of Jewish nationalism.

Unfortunately, we do not meet an adequate response from other peoples. Jews who suffered so terribly during the years of Nazi conquests, who resisted so bravely the Nazi beasts, who wrote in their own blood the historic chapter of the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto,—Jews who have survived unimaginable tragedies are facing problems and needs which ought to have been solved and met long ago.*** What irony and what a crime that the most fortunate—or should I call them the most *unfortunate*—survivors of this "war of survival" have still to live as unfree men in post-Nazi camps! Again and again we hear in this country the call for opening the doors of Palestine to the Jewish DP. But what about the doors of this great country? It is indeed a very painful blow to those directly concerned,—but it is to no lesser extent a shame to our civilization—that this elemental demand for opening the gates of *all* countries to the uprooted and displaced victims of the most horrible Nazi cruelties is still not fulfilled.

I have mentioned the Nazi hell we went through in the not distant years of war. But many of our best

men and women were also victims of tyranny and slavery practiced by the Soviet dictatorship. And now that so few of our comrades have been left in Poland—now the Communist rulers of that country, imposed there by force and intimidation, have deprived the Jewish as well as the entire Socialist movement of its liberty to choose its own way of action.

So, in the course of the last few years, we, the members and followers of the BUND, have felt more than any other people or Socialist movement all the crimes and all the evils of both capitalist and fascist reaction and Communist domination. We thus wish to voice our strong accusation and a most serious warning against the imminent dangers of both capitalism and Communism.***

***You have heard before at the other conventions of the S.P. representatives of the Jewish Labor BUND. But up till now they always spoke as the delegates of the BUND in Poland. Now I am here for the first time on behalf of the BUND as an organization which considers itself a part of the American Socialist movement and feels closely connected and deeply concerned with all the problems, aims, and tasks of Socialist policy in this country. Coming here I took with me not only the best wishes of my organization but also its good will and determination to do our share in helping these wishes come true.

And there is, first of all, our—and as I know also your—strong, sincere, and deeply-rooted wish for Socialist unity. There were, perhaps, great differences of opinion between the two democratic factions of the American Socialist movement in the past. They have greatly diminished in recent years, and what is left of them now should not and must not prevent both organizations—the S.P. and the S.D.F.—from joining their ranks and reuniting the movement. There is certainly no more immediate task and no more urgent need of American Socialism than the speedy end to the feud between the democratic socialist factions. As for ourselves, we have already tried to contribute in some way to this cause, and we have pledged ourselves to

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further work for speeding up the unification of the S.P. and the S.D.F. as well as of our own group and our friendly and fraternal Jewish Socialist Verband. May I express the wish that the next Socialist Convention be a convention of a united and reunited Socialist Movement of the United States.***

***Socialist policy—and I am speaking only of true democratic socialism—Socialist policy is a good service not only to Europe. If there is any meaning in socialism, it must mean also to us in this country the way of a *distinct* Socialist policy, a policy strongly opposed both to Communism and capitalism, a policy of independent democratic socialist action. The so-called “third way”—which led to such splendid results in Labor Britain—the third way which has up till now saved Western Europe from going fascist or Communist—this third way, and as its implementation a truly third party, a democratic anti-capitalist mass party, is also the only way of a promising labor and Socialist policy in the United States.

That implies in this year of presidential elections

first of all the necessity of an independent Socialist campaign for a Socialist presidential candidate, who should run on a clear-cut Socialist program and platform. Our own attitude in this respect has been defined by the following brief resolution, which I should like to quote:

“The Jewish Labor BUND in New York is convinced that the Socialist Movement should take part in this year’s elections by nomination of its own Socialist presidential candidate running under an adequate Socialist platform on the various issues of domestic and international policy.

“The Jewish Labor BUND resolves to support a Socialist presidential candidate, provided that the adopted platform will be generally in accordance with the principles of the BUND.”

***Be successful in your decisions! And let us go—through a successful Socialist election campaign to a united strong and victorious Socialist Movement of America and to a real third party—a strong, victorious, independent anti-capitalist party of the American working class.

SP Convention Adopts Resolution of Greetings to the BUND

National Convention, Socialist Party USA

RESOLUTION TO SEND
FRATERNAL GREETINGS
TO JEWISH LABOR BUND

The Convention of the Socialist Party U.S.A. expresses its thanks to the Jewish Labor Bund for the fraternal greetings presented by its representative. The Convention assures the comrades of the BUND of its

determination to continue our efforts for the broadest unity of democratic socialists. We will continue our efforts to build a Socialist movement that can create a Socialist America and aid our comrades abroad to build a Socialist Europe and a socialist world.

(signed) HARRY FLEISCHMAN
National Secretary
Socialist Party USA

From Our Movement

The BUND at the International Conference in Vienna

The BUND delegation at the forthcoming International Socialist Conference in Vienna will include Dr. Emanuel Scherer, New York; Professor L. Hersh, Geneva, Switzerland; and Raphael Ryba, Paris.

The Conference will be held at the beginning of June, 1948. Its order of business, as scheduled by the COMISCO in London, will be as follows:

- (1) Written reports from the affiliated parties
- (2) Socialist Planned Economy
- (3) The Bill of Human Rights at the United Nations

Executive Session of the Coordinating Committee

The Executive Bureau of the BUND Coordinating Committee, New York, after consulting with the Plenary Session members in Europe, decided to call the next Executive Plenary Session on June 10, 1948, in Brussels, Belgium. The Executive Bureau proposed the following order of business:

- (1) Report
- (2) Withdrawal of the Polish BUND
- (3) The Palestine Situation
- (4) Reorganization of the European Secretariat
- (5) UNSER TSAIT as the Organ of the Coordinating Committee
- (6) Miscellaneous

Dr. Emanuel Scherer and L. Odes are scheduled to leave New York to take part in the deliberations of the Plenary Session.

S. Mendelsohn Publishing House in Mexico City

The Association for Culture and Aid in Mexico City decided to honor the recently deceased BUND leader and cultural worker S. Mendelsohn by establishing a publishing house to be named after him.

The house is expected to publish both Jewish fiction and non-fiction. The Publishing Committee already decided upon includes F. Gutman, H. Greenstein, T. Mayzel, J. Rotenberg, M. Ferdman, R. Weisfeld and J. Shaptchik. A special fund is being created to insure systematic publishing activities of the establishment. Mr. H. Greenstein gave proof of his personal interest in the venture by pledging a sum equal to the combined contributions collected from other sources.

The Publishing Committee already started its work; the first Jewish book is already being prepared for publication.

According to a second letter received from the BUND group in Mexico, it appears that the fund raised for the S. Mendelsohn Publishing House has already reached about 20,000 pesos (\$5,000). This is additional proof of the respect and love the deceased leader enjoyed in Mexico.

Conference of the BUND in Austria

A conference of all Bundist groups in existence within the former German concentration camps of the British and American zones of Austria took place in Salzburg on March 20, 1948. In addition to the numerous delegates from the various BUND groups, the conference was attended by guests—BUND members from the camps in Germany.

The chairman of the Bundist groups in Germany and a representative of the American Jewish Labor Committee, Gerowicz, also attended the Conference.

Comrade Grodzanowski was chairman of the Conference. The order of business included a financial report, a discussion on the international situation, the Palestine problem, the World Congress for Jewish Culture, a report on emigration opportunities, et al.

The report by Comrade Rosenfeld, Secretary, covered a period of four months. During that time a special "winter relief" campaign, designed to help needy comrades, was conducted among the Bundist groups in Austria, as well as a special campaign for the Bundist organ in Paris, UNSER SHTIME. Two S. Mendelsohn memorial meetings as well as several membership meetings and political talks also took place. The Bundist groups in Austria also initiated a special fur-workers training program to enhance emigration possibilities among the refugees.

The question of opportunities for emigration aroused much interest. The Conference resolved to undertake all possible means in order to put an end to the demoralizing way of life in the camps. The assembled

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delegates voiced protests against Jewish labor organizations in the United States which, they claimed, are forgetting the existence of Jewish refugees in Austria. Refugees in Germany were claimed to enjoy incomparably more aid than those in Austria.

At the closing of the Conference, the delegates adopted a resolution of appreciation for the Jewish Labor Committee and its representative, N. Gerowicz.

Fifth Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

New York: On April 20, 1948, the BUND Organization of New York and the Jewish Socialist Verband called a joint memorial meeting to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the heroic uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. The meeting was held in the Debs Auditorium of the New York Rand School, and it was well attended.

Dr. Emanuel Scherer opened the meeting. On the stage were seated four participants in the ghetto fighting: Bernard Goldsztejn, Vladka, Celemenski, and Goldberg. N. Chanin, Leo Finkelstein, and B. Celemenski were the speakers. Z. Segalowicz read fragments of his poem "Treblinka" and of other works, which greatly impressed the audience. Miss Shkolnik, a talented singer, entertained the gathering with a special selection of songs.

The evening was closed with the singing of the BUND anthem.

Sao Paulo, Brazil: At the general memorial meeting called by representatives of the Jewish community in Sao Paulo for April 19, 1948, a BUND representative, Meyer Treyber, addressed the audience. The speaker analyzed the importance and significance of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and explained the BUND's view of the Palestine question.

Detroit, Michigan: A memorial meeting with an interesting program took place in Detroit on April 16, 1948. In addition to speeches, the Workmen's Circle Choir presented a well-selected program of songs, and children attending the Workmen's Circle schools re-

cited suitable poems. Besides the adult audience, the meeting was attended by about 600 children.

DP Camps in Austria: Memorial meetings to commemorate the ghetto uprising were held in almost all DP camps in Austria. These meetings were called by various political groups. The BUND groups organized meetings in almost all camps in the British and American zones of Austria.

One such meeting took place in Steyr, Austria, on April 24, 1948. The auditorium of the Social Democratic Party was suitably decorated. The addresses included a general evaluation of the uprising; a chronological review of the fighting; and a personal account by one of the ghetto fighters, Lumowski. An artistic program of songs was also presented.

A meeting of all Bundists in the Salzburg District camps was called in Hallein, also on April 24, 1948. The part of the BUND in the uprising, the significance of the ghetto deed, and the events leading to the armed action were described in several speeches. An artistic part closed the impressive gathering.

May Day, 1948

New York: The BUND representatives to the Conference for a United May Day were Dr. E. Scherer and P. Szwarc. The Conference included representatives of the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Federation, the Jewish Socialist Verband, the BUND, and several trade unions. The BUND representatives at the Conference maintained that a separate May Day parade should be organized; the majority of the representatives, however, held that such a step was still unfeasible this year. It was voted to limit the joint demonstration to a mass meeting in the Manhattan Center auditorium. The BUND representatives then communicated to the Conference the decision of their organization to hold a brief meeting of their own preceding the joint mass meeting in Manhattan Center, and to march from this meeting to Manhattan Center in formation, under the BUND banner.

After the brief meeting, presided upon by Dr. Scherer and addressed by A. Erlich, the BUND mem-

bership indeed marched to the mass meeting in formation, along several streets of New York. The entrance of the BUND group into the Manhattan Center auditorium was warmly applauded by the audience and the prominent guests assembled on the stage.

Later the joint meeting was addressed in behalf of the BUND by P. Szwarc. The BUND decision to march on May Day in the streets was warmly commended by Norman Thomas, in his inspired address at the close of the impressive meeting.

France: The mass meeting called by the BUND organization in France was indeed a symbol of international Socialist brotherhood. On the stage were present, beside the BUND representatives, noted leaders of the Socialist movements of France, Austria, and Spain. According to the reporter of Unser Shtime, "the international character of the chairman's table created a special mood in the audience — a feeling that the Jewish working class was not isolated in its struggle for liberitarian, democratic socialism, that its allies were, like itself, ready for sacrifices in the work to free mankind."

After listening to speeches by representatives of the BUND and the TSUKUNFT (the youth organization of the BUND), the audience was addressed by the veteran French Socialist leader, A. Bracke, who, among others, declared that "the slogan of a united and Socialist Europe has now become a matter of practical consideration." Julius Deutsch, renowned commander of the Austrian Schutzbund and participant of the fighting in Spain, was strongly applauded as he rose to address the gathering on behalf of the Austrian Socialists. Then the meeting was addressed by Mariano Roja, representing the Socialists of Spain. In a masterful speech, Roja compared the fate of the enslaved Spanish people with that of the persecuted Jewish masses.

The artistic part of the gathering included a violin recital, recitation of poems by Jewish writers, and a program of suitable songs.

Italy: An impressive May Day meeting took place in Rome, in the premises of the Bundist cooperative in that city. The guests at the gathering included several prominent Italian Socialists, well-known editors of Italian Socialist publications, and the chairman of the Association of Jewish Communities in Italy, Dr. Raphael Cantania. The program of the meeting included addresses by BUND leaders, Dr. Raphael Cantania, and Pieleani, who assured the audience that the Italian Socialists would not spare their efforts to do away with the existence of the DP camps. Labor songs in Yiddish and Italian were also sung at the meeting.

May Day meetings also took place in all camps where BUND groups are in existence. A particularly impressive gathering was organized in the camp "Torino Crugliasea."

Montevideo, Uruguay: The gathering planned for May Day in Montevideo appeared, at first, to be jeopardized by the general strike in the city; there were no means of transportation available. It turned out, however, that the friends of the BUND in Montevideo did all turn up at the designated place with their families, even though some of them had to walk from distant sections of the city. The meeting was quite impressive. In addition to local speakers, two BUND members from Argentina also addressed the gathering. A youth group, organized due to the efforts of Z. Papiernik, who had recently arrived from Paris, presented a program of songs. After the formal part of the meeting a banquet took place, at which children recited poems in Yiddish. The BUND anthem closed the interesting gathering.

Germany: A special May Day publication, VEKER, was prepared in Germany by the BUND groups in the former German concentration camps. The paper includes the text of the May Day message adopted by the Executive Committee of the BUND groups in Germany, a great many interesting articles, and a section devoted to the memory of S. Mendelsohn.

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