

*The Jewish  
Labor*

**Bund**



**Bulletin**

Published by the

**World-Coordinating Committee of  
Bundist and Affiliated  
Jewish Socialist Organizations.**

175 East Broadway New York 2, N. Y.  
ORchard 4-1587

Vol. III, No. 3-4 (24-25)



March-April, 1950

## Seventh Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising THE WALL by John Hersey

Almost exactly on the seventh anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, a remarkable book was published, whose theme is the heroic struggle of the Warsaw Jews in the face of physical annihilation. The book, *The Wall* by John Hersey, has already won applause and distinction. Rather than re-appraise the deed of the ghetto fighters, a few remarks on the margin of this great novel might be in order.

John P. Marquand in his review of *The Wall* said: *It is a novel that records the tragedy of the extinction of the Warsaw ghetto by the Germans.* Actually it is more, for the tragedy of the Warsaw ghetto, as described in the novel, is but a reflection of the much greater tragedy of the wholesale extermination of six million Polish Jews by the Nazis. However, the novel is also less than a record of the extinction of the Warsaw Jews, for the real drama behind the ghetto walls surpasses the framework of *The Wall*.

Up until now we have had a number of books containing authentic eye-witness reports, historical documents, and data about the extermination of the Jews in Poland by Nazi Germany as well as about the heroic uprising of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. But *The Wall* is the first great work of fiction based on this unparalleled crime. To attempt such an artistic performance and to succeed even to a limited extent is no doubt an achievement.

We do not believe that John Hersey deliberately distorted and belittled the role of the Jewish Socialist movement in the historical events that led to the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. It appears that the author

### Contents

1. Seventh Anniversary of the Warsaw-Ghetto Uprising.
2. The Defamers in Reply.
3. Franz Kursky.
4. Leon Blum — in Memoriam.
5. Harold Laski.
6. From Our Movement.

of the *The Wall* was simply not sufficiently acquainted with the tremendous impact that half a century of activities of the Jewish Socialist movement has had on the lives of the Polish Jews. He failed to perceive that it was the BUND's spirit of a relentless struggle for human and national rights, for equality and justice, which paved the way for the uprising in the ghetto, and which made warriors and crusaders for liberty and freedom out of the once-humble Jews. John Hersey failed to see the underlying forces that led to the establishment of the Jewish underground movement, as well as to the heroic uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. As Mr. Alfred Kazin in *The New Yorker* of March 4, 1950, remarked in his review, John Hersey is so unjust to his Socialist, Henryk Rapoport, a leader of the remarkable Jewish Worker's Bund, that he entirely misrepresents one of the greatest contributions the Polish Jew had made to the democracy of Europe".

The most important achievement of *The Wall* is, in our opinion, that it finally brought to hundreds of thousands of readers in the English-speaking world the full impact of the Nazi brutality in Poland. For the first time since the crime of the annihilation of six million Jews was committed by the Nazis, the

knowledge of it is penetrating the wall of indifference and incomprehension by relating at least part of the story about the annihilation of the Jews in Poland during the bleak years of the Second World War.

Thus, despite its shortcomings, John Hersey's novel performs a useful task.

## THE DEFAMERS IN REPLY

Two articles in the January-February issue of our BULLETIN on "The Status of Jerusalem" and "Refugees from Israel" were the cause of a hysterical attack on us by the entire Jewish press with but small exceptions. In an editorial in the "Forward" of February 15, 1950, the article on "The Status of Jerusalem" was misrepresented and our publication was described as a scandalous sheet giving information to the enemies of Israel. All this wrath was caused by our daring to criticize the Government of Israel not so much for its view point but for its coup d'état, consisting in its demonstrative *act* against a decision of the U. N. To the report about conditions in the camps for the new arrivals in the State of Israel the editorial writer of the "Forward" replied: "Scores of newspaper correspondents are now in the State of Israel, some as visitors, others as permanent reporters. They report not only to the Jewish but to the English press in the United States as well. The camps for the new arrivals are open to all correspondents, conditions within the camp are frequently described. *However, in none of these reports are such horrible stories to be found.* Not even the slightest insinuation of what is reported in the BULLETIN of the BUND can be discerned in these descriptions."

An obscure columnist of the "Morning Journal" wrote on the same day: "The manner in which the Bulletin of the BUND describes the camps in the State of Israel and the stories of the BUND about the barbed-wire surrounding the camps and about the corruption within them—are well-known examples of scare-propaganda".

In short, the "Forward" as well as the "Morning Journal" accused the BUND BULLETIN of lying about the conditions in the camps in the State of Israel.

Yet it happened that only two weeks later, on February 28, 1950, there appeared in the same "Morning Journal" a report written by Mr. M. J. Nirenberger about the conditions in the same camps. Here is a quotation from this report: "At present 85 thousand Jews live in the camps for the new arrivals. I visited those camps. I must admit that I was ashamed while observing the Jews in those shelters; I thought I was

in Germany, in the year 1945, after the liberation. *Wherever I went I could not help but see the wire or the fences surrounding the camps, the policemen guarding them, and the appalling, demoralizing attitude of the camp executives.* In Israel, where we had just arrived, again in a camp? That question was asked especially by former Jewish DP's from the camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy".

Our readers will compare what we have written about the conditions in the camps of Israel, i. e. the article which aroused the anger of the "Forward" and the "Morning Journal," with the report of Mr. Nirenberger and draw their own conclusions.

As to our actual attitude toward the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem, which was distorted and misrepresented by the editorial writer of the "Forward," we issued a statement, reprinted in the "Forward" of February 22, from which we quote: *In the "Forward" editorial, we read that "on the matter of the internationalization of Jerusalem, the BUND BULLETIN aligns itself fully with the viewpoint of the Arabs, of Vatican City, and of the Soviet Union. It is the view of the BULLETIN that Jerusalem ought to be taken from the Jews and be internationalized."*

*There is not the slightest indication in the BUND BULLETIN that the BUND subscribes to a similar view. To the contrary, we wrote in the BULLETIN that "we do not want to dwell upon the question whether the internationalization of Jerusalem is the best possible solution."*

*A month ago the main organ of the BUND, UN-SER TSAIT, published an article clarifying the BUND standpoint on the question at hand. This article contained, among others, the following:*

*"The United Nations adopted a resolution concerning the internationalization of Jerusalem. The solution is a wrong one—it is wrong for several reasons; but in the first place because of the perfidy of the three forces which caused the solution to be adopted. Moscow, Vatican City, and the majority of the Arab States—this strange trinity suddenly became the carrier of—"internationalization," from behind*

which are clearly visible the naked, lay or religiously imperialist, or simply reactionary interests of each party to it.

*"As we said, the decision is a wrong one. But even if it were a just one, a critical or negative attitude toward it on the part of those who have a different opinion on the subject is certainly possible. And we, who up to the present day hold that the very basis of the entire United Nations attitude on the Palestine question—the resolution on partition—was wrong, we are certainly the last to deny the rights of anybody to criticize or oppose the decisions of the United Nations."*

The quoted paragraphs make it clear that the BUND as well is opposed to the U. N. decision on the internationalization of Jerusalem. The BUND

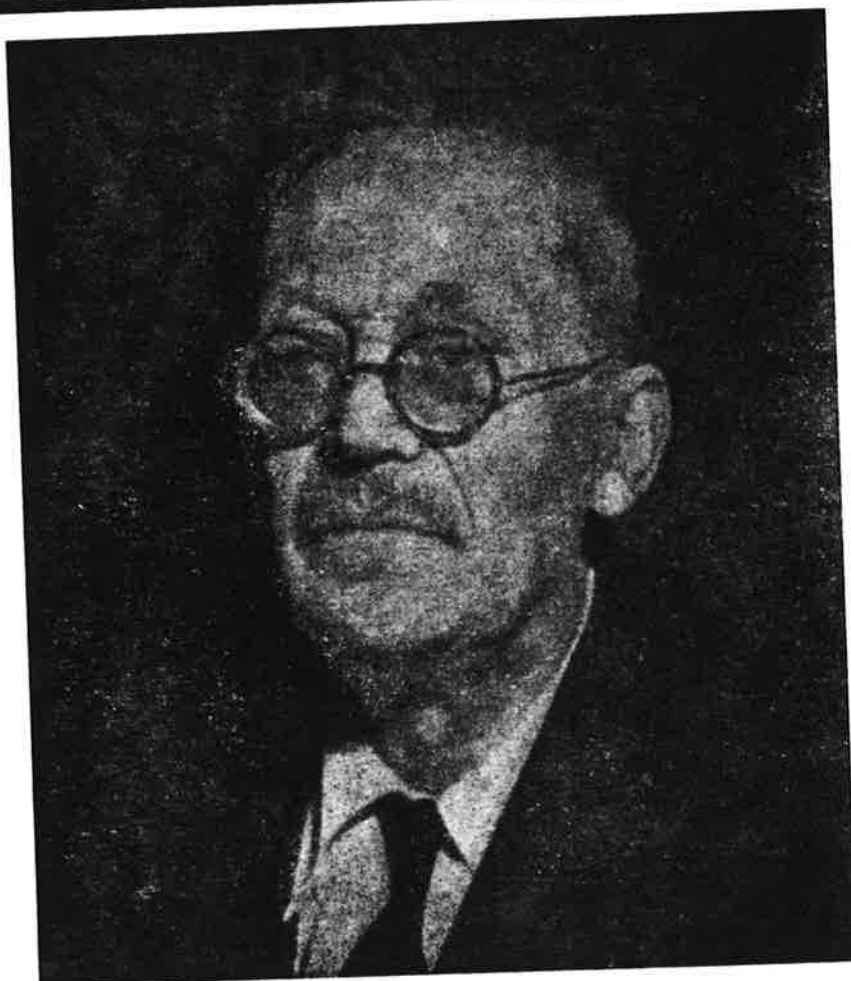
has its own view on the matter. The Israeli Government wishes to promote its own solution of the problem, and it is certainly in the right in doing so. We do, however, deny the moral right of the Government of Israel—as well as of any other government in the world—to commit acts which lead to unilateral *faits accomplis*, and to "tread upon the order of international justice." The BULLETIN article reacted only against this act of the Israeli Government, and only in this sense we wrote:

*"We are, however, deeply convinced that in the long run there is only one way to avoid new wars and bloody catastrophies and to preserve a lasting peace, and that is that all nations, big or small, abide by the decisions of the United Nations, whether they agree with them or not."*

## FRANZ KURSKY

On January 17, 1950, there died in New York one of the outstanding representatives of the genera-

tion who, more than half a century ago, were instrumental in the founding and the development of the



Franz Kursky

Jewish Socialist movement which became famous under the name of the BUND.

Kursky was born on September, 1876 in Boysk, a small town in former Czarist Russia located on the border of two provinces, Kurland and Lithuania; he died at the age of 74. As a young man of twenty he joined the revolutionary Socialist movement in Russia and until the last day of his life he remained faithful to the banners of his youth.

The BUND in Czarist Russia was an underground revolutionary organization persecuted by the police of the Czar. Franz Kursky was one of the BUND's most important underground warriors. He learned to perfection the art of conspiracy and soon he went abroad in order to organize the smuggling of revolutionary literature and arms for self-defense into the towns and cities of the former Russian Empire. For many years Franz Kursky supervised this illegal transport and supplied with both weapons and printed matter not only the BUND but the Polish and Russian Socialist movements as well.

Franz Kursky was the mainspring of the External Committee of the BUND, located in Switzerland. This specialized body was of tremendous importance to the underground BUND movement in Czarist Russia and grew steadily in significance. Franz Kursky was also for many years the BUND representative in

the Socialist International. For scores of years he maintained the close contact with the leading circles of the Socialist movement in Europe. In a way he was the most important liaison man between the Socialist movement in Czarist Russia and the European democracies. He did his utmost to inform the democratic West and the Socialist movement of Europe about the crimes committed by the Russian Czar, the pogroms, and the heroic resistance organized by the BUND. The great passion of his life was the maintenance of the archives of the revolutionary movement in Russia, particularly the BUND archive, of which he was the main architect, and scrupulous custodian. He was the living memory not only of the BUND, but of the entire Russian Socialist movement.

Kursky escaped from Nazi-occupied Paris and in 1940 came to New York. Before he left France he did everything in his power to secure the BUND archives against the Nazi barbarians. Since his arrival in the United States he was a member of the American Representation of the Underground BUND Movement of Nazi-occupied Poland. In addition to his political activities, Kursky was active as a Jewish scholar, historian, and gifted man of letters. His death was a grievous shock to all who knew him. The BUND organizations throughout the world lost a devoted comrade and a cherished leader.

## LEON BLUM - IN MEMORIAM

Leon Blum, the leader of the Socialist movement in France and one of the outstanding personalities of international Socialism, died on March 30 in Paris. The World Coordinating Committee of the Jewish Labor BUND sent the following cable to the Center Committee of the Socialist Party of France:

"Together with the entire Socialist world we are grief-stricken and mourn the death of Leon Blum, one of the most prominent leaders of Democratic Socialism and devoted friend of the Jewish Labor movement. The unparalleled integrity of Leon Blum and his life-long Socialist experience will be missed not only in France but by Jewish Socialists all over the world."

To the chairman of the Leon Blum Memorial, which took place on April 6 in Manhattan Center, New York, we sent the following message of grief on behalf of the World Coordinating Committee of the BUND and of the Jewish Labor BUND Organization of New York:

"Grief-stricken because of the sudden death of Leon Blum, one of the most prominent figures among the noblest fighters of democracy and Socialism, the Jewish Labor BUND mourns his loss. The life-long Socialist experience of Leon Blum, his moral integrity, his outstanding intellectual qualities will be missed everywhere. The great passion of his life was liberty and freedom. When he discovered that poverty, insecurity, and inequality, inevitable in a capitalist society, are a real menace to a true democracy, that a planned economy to provide security and equality, full employment, and educational advancement for the entire population is necessary to maintain and extend liberty and freedom, he became a Socialist and remained faithful to this cause until his dying day. Intrepid warrior for democracy and freedom, for peace and Socialism, Leon Blum abhorred passionately totalitarian regimes of all trends and colors. His life was an unceasing crusade against all the enemies and despoilers of democracy. During his relentless struggle for Libertarian Socialism, Leon

Blum won the esteem of millions of workers the world over, and among them the admiration of the Jewish Socialists in various countries organized under the banner of the BUND. With the death of Leon Blum the BUND lost a real friend among the prominent leaders of International Socialism. Leon Blum met personally our two martyrs murdered by the Soviet regime, Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, at the sessions of the Executive Committee of the Socialist International during the years before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was there that he learned to esteem them for their devotion to the cause of democracy and Socialism.

The death of Leon Blum is especially deplorable at present when the bosses of the Kremlin are threatening liberty and peace all over the world. In our days, when Communism in France, Italy, and some other countries speeds up its destructive work, we would need Leon Blum more than ever before. More than ever before the Socialist movement of his land as well as international Socialism would need his wisdom, his foresight, his fortitude, and his devotion to the cause of democracy and Socialism. Together with the Socialist and freedom-loving people all over the world we pay tribute to and cherish the memory of Leon Blum".

## HAROLD LASKI DEAD (1894-1950)

Harold Laski, the colorful outstanding personality and leader of the Socialist movement in England, a scholar, writer, and lecturer whose fame was great not only in Britain, but all over Europe and the United States as well, died suddenly on March 24, 1950.

The annual gathering of the BUND members and friends of *Unser Tsait*, the BUND monthly, which took place in the evening of March 24, was informed about the sudden death of the former chairman of the British Labor Party. The representative of the British Labor Party, Major John Neer, who spoke at the gathering on the election victory of British Labor, characterized the personality of Harold Laski in touching expressions of reverence. The audience paid tribute to the memory of a leader of British as well as international Socialism by rising from their seats and remaining standing in silence for two minutes.

The BUND World Coordinating Committee monthly *Unser Tsait* paid tribute to the memory of Harold Laski by reprinting verbatim the excellent and touching article about the deceased written by Leon Blum a few days before he, too, closed his eyes forever.

The BUND Organization of New York summoned a special meeting of its members to commemorate the death of Harold Laski and Leon Blum.

The following are excerpts from a column dedicated to the memory of Harold Laski in the BUND daily, *Unser Shtime*, published in Paris:

"Harold Laski's death is a great loss to the British Labor Movement. He was not only an outstanding personality. Harold Laski was one of the few who were instrumental in infusing the British Labor Movement with its Socialist spirit.

"The evolution of the British Labor Movement, its steady advancement toward Socialist goals, took place under entirely different conditions than that of the labor movement on the continent of Europe. British Labor advanced along a path of its own, different from that of the Labor parties of the leading European nations.

"The British Labor Movement was not born under Socialist banners as the parties in most European countries. In Britain the movement began as a trade-union organization with the limited task of improving the working conditions of its members. For many years it did not participate in the political battles of the country as an independent force. It did not attempt to have its own representatives elected to Parliament. Similarly to the present custom in the United States, the policy of the British Labor Movement during national elections was restricted to supporting a candidate of one of the two large political parties—the Tories or the Liberals.

"The British Labor Party, created half a century ago and based mainly on the collective membership of the existing trade unions, did not consider itself a Socialist party for many years after its appearance on the political scene of Great Britain. The British Labor Party strived toward improvements of the existing capitalist way of life rather than toward a radical change of prevailing conditions.

It was Harold Laski who played the most important part in the evolution of the rank and file of the British Labor Party toward adopting a Socialist attitude and the setting of Socialist goals.

"Harold Laski preached relentlessly the ideals of Socialism by publishing scores of volumes of pamphlets, by writing hundreds of articles and columns in the British dailies and weeklies, and as a speaker at public gatherings throughout the country. He could

rightly consider his work a success: The seeds planted bore fruit.

"The Soviet Union and the Communist attempt to abolish capitalism occupied to a large extent his attention and his thoughts. He hoped against realities that the Russian revolution would rid itself of its dictatorial and totalitarian aspects and reestablish democracy in Russia. He could not help but become disillusioned."

\*\*

Harold Laski's first memories of the Jewish Labor BUND date to his early youth. According to his own words, the stories about the heroic struggles of the BUND in Russia as told by his father left a lasting imprint on the young Laski's imagination. Long afterwards, Laski related, the atmosphere created by these stories in his parents' house stood vividly in his memory.

## FROM OUR MOVEMENT

### NEW YORK

The educational department of the New York BUND Organization held a memorial meeting, on Saturday, April 8, 1950, dedicated to the memory of I. L. Peretz, one of the outstanding Jewish men of letters, who died in Warsaw thirty-five years ago. Ch. Sz. Kazdan, S. Nizer and L. Finkelstein gave the audience a vivid picture of this famous Jewish writer and his creative personality. A. Reisin, the dean of the Jewish poets and a contemporary of I. L. Peretz, called the attention of the assembled to the personal charm of I. L. Peretz that captivated everyone in his environment. The memorial was held in the New School for Social Research auditorium and was attended by 500 people.

The annual gathering of friends and supporters of *Unser Tsait*, the monthly issued by the BUND World Coordinating Committee, took place in the

Capitol Hotel, New York, on March 24, 1950. The speakers were, Dr. Emanuel Scherer, J. Charlash, and B. Tabachinsky. Major Jon Naar, a representative of the British Labor Party, spoke on the significance of the Labor victory in the recent elections in Great Britain. More than 300 representatives of various Jewish organizations and groups attended this yearly gathering. The assembled donated \$10,000 in pledges and cash to the BUND World Coordinating Committee and its monthly *Unser Tsait*.

### PARIS

Representatives of the various organizations comprising the BUND movement in France met in Paris on February 7, 1950, to discuss the proposed monument commemorating the BUND members who had perished during the years of the Nazi occupation.

On February 12 a public memorial meeting, organized on the second anniversary of the death of

S. Mendelsohn, took place in Paris. The gathering was initiated by the Committee of the S. Mendelsohn Children's Homes and Kindergartens.

The first conference of the French Council of the World Congress for Yiddish Culture met in Paris on February 5. The seriousness of the deliberations and the excellent attendance at the conference presage an increased pace of Yiddish cultural activities in France.

The Paris Jewish Socialist Children's Organization (SKIF) will take part in the International Red Falcons' Meet in Austria, in the summer of 1950. On behalf of the SKIF, 30 Jewish children from France will attend the Meet, organized to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Austrian Red Falcons.

## TORONTO

The BUND Group in Toronto held a general meeting in January, 1950, to discuss the report on the Coordinating Committee Executive Session. All resolutions of the Session were endorsed unanimously; three members abstained from voting on the resolution describing "The Aims of Our Local Work." (The BULLETIN readers will find a report on the Executive Session as well as the full text of the resolutions in the January-February issue of the BULLETIN.)

In connection with the anti-BUND propaganda carried on by the Jewish press as a result of the BULLETIN article "On the Status of Jerusalem," a general meeting of the Toronto BUND Organization held on February 25, adopted with one abstaining and no opposing votes a statement which reads in part:

"Defending the right of free criticism in general, and particularly when the criticism is voiced by a Jewish group of such stature as the BUND—a party

which, with historic acts, had demonstrated its heroic devotion to the interests of the Jewish popular masses in all realms of their social and national life and struggle—we voice our strongest protest against the renewed attempts, on the part of the Yiddish press in the United States ("Morning Journal" and Forward") to introduce into Jewish public life *totalitarian* methods by presenting and adjudging every critical thought, particularly referring to the State of Israel, as an expression of a propaganda campaign or a deed of treason."

## MONTREAL

The BUND Group in Montreal has recently become more active than ever. The visit to Montreal of H. Himelfarb helped to increase the influence and prestige of the organization. A special committee was recently elected whose duty it will be to promote the sale and subscription campaign of UNSER TSAIT, the BUND monthly. Preparation for the May Day activities are also in full swing.

## BUENOS AIRES

The general meeting of the BUND group in Buenos Aires, held in March, resolved to begin immediately the campaign of financial support for the World Coordinating Committee.

The Leon Blum memorial meeting organized by the group was attended by a large number of people.

The YID-BUCH Publishing House, whose anticipated publications include a large number of books in the fields of Yiddish literature and history, released the first volume, three stories by Y. L. Peretz. A book on "The Methodology of the Yiddish Language" by Ch. Sz. Kazdan is being prepared for publication.

## MONTEVIDEO

The BUND Group in Montevideo recently sponsored a number of public gatherings. These included a S. Mendelsohn memorial meeting as well as a meeting commemorating the recently deceased Franz Kursky.

## MEXICO CITY

The new Yiddish School, organized and supported with the active help of the BUND Group in Mexico, promises to be a great success. All attempts by Zionist groups to interfere with its establishment—attempts which included an appeal to the Mexican Ministry of Education to deport the teachers for their supposed “enmity toward the State of Mexico”—were futile. 101 children were admitted to the new school to date.

## CHICAGO

The Chicago “Friends of the BUND” invited H. Himelfarb for a sojourn in Chicago which lasted from February 9 to 17. During that period of time the guest appeared on the speaker’s stand of numerous public gatherings.

The “Friends of the BUND” raised \$500 for UNSER TSAIT.

## PHILADELPHIA

The formal founding of the “Friends of the BUND” Association in Philadelphia took place on March 12, 1950, at a banquet attended by 80 people. The Executive Committee of the Association includes Dr. Bail.

## BRUSSELS

B. Ciechanowski was recently elected Chairman of the BUND Organization. The BUND Hous in Brussels is the focal point of the activities of the organization. Both party meetings and public gather-

ings take place there, and recently theater facilities were installed in the building.

The Organization sponsors lectures on political as well as cultural topics. The Women’s Division (YAF), Youth Organization (TSUKUNFT) and Children’s Group (SKIF) are also very active.

## SWEDEN

The National Committee of BUND Groups in Sweden recently adopted an ambitious plan of activities. Appropriate directives were sent to all BUND Organizations throughout the country. Those include a detailed outline of proposed political and cultural meetings, directions regarding collaboration with local Social Democratic groups, etc.

## ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

In commemoration of the Ghetto Uprising in April, 1943, the following memorial meetings are scheduled by BUND Organizations in America:

1. New York—Principal speaker: H. Himelfarb.
2. Boston—April 16—Bernard Goldstein.
3. Toronto—April 23—N. Gerowitz.
4. Montreal—April 16—Wladka Miendzyrzecki.
5. Albany—April 16—J. Celemensky.

## EUROPEAN LECTURE TOUR OF B. SHEFNER

B. Shefner, a member of the Executive Committee of the Bund World Coordinating Committee, left for Europe to deliver lectures on Yiddish literature and Yiddish life in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Stockholm, and London. The speaker will also visit the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany.

## BUND AND THE COMISCO

The COMISCO Bureau acquainted all its participating organizations, in a circular dated February 21, with the full text of the resolution on the “BUND in the Socialist International,” adopted by the BUND World Coordinating Committee Executive Session in Brussels, in October, 1949.