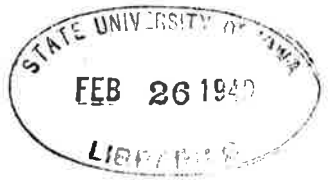


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The Jewish Labor Bund

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Bulletin

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Elections in the State of Israel

The first popular elections in the State of Israel are over. The Zionist-Socialist Party, led by Prime Minister Ben Gurion, Mapai, received 36% of all valid votes. The left-wing Zionist-Socialist Party, Mapam, received 16% of the votes. The Communists polled only 4%, while the disguised fascist party, led by the notorious Mr. Begin, received 12% of the votes. A religious block which embraced various Orthodox groups could boast only 1% more than the Beginists—13%. The rest of the votes were divided among various Zionist and local groups.

The most important point of the accomplished elections in the newly created State of Israel is no doubt the clear majority polled by both Labor Parties, which gave them a decisive role in governing the State of Israel and moulding the lives of its inhabitants. The question remains, however, whether both Socialist parties that won the elections are what they claim to be.

To pay lip-service to Socialism or to call oneself a Socialist is not enough. Under the circumstances now prevailing in the State of Israel, there are three criteria according to which the Socialist majority in Israel can be judged:

1) A Socialist government is expected to take steps toward abolishing the system of private enterprise and to introduce instead an order of planned economy and economic equality. Full respect of human rights and human dignity, democracy, and freedom must, of course, be maintained. The already existing collective farms and some other elements of public ownership, as

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for instance the cooperatives, could only facilitate efforts in this direction by a Socialist government.

2) A truly Socialist government should stop playing power politics in its foreign relations, should be inspired with the spirit of international brotherhood toward all its neighbors and eschew any and all nationalist attitudes. Power politics may conceivably help to reach a precarious armistice with the rulers of the Arab nations; international brotherhood is the only way to disarm the hearts of the many millions of Arabs and thus to establish real peace and cooperation.

3) Socialism cannot remain neutral in the decisive struggle of our time between democracy and totalitarianism, between East and West. Nationalistic considerations, always shortsighted from a historic point of view, quite frequently lead to such a state of neu-

trality in a struggle where the very existence of democracy is at stake. In the past we never hesitated to condemn such neutral attitudes by Socialists, regardless of their nationality. There is no reason to make an exception for Zionist-Socialists of the State of Israel.

The events preceding the establishment of the State of Israel and those immediately following made us

Liquidation of the "Bund" in Poland

The Communist minority now ruling Poland with the blessing of Moscow has finally succeeded in putting an end to the existence of an independent BUND movement in that country. After the unity parade held in Warsaw on December 15, 1948, when the last remaining shreds of an independent Socialist movement were eradicated, the fate of the BUND was all but sealed. A month later, on January 16, 1949, a liquidation congress of the Polish BUND took place. The participants dissolved the independent BUND movement and called upon its former members to join the "Unity Party"—actually the Communist Party in Poland.

Following is the statement regarding this tragic event, adopted by the BUND World Coordinating Committee.

The Liquidation of the BUND in Poland

The liquidation of the Polish Socialist movement, which also caused the Polish BUND to be dissolved, was brought about against the true wishes of the Polish working class after the Communist rulers broke its resistance by shameful methods of physical violence, terror, and corruption.

Now the ignoble period, marked by various "adaptation" measures and continuous ideological concessions on the part of the Socialist movement of Poland by means of which that movement had hoped to wrangle from the Communist rulers a chance to exist, came to a close. Simultaneously was stifled the attempt of the comparatively few Jewish workingmen who remained alive to continue, after World War II, upon the ruins of the once throbbing Jewish community in Poland the struggle of the Jewish Labor BUND under its own banner—the banner which had once inspired

critical as to the full value of the Socialist factions in Israel. These events would appear to make one suspicious that under a veneer of Socialist phrases the ugly head of a nationalistic chauvinism continues to grow. Whether the Zionist-Socialist majority of Israel can be expected to discard this nationalist attitude, the near future will surely show.

the Jewish working masses to the fight against tsarism, against Polish reaction, and, in the years of the recent war, against the Nazi cannibals.

To the long chain of Communist crimes a new link has now been added—the forced liquidation of the Polish BUND. The BUND in Poland—flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood—became a victim of the Communist crusade against the last vestiges of an independent Socialist movement.

With regard to this political and moral act of murder committed by the forces controlling the life of contemporary Poland—the very same forces which seven years previously, in December 1941, murdered in the Soviet Union the leaders of the Polish BUND, Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter—the BUND World Coordinating Committee feels obliged to state:

The liquidation of the BUND in Poland finally puts an end to all hopes of a significant Jewish community again developing there. The eradication of free civic organizations in Poland makes impossible the very existence of culturally productive Jewish activities.

The guilt for repudiating the basic principles of the Bundist ideology and the shame for denying the glorious history of the old BUND in pre-revolutionary and pre-war Poland does not rest with the BUND membership; for the membership kept faith with its old ideals. The guilt rests with the individuals who brought about the party's dissolution; but the real culprit is the Communist movement, which has developed into an apparatus of oppression catering only to the principles of brute force, of blackmail, and of terror.

The BUND World Coordinating Committee proudly notes that a large majority of BUND and TSUKUNFT (Bundist youth organization) members in today's Poland refused to betray the party's principles and

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the party banner—which had been a rallying point for hundreds of thousands of Jewish workmen for half a century. As does the vast majority of the Polish laboring class, these Bundists carry in their hearts a burning hatred against their Communist oppressors.

The names of the BUND and TSUKUNFT members who were expelled from the BUND by the Communists' helpers for refusing to join the nominally united, but actually Communist-controlled single new party, will remain in the annals of the Jewish labor movement as symbols of unfaltering devotion to the

ideals of true socialism which they displayed in the darkest and most difficult times now experienced by the Socialist movement in Eastern Europe.

The BUND World Coordinating Committee gives vent to its sincere belief that the time will come when the present minority regimes in Poland and in other countries will be removed by the working and popular masses of the respective countries, and that these masses will reestablish a free Socialist movement in order to rebuild their life on the basis of free libertarian Socialism.

BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

JEWIS IN RUMANIA

Rumania now has the largest Jewish community in post-war Europe, not counting the Soviet Union—a group totaling half a million Jews. The Jewish settlement there dates back a great many years and is intimately tied to the country's history and traditions. Some of the Jewish communities in Rumania—as, for example, those in Cernauti and Iasi—are prominent in the annals of Jewish history. Most of Rumania's Jews speak Yiddish, are proud of their Jewish origin and of their Yiddish schools, and are deeply aware of their ties with creative Jewish elements all over the world.

The further national and cultural development of Rumania's Jews, however, appears to have become exceedingly difficult with the recent adoption of a resolution on national minorities by the highest authorities of the Rumanian Communist Party. A few excerpts from the document pertaining to Jewish problems follow:

"Bourgeois nationalists have tried to create a JEWISH UNITY. According to their gospel, there are no divisions among Jews. This view is nothing but a diversion and a ruse to win over the Jewish working population to serve the vested interests of the Jewish bourgeois, who is a servant of British-American imperialism."

Everybody in Rumania knows only too well what it means to be ear-marked as an agent of British-American imperialism. It is easy to imagine the consequences for the majority of the Rumanian Jews, who are known for their anti-Communist sentiments.

In another excerpt of this same statement, the Jews are bestowed with equal citizenship rights; but there is not the remotest inkling about their rights as a national minority. The statement goes on to say that:

"Cultural institutions and social relief should be subsidized by the government. The rights of the ISRAELITES (this name is used in the statement instead of Jews) of schools in their own language—JEWISH, RUMANIAN, AND HUNGARIAN—is being guaranteed."

To perceive the full impact of this statement granting the Jews the right to educate their children in three languages,—but putting an end to the further existence of Jewish national councils with their centuries-old activities—it should be compared to the directives of another part of the document concerning other national minorities in Rumania. At least on paper, all of these other minorities are granted nationality rights and recognized as separate communities. The statement provides them for example, with

"the right to use their own language in the courts and in all other administrative institutions, the right to a national representation in the Rumanian Parliament, the rights to national appointees in the Government administration of the country."

After the statement about the rights of the national minorities in Rumania (excluding the Jews) was issued, the Politbureau of the Communist Party

initiated a spirited campaign against so-called "Jewish nationalism." Even some Jewish Communists were rebuked and punished for their lenient attitude toward the Jewish population. They were accused of "harboring disguised Bundist inclinations." In accordance with this new general line with respect to the Jews, the Communist regime in Rumania already began to eradicate

all remaining signs of Jewish national life in Bucharest and other towns and cities throughout Rumania.

It is not difficult to prophesy the ultimate fate of the Jewish community in Rumania. It is at the mercy of an unchecked policy of national annihilation promoted by the Communists of Rumania under the guise of uprooting agents of British-American imperialism.

YIDDISH AND HEBREW

The half-a-century-old struggle between Jewish Socialism, as represented by the Jewish Labor BUND, and the various factions of the Zionist movement, embraces almost every ramification of Jewish life. This struggle has even been carried into the sphere of languages by the fight for recognition of Yiddish or Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people. The question of whether Yiddish or Hebrew could better further the cause of Jewish national and cultural advancement has divided the Jewish community into the same two camps—Jewish Socialists, followers of the BUND, along with other non-Zionist, liberal, and progressive elements among the Jews, resist the Zionist attempt to lift the ancient Hebrew language to new importance as the only recognized national tongue of the Jews. The following article endeavors to introduce to our English readers the struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew:

Hebrew was widely used by the inhabitants of Judah only until 587 B.C. By 150 B.C. Aramic had already become established as the daily language of the Jewish population to such an extent that a new custom was introduced at religious services—that of translating the Holy Writings into Aramic for the benefit of the congregation. After the Second Destruction and throughout the nearly 2,000 years of the Diaspora, Hebrew completely ceased to be used in everyday life; it did, however, remain the language used in prayers and in the Judaic religious writings.

The Yiddish language developed about a thousand years ago in the Rhine River basin. In the centuries which followed, Yiddish was carried along by the Jewish masses in the course of their expansion Eastward and, more recently, in their emigration to the Western Hemisphere. By comparison with other tongues used by the Jews in their world-wide wander-

ings, Yiddish was the language used most extensively and by the largest number of Jews ever. Before World War II, about 11½ million Jews used the Yiddish language, i.e., two-thirds of all the Jews in the world. The Russian census of 1897—conducted at a time when upward of three-quarters of all Jews lived in the Russian Empire—showed more than 97% of the Jews claiming Yiddish as their language. The very name "Yiddish" is associated with "Yid" (Jew), the Jewish people.

A significant literature in Yiddish was created in the course of time; it includes works of a religious and didactic type; a purely entertaining literature; and, more recently developed, modern fiction and works of science. During the last century a varied and ramified press in Yiddish sprang up. In addition, the Yiddish theatre came into its own, and, in the past half century, a modern, free educational system in the Yiddish language was established. The Jewish labor movement used the language as its own for the past 70-80 years; it included in its political program demands that Yiddish be recognized as the language of the Jewish people and accorded full public rights in the countries where Jews dwelt. Yiddish thus became the language of the Jewish social, national, and cultural-literary movements of the last hundred years. Through the use of the language the broad Jewish masses were awakened from their lethargic slumbering in religious traditionalism and inspired with a new lust of living, a healthy fighting spirit, national consciousness, and original cultural creativeness.

The last century, however, also saw the establishment of a movement to revive Hebrew as the language of the Jews. The pioneers of the Zionist movement adopted Hebrew as the exclusive language of the new

Jewish settlements in Palestine. This propaganda for Hebrew as well as conscious efforts to establish the language among the new settlers were aggressively and fanatically promoted during the past 70-80 years. The notion was built up that the "Diaspora" was of inferior value and doomed to perdition—and this notion was applied principally with regard to the language of the so-called Diaspora—Yiddish. Yiddish had already been branded as a "jargon",—a despised mixture which was supposedly but a poor attempt to imitate the German language—by famous Jewish scholars of two previous generations. Yiddish was termed the "maids' language", while Hebrew was the language of the Bible, the master, the crown of the Jewish people. Thus the Yiddish language became the distinct symbol of the class division among the Jews: The working men and women, the man-in-the-street used and found an outlet in the Yiddish language; the nearly-assimilated bourgeois elements, contaminated by Zionist propaganda, proclaimed Hebrew as their tongue.

In Palestine the Yiddish language was methodically persecuted for many years. Printing shops which did work in Yiddish were sometimes attacked and boycotted; newsstands which sold Yiddish papers were demolished; Yiddish plays and Yiddish movies were forbidden; no Yiddish dailies were allowed; meeting halls for lectures in Yiddish were difficult to obtain. This anti-Yiddish propaganda systematically poisoned the hearts of Palestinian youth, whose attitude in this respect was aided by the education it received in the exclusively Hebrew Palestinian schools.

Today the Jewish state in Palestine is one of the few countries in the world where the Yiddish language is denied its natural rights. In the projected constitution of the State of Israel Arabic is acknowledged as the second official language of the land; Yiddish is accorded no such right. In the German and Italian camps Jewish D.P.'s established and maintained 25 periodicals in Yiddish; yet, when these same D.P.'s come to Israel, they find no Yiddish daily to read. Very recently an illustrated Yiddish weekly made its appearance in Tel Aviv, purportedly for the Cyprus internees. The publication, however, enjoyed tremendous success among the

Jewish soldiers. Now, after 18 issues, Supreme Headquarters of the Israeli Army issued an order prohibiting the distribution of the publication in the military canteens.

In the United States are published 56 periodicals in Yiddish; there are four dailies in New York alone, whose joint printing reaches a quarter of a million copies. Yet there appears not a single Yiddish daily in the State of Israel.

When, several years ago, the Government of Argentina prohibited the publication of Yiddish newspapers in Buenos Aires, President Roosevelt considered it his duty to issue a statement protesting the move, which was promptly revoked. Yet when a Jewish government acts in a similar way, no significant voices are raised in protest.

Even the reactionary government of pre-war Poland saw no way but to tolerate the ramified network of elementary schools and high schools in Yiddish. Not only do no Yiddish schools exist in Israel, but the Yiddish language is not even a subject of instruction in the elementary and higher-type schools. Only recently, after years of struggling and "consideration", the University of Jerusalem decided to establish a chair of Yiddish. So, far, however, the decision has not been implemented.

About a year ago, a conference on educational matters, called by Jewish Orthodox circles, was held in Cleveland. A resolution adopted at this conference emphasizes the necessity to have Jewish children speak Yiddish "so that they do not become estranged from the great, constructive part of *** Jewish life whose language is Yiddish." The Hebrewistic circles did, conversely, everything in their power to estrange the younger generations from Yiddish, the language of the Jewish people.

Toward the end of 1948, the first issue of "The Golden Chain," a Yiddish quarterly, appeared in Tel Aviv. It is to be hoped that this is the first harbinger of a decisive change in the attitude of responsible Israeli personalities toward the Yiddish language.

Beinish Michalewicz — Twentieth Anniversary

During the month of December 1948, the BUND Organization in New York, as well as the BUND movement in France, Belgium, and other countries, paid tribute to the memory of Beinish Michelewicz, one of the outstanding BUND leaders, who died twenty years ago in Warsaw.

Michalewicz's actual name was Yosef Izbitzky, and he was born in December 1876, in Brest-Litovsk, then in Czarist Russia. His father was a railroad mechanic who worked hard to give his only son an orthodox Jewish education. In his dreams he saw his son as a future rabbi. Instead, his son became a leader of the revolutionary movement in Czarist Russia, a Bundist, persecuted by the Czar, jailed in Russian prisons, deported to Siberia, a famous orator endowed with the rare gift of communicating to his listeners his own unshaken belief in freedom, liberty, and socialism, a gifted man of letters, whose articles and clandestine leaflets inspired the Jewish working population first in Russia, and then in independent Poland.

His was the time when the oppressed people of Czarist Russia began to show the first signs of awakening to a new life, the time of the first Socialist cells established among the workers of Russia's empire. As early as 1894 he became a member of a revolutionary circle in his home town to fight against the serfdom of the czar. In 1897, when the BUND—the General Jewish Workers' Union of Russia, Poland, and Lithuania—was created, he joined it and from that moment on until his last breath he remained faithful to its ideals.

He began as a mere soldier of the revolution, as one of the rank and file of the BUND. However, his devotion to the cause of Jewish Labor and his valuable gifts as a speaker and writer soon gained for him acclamation in the movement, and he was elected to the Central Committee of the BUND.

Beside his participation in the daily press and the theoretical organs of the BUND movement, some of which he edited, he wrote and published books that were very popular among the Jewish Socialist-minded workers and the Jewish intelligentsia. His most important books were, *Memoirs of a Jewish Socialist*,

Socialist Etudes, and a book of biographies of famous international Socialists and fighters for liberty, *Distinguished Personalities*. He also translated into Yiddish from the Russian a text-book of political economy by Bogdanov. This last task he performed during his years in Siberia as a political exile.

The last ten years of his life, spent in Poland, were his most fertile and active period. Inspired by a movement which steadily gained momentum and power, his unusual natural gifts reached their climax. He became the tribune of the Jewish working population, their beloved leader and teacher. He was elected by the Jewish working population in Warsaw as its representative to the Jewish Council of the Polish capital and he became the first president of the Jewish Educational Center in Poland.

He died at the age of 52. Thirty-four years of his life he served as a fighter for the Jewish working population. Ten years of his life were spent in exile.

On October 30, 1938, a vicious cancer disease overcame him. His heart stopped and tens of thousands of Jewish workers and plain people paid tribute to his last remains. His memory will never die.

* * *

In an article published in the daily *Lebensfragen*, in 1919, Warsaw, Beinish Michalewicz wrote about the death of B. Groser:

"It is in the very nature of any real mass movement that it absorbs the individual within itself, it swallows the personality, its stormy wells dissolve his personal qualifications. All of an individual's abilities, his accumulated knowledge, and all his blessed gifts are thirstily assimilated by thousands of hungry mouths of the nameless crowd. They become sacrificed on the shrine of a modern movement, of a movement which demands and requests."

This characterization of another great Socialist by Beinish Michalewicz applies equally well to his own life and his own great personality.

Jewish D.P. Camps in Germany

Since the day when we first received reports about the plight of the Jewish D-P's in the former death-camps of Germany, Austria and Italy, we ceaselessly exposed the calamity of their continuous existence and requested that the victorious democracies help these unhappy victims of Nazi brutality by admitting them to their respective countries, thus affording them a new start in life.

The letters we recently received from our correspondent in the camps appear to indicate that these torture-spots are soon to be liquidated by force. Unfortunately this is not the kind of liquidation we demanded. Incredible as it might seem, our comrades request that we rouse public opinion against the contemplated liquidation.

What has gone wrong?

When we thought and wrote about the liquidation of the D-P Camps, our notion was that the camps should be emptied of their inhabitants by permitting them to emigrate according to their free will and choice. Only thus could the misery of the camp inmates be relieved. However, the camps are forcibly liquidated *before* their inmates received visas or opportunities to leave them for other countries. They are liquidated for but a single purpose—to *compel* the grief-stricken D.P.'s, for want of any other opportunity, to settle down in the State of Israel. This development is simply a new move designed by the Zionists—who govern the life in the D-P camps—to increase the population of Israel. The ruling came in the midst of a severe winter, when it is all but impossible for the average D.P. to find housing and work for himself and his family outside the camps. In addition, along with his place in a camp, a Jewish D.P. loses the relief doled out by the Joint Distribution Committee, the IRO, and similar organizations. Under these circumstances a number of D.P.'s found themselves unable to resist the temptation of having Zionist agents arrange for their trip to Israel, —which is exactly what the Zionists had hoped for. It is all part of a well-designed scheme; the timing of the ruling was also selected to be most effective, from the Zionists' point of view.

The resentment of the Jewish D.P.'s caused by this unscrupulous Zionist action is boundless. Some of them went as far as to petition General Lucius D. Clay, the American Military Governor in Germany, to revoke the order to evacuate them from their old camps. One

of the replies which the D.P.'s received from the Office of Military Government of Germany follows:

OFFICE OF
MILITARY GOVERNMENT FOR GERMANY (U.S.)
Office of the Military Governor
APO 742
Berlin, Germany

2 January 1949.

Camp Committee
DP Camp Herzog
Hess. Lichtenau, Land Hesse

Gentlemen:

I have received your communication of 8 December petitioning the order for the closing out of Camp Herzog be revoked.

As the number of displaced persons remaining in Germany decrease, it is necessary to consolidate the persons remaining into more easily administered areas. This consolidation is carried out by the International Refugee Organization out of consideration for the best interests of all the displaced persons in the U. S. Zone of Germany. I can understand, of course, your wishes to remain in a familiar locality; however, it is necessary in the interest of the over-all welfare of displaced persons to close certain assembly centers.

The Camp Herzog is to be closed as of 31 January as decided by the International Refugee Organization in consultation with the Central Committee of Liberated Jews, Civil Affairs Division, European Command, and representative of Jewish agencies. I am informed that a large percentage of you will have moved to Israel prior to the closing date set for your camp and that there is adequate space in other Jewish centers in the U. S. Zone for those who have not emigrated by this time.

Under these circumstances, I cannot ask the International Refugee Organization to continue to operate Camp Herzog. Naturally there is no objection if you prefer to forego IRO care and maintenance to remain in the vicinity of your present camp; in this eventuality however, I am sure that you are aware that arrangements for housing and food rations are made with local German authorities.

Sincerely,

(Signed): LUCIUS D. CLAY
General U. S. Army
Military Governor

Round-Table Discussion on the New State of Israel

Knitgoods Workers, Local 155, I.L.G.W.U., whose manager is L. Kelson, arranged in January 1949 a round-table discussion on the highly controversial problems pertaining to the State of Israel. More than twenty union officials and members of the local voiced their opinion in the debate, giving a fine example of freedom of speech and independence of thought. It was only natural that the participants were divided into two camps—of enthusiastic supporters of the new State of Israel and of its outright opponents.

Several speakers raised objections against Zionism. The creation of the State of Israel, they maintained, did not solve the Jewish problem and cannot solve it in the future; independent Jewish nationhood in Pales-

tine has already raised nationalistic and chauvinistic feelings among Jews throughout the world; such a state of mind is likely to strain the peaceful relations between Jews and non-Jews; the establishment of the State of Israel has already brought about a forceful displacement of more than 700,000 Arabs.

Other speakers voiced their full support of the State of Israel.

At the present time, when the Zionists, drunk with success, do not shun from totalitarian methods of persecuting their opponents, a debate such as the one launched by the Knitgoods Workers is a welcome example of a serious and constructive effort to clarify the issues of contemporary Jewish life.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE of BUNDIST
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ORGANIZATIONS in VARIOUS COUNTRIES

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