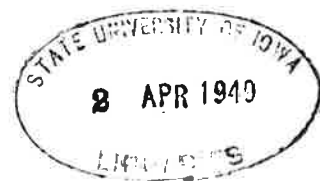


WPP
**The Jewish
Labor**

Bund



Published by the

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

175 East Broadway

New York 2, N. Y.

ORchard 4-1587

Bulletin

Vol. II, No. 15



March, 1949

THE MURDER OF A MOVEMENT

The BUND in Poland no longer exists. A party convention held on January 16, 1949, decided to bow to the will of the Communist regime sponsored by the Kremlin bosses, and dissolved the BUND Movement in Poland. As we have already stated in our resolution on this tragic matter published in a former issue of our *Bulletin*, "the vary forces which seven years ago, in December, 1941, murdered in the Soviet Union the leaders of the Polish BUND, Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, committed this political and moral act of murder of a movement". For the thousands of former members of the Polish BUND scattered all over the world, for all those who received their political education in the ranks of the BUND and who nursed a deep sentiment for this famous movement under the proud banners of which they fought glorious battles for liberty, democracy, Socialism, and the national and cultural advancement of the persecuted Jewish people, the end of the Polish BUND is also a personal tragedy. The liquidation of the Polish BUND makes their hearts contract with shame and pain.

More than half a century of glorious activities of the Jewish labor movement under the banner of the BUND came to an end in Communist Poland. A movement which withstood successfully severe persecution on the part of the Russian czars, a movement which the reactionary government of pre-war Poland

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was unable to extinguish, which, during the bleak years of the Second World-War, the Nazi hangmen could not eliminate, which went underground to wage war against the Nazi subjugators of Poland and gained immortal glory as a leading exponent of armed uprisings in the ghetto of Warsaw and other cities, was liquidated by the evil power of the Communist usurpers who, unable to confront an independent Socialist movement, exterminate it wherever their power of coercion and terror is established.

The reasons why the Communist regime succeeded where the czars of Russia or Nazi Germany failed might be an interesting subject of study; it is not, however, our object to pursue a similar analysis. But

it must be noted, first, that it was the prior liquidation of the Polish Socialist Party which made the Polish BUND's position wholly untenable; and, second, that the liquidation of the Polish BUND by the Communist regime of Poland came at a time when the Jewish community in that country numbered but a small fraction of its former strength. Out of a quarter of a million Jews who survived the wholesale annihilation of Polish Jewry accomplished by the Germans under Hitler's direct orders, only 50 to 60 thousand Jews now remain in Poland. 200,000 remnants of the pre-war Jewish community of 3½ million escaped from Poland driven, on the one hand, by anti-Semitic sentiments lingering in Poland even after the end of the war, and on the other hand by their abhorrence of the Communist regime forced upon their country.

The postwar existence of the Polish BUND under the conditions of a steadily decreasing Jewish population was primarily of symbolic significance. The banner of an independent BUND movement was again raised in post-war Poland mainly as a tribute to the fighting traditions of the BUND and as a

touching confession of faithfulness to the ideology of the BUND on the part of the members of this movement who miraculously escaped death in the crematoria and gas chambers. However, even such a symbol was too much for the Communist rulers, for those who must erase every shred of independence of thought and action from the memories of the people so as to intimidate and bully them. The BUND in Poland fell a victim to the Hammer and Sickle. But the real spirit of the BUND, its intrepid traditions of fighting for democracy, liberty, and Socialism, cannot be killed. They live in the hearts of the Bundists wherever they try to continue their work and perpetuate their heritage in the new countries of their existence, where, as before, they resist nationalistic and chauvinistic attitudes among the Jews, they fight against the totalitarian travesty of Socialism advocated by the Soviet Union, and they expound their belief that the solution of the Jewish problem is intimately tied to the victory of liberitarian Socialism. The BUND World Coordinating Committee, proud of this heritage, has now the moral right to speak in behalf of the forcibly liquidated BUND in Poland.

WHAT NEXT IN ISRAEL?

The first months of 1949 were indeed of grave importance to the State of Israel. The balloting is over and instead of a provisional government, Israel now has a permanent government growing out of the recent elections. The prolonged negotiations with the representatives of Egypt on the Island of Rhodes fortunately brought about the signing of an armistice. There is every sign on the horizon that the war is ended on all the other frontiers with various Arab states. Treaties with Trans-Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria are in the making. The State of Israel will probably be admitted to the United Nations. The transitional period of the new state has apparently come to an end. Israel is an established state with all its implications for the future of the Jewish communities of the world.

The first Government of Israel celebrated the successfully accomplished elections by granting an amnesty to its political prisoners. A similar act is in itself not an unusual step and has many historical precedents. What is rather unusual is the fact that the amnesty applies to the imprisoned members of the fascist gang accused of planning and executing the assassination of Count Bernadotte. Imagine the indignation of the Jewish people all over the world if a *non*-Jewish government had granted amnesty and released from prison notorious fascists involved in murder and other infamous practices!

While granting freedom to the fascist assassins, the Israeli Government has not yet taken any steps to alleviate the lot of the Arab refugees whose homes are in territories included in the State of Israel.

Stipulations for solving the Arab refugee problem are long overdue. Ultimately the mere fact of existence of this problem will prove detrimental to Jewish development in Israel.

There is still another grave problem facing Israel today. It is that of the new state's position with regard to the great powers of the world and to the struggle between the East and the West dominating the political life of the present historical period. Now that Israel has been approved for membership in the United Nations and that a government has been formed expressing the majority won by the Zionist-Socialist parties in the recent elections, it appears to be of importance that Israel take a definite stand in the East-West controversy, in which the very existence of democracy is at stake. It is our deep conviction that Socialists all over the world should take an active part in this contest between the democratic and the totalitarian forces. The powerful and influential Socialist parties in Norway and Denmark have now finally decided to abandon their traditional policy of neutrality and to join the discussions on the Atlantic Defense Pact. Swedish sentiments also appear to be undergoing radical changes. If this is the case with democracies close to the Soviet Union, the State of Israel's "neutrality" would indeed be difficult to justify.

But whatever policy the State or Israel will follow both in its domestic development and in its foreign

affairs, it is evident that Israel is in no position to influence in a positive manner the conditions in the Jewish communities all over the world—provided of course that the vast majority of the Jews outside the State of Israel will not sacrifice their vital interests for the benefit of the 700,000 Jews at present in Palestine. After all, the physical power of an independent Jewish sword wrought by Israel is negligible compared with the armed forces of the world powers. At present, just as before the establishment of an independent Jewish state, not arms but the moral force of justice and righteousness can defend the upward of 90% of the Jews who are scattered among various people all over the world as national minorities. The Socialist movement—the historical crusader for a new way of life based on justice, humanity and brotherhood,—can alone solve the Jewish problem by introducing social security and equality coupled with the respect for human rights, democracy, and freedom for all people regardless of their race, nationality, or religion. To injure or to offend the moral laws of humanity and decency, to indulge in power politics for the sake of Israel, is therefore detrimental to the real interest of the many millions of Jews who live outside the State of Israel. The sooner the Jewish communities all over the world will realize this simple truth, the better are the chances not only for their own advancement, but also for the existence and peaceful development of the State of Israel.

BUND STATEMENT AT THE J. L. C. CONVENTION

The following statement was introduced by Emanuel Nowogrudsky on behalf of the BUND World Coordinating Committee at the resolution committee of the National Convention of the Jewish Labor Committee recently held in Atlantic City:

In behalf of the Bundist delegation at the present National Convention of the Jewish Labor Committee, I have the honor of introducing the following resolution:

At its establishment in 1933 the Jewish Labor Committee formulated the task of drawing the Jew-

ish working masses in the United States into the struggle against fascism and reactionary ideologies then menacing the freedom of all peoples and the very existence of the Jewish people in its old homes—the countries of Europe. The Jewish Labor BUND greeted the establishment of the Jewish Labor Committee and participated in the Committee's activities since the beginning, and particularly after 1939. The great, glorious rescue work in which the Jewish Labor Committee was engaged during the bleak war years, when Nazi Germany was slaughtering our

brethren in Poland and in other European countries; and the important relief and reconstruction activities undertaken in the post-war period on behalf of the remnants of the Jewish people in Europe, strengthened even more our sentiments of comradely appreciation and thankfulness for the Jewish Labor Committee.

In its great and important relief activities, the Jewish Labor Committee was guided by the just principle that it is of importance to retain Jewish life and activities in all the countries where Jews dwell. The Committee's relief work is thus tied to the grave and difficult task of reconstructing and securing the existence of our people throughout the world. Yet this task, as well as the very faith in Jewish development in the lands of the so-called Diaspora—a faith which unites us all—are being notably weakened and, sometimes, even entirely nullified by those political declarations and demonstrations of the Jewish Labor Committee which represent a chain of concessions toward Zionism and which thus serve, regardless of the Committee's intentions, to strengthen chauvinist sentiments within Jewish public opinion. Our attitude regarding the Jewish state was brought out in the resolutions of our Second World Conference. This attitude does not coincide with the views of the Jewish Labor Committee. The non critical approach, on the part of the Jewish Labor Committee, toward the fact of the Jewish state's existence causes the boundaries between the Committee and the Zionist camp to become more and more indefinite; consequently, against the will of its leadership, the very basis of the Committee's existence is

being endangered.

Greatly concerned about the fate of the Jews in Israel, surrounded by millions of Arabs; and greatly concerned about the fate and the national future of the more than 90% of all Jews, who live outside the Israeli territory as minorities among other nations; we consider it our foremost duty to emphasize that for all those who really wish to contribute toward the national and social liberation of the Jewish masses and their cultural renaissance there is no other way but to keep faith with Socialism, and no alternative but to fight, together with Socialists of other nations, for the ultimate victory of the Socialist ideals.

With this view in mind, we consider the dedication of a special session of the National Convention to the State of Israel to have been an error. A similar demonstration, regardless of its underlying intentions, must, of necessity, still more augment Zionist sentiments and detract our attention from the true task of the Jewish Labor Committee—that of concern for the Jewish settlements outside Israel. Jewish life in the so-called Diaspora is now in danger of drying out, both intellectually and materially, and of neglecting the important tasks before it. The Jewish Labor Committee might have been expected to be the force counteracting this dangerous result of Zionist *gleichschaltung*.

We are deeply convinced that the time is near when the Jewish Labor Committee will correct this sidetracking of its efforts and will return to the only path on which it will accomplish its historic mission.

S. Mendelsohn — First Anniversary of his Death

A year passed since that fateful day when Szlama Mendelsohn, one of the most colorful and gifted personalities among the leaders of the Jewish labor movement in pre-war Poland, died in Los Angeles. As a soldier on duty he demised on February 9, 1948, on a lecture-tour on behalf of the BUND World Coordinating Committee.

In February, 1949, on the first anniversary of his death, BUND Organizations and groups in various

countries paid tribute to the memory of their beloved leader. The BUND Organization in New York, together with the Jewish Socialist Farband, held a memorial meeting for S. Mendelsohn at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel. More than 500 close friends and political comrades of Szlama Mendelsohn attended the solemn ceremony. Emanuel Nowogrudsky, N. Chanin, J. Baskin, Ch. Sz. Kazdan, and the famous Jewish man of letters, Chaim Grade, addressed the memorial meet-

ing which was presided over by Dr. Emanuel Scherer. An appropriate musical concert helped to underline the deep sentiment for the man who during his life kindled the hearts of many thousands and led them toward the promised land of democracy and Socialism.

The BUND movement in Paris summoned a public meeting in one of the big theatres in commemoration of the first anniversary of Szlama Mendelsohn's death. The solemn gathering was attended by more than a thousand persons of all ways of life.

A memorial meeting was also held by the BUND Organization in Toronto, Canada. B. Szefer of New York delivered the main address on behalf of the World Coordinating Committee. Among the several

hundred people who attended the meeting were an impressive number of young Bundists who recently arrived from the D-P camps in Germany. The singing of the "Shvue" was the final accord of this solemn meeting.

In Mexico and in Brasil, as well as in various other countries where BUND groups exist, similar gatherings and memorial meetings were summoned during the month of February. The BUND publications everywhere, such as the monthly "Unser Tsait" published by the BUND World Coordinating Committee in New York, and the Bundist daily "Unser Shtime", published in Paris, dedicated articles and memoirs to the memory of S. Mendelsohn.

JEWISH LIFE IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

From S. Mendelsohn's Heritage

Following are excerpts from Szlama Mendelsohn's statement of principles of which Jewish life should be based in the post-war period.

I

*** 1. As a result of the national catastrophe and of the past years of Nazi rule, the unity of Jews in various countries was strengthened. The community of interest of the entire Jewish people became more pronounced. Therefore:

(a) The responsibility of one Jewish community toward the others must be more strongly emphasized (of primary importance is here the great responsibility resting upon the American Jewish communities, both in North and South America). (b) Jewish labor, which should play an active and leading part in the present historic times, should be united in the supra-national scale so as to be able to fulfill its national mission. (c) The struggle for economic, political, and national existence in the separate countries should be supported and fortified by demands formulated on the international forum. Even though the nationalist tendencies in the separate countries are still strong, the international factor is becoming more and more forceful and effective.

Both on the international forum and in the separate countries the demand must be forcefully made that Jewish economic life be established and that the respective governments bear the costs of its establishment. National rights for the Jewish settlements must be demanded despite the frightful decrease in the number of Jews. The national-cultural institutions must not become the burden of the Jewish population, but should be subsidized by the states.

Both the estates of the martyred Jews (when there are no heirs) and the Jewish population's share of the payments for damages which will be collected from the Germans should be turned over to the respective Jewish communities for reconstruction purposes.

2. The existence of the Jewish people is based upon its national sentiment and its national consciousness, which manifest themselves in the creativeness and the mode of life of the masses. The tremendous numerical reduction of the Jewish population endangers the creative process which showed such great progress in the course of the past century. The present-day task is to guard and collect all that had been created in the past; and—within present possibilities—continue anew the process of cultural creativeness.

The Yiddish language and our modern Yiddish culture are some of the most important instruments of our national existence.

At the present time the Jewish workingmen and the Jewish Socialist movement must emphasize this field of endeavor even more than they did before the war. The broad Jewish masses now are entrusted with the responsibility of the future existence of the Jewish people.

3. On the one hand, the war increased the assimilatory processes which, in addition to their pre-war causes, now have a new driving force: the decreased number of Jews, tiredness of wartime suffering, and terrifying fear. On the other hand, there are signs of resurgent national feelings which may easily become warped into nationalist and mystic sentiments.

4. Today more than at any other time the suffering Jewish masses must be taught with particular emphasis that they are tied to and have a community of interests with the working people all over the world. Despite all disappointments, the community of aims, hopes, and struggles was not disproven. These international sentiments can and must be tied, in a natural manner, with the national consciousness (of the Jews) as a counterweight to nationalistic despair.

5. All manner of neo-religious sentiments and calls to "return to the old" are expressions of resignation and befuddlement. They are basically fruitless and politically harmful.

6. The treasures of our past should at present be emphasized more than they have been before the war.

II

1. The Zionist approach to and solution of the Jewish problem always was—and is now even to a greater extent—isolationist and harmful. Its final result is national and political disarmament of the Jewish masses. Jewish statehood does not constitute a solution of the Jewish problem; moreover, it complicates the difficult position of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. The increased post-war tendency to "escape the Diaspora" is historically in error, politically harmful, and paralyzing from a national point of view.

2. Our national existence is tied to and dependent upon the accomplishments of Socialism. It is im-

possible to establish an order of relative importance regarding the national and Socialist struggle. Libertarian Socialism intergrates the freedom of the individual and that of the national community to live within the framework of his—or its—national culture. National life, however, is not accomplished automatically; rather, it is strongly dependent upon the will to further it. The Socialist view is the greatest encouragement and the most realistic perspective for the suffering Jewish masses. Only those forces in Jewish life which are armed with the world-saving ideals of Socialism are—simultaneously—the true bearers of national existence.

3. At the same time it should be demanded that the organized Socialist sector of the world be prepared to help the sorely tried Jewish population. This readiness to help is the measure of true humanitarian Socialism.

4. The organizational form of Jewish life in Europe suited to the greatly diminished population is that of Community Councils. These must be lay institutions, elected according to democratic principles, and accorded public rights. The Jewish Socialist labor movement should strive to play a leading part in these Councils.

5. The post-war practice of establishing voluntary common institutions, in which all parts of the Jewish population take part—such as, for example the Jewish Committees in Poland, the CRIF in France, etc.—demonstrated that these institutions did develop neither in instruments of the Jewish population's will nor in forums upon which were argued the views and convictions regarding the subsequent reconstruction of Jewish life. This method of establishing general, all-embracing institutions does not meet the demands of our times.

6. A European Federation—the slogan of the democratic Socialist groups in the world—would also bring about an inner strengthening of the Jewish settlements in Europe. The two million Jews who remained alive would then constitute a definite entity, bound by a community of political life, and this fact would aid their becoming unified in a national sense as well.

FROM OUR MOVEMENT

United States

On behalf of the BUND World coordinating Committee and the BUND movement in the United States, Dr. Emanuel Scherer addressed the National Convention of the Jewish Socialist Farband, which was held in Boston on February 5 and 7, 1949. The speaker emphasized the urgent necessity for unity in the Socialist ranks. The split which still exists among the Socialists in the United States hinders the solution of the problems now facing the movement. The American Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Federation of America should unite. But even before this unity of the Socialist movement in the United States is accomplished, the BUND in the United States is prepared to join the Jewish Socialist Farband, under certain conditions, and to work jointly toward a general unity of the Socialist movement in the United States.

Dr. Emanuel Scherer's address at the National Convention of the Jewish Socialist Farband had the support of many delegates and received a warm applause.

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At the National Convention of the Jewish Labor Committee in Atlantic City, on February 25, 26, and 27, 1949 the historical controversy between Zionism and Bundism was one of the main topics in a lively discussion. B. Tabachinsky and Dr. Hoffman-Zivien presented to the delegates the viewpoint of the BUND under the new circumstances created by the existence of the State of Israel. The impact of the newly-gained statehood by the Jewish population in Palestine as well as the state of Jewish affairs the world over was thoroughly analysed by Dr. Hoffman-Zivien.

The Jewish Labor Committee, which was established in 1933 and has since gained general recognition for its important rescue work for the remnants of European Jewry, embraces all political trends of the Jewish workers in the existing trade-unions and

other various important Jewish labor organizations. Conceived primarily as a relief organization for the Jewish population outside Palestine, the Jewish Labor Committee lately encountered certain difficulties in its work due to the sentiments for the State of Israel by the Zionist-minded part of its membership. The National Convention in Atlantic City tried to resolve these difficulties. In the statement on the Jewish Labor Committee printed in the present issue of our *Bulletin* the reader will find the BUND's stand on this question.

France

The BUND Organization in Paris is steadily growing in number and in influence. The events in Poland in general, and particularly the liquidation of the Polish BUND by the Communists, brought to France new immigrants from Poland who are joining the BUND in France. The BUND in France is proud of its youth and women's branches and their lively activities. The Yiddish daily "Unser Shtime", published by the BUND in France, is now firmly established as an influential organ of the Jewish Socialist movement in France. The BUND in France has established a very cordial relationship with the French Socialist Party.

Brazil

The BUND Group in Brazil started a new magazine called "Upstream", the purpose of which is to build an ideological dam against the nationalist and chauvinistic currents in Jewish life now predominant in the Jewish community of Brazil. We quote the following characteristic lines from the appeal to the readers in the first issue of this magazine:

"The most extreme fractions of Zionism and especially the sentiment for the former notorious terrorist-organization in Palestine "Irgun" are blooming in the countries of South America. Even an important part of the religious-minded Jews, the so-called ortho-

dox faction led by the "Mizrachi", is now supporting the most extreme chauvinists among the Zionists. However, in the countries outside of Palestine where 93% of the world's Jewry dwell, various groups opposed to Zionism are trying to raise their voice. It is certainly difficult to swim upstream, but we deny the right of 7% of the world's Jewry living in the State of Israel to dominate the political life of the remaining 93%."

Italy

The BUND Organization in Italy sent fraternal delegates to the National Convention of the Italian

Socialist Party whose outstanding leader is Matteo Lombardo. The National Convention took place on January 23-26 in Milan. More than 400 delegates from Italy participated. The address on behalf of the BUND Organization was delivered by I. Orbach. He emphasized the gratitude of the Jewish D-P's to the Socialists of Italy who did their best to help them in their plight. He mentioned the murder of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, the BUND leaders executed in the Soviet Union, and expressed the devotion of the BUND members to the ideal of democracy and Socialism and their unshaken belief in the necessity to combat totalitarianism regardless of whether it comes from the right or from the left.

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