



The Jewish Labor Bund

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The Jewish Labor BUND and the State of Israel

An extraordinary session of the Executive of the BUND World Coordinating Committee, meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on June 12 - June 14, 1948 and at which were present representatives of the BUND organizations in the United States, France, Belgium, and other countries, after a thorough discussion and a great deal of deliberation adopted, with a single dissenting vote, the following statement concerning the State of Israel. This same statement was subsequently adopted by the BUND groups in France, Belgium, Italy, the D.P. camps of Austria, et. al. It is now being discussed and will most probably be accepted by various other BUND organizations.

STATEMENT

1. *The Jewish people now lives in a difficult, fateful period of its history.*

Deeply grieved and shaken after the murder of six million of their brethren, the masses of the Jewish people became enveloped by strong nationalist tendencies, which, used and fanned by skillful Zionist propaganda, caused among the Jews a psychosis of Zionist and Messianistic illusions. In these circumstances it became easy to propagandize the newly-established Jewish State as the ostensibly unique remedy for national uncertainty and desolation.

Yet the proclaiming of the State of Israel placed in a most precarious position the entire Jewish nation—the Jewish community in Palestine, the Jews in the Arab countries, and the Jewish population the world over.

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Bloody war rages in Palestine. The future of more than 600,000 Jews there is in grave danger. The accomplishments of the Jewish settlements and their very existence are at stake.

DIFFERENCES WITH ZIONISM REAFFIRMED

In this grave hour the BUND World Coordinating Committee wishes to state:

The important ideological differences which have caused the schism between the BUND and the Zionist movement in the past continue to divide the two factions. We are, however, deeply concerned with the fate of the Jewish community in Palestine, which constitutes a part of the living organism of our people. We are filled with apprehension and fear regarding the present tragic position of the Palestinian Jews and the bearing it may have upon the lives of Jews throughout the world. Moved by these sentiments and by the will to help prevent a catastrophic end, we state:

The heretofore negative attitude of the BUND toward the Zionist aim of statehood has become even more justified owing to the actual forms of the newly-proclaimed State of Israel. A result of a purely artificial division of the country, and having an impossibly long frontier, innumerable corridors and islands of Jewish and Arab minorities, ports without hinterlands, and hinterlands without ports, the country became from the very start a source of Irredentist movements, Jewish-Arab conflicts, and an open threat of war.

PEACE IN PALESTINE DEMANDED

2. The Jewish settlements are more important than the Jewish State. The interests of the settlements are — peace; the way to achieve statehood is — war.

The very establishment of the State of Israel marked the beginning of a bloody war in Palestine. In the present tense conditions prevailing in the world, this local fighting may become the start of a terrifying universal war.

We democratic Socialists, who fight against imperialism and for the establishment of peace and the brotherhood of peoples based upon liberty, security, and equality of all nations rejecting war as a means of settling national controversies, demand that all powers involved employ all necessary means to establish peace on the entire territory of Palestine.

But a true and lasting peace in Palestine depends, first of all, upon the peoples inhabiting the country and their mutual relationship. No solution based on force, no victory and rule of one faction over the other has a chance of acceptance. A freely accomplished understanding between the two nations is a necessary condition for the true, stable, and lasting solution of the present tragic Palestinian problem.

NATIONALISM SCORED

Aggressive nationalist tendencies within both camps, tendencies continually increasing in intensity, are the main obstacle in the path toward such a solution. The only way to establish a true peace and to form a basis for a just solution of the Palestine problem is the renunciation by both the Arabs and the Jews, of their respective nationalist ideals and their lust for unlimited power.

To defend their lives and their elementary human privileges is the natural right of every community and every individual — including, of course, the Jewish community in Palestine. But this right of self-defense must not be utilized in or identified with the struggle for Jewish statehood, or with sustaining such a struggle or the groups engaged in it. One must constantly keep in mind that the safety and the peaceful development of the Jewish settlements can indeed be secured by applying the right policies — policies aiming at democratic cooperation between the Jewish and Arab population within the framework of a common governmental structure which would ensure the fullest freedom of development both for the Jews and the Arabs.

PALESTINE NOT A SOLUTION

3. Safe from the threat of war, bent upon a peaceful co-existence beside the Arab population, and freed from its Zionist illusions, the Jewish community in Palestine could truly contribute its share in the struggle for our national existence, and thereby play an important part in the development of the Jews. But even in that case — and even if it were endowed with a state of its own — the Jewish community in Palestine would always comprise but a small minority of the Jews throughout the world. The vast majority of the Jewish nation will continue to dwell — as it dwells now, after 50 years of political Zionism — outside the boundaries of Palestine. Thus Palestine cannot possibly solve the Jewish problem, in any case. The fight against anti-Semitism, for full equality, and for the full national and cultural development of the Jewish people must be waged — as it has been until now — side by side with the democratic and Socialist elements of the non-Jewish population in those countries and in those areas where more than 90% of the Jewish nation now live. The positive part which could be played by the Jewish settlements in Palestine in the national and cultural development of the Jews is now being undermined by the Zionists' promotion of the Hebrew language, which causes a rift between the Jews in Palestine and the Jews in the so-called Diaspora.

DANGEROUS ASPECTS OF THE JEWISH STATE

The national importance of the Palestinian Jews as a whole was basically damaged by the establishment of the Jewish state, which caused large parts of the Jew-

ish people to fall prey to poisonous chauvinistic tendencies. Because of the proclamation of the State of Israel, a great many Jews are now inclined to slight the future and the development of the Jews in the so-called Diaspora, while the atmosphere in the Jewish communities becomes more and more favorable for the development of political brigandry, terror, the extremes of home-grown Jewish fascism, nationalism, and reactionary trends. Moreover, the tendency to regard all Jewish settlements throughout the world as but a second-rate hinterland of the State of Israel is constantly growing. Finally, the drive to capture all phases of Jewish life by terrorist and totalitarian methods — a tendency shared by Communists and Zionists alike — takes on more dangerous forms every day.

ROLE OF FOREIGN POWERS

The propaganda seeking to tie the future of the Jewish community in Palestine with the policies of the Soviet Union, practiced by the entire Communist camp and an important faction of the Zionist movement, is false and illusory. Such a line of reasoning may lead Jewish life as a whole to catastrophic results. The present support lent by the Soviet Union to the Zionist cause is dictated solely by the imperialistic aims of Soviet foreign policy and not by the best interests of the Jewish people.

The positive attitude of the United States to the newly-established Jewish State is, on the other hand, a result of the contest for power waged by the two major American parties. The recently-adopted bill concerning the admittance of 205,000 D.P.'s from the camps, which contains anti-Jewish discriminatory rules, is a clear indication of how little the two political parties are really concerned with the true interests of the Jewish population.

Great Britain — moved by the controversial exigencies of her foreign policy and by provocative actions on the part of extremist Zionist groups headed by the Irgun and Stern gangs — adopted an attitude of unilateral help for and collaboration with the Arab camp, thereby taking upon her shoulders part of the responsibility for the present gory developments in Palestine. While we protest against this attitude, we refuse to be identified with the irresponsible demagogic campaign waged against the British Government and

the Labor Party by the Zionists on one hand and the Communists on the other, a campaign which damages the cause of the Jewish people and the ideals of international Socialism.

COOPERATION IS BASIC SOLUTION

4. A true and final solution to the Palestinian problem can be found only according to the universal humanistic principles of justice, democracy, and international solidarity.

In accordance with these principles, true internal peace must be established and secured in Palestine, after which the country should become politically independent. The government, created on the basis of full internal democracy, oriented toward international democratic Socialism, based upon constitutional equal rights for both peoples — rights guaranteed by the United Nations — should be a truly common government of the country's entire Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants.

Free immigration, devoid of any discrimination on the basis of religion or nationality, and regulated by general rules, should be ensured. Yet these immigration rules must not constitute the least obstacle for the struggle to open the gates of all democratic countries to the uprooted Jews.

The full formal and actual rights of the Yiddish language in the political, social, and cultural activities of the Jewish community in Palestine must likewise be assured.

The BUND World Coordinating Committee gives vent to its firm conviction that the realization of these principles and guarantees enumerated above is the true and just solution of the Palestinian problem — a solution which is in full accord with both the well-understood interests of the Jewish people and the general ideals of international democratic Socialism.

COMMUNITY OF INTEREST WITH SOCIALISM EMPHASIZED

5. As a result of the past 2,000 years of Jewish history, the Jews have become a nation of the world. The wheels of history cannot be turned backwards. The Jewish people, strewn throughout the world, can continue to exist and to best develop its national and cultural values in conditions of liberty, equality, eco-

conomic security, and tolerance — conditions which shall most securely be realized by democratic Socialism. The struggle waged by the international Socialist movement for liberty and Socialism and the victory of that movement will cause the defeat of anti-Semitism and of all

forms of national oppression and discrimination. A Socialist victory will create new and better social and political conditions, in which both Jews and non-Jews will be able to lead and enjoy a free, peaceful, and successful life — everywhere in the world.

We Will Not Be Bullied

The statement concerning the establishment of the State of Israel, adopted by the Executive Session of the BUND World Coordinating Committee and reprinted in the current issue of the *Bulletin*, has already aroused against us all evil forces of Jewish nationalism. A veritable deluge of condemning articles was let loose. The entire Jewish press, dailies, weeklies, and scores of other publications, united in taking the BUND to task as a traitor to the Jewish cause. All shades of Jewish public opinion united in mobilizing the Jewish communities against us — simply because we dare criticize the wisdom of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

The circumstances of this anti-BUND propaganda within the Jewish communities resemble strikingly the

past developments in all countries remaining in the grip of extreme nationalistic factions. Be this as it may, we wish to assure our political antagonists that we shall not allow them to terrorize us into silence. For half a century the BUND fearlessly expressed its Socialist views in the face of serious attempts to silence it on the part of the old Czarist regime and the reactionary pre-war Polish Government. We shall remain true to this old tradition of the BUND. As we have in the past, we shall continue to subscribe to the spirit of international Socialism. As in the past, our public statements shall be guided solely by our Socialist ideals. We shall not be diverted by any temporary nationalist trend, be it even as strong and triumphant as the wave of Jewish nationalism witnessed by the present days.

ARAB REFUGEES

The United Nations now face a new problem, one caused by recent developments in Palestine. Almost the entire Arab population in the part of the country assigned to the State of Israel left their homes to escape the horrors of war. It is estimated that close to 400,000 people of Arab origin — men, women, and children — are now living as refugees, without shelter, adequate food, or medical supplies. These people wish to return, provided the Government of Israel will permit them to go back to their former homes.

For more than two thousand years the appalling plight of exile and homelessness was too often the fate of the Jews, wherever they might have dwelt. Anti-Semitism, discriminatory practices, and almost every war in history added to the number of displaced Jews. During World War I, the Czarist regime of Russia forcibly deported many hundred thousands of Jews. During World War II, Hitler's henchmen deported the Jews from all countries subjugated by the Germans' military might. 200,000 Jews, victims of the war, are held even now, three years after the end of hostilities, in the former concentration camps of Europe as D.P.'s,

exposed to all the suffering and humiliation of their uncertain status.

For the first time in two thousand years the Jews themselves now have to handle the problem of displaced persons of non-Jewish faith. Yet it appears that 2,000 years of suffering and of untold hardships caused by the misery of numerous deportations were entirely forgotten as soon as circumstances caused a fraction of the Jewish population to be placed in a position of self-government. True to its Zionist self, the Jewish Government of the State of Israel appears ready to forfeit the moral rights of the Jewish D.P.'s in Europe and elsewhere by refusing to permit the Arab refugees to return to their homes in Palestine. Nationalism is short-sighted, and Jewish nationalism is not excepted from this affliction. In the long run, the future of the Jews in Palestine depends upon the establishment of peaceful relations with the Arab population and with the neighboring Arab states. What could contribute more to the establishment of these peaceful relations than a humane approach on the part of the Israeli Government toward the Arab displaced persons craving to return home?

Second World Conference of the BUND Organizations

The meeting of the BUND World Coordinating Committee Executive body, held in Brussels on June 10-12, 1948, decided to call a second world conference of the various BUND organizations. This conference is to be held in New York, in October, 1948.

Two important issues are on the agenda of the Conference: the statement on the State of Israel adopted by the Executive Session in June, 1948; and a declaration of principles restating the stand of the BUND organizations regarding the important problems facing the Socialist movement after World War II. In addition, the delegates from the various countries will have to consider a number of organizational problems and problems of policy, relating to the experiences gathered since the creation of the BUND World Coordinating Committee almost two years ago, in May, 1947.

In the time which elapsed since the first World Conference of the BUND, held in May, 1947, the Coordinating Committee lost an important member, the BUND of Poland. The liquidation of the independent Socialist movement in Poland enforced by the Communist minority ruling that unhappy country made it impossible for the Polish BUND to remain a member of the World Coordinating Committee. There is not a single BUND organization in the world which does not deplore the circumstances which led the Polish BUND to sever all its connections with the world BUND family and with the independent international Socialist movement in general. The ultimate fate of the BUND in Poland will be the same as that of the Polish Socialist Party, and at present there does not appear to exist a chance of changing the direction of developments behind the Iron Curtain in that respect.

Aware of the importance of the deplorable loss of the Polish BUND as a member of their coordinating body, the delegates to the forthcoming Conference will have to adjust their policies to the new circumstances. As long as the Polish BUND remained in the World Coordinating Committee, the latter was forced to abstain from voting on nearly all important questions facing the Socialist movement after World War II.

It was frequently painful for us to have to refrain from expressing our views on some of the important problems bearing on the tactics of the Soviet Union and the Communists in Poland and elsewhere. Yet, dedicated as we are to the principles of democratic Socialism, we deliberately shunned to emphasize our views, aware of the difficult circumstances under which our Polish comrades lived and worked.

This situation has radically changed since the Polish BUND has left our ranks. The BUND World Coordinating Committee is now free to express itself on the most burning issues of post-war Socialism without fear of exposing the Polish Bundists to the vengeance of the present Communist-dominated regime of Poland. Under these circumstances the Executive Committee felt free to place on the agenda of the forthcoming Conference the discussion on a general declaration of Socialist principles. There is little doubt that the delegates will accord this issue their utmost attention, and that they will proclaim the viewpoint of the BUND and reassert its place among those Socialist parties which repel the totalitarian brand of Socialism and which are dedicated to Socialist ideals based upon democracy and the respect of the individual's rights and privileges.

We do not aim to anticipate the outcome of the Conference. We do, however, feel certain that the delegates to the Second World Conference of the BUND will remain faithful to the Jewish Labor BUND's long-established revolutionary tradition and to its longtime struggle for liberty, democracy, and Socialism. We feel certain that the Conference of our movement will mark an important date in the post-war history of the BUND. The growth of our movement in all countries of Europe where new Jewish communities sprang up after the war is an inspiration and an assurance that we are on the right path. The BUND Organization of New York, where the Conference will take place, will certainly do all to show the utmost hospitality to the delegates participating in the meeting.

The Ice Is Broken

The indifference and the deadly silence accorded the plight of the anti-Zionist Jewish D.P.'s in the former concentration camps of Germany, Austria, and Italy, those unfortunates who are being bullied, terrorized, and forcibly inducted into the Jewish Army, are finally broken. We received the following statement bearing on this issue adopted by the Executive Board of the Knitgoods Workers Union, Local 155. We are quoting the statement verbatim, and we hope that it marks the beginning of a vigorous campaign of protest against the inhuman acts of brutality which are being committed by the Zionist bigwigs in the Jewish D.P. camps of Europe.

**STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE KNITGOODS WORKERS UNION
LOCAL 155, ILGWU, A. F. of L.**

For the last two years we have received disquieting reports and information about acts of terror and discrimination in D.P. camps, committed against Jewish individuals who differ with Zionism.

As a responsible organization we did not take any action. We tried to ascribe these deeds to overzealous individuals and exonerated the organizations responsible for administering the D.P. Camps.

However, we have today received documents through the Jewish Labor Bund confirming our worst fears and indicating that these are not isolated acts but part of a general policy.

The following actions were taken to force Jewish D.P.'s to accept Zionism, to force them into the Palestine Jewish Army, or to stifle legitimate political difference.

- *Dismissal from work.*
- *Deprivation of food rations.*
- *Smashing of machines sent by Americans to train D.P.'s in useful skills.*
- *Recruiting of Jewish D.P.'s by force into the Palestine Jewish Army.*
- *Taking away legal protection and visa rights from dissenters.*
- *Expulsion from D.P. Camps of political opponents.*

- *Finally the public flogging of a Jewish D.P. who refused to join the Israel Army. The perpetrators of this act were not ashamed, but on the contrary themselves took pictures of this spectacle.*

Such actions if tolerated are poison and rot that will spread and infect all Jewish communities. Already in one community in Latin America, kangaroo courts have been set up to ex-communicate and isolate from all social intercourse those who do not contribute to Zionist organizations.

These are actions taken against Jewish D.P.'s who have undergone twelve years of torture and hell, and only want peace and quiet.

The use of such methods against political opponents is a reflection of the direct action of Hitler's storm troops, of the violence of Mussolini's fascio bands. It is aping and introducing fascist techniques into the Jewish community.

It would be a grave disservice to the community if any responsible organization kept these developments a secret. Nay, silence would in this case carry assent.

The Executive Board of the Knitgoods Workers Union condemns such terror as a violation of all individual rights and calls for an immediate end to such injustice and hooliganism.

The first responsibility for the continuation of such disgraceful tactics rest upon the American relief organizations which administers these camps. Our Union which has contributed tens of thousands of dollars to the Jewish Labor Committee, United Jewish Appeal and Joint Distribution Committee, protests the silence of these organizations. We call upon these groups to immediately publicize these developments and take swift action to bring an end to the reign of physical terror and violence.

The Jewish Community has suffered too much from injustice, hooliganism and fascism to permit such tactics in its midst.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD
KNITGOODS WORKERS UNION
LOUIS NELSON**

Jewish Displaced Persons

The Executive Session of the BUND World Coordinating Committee, convened in Brussels on July 10-12, 1948, unanimously adopted a resolution concerning the present plight of Jewish Displaced persons in various European countries. Excerpts from this resolution will be found below:

The gory plight of the Jewish refugees in the Displaced Persons' Camps took a turn for the worse within the past few months.

The democratic countries established government-sponsored agencies for the purpose of selecting from among the D.P.'s suitable prospective immigrants; these agencies, however, practice policies of flagrant discrimination against the Jewish D.P.'s. Moreover, the failure of the United States to admit larger groups of Jewish D.P.'s made the latter's position even more precarious.

The living conditions of the individual Jews in the camps have deteriorated owing to the taking over of the camps' administration by the IRO. The food rations have been cut, and the allotment of clothing to the D.P.'s reached a new dangerous low.

*On the other hand, the entire life in the Jewish camps is dominated by the Zionists and their helpers, and this state of affairs has led to the establishment in the camps of a reign of lawlessness, corruption, and terror.****

Another factor contributed to the establishment of Zionist rule in the camps: Zionist propaganda was enhanced by the camp inhabitants' lack of hope of leaving the camps in the immediate future; and by the illusion that all refugees would eventually be permitted to emigrate to Palestine.

As these illusions lost their attraction, the rift between the D.P. masses and the corrupted Zionist administration became more pronounced. And thus, in order to maintain their unlimited authority in the camps, the Zionists and their helpers found themselves forced to increase the totalitarian measures practiced

by them and to quench by force all educational activities and all efforts to oppose the existing officials.

The Zionist rule of force asserts itself daily in the following practices:

(1) *All those refusing to be drafted into the Haganah forces are dismissed from their work.*

(2) *Camps are blockaded by the Zionists in order to facilitate the induction, by force, of those Jews of military age who otherwise refuse to join the military formations of the Haganah.*

(3) *Night raids are conducted in the camp barracks and people are denounced to and arrested by the police. It is hoped that these measures would induce the refugees to join the Haganah forces.****

These are the conditions in the camps. We cannot and must not tolerate a situation in which our brethren miraculously saved from the abysmal iniquity of Nazism are made to suffer the Zionist terror and are being used as instruments of the high-headed policies of Zionism, against the duly-stated wish of the D.P.'s.

The Coordinating Committee thus resolves:

(1) *To present to the forum of world public opinion the plight of the Jews in the camps; and to mobilize the democratic and Socialist forces of the world for immediate help to the displaced persons.*

(2) *To fight vigorously against the totalitarian regime in the camps; and to strongly demand that the liberty and the individual freedom of the Jews in the camps be respected.****

In view of the continuously growing anti-Semitic tendencies in Germany, it is the duty of the Coordinating Committee to exert pressure upon the German Social Democratic Party in order to induce it to fight anti-Semitism with all means at its disposal. In addition, the BUND should bring up this question on an international scale and mobilize the international Socialist movement for the fight against anti-Semitism.

Denial

In the July 1948 issue of our *Bulletin* (No. 7), in the article entitled "Nationalism on the Warpath," we cited several examples of Zionist terror in all parts of the world. We wrote, among others, that we had received word from the Jewish community in one of the Latin American countries that far-reaching sanctions were being applied against all those who dare oppose the Zionist drive for contributions. Seven of these

drastic measures were quoted without divulging either the name of the city or the names of the people involved.

Our friends in Mexico City asked us to inform our readers that the events described in this article have no bearing on the situation in Mexico. We are glad to comply with their request.

A Wave of Zionist Terror in Argentina

We just received word about a new wave of Zionist terror in the Jewish communities of Argentina. The Zionists decided to raise 50 million pesos for the Jewish State of Israel. The donations are compulsory. Everyone is taxed in accordance with the views of the Zionist leaders. Several collecting points for payment of the donations have been designated. Anyone refusing to obey the order of the Zionist organization is exposed to the following sanctions:

- 1—Without a receipt from the Zionist organization, one is not permitted to enter the synagogue and community houses.
- 2—Anyone without such a receipt is excluded from prayers on the Day of Atonement.

3—Members of the Jewish community who refuse to pay the tax are refused wedding services; their newborn children are not circumcised.

4—Those who refuse to pay this tax are denied the right of burial on the Jewish cemetery.

5—All opposing this taxation are not permitted to be members of the boards of any existing Jewish institutions.

The Jewish press in Argentina and Brazil has printed appeals about the taxation and the sanctions involved, succumbing shamelessly to the request of the Zionist terrorists.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE of BUNDIST
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