

*The Jewish  
Labor*

# Bund



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# Bulletin

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## TEN YEARS AGO

Ten years ago on September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany unleashed the destructive forces of the Second World War. Backed by the infamous Hitler-Stalin pact, the motorized armies of Germany darted into Poland and started the course of events which years later led to the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. This, however, was not achieved before Europe with but small exceptions was overrun by the Nazi forces, before tens of millions of people paid with their lives on the battlefields and in the concentration camps of the Nazis, before innumerable towns and cities were destroyed and reduced to shambles, before Nazi Germany accomplished its scheme of annihilating the entire Jewish population of Poland and Eastern Europe. And not before Soviet-Russia was suddenly attacked by Hitler Germany in repudiation of the Hitler-Stalin pact had Moscow decided to ally her forces with the democracies of the West.

Ten years elapsed since the beginning of World War II and of untold suffering and destruction. The libraries in the capitals of the world are now filled with books and research material containing secret documents and archives which help to establish the cause and the events that led to the outbreak of the conflagration. In view of all this assembled knowledge there can no longer be any doubt that the war could have been avoided. The first step leading to the bloody

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catastrophe was the rise to power of Fascism and Nazism, an event which was rather benevolently accepted by the most important world powers of that time, presumably as a dam against the Socialist tide. The second step which made the war inevitable was the policy of appeasement embodied in the symbolic figure of Prime Minister Chamberlain and in the notorious Munich Conference of 1938. The underlying atmosphere of a decadent and overgrown capitalism, of endangered vested interests, with morality at its lowest, brushed aside all human inhibitions against the tragic events that followed.

Many are the changes in the picture of the world caused by the ten years since 1939. As a result of World War II, the Soviet Union became one of the

biggest military powers in the world. The Soviet might, however, is far from being a bastion of enduring peace among peoples. The Kremlin bosses used their power in the post-war world to subjugate and coerce their neighbors, to rob them of their independence and rule over them against the will of the majority of their populations. The Soviet totalitarian regime — though to a lesser degree than the former totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Fascism and the clashing capitalistic interests of the old and new world — cannot but be considered a menace to world peace.

But as a result of the same world struggle, Great Britain, the oldest capitalistic empire, turned Socialist. Britain's is not the false brand of Socialism made in Moscow, which is a mere derision of freedom, equality and brotherhood, of all the lofty ideals of libertarian Socialism. The Socialist Government of Britain pledged itself to combine the new socialist economy with political freedom, liberty, and the respect for the rights of the individual, and lives up to its promise. A new way of life is gradually emerging on the British Isles,

a way of life which is the only means to avoid wars and to establish a community of free and equal nations. The eyes of Socialists the world over are focused on the peaceful revolution which is now transforming England and promises to realize the dream of generations — Libertarian Socialism.

During the ten-year period we also witnessed important changes in Jewish life. As if to compensate the Jews for their tremendous losses during the bleak war years, for their suffering in the war against Nazism and Fascism, an independent Jewish State came into existence in part of Palestine. The newly-won statehood imbued important segments of the Jews with nationalistic and even chauvinistic sentiments. The State of Israel looms on the horizon of Jewish life to a degree far above its actual significance. We, Jewish Socialists, resisted the nationalistic temptation and remained faithful to our underlying conviction that *Democracy and Socialism in their victorious march across the world, carry the only real and permanent solution of the ages-old Jewish problem.*

## ADOLF BLEIBTREU

The bloodshed in Munich caused by a Jewish demonstration against a letter to the editor published in a German newspaper, in which an ardent Hitlerite using the name Adolf Bleibtreu expressed his resentment that not all Jews had been gassed by his Fuehrer and that some of them escaped the Nazi-planned annihilation, has more significance for the presence and future of Germany than would appear.

The pseudonym chosen by the anonymous Hitlerite means "Faithful to Adolf". In view of the whole electioneering campaign carried on by the German political parties taking part in the first free election in the three zones of Western Germany completed on August 14, 1949, it seems that the state of mind indicated in the mentioned letter is widespread among the German population.

According to the complete election returns in Western Germany, almost 80% of the voters went to the polls. The 24,000,000 valid votes were, roughly speaking, divided evenly between three groups. More than a third of the votes went to the Christian Demo-

crats, another third to the Social Democrats, and the last third to all kinds of split parties and local groups, including the Communists, who fortunately made a very poor showing by gathering only 6% of the votes.

The elections were a very close race between the two main political camps, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats. The first received 139 seats, the second — 131 seats.

In the first free elections in Germany after the First World War in 1918, the German Socialists received more than 45% of the valid votes and became the dominant power in German political life. In our days, 30 years later, in the first free elections after the Second World War, German Socialists received only 32% of the votes and were beaten, though by a small margin, by the Christian Democrats. It is true that the comparison between the election results in 1918 and 1949 is somehow inadequate. Let us not forget that the capital of Germany — Berlin, (which was traditionally the biggest stronghold of German Socialism) as well as the entire zone of Germany occupied by the Soviet Union, did not take part in the elections on August 15,

1949. Nevertheless — it is a defeat for German Socialism with vast political implications for the future of Germany.

It is not, however, our desire to dwell upon these political implications. It is not this temporary numerical setback, but the ill-conceived ideological background of the German Socialists' electioneering campaign that is most disturbing. According to reports by numerous correspondents and eye-witnesses, the German Socialists, during the entire campaign, appealed mostly to the nationalistic sentiments of the German people and tried to arouse them against the occupying powers. The latter rather than the criminal practices of Hitler-Germany and her heritage were made the scapegoat for all the wrongs which assailed Germany after the lost war. In this respect no difference could be discerned between the German Socialists and all other German political parties of the right, those permeated with the evil spirit revealed in the letter by "Adolf Bleibtreu".

Socialists the world over were entitled to believe that their German comrades would use the first free elections after the shattering of Hitler's grip over Germany to expose the bloody crimes committed on behalf of the German people by the Nazis, that the German Socialists would use the occasion to appeal to the Germans and urge them to atone for the beastly crimes for which no adequate words can be found in the language of man. Mankind, stricken by the horrors of Nazi Germany, could expect that the German Socialists would distinguish themselves by explaining to the German population the entire scope of Germany's guilt before the conscience of the world — for instigating the Second World War and promulgating the gospel of a master race entitled to enslave its neighbors. While the majority of the German population can be accused not of a crime of commission, but only of failure to remonstrate against the inhuman practices of Belsen Bergen, Oswiecim, Maidanek with their infamous crematoria and gas-chambers, the German Socialists ought to have grasped at the first occasion to expose and condemn the nationalistic sentiments which led Germany astray and to emphasize their belief in the international brotherhood of mankind.

Socialist England, which, in our days, is mankind's greatest hope to establish a new way of life based on democracy, freedom, and economic equality and security, should have been extolled by German Socialists in the first free elections after World War II. Instead, the German Socialist Party used the opportunity of the election campaign to mire the Socialist government of England for dismantling former war-plants. In the eyes of the German Socialists everyone is guilty in the plight of Germany but the German population.

We Jewish Socialists have a special reason to watch closely the behavior of the German Socialists in the busy days of electioneering. We did not forget and we shall never forget the annihilation by Nazi Germany of the entire Jewish population in Poland and in Eastern Europe. The 6,000,000 Jewish men, women and children who died in the Nazi gas chambers cry for atonement. We believed that the German Socialists, in their first free electioneering campaign would not fail to display for the German people the horrors and the scope of this unparalleled crime. We believed that they would be the apostles of a new spirit among Germans and thus pay tribute to the memory of the innocent victims. In short, we believed that they would do their duty as *Socialists*.

The German Socialist Party neglected these unwritten obligations. It did not rise to the requirements of the new situation. At the first occasion provided for them in the post-war world, when the attention of the world was focused on them, they indulged in the old pattern of sordid nationalism which can only lead to the resurgence of Nazism. Even Dr. Thomas Mann declared after a three-month tour of Germany that he was afraid of the increasing nationalism of the Germans. "The Germans do not realize the cause of their actual condition," he said. "The great majority of the people complain — 'under Hitler we were much better off'".

Such a state of mind of the German people is truly appalling. But what hurts even more is the fact that the German Socialists apparently failed to learn a thing. Their moral defeat is even worse than their political loss of voters.

## TO OUR READERS

*It is now two years that we are trying to present in the BULLETIN the views and policies of the BUND organizations and groups throughout the world—organizations which constitute a distinct factor in Jewish political life and Jewish public opinion. We feel certain the material to be found in the BULLETIN pages is not available elsewhere, and we also believe we are meeting a definite need of the English readers who are intent upon acquainting themselves with the various trends in Jewish life.*

*In these troubled days in Jewish history, when Zionism engulfs the Jewish press and Jewish public opinion in general, and when Zionist spokesmen attempt to present their movement not as ONE of the shades of Jewish political thought but as THE one and only political faith of all Jews; today, when all those daring to raise an independent voice and to follow an independent thought are castigated as traitors to the Jewish national cause; now, we believe, it is of utmost importance that the other side of the Jewish political picture be presented to the Jewish as well as to the non-Jewish world. Within its limited possibilities and its meager resources, our BULLETIN attempts this tremendous task by bringing the views of the Jewish Socialist groups the world over.*

*We have never set a subscription rate to the BULLETIN, believing it to be a public service rather than a financial venture. The numerous reprints from our articles and news were our only reward. We still believe that was right, and we do not intend to charge our readers for the BULLETIN.*

*However, the cost of publishing and distributing the BULLETIN has been considerable, and we are forced to appeal to you, our readers, for voluntary contributions to ensure its further existence. We are confident you will recognize the importance of maintaining our publication and will respond quickly and effectively to our appeal for financial aid.*

*You are urged to contribute at once. Please make your contributions payable to:*

BUND BULLETIN, 175 East Broadway, Room 305

New York 2, N. Y.

## REVIVAL OF THE NAZI PRESS

It is impossible to read without boiling indignation the report by Drew Hamilton in the New York Times of August 25th, that "with the abolition of newspapers licensing in Bavaria, 80 or more frankly pro-Nazi newspapers will be founded in that state", and that among them "Max Wilme, once publisher of the *Stuermer*,

*the most rabidly anti-Semitic of all Nazi publications, intends to publish two papers in the Nuremberg area*".

The same gang that once succeeded in poisoning thoroughly the minds of the German population is again at work. Those who are directly responsible for the

outbreak of the Second World War and for tens of millions of human casualties, those who introduced gas chambers and cremation of millions of innocent men, women and children for the first time in the history of civilized mankind, the same people who brought about the unheard of atrocities and the infamous hell spots like Belsen-Bergen, Oswiecim or Maideneck, are again resuming their cannibalistic propaganda before the eyes of the whole world.

We are not thinking exclusively of the six million Jews exterminated in cold blood by Germans, indoctrinated to the hilt with the poisonous propaganda of Nazi editors. The spectacle of thriving cities reduced to shambles, of millions of young people perished in the war for world domination, planned by the Nazis, is constantly in our minds. The escaped remnants of the Nazi chieftains are now again challenging the conscience of decent people all over the world. They do not even

try to parade in a new uniform. The old Hitler mantle is apparently good enough for them.

To permit spiritual leaders of Nazism to start their work again is a mockery of decency and justice, of democracy and of all the lofty ideals for which the democratic world fought. To watch inactively while these people begin to tread the same path which had once led — and which may again lead — to a world catastrophe, is folly.

Under normal conditions the abolition of newspaper licensing is undoubtedly a step to Democracy. In Germany, however, this step was the green light for the old criminal gang of Nazi editors.

Public opinion in the democratic countries must find ways and means to stop the Nazi criminals before it is too late. A crime of omission committed now is surely intolerable.

## Growing Sentiment For Yiddish in the United States

In recent years, since Jewish problems have become front-page stories on the international scene, the United States has witnessed a resurgence of interest for the Yiddish language and literature. Among the major American Jewish organizations Yiddish has finally gained recognition as a binding tie among Jews throughout the world. A representative of the Jewish Theological Seminary on a tour of South American countries stated that one of the most effective forces in furthering common interests among the Jews was the Yiddish language. The American Jewish Committee, long a stronghold of assimilation, has embarked on the publication of a Yiddish bulletin (*Yedies*) for its Latin American audiences.

With the rapid shrinking of the globe as a result of advances in transportation and communications, American Jews have become increasingly more concerned with the fate of Jews in other countries and recognized Yiddish as the primary medium of communication. Consequently interest for the Yiddish language within the borders of the United States itself has been revitalized. In 1947, the study of the Yiddish language and its literature was introduced into the curricula of City College and Brooklyn College in New

York City. In 1948, courses in Yiddish and Yiddish folklore were given at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Concurrently, students attending these courses at these various institutions have organized themselves into clubs for the extracurricular furtherance of their Yiddish interests. The College Yiddish Association of New York has presented a number of public programs based on materials of Yiddish folklore and literature. One Yiddish textbook has already appeared while another, to be published by the Yiddish Scientific Institute (*Yivo*), is scheduled for publication this fall.

English magazines of Jewish interest seek out Yiddish literary works meriting English translation so that they may bring to their readers some smattering of Yiddish-language culture.

All in all, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the interest in the Yiddish language and its contributions to world culture will continue to grow among the Jews all over the world as they become more and more concerned about the common Jewish fate and the future of the world-wide Jewish community as a whole.

## Anti-Semitism on the Agenda of the International Socialist Movement

It is noteworthy to emphasize that the International Socialist Movement finally decided to take active steps to eradicate the anti-Semitic tendencies and racial discrimination still remaining in the post-war world. Needless to say that our representatives at the International Socialist Conferences were instrumental in calling the attention of the delegates from the various Socialist parties to the necessity of fighting against anti-Semitic trends.

The meeting of the International Socialist Conference Committee on July 7, 1949, agreed that a questionnaire on anti-Semitism be circulated to all member parties. After the replies were received, the matter was to be considered by the sub-committee of the International Socialist Conference.

On July 26, 1949, this questionnaire on anti-Semitism was already forwarded to all Socialist parties participating in the "Comisco". The questionnaire consists of the following five questions:

1. Does anti-Semitic propaganda and activity exist in your country?

2. Has there been any noticeable increase in anti-Semitism since the end of the war?
3. Are special measures taken to protect Jews and other racial minorities from discrimination of any kind?
4. What steps are being taken
  - a) by the government
  - b) by your party
 to combat anti-Semitic propaganda and activities if they exist?
5. What, if anything, should be done, in your opinion, to deal with anti-Semitic tendencies where they exist?

The BUND World Coordinating Committee appointed a special body to prepare a written memorandum on this problem for the International Socialist Conferences Committee. Comrade Murafchick, member of the Socialist Party of America, accepted our invitation to join this panel.

### B. HOFFMAN - ZIVION — 75 YEARS OLD

Several hundred people filled the auditorium of the New School for Social Research in New York on June 11, 1949, to celebrate the 75th birthday of the dean of Jewish Socialist journalism, Dr. B. Hoffman (Zivion). Among those present were numerous representatives of the Jewish literary family of New York, recent arrivals from the former concentration camps in Germany, and a great many personalities of Jewish life in America, including Abraham Kahan, Editor-in-Chief of the Jewish Daily Forward.

Below is the text of a special citation presented to Dr. Hoffman by the BUND World Coordinating Committee at the close of the gathering.

*Dear and Esteemed Comrade:*

*It is half a century since you have joined the ranks of the BUND. The Socialist transformation of the world and the active struggle for this new order of liberty and justice became the mission of your life. In the course of these fifty years the BUND grew from its beginnings amongst the depths of Jewish labor in the old tsarist empire, became a mighty force, and blossomed so magnificently in pre-war Poland. Thanks to the teachings of the BUND, the creative abilities of the Jewish popular masses found expression not only in the field of political activities, but also in the development of the Yiddish language, of Jewish literature, and,*

generally, in the field of Jewish culture. The Jews of Eastern Europe were slaughtered by the Nazi beasts. But the BUND banners were not folded even under the heinous conditions of Nazi rule. The battle-cries and the wailings of the Warsaw ghetto uprising — such was the swan song of the old-established Jewish community in Poland.

During these fifty years of immortal glory and valiant deeds, of important victories and dreadful catastrophes occurring at every turn of Jewish — and our civilization's — history, you never wavered. You remained true to your convictions and to your ideals. Your pen, which served to educate generations of Jewish working people — from Hersh Lekert to the leader of the Warsaw ghetto uprising Michal Klepfisz — never ceased to defend the basic principles of Socialism and of the BUND ideology. Your pen has always served the cause of Truth. During the fifty years of your militant journalistic activities on both sides of the

Atlantic Ocean, you became a leading personality in the family of Jewish men of letters; but you remained Zion — the Bundist. In the more than two-score years of your activities in the United States, your close contact with the Jewish Socialist movement was never interrupted, your passionate interest for all expressions of Jewish life and Jewish endeavor never weakened.

Sincerely appreciating your achievements in the field of Jewish Socialist writing and thinking, deeply admiring your life of a relentless knight and fighter for Socialism, with love and gratitude for you as a comrade and a Bundist, we present you with this citation on the occasion of your seventy-fifth birthday. BUND followers from all corners of the globe thus give vent to their most sincere feelings of love and comradesly affection.

WORLD COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
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JEWISH SOCIALIST ORGANIZATIONS

## FROM OUR MOVEMENT

*New Books* — A number of new books were published and are about to be published by the UNSER TSAIT Publishing House in New York. These include an anthology of the writings of Shloime Mendelsohn, *Shloime Mendelsohn — His Life and His Work*; the fourth and fifth volume of I. I. Trunk's *Poland*; and a volume dedicated to the memory of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, murdered by the Soviet secret police, to be published shortly.

*New York* — The New York BUND Group adopted a plan of future activities which includes the establishment of a "Cultural League" which would organize a regular series of lectures and a course of study in selected fields. On August 20th a lecture by J. B. Salutsky-Hardmann on the "Peculiarities of American Political and Public Life" was organized by the group.

*Chicago* — The annual series of meetings and public gatherings organized by the Chicago Friends of the BUND was held, as usual, during the first week of August. Emanuel Nowogrudsky attended the gatherings on behalf of the BUND World Coordinating Committee, while M. Polin, chairman of the Chicago Friends of the BUND, interrupted his vacation in Europe to head the activities. The collections during the various meetings netted upward of \$2,500 for the World Coordinating Committee.

*Mexico City* — A general membership meeting of the BUND Group in Mexico City adopted plans for increasing the number of subscriptions to the monthly UNSER TSAIT and for meeting the group's pledge of financial support to the World Coordinating Committee. FOROIS, the BUND organ in Mexico City, is steadily gaining in popularity. The Society for Culture and Aid adopted a resolution protesting the anti-Jewish regulations in the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies."

*France* — The national convention of the BUND in France, held in July, discussed anew the resolution on Israel and Zionism adopted at the Second World Conference of Bundist Organizations. After prolonged debate the convention reaffirmed the French BUND'S acceptance of the controversial resolution.

On June 26th a monument commemorating the 120,000 French Jews transported by the Germans to the death camps in Oswiecim (Auschwitz) was unveiled in a Paris cemetery. The BUND delegation, consisting of three former inmates of the death camp, placed a wreath on the monument.

On July 17th the Jewish Socialist Verband (BUND) organized a public mass meeting to commemorate the

25,000 Jews deported on July 17, 1942 from the Velodrome d'Hiver.

The BUND groups in France are also active in the field of child education. Several children's homes were established, as well as a Preventorium named after B. Vladek. A number of children's concerts took place in the month of July in Paris.

*Belgium* — On August 7th the Socialist Youth Organization TSUKUNFT in Brussels opened its camp on the seashore. A number of guests — members of the BUND Group in Brussels — attended the opening ceremonies.

The S. Mendelsohn Children's Home ended its school year with a public gathering on July 22nd, at which were also present guests from America — J. Yeshurin and his wife. The children read some of the examination papers, recited, and played in a number of skits.

The Brussels BUND Group mapped its plans for the forthcoming action designed to increase the number of subscribers to the monthly UNSER TSAIT.

*England* — The Jewish Socialist Organization in England recently organized a get-together to celebrate

the 60th birthday of one of its most active leaders and founders, B. Rosner. The gathering was a marked success.

The Youth Group in London established a children's club which, it is hoped, will eventually lead to the founding of a children's organization in London. Part of the activities of this club is the study of the Yiddish language.

On the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the death of Artur Zygielbojm, his friends and former associates gathered at the crematorium around the urn containing his ashes. Lucjan Blit addressed the gathering.

*Germany* — On July 30th was held a conference of delegates from the various BUND groups in the German camps. Representatives of the American Jewish Labor Committee also took part in the deliberations which were concerned with current problems of the BUND membership.

### CORRECTION

Our Bulletin from June - July 1949 was marked Vol. II, No. 17. The figure should have been Vol. II, No. 18-19.

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