

WP and SYL Picket Beigin Welcome Rally in New York

By AL FINDLEY

Menachim Beigin, former Irgun commander, received a welcome in New York—but not the kind of welcome he had expected. Expecting the honors accorded a VIP, he received a welcome befitting a fascist pretender.

The reason for Beigin's trip to the United States was to get financial and moral support for the Heiruth (Freedom) Party formed by organizational merger of the Irgun and the Revisionists in Palestine. There was no need for a political rapprochement, since the two groups both claimed the mantle of the Jabotinsky movement. It was a struggle of cliques. The Irgunists won, and now have the overwhelming control in the combined movement. They have installed as the editor-in-chief of

their newspaper Uri Zvi Greenberg, theoretician of the Brith Baryonim.

The propaganda experts of the American League for a Free Palestine attempt to act as statesman and proclaim that Beigin, the "probable next premier of Palestine," is here on a good-will tour. Beigin did not fail to act also as the "commander-in-chief" and "review the troops" of the Betar, a semi-military revisionist youth organization.

Large advertisements appeared in the newspapers, announcing a welcoming committee of governors, rabbis, congressmen, preachers and Philip Murray. Many of these people (including Murray) later withdrew their names, under the pressure of Jewish labor leaders, the Einstein statement and the Lazon open letter.

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Picket Beigin Meeting...

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The long-awaited public appearance—and the only one scheduled—took place in Carnegie Hall on Monday, December 6. Despite the huge build-up, the comparatively small hall was only half filled.

PICKET LINE IN ACTION

In front of the hall, the audience were handed leaflets distributed by Hashomer Hatzair, copies of "Haganah Speaks" distributed by Habonim (Paole Zion youth group) and a Workers Party statement. They were also confronted by a spirited picket line of over 45 people. Last minute attempts by the Workers Party to unify the actions failed. However, in action, there was friendship and coordination of the militants of all three groups.

"Haganah Speaks" carried an article attacking Beigin with the main theme that the Irgun had "jeopardized Israel-UN relations." It mentioned that Irgun squads, in 1946, knifed the textile strikers at Petach Tikvah. It also deplored the fact that the official Zionist leadership did not speak out against Beigin and his party.

The Hashomer Hatzair leaflet was better. It branded Beigin as a gangster with a "gun for hire," "schooling in the tenets of the Nazi primer," who had "once courted British pounds and Italian lire and now looks for American dollars." It accused the Irgun of trying to smuggle arms on the Altaleno for a coup d'état against the Israeli government. The Hasho-

mer Hatzair called on the people of the U. S. "to boycott Beigin and the Irgun." Despite many positive features, the Hashomer leaflet was wrong in its **complete** dismissal of the role of the **actual fight** the Irgun did carry out against the British.

The Workers Party leaflet, reproduced in full in this issue of LABOR ACTION, admitted the fight of the Irgun, but pointed out the reactionary and fascist aims of its leadership.

The high point of the evening was the picket line. Manned mainly by enthusiastic members of the Socialist Youth League, the picket line was one of the most impressive and disciplined ever arranged for political purposes. The rest of the participants in the picket line were members of the Workers Party, plus some student members of Hashomer Hatzair.

IRGUN POGROM RECALLED

The placards carried by the opponents of the fascist Beigin reminded the people of the only pogrom organized by Jews—the Irgun slaughter of Arabs at Deir Yassin: "Remember Deir Yassin, the Mufti's only victory." Another placard read: "For Arab-Jewish cooperation — against Deir Yassins." The main theme of the signs stressed the fascist danger of the Irgun-Revisionist Party, now call-

ing itself Heiruth (Freedom) Party. Some of the other slogans were: "Defend Israel's democratic institutions," "Mr. Beigin, are strikes treason?" "Beigin's Party, a threat to Israeli democratic institutions."

The spirited demonstrators shouted the slogans written on the signs and chanted such slogans as "No welcome to Mussolini's friends." The enthusiasm of the demonstrators was so great that new slogans kept bubbling up from the ranks. In addition, the pickets turned the jeers of the enraged Irgunists into new slogans: "Go back to Moscow" was met with the spontaneous slogan: "Washington, Moscow, keep out of Palestine!" "Agents of Bevin" got the response "Down with Bevin—Down with Beigin!"

It is interesting to report that after the picketing ended, LABOR ACTION Reporter Al Findley, who acted as picket captain, entered the meeting to cover it for this paper. No sooner was he in the hall than he was "invited" to leave, and was given a sturdy escort to the door.

The barring of the L.A. reporter prevents a fuller coverage of the actual meeting. But press reports show that Mr. Beigin was forced to devote the major portion of his speech to repudiate the charges of "fascist" which have been made against him.

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