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United Nations Mediator Assassinated

On September 17, 1948, the world was shocked by the horrifying news of the assassination in the Jewish section of Jerusalem of Count Folke Bernadotte, who was slain by a Jewish terrorist group. The mediator's French assistant was also killed.

It is now but a few months since the proclamation of the State of Israel. Yet this new state is already involved in a murderous war with the neighboring Arab states, a war temporarily halted due to the efforts of Count Bernadotte. The new state has already suffered from atrocities committed by the Arabs; its own armed forces, on the other hand, have likewise committed atrocious acts against the Arab population. The State of Israel, in the short period of its existence, has already created a new refugee problem, this time involving Arabs, awaiting—so far, in vain—the permission of the Israeli Government to return to their homes.

The Jewish Socialists, who are opposed to the Zionist view that the solution of the Jewish problem is to be found in the establishment of an independent Jewish state with all institutions and modes of procedure associated with modern statehood; and who, conversely, believe that the only true and lasting solution to the Jewish problem is the establishment of a Socialist order all over the world which would provide economic equality and security for all peoples; those Jewish Socialists

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feel extremely disturbed by events in Palestine, particularly by the assassination of the United Nations Mediator.

There is little doubt that this shameful deed was committed by a fascist Jewish group. We do not doubt the sincerity of the official statements both by Israeli Government officials and by Zionist leaders in Palestine and elsewhere statements strongly condemning the Stern Gang. We feel certain that the Israeli Government is doing its utmost to apprehend the fascist murderers and bring them to justice. But we cannot close our eyes to the frame of mind prevailing among the Jews in Palestine as well as outside its boundaries, a mental attitude which paved the way for acts of bloody terror such as the assassination of Count Bernadotte. Years of terrorist activities committed against the civil

servants and soldiers of the British Administration in Palestine, tolerated by the Jewish community in Palestine and extolled by all trends of Jewish nationalism throughout the world, the Jewish community in the United States included, created an atmosphere in which bloody schemes contrived and propagandized by nationalistic fanatics thrive and develop. The nationalist hysteria enveloping all phases of Jewish life as a result of vigorous Zionist propaganda; the wave of hatred against the British Socialist Government; the persecutions and terror practiced against anyone within the Jewish communities daring to oppose the Zionist views; the new adherence to the principles of force and might rather than to those of justice and international brotherhood; these factors, as well as others resulting from the Zionists' domination of Jewish life, made the Jewish community in Palestine a hotbed of various political terrorists and assassins. These factors decreased the Jewish community's resistance to fascist-minded

minority groups; what is more, they promoted an inclination to regard the terrorists as national heroes rather than to condemn their brutal practices.

This general atmosphere now culminated in the shameful assassination of Count Bernadotte. It is to be hoped that the reverberation throughout the world of this bloody deed will sober the inflamed minds of the majority of Jews and will be instrumental in eliminating from Jewish life not only the assassins themselves, but also the ideological, emotional, and psychological attitudes on which terrorist groups thrive. It is further to be hoped that the death of Count Bernadotte will not bring to an end the work of mediation between the Arabs and the Jews, a task more vital now than ever before. Only a peaceful solution of the troubled Palestine problem, a solution which would lay the foundation for cooperation between the Arabs and the Jews and for the two peoples' future advancement and well-being, will be durable and just.

World Conference for Yiddish Culture

A conference to advance modern Jewish culture convened in New York on September 16-September 22, 1948, with delegates representing the Jewish daily press, Jewish literature, literary and scientific societies, schools and educational organizations, and various other Jewish cultural organizations throughout the world. The initiative for calling the World Conference came from the Jewish Labor Committee in New York. A special organizing committee, composed of representatives of the Jewish Labor Committee, the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Literary Society of New York, and other groups, did all the complex preparatory work. More than five hundred delegates from all parts of the world where Jews dwell and try to establish their own cultural life attended the conference. Among the delegates were representatives from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Australia, and Palestine, in addition to the American representatives.

The fact that it was the Jewish Labor Committee that initiated the World Conference for Yiddish Culture is not an accidental one. It emphasizes the part played by the Jewish working population in found-

ing and developing modern Yiddish cultural values. The action of the Jewish Labor Committee is in line with the pre-war tradition of the Jewish labor movement in Europe. Whereas the Zionist trend was always to neglect the various problems of Jewish culture outside Palestine and to treat contemptuously the Yiddish language in favor of the Hebrew, which was promoted as the official language of the Palestinian Jewish communities, the labor movement emphasized the importance of developing and perpetuating Jewish cultural values in the so-called Diaspora.

Even though the delegates to the conference were representative of various Jewish cultural organizations and groups, they belonged, politically, to two main camps: the pro-Zionist and the Socialist. Among the Socialist-minded delegates were many Bundists: the BUND representation at the conference numbered almost 100 delegates.

It was agreed in advance that the conference would be devoted exclusively to cultural problems; and that it would specifically avoid political issues. This point was made in order to prevent the conference from be-

coming a political battling ground. The main task of the conference was envisaged as the establishment of a world-wide body for the coordination of Jewish cultural activities, a body with sufficient authority to unite and direct the manifold manifestations of cultural interests among Jews in various countries and to encourage cultural activities in countries where no such activities are at present conducted. In this respect the conference was a notable success.

The Jewish Labor BUND, historically and ideologically one of the most important factors in modernizing Jewish life in general and Jewish cultural activities in particular, decided, in view of the specific circumstances created after the wholesale slaughter of six million Jews by the Nazis, to forego its traditional reluctance of collaborating with nationalistic elements and to work together with all those sincerely interested in promoting and advancing Jewish cultural activities. It was this determination that brought the Bundist delegates to the conference, even though many among them harbored serious misgivings as to the possibility of bridging the schism between Jewish nationalism and Socialism, even in purely cultural matters.

Despite the mutual agreement to avoid political issues during the conference, some political clashes took place. The pro-Zionist delegates proposed a resolution of greetings for the State of Israel, even though they were well aware of the Socialists' different view regarding this question. The BUND faction at the conference issued the following statement in this controversy:

"The BUNDIST delegates consider improper the introduction by the majority of the delegates to the Congress for Yiddish Culture the problem of the State of Israel—a purely political question.

"Maintaining that these problems do not come under the competence of the Conference and should not have

been introduced for consideration there, we nevertheless deem it necessary, in view of the circumstances, to make clear our views regarding the resolution of the majority.

"We thus state:

(1) We oppose the resolution adopted by the Committee majority;

(2) In accordance with the widely known view of the BUND, we hold that the State of Israel solves neither the Jewish problem in general nor the question of the future of the Jewish settlements in Palestine. Moreover, as evidenced by the experiences of the past months, the establishment of the Jewish state carries grave dangers both for the Palestinian settlements and for Jewish communities the world over.

"The State of Israel, we are convinced, is not the proper solution to the Jewish problem. In the course of its history the Jewish people became a people of the world. Spread all over the world, our fate is intimately tied to the development of the peoples among which we dwell. Only by transforming the present order of the world, only by winning, side by side and together with the Socialist and progressive elements all over the earth, a truly socialist order, conditions can be created under which the Jewish people in all countries, including the Jewish community in Palestine built and developed with such effort and sacrifices, will be insured against persecution and extermination and afforded the opportunity to develop its own national cultural values as well as to strengthen its existence as a nation.

"We regard the Palestinian Jewish community as an important member of our national organism; and we hold that in the present tragic period of Jewish history it could bring much aid to the struggle of Jewish existence all over the world, if it revised its negative attitude toward the Yiddish language and afforded that language full rights and recognition in Palestine."

The Case of Ilse Koch

According to a recent announcement by the United States military authorities in Germany, Ilse Koch, the wife of the notorious "Butcher of Buchenwald" and a sadistic Nazi herself, will be free to walk outside the prison gates in less than a year from now. Tried, convicted, and duly sentenced to life imprisonment for her beastly conduct and inhuman practices in the Buchenwald concentration camp, Frau Koch's term in prison has been reduced, by order of the highest American military officials, to four years from the time of her imprisonment on October 18, 1945. The official reason for commuting the sentence, as explained by General Clay, is the supposed lack of sufficient evidence that Ilse Koch did indeed take part in some of the more debauched practices that went on in Buchenwald; that she indeed had prisoners beaten and murdered so that she could experience the thrill of watching a helpless man die; and that she had indeed selected her victims according to the adaptability of their skin for the manufacture of artistic lampshades for her neat and elegant apartment. And so Ilse Koch was shown clemency—in the name of justice.

But it is a strange justice indeed which can be used as the instrument of an ill-conceived and misunderstood policy of attempting to win the Germans—yes, even the still unconverted Nazis—"at all costs"; that makes unwarranted use of the clemency right when a multitude of witnesses testified as to the type of depravity which made up the character of Ilse Koch; and that allows the criminal to go free even as the brethren of her victims, those who witnessed her trafficking in human skin and who felt the calculated cruelty of her glance during many of her infamous "selections," are still held in the former concentration camps of Germany with not a place on the earth to go and not a glimmer of hope of starting a new, useful, and happy life.

Yet it would appear that they, the unhappy Displaced Persons in Germany, Austria, and Italy were the real victors of this war. For who awaited more impatiently the hour of victory than they, the inmates of Buchenwald and of Dachau, of Flossenberg and Mauthausen? And when the Nazi legions crumbled, who felt more than they the thrill of anticipated freedom and the relief of being removed from the merciless custody of nefarious sadists such as Frau Ilse Koch? Yet they, the wretched victors, are still behind barbed-wire fences, while the former mistress of their lives, the cruel specimen of the defeated "master race" is being granted clemency and the hope of absolute freedom in less than a year.

It is to be assumed that the new twist in the case of Ilse Koch is a move in the struggle for the soul and the recognition of the German people, a struggle waged by the United States and the Soviet Union alike. But it is precisely by moves such as this that the authority of the United States of America in Germany is being undermined. For similar tactics represent a mockery of real justice, of the principles of equality, and of the humanitarian ideals which the American military authorities in Germany ostensibly embrace.

The case of Ilse Koch has already aroused American public opinion to a degree which warranted the appointment of a special congressional committee to investigate the matter. It is to be hoped that the decision of the American military authorities will be overruled. Should this not be the case, world public opinion will be justified in maintaining that, despite noble-sounding American statements, the United States is nullifying her great democratic traditions in occupied Germany.

Socialism Versus Nationalism

Why would *our* adoption of a positive attitude toward the Jewish state be "un-Socialist," while we do not accuse the Socialists of other nations who sup-

port Zionism of being "un-Socialist", merely stating that theirs is a wrong attitude? The answer is indeed a simple one. When Socialists and Socialist parties in

various countries (including Leon Blum, in spite of his Jewish ancestry) voice opinions favoring the Jewish state and the Zionist solution of the Jewish problem, these questions are, for them, of precious little importance in their daily activities and current political struggles. Yet even if, in addition to patting the Zionists on the back every once in a while, these Socialists were to engage in practical work for Zionism,—even then these activities would not take up more than an insignificant fraction of their political energy, of their day-to-day policies, of their true rational and emotional interests. Be it fortunate or be it bad—this is the case. They are not called upon to work, to build, to declare themselves daily for the Jewish state. Thus these people find it so easy to state their sympathy with the Zionist aims—but because of these very same reasons none of us would think of judging (or condemning) their Socialist convictions. Their Socialism the representatives of the “gentile” Socialists show not by adopting a positive or a negative view toward the Jewish state, but by the activities making up 99 percent, if not more, of their life, their work, and their struggle: the fight against their own—and the world’s—reactionary groups, against capitalism, for freedom, for democracy, for the scores upon scores of lesser, more important, and prime postulates of Democratic Socialism. Quite naturally, our appraisal and our attitude toward a “gentile” Socialist party is duly influenced by that party’s views regarding Jews in general, Jewish aims, and anti-Semitism. But—and this is important—we do not identify Jewish aims with Zionist aims, nor do we identify a group’s attitude toward Zionism with its attitude toward the Jewish people. Even as we do not summarily condemn a “gentile” Socialist whose views are pro-Zionist (although we oppose his stand), do we not, on the other hand, call him names because he voices anti-Zionist opinions.

This very same approach also governed our attitude toward the British Labor Party in the past. In past years we never questioned the Labor Party’s Socialist character even though it was the most pro-Zionist group in the international labor movement. We all criticized its views (and not only with regard to Zionism). But—

to repeat—despite its strongly pro-Zionist leanings which were completely foreign to us and which we could not accept, we never ceased regarding the British Labor Party as a *Socialist* party. The Labor Party changed its Palestine policy (how and for what reasons is quite another matter). But because of this change *alone*—even if the change were completely to our liking—it did not become an iota more or less Socialist. True, we feel closer to the Labor Party and it is more dear to us now. But this is due *solely* to its struggle for Socialism, to the truly great historic part it plays as the first group in all history to actually build a structure based upon our common universal ideal of Democratic Socialism. For this reason we feel closer to it, for this reason it is more dear to us, and for this reason it should be closer and more dear to *all* Jewish Socialists—all those who really believe in Socialism, who really want Socialism, who are really convinced that the fate and the interests of the Jewish people are closely tied to the fate of Democratic Socialism, and who are sufficiently far-sighted to realize that, as did the fate of World War II at one time, the fate of democracy and of Democratic Socialism is now being decided on the British Isles.

This attitude toward the British Labor Party we shall undoubtedly retain even if its views on the State of Israel should change in the near or distant future—which, by the way, is not impossible. The Zionists and their helpers will then surely keep daunting us with the names of Attlee and Bevin—even as they are doing now. Their purpose in doing so would, of course, be different then, but the underlying principles, the basic attitude would be the same as it is now; the view that we, Jewish Socialists, BUND members, ought to base our attitude toward nations, peoples, and (non Jewish) political parties solely upon those nations’ and those parties’ attitude to the State of Israel. Once, long ago, the Czar’s henchman Pleve was “alright”, as far as the Zionists were concerned; many years later Zionists held Mussolini in high esteem; for a long period of time Great Britain was “good,” Soviet Russia “bad”; now the situation is reversed—it is the same idea throughout, the same tendency to subordinate all

phases of Jewish life to the momentary interests of Zionist policy, or, at the present time, to the interests of the State of Israel.

If, however, as was mentioned, a positive attitude toward Zionism does not change the political character of the non-Jewish Socialist parties, the story appears in quite a different light in our own case, in the case of Jewish Socialists. As far as we are concerned, we cannot possibly become "only as" pro-Zionist and pro-Israeli as, for instance, Leon Blum. Our field of action is Jewish life. Jewish aims, Jewish hardships, Jewish interests occupy as much the first place of our social activity as do the parallel French problems in the life of Leon Blum. Zionism and the Jewish state cannot, in our case, become merely the subject of political declarations followed by a series of activities wholly unrelated to it. Concerning Jewish problems and Jewish affairs, every view we adopt must be carried out to the limit, must stem from our hearts and our convictions and constantly influence our actions. Were we to become adherents of a Jewish state in Palestine, we have

to fight for this ideal, be ready to offer sacrifices for it, include it in our political program and in our daily activities. Whether we like it or not, in this respect half-measures, half-mouthed declarations, half-hearted actions are not possible. Neither is it possible to retreat—politically—half the way. There can be, at best, retreats in installments: today a little bit, tomorrow a few more steps, and the following day farther still. And thus to the very end.

This is the logic of the situation, the objective compulsion of life. Leon Blum may be a good French Socialist despite his positive attitude toward Zionism; but he could never be simultaneously a French Socialist and a French nationalist. We are in a quite similar position. We, too, can be either Jewish Socialists, or Jewish nationalists, never both.

One cannot appease nationalism. This is the simple truth—one cannot appease even nationalism. Were one to give in just a tiny bit (and more than a tiny bit is already at stake today...)—the results will quickly follow.

A New Line Reversal?

According to a Moscow cable by the United Press, an article on Zionism written by Ilya Ehrenburg, a leading Soviet commentator on foreign affairs, was published in the *Pravda*, official Communist Party organ. "While the Soviet Union unalterably opposes anti-Semitism, which it regards as a cannibalistic survival, it has no sympathy whatever for Zionism," the article said. The cable further states that Ilya Ehrenburg "condemned Zionists as mystics and denied there was any affinity between Jews in different countries. In the Soviet view, he said, the Jewish problem could be solved only by general improvement of the social order in all countries, meaning a Socialist society."

In view of the circumstances under which Soviet writers and commentators ply their trade, there appears to be little doubt that the article marks the beginning of a complete reversal of Communist views on Zionism,

or, rather, a return to the Communists' old attitude, also held by the Jewish Socialist movement, regarding Zionism as a harmful expression of Jewish nationalism. The Soviet Union's approval of Zionist aims was a very recent development, originated after World War II and obviously adopted to further Soviet post-war foreign policy. As could be expected, the Soviet Union's change in views brought about a radical change in the attitude of Jewish Communists the world over, who immediately followed the Soviet lead and began extolling Zionism and its goals. In fact, there could hardly be found a more ardent supporter of the more extreme Zionist methods than a Jewish Communist. The reversal naturally enough brought a deluge of abuse, on the part of Jewish Communist leaders, against the Jewish Labor BUND, which remained opposed to all forms of nationalism, Zionism included.

At the present time it is hard to analyze the exact reasons which apparently caused the Soviet Union to resume its opposition to Zionism. As did the adoption of a positive attitude toward the aim of Jewish statehood several years ago, the new policy is most probably dictated by the exigencies of the Soviet Union's foreign policy. The current drive to uproot nationalist tendencies in Yugoslavia, Poland, and other countries behind

the Iron Curtain, conducted by the Cominform, apparently necessitated a stronger stand against nationalism in general, the Zionists becoming the victims of the general trend. Be this as it may, the Jewish Communists will most probably again follow the Soviet lead, demonstrating anew their role as a mere mouthpiece for the changing requirements of Soviet foreign policy.

BUND Support for the Socialist Party

The Jewish Labor BUND Organization in New York adopted a statement regarding the coming elections and supporting the Socialist Party ticket headed by the well-known American Socialist leader Norman Thomas.

The New York BUND is a Socialist organization which carries on the tradition and the ideals developed during the 50-year existence of the Jewish Labor BUND in the countries of Eastern Europe. Three ideological principles form the basis of the group's credo: independent Socialist policy opposed to the capitalist system and its parties as well as to the totalitarian Communist dictatorship; the desirability of unity of all democratic Socialist forces in this country; opposition to nationalism in any form, including Zionism, leading to the belief that the Jewish problem and all questions derived from it can be solved only in the countries where Jews live and only by the application

of sincerely conceived and actually practiced democratic principles.

The platform of the Socialist Party and its ideals and activities are in full accord with these fundamental principles. The Socialist Party is opposed to the parties of American capitalism as well as to the Communists and the Communist-controlled Wallace Party; the S. P. fights under the banner of independent Socialism and is in favor of Socialist unity; and several statements found in its declaration of principles closely agree with the BUND's views on nationalism and the solution to the Jewish problem.

In view of the foregoing, the New York BUND Organization adopted the resolution of support to the Socialist Party election campaign, calling all its members and sympathizers to do their utmost in helping the Socialist Party of the U.S.A. to emerge from the coming contest stronger and better organized than ever before.

Statement on Israel Adopted by BUND Organizations

The statement concerning the State of Israel, adopted by the executive session of the BUND World Coordinating Committee in June, 1948, and reprinted in the August-September issue of the BULLETIN, caused a great deal of comment and led to a series of violent attacks against the BUND movement on the part of Jewish groups all over the world. All the various political factions in Jewish life, the Communists included, decried the statement as an act of national

treason and conducted a vigorous campaign against the BUND leaders for daring to resist Jewish nationalism and to oppose the Zionist solution of the Jewish problem.

During the months of August and September the statement in question was thoroughly debated in the various BUND organizations throughout the world. As a result, the statement on the State of Israel as

adopted by the executive session in Brussels was accepted by the BUND groups in the United States, France, Belgium, England, Sweden, Australia, in the D.P. camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy, and the BUND group in Brazil. The votes in favor and against the statement divided equally in Argentina, while a majority of the BUND members both in Mexico and

Uruguay voted against the statement. Reports from a few other countries where BUND groups are in existence are still lacking, but the final result is already certain, viz., that a vast majority of the BUND membership and of the BUND groups participating in the World Coordinating Committee were in favor of the statement on Israel as adopted.

Agenda of the Second World Conference of the BUND

Following is the proposed agenda of the Second World Conference of the BUND and Affiliated Jewish Socialist organizations, which opened in New York on October 1, 1948. The conference is to last one week.

1. Reports by the BUND Coordinating Committee, the European Secretariat, and representatives of BUND groups throughout the world.
2. Declaration of socialist principles.
3. Discussion on Jewish life in general and the special tasks of Jewish Socialists:
 - a. Activities in various countries;

- b. Statement on the State of Israel adopted by the BUND Coordinating Committee Executive Session in Brussels, in July 1948.
4. The Jewish Displaced Persons in the European camps.
5. Organizational problems.
6. Elections.

As we are going to press, delegates from Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Cuba, France, Belgium, Switzerland, England, Australia, South Africa and Palestine have already arrived for the Conference.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE of BUNDIST
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