

Wop
**The Jewish
Labor**

STATE LIBRARY CITY OF NEW YORK
6 JUL 1949
LIBRARIES
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. 17.

File 18-197



June-July, 1949

THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM

The fifth annual conference of the American Council for Judaism held in Chicago on April 23, 1949, adopted a statement to the effect that

"Americans of Jewish faith must strive to achieve political, civic, cultural, and social integration with the American people."

Simultaneously the statement expressed vigorous disagreement with those who misrepresent the Jews "either by labeling them as a separate nationality or by seeking to impose upon them special obligations toward the State of Israel". And further—"The contention that there is a Jewish nationalism relating all Jews politically to the State of Israel and Israel to all Jews, makes it vital that we achieve the complete identification of American Jews with the American people".

The American Council for Judaism is today one of the most important forces of American Jewry remaining in opposition to Zionism. By its critical attitude toward the prevailing Zionist current in Jewish life as well as by its relentless efforts to clarify and emphasize the obligations of the Jews and their duties as loyal citizens in the various countries where they live, the Council performs a useful task. It bridles the chauvinistic sentiments of the Zionist-dominated part of the Jewish people and corrects distortions caused by unrestrained Zionist propaganda.

Contents

1. The American Council for Judaism.
2. To Our Readers.
3. The New Immigrants in Israel.
4. Antisemitism in the Soviet Union?
5. David Dubinsky Recalls Erlich-Alter Case.
6. International Socialist Conference in Baarn.
7. An Important Book.
8. From Our Movement.

Yet we strongly disagree with some of the Council's underlying assumptions.

The American Council for Judaism considers the Jews as a mere religious sect; we are convinced that they are a separate nationality. To the American Council for Judaism nationhood without statehood is an imaginary affair; for us it is a reality verified by two thousand years of Jewish history and life outside Palestine. The American Council for Judaism rejects the ties that bind the Jews all over the world into a common *cultural* entity; we acknowledge these ties, and believe that even the part of the Jews which won independent statehood by establishing the State of Israel ought to recognize these very ties instead of attempting to deny them. To the American Council for Judaism the Jews in the United States

are simply citizens of a great democracy who owe allegiance to their ancient religion. We consider the Jewish community in the United States as a part of the Jewish nationality, whether it is aware of it or not. In our opinion there is no conflict between citizenship in the United States or in any other country and recognition of the cultural ties among Jews.

We do not deny that powerful trends of our present way of life accelerate the process of assimilation of the American Jews. What we deny is the desirability and the justification for such a development. We are deeply convinced that preservation of a nationality's identity is anything but detrimental to American

democracy. A Jew who is proud of his cultural heritage makes a better American citizen than one that is ignorant of it and who strives to melt away his national integrity.

As Socialists we strive toward a new way of life, in which economic security and equality along with political democracy and freedom shall permit everyone to preserve his own nationality and identify himself fearlessly with it. As Socialists we seek the solution of the age-old Jewish problem in the creation of a Socialist world, in which all nationalities, regardless of their size, will enjoy free and unrestricted cultural and national advancement.

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.

THE NEW IMMIGRANTS IN ISRAEL

According to eye-witness reports recently received, the atmosphere in Israel is charged with bitterness and resentment. More than 200,000 former DP's from the concentration camps of Germany, Austria, and Italy as well as Jews from some Islamic countries entered Israel in hope of finding there the many promised opportunities of starting a new and peaceful life. What they found was anything but such a chance. The authorities are not even able to provide the flood of new settlers with any living accommodations whatever. Only one third of the new arrivals found quarters in the deserted homes of the forcibly evicted Arabs. More than 150,000 of these unhappy people are placed in camps that bear a dismal resemblance to the dwellings they had but recently left. The lack of adequate food, medical care and proper shelter creates a desperate situation. Some cases of suicide were reported; "squatters" moved into homes of some old timers. There are hunger strikes and angry demonstrations of resentful people who came to the State of Israel tempted by the careless promises of the Zionists.

Israeli opinion is aroused. The press accuses the new arrivals of thievery and other criminal acts. Another segment of public opinion decries the new immigrants' lack of idealism and of the spirit of sacrifice. Leading Zionist personalities demand that the unchecked immigration movement of Jews into Israel be stopped. They believe the gates of the new state should be closed at least temporarily, so that the flood which endangers the young state may be rammed.

There is no doubt whatever that the new state is not yet ready to accept as many immigrants as are directed into it. The Negeb desert could conceivably be developed by idealistic pioneers into an habitable region. The area, however, is not a territory where tired and exhausted people who had gone through

the ordeal of Nazi persecution and years of exile could gain a new start toward a peaceful life—the only thing they desire. We do not deny the right of Zionist pioneers to sacrifice their lives on the shrine of the State of Israel. What we resent is the Zionist practice of luring plain people, who have no desire to do pioneer work, with all manner of promises, only to use them to develop the deserts.

Let us not forget that the plight of the new arrivals in the State of Israel, terrible as it is at the present time, would have been even worse had the Arab population not been driven from the Israeli territory. At present, when more than half a million Arab displaced persons are demanding permission to return to their former homes, the State of Israel is not in a position to provide shelter and work for the new Jewish settlers. How the State of Israel could possibly cope with a Jewish immigration of any scope without the "miracle" of the vanished Arabs is beyond anybody's imagination. Yet the Arab refugee problem remains most urgent, and it is to be hoped that it will be solved according to humane principles rather than by the methods of irresponsible nationalism.

Before the establishment of Israel and while the Arab-Jewish hostilities were in progress, Zionists were quite boastful about the immigration possibilities of the State of Israel. When the British Government mentioned the possibility, under certain conditions, of permitting 100,000 new Jews to enter Palestine, the Zionists were loudly resentful at the suggestion. And even now, when some of the more responsible Zionists demand that immigration be restricted, the majority of the Zionist rulers of Israel maintain that "the more people the better for the State of Israel. We need them for two purposes: to fight the Arabs and to develop the desert. We regret the casualties, but they are necessary if we want the State of Israel".

State versus human lives is the slogan of all nationalism. The Jewish brand is no exception.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SOVIET UNION?

Recent reports from the Soviet Union tell us an old story about a new purge within the ranks of Soviet men of letters. Soviet purges are no longer news. The new purge, however, has peculiar distinctions. Unusual is the purpose of this new house-cleaning: The official slogan is to get rid of individuals offending the patriotic sentiments of plain Russian people by promoting "cosmopolitanism". The Kremlin bosses came to the conclusion that cosmopolitanism or internationalism is nothing but the *gospel of Wall Street*. By promoting these sentiments, they say, the United States undermines the independence of states and nations and consequently paves the way for world domination. As time goes on, more and more distinguished authors and scientists are caught in the witch hunt and brand-marked as confounded cosmopolitans. No restraint whatever is being used in upbraiding and vilifying these doomed individuals. Until now more than one hundred famous intellectu-

als have already been taken to task for the new "crime." What is rather remarkable is that the majority of them are Soviet citizens of *Jewish* origin. It seems that the authorities take pleasure in emphasizing the Jewish ancestry of these individuals. The official Soviet publications invariably mention their Jewish names, even though many of them never used these names at all.

The procedure applied in this purge is new. The Soviet system being what it is, there is no doubt that the new technique of putting an accusing finger to the Jewish origin of the victim and of revealing his Jewish name is prescribed from high quarters. Small wonder that rumors about a revival of anti-Semitism in Russia are prevalent. Reactionary forces in the old Russia often used the Jews as a scapegoat in order to eschew responsibility for their deeds. Could it be that the Stalin regime now follows a similar pattern?

David Dubinsky recalls Erlich-Alter Case

On April 23, 1949, the League for Industrial Democracy awarded to David Dubinsky a citation in recognition of his outstanding achievement in the labor movement of the United States. In his address, expressing his gratitude for the distinction rendered him by the League, David Dubinsky described the part played by American organized labor during the war years. Referring to the confusion reigning among American liberals, he said:

"It was then very fashionable to confuse Joseph Stalin with George Washington. An ambassador wrote a movie script to prove that there was really little difference between Vyshinsky and Oliver Wendell Holmes. The fellow traveller became a bed fellow. For anyone to point out that Russia was still a dictatorship was not only a crime against humanity; it was also bad taste.

"How well I remember. I was then at the very center of an attempt to protest the lynching of

Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter, leaders of the Jewish and Socialist Bund of Poland. Stalin gave this bloody proof, right in the middle of the war, that he had not forgotten and would not forget his private war against true democracy.

"Only recently I thought back on all the difficulty we had to hold such a meeting. It was brought to mind by the world-wide protest against the trial and sentencing of Cardinal Mindzenty. Yet remember: Mindzenty did get something resembling a trial, followed by a life sentence. Ehrlich and Alter were killed in secrecy—without a hearing, a trial, or even public execution. Yet for Ehrlich and Alter there could only be organized a little meeting because the liberals, yes, the American liberals, and even trade unionists, would not have it otherwise.

One CIO leader was told by another that if he dared to come he would have his nose pushed in. A liberal New York newspaper

promised to run an editorial against Russian terror but somehow never got around to it. A magazine editor, who dared to protest the red lynching in a liberal magazine, lost his job. A trade union editor who participated fared no better. A United States Senator, of unquestioned liberal persuasion, failed to make an awaited personal appearance. Finally, an outstanding Socialist leader told some friends that maybe it really was a mistake to find fault with the Soviet Union.

"Together with a few others, we felt we had no one to consult except our own consciences.

We then decided that even if all the world rejected us, even if we stood alone, entirely alone, we would not surrender. We would protest; we would cry out against this crime; we would continue to fight alongside Russia against the Nazi foe, but that we would not sell our souls in the bargain.

"I see, in this company this afternoon, the faces of some who had the courage to stand up and be counted. I think that time has paid them the tribute of clear vision and far-sightedness."

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

On May 14—17, 1949, an international Socialist conference was held in Baarn, the Netherlands. The Poale Zion delegation from the State of Israel was absent, as it was during the previous Socialist conference. It is presumed that the Israeli Socialists' absence was dictated by their attempt to maintain neutrality in the controversy between the East and the Western democracies..

The Conference debated a number of organizational problems as well as the problem of the proposed European Federation.

Raphael Ryba, of the BUND delegation, delivered a speech in which he decried the failure of the occupying powers to effect the de-Nazification of Germany. He then spoke on the problem of anti-Semitism. "At the same time that attempts were begun in various countries to revive reactionary forces," the speaker charged, "anti-Semitic propaganda was greatly increased. * * * In Sweden, for instance, a central distributing point for anti-Semitic literature

was established. I have similar facts available concerning anti-Semitic activities in other countries, including France, not to speak of Germany, where anti-Semitic sentiments persist since the time of the Nazis. It is true that anti-Semitism hurts the Jewish population first of all; but anti-Semitic tendencies endanger democracy and the peace as well. We thus maintain that the question of combatting anti-Semitism should properly be debated at a COMISCO conference and should be placed on the political agenda of the particular Socialist parties as a burning problem of our days."

The Conference, after a debate, unanimously decided that the COMISCO Secretariat present to the next conference data concerning the facts mentioned by Raphael Ryba, and that the problem of combatting anti-Semitism be placed on the agenda.

The BUND World Coordinating Committee delegation to the Conference consisted of Alexander Minc and Raphael Ryba.

THE STARS BEAR WITNESS

by Bernard Goldstein. Translated and edited by
Leonard Shatzkin. Viking Press, \$3.50

The author of this recently published book is a distinguished member of the Jewish Labor Movement *Bund* in Poland who went through the ordeal of the Nazi occupation of Poland and who participated in the heroic uprising of the Jewish population in the Warsaw ghetto. He is one of the very few who miraculously escaped death. He refused to bow to the yoke of the Communist regime in Poland and came to the United States to escape persecution by the red "liberators". His book is a touching account of Jewish life in Warsaw under the Nazis, of boundless misery and of untold heroism. But the author rarely mentions his own suffering on the pages of this remarkable book. His attention is always fixed on the lot of his brethren in misery. Thus his book is a dignified memorial for hundreds of plain people who lived as martyrs and died as soldiers for the loftiest ideals of mankind, a tribute to the unknown heroes of the underground mass resistance led by the *Bund* Movement in Poland. It is the heroic spirit of the underground movement which led to the Warsaw ghetto uprising that permeates the pages of this story of the Polish Jews' life and death.

With his book Bernard Goldstein fulfilled an obligation toward the annihilated Jews of Warsaw. His account is a remarkable contribution to the story of Jewish sufferance under the Nazis.

THE STARS BEAR WITNESS was originally written in Yiddish and published by the BUND's publishing firm "Unser Tsait". Victor Shulman, former executive secretary of the daily Jewish Socialist

daily "Folkstsaitung", was instrumental in presenting this book to the Jewish readers in the United States. We owe him our gratitude for the good work he so willingly did. The translating and editing of the English version, done by L. Shatzkin, is also excellent.

It may be fitting to close this short review with a quotation from an appraisal of Bernard Goldstein's work by Mr. Norman Thomas:

THE STARS BEAR WITNESS, by Bernard Goldstein, should prove a monument more enduring than bronze to human endurance, courage, and capacity for loyal fellowship among Polish Jews against a background of sustained cruelty and hate beyond human imagination to picture. No single book gives so terrible and comprehensive a record of the horrors of war and race hatred at their worst. Most of us have known in outline the story of the Jewish community in Poland and its extermination. This soberly written personal narrative, with the strength of understatement, gives an account of the process which would be unendurable reading except that its revelation of human infamy is lightened by stories of the heroism in the ghetto unsurpassed in history. The story is not relieved by a happy ending or liberation.

The author, whose continued existence is a marvel, finally had to escape from the home he loved when it fell under Communist rule. The crowning wonder is that he and his other survivors of the Jewish Socialist *Bund* in the lands which they have found refuge still have faith and courage to plan and work for a better world.

FROM OUR MOVEMENT

Sixth Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Special memorial meetings organized by the BUND groups to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto were held throughout the world. These meetings were better attended than similar gatherings in previous years, and were also

marked by more elaborate arrangements. We received reports about meetings held in New York, Chicago, Montreal, Mexico City, several cities in Sweden, Paris, London and Brussels. A special anthology, entitled *THE HEROIC STRUGGLE*, was published by the Executive Committee of Bundist groups in Germany.

UNSEE

In co
of subs
tion of
the BU
100 ra
intens
reader

The A

The
lished
Thou
tender
collec
ME
to ga
gaini
group

Max

Th
gani
birth
great
Wor
mess

A N

A
arr
form
new
and
BU

Be

gar
the
gal

D

Je

UNSER TSAIT Drive

In connection with the drive to double the number of subscribers to UNSER TSAIT, monthly publication of the BUND World Coordinating Committee, the BUND Organization in Toronto decided to order 100 rather than 60 copies of the magazine, and to intensify the efforts to find new subscribers and readers.

The BUND Group in Argentina

The BUND Group in Buenos Aires recently published a collection of articles under the title "Our Thought", designed to counteract the pro-Zionist tendencies prevalent in Jewish public opinion. A collection for the Paris Bundist daily, UNSER SHTIME (Our Voice), was recently concluded. The drive to gain new subscribers for UNSER TSAIT is also gaining momentum. J. Lipski is secretary of the group.

Maxim Stern—Sixty Years Old

The BUND Organization in Rio de Janeiro organized a banquet in connection with the 60th birthday of its renowned leader, Maxim Stern. A great many BUND groups as well as the BUND World Coordinating Committee sent telegraphic messages of congratulation to the gathering.

A New BUND Group in Sweden

A group of young Bundists from Poland, recently arrived in Treleborg, Sweden, banded together to form the newest BUND group in that country. The new group decided on a program of regular meetings and talks and already remains in contact with the BUND Center Committee in Stockholm.

Berl Rosner—Sixty Years Old

The Jewish Socialist Organization in England organized a banquet to celebrate the 60th birthday of the renowned BUND leader Berl Rosner. The gathering took place in London on April 23.

Dr. B. C. Hoffman (Zivion)—Seventy-Five Years Old

Dr. B. C. Hoffman (Zivion), one of the best-known Jewish newspaper columnists in America, is now 75.

Dr. Hoffman joined the old BUND in 1898; ever since that time he faithfully served the cause of Jewish Socialism.

In connection with his 75th birthday, the E. Laub Publishing House published a volume of Dr. Hoffman's selected writings, *Throughout Fifty Years*. A special meeting organized by the New York BUND Organization took place on June 11th in the New School for Social Research auditorium, where a citation was presented to the distinguished journalist.

Second Issue of YUGNT VEKER

The second issue of YUGNT VEKER, the organ of the Bundist Youth Organization TSUKUNFT, was recently published in Paris. The issue contains a number of interesting articles as well as the text of the declaration of the Bundist Youth Movement in Poland, familiar to the readers of our *Bulletin*.

All YUGNT VEKER subscribers also received a special French-language publication of the TSUKUNFT in France.

Reception Meetings for Jewish Labor Committee Representatives

The representatives of the American Jewish Labor Committee, who visited several European countries while en route to the State of Israel, were warmly received at special reception meetings by the BUND Organizations in Paris and Brussels. The Paris meeting took place on May 11 and was exceptionally well attended. 500 people attended the gathering in Brussels.

May Day Celebrations

New York—This year the Social Democratic Federation inexplicably refused to agree to organize a joint May Day celebration of all parts of the Socialist movement, such as had taken place in previous years. The New York BUND Committee thus accepted the invitation of the Socialist Party to celebrate May Day jointly, a decision which was upheld almost unanimously by a general membership meeting of the New York BUND Organization. A joint May Day Committee of the two participating groups was formed, plans for the

meeting to be held at the Hotel Diplomat were formulated, and a May Day appeal in Yiddish and English was published and distributed in several thousand copies.

The BUND group decided to come to the joint meeting in an organized fashion. The BUND membership, about 400 strong, gathered for a short session, after which they marched through the New York streets in a parade of their own to the joint May Day meeting.

The joint meeting, attended by more than a thousand, was a marked success. On behalf of the BUND group the audience was addressed by Emanuel Scherer.

The May Day banquet of the Socialist Party took place on April 29. The BUND group delegated Emanuel Nowogrudsky and Emanuel Scherer to represent it at this banquet. Emanuel Scherer and Bernard Goldstein represented the BUND Organization at the Jewish Socialist Verband banquet which took place on May 1.

Several BUND members also addressed special May Day meetings arranged by various branches of the Workmen's Circle and other Jewish labor organizations.

Paris—A public May Day mass meeting was organized by the Socialist Association BUND in Paris and the Paris Workmen's Circle. Representatives of the Association, the Workmen's Circle, the Children's Friends League, the Youth Organization TSU-KUNFT, and the Rumanian Refugees occupied the chairman's platform. The meeting was presided over by Raphael Ryba. In addition to the chairman, Manya Reinhart and P. Shrager addressed the gathering. An appropriate artistic program helped to make the meeting a success.

Mexico City—The BUND Group in Mexico City and the Association for Culture and Aid organized a May Day meeting at the Cultural Center. The gathering was addressed by J. Zakhariash, Chairman of the BUND Group in Mexico; S. Yeziar; J. Rotenberg; T. Mayzel; and B. Shefner, of New York City.

Germany—The Executive Committee of BUND Groups in Germany organized May Day celebrations

in all camps where BUND groups exist. Special May Day literature was distributed in the camps, and speakers were made available by the Executive Committee.

Rome—A Bundist May Day gathering and banquet was organized on April 30th at the cooperative "Reconstruction". Mr. and Mrs. M. Rubinstein of Mexico City were guests at the gathering.

After an address by Orbach, an artistic program including music, poetry, recitations, etc., followed. M. Rubinstein, in his concluding address, emphasized the efforts of labor organizations in the Americas to aid the refugees.

Tel Aviv—Despite transport difficulties in Tel Aviv, 80 Bundists gathered on May 1 to exchange reminiscences and experiences. Similar groups in Haifa and other localities took part in separate celebrations.

A collection for the monthly "Unser Tsait" brought \$50. It was decided to establish a Bundist "Home" in Tel Aviv and to organize a general gathering of Bundists from various parts of the country to coincide with the time of arrival of the American Jewish Labor Committee delegation. The gathering sent fraternal greetings to all Bundists throughout the world.

Stockholm—As in previous years, the BUND Group in Stockholm took part in the gigantic May Day parade of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. The BUND Group marched at the head of the parade under a banner of their own and carrying slogans in Yiddish and Swedish. About 100 Bundists took part in the parade.

On April 30 a May Day banquet for BUND members and sympathizers took place. Paul Olberg delivered the May Day address, while two well-known artists took part in the musical program.

The Stockholm BUND Committee published a special May Day appeal which stressed the Bundists' determination to fight every form of aggression, their community of interests with the international camp of democratic and Socialist forces, and their unflinching devotion to the ideals of liberitarian Socialism.