

# Statements on Palestine

In connection with the current discussion within the various BUND groups and organizations regarding the Palestine problem, we bring below a few of the resolutions and statements adopted by some of these groups. Although these materials antedate the United Nations decision on the partition of Palestine, it is thought worthwhile to present here the views of BUND groups throughout the world concerning this major development in Jewish post-war life.

## **Statement on Palestine and Zionism issued by the New York BUND Organization, 1947**

The development of the Jewish Community in Palestine, its future advancement, the import it has acquired among the Jews all over the world after the annihilation of the European Jews by the Nazis, and the international efforts being made to solve the Jewish problem — urgently require that we apply the general principles of the BUND ideology to the situation in Palestine and that we formulate the attitude of the BUND toward this problem.

Any solution of the Palestine problem contradictory to the principles of democracy and justice is bound to be wrong. The only way out from the present situation is to achieve independence for the country as well as freedom for its entire population by a guarantee of the national rights of both communities.

A simple majority rule is not advisable under the prevailing conditions, while a minority rule over the majority is even less satisfactory. The concentration of the Jews as well as of the Arabs in separate districts of the country makes possible the application of the principles of territorial and cultural autonomy within

the boundaries of a common democratic state based on the principles of equal community rights for both Jews and Arabs. Only a solution creating an atmosphere of real democracy and freedom, of international brotherhood and mutual respect, will establish proper conditions for the future advancement of the Jewish community in Palestine.

Aware of the achievements of the Jewish community in Palestine, especially in the realm of economic rehabilitation of the country, social security, and national self-administration, we should not, however, disregard its faults, caused mainly by the Zionist ideological trend with which the community became imbued. Particularly dangerous and harmful are the worsening of relations with the Arab population and the curse imposed upon the Yiddish language, which tends to estrange the Jewish population in Palestine from Jewish life all over the world.

In accordance with the above-mentioned considerations, we propose the following *basic suggestions for the solution of the Jewish problem*:

(a) The peaceful co-existence of Jews and Arabs must be brought about by the renunciation of the Zionist goal of an independent Jewish state on the part of the Jewish community on one hand; and on the other, by the Arabs' recognition of the basic democratic principle proclaiming that a country belongs to its entire population. Palestine should thus be regarded as belonging both to the Arabs and the Jews.

(b) Palestine should become an independent state. Its freedom and the equal rights of its two communities should be internationally guaranteed. During the transition period, the country should be supervised by the United Nations.

(c) Discriminatory practices of every kind against Jews as well as against non-Jews should be stopped.

(d) Free immigration into Palestine, restricted only by the economic possibilities of the country, should be established. In this respect we do not discriminate between Palestine and other countries into which Jews wish to immigrate.

(e) Palestine is far too small to absorb all the Jewish Displaced Persons. The plight of these grief-stricken victims of Nazism must be ended by allowing free entry into all countries, Palestine included.

(f) All restrictions regarding the use of the Yiddish language should immediately be abolished. Yiddish should enjoy equal rights with any other language.

In connection with our suggestions for the solution of the Palestine problem we deem it advisable to declare:

1) The annihilation of the better part of the Jews by the beasts of Nazi-Germany, completed before the very eyes of the world, could not but increase desperate tendencies among the majority of the Jews still alive; cause many of them to be dominated by dangerous thoughts of divorcing themselves from the world; and help the growth of nationalism among Jews. The basic ideas of Zionism — suspicion of the non-Jewish world, a longing to isolate themselves through the creation of an independent state in Palestine, — embraced under the circumstances large sections of the Jewish population. These nationalist feelings among Jews, expedited by the above-mentioned circumstances, caused influential parts of the Jewish population in the United States, at present the largest Jewish community in the world, to support the Zionist aspirations for a Jewish state in Palestine, even while continuing to proclaim their allegiance to this country and their belief in peaceful cooperation between Jews and non-Jews in the United States.

2) The same nationalist trends made of Palestine a fertile ground for the growth of various extremist Zionist factions and groups; various Jewish terrorist organizations; and the so-called Revisionists, who employ Fascist methods to fight for the establishment of a Jewish state and for their own influence in the Jewish community of Palestine. The mentioned groups are a tremendous danger for the Jewish community in Palestine. They harm the name of Jews throughout the world, and they must therefore be combated with utmost determination. The fact that they are Jewish groups does not detract from their harmfulness, and they should be condemned and opposed by all people who are aware that Fascism is the enemy of mankind.

3) The tense nationalist trend enveloping large sections of the Jewish population paved the way for the irresponsible fight waged by the Zionist camp against the British Labor Government. The Zionist "War against Britain" has converted all those who permitted themselves to become involved in this struggle into enemies of a democratic Socialist government, a government that, despite some wrongs committed by it, is building new foundations for a new order of life and carries the hope of the working population of the world as well as the hope for a real redemption of the Jews. Since we remain convinced that the real solution of the Jewish problem is irrevocably connected with the victory of libertarian Socialism which will replace capitalism by a new way of life based on economic, political, and social democracy, we see but one way for the Jewish working masses, — to share the movement of International Socialism.

4) A Jewish state in Palestine does not constitute a solution of the Jewish problem. The vast majority of the Jews live and will remain living outside Palestine. The abolishment of anti-Semitism and all race discrimination, the granting of equal citizenship rights, and the satisfaction of the national and cultural aspirations of the Jews — this, the real solution of the Jewish problem, will have to be achieved outside the boundaries of Palestine.

5) However, even for the Jewish community in Palestine the creation of a Jewish state in a part of that country is not a solution. Such a Jewish state will inevitably remain too weak to guard its boundaries and its population in case of an armed conflict of some importance. It would become a brewing pot of international machinations, of various military preparations, and of war-mongering. Even barring an open war, the Jewish state will only increase the prevailing tension, insecurity, and danger for the Jewish community. Far from being a solution of the Jewish problem in Palestine, a Jewish state there would create a new permanent problem for the whole world, a new source of complications and dangers, a new source of anxieties for Jews inside and outside Palestine. The actual obstacles against the creation of a Jewish state are more powerful than the forces which favor its establishment and which will be in a position to protect such a creation built on a volcano. As they have been frequently during the past decade, great dangers and bitter disillusionment will be the lot of all those who stake their hopes on the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

6) The future of the Jewish community in Palestine and its advancement cannot be built upon latent

or open war against the Arab majority of the country as well as against the Arab countries surrounding Palestine. However, such a state of affairs would be the inevitable result of a creation of a Jewish state.

7) During the past 2,000 years of Jewish history the Jews became a nation of the world. The wheels of history cannot be turned back. The Jewish nation

scattered all over the world can exist further and develop to the best of its ability only under the conditions of freedom, democracy, and Socialism. Only thus will disappear the evils that raised anti-Semitism and only thus conditions can be created which would halt the sequence of catastrophes suffered by the Jews so frequently throughout their history.

## STATEMENT ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE BUND IN FRANCE (October, 1947)

Jewish life all over the world bears today the consequences of the catastrophe which has befallen the Jewish population during the years of Nazi domination in Eastern Europe. We are burdened more than ever before with the responsibility for a national and cultural reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Jewish nation, a reconstruction which can be achieved only through a mutual effort of all the existing Jewish communities.

We must, first of all, attend to the elementary needs of the Jewish masses. It is our duty to do our utmost in order to speed up the rehabilitation of Jewish life, to strengthen the economic as well as social strongholds of the Jewish masses, and to fight energetically against anti-Semitism of every kind.

We must proceed with particular energy in our deliberate fight for the liquidation of the DP camps. All governments are to be blamed for the camps' prolonged existence. We shall not cease demanding the admission of all tragedy-stricken victims of Fascism into all countries, Palestine included.

This demand explains the attitude of our organization in the case of the "Exodus", which in our opinion was inevitably connected with the general solution of the DP problem. Our view was, at that time, in the best interests of the hundreds of thousands Jewish Displaced Persons.

Today as before we must proceed in our efforts to advance the Jewish language and Jewish culture. We must do our utmost to help the mother tongue of the Jewish masses to regain its proper place in Jewish life; and to wage a decisive battle against all tendencies of assimilation, no matter where they originate.

Simultaneously, in accordance with our primary duty as Socialists, we must try to imbue the Jewish masses with the Socialist ideal, to win them for the common fight with the non-Jewish workers for a new Socialist way of life, which will put an end to oppression and restrictions of all kinds, which will finally and radically solve the problems of mankind, the Jewish problem included.

We should strive now more than ever before to enhance the awareness of the Jewish masses that their

fate is inevitably tied up with the fate of the struggle waged by the working and progressive camp all over the world. We should influence the Jews to take up the fight against nationalist trends among them, tendencies caused by the unparalleled catastrophe which had befallen them.

At present, while bleak clouds loom on the horizon of France, while reactionary forces are mobilizing and commencing to endanger our democracy, it is our duty more than ever to defend the interests of the Jewish masses by our active participation in the struggle for democracy and freedom waged by the Socialist Movement of France. In our efforts to defend the Jewish masses, we shall take the initiative in mobilizing and utilizing all progressive forces within the Jewish community.

### Jewish Communism

During the black years of occupation and war the Jewish masses stood united in their struggle to defend themselves and to participate in the underground campaign against Nazi Germany. This unity was achieved owing to our active efforts in bringing it about.

After the liberation of France this unity of effort still remained and contributed to the rehabilitation and strengthening of the Jewish community in France. However, the Communists are now undermining the unity achieved in past years by conducting an intolerable war against Socialists and by exhibiting a singular lack of loyalty within the common offices and bodies.

Following the assimilationist views which they did not renounce, the Jewish Communists are opposed to the establishment of Jewish branches of the existing trade unions and are against the building of Jewish craftsmen's organizations, veteran unions, etc. They have even opposed Jewish branches in general manifestations. A similar negative attitude harmed the advancement of Jewish national life in our community.

The Jewish Communists, bearers of an ideology based on dictatorship and opposed to democracy, are acting accordingly in our Jewish community. Their demeanor tends to harm the Jewish democratic organizations at a time when democracy is a basic condition

for the national existence of the Jews everywhere.

Contrary to the behavior of the Communists, we shall strengthen the unity among the Jewish population for the defense of their rights by opposing all Communist attempts to weaken the united institutions and by fighting against the anti-Socialist campaigns and anti-democratic pronouncements of the Communists.

### Zionism

The overwhelming majority of the Jewish population — more than 90% of it — will remain outside Palestine. Zionism is thus in no way a solution for the Jewish problem. The harmful slogans of Zionism, like that of a European exodus and an exodus from the Diaspora, their tendency to jeopardize the well-being of the Jewish DP's, their opposition to the rehabilitation of the Jewish Communities outside of Palestine, all tend to increase the harmfulness of Zionism under the prevailing circumstances.

As a consequence of the Jews' position during the years between the two world wars and of the events

caused by the Second World War, the Jewish Community in Palestine grew in numbers. Supported by the Jews all over the world, the Jewish Community in Palestine has a number of social and national achievements to its credit.

Acknowledging the achievements of the Jewish Community in Palestine, we are at the same time deeply concerned about its existence and future advancement. For the policies of Zionism are clearly endangering the future and the development of the Palestine Jews.

We hold that everything in our power must be done in order to find means for a peaceful cooperation between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine as the only way to secure the existence of the Jewish Community in that country.

The Third National Convention of the BUND in France requests the BUND World Cooperation to put on the agenda of its Executive Committee meeting in December 1947 the problem of our comrades' activities in Palestine.

## STATEMENT OF THE JEWISH SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION IN ENGLAND, AUGUST, 1947

1. The Jewish Socialist Organization in England condemns bitterly the Palestine terrorist groups striving to attain power by means of bombs and scaffolds. It also sharply denounces the entire Zionist propaganda, which is to blame for the Fascist acts committed by the most nationalistic faction of Jewish youth in Palestine — deeds which endanger the Jewish Community in Palestine as well as the Jewish Communities all over the world.

2. The Jewish Socialist Organization in England raises its voice in protest against all those who are engaged in inciting the grief-stricken Jewish DP's to illegal immigration into Palestine by boats which place their lives in danger and stand an exceedingly slim chance of reaching their destination. Particularly vicious has been the campaign of a "European Exodus", which implied the necessity for the Jewish inhabitants of various countries of Europe to run away from their homes where they wish to remain.

3. The Jewish Socialist Organization in England voices an appeal to the British Government to participate in solving the problem of the Jewish DP's by permitting at least 25,000 of them to enter England, and by simultaneously requesting the governments of all other democratic countries, and first of all the governments of the Dominions and of the United States of America, to admit numbers of the remaining Jewish DP's in proportion to the populations of their respective countries. Such a move would be the only way to

solve once and for all this tragic problem. The Jewish Socialist Organization of England published a similar resolution long ago, and appeals now to all Jewish and non-Jewish progressive associations and labor organizations to insist on such a solution of the DP problem.

4. The Jewish Socialist Organization in England is deeply convinced that the British Labor Movement as well as the British Government are fully aware of the political and social dangers involved in anti-Semitic activities of any kind in England, and particularly in those which recently took place in Liverpool and Manchester. We expect both the Labor Movement and the Government to do their utmost in their respective realms in order to protect the British citizens of Jewish origin who are not responsible for the outrageous acts committed by Jewish Fascists in Palestine. Although the authorities, attending to their duties, have quenched the anti-Semitic attempts against the Jewish citizens, we are of the opinion that the population of England ought to be even more enlightened as to the dangerous implications of anti-Semitic propaganda, which always and everywhere was but a tool used by reactionary and Fascist elements. The Jewish Socialist Organization in England hopes that the Government as well as the Socialist Labor Movement will do everything in their power to prevent the recurrence of anti-Semitic excesses, which are harmful to the good name of British democracy.