

UNITED DEMONSTRATION IN PARIS

By G. Koenig

THE Jews of France have answered the bloody provocations of Arab reactionaries and of the British with a united campaign for the benefit of embattled Palestine. Jews of every political complexion participated in united action for the Haganah. The only group that remained aloof was the local Bund crowd, the wards of Chanan and the Jewish daily *Forward*, the lauders of Bevin.

This unity was expressed on March 3, 1948 in one of the biggest political demonstrations ever held by Parisian Jews—a stupendous mass meeting for Palestine. The high point of this united meeting, addressed by speakers of all but the rabid anti-Soviet group, was the moving speech of the secretary of the French Communist Party, Jacques Duclos, who left a very important session of the Chamber of Deputies to bring to the Jewish people an expression of full solidarity and support in the name of his party for the just struggle of our people. He did it with the full power of his remarkable oratorical talent, and with the deep humanity that only Jacques Duclos can express.

Chairman of the meeting was the prominent Zionist leader, Y. Yefroikin.

“We came here,” he said, “to demonstrate for the ideal of freedom, for the ideal of the Jewish people. We are now faced with a declaration of war by the High Commissioner of Palestine against the Jewish people, threatening to exclude the Jews from human civilization. A time will come when no trace will be left of British imperialism, but the Jewish people will live. Let those who oppress other nations not lecture us about civilization.”

He also spoke about the ruling circles in the United States, who “talk Jewish but act Arab,” as Henry Wallace expressed it. The chairman then presented the chairman of the Zionist Federation, M. Yarblum.

“For three months,” said the speaker, “the heroic Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine has engaged in struggle against the feudal Arab states, in struggle against British imperialism, which is utilizing its entire military might, its navy, its planes and tanks against the Jews who had saved themselves from Hitler’s purgatory. So long as the British mili-

tary remain in Palestine, so long will unrest continue, so long will it be impossible to establish a Jewish state. England is responsible for the blood being spilled in Palestine.”

The French Socialist leader, Joseph Russ, appealed to the Arabs to establish peace with the Jews. He spoke about the principles of peace and justice, and about the Jewish work of construction in Palestine.

A deep impression was made by the excellent address of A. Raisky, general secretary of the important progressive Jewish people’s organization, the French Union. This was a speech of national fervor expressing concern for the future of Palestine, for the future of the Jewish people and it advanced a clear program for success in the struggle of our people. The speech was frequently interrupted by great applause.

“Friends and comrades, brothers and sisters,” Raisky began, “at the moment when the Jews of Paris are gathered here today, two battles are taking place that are going to be decisive for the future of Palestine. In Palestine itself there is taking place a heroic and bloody struggle in which tens of thousands of Jewish sons and daughters are defending the security of the *Yishuv* against the attacks of the Arab reactionary bands and British military, with their lives. We send our deepest greetings and our assurance that we will be at their side till victory is achieved.”

Raisky then took up the second battle taking place at Lake Success where it is becoming clear who are our friends and who are our enemies. “We publicly express here our gratitude to the governments and nations who are indefatigably defending the position of our people. The right of the Jewish people to Palestine was fortified with the sweat and blood of the builders, with the tragic suffering of the Jewish people in the Hitler period, with the participation of the Jews in the struggle for the liberation of the world from Hitler fascism. No amount of dollars and pounds can outweigh the sweat and blood of the millions of fallen and annihilated.”

Raisky then turned to the shameful declaration of the British government that Jews will no longer be considered civilized people.

“Were Hitler and Goebbels alive today, they would not have used different words. The Jewish people, which gave the Bible to humanity, will not be lectured on civilization

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Brooklyn Marches to Washington, March 24, 1948. A Community Contingent that Made Up Part of the 1000 Marchers.

by those who trample upon the Bible and its ethics. We are convinced that the fighters of the Haganah will not fall into despair, that the broadest Jewish masses will not become despondent about the outcome of the struggle for a Jewish state. The illusion that it is possible simultaneously to help the nazis and fascism and the Jewish people will be dispelled. No, the path of once again building up a strong Germany leads to the destruction of Jewish national aspirations. Our people, with the help of world democracy, must compel the imperialist governments to keep their word!"

Recalling a sentence from a speech by Ben Gurion in Paris that a Jewish government in Palestine will never play Vichy politics, Raisky greeted the establishment of a provisional Jewish government. He declared:

"The Jews in France, raised in the spirit of democracy, strengthened by their stubborn resistance against the nazis and Vichy, will give their utmost support to a democratic Jewish government, which will stand at the head of the struggle for full independence of this country."

Raisky then commented on the Bund group, which had

broken Jewish unity. "Those who use the same language as the Mufti, bleating about the 'red danger,' who stand apart and refuse to help the Haganah, must remain silent! There is no place in Jewish life for the friends of Bevin, and in the last analysis, for the friends of the Mufti."

The whole assembly gave stormy approval to this condemnation of the treasonous elements among our people, the *Forward* gang in Paris.

The speaker then discussed the importance of reaching an understanding with the progressive Arab forces. Raisky showed that the Jewish people had learned in the course of their heroic struggle and tragic suffering that anti-Semitism was the weapon of Hitler and that the issue they must decide is not to choose between communists and non-communists, but rather between reaction and democracy, between anti-national elements and national elements. He issued an ardent call for a broader national Jewish community, from which the Jewish friends of imperialists and the Mufti exclude themselves.

Chief of the Haganah general staff G. Juchevitzky

developed the idea that what is taking place now is a Jewish war and that the Jewish people could rely only on themselves. The great assembly was rather surprised that the speaker did not mention the great friends that our people have in the democratic world. The speaker gave moving facts about the fighting spirit of the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. He described the 1600 Jews in old Jerusalem—religious Jews who pray throughout their years at the Wailing Wall—who have now been battling heroically for three months against the Arab bands by whom they are surrounded. "There will be no peace in Palestine at our expense," the speaker declared, telling also how the British interfere with the Haganah and support the Mufti gangs.

While Juchevitsky was speaking, the secretary of the Communist Party, Jacques Duclos, entered the hall. The whole assembly rose, and an ovation of several minutes greeted the labor leader.

Juchevitsky indicated the help the Haganah awaits from the other Jewish communities in the form of money, arms and manpower. He concluded by expressing the confidence that despite the difficult situation and the even harder struggles that must be expected, the Jewish state would be built, free and democratic.

When the chairman introduced Duclos, an enthusiastic ovation again broke forth and the moving speech of the labor leader was punctuated with applause.

The whole assembly rose to its feet when Duclos concluded. By this long ovation the audience of 5,000 expressed the gratitude of the Jewish community in France and of our brothers in Palestine for the warm, human greetings of solidarity which the French labor leader, the leader of the first party in France, had brought to us in such clear and noble language to help light up the difficult days ahead which will reveal who are the true and sincere friends of our people. (Duclos' speech printed below.—*Eds.*)

It was extremely moving to see how the Jews of the different groupings, right and left, orthodox and non-religious, old and young, greeted the great communist leader with boundless gratitude. They understood how mistaken is the theory that we were "alone" and can count on no one.

Several resolutions were adopted unanimously. Jewish national songs were sung. It was an unforgettable evening. It was more than a meeting. It marked a new stage in Jewish fighting unity, a new and important step forward in the participation of the Jewish community in the struggle for a democratic and independent Palestine.