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PRESS RELEASE

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**STATEMENT ON THE RUSSIAN-POLISH
CONTROVERSY**

Statement on the Russian-Polish Controversy

The American Representation of the General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland issued the following statement at a meeting held on the 25th of January, 1944, regarding the Russian-Polish controversy:

The entry of the victorious Russian Army into the territories of pre-war Poland should be lauded by the entire anti-Fascist world. It is additional proof, that the inevitable military defeat of Hitler-Germany and its satellites, that the ultimate defeat of Fascism which, unpunished, has for years drained the blood of its victims, is approaching. However, the entry of the Red Army has, unfortunately, aggravated the controversy between Poland and Soviet Russia which, from its inception, threatened not only the good-neighbor relations between the two countries, but also the unhampered, democratic and Socialist reconstruction of Europe, of which Poland is an integral part.

The Soviet Government's declaration, that the Curzon Line can serve as the basis for boundary negotiations between it and Poland; the Polish Government's reply, that it will agree to negotiations provided the British and American Governments participate — a reply that augured, for Russia, a satisfactory settlement of her boundary demands, and the refusal of the Soviet Government to negotiate with the present Polish Government even under such circumstances, are a warning, that the problem involved has ceased being merely a boundary dispute, because territorial controversies that would remain unsettled even after such a conference as was suggested, would have to be cleared up by means of a free, democratic plebiscite

on the part of the populace in question. It has now become a matter that concerns the fundamental basis of every independent country; the independence of our country is now at stake.

In this fateful moment of Poland's existence, fully aware of the historic responsibility that it bears as an integral part of the Socialist sector of Poland in general, and of the particular responsibility it bears as the Socialist vanguard of the Jewish working masses of Poland, the American Representation of the General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland ("Bund") deems it a duty to set forth the following:

- 1) The crimes of Polish reactionaries and of Poland's reactionary governments, against which the Socialist masses of Poland always struggled bitterly, resulted in untold suffering for the Polish masses and jeopardized Poland's reputation throughout the world. However, the above does not entitle anyone to deprive the Polish people of their elementary right to remain on an equal footing with all the other peoples of Europe with regard to an independent national existence — their right to an independent Poland. It is the duty and the privilege of the workers and peasants of Poland, while strenuously denouncing all outside attempts at intervention, no matter what form those efforts may assume, to continue their struggle in an independent Poland, for complete democratization of their country, for the reconstruction of Poland in accordance with the principles of libertarian Socialism, for Poland's participation, on an equal footing with other nations, in the future federation of European States.

T H E G H E T T O S P E A K S

2) Since the outbreak of the war in 1939, the "Bund" of Poland has constantly been opposed to the Polish Government-in-Exile and has not ceased demanding, that those reactionary elements at the head of both the Government and the Army, who were directly or indirectly responsible for the pre-war regime of Poland, should be removed. This demand has been made public in a number of declarations and resolutions. The representatives of the "Bund" in the Polish National Council — S. Zygielbojm, before the Polish-Russian controversy arose, and now Emanuel Scherer — emphasized this demand at every opportunity. The "Bund" adheres to this demand even at this crucial moment. However, this struggle concerns the democratic forces of Poland only, both during and after this war. This struggle will not be facilitated, but crippled, should outsiders, whose intentions do not have the slightest connection with those of Polish democracy, intervene.

A Polish Government in exile, which will comprise representatives of the peasant and labor movements, as well as democratic elements, should, in a liberated Poland, give the working masses the opportunity to elect their own government, at the earliest possible moment and under absolutely free conditions.

3) In pre-war Poland, the "Bund" often paid dearly because of its constant demands for the establishment of good-neighbor relations with Soviet-Russia. Friendly relations are, today, even more than before the outbreak of the war, necessary to our country.

They can only be attained, however, on a basis of reciprocity. Those relations can be strengthened and can assume a wider scope if the Soviet Government will refrain from any attempt at interference in Poland's inner problems and, if the working masses of Poland will ultimately assume the reins of the Government.

4) The breach between Soviet-Russia and Poland is hazardous not only because it raises the hopes of Hitler-Germany for a split among the Allies; this controversy is a bad omen for the peace that is to follow and for the Socialist reconstruction of Europe after the war, that can be realized only if it will not be hindered from without. All must, therefore, be done to terminate this controversy at the earliest possible moment. Peaceful relations between nations can be realized neither through the assertion of power nor the dictatorship of the strong over the weak, but on the basis of complete equality among nations. Since an organization, embracing all nations as equal partners has not been established as yet, the suggestion of a conference between the Polish and Russian Governments, with the participation of America and Great Britain, is the wisest one in order to settle the dispute.

Poland, which was the first victim of Nazi aggression, has been suffering more than the other occupied countries, from Hitler's murder-lust. The Poles, who endured the heroic defense of Warsaw, who, for five years, have been struggling underground and have not produced a Quisling, must not, as a result of the war, be robbed of their independence.