

Anti-Semitism And Khrushchev

By Harry Ring

The Daily Worker and the Yiddish-language paper, Freiheit, reported, July 21, that the National Committee of the U.S. Communist Party had adopted a resolution which deplores the crimes committed against the Soviet Jews during the Stalin era. In the same breath the resolution expresses confidence that "The Soviet Party. . . will, in the process it has begun of examining the Jewish question and the Leninist solution to it, give full expression to the cultural needs and desires of the Jewish people."

NO CONFIDENCE

That such confidence in the Khrushchev bureaucracy is baseless is underscored by an editorial which appeared in the Aug. 1 Freiheit calling for "greater sensitivity" on the Jewish question by the Soviet government. The editorial was deemed sufficiently important to be reprinted on Freiheit's Aug. 11 English page and again in the Aug. 15 Daily Worker.

The editorial was prompted by Khrushchev's recent interview with a group of American tourists. Asked if it were true that Soviet Jews are not permitted to leave the country, Khrushchev replied that passports are issued only when it serves a "useful" purpose. He added, "Recently we gave Jews passports for repatriation to Poland, but we know they went straight on to Israel. We consider Israel is pursuing an aggressive policy."

Taking sharp exception to the second point, Freiheit correctly observes that "the fact that one goes to settle in Israel does not imply that he approves of the policy of the Israeli government. Nor should the fact that a certain government follows a harmful policy be considered a proper reason for interfering with an individual's right to enter such a country if he wishes or must settle there."

SUBSTANTIAL REASONS

The editorial continues that there are substantial reasons why Jews want to leave the USSR. It cites the fact that the Jewish cultural institutions which were shut down after World War II have not been restored, leaving the Jews with "no opportunity for self-expression as Jews."

A second reason why Jews want to leave the USSR, says Freiheit, is that the government has failed to combat "vestiges of anti-Semitism" among the population. These "vestiges" are characterized as a hangover from Czarist days and from the period of the Nazi invasion.

To correct this situation, Freiheit calls for "a special Jewish institution created by the Soviet government. . . that would help carry on Yiddish cultural activity and that would also be helpful to the government in the process of repairing the injuries inflicted on the Jews as the result of the vestiges of anti-Semitism."

This editorial reflects the deeply troubled feelings of many Communist Party supporters regarding the Kremlin record on the Jewish question. But like the resolution of the CP national committee it tries to dodge the main issue.

The basic problem facing the Jewish people of the USSR today is not that of remnants of anti-Semitism. Nor is it simply a problem of the government failing to take sufficiently energetic measures to combat such anti-Semitic hangovers. The stark fact is that Khrushchev — like Stalin — not only caters to anti-Semitism but fosters and deepens it.

The Kremlin bureaucracy does not lack "sensitivity" on the Jewish question. Quite the contrary. Khrushchev demonstrated extreme sensitivity on the question when he catalogued Stalin's

crimes to the 20th Congress and very carefully avoided a single mention of the crimes committed against the Jews.

This "sensitivity" is evident in the Soviet Literary Gazette's treatment (Aug. 25) of Howard Fast's break with the Communist Party. This Stalinist hatchet job carefully avoids mentioning Fast's condemnation of the treatment of the Jews. Instead it declares that he speaks of "discrimination" against "national minorities" in the USSR. The point is disposed of with the malodorous charge that Fast "repeats the inventions of. . . the most bellicose, reactionary agents of Zionism."

The most decisive expression of this "sensitivity" is this: It is now 18 months since the Polish-Jewish paper, Folkstimm, detailed the crimes committed against Soviet Jewry. In that time the Kremlin has refused to issue a single statement about those shocking revelations. (The sole exception was by the bureaucrat Ekaterina Furtseva who brazenly declared that the charges were not true.)

EQUAL OPPRESSION?

Yet the editors of Freiheit reassure us that there is no problem of "official anti-Semitism." While criticizing Khrushchev's refusal to grant passports to Jews, Freiheit is quick to assert that by itself this is not discriminatory. Why? Because "the same rule applies equally to all Soviet citizens."

The reactionary abrogation of the democratic right of travel and migration reflects the complete lack of democratic rights in the Soviet Union today. In such a fettered atmosphere the Jews — who, as a national grouping have been reduced to second-class citizens — can only suffer the most from such "equality" of police restrictions.

COMING SOLUTION

Those seeking a genuine solution will place their confidence not in the reassurances of Freiheit and the Daily Worker about the Kremlin clique but in the Soviet working class which made the revolution of 1917. In good time that working class will regain political power. The October Revolution brought national freedom for the Jewish people. The coming political revolution to re-establish workers' democracy will renew and extend that great conquest.

Calendar Of Events

Chicago

Militant Labor Forum. Fri., Sept. 6, 8:15 P.M. "The History of the Fifth Amendment." Speaker: Jim Merritt, 777 W. Adams.

New York Youth

Young Socialist Forum. Tues., Sept. 3, 8:15 P.M. "What's Wrong with the Unions?" Speaker: Steve Geller of the American Socialist Club, Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Ave. (near 14th St.) Contribution: 50 cents. 25 cents for students.

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