

A New Question on Soviet Jews

The Jewish-language daily, Freiheit, has long supported the Soviet political rulers. However, since the recent incontrovertible proofs of past and continuing anti-Jewish practices by the Kremlin, Freiheit has spoken out frequently in support of the demand that the Jews in the USSR be accorded the national rights which are supposed to be guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution. Their readers apparently will not settle for less.

In the May 15 issue of Freiheit, Moishe Katz raises a simple but searching question. He reports the news that a number of national minorities in the Soviet Union have regained some of the national rights they were brutally deprived of during World War II. These groups had been deported in mass from their homelands because Stalin charged that some of their members had collaborated with the Nazis.

The ban on the Volga Germans, the Crimean Tartars and several national groups in the North Caucasus have now been lifted. Those in exile have been permitted to return to their homelands and they are again allowed to publish newspapers in their own languages.

While welcoming this development, Katz poses this very pertinent question: What about the rights of a people that have done no wrong, never have been

suspected of collaborating with the Nazis, in fact were the worst sufferers of Nazism, a people that demonstrated outstanding heroism in the fight against Nazism. In short, what about the three million Jews who have been deprived of all national rights? How about an 'amnesty' for them?

Noting that such requests have been made repeatedly to the Soviet leadership by foreign delegations both Jewish and non-Jewish and that they have in reality been ignored, Katz declares anew the urgent need for all those concerned with the fate of the Soviet Jews, and of the Soviet Union itself, to speak out in the strongest possible way.

We believe Katz is entirely correct about this and associate ourselves with the demand that the Soviet Jews be accorded "rights [which] belong to them by virtue of the Soviet constitution and the Leninist concept of politics."

We further believe it to be the obligation of all other working class and radical papers to speak out on this issue. In this regard it is necessary to note again that the Daily Worker, which has no less reason than the Freiheit to speak up, continues to maintain a shameful silence on the issue after making a solemn pledge to speak out until justice was accorded to the Soviet Jews.