

CP's Position On Soviet Jews

By Harry Ring

When the Communist Party held its national convention last February it was confronted with the urgent need to take a stand on the disclosures of the destruction of the national rights of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union. The leadership of the Communist Party prevented a discussion of this issue by the convention delegates. Instead, under the shabby pretext of "pressure of other business," it put through a motion to refer a resolution on the question to the incoming national committee.

On July 21, the Worker reported that the new national committee had finally adopted a resolution on the Jewish question in the Soviet Union. The resolution is worth examining in the context of previous CP pronouncements on the question.

N. Y. RESOLUTION

Last March 31, the New York State convention of the Communist Party adopted a resolution on the Jewish question. A week later, the Daily Worker in a lengthy editorial entitled "A Fortright Resolution," triumphantly hailed this action as bone-crushing proof of the "new course" charted by the party, a course which was supposed to end ideological subservience to the Kremlin.

Actually the resolution was far from "forthright." True, it expressed "shock" at the slaughter of Jewish writers under Stalin. It deplored the abrogation of the national rights of the Jews which are supposed to be guaranteed by the Soviet constitution and it even pressed the Soviet government for a statement of intentions on the Jews. But at the same time it attempted to assure a deeply troubled Communist Party membership of its full confidence that "the Soviet Party, which is steadily correcting the errors of the Stalin period, 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 EVIDENCE

This expression of "confidence" was a new effort to whitewash the Kremlin bureaucracy which has destroyed the great gains won by the Soviet Jews as a result of the 1917 revolution. The resolution did not and could not offer a shred of evidence to bolster its claim that the Kremlin was "examining" the question or seeking a "Leninist solution," to it. All the available facts proved the contrary and continue to prove the contrary to this day.

The New York State convention whitewash job was still fresh in my mind as I sat down to read the report on the present national committee resolution. This time there was no editorial fanfare. Not even the entire text of the resolution was published. Instead I found a series of extracts buried in a report on five different resolutions adopted by the committee. These extracts seemed extremely familiar. I checked back on the resolution adopted four months ago and, lo and behold, found the published extracts of the present resolution to be straight, word-for-word repetitions of the New York resolution!

In other words, four months

later—four months in which Khrushchev and company have still not uttered a mumbling word that would indicate an improvement of the lot of the Jews—the leadership of the Communist Party brazenly repeats its "confidence" that the "errors" are being rectified and things are going to be fine and dandy for the Soviet Jews.

This gratuitous insult to rank-and-file Communists was apparently too much even for the Jewish language daily, Freiheit, to stomach raw. In the same issue in which it reported adoption of the resolution, Freiheit also pointedly published a recent, devastating exchange on the Jewish question between the Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Jewish Progressive Center in Melbourne, Australia. The exchange was prompted by a resolution on the Jewish question forwarded to the USSR by the Melbourne group which is pro-Soviet.

PRESTO—NO MORE PROBLEM

Replying to this resolution, the Soviet letter asserts with typical bureaucratic arrogance that it springs from an ignorance of "the life and culture of the Soviet peoples." The Soviet government agency claims that in all countries, except Israel, Jews are "naturally" assimilated. It then blandly asserts, "There is no Jewish 'problem' in the USSR. For the overwhelming majority of the Soviet Jews, their national language is Russian or the language of the Republic in which they live." The letter continues, "We do not deny that at a certain time there occurred in the Soviet Union certain violations of Soviet legality that have hit Soviet Jews in the same way as they hit Soviet citizens of other nationalities. Those who suffered innocently by these violations, Jews as well as non-Jews, are being rehabilitated and given back their full rights." Finally it assures the Australians that the Jews have made big advances as "part of the multi-million family of the Soviet people."

In a slashing reply which receives the editorial endorsement of Freiheit, the Australians dispose of these arguments. They write: "You point out in your answer to us . . . that Jews are permitted into all parts of the national economy and culture. We are very satisfied to hear that . . . But that is not the whole story. We Jews in Australia also have full citizenship rights, as have Jews in a series of other democratic countries. But we don't make much of a hullabaloo about it. . . ."

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

"What we have always considered a special manifestation of advanced social legislation in the Soviet Union was the fact that Jews, thanks to the revolution, had obtained equal rights, not just as INDIVIDUALS but also as a NATIONAL group. The Jewish culture had been given full rights with all other national cultures . . . not as a favor, but as a commonplace duty of a socialist government. (Emphasis in original.)"

"What caused us to speak up," the letter adds, "is not only what you call 'violations of legality in which Jews and non-Jews suffered.' That is a matter by itself. But something else happened too—namely, the complete and total liquidation of every sign and expression of the . . . Jewish people's culture."

And the National Committee of the Communist Party, in the name of its "new look," solemnly assures us of its "confidence" that the very people responsible for the crimes detailed in the letter of the Australians are going to rectify them any day now!

New York Young Socialist Forum

Third forum in series

"Algeria: The Fight for
National Independence"

Speaker: Renee Stone
(American Youth for
Socialism)

Tues., Aug. 13 — 8:15 P.M.

ADELPHI HAL
74 Fifth Ave. (near 14th St.)