

Sorrow and Perspective - - - An Article by Eugene Dennis

By EUGENE DENNIS

AS A RESULT of the initiative taken by the Central Committee of the CPSU in the last three years and particularly at the 20th Congress, numerous facts have been brought to light revealing the anti-socialist crimes and the shocking violations of Soviet law and justice that were perpetrated by the Beria gang and their accomplices.

Among these disclosures the recent news from Warsaw concerning the imprisonment and execution of political and cultural leaders of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union during the past years underscores the terrible extent of these outrages and fill us with heartfelt anguish.

We feel this way, in the first place, because of what happened to the Jewish organizations which were dis-

solved, to the newspapers which were closed down, and to the political and cultural leaders of the Jewish community who were either arrested or executed. We feel this way, secondly, because this happened in a socialist country in which anti-Semitism has been outlawed and where the Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom and equal rights to all.

OVER THE YEARS charges were made that such events had taken place in the Soviet Union. For the most part these charges were made by bitter and venomous enemies of socialism who have not hesitated to invent and spread the most slanderous lies against the working class, especially in those countries where it has come to power. We denied these charges out of hand because, amongst other things, it was utterly in-

conceivable to us that such things could happen in a socialist country.

For as a matter of fact the unparalleled achievements of the Soviet Union in the fight against anti-Semitism are well known. The establishment of the USSR brought a final end to the czarist policy of pogroms, ghettos, pale of settlement laws, yellow badges and passports imposed on Jews. The Soviet government outlawed anti-Semitism, encouraged the growth of Jewish communities, helped develop a flourishing Jewish culture, and enabled the Jewish people to be fully integrated without discrimination into Soviet industry, agriculture, the government and military services.

IN THE WAR against Hitler, whose booted Nazis
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exterminated six million Jews in Europe, the Soviet people bled and died for victory, thus helping to save millions of Jews from death in Hitler's gas chambers and concentration camps. And in this great struggle, the Jewish people of the USSR made their own important contributions. These were widely popularized through the work of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee formed in the Soviet Union, some of whose leaders visited the United States. After the war's end, the Soviet government helped establish Israel as a Jewish homeland state for the uprooted Jews of the capitalist countries.

These historic facts were of particularly great significance for us in the United States where the Jewish community is one of the largest in the world, and plays so important a part in our country's political life. This record was a matter of great pride to the Jewish workers, intellectuals, and middle classes of our country who play so prominent and noteworthy a role in all the struggles of the labor and progressive movement, and who today are justly concerned about the safety of Israel and desire not an arms race and tensions, but an agreement and negotiations among the Five Great Powers, Israel, and the Arab states to secure peace in the Middle East.

While we recognize what is being done to unmask the grave violations of socialist democracy that have occurred, and while we greet the resolute steps taken to prevent their recurrence—historical truth as well as socialist morality impel us to declare bluntly that what has been revealed in the latest disclosures is a sad stain upon, and wholly at variance with, the noble and inspiring record of the Soviet Union.

IT IS TRUE that these outrages, which evoke the most profound horror and indignation, were perpetrated by Beria's gang and their predecessors as part of their conscious policy of stirring up national hatreds and animosities and attempting to undermine Soviet society by a process of repressions in flagrant disregard of the Soviet Constitution.

It is also a fact that they were able to get away with this for so long because the great successes in socialist construction tended for a long time to obscure the harmful violations of Party and Soviet democracy, the absence of collective leadership, and the serious distortions on the national question that took place under Stalin.

Moreover, the long years of intervention, the recurring threat of imperialist attack, the actual fascist invasion, the cold war and its open publicized Project X, all facilitated a state of affairs in which the security forces under Beria and his predecessors assumed exaggerated power and were able to play such a dangerous and abnormal role.

Be this as it may, their misdeeds and crimes against the Soviet people, including the Jews, did grave harm to the Soviet Union, to the unity of its multi-national state, and reverberated with damage beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

THE INVETERATE en-

found in the final article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations. Let me quote: "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying or any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein."

Fraternally yours,

FRANCIS SHEEHY.

emies of socialism and the USSR gloat over these revelations. They would like the American people to believe that these injustices flow from the nature of the socialist system in the USSR. They hope thereby to undermine faith in socialism and to discredit the USSR, the leading country in the world system of socialist states.

What they are trying to conceal is the following: under capitalism—even under bourgeois democracy, not to speak of fascist barbarism—the most monstrous crimes of racism and anti-Semitism are woven into the very fabric of "normal" life. Racism, anti-Semitism, national oppression and social injustice are inherent in the capitalist system, especially in respect to the plight of the Negro people. Capitalism gives birth to it daily and hourly. Capitalism fosters national and class oppression in order to perpetuate its system of monopoly exploitation and reaction.

This elementary fact is being grasped today by ever wider sections of the labor and democratic forces of our country who are beginning to understand that there can be no social or democratic advance unless monopoly's poison of white chauvinism is resolutely combated, unless the Negro people are ensured full equality and representative government, especially in the Deep South, and unless the Puerto Rican and Mexican American national minorities and groups are also guaranteed equal rights and fraternity.

But in a socialist country like the USSR, where there are no exploiting classes, whatever temporary distortions have occurred in attitudes to nations and peoples, whatever violations of the principles of socialist justice have taken place—these are departures from the principles of socialism.

The progress and advance of socialism makes the correction of these aberrations inevitable. And that is what is now taking place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party of that country.

THE LEADERSHIP of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Soviet government began more than three years ago to cut this alien growth by exposing Beria's frameup plot against the Jewish doctors. Its open and frank admission at the 20th Congress that wholesale violations of socialist justice had taken place for years, even before the plot against the Jewish doctors, as well as the inauguration of measures to repair the monstrous injustices done and to punish those guilty is an act of great political honesty and courage.

Only a socialist government, committed by its very essence to the extirpation of all injustice could bring these facts into the open and establish guarantees against their recurrence. And that is exactly what the Communist Party of the USSR, and the Soviet government which it leads, has been doing. Reports indicate that the Soviet government is already beginning to restore various institutions of Jewish life and culture. We look forward to the unfolding of this necessary process in the period ahead, and we look forward, too, to the fraternal exchange of representative cultural delegations between the Jewish communities of all lands.

THE RECENTLY concluded 20th Congress of the CPSU was, in truth, a triumphal forum from which the Soviet people took stock of their great achievements in advancing from one of the most backward countries in the world to the position of the world's second greatest in-

dustrial power. It dramatized the new world historic fact that socialism today no longer exists only in a single state, as it did a decade ago. That there is today a world system of socialist states which together with the newly emancipated colonies and the neutral nations constitute a great zone of peace.

This great protective barrier lies athwart the path of those who thirst for war and reinforces immeasurably the struggle for peace waged by the masses in our own and other capitalist countries. Because the 20th Congress highlighted this new world situation, its significance has registered profoundly in the minds of the American people.

But the 20th Congress also did something else. With a boldness and confidence that is without equal in all the annals of history, it threw a spotlight of self-exposure on the distortions of Soviet society. It mobilized for struggle against the cult of the individual, against violations of socialist democracy, against departures from socialist legality.

As a result, faith in the great ideal of socialism, pride in the grandeur of the socialist achievements of the USSR have been strengthened and deepened. In the course of this process the legions of friends of the Soviet Union are also learning to look at the Soviet Union in its entirety, and to take into account its weaknesses and mistakes, as well as its glorious and epochal achievements.

AS FOR the socialist-minded workers, they are obligated at all times to deal with reality as a whole. And this reality includes the fact that the Soviet Union has had to struggle not only with the difficult and massive task of overcoming its economic backwardness. It has had to, and is still engaged in a many-sided struggle to eliminate the remnants of backward ideas and hostile influences, including those which were cultivated in certain occupied areas during Hitler's invasion, and to perfect its socialist society. To publicly recognize this truth will not lessen but will help promote greater friendship and understanding between the peoples of the USA and the USSR.

Moreover, precisely because the advanced workers in all countries are people with a scientific outlook and recognize and act upon facts in accord with the genuine interests of the working class and their people—they understand one of the greatest realities of our times: namely, that the Soviet Union is not just "another country." For it is a country where the working class is the ruling class. It is a country in which an heroic people, led by its indomitable Communist Party, has lifted itself up by its bootstraps from backwardness to the epic heights of social and cultural progress.

For the Soviet Union is the country whose working people have suffered privation, hunger, and war to bring into being the pioneer builder of a new world system of socialism. It is the country which uncompromisingly supports the national liberation struggles of all colonial and oppressed peoples. It is the country which steadfastly champions the principle of peaceful coexistence of all peoples and nations, and has helped bring about a new world relation of forces in which war is no longer inevitable. And it is a country which, in performing this historic role, has made certain mistakes and is still striving to improve and develop its socialist society, especially now as it boldly and confidently advances toward communism.

That it will do so, and in fact is doing so, has been demonstrated anew by the 20th Congress.