

The CP Resolution On Soviet Jews

By Harry Ring

The revelations of crimes committed against the Jewish people in the Soviet Union have had a major impact on the members of the Communist Party. With the report of J. B. Salsberg on the current status of Soviet Jewry, published in the February issue of *Jewish Life*, the concern has grown deeper. This wide-spread troubled sentiment is given partial expression in the resolution on The Jewish Question in the USSR adopted by the recent state convention of the Communist Party in New York.

The resolution criticizes the Soviet government for failing to carry out its pledge to restore Jewish cultural and educational facilities and presses for a public statement by the government spelling out its attitude and intentions on the Jewish question.

RECORDS CRIMES

In an April 8 editorial, the *Daily Worker* hails the resolution as "a milestone in American Communist treatment on this question." Relative to past performance, the resolution is a step forward. (A similar resolution never got to the floor of the Party's recent national convention.) Study of the present resolution, however, shows that a good deal more frank and unambiguous talk is required before the "milestone" that the membership is looking for is actually reached.

The resolution records the crimes committed against Soviet Jewry under Stalin, including the closing down of the Jewish cultural institutions and the execution of leading Jewish literary figures. But it does not analyze the verified reports, such as Salsberg's, of continuing anti-Jewish practices. Instead it 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 expression to the cultural needs and desires of the Jewish people."

We are further informed by the resolution that, "Heartening amidst the agony caused by the revelations of the 20th Congress was the fact that the CPSU itself had uncovered the errors and crimes, branded them as violations of socialism, and resolved to return to the Leninist policy on all questions, including the National question."

The confidence thus expressed in Khrushchev and Co. is certainly not heartening. After all, it was no special trick for Khrushchev to "uncover" the crimes he recited at the 20th Congress considering that he knew of them as an accomplice in Stalin's bloody misdeeds. Furthermore, there is not a shred of evidence to substantiate the claim that the Jewish question is now being examined with a view to a "Leninist solution."

SILENT ON JEWS

One of the most disquieting features of the 20th Congress was precisely the fact that while Khrushchev catalogued many other vile crimes, he deliberately omitted any mention of the crimes committed against the Jews. Most revealing on this count was his detailed discussion of the infamous "Doctors' case," in which he managed to avoid any reference to the anti-Semitic character of that particular frame-up.

The revelations about the Soviet Jews did not come from the Soviet government—either before, during, or after the 20th Congress. They were made, on April 4, by the Warsaw Jewish-language paper, *Folksstimme*. Since then there has been, to our knowledge, but one public reference to the *Folksstimme* exposure by a high Soviet official.

In her notorious interview



STALIN

with Tabitha Petran of the *National Guardian*, Ekaterina Furtseva, a leading Moscow functionary, declared that she was positive that if the *Folksstimme* revelations were true, "we would have published them." Mrs. Furtseva also "denied emphatically that there ever has been any suppression of Jewish culture or repression of the Jewish people." (*Guardian*, June 25, 1956.)

But the incontestable fact is that discrimination against Jews was and still is being practiced. Both Furtseva and Khrushchev have conceded and attempted to justify the use of restrictive quotas on Jews in government office. Passports and personal papers are still stamped "Jew." It is precisely such practices that have compelled J. B. Salsberg to brand present Soviet treatment of Jewish citizens as "in complete contradiction with the elementary concepts of socialist equality."

WHITEWASH JOB

However, the convention resolution assures us, the present course is one of "steadily correcting the errors of the Stalinist period," and this offers "basic guarantees" of a return to the Leninist position on the Jewish question.

If these indeed were simply "errors" and they were in fact being "steadily corrected" then a better attitude on the Jewish question might be hoped for. But it is nothing less than whitewash to characterize as "errors" the actions of the Kremlin against the Soviet Jews and the entire Soviet people. The most fundamental of Marxist principles were scrapped and betrayed. The deeds committed were crimes, not errors—and on the Jewish question, Khrushchev and Company have even refused to admit their crimes.

But most decisive is the fact that Moscow has already reversed the course it charted at the 20th Congress. That congress signified a decision by the Kremlin rulers to grant concessions to cope with the growing pressure of the Soviet people for a new deal. But since the upsurge of the Polish working class and the revolutionary uprising in Hungary, the Kremlin has been backtracking. Its present attitude was perhaps most shamefully expressed in Khrushchev's recent boast: "I am a Stalinist!"

This reactionary turn is decisive for the Soviet people in general and the Jewish people in particular. Salsberg correctly relates the two problems when he observes that "the rise and fall of Jewish cultural and communal life coincides with the rise and fall of democracy in the . . . USSR."

Right now the graph is swinging sharply downward. This fact must be bluntly stated if effective aid is to be given to the struggle for the revival of Leninist democracy in the USSR.

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