By Paul Novick

It has long since been observed that the "anti-Zionism" of various books, pamphlets and articles that have been published in the Soviet Union since 1963, when Trofim Khichko's book, Judaism Without Embellishment, was published, is truly only a cover for anti-Semitism. In this article I shall deal with a new book, supposedly about Zionism, to which the public goes way back to the times of the Russian czars Nicholas I and Alexander II when no Zionist movement existed. This book "demonstrates" that not only's there no Jewish problem in the Soviet Union now, but that there was no Jewish problem in Russia under the czars.

It is, of course, no longer news that this literature makes a defense of the czarist pogroms against the Russian Jews. The pogrom in Kischinev, Bessarabia, during Easter, 1903, was financed by these same entrepreneurs, manufacturers, merchants and other exploiters, the reason for this must be "national" (i.e., anti-Semitic) literature that has been published in recent years in the Soviet Union. But it will not take much, for example, to write a newer book, which goes even further than the writings of Ilyusheh and Yemelyanov.

This new Russian book is entitled Zion and Russian Anti-Semitism. Its author is Lydia Artemyevna Modzhorian. The book was written in 1965 in Moscow by the publishing house Mkhedruradze Osnoshenias (interpeoples Relations) and it was on sale at the Continent Book Store on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Lydia Medzhorhian also points out that the pogroms in czarist Russia were a form of the class struggle. Here is how Lydia Medzhorhian summarizes Khichko's viewpoint:

"The czarist era in this manner: the czarist prosecutor in the infamous ritual murder case against Mendel Belits in Kiev in 1913. Even the czarist court rejected them as 'evidence' and Mendel Belits was set free."

5. On pages 84-85 and on page 148 she describes the trouble that the Jews caused the czarist regime. The Jewish problem in czarist Russia was only "artificially created" to enable the penetration of West European Jewish capital into the country, Lydia Medzhorhian states. This is how the Jewish "usurer bankers" (her designation) continually interfered in czarist Russia. It is even as far back as the times of Nicholas II.

Libels and falsehoods.

Lydia Medzhorhian also includes various stories of which we will note a few here: 1. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, the French Jewish philanthropic organization founded by Adolphe Crémieux in 1840, was supposedly, according to Yakov Brafman, "a political center of the entire Jewish people" (page 24). Actually the Alliance aided victims of anti-Semitism in various countries and sponsored modern schools for Jewish children in North African countries.

2. The B'nai B'rith, which was founded in 1843, is described as a sinister, "international organization of Jewish mass" with rituals, a secret membership, secret passwords and signs (page 26). 3. On page 27 Lydia Medzhorhian again forgets about Zionism and refers to "the political dogmas of Judaism," that is, of the Jewish religion. One wonders what these political dogmas are. 4. On page 27 she quotes a statement, supposedly from the Chumash (Pentateuch), one of the religious Jewish texts, that Jews may take loans from Gentiles and rule over many peoples and they will not rule over you." Whether this is a correct quote or not is immaterial. One can find in centuries-old religious books of all kinds—Judaic, Christian or Musulmanic—many other ancient statements which are irrelevant to present-day relations among peoples. In fact, Marxist, similar anticlerical and obscurantist statements in old Judaic religious books were used by the czarist prosecutor in the infamous ritual murder case against Mendel Belits in Kiev in 1913. Even the czarist court rejected them as "evidence" and Mendel Belits was set free.

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Oh, my Russian people, I know that you are internationalist by nature. But often those whose kudos are Made up of your irreproachable name. What is happening there? Is socialism possible with czarism? Had the socialists and the revolutionaries ever gone in vain to prison camps because of their struggle against czarism?

When a country continually engages in anti-Semitic propaganda, regardless of which country it is, our obligation is to demand that it be halted. This must be done because capitalist countries are concerned and it certainly ought to be a concern of those countries who claim to be Socialists. Yet, during World War II, quite independent of the officials of the Soviet Union, which after the October Revolution gave the Jews and the Yiddish culture a new life and forced the entire history of the Jewish people.

This is the very same country where anti-Semitism is as prevalent as ever, and which Lenin with fiery scorn assailed anti-Semitism and the anti-Semites as the deadly enemies of the October Revolution.

Paul Novick is editor of the Morning Front, where a longer version of this article appeared.