integration of Soviet Jews. In fact, as far back as 1925 the writer was told that the famous Yiddish Art Theater existed because more non-Jews than Jews attended the shows. The same is true today of the Yiddish theater in Poland. And why is there no demand for a Yiddish theater in Israel?

The 160-page Soviet Homeland has 25,000 Jewish readers—probably the biggest Yiddish publication in the world. Yet 470,000 Soviet Jews still consider Yiddish as their tongue. Why then doesn’t Soviet Homeland have a larger circulation? My guess is because when 470,000 Soviet Jews state on a questionnaire that their mother tongue is Yiddish, it doesn’t mean that they are still using that mother tongue. With a Jewish population of 5,500,000 in the U.S., probably more than 470,000 would declare their mother tongue to be Yiddish. Yet the combined circulation of all three Yiddish newspapers in New York is only about 100,000. And these papers feel obliged to have English sections.

Already in 1935 an English authority said that “it is surely unrealistic to look forward to a flourishing Yiddish literature in England or America.” The reason is, of course, that the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people in England and the U.S. are clearly linguistically integrated. This is even more true of the Soviet Union, because of the extraordinary educational opportunities available and used by the Jewish people there.

Therefore, to demand from the Soviet Union the “full” restoration of all Yiddish institutions is sheer irresponsibility. When Communists make such demands, they reflect national chauvinist tendencies and unwittingly help the spread of the falsehood of “Soviet anti-Semitism.”

This does not mean that we must gloss over wrong and harmful practices in socialist countries. It does mean that we must be responsible and tell the truth. At the present time what is called for is an offensive against all campaigns of slander and falsehood directed against the Soviet Union from the U.S. and Israel. It is our sacred obligation to expose every lie and intrigue against the socialist countries, remembering that such lies and intrigues are directed against the interests of the American people as well as the people of the socialist countries. When reactionary haters of the Soviet Union attempt to send prayer books to the Soviet Union as a means of smuggling in secret messages for anti-Soviet intrigues under the cover of religion, we must expose them. Such people do not propose to send them because of an interest in prayer books or prayers. For them the prayer book is an anti-Soviet weapon and not a religious book.

When Israeli leaders promote a campaign of falsehoods against so-called “Soviet anti-Semitism” to blackmail the Soviet Union with the aim of advancing the Zionist objective of “ingathering of all Jews in the homeland of Israel,” we must expose them.

When apologists for racism and Negro oppression in the U.S. compare the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union with the treatment of Negroes in this country, we must expose their lies with the truth about the limitless opportunities for Jews in the Soviet Union for the fullest participation and creativity in every phase of Soviet life.

We must repeat a thousand times the fact that the Soviet government took immediate and timely steps to evacuate Jews from the danger spots of Nazi invasion and thus saved millions of Jews from Hitlerite extermination. Let the anti-Soviet propagandists explain what kind of “anti-Semitism” can exist in a country capable of such humanism. It is particularly dastardly that a campaign against “anti-Semitism” should be directed against the one country that did more than any other to destroy anti-Semitism.

Comrade Novick’s article on “national nihilism” deserves special attention, which cannot be given here. I will only say this much now: nations and nationalities will not exist forever. The historic process will be that of national amalgamation, and that process will be set in motion under socialism not by hurried and forcible means, but by the higher needs arising from a higher, more human and more reasonable social, economic and cultural order. The process of national amalgamation is beginning to develop and will continue to develop even while at the same time new nations arise as a result of the liberation of peoples from the yoke of colonialism. One does not contradict the other.

I have concentrated on the negative features of the draft resolution because these features must be removed for the resolution to be meaningful and sound.

DANIEL RUBIN

Comments on the Resolution

Focus of the Discussion

A discussion is now taking place on the draft resolution prepared and issued by the Jewish Commission of the Communist Party. That we are holding such a discussion is, of course, a step forward. But unfortunately, judging from written materials in the discussion and reports of it from around the country, its focus is not always the best, in this writer’s opinion. Too often it is focused on one or more of the following: Israel, Jewish life in the USSR, how much assimilation is there in the U.S., and as a less significant
aspect, the fight for unity of the Negro people and the Jewish people. The discussion would be more productive if we were to focus on strengthening the struggle of the Party against anti-Semitism and the fight to improve the conditions of life of Jewish masses in the U.S., to increase the influence of the Party among Jewish masses and to win them as an even more significant factor in the main struggles in our country—to end the war in Vietnam, to defeat the racist, ultra-Right counter-offensive, etc.

There are a number of intertwined reasons for much of the present focus of the discussion. If we had more comrades actively involved in the mass Jewish organizations and struggles, and if we were prepared at leadership levels to meet their needs, then their burning problems would become the heart of the discussion. Another reason is the obvious existence of substantial differences of an ideological and theoretical nature that show up especially on these questions. And related to such a focus of discussion are views on these particular questions which in this writer's judgment run counter to a working-class internationalist approach. Lastly, I believe that while the draft resolution is sound in many respects, it suffers from a similar one-sidedness in focus, a one-sidedness that might have been corrected if a leading body of the Party representing all aspects of Party work had discussed it before its issuance as a draft. On the latter point, as a member of the leading bodies, I share responsibility for the absence of such a discussion.

The draft resolution will be greatly strengthened if it speaks throughout for the Party as a whole and not for the “we, the Jewish Communists” that it slips into in places. I think this is connected with some of the ideological confusion and one-sidedness of the resolution. If corrected, it could then speak more concretely of the tasks of the whole Party in fighting the anti-Semitism spewed forth by the ultra-Right. And the resolution could be linked more closely to the central tasks of the Party in combatting the ultra-Right, and in fighting for Negro rights and against the white chauvinism that emanates from the same sources. It could speak of the special responsibilities of non-Jewish comrades in fighting concrete manifestations like the continued discrimination, despite advances, in many occupation categories and in housing for Jews. Inadvertently, at one point, the resolution speaks as though anti-Semitism is just a matter of attitudes and verbal expressions rather than also a justification for discrimination in material conditions of life.

We could then also talk about the specific tasks of Jewish Communists among the Jewish masses and examine the chief obstacles in winning the Jewish people for effective struggle for their own special needs as well as for the general goals of progress in our country. In doing so, we would have to focus on the attempt to divert the Jewish people from their traditionally progressive role on the major social issues. These attempts by the ultra-Right and by the Johnson Administration, aided by some Jewish reactionaries, center around anti-Communism and the Soviet Union, around white chauvinism and nationalism connected with Israel, and around certain other questions.

Anti-Communism has even had a certain revival recently, the heart of which is anti-Sovietism. There is a widespread attempt to convince the Jewish people that the main oppression threatening Jews in the world today is not ultra-Right reaction based on a section of U.S. monopoly, but rather “Communism” and the USSR. As a result, we find mass meetings and demonstrations being held against alleged Soviet anti-Semitism that brings together a spectrum ranging from ultra-Rightists to advanced liberals and even socialist-minded people on a platform provided by Jewish organizations. This represents a weakening among Jewish people of their understanding of the ultra-Right and its role, and a weakening of the democratic and socialist currents among the Jewish people that once were almost taken for granted.

Therefore, greater clarity on the U.S. ultra-Right monopolist enemy is a key task for Communists working among the Jewish people. These demonstrations also involve a restriction of the growth of influence of the Left and of the Communist Party with resultant loss of the full potential of their special contributions. Only the active intervention of conscious Jewish forces will determine the outcome, not some built-in “progressivism” of the Jewish people.

**Negro-Jewish Unity**

There is one view expressed in the discussion in and around our ranks that is objectively white chauvinist in character and disarms our comrades from playing the role that is their responsibility in work among Jewish masses. This view holds that the Negro and Jewish questions are of equal importance for our country. One of its practical consequences is that any manifestations of anti-Semitism among the Negro people receive equal emphasis with anti-Negro sentiments among Jews. For some, the pattern goes even further. These Jewish comrades continually raise instances of Negro anti-Semitism but give only lip service to their own responsibility to fight white chauvinism among the Jewish people.

This dovetails with the attempt to convince the Jewish people that Negroes are a major source of anti-Semitism and to pit Negroes and Jews against one another. It encourages tendencies to sit in judgment on the civil rights movement with no recognition of one's own responsibilities in the fight for Negro-white unity. And
it fits in with a certain stiffening of white chauvinist attitudes among sectors of Jews that Negroes are "going too fast," using the "wrong" methods and shouldn't move into housing in Jewish communities anyway.

It would take a good deal of space to point out all the respects in which these views are wrong and extremely harmful. All stem from the fact that while anti-Semitism, along with oppression of the Mexican-American and Puerto Rican peoples, is among the most important expressions of national oppression in the U.S., the struggle for Negro freedom is the very heart of the struggle for democracy in our country, and Negro-white unity is therefore indispensable for significant advance on any front.

One other aspect of the question should be noted. Both Jews and Negroes are victimized by the same enemy, U.S. monopoly capital. And yet with respect to Negroes the Jewish people, along with all other white nationality groups in the U.S., are part of the oppressor people despite the fact that the Jewish masses do not gain from Negro oppression. Therefore, as between these two people, even though both are subjected to discrimination by a common enemy, it is the Jewish people who have the main responsibility for overcoming frictions.

If one wants to discuss the Negro people with respect to anti-Semitism, a starting point might be to cite the results of a recent B'nai B'rith study indicating that anti-Semitic attitudes are much less common among Negroes than within the rest of the population and are declining. We might then say that the Jewish people, with Jewish Communists in the forefront, must take the initiative toward establishing better relations with the Negro people based on a fight against white chauvinism in their own ranks. And then we could add—thirdly and not firstly—that we have confidence that our Negro comrades will take the lead among the Negro people in combatting manifestations of anti-Semitism. We should also remember that Negro anti-Semitism does not take the form of discriminating against Jews in hiring or in housing while white chauvinism by Jews against Negroes does take such forms.

Israel and National Narrow-Mindedness

Besides the tasks of Jewish Communists with respect to anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, and with respect to white chauvinism among Jewish masses, there are also problems of national exclusiveness. If the most reactionary sections of monopoly are the sharpest enemies of the Jewish people, then the most important potential allies are labor and the Negro people. But ideas that non-Jews cannot be trusted, that Jews are the chosen people and have a superior intellect, weaken rather than aid the struggle and need to be combated.

ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

The attempt of Johnson to use the concern of masses of Jews for the continued existence of Israel in order to turn back anti-Vietnam sentiment is an especially despicable form of anti-Semitism which the whole Party needs to fight vigorously. Attempts by Israeli reactionaries to encourage capitulation to this pressure in the name of aiding Israel need to be taken on by Jewish Communists.

One of the weapons of reaction in its efforts to reverse the role of the Jewish people in the U.S. is an upside-down approach to Israel. A picture is presented of a highly intelligent, civilized and progressive Israel which continues to be threatened by reactionary and ignorant Arabs in surrounding countries, whose leaders threaten Israel's existence in order to distract the Arab peoples from their own domestic problems. Further, the USSR and the world Communist movement are accused of aiding the "Arab aggressors" for narrow opportunistic reasons.

By accepting this picture, Jews in the U.S., usually unwittingly, find themselves aiding U.S. monopoly in its all too successful attempt to control the economy and the governmental policies of Israel to the detriment of the Israeli masses. They find themselves on the side of U.S. imperialism in opposition to national liberation movements and on the side of rabid anti-Communist cold-warriors. A correct working-class internationalist policy in the interests of the Jewish masses of the U.S., the Israeli masses and the masses of Arab peoples, requires taking the following points into consideration:

1. The main question for the Middle Eastern area is the struggle to throw off the domination of imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism.

2. Hence U.S. imperialism and its servitors among the Israeli and Arab ruling circles must be viewed as the main enemies of the Israeli and Arab masses.

3. The countries following a generally anti-imperialist policy and therefore playing an historically progressive role are the UAR, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Algeria, while those following a role of accommodating to or strengthening U.S. imperialism are Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia which thereby generally play an historically reactionary role.

4. The right of Israel to exist as a state is unquestioned.

5. The failure of Israel to recognize its responsibility toward the Palestinian Arab refugees, its role in initiating water projects that adversely affect Arab countries without their agreement, and its role in the 1956 joint military venture with Britain and France show that the government's policy has been one of making Israel a support and an instrument of imperialist domination and national suppression. The 1956 Israeli Commander-in-Chief Moshe Dayan reveals (New York Times, October 30, 1966)
that it was the conscious plan of Britain, France and Israel not only to take away from Egypt the Gaza strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal but to overthrow the anti-imperialist government of Nasser and presumably replace him with an acceptable toady.

6. For the Israeli and Arab masses, conflicts between Israel and the Arab states are a harmful diversion. For the Israeli state policy they are a part of the government's role as a tool of U.S. imperialism. For the Jordanian and Saudi-Arabian rulers such conflict, when it is over the right of Israel to exist, is a diversion from the struggle of their own peoples against imperialist domination of their countries, though it also reflects the justified grievances mentioned. For Syria, the UAR, etc., there is also the element of response to justified grievances, but to the extent that the response is military or a verbal threat to destroy the State of Israel, it is a nationalist response to imperialist provocations and actually weakens and diverts from their main role of the foremost champions of national independence in the Middle East.

7. It is the responsibility of Israeli Communists and Jewish Communists in the U.S. to fight against Israeli and Jewish nationalist tendencies and to make clear the role of the Israeli ruling-class policy, just as it is the role of Arab Communists to fight against Arab nationalism.

With respect to the draft resolution on these questions, I think it tends in the direction of evenly balancing both sides, paralleling the error made by some in the discussion of evenly balancing the Jewish question and the Negro question, or of equating white chauvinism among Jews and anti-Semitism among Negroes. The draft says: "Arab chauvinism directed against Israel and the Jewish people is also a formidable obstacle which must likewise be combatted." While this statement may be true, taken alone it changes the entire context and direction of the struggle. It fails to accept that the Israeli government is the main instrument of U.S. imperialist domination in the area, directed against the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples, and that therefore chauvinism on each side cannot be handled even-handedly.

It would also be better if that section of the draft were reformulated to eliminate ambiguities that now exist. It can be interpreted to mean that "American Jews," including progressives and Communists, have a "warm and sympathetic regard" for the "State of Israel," meaning not just for its right of existence or for the well-being of the masses of its people but for the "State," including its international role. As an American Jewish Communist, I feel ashamed and angry that a Jewish government coming from a people who have known so much oppression should oppress Arabs within Israel and play the U.S. imperialist game of supporting their oppression in neighboring countries.

It seems to me that as partisans of the working class and social progress, and therefore of the national liberation movement, we Communists and especially Jewish Communists should welcome every step forward by Arab progressives in leaving behind anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli approaches which weaken and divert their own struggle. We should note that despite the fact that the official statements of the UAR and Syria contain even recently challenges to the existence of Israel, changes have been taking place. Israel admits that the UAR has not caused one incident with Israel in some years (New York Times, October 30, 1966). Syria disowns any military groups penetrating into Israel. It states that its position is strictly defensive with regard to Israel and points the finger squarely at U.S. imperialism, not Israeli reactionaries, as the main instigator of recent events on the border. It says the main aim in the present situation is that of U.S. imperialism to overthrow the new progressive regime in Syria through the use of Israeli political, diplomatic and military pressure. Given Dayan's admission with respect to Nasser, such a policy today of once again singling out the most progressive Arab state for conflict—not reactionary Jordan—should not be surprising. The Israeli-supported resolution speaks only of Syria, though most incidents admittedly emanate from Jordan. It is not the job of Jewish Communists to be the main ones to lessen Israel's responsibility, to ignore even small steps forward by progressive Arab countries on the Israeli question and to become the main champions of the fight against Arab chauvinism on the part of the most progressive Arab regimes.

The USSR

With respect to the Soviet Union, to argue as some do, that "the Soviets are following today a policy of forced assimilation" is wrong on a number of scores. If they were following such a policy, objectively this would be Great Russian chauvinism, and when expressed against the Jewish people in particular, it would be anti-Semitism. Thus it is tantamount to saying the USSR, intentionally or not, follows an anti-Semitic policy. A problem with the draft resolution is that after denying Soviet anti-Semitism, it then lists specific instances of absence of Jewish cultural institutions with the implication of forced assimilation until the initial denial becomes lip service only.

Communists would urge caution on people in the U.S. about, say, telling the people of Britain that they are suffering some wrong which they themselves do not see. The principle of non-interference in the affairs of another people is properly very close to the hearts of all Communists. But then we
come to a socialist country and the question of whether a particular section of the people are suffering an injustice. A partisan class approach begins by giving them the benefit of a doubt. This is especially true when we have experience with every kind of lie about the USSR propagated for anti-Communist cold-war purposes by reaction, and when it is clear that any public criticism of a socialist country will be used by reaction in every possible way. By now we are all probably aware of how the ruling class is using the draft resolution’s section on Jews in the USSR, out of context, in newspaper articles and radio broadcasts, including the Voice of America beamed to the USSR, etc.

Before criticisms are expressed, therefore, one would expect great assurance as to the correctness of both our facts and theories, also that all other means of raising such questions have been exhausted and that there is an extreme situation in the USSR that calls for our placing such criticism in a resolution of our Party. This is far from the case.

What we know for certain is that Yiddish language institutions have been expanding in the last number of years and that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has spoken out a number of times recently against anti-Semitism. What is in dispute is whether the expansion is fast enough, embraces all the kinds of institutions the Soviet Jewish people desire and whether enough is being done to combat vestiges of anti-Semitism.

If we are objective about it, we should not jump to conclusions about which particular Yiddish language institutions and how much of each are desired by Soviet Jews simply on the grounds that 470,000 indicated in 1959 that they considered Yiddish their “mother tongue.” What does “mother tongue” mean—the language they first knew or the language they prefer to speak, read and educate their children in today? We don’t know the answer with any assurance, so it is better to leave the answer up to the Soviet people, including Soviet Jews. They are people who are used to standing up for their beliefs. They don’t need us as their champions.

Even if it were established that the expansion of Jewish cultural institutions is not extensive enough, etc., we would still face the question of whether this constitutes a policy of forced assimilation or just wrong individual estimates of the desires of the Jewish people that are too slowly being corrected. We, of course, know that every Communist Party frequently makes estimates of situations that are not fully accurate, goes through a process of constantly rendering these estimates more accurate, and yet no big policy questions are involved. And we would still face the question whether the Communist Party in the U.S., the country instigating the cold war and basing its instigations on every kind of anti-Soviet, anti-socialist slander, should pose such criticisms in its resolution and thereby aid the instigators against those on the receiving end.

Rather, our resolution should approach the question of Soviet Jews from the following standpoint:

1. Reaction is trying to enlist the Jewish population of the U.S. in the cold war, and to weaken its resistance to the general program of reaction in the U.S. by involving Jewish masses in anti-Communist and anti-Soviet demonstrations based on the lie that Soviet Jews are the worst off in the world today.

2. Actually Jewish masses in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are the best off in the world. First, socialism means the end of exploitation of Jewish workers. With the end of production for profit, no one can profit by national oppression and in practice, aside from isolated individual victims from capitalism, discrimination and anti-Semitism do not exist.

3. In capitalist countries there is pressured assimilation but in the USSR and other socialist countries Jews are free to develop their distinct culture or bring its best features into the common stream of Soviet culture. We should then cite the cultural aspects that now exist in a distinct Jewish form and those that are now a part of the common cultural heritage of the USSR. Then we should indicate that while during Stalin’s period there was suppression of cultural institutions of many peoples, including the Jewish people, that period is over. Finally, there is now taking place in the USSR an examination of the justification or lack of it for particular Jewish cultural institutions in that country.

Such an approach is necessary, even though tactically it is much easier to go along with the crowd in a toned-down form of criticizing Soviet policy in this field.

Toward Amalgamation or Not?

Lenin, and Stalin during Lenin’s life, indicated two stages in Soviet nationality policy. The first would bring a consciously stimulated national culture for each oppressed people so that they could establish equality in actual living conditions and not just in formal rights. Their own language and cultural flourishing would be necessary aids to catching up in education, in position in production, in daily living conditions. When such full equality was actually achieved, then voluntary amalgamation or assimilation would be the inevitable and desirable process. At this second stage, national distinctiveness would not be stimulated by oppression nor would it have a role in catching up in conditions and so it would gradually die out.

The evidence seems to be that even before complete equality is achieved and even while aspects of national distinctiveness are being promoted, voluntary assimilation in other aspects already sets in as a necessary reflection of the
They therefore do not have to examine each particular situation to see what the Jewish people want but assume that if a steady and rapid restoration to former levels in every aspect does not take place, it must be because of a policy of forced assimilation. They then point to every individual area of renewal of distinct Jewish forms as proof that there were errors of forced assimilation on this point up to the day of its reinstatement and therefore there is desire for even further institutions.

These progressive critics have failed to show that the over-all trend is not now toward amalgamation and why. They do not discuss when and under what conditions amalgamation might become the trend.

In the U.S., the decline of Yiddish has followed certain patterns. First it declined as a language of commercial intercourse. Then such literary forms, books or plays that require a greater volume of readers or listeners to make them feasible, declined. Then the tendency has been for daily newspapers to disappear, which not only require large numbers of regular readers but also many such people living in the same location to appreciate the local flavor of news that is inevitable in a daily. There is the tendency for the ability to write fluently to depart first and then the ability to read, leaving Yiddish more and more as a private family auxiliary language. So the tendency of decline has been to eliminate new books, theaters and even daily newspapers so that only monthly become a means of mass communication in the language. Here the decline takes place with much pressured assimilation, including the pressure of capitalist profitability, but I suspect that with some differences, much the same pattern will be taking place in the absence of forced assimilation in a socialist country.

If this is so, then we Americans who are so prone to know all the answers about everyone else's country should not jump to conclusions. We should not conclude that if Sovietish Heimland, a monthly, has a circulation of 25,000 throughout the country and given the Second World War dispersal of Jewish centers of population, that there must therefore be a demand and the possibility for providing Yiddish newspapers, a greater quantity of Yiddish books, or a Yiddish theater in the USSR.

As for education in Yiddish, I believe there is hardly a parent or child in the Soviet Union who wants to be educated in Yiddish, making that their first language rather than Russian or the main language of their republic. Yiddish is nowhere the language of everyday intercourse except perhaps within some private homes. On my trips to the USSR, when non-Russian parents and children were given a choice in many minority republics of sending their children to a school where Russian was the first language and their own mother tongue the second, or to one in which their mother tongue was first and Russian second, they chose the Russian school, thus causing something of a crisis in the other schools. With the tremendous popularity of English, German, French and Chinese among the youth, it is highly doubtful that more than a handful would pick Yiddish as even the second language in a school.

If you assume a certain limited revival of Yiddish and distinct Jewish culture following the errors of the Stalin period but within a decided overall trend of voluntary amalgamation, then even the order of limited revival of institutions based on which first steps creates the possibility for other steps—is predictable and fits the pattern that has taken place.

The Hadassah delegation just returned from the USSR concludes that unless something is done, and presumably from the outside, Jewish culture will be completely dead in ten years. Besides their overwhelmingly religious concepts of what is Jewish and the way in which their conclusions make them unwitting tools of the old warriors, we still should ask ourselves whether, if it is true that Jewish culture in the USSR will be dead in 10 years, this in itself is bad? I would say if there is no forced assimilation and if, as is now the case, the Sholem Aleichems are becoming part of the common cultural heritage of all Soviet peoples in Russian and other languages (Lenin's concept of amalgamation), then what is there to object to? Those who find
it hard to answer "no objection," I think should examine whether at bottom they aren't influenced by nationalist concepts and moods.

Should it turn out that numbers of comrades have widely differing views on some of these questions, we may have to conclude that we are not ready to resolve all questions. The main thing will be to strengthen our fight among the people as a whole for full equality for the Jewish people and against anti-Semitism, and among Jews to resist reactionary pressures and bring the Jewish masses fully into the fight to end the aggression in Vietnam, for the rights of the Negro people and against the ultra-Right.