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## The fraud of Soviet anti-Semitism

Herbert Aptheker

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THE FRAUD OF  
"SOVIET  
ANTI-  
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By HERBERT APTHEKER

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"SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM"**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

HERBERT APTHEKER was born in New York City, in 1915. Since his first work, *The Negro in the Civil War*, was published in 1938, he has authored more than a dozen books and scores of pamphlets, among the best known being *American Negro Slave Revolts* (Columbia University Press, 1943), *To Be Free* (International Publishers, 1948), *A Documentary History of the Negro People* (Citadel Press, 1951), *History and Reality* (Cameron Associates, 1955), *Toward Negro Freedom* and *The Truth About Hungary* (New Century Publishers, 1956 and 1957), *The Colonial Era* and *The American Revolution: 1763-1783* (International Publishers, 1959 and 1960), *The World of C. Wright Mills* (Marzani & Munsell, 1960), and *Dare We Be Free?* (New Century Publishers, 1961). His latest work is a comprehensive study, *American Foreign Policy and the Cold War* (New Century Publishers, 1962).

Dr. Aptheker served in the field artillery for over four years in the Second World War, rising through the ranks from private to major. He was awarded a prize in history by the Association for the Study of Negro Life in 1939, and was a Guggenheim Fellow, 1946-47. He is presently the editor of *Political Affairs*, and on the editorial board of *Mainstream*. Dr. Aptheker's articles and reviews have appeared in most of the leading historical journals, including the *American Historical Review*, the *Political Science Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro Education*, the *Journal of Negro History*, *Phylon*, and many more.

Aptheker's contributions have earned him a place as a consequential figure in the field of American scholarship.

### "Stop the Press" Flash

On June 17, 1962, the Soviet Government announced the appointment of Veniamin Dymshitz (mentioned on page 8) as Chairman of the State Planning Commission, and as Deputy Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R.

## THE FRAUD OF "SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM"

By HERBERT APTHEKER

For many months a concentrated campaign has been conducted in the United States by every means of communication having as its object to portray the Soviet Union as a land and a government drenched in anti-Semitism. Via radio and television, from the mouths of leading politicians—like Senators Javits and Keating of New York and Dodd of Connecticut—and in the pages of publications whose circulation amounts to many millions—such as *Life*, *Look*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *N.Y. Herald Tribune*, *N.Y. Post*, *Reader's Digest*—this charge, with more or less circumstantial details, has been hurled against the U.S.S.R. It has also come from organizations with considerable influence—such as the Workman's Circle, the American Jewish Committee and the (Orthodox) Rabbinical Council.

Half the Jews living in the world today—after Hitler's barbarism—reside in the United States; millions of Americans who are not Jewish know very well and very truly that anti-Semitism is a hallmark of social backwardness and political reaction. These two facts make the charge of anti-Semitism against the Soviet Union an especially damaging one because it is an obstacle to efforts to end the Cold War and to achieve a stable era of peaceful co-existence. The main concern of those responsible for the campaign is not any alleged injustices against Jews, but rather a desire for the freezing of the Cold War and the launching of World War III. They choose the most effective weapon they can find—anti-Semitism—with which to besmirch the Soviet Union, the better to accomplish their real and sinister aim.

Nevertheless, this campaign has great impact upon many millions of people in the United States—Jewish and non-Jewish—and the vast majority of these millions are perfectly sincere folk who want peace and not war, and who at the same time despise

anti-Semitism. As part of the necessary effort to get at the truth, and as part of the effort to liquidate the Cold War, let us turn to an examination of the present reality concerning this charge of anti-Semitism hurled against the Soviet Union.

### **Who Is Guilty?**

The Soviet government is not guilty of anti-Semitism; on the contrary, it is one of the few governments in the world—there are several others now, since there are several Socialist states—which illegalizes all expressions or manifestations of anti-Semitism or any other form of racism. It is one of the few governments on earth which not only illegalizes anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, but also conducts a vigorous and sustained campaign of denunciation of such poisons and of education in human brotherhood in accordance with its socialist morality and law.

Would, as an American, that I could say the same about the United States. The government of the United States, however, is guilty of the systematic sustaining, both in a positive and a negative sense—that is, both in what it does and does not do—of the most awful system of racism in the world today, challenged for “supremacy” in this only by the Republic of South Africa. Present in the racist fabric of American life—though not in governmental sanction—is deep and chronic anti-Semitism. As Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, of the anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, state in their recent book (*Some of My Best Friends*, N.Y., 1962) discrimination against Jews is “virtually a built-in part of American living.” This applies to housing, occupations, education, social intercourse and to a very widespread belief in elements of the anti-Semitic mythology among scores of Americans; with the rise of the ultra-Right, this disease is spreading and intensifying.

No discussion of the position of Jews in the Soviet Union should begin without bringing to the fore two basic facts. Firstly, Czarist Russia was the prison-house of nations, and among its most awful features was the thorough and official policy of anti-Semitism. The ghetto and the pogrom were regular features of czarist life; and in that society there existed the most widespread anti-Semitism among the populace, especially in the predominant rural areas. This was

as wide and deep as is white chauvinism in the United States today.

The struggle against anti-Semitism by the Government and the Communist Party of the USSR has been one of the very important features of Soviet life since the Revolution; one of the most momentous successes of that Revolution is the cleansing from Soviet life of anti-Semitism. This does not mean that all its aspects and vestiges have been eliminated, and certain events since the Revolution—to which I shall revert—have tended to retard the cleansing. But the historic fact is that since and because of the Great Socialist Revolution in Russia that vast land has been transformed from one characterized by intense racism and anti-Semitism into one singularly devoid of both.

Secondly, there are only two European countries in which a substantial portion of the Jewish population managed to survive the Hitlerite holocaust; these were Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. The fifty thousand Jews of Bulgaria were saved by the struggles of the Left and by the very militant resistance therein by the Jewish people themselves. With the Soviet Union, however, one is not dealing with Jews by the thousands but by the millions, and while none of the nations of Europe—or the rest of the world, for that matter—intervened, as governments and states, with any effectiveness at all on behalf of Jewish survival, the Soviet Union did.

In the Soviet Union top priority was given to saving elements of the population especially threatened by the nazi beast. Among these elements were the Jews. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from Poland and Rumania and hundreds of thousands of Jews from the USSR were shipped east out of the path of the nazis. It is because of this—undertaken in the face of fantastic difficulties, when all priorities went to movement from the east to the west—that literally hundreds of thousands of Jews were saved by moving them from west to east. And it is because of this that there are living today—as full and equal citizens of the Soviet Union—about two and a half million Jewish people.

It will not be remiss to recall the words of Albert Einstein, spoken in New York City in December, 1945, before a Noble Prize winner's banquet: "We do not forget the humane attitude of the Soviet Union who was the only one among the big powers to open her doors to the hundreds of thousands of Jews when the nazi

armies were marching in Poland." Nor is it irrelevant to quote the publication of the Carnegie Peace Foundation, *International Conciliation* (April, 1943): "Of some 1,750,000 Jews who succeeded in escaping the Axis since the outbreak of hostilities, about 1,600,000 were evacuated by the Soviet Government from Eastern Poland and subsequently occupied Soviet territory. . . . About 150,000 others managed to reach Palestine, the United States, and other countries beyond the seas."

*The Soviet Union has been the savior of the Jews of Europe.* That is a fact, and it is a central and basic fact for any discussion of the attitude of the Soviet Government towards Jewish people and towards anti-Semitism.

What are some of the main charges leveled today against the Soviet Government by those who accuse it of pursuing an anti-Semitic policy?

### **The "Special Passport" Hoax**

It is alleged repeatedly that the Soviet Government requires all Jews to carry a special passport indicating the fact that they are Jews. What are the facts?

All citizens of the USSR carry as identification what is called an "internal passport"—something not at all unique to the Soviet Union but rather common among European countries. One of the elements of identification on this passport is nationality; all passports carry the nationality of the owner. This includes Jewish citizens of the USSR, for in the Soviet Union the Jew is considered a member of a national group—hence the establishment, thirty years ago, of Biro-Bidjan, a Jewish autonomous region, which is still very much in existence. Historically, Jews, while having elements of nationality do not have all such elements and do not have all completely—notably the absence, in Eastern Europe, of a common territory. Therefore, Jews in the Soviet Union have the option, when getting their passports, of giving their nationality as either Jewish or as that of the Republic wherein they may reside.

This fact was stated, accurately for a change, in the *New York Times*, April 2, 1962, although it was buried in a dispatch from Seymour Topping describing the general decline of religions in the USSR. Topping, noting that many Jewish youths in the Soviet Union had lost all religious belief, observed that as a



consequence there is growing integration of Jew and non-Jew. He then continued: "At the age of 16, when Soviet citizens are issued their internal passports, Jewish youngsters have the option of entering their nationality as Jew or that of the republic in which they live."

Of course, in the United States—marked as it is by national persecution and by chronic anti-Semitism—there are tendencies, especially so far as official documents are concerned, to resist the inclusion of nationality identification. Thus, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has fought to remove all designation of race or nationality from documents—even drivers' licenses. In our country, under present conditions, that is a progressive effort, especially as it pertains to documents related to employment or police records. But when white chauvinism has been illegalized and sustained education against it has been conducted over a prolonged period, and the whole fabric of social, political and economic life has been changed, such demands will fade away, and the obvious usefulness, for purposes of identification and statistical knowledge, of the nationality of the person will be clear and primary. Such characterization then will be in no way invidious, and data on nationality will be offered as naturally as today one offers the color of his eyes.

### **The So-Called "Quota System"**

Another common charge is that there exists a "quota" in the educational institutions of the Soviet Union, as there used to exist in old Russia—and old Poland, Hungary, Rumania—and as exists presently in many educational institutions in the United States, where it is still applied against Jews, let alone the notorious and rigid discrimination against Negroes.

This charge, too, is false. Merit in the Soviet Union—unlike in the United States—basically determines entrance into educational institutions and increasingly, since education is free—as facilities grow—everyone is receiving equally more and more education. Thus, as of December 1, 1960, there were 3,545,000 Soviet citizens in schools of higher education; of these, 2,070,000 were Russians, 517,000 were Ukrainians, 291,000 were Jews, 95,000 were Byelorussians, 88,000 were Georgians, 74,000 were Armenians, etc. Jews, though standing eleventh in terms of numbers among the nationali-

ties within the USSR, stood third in the number of students attending higher institutions of learning; put another way, though Jews amounted to only 1.1% of the population of the Soviet Union, they amounted to 8.2% of the number of students in institutions of higher learning in that country.

At this point it is sometimes objected—as by Senator Javits, for example—that while the percentage of Jewish students at such institutions may be beyond the percentage of Jews in the population, still the present percentage is below what it was in 1935. And that fact—it is a fact—is supposed to show some kind of quota system and to be explicable only on the basis of such a system, reflecting an alleged policy of anti-Semitism. First, if the percentage of Jewish students is about 8 times that of the Jewish population as a whole it surely does not reflect a quota system against Jews. Second, the fall in percentage in the past twenty-five or thirty years is explained by two things: (a) the casualty rate among Jews in World War II was higher than that for most other nationality groups in the USSR; (b) the literacy and cultural levels of other nationalities in the Soviet Union have leaped forward as a result of the Socialist revolution.

Additional data may be brought forward demonstrating the absence of any quota system and simultaneously going a long way to demolish the myth of “Soviet anti-Semitism.” Specialists employed in the Soviet Union, possessing a higher education, number 427,000 Jews, 257,000 Byelorussians and 155,000 Georgians, yet both of the latter nationalities considerably outnumber the Jews. Among scientific workers in the USSR—in both the natural and the social sciences—Jews stand third: Russians, 230,000; Ukrainians, 35,000; Jews, 33,500. In fact, though, as we have noted, the Jews number but 1.1% of the Soviet population, they constitute today 14.7% of all doctors, 8.5% of all writers and journalists, 10.4% of all jurists; 7% of all art workers (actors, musicians, artists, sculptors, etc.).

These facts demonstrate conclusively that the charge of a quota system—while true in many countries of the “free world,” including the United States—is not true as regards the Soviet Union.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that Jewish scholars are present in considerable numbers among the faculties of Soviet universities. Thus, several of the faculty members of the Moscow

Institute of Foreign Languages are Jewish, including: Sophia Frey, Ilya Galperin, Elisa Rizel, Isaac Salistra, Israel Shekter. Forty members of the faculty of the Lenin Teachers' Center, in Moscow, are Jewish. The Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of Moscow until his death early in 1962 was Jewish—the famous composer, Alexander Goldenweiser. At the Byelorusian State University in Minsk, 68 of the faculty members (out of a total of 300) are Jewish, and five departments at that University are headed by Jewish scholars, including Professor Grigori Starobinets, head of the Department of Analytical Chemistry, and Professor Lev Shneerson, head of the Department of Modern History.

### **“No Outstanding Jewish Leaders”?**

It is frequently alleged, as part of the charges of anti-Semitism against the USSR, that there are no leading personalities, especially in government and in the foreign service and in the armed forces, who are Jewish. The facts demonstrate this to be as false as the charge of a quota system in education.

Who are some of the outstanding figures of Jewish nationality in the Soviet Union today?

They include:

*M. B. Mitin*, Chairman, All-Union Department of Political and Scientific Education, Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

*Veniamin Dymshitz*, Member, Central Committee, CPSU, Member, State Planning Commission of the Soviet Union, formerly chief engineer of the Bhilai Steel Mills project in India.

*Jacob Kreizer*, Colonel-General in the Soviet Army, Member, Central Committee, CPSU, Hero of the Soviet Union, Member, Supreme Soviet, RSFSR, Commander-in-Chief of all Soviet Armed Forces in the Far East.

*David Dragunsky*, General in the Soviet Army, Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Delegate XXII Congress of the CPSU; Commander, Southern District, European Front, Deputy from Armenia to Supreme Soviet.

It may be added that there are 400,000 Jews who are members

of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; and there are over 100 Jews who are Generals in the Soviet Army.

Among Jews holding very responsible positions in the foreign and diplomatic services of the USSR are: *N. Tsaraphkin*, Chief of the Soviet Mission at the Geneva Disarmament Conferences; *G. Mendelevitch*, Secretary of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations.

Cabinet rank in several of the Republics of the Soviet Union is held by Jews; among others are *Ilya Beliavicus* of the Lithuanian Socialist Republic, and *Leonid Paperny* of the Byelorussian Socialist Republic. In many other cases positions of great political consequence are held by Jewish people, as in the instance of *Genrikas Zimanas*, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Lithuania (and Editor-in-Chief of the Party's organ in Vilna); of *Ilya Egudin*, Chairman, State Collective Farm of the Crimea and Member of Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Republic; of *Israel Kazhdan*, Deputy Chairman, City Soviet of Minsk.

The editorial staffs of leading newspapers and journals almost always include Jews among other nationalities, and in not a few cases chief editorships are held by Jews. Thus, for example, the editor-in-chief of the very significant journal, *Problems of World Economics and International Relations* is *Jacob Khavinson*, while the editor-in-chief of *Problems of Oriental Research* is Professor *Joseph Braginsky*, also Jewish.

Outstanding research and administrative figures in scientific endeavor in the Soviet Union include Jews. Thus, the Chief of the Theoretical Section, Institute of Atomic Energy, is *Savely Feinberg* (a Lenin Prize winner), and the Chief of the Magnetic Laboratory of the Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism is *Shmai Dolginov*. Among the many outstanding medical institutions in Moscow, seven are headed by Jewish scientists; Professors *Berlin-Chertov*, *David Vas*, *Nahum Altshuller*, *Mendel Vasserman*, *Zinovy Lurye*, *Liber Nisnevich* and *Yetim Pasnykov*. The chosen President of the Society of the History of Medicine of the USSR is the revered scientist—a Jew—Professor *Ilya Strashun*. The Chief of the Physical and Electronic Optics Division of the Institute of Surgery (Moscow) is *Dr. Eliazar Rosenfeld*.

Among those announced in 1960 as having been awarded the Lenin Prize were 38 Jews, and their fields of accomplishment

included physics, mathematics, medicine, history, economics, machine-construction, automation, metallurgy, chemistry, energetics, architecture, communications and agriculture.

One of the most distinguished physicists in the Soviet Union—and in the world—is *Dr. Lev Landau*, who is Jewish. A foremost psychologist, *Dr. A. R. Luria*—well-known in the United States, for his work has been published here and he toured this country, speaking before professional assemblies, in 1960—is Professor of Psychology at the State Institute of Experimental Psychology (Moscow); *Dr. Luria* is Jewish.

Directors of world-famous artistic and cultural organizations not infrequently are Jewish. Thus, the Director of the Russian Drama Theatre in Vilna is *Lurye*; of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow is *Chaikin*; of the Bolshoi Ballet is *Feier*; of the Maly Theatre in Leningrad is *Rabinovich*; chiefs of choreography with the Kirov (Leningrad) Ballet are *Fenster* and *Yakubson*.

Several of the Soviet artistic performers and literary figures whose genius has gained applause from the entire world are Jewish: *Emil Gilels*, *David* and *Igor Oistrakh*, *Leonid Kogan*, *Vladimir Ashkenazi* and *Ilya Ehrenburg*.

### **Yevtuschenko's "Babi Yar"**

Even the publication of the very moving poem, "Babi Yar," by Evgeny Yevtuschenko, has been made into an attack upon the Soviet Union and some kind of "proof" of its being guilty of anti-Semitism.

But what is the truth of this matter? Yevtushenko is a splendid product of Soviet society; he is a Russian, a non-Jew, who has helped in the translation of the work of such Jewish writers as Feffer and Vergelis. He is a Communist.

His "Babi Yar" appeared, together with another poem from his pen hailing the Cuban Revolution (for some "unknown" reason the American press, so smitten with Yevtushenko's poetry, has ignored entirely his work on Cuba!), in *The Literary Gazette*. That journal is the central organ of the Soviet Writer's Union and has a circulation of over 700,000.

Yevtushenko has stated that the immediate inspiration for the poem was the publication of the Draft Program of the XXII

Congress of the CPSU—a Draft envisioning the building of Communism in the USSR, and containing a very strong attack upon all forms of racism and explicitly against anti-Semitism. The poem memorialized the scores of thousands of Jews who, together with many Soviet Army officers, were slaughtered by the nazis near Kiev during World War II.

This stirring poem concludes:

*Wild grasses rustle over Babi Yar.  
The trees look sternly,  
like judges.  
Everything here cries out in silence,  
and doffing my hat,  
I feel  
how I suddenly become gray,  
And myself—  
like one entire soundless cry  
over thousands and thousands of buried ones.  
I am—  
each old man shot right here.  
I am—  
each baby shot right here.  
Nothing within me will ever forget it!  
Let thunder the "International,"  
when forever buried shall be  
the last anti-Semite on earth.  
There is no Jewish blood in my blood.  
But hated vehemently I am  
By all anti-Semites.  
Just as a Jew  
And therefore—  
I am a true Russian.*

This poem has been recited before thousands in the Soviet Union, in addition to reaching hundreds of thousands in printed form. It was passionately discussed—culture is a matter of universal interest in the USSR. In some cases it was criticized, justly (as failing to make any mention of the struggle against anti-Semitism that was characteristic of the best in the Russian revo-

lutionary tradition; as failing to note the many non-Jews slaughtered with the Jews in the Soviet Union, and at Babi Yar, itself), and unjustly, too in a dogmatic and sectarian way.

But, basically, the poem and the poet reflect the health of the Soviet Union, the best in its younger generation, and the refreshment coming with the post-war purging of the rigidity, excesses and illegalities associated with the latter years of Stalin's power. While the first edition of Yevtushenko's collected poems was printed in 20,000 copies, the second edition recently issued numbered 70,000. He himself recently visited Great Britain, France, the United States and Cuba and has now returned home.

Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" was written as news of the swastika paintings in West Germany and the United States, the attacks upon Jewish communities and people in many places of the "Free World," were horrifying all civilized mankind. It is a cry of outrage against such barbarism in all its forms and no matter how covert its vestiges, coming from one of the magnificent products of a socialist society. It reflects the finest values created and nurtured by that society.

### **Economic Crimes Against Society**

The Soviet Union is now consciously building a Communist society. This is the task set forth in the Program of the Communist Party adopted at its XXII Congress. It is the third Program that Party has so far adopted: the first, at its II Congress (1903) set the task of destroying Czarism; the second, at the VIII Congress (1919) set the task of building Socialism. Both those Programs were accomplished; the third also will be accomplished—if peace is preserved in the world—and by 1980 Communism will have taken shape in the Soviet Union.

To accomplish this, economic crimes against society—such as large-scale and systematic stealing, speculating, black marketeering—must be eliminated, for they reflect the persistence of an ethic that is incompatible with socialism and communism and they constitute blows of a material character that intensify the difficulties of accomplishing the Program of the Party. Such crimes are few because the society has been transformed and with it its people have been transformed. Still such crimes do appear; under present conditions and in that kind of society they are the worst forms

of criminality. Hence for them, in aggravated and repeated instances, severe penalties have been provided, including even execution.

Since these laws were passed, several score people have been found guilty—among the 210,000,000 people of the USSR—of these crimes and perhaps as many as twenty or twenty-five have been executed. Those jailed and executed make up many nationalities of the USSR and include Jews; the press of the West, and especially of the United States—but not of the USSR—has made much of the fact that Jews appear to be among the criminals arrested and/or executed in these cases. These laws and their enforcement have nothing at all to do with anti-Semitism. They are laws aimed against criminals; they severely punish the forms of crimes held to be most awful in a society that is socialist and that is consciously struggling to build communism. They are applied to those guilty, and their nationality has nothing whatsoever to do with the cases.

Professor Harold Berman, of the Harvard Law School, was in the Soviet Union for several months in 1962 lecturing on American Constitutional Law as a Visiting Professor in the University of Moscow. Himself Jewish, Professor Berman had the following to say about this matter:

*In the past months I have read reports in American newspapers that anti-Semitism is supposedly growing in the Soviet Union. To my mind there is a large element of subjectivism and inaccuracy in these reports. I know they are often connected with the recent trials in the USSR of big speculators, thieves and embezzlers. However, this in my opinion, does not mean that any policy of discrimination is being pursued against the Jews. My Jewish friends in the Soviet Union, with whom I discussed this question, confirmed this. For among those convicted are not only Jews but individuals of other nationalities.*

On the general question of the existence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, it is worth quoting Professor Berman again:

*I have been in the Soviet country for almost a year and have not seen any manifestation of anti-Semitism. I have attended many meetings and conferences of Soviet lawyers*



*among whom there were quite a few Jews. At these meetings there were often heated, even sharp, arguments on the questions under discussion. But I have never felt any element of national or racial hostility in these arguments. (Vocheblatt: Canadian Jewish Weekly, May 10, 1962.)*

### **The “Banning” of Matzoh**

Much capital for the Cold War was made as a result of the order in 1962 by the Soviet Union banning the baking of matzoh (unleavened bread) in State Bakeries; this also was played up in the Western press as evidence of anti-Semitism. The fact, however, is that the same decree which banned the use of State Bakeries for the making of matzohs also banned them for the making of wafers used in the religious services of the Greek Orthodox Church. In neither case was the baking of the product forbidden, or its use in any way prohibited; as a matter of fact, both products were made in homes and in private religious institutions and were used during the appropriate holidays. But they are no longer to be produced by the State; this has nothing to do with being anti-Semitic (or anti-Greek Orthodox), but is rather part of the continuing effort to divorce absolutely and completely the state and the church—the secular from the religious—within the Soviet Union.

### **Revival of Yiddish Culture**

For the last several years a process of the revival of Yiddish culture has been going forward in the Soviet Union. Among the crimes, illegalities and excesses associated with the repudiation of collective leadership and Leninist principles of Party and government functioning, during the last years of Stalin's life, measures were taken against the cultural life of the Jewish people. In addition, among the many peoples victimized in that period were Jews. Related to this was the corrupting impact of years of nazi occupation in considerable areas of European USSR, as well as the incorporation within the Soviet Union of areas that had been dominated by quasi-fascistic governments in Poland and in Rumania. These harmful and anti-Marxist and anti-Soviet acts and policies—organically tied to preparing for World War II and then the worst years of the Cold War—have been utterly repudiated

and stern measures of correction and of renovation have been undertaken.

In the recent period in the Soviet Union scores of thousands of copies of the works of Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Moise-Seforim, I. L. Peretz, David Bergelson, Osher Swartsman, have been published, in Yiddish, in the Soviet Union. The bi-monthly magazine, *Soviet Homeland*, in Yiddish, has been issued since August, 1961; it is published in 25,000 copies and during the first year carried the creative writings of 112 Soviet Yiddish authors, poets and dramatists.

Concert tours, recordings, plays, theatre groups, choruses—all performing in Yiddish—have been seen or heard by millions and millions of Soviet citizens in the past six or seven years. These individuals or groups have toured every major city in the Soviet Union; their appearances have been advertised in both Yiddish and other languages (on billboards of various Republics) and their audiences are made up of every nationality in the vast country.

As a few examples: A Soviet Yiddish revue, "Zol zein Fraid" (Let There be Joy) has been performed, in 1961, in Zaporozhe, Dnepropetrovsk, Yalta, Sinferopol, Evpatoria, Kislovodsk, Yesentuki, Piatogorsk, Moscow and other cities. In Riga, Latvia, the Distributive Workers formed a Yiddish Dramatic Group and it has given many performances not only in Latvia but in other Republics. The Pensioners' Council of Lithuania also formed a Yiddish Theatre Group which performs regularly at the Kovno State Theatre. The Trade Unions of Lithuania have formed a Yiddish Amateur Theatre Ensemble (52 members) which has presented Yiddish plays in Vilna, Minsk, Moscow and Leningrad in the past few months. A concert ensemble was formed in Czernowitz and this has carried classical and modern Yiddish culture to Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tashkent, Vitebsk, Gomel and Odessa in the recent past. There are many other examples of collective—and individual—cultural performances in Yiddish everywhere in the USSR today, and they are witnessed by literally millions of people each year.

Other forms of activity directly related to Yiddish cultural activity may be instanced. Thus, in December, 1960, an exhibit of the life and works of the great theatre personality, Solomon

Mikhoels, was offered at the Central Actors' House, in Moscow. In July, 1960, in Czernowitz, the Writer's Union held a literary evening, attended by 1,500 people, at which Ukrainian, Russian and Yiddish literary figures read from their works—Moishe Altman and H. Blushstein, reading from the Yiddish. In April, 1961, a Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Meeting was held in Vilna, under the auspices of the Trade Union Cultural Council of that city; the Vilna Yiddish Chorus sang partisan songs, a Russian survivor of nazi imprisonment spoke (in Russian), a Lithuanian spoke, in his language, and a Jewish survivor, Mendel Deitch, spoke in Yiddish.

The rehabilitation of those victimized in the "Bad Years" includes Jews, of course, as well as non-Jews. The works of Mikhoels, of Feffer and of Kvitko have been issued in hundreds of thousands of copies; records of readings of the writings of Feffer and others, in Yiddish and in Russian, have been produced by the scores of thousands. Late in 1959 a monument to Mikhoels in Moscow was unveiled in a very impressive public ceremony attended by outstanding political and artistic figures; the sponsor of the monument was the All-Russian Theatrical Association. On the suggestion of the Soviet Writer's Union, the city of Rogochev, birthplace of the famous Yiddish poet, Shmuel Halkin, named a main street after him. (The city already has a street named in honor of Sholom Aleichem.) It is worth adding that the city of Vitebsk, in the Ukraine, named a street, in 1960, after Morris Winchevsky, the Lithuanian-born Yiddish socialist poet and editor, who lived in the United States from 1894 until his death in 1933.

Of perhaps even greater consequence, in terms of the evidence concerning anti-Semitism, than the renaissance of Yiddish cultural expression which is again in the process of development in the USSR, is the really impressive evidence of the bringing of the best in Yiddish culture to the vast masses of the non-Jewish population of the Soviet Union, in forms understandable by them.

Literally millions of copies of classical and modern Yiddish literature have been published in recent years in the Russian, Ukrainian and other languages of the USSR. Thus, in 1957, in the Russian language, David Bergelson's poetry was issued in 75,000 copies; L. Kvitko's in 300,000 copies; the books of Sholom Aleichem in 700,000 copies, and many others.

In 1959, the centenary of Aleichem's birth, millions of copies

of his works were issued—including a six-volume collection in 225,000 sets. A general commemoration-day was held with outstanding figures of the governmental and literary world participating. The government issued a postage stamp carrying Sholom Aleichem's face and name. In 1961, the All-Union Group Publishing House issued an exquisite book of lithographs on Aleichem themes by the Jewish artist, Anatoly Kaplan.

In 1960, there was issued a "Collection of Jewish Songs" with texts in Russian and Yiddish, and musical scores by the prominent Soviet Jewish composer, Kampaneyetz. In that year and in 1961, there were performances and recordings of Shostakovich's "From Jewish Poetry," the record containing the voices of outstanding Soviet artists, as Zara Dolukhanova and Mark Reisen.

Plays by Jewish artists having themes exposing the horrors of anti-Semitism, either in Czarist days or in fascist countries, have been produced in many Soviet cities and witnessed by tens of thousands. A feature movie on Biro-Bidjan ran for several months in Moscow theatres in 1961; in 1960, an East German film based on the Ann Frank diary ran for weeks in various Soviet cities; the Youth Theatre of Riga, in 1961, performed its own version of the Ann Frank story.

In the latest issue of *Soviet Homeland* (June, 1962) figures are published showing that from 1955 through 1961 there were published in the Soviet Union 187 different books by 80 Jewish writers, in printings totalling almost *twelve million copies*, in all languages, including Yiddish. Sholem Aleichem's works, during that period, were published in the USSR in seven languages (including Yiddish) in 3,062,450 copies.

*Just as it is a fact that the Soviet Union was the savior of the Jews of Europe, it also is a fact that no country in the world approaches the Soviet Union in its systematic effort to bring the riches of Yiddish thought and culture and the realities of Jewish life to its entire population.*

### **Education in Communist Outlook**

Furthermore, there is, of course, in the Soviet Union continual education in the Communist world outlook—i.e., materialist, scientific, humanist, anti-religious, anti-mystical. As part of this, there is repeated reference, including from the highest level of govern-

ment, to the abomination of anti-Semitism, its sources and the necessity to combat it. This appears not only in terms of the publication, in millions of copies and in the languages known by the masses of people, of the greatest classics of Yiddish writings; it appears positively, as in Boris Polevoi's best-selling novel, *The Story of a Real Man*, and in the beautiful film made from that book.

It appears, too, in specific and unequivocal condemnations of anti-Semitism. Thus, for example, the Prime Minister of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, in addressing the Supreme Soviet, January 14, 1960, noted the upsurge of anti-Semitic outrages in the West, especially in West Germany, and went on to say:

*The current fascist anti-Semitic incidents in many cities of West Germany are a characteristic sign of the upsurge of reaction, whose evil maneuvers have long since been widely known to the world community. Many decades ago, during the period when Czarist reaction was rampant, anti-Semitic pogroms had been organized by the "black hundred" [gangs] from time to time. Lenin, the Bolsheviks and all progressives, decisively combatted that ignominious manifestation.*

*In Germany Hitler aggressively fanned the flames of anti-Semitism. He suppressed all freedoms, ruthlessly crushed democratic rights. And he perpetrated all that in order to launch his bloody cause—to spark war.*

It would be well if a President of the United States would some day favor the Congress with such a lesson.

In *New Times*, November 4, 1961, as another example—and *New Times* is a weekly magazine published in Moscow in seven languages in addition to Russian with a circulation of many hundreds of thousands—one finds a leading historian, Zinovy Sheinis, quoting Lenin on the Jewish question. Sheinis writes:

*It is not the Jews who are the workingman's enemies. The workers' enemies are the capitalists of all countries. Among the Jews there are workers, toilers, they make up the majority. They are our brothers in oppression by capital, our comrades in the struggle for socialism. . . . Shame on accursed Czarism, which has tormented and persecuted the Jews.*

*Shame on those who sow enmity for the Jews, who sow hatred for other nations.*

Professor Sheinis then continues:

*In the Soviet Union, whose Jewish population is half as large again as that of Israel, Jews are working devotedly, with all our other peoples, in the building of communist society. In the war years they fought and laid down their lives for the Soviet homeland; many were honored with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and tens of thousands were awarded decorations. Now, in peacetime, they are active in all branches of our economic, scientific, and cultural life.*

With such statements coming from a nation's Prime Minister made before its Parliament, and from a nation's leading historian published in one of its most widely circulated publications, it is difficult not to believe that those who persist in spreading slanders about "Soviet anti-Semitism" are engaged in this effort not because of concern for Jewish people, but because of a desire to condemn Socialism and to worsen international relations.\*

There is great complexity on the whole question of Jewish culture, and much room for honest disagreement and fraternal seeking of the best possible approach. The general trend, especially in the USSR, but also in most advanced societies, is toward full integration of Jew and non-Jew. The Jews of the Soviet Union have features of a nationality, but are not a nation; and in the United States—where anti-Semitism, as we have stated, is sharp and deep and widespread—integration also has gone far. There are now, for example, in the United States only three Yiddish-language daily papers, and 110 English-language papers devoted largely to Jewish people's affairs. The Yiddish-language theatre has all but disappeared, and publication of creative works in Yid-

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\* After this pamphlet was in galleys three additional publications from Soviet authors came to the writer's attention directly touching on the question of anti-Semitism, its bestiality and the need to extirpate it. These are the UNESCO study, *Equality of Rights Between Races and Nationalities in the USSR*, by I. P. Tsamerian and S. L. Ronin (1962), *Communism Creates Brotherhood*, by M. Visinetsky, and *Communism Ensures Equality*, by P. S. Mstislavsky (London, 1962).

dish is done in editions that may total about 1,000 copies. Real integration has gone much further, and is on a much higher level, in the Soviet Union. But the tendency there, very definitely, is away from the decision of post-World War II and towards rebuilding Yiddish cultural activities and expressions in Yiddish itself. This process undoubtedly received a boost when the census returns in 1960 showed that about 450,000 Soviet citizens stated that their first language was Yiddish.

Of course, the general long-term commitment of Marxism-Leninism towards human integration as a whole should be borne in mind; it is reiterated in the Program of the XXII Congress of the CPSU, laying out the road from Socialism to Communism.

It is basic to understanding the Soviet Union to keep in mind its commitment to a materialist philosophy and its principled opposition therefore to religious ideology. This is reemphasized in the present period with the planned move to a communist society. The number of churches—and synagogues—has been declining and will continue to decline, as has the number of seminaries—and yeshivas. They all still exist and are maintained privately by those who feel the need for them, but the long-term commitment of the building of communism is away from religious ideology, practices and institutions. This has nothing to do with anti-Semitism; it is opposition to superstition and to the idealistic philosophical outlook—to obscurantism and mysticism. It is aimed not at Judaism *per se*, but at all religious outlooks.

### **Anti-Capitalism Is Not Anti-Semitism**

It is necessary, also, to bear in mind the anti-capitalist commitment of Marxism and of the Soviet Union. This is relevant to the kind of attitude reflected in certain upper-class Jewish circles, where hostility to the bourgeoisie is confused—more or less deliberately—with anti-Semitism, or hostility to Jews *per se*.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, for example, the President of the World Zionist Organization, speaking in Jerusalem, May 27, 1962, according to the *N. Y. Times*, “declared that Jewish communities abroad, while not seriously threatened by anti-Semitism, were facing dangers of a different nature. He noted the revolutionary atmosphere prevalent in many areas of the world and the fact that social upheavals could ruin Jews of the prosperous middle and

upper classes. 'The classic example,' Dr. Goldmann said, 'is Castro's Cuba where a flourishing Jewish community was ruined overnight, not because of any anti-Semitic tendencies of the Castro regime but because of the social revolution he brought about.'

If this is ruination, then many Jewish communities—not only in Cuba, but in Atlanta and Miami, too—are in for "ruination" in time. But the Jewish community under Batista and the Jewish communities in the midst of systematized Jim Crow do not live as real Jews, and do not live as full human beings. And in both cases, also, of course, the anti-Semitic poison is not absent.

### Refutations of "Soviet Anti-Semitism"

Denials of the charge of anti-Semitism brought against the Soviet Union have come from several eminent sources that cannot be suspected—if that is the right word—of being Communistic. We have already quoted Professor Harold J. Berman of the Harvard Law School to that effect. Dr. Goldmann himself, in the above-cited speech, said that the Soviet Union "does not deny equal human and civil rights to Jews"; he differed with its approach to the matter of religion and of nationality—as one would expect from the head of World Zionism—but this is not a charge of anti-Semitism. On the contrary, Dr. Goldmann specifically denied its existence in the USSR; this denial, made in May, 1962, was a reiteration of what Dr. Goldmann had said earlier at the 25th World Zionist Congress, held in Jerusalem.

In October, 1961, Andre Blumel, a prominent French attorney, and former head of the Zionist Organization in France, having returned from his fourth visit to the USSR, said:

*After carefully studying the situation there, I found no anti-Jewish discrimination.*

*The cultures of the various Soviet nationalities are reaching ever newer heights and the USSR is determined to fight every manifestation of anti-Semitism.*

*Besides the Jewish paper in Biro-Bidjan and the Moscow journal, Soviet Homeland, and besides the books that have appeared in Yiddish, there are in the Soviet Union fifteen performing groups in the Yiddish language.*

*Jews are to be found holding various official posts, includ-*



ing high military posts and prominent positions in the sciences. Jews are heads of such a vital ministry as atomic energy.

*Jews in the Soviet Union are not ashamed of their Jewish origin. Jews must not be dragged in as pawns in the cold war.* (VOCHENBLATT, November 2, 1961).

These are the findings, as of the end of 1961, by the former President of the Zionist Organization of France. They are in accordance with the vast body of evidence. It is clear that the Soviet Union is a remarkably cleansed country so far as anti-Semitism is concerned and that, most certainly, the Government of the Soviet Union is not guilty of anti-Semitism. On the contrary, the truth is that the Soviet Government is one of the few governments in the world committed to the extirpation of that fascistic poison.

### **The Ultra-Right and the Cold War**

In the United States today, the rise of the ultra-Right and the accentuation of the danger of fascism are clear. The intensification of anti-Semitism, including violent assaults upon the property and the person of Jews, is a fact in our country at the present time and this certainly is related to the threat from the Right.

Parties such as the National States Rights Party, the American National Party, the American Nazi Party, and the whole collection of Right-wing vermin from the White Citizens Council to the (so-called) Christian Anti-Communist Crusade are saturated in anti-Semitism and some of them put out literature openly calling for a policy of genocide so far as Jews are concerned. Here, for example, before me as I write these lines is the February, 1962 issue of *The Stormtrooper*, a lavishly illustrated magazine published by Rockwell's Nazi Party, in Virginia. On the cover, in color, is a Streicher-like caricature of what is labeled "A Miami Beach Kike"; inside are offered for sale, such choice objects as the "Jew Zoo—A portfolio of 20 brutal caricatures of some of the top Hebrews in our national life—plus Eleanor herself," and "Ann Frank Soap Wrappers—Look absolutely genuine and guarantee soap is 100 percent kosher. Put it on regular cakes and delight your friends."

This is what is printed in the United States and goes through

the mails; and the editor of this magazine is not troubled by the McCarran Act!

In the face of menaces real and awful as these are; in the face of the realities of the Cold War today and what a Hot War would mean with modern weaponry, the concocting of a frantic campaign denouncing the alleged "official Soviet anti-Semitism" is a service to no one except atom-maniacs and George Lincoln Rockwell.

Among the greatest achievements of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917—despite fantastic difficulties and awful setbacks and fearful human failures—stand the building of Socialism, breaking Hitler's back, creating a society with the lowest death rate in the world, the lowest illiteracy rate in the world, the lowest crime rate in the world, the second mightiest industrial capacity in the world, and the least racism in the world.

Remembering what Czarist Russia was—the prison-house of nations and the land of institutionalized anti-Semitism, of the pale, the ghetto and the pogrom—and seeing what the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is today—a land where racism is outlawed, where anti-Semitism is considered barbarism, and where scores of nationalities live in equality and fraternity, one must hold this to be a signal achievement of the Revolution and a powerful tribute to the Marxist answer to the question of racial and national oppression.

Americans must labor not to intensify hostility towards the Land of Socialism but to develop a sense of friendship for that country and its more than two hundred million peoples. What is needed by all Americans—and most certainly, what is needed by Jews in America—is not the freezing of the Cold War, but the ending of that War. The truth about the two and a half million Jews now living in the USSR will serve to enhance Soviet-American friendship, and so play its part in preventing world war.

\* \* \*

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