

Draft Resolution on the Jewish Question

With reference to the work of the Communist Party relative to the Jewish question, the 18th National Convention adopted the following proposals:

1. That a national Party conference on work among the Jewish people and the fight against anti-Semitism be scheduled within the following four months.

2. That a full discussion on the Jewish question be organized for the period preceding the conference, with the provision of a discussion bulletin and other suitable media for publication of discussion articles and of statements and resolutions from Party organizations.

3. That a draft resolution be prepared by the incoming national Party leadership immediately following the Convention, to serve as a basis for the discussion and for the preparation of a final draft at the conference.

We present here the text of a draft resolution prepared by the National Jewish Commission as a basis for the discussion and approved as such by the national Party leadership. All Party organizations are called upon to study and discuss the resolution and to submit statements, resolutions and articles to be published in *Political Affairs*, *The Worker* and a discussion bulletin to be issued as the need dictates.

The proposed national conference is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of November 12 and 13. The discussion is to continue until that time.

This procedure was decided upon because of the existence of differing views on a number of important questions and the need to thresh them out thoroughly. We look forward to a rich discussion and a fruitful conference, which will greatly advance the ideological and organizational status of our work in this important area.

National Education Department, CPUSA

I.

In Vietnam the Johnson Administration is waging a war of annihilation against a colored people. In West Germany, the U.S. government has encouraged the return of former Nazis to positions of power and the growth of a remilitarized, revanchist, warlike regime which it now threatens to arm with nuclear weapons. Everywhere the aggressive, reactionary policies of U.S. imperialism, aimed at the

oppression of other peoples, are based on and foster the rankest chauvinism, racism and jingoism. In our own country they give support and encouragement to all the forces of national and racial hatred. And they have greatly accentuated the age-old problem of anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism has always been an instrument of reaction, of counter-revolution, of the capitalist exploiters for sowing dissension among the people and dividing the working class. The struggle against anti-Semitism has always been part of the struggle for working-class unity, for democracy, against the class forces of reaction in our society.

Today we witness a resurgence of the rabid fascist, racist elements of the ultra-Right in the United States—of the American Nazi Party, the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan, the White Citizens Councils and others, which engage in spreading violently anti-Semitic propaganda as part of their campaign against democracy, against the Negro people, against peace.

The country is being flooded with anti-Semitic filth, much of it through the U.S. mails. Radio and television are being extensively used by the Birch Society, by the innumerable "crusades," by the agencies of the pro-fascist oil magnate W. L. Hunt, and others. There is a rise of desecration of synagogues and other anti-Semitic acts.

Financed by the dollars of "respectable" big-business corporations and finding fertile soil in the "respectable" anti-Semitism prevalent in our country, the ultra-Right purveyors of racism and anti-Semitism create the constant threat of a violent flare-up of anti-Semitic actions.

The new upsurge of Nazism and anti-Semitism in West Germany gives added urgency to this menace. The neo-Nazi revanchists of Bonn, faithful allies of the Pentagon, are using anti-Semitism in their plot for World War III just as Hitler used it in unleashing World War II. The ominous rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism is shown by the results of the last elections, particularly in Bavaria, by the frequent swastika outbreaks, and by such spectacles as the funeral of former S.S. General Sepp Dietrich, at which seven thousand of his ilk gathered at his grave, each decorated with the Hitler Iron Cross, singing "Deutschland Ueber Alles." The *Brown Book* recently published in the German Democratic Republic amply demonstrates the entrenchment of the Hitlerites in Bonn and the return to power of the magnates who once brought Hitler to power and are now plotting another world war.

Peace forces throughout the world are sounding the alarm over these developments. Among others, the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee have issued warnings against

the world-wide activities (in the "free world," that is) of the Nazi International based in West Germany and spreading its tentacles into many lands.

The struggle for peace and freedom generally is closely interlinked with the fight against anti-Semitism in particular. On the one hand, the forces of progress must relentlessly combat the evil of anti-Semitism if they are to be victorious; on the other hand, the fight of the Jewish people against the discrimination and anti-Semitism to which they are subjected can be won only in alliance with the cause of all progressive mankind. In particular, it is intimately tied to the struggle against *all* national and racial oppression, and above all to the heroic fight of the Negro people for their freedom. The battle against anti-Semitism can be successfully waged only in conjunction with the whole-hearted championing of the rights of the Negro people within the Jewish community and with a determined fight against all forms of racism and chauvinism among the Jewish people.

There exists a dangerous complacency about anti-Semitism in our ranks today. This complacency must be ended. It is time to call the alarm, to arouse the entire American people against this evil which is part of the threat to peace and freedom in the world today.

It is the obligation of all truly progressive Americans, and in the first place of Communists, to stand guard against and combat anti-Semitism, as well as all other forms of national and racial discrimination and persecution, and to join hands with the Jewish people in their striving for full democracy and equality.

II.

The Jewish community today plays a noteworthy role in the fight for peace and progress. A community of close to six million people, the largest in the world, concentrated in the major cities of the country, and to a large extent integrated in American life economically, politically, and culturally, it is an important factor in our country.

Large sections of the Jewish community—workers, students, professionals, religious figures and others—are currently actively involved, both as individuals and through some major Jewish organizations, secular and religious, in the fight against U.S. aggression in Vietnam, as well as in other progressive movements. There exists among the Jewish people a strong tradition of the struggle for democracy and progress which goes far back into the history of our country and continues to manifest itself today—a tradition whose roots lie primarily in the masses of Jewish working people. Jewish workers, particularly in

the needle trades, have in the past contributed important chapters to the struggles of the American labor movement and have been an active element in the Socialist and Communist movements in our country. Such traditions of class struggle, still exerting a strong influence, should be cherished and kept alive by Communists; they serve as a bridge with the progressive struggles of today in our country, and as a means of creating closer bonds between American forces and the socialist world.

Significant changes in the class composition of the Jewish community have taken place in recent decades. The strength and influence of middle-class elements have grown considerably. The laboring elements are no longer concentrated in the needle trades, or construction industries but are now spread among the radio, electronics and other "new" industries, among plumbers, printers, taxi drivers, teachers and other professional categories, office workers, retail clerks, teamsters, longshoremen and a host of other occupations. In addition to the needle trades, Jewish trade union leaders are to be found in a number of other unions. What is of basic importance is that like the American people as a whole, the Jewish people continue to be in their great majority wage and salaried workers.

Members of the Jewish middle class who themselves, as workers, had participated in class battles in the past, are today allied with workers in current progressive struggles. Moreover, the existence of the menace of fascism and Nazism, which perils *all* Jewish people, and the memory of the slaughter of six million Jews—one-third of the world's Jewish population—create a deep impression among all sections of the Jewish community. This, together with the long history of persecution of the Jews, as well as the progressive traditions of the past, impels American Jews to participate in a high degree in the struggles for progress.

Such occurrences as the Nazi persecution of the Jews and more recently the emergence of the State of Israel have contributed to the growth of national consciousness and national pride among Jews in all parts of the world and to the creation of a heightened sense of kinship. Such sentiments are natural and understandable, and we identify ourselves with them. This has nothing in common, however, with narrow nationalism which views as fundamental—and even unbridgeable—the distinction between Jew and non-Jew, which gives rise to a preoccupation with questions affecting the Jewish people in isolation from and to the exclusion of all other struggles, and which leads to separatism and chauvinism. An extreme form is political Zionism, which sees anti-Semitism as eternal and the future of the Jewish

people as lying only in the ingathering of all Jews in the homeland of Israel.

To the progressive currents within the Jewish community there are, of course, opposing trends and class pressures. Bourgeois influence is strong and has increased in the postwar period as have Zionist, pro-Zionist and nationalist influences in the leadership of Jewish organizations and institutions. Sections of the upper middle class and the big bourgeoisie exert profound pressures for conformity and the status quo and acceptance of Administration policies, and foster anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism among the Jewish people.

In the pursuit of these reactionary class interests they find a loyal ally and servant in the forces of Right-wing Social Democracy, concentrated around the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the Jewish Labor Committee and the Dubinsky type of leadership in the needle-trades unions. These are firm supporters of the most reactionary exponents of cold war and are among the most rabid adherents of the Johnson policy of aggression in Vietnam. They propagate the most virulent anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, and agitate constantly against the very idea of peaceful coexistence.

The Jewish community is highly organized, possessing over 200 national organizations and thousands of local groups. B'nai B'rith has over 450,000 members, the Zionist women's Hadassah over 300,000 and other Zionist organizations another 200,000 or more. To these may be added other women's organizations such as the National Council of Jewish Women and the Emma Lazarus Women's Federation. There are national fraternal groupings such as the Workmen's Circle, the National Jewish Workers Alliance and the Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies. There are numerous cultural organizations including the Workmen's Circle choruses, YKUF, the Reading Circles and the Jewish Music Alliance with more than twenty affiliated choruses and mandolin orchestras.

The three Jewish religious denominations each claim a million adherents, and have numerous women's and young people's auxiliaries engaging in social and recreational activities. The Jewish Children's Schools, with an enrollment of over 600,000 are mostly under religious domination; the secular schools have less than 20,000 students. The orthodox parochial schools, the Yeshivas, are on the upgrade, with an enrollment now exceeding 50,000.

The Jewish Centers for educational and recreational activities, such as the YMHA and YWHA, have an affiliation of half a million. Of particular importance are the Jewish youth organizations, such as

the Hillel Clubs on college campuses. And there are other types of organizations as well, all exerting their influence on Jewish life.

There are three Yiddish dailies, published in New York: the *Jewish Daily Forward* (Right-wing Social-Democratic); the *Jewish Day-Morning Journal* (Zionist); the *Morning Freiheit* (progressive). These have a combined circulation of about 100,000. There are also twenty Yiddish weeklies and monthlies.

The Yiddish press is slowly declining; however, the Anglo-Jewish press is growing and as of 1964 totaled 144 publications—weeklies, bi-weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies. Over 200 books dealing with Jewish themes are published annually in English; some 50 books a year in Yiddish, and a few books in Hebrew.

Since more than 80 per cent of the Jewish population in this country is native-born, the language of the overwhelming majority is English. Yiddish continues, however, to be the language of not inconsequential sections centering around such organizations and institutions as the Workmen's Circle, the National Jewish Workers' Alliance, the Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies, YKUF and the numerous Reading Circles, the Jewish Music Alliance, the orthodox parochial schools, the secular Jewish Children's Schools and certain Right-led cultural organizations.

The overwhelming majority of the Jewish people in the United States are clearly linguistically integrated; nevertheless, the Jewish community retains its existence as a distinct cultural entity, as is demonstrated among other things by the membership in the organizations and religious institutions listed above.

In view of the great size of the Jewish community, its concentration in the large cities, and its significant role in the economic, political and cultural fields, both the importance of this area of work and the overwhelming magnitude of the tasks facing Jewish progressives and Communists become obvious.

Communists and progressives need to become much more deeply involved in the political, social and cultural life and struggles of the Jewish community, especially of its native-born majority and the mass organizations whose membership they comprise. They need to become concerned particularly with the problems and interests of the Jewish youth, who take an active part in the youth movements and struggles of today.

In their activity, the Communist and progressive forces must base themselves solidly upon the interests and welfare of the masses of Jewish working people, and upon the principles of proletarian internationalism—on the unity of all working people, Negro and white,

Jew and non-Jew. They must firmly oppose the ideological influences of Zionism and nationalism, and they must energetically combat the pressures to support the cold-war policies of the State Department and the rabid support of reaction by Right-wing Social Democracy.

It is necessary, amidst the complex cross-currents within the community, to avoid both Right and "Left" errors. Thus, while we oppose the influences of nationalism and Zionism, we must at the same time not fail to fight, as part of the Jewish people, for their national rights and interests, for their progressive culture and traditions, and against the insidious influences of national nihilism, which rejects the continued distinct existence and role of the Jewish people and the need to give specific attention to their problems and struggles.

Among other things, it is essential to avoid a sectarian approach to religion and religious people. The statements in the Draft Program that "our Party is made up of believers and non-believers" and that "we extend the welcome hand of friendship and solidarity" to religious people active in the struggles for a better life on earth apply to those of the Jewish faith no less than to others. The wide participation of rabbis and religious people generally in the struggle for civil rights and peace emphasizes the correctness of such an approach. Despite the negative influences and the obstacles created by certain Jewish leaders, broad possibilities exist for cooperation with many religious sectors of the Jewish community in the struggles for democratic aims.

The progressive forces, through their fraternal, women's, cultural and educational organizations, as well as through their Yiddish and English press, are an integral part of the Jewish community. It is their task to counteract obscurantist, nationalist, separatist influences among the Jewish people, and to preserve and foster working-class and progressive traditions. We reaffirm the resolution adopted by the 17th National Convention of our Party, which states:

The Party must lead in the fight to safeguard the democratic rights of the Jewish people, to foster the development of progressive Jewish culture and to combat the influence of bourgeois nationalism, which seeks to utilize the justified interests of American Jews in Israel and in Jewish communities in other lands to promote the cold war, and which separates Jewish workers from the general American struggle and the fight by the side of the Negro people against all forms of racism and discrimination.

III.

There exists among American Jews a warm and sympathetic regard for the State of Israel, founded on the basis of the United Nations Palestine resolution of 1947, with the active support of the socialist states in that body, and after a period of struggle against British imperialism and the machinations of the Truman Administration. After the State of Israel was proclaimed, its people were compelled in 1948 to wage armed struggle for their independence against the onslaught of British-led Arab legions aided by the U.S. embargo on arms to Israel (it was from the socialist states that Israel received arms with which they defeated the invaders).

We Communists, and progressive Jews in the United States generally, wholeheartedly supported this struggle and welcomed the newly-established Israeli state. We unequivocally defend as unchallengable the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state, and condemn all declarations, from whatever source, which falsely label Israel as an artificial creation of imperialism and call for its destruction.

To defend the existence of Israel, however, is not the same thing as defending the policies of its government. After a short period of relative neutrality the Israeli government, under the premiership of David Ben Gurion, swung to full support of the line of the State Department and of imperialism generally—a course of action which led it eventually to the military aggression against Egypt in October 1956 in conjunction with the forces of British and French imperialism. The Ben Gurion government also gravely aggravated relations with the Arab countries by its persecution of the Arab minority in Israel and its refusal to recognize the rights of the more than one million Arab refugees. And not least, the Ben Gurion government entered into economic and diplomatic relations with Bonn, going to the extent of selling arms to the West German army. American Communists and progressives have strongly protested against these policies, as have similar forces inside Israel, and have condemned them as contrary to the best interests of both the Israeli and Arab peoples.

The people of Israel have rejected the extreme "activist," pro-imperialist policies of Ben Gurion. The new government headed by Premier Levi Eshkol has made some moves toward bettering relations with the socialist countries, reacting to the "spirit of Tashkent" (where India and Pakistan, aided by Soviet Premier Kosygin, reached an understanding). But it has not given up the basic Ben Gurion

policies with relation to the Arab minority in Israel, the Palestinian Arab refugees, or the support of imperialism in the Middle East. The struggle of the Israeli Communists and other anti-imperialists is directed against these policies in the interests of the people of Israel, and in defense of the existence of Israel as a state.

For the American Jews, and for the American people generally, the central question is the struggle against the role of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, where it drives to maintain and expand its economic and political domination and to exploit the natural wealth of the area. In pursuit of these aims, as it does everywhere, it allies itself with and arms the forces of reaction in the Arab world against the growing anti-imperialist forces and seeks to use Israel as a pawn, playing Arab against Jew, against the interests of both. This imperialist policy, which fans the flames of war in the Middle East for the sake of the profits of a handful of monopolies, is equally opposed to the interests of the American people.

Regrettably, a number of Arab leaders, some of them outright reactionaries in the service of imperialism and others playing a positive role in the struggle against imperialism, advocate a war to destroy Israel. Indeed, some Arab countries which in 1948 took part in the war against Israel never signed the cease-fire agreement (Iraq, Saudi Arabia). An Arab-Israeli understanding, in the "spirit of Tashkent," is essential to peace in the Middle East. To this end the anti-Arab position of Jewish chauvinist elements is a basic obstacle which must be combatted; however, Arab chauvinism directed against Israel and the Jewish people is also a formidable obstacle which must likewise be combatted.

The widespread sympathies of American Jews for Israel arising from generations of persecution of Jews in many lands and from the Nazi extermination of a third of the Jewish people, is sometimes mistakenly regarded as a form of Zionism. Although Zionists are certainly among the most active supporters of Israel, the support given by most American Jews is rather an expression of solidarity and friendship. It has little to do with party-Zionism, much less political Zionism which for many years, particularly since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, based itself on British imperialism and now adheres to the line of the U.S. State Department. Many of the Jews interested in the building of Israel are opposed to this political line, and many are involved in the movement against the war in Vietnam. It is necessary, therefore, while fighting against the reactionary ideology of political Zionism, not to identify this with all who support Israel.

It is similarly necessary to differentiate among various groupings within the Zionist movement. Thus Hadassah is primarily a philanthropic organization, building and maintaining non-sectarian hospitals in Israel. There are differences on important questions between the Labor Zionists and the General Zionists (Zionist Organization of America). And to the left of these is the Mapam grouping, Americans for a Progressive Israel, which is part of the World Peace Council, opposing the war in Vietnam. Even among the General Zionists there are the followers of the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland, an outspoken opponent of the cold war; today there are such figures as Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld of Cleveland (newly-elected president of the American Jewish Congress) and Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein of Chicago, (President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis), both well-known fighters for civil rights and peace. Clearly our attitude toward such groups and individuals and our readiness to collaborate with them must be based not on their profession of Zionism but on their position on specific issues.

IV.

There is also a deep interest among American Jews in the life of Jews in the socialist countries, above all in the Soviet Union. The socialist solution of the national question in the Soviet Union, and especially the transformed status of Soviet Jews and the unprecedented flourishing of Jewish culture in the twenties and thirties, won a sympathetic response from almost all sections of American Jewry. This was enhanced by the Soviet measures during World War II which saved millions of Jews from Hitlerite extermination, and by the outstanding role played by the Soviet Union in the establishment of the State of Israel.

The news of the suppression of Jewish cultural institutions and executions of cultural figures during the Stalin regime served to alienate considerable sections of the Jewish people in the United States who had previously been active supporters of Soviet-American friendship. It also gave new impetus to the cold-war elements in this country in their unending anti-Soviet campaigns under the banner of "Soviet anti-Semitism."

This slogan is a slander and an outright fraud, which must be rejected and fought. Not only is there no official policy of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, but anti-Semitism and all other forms of national discrimination (or privileges) are prohibited by the Constitution of the USSR. Jews are actively participating in the building

of socialism. They are to be found in the government, the army, industry, the arts and sciences. While the Jewish nationality in the USSR occupies eleventh place in size of population, it occupies third place in the number of scientists, exceeded only by the Russians and Ukrainians. Jewish university students exceed in numbers those of the Uzbek and Georgian Republics, which are much larger sections of the Soviet population. The same may be shown in other areas of social and economic participation.

Today, as in the past, the Soviet Union is the staunchest champion of peace and human freedom in the world. The interests of the Jewish people, certainly no less than those of any other people, lie in seeking friendship with the Soviet Union and in combatting anti-Sovietism.

The fraudulent slogan of "Soviet anti-Semitism" is grist to the mill of the cold-war forces fighting the Soviet Union as a bulwark of world peace and as the world's first land of socialism. These have launched an intensive campaign designed to undermine U.S.-Soviet relations and to promote a policy of aggression and war. In this campaign they have sought to utilize every error, every shortcoming which may occur in the process of erasing the results of the crimes of the Stalin period and restoring Jewish cultural institutions in order to mislead many honest people, even some leading figures in the civil rights and peace movements. The existence of such shortcomings as the crude, fallacious anti-religious propaganda embodied in books of the Kichko or Schaknowitz varieties, in continued limitations (such as lack of prayer books) experienced by religious Jewish people, the absence of a campaign against persistent expressions of remnants of anti-Semitism, the slowness of restoration of Jewish culture, have enabled the cold-war instigators of the campaign to meet with a considerable degree of success in these efforts.

In the past several years, substantial advances have been recorded in the return to Leninist norms in this area. Anti-religious books of the Kichko type have been withdrawn. Premier Kosygin has spoken out against anti-Semitism in his Riga speech of August 1965, and an editorial in *Pravda* on September 5, 1965 called attention to Lenin's position against anti-Semitism. These are welcome beginnings of a campaign against remnants of anti-Semitism.

The Yiddish magazine *Sovietish Heimland*, established toward the end of 1961, has been recording continued growth, and has become an outstanding Jewish cultural institution. Yiddish books have been appearing, although at a slow pace. Yiddish concerts are given in many Soviet cities with record attendances. Some 213 books by Yid-

dish writers were translated into Russian and other languages between 1955 and 1964, with a total circulation of over 26 million copies.

While emphasizing these advances, we look forward to the continuation of the process now under way and its progress toward full restoration of the administratively suppressed Jewish cultural institutions. We support the approach expressed in the editorials in *Political Affairs* of June and July 1964 with reference to combatting remnants of anti-Semitism in the USSR, the approach to religion and anti-religious propaganda, and for the restoration of such institutions as a Jewish state theater, Yiddish newspapers, education, and other means of Jewish culture.

V.

Our Party will rally all its forces in the fight to eradicate the evil of anti-Semitism in our country.

We will strive to unite the Jewish people with the Negro people and other oppressed minorities in common cause with all Americans against all national oppression. We will energetically combat all manifestations of white chauvinism and the reactionary Jewish nationalism and chauvinism which isolate the Jewish people from its allies and lead it in the direction of becoming a tool of U.S. imperialism.

At the same time, we shall work for the development of progressive Jewish culture and against all manifestations of national nihilism.

We will strive to win the Jewish masses to the cause of peace, democracy and socialism, for the achievement of a world without war, without exploitation and without national oppression.

We applaud the important contributions to the cause of progress made by the *Morning Freiheit* and other progressive Jewish publications. We will work to build the circulation of *The Worker* among the Jewish people and to bring them in growing numbers into the ranks of the Communist Party.