The Anti-Sovietism of the *Morning Freiheit*

Statement of the National Jewish Commission, Communist Party USA

Having departed from the path of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the editors of the Morning Freiheit have in recent years sunk further and further into the bog of anti-Sovietism and pro-Zionism. They have repeatedly accused the Soviet government of imposing forced assimilation on Soviet Jews, of depriving them almost completely of "opportunity for national identification." And they have charged the Soviet government and the CPSU with permitting widespread dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda in the guise of anti-Zionism. They have published numerous lengthy articles and editorials on these themes building up, under the cloak of "friendly criticism," an ever more sinister picture of alleged "Soviet anti-Semitism." They have sought, moreover, to attribute Soviet Jewish emigration mainly to these factors, and thus falsely to place the onus on the Soviet leadership.

In the face of the growing anti-Semitism in this country they have chosen to focus their attack on the Soviet Union--on that country which liberated the Jews from tsarist oppression, which saved some two million of them from Hitlerite extermination, and which elevated them to a status of full, proud equality with all other Soviet citizens. By now their actions have taken on the dimensions of a clearly defined anti-Soviet campaign, based on deliberate distortions and exaggerations. Their allegations have become less and less distinguishable from the gross slanders purveyed by the Zionist enemies of the Soviet Union.

This is evidenced especially in their most recent campaign, which descends to new depths of anti-Soviet incitement.

Together with certain other self-styled Jewish "progressives," the Morning Freiheit editors have mounted a shrill attack on an article by Dimitri Zhukov, "The Ideology and Practice of Violence," which appeared in the popular Soviet magazine Ogonyok of October 12, 1974. The article is a review of a book recently issued by Nauka Publishers, Against Zionism and Israeli Aggression, containing a collection of writings from the Communist Party of Israel and other sources.

This review was first published in English translation, with editorial comment, by MAKI, the remnant of the former Mikunis-Sneh group of renegades from the Communist Party of Israel, in January

1975. It was reprinted by the Morning Freiheit, with comments by the editors, on February 16. Additional statements and articles have appeared since then.

But they did not stop with this. Copies of the translation and the editors' comments were widely mailed out and individuals and organizations were asked to issue statements of protest to the Soviet government against the publication of the Zhukov article. In short, a campaign was set in motion of a type worthy of the Zionist slanderers of the Soviet Union, a campaign deserving only of condemnation.

To be sure, in condemning it we cannot defend the Zhukov article itself. It contains a number of gross inaccuracies and statements with distinct anti-Semitic implications. He tends to identify Zionism not as a political movement, however reactionary and pro-imperialist, but as a secret conspiracy of Jewish capitalists. He cites as an authority for the alleged affluence of Jews the Nazi ideologue Werner Sombart, and he adds the astounding statement that in tsarist Russia less than one per cent of the Jews were proletarians--a complete perversion of reality. He also repeats uncritically a statement in the book under review that three-fourths of the profits extracted from Latin America by U.S. imperialism since World War II have gone to "the monopolies led by the Zionist 'elite.'" Clearly the article propagates anti-Semitic stereotypes and it violates the precepts of Soviet socialism and Leninist principles. It is unquestionably deserving of the severest criticism.

We must, however, totally disassociate ourselves from the distorted "criticism" of the Morning Freiheit editors and their "progressive" associates. Their attack, though launched under the banner of "a Leninist struggle against anti-Semitism," has in fact nothing in common with Leninism. And though they continue to adopt the guise of "friendly criticism," it can only be said that of such "friends" as these the Soviet Union has no need.

The question may well be asked: is the Morning Freiheit honestly seeking the correction of errors or is it motivated by other considerations?

To begin with, the translation published by the Morning Freiheit contains numerous distortions which alter the tone and meaning of the article and magnify its anti-Semitic implications. Thus, where Zhukov states that "a considerable part of the capital and industries in the developed world came into the hands of the Jewish bourgeoisie," the translation reads "a large majority." And where Zhukov speaks of Jewish capitalists controlling "a significant part of industry, finance and the news media" the translation reads "the greater part." These are obviously not trivial differences. They represent the Jewish bourgeoisie not as a significant factor in the capitalist world but as the dominant factor--an important distinction. Other examples can be given.

Nor can the use of such a distorted translation be viewed as incidental. It can only be regarded as deliberate--as part of a

deliberate pattern of distortion and bias which has come to mark the Morning Freiheit's treatment of the Soviet Union. And these distortions are added to by the exaggerated, inflamed comments of the editors.

Second, the editors seek to label the article as a deliberate piece of anti-Semitism--as a "piece of anti-Semitic filth," whose author, together with the editor of Ogonyok, should be prosecuted as a common criminal. Such a characterization is totally unjustified. While the article merits severe criticism, the fact remains that Zhukov's characterization of Zionism as reactionary and racist is by no means incorrect, and any criticism must begin with recognition of this fact. It is not in condemning Zionism that Zhukov errs; it is rather in his uncritical acceptance and propagation of certain anti-Semitic falsehoods and stereotypes, with the result that he ends up by giving ammunition to the Zionist forces.

It is from this standpoint that Aaron Vergelis, editor of Sovetish Heimland, criticizes Y. Yevseyev's pamphlet Fascism under the Blue Star (see "The Fight against Zionism from a Realistic Point of View," Jewish Affairs, December 1973). This is not, however, the point of departure of the Morning Freiheit, which has become increasingly an apologist for Zionism. One finds in its pages virtually no criticism of Zionism, but one does find endless attacks on those who do condemn Zionism, and not least on those who speak for the Communist Party. And one does find repeated attacks on Soviet writers on Zionism who are in effect charged with resorting to anti-Semitism in order to defame Zionism.

Third, the Morning Freiheit seeks to create the impression that the Soviet people are being subjected to an endless flood of anti-Semitic writings, of which the Zhukov article is but the latest. "How much longer," asks Freiheit managing editor Chaim Suller, "can this go on? How much longer will the Communist Party and the government of the Soviet Union permit the dissemination of anti-Semitism in Soviet publications?" (February 23, 1975.) What is clearly implied here is that the CPSU and the Soviet government deliberately permit the publication of such literature (since surely they must know it to be anti-Semitic and yet do not put a stop to it)--that, in short, they follow a policy of dissemination of anti-Semitism. With this, the editors of the Morning Freiheit reach out to join hands with the Zionist purveyors of the Big Lie of "official anti-Semitism" in the Soviet Union.

The fact is, however, that in the Soviet Union, unlike the United States, such objectionable writings are not encouraged or tolerated, and particularly glaring examples, such as the Kichko book and the Yevseyev pamphlet have not only been criticized but removed from circulation. There is, of course, no excuse for any instances of anti-Semitism. But to treat them as if they were the rule, as if they were typical of Soviet society, rather than a violation of its precepts and norms, is to create an entirely false picture. It is, in fact, rank defamation of the Soviet Union.

Those in Israel who have parted company with the degenerate leaders of MAKI have sharply repudiated such a position. Shmuel Mikunis, long the political darling of the Morning Freiheit, who recently resigned as general secretary of MAKI and subsequently from membership in it, declares in Undzer Shtime (January 1975): "It is clear that a Yevseyev in a socialist country is a very harmful and a painful incident. But it is only an incident, a weed in socialist life...." The February issue of Undzer Shtime contains an article by Moshe Gabzeh entitled "For the Right of Criticism and of Censuring Incitement." He is highly critical of Zhukov but is much more critical of MAKI. He writes: "This entire incitement [by MAKI] is nothing less than a betrayal of the foundations of internationalism and its mobilization in a crusade against the Soviet Union in which everything goes...We favor criticism of existing negative phenomena in the Soviet Union; however, we negate and denounce the reckless and unrestrained incitement against the Soviet Union." But if MAKI is to be denounced for its anti-Soviet incitement, the Morning Freiheit, which is guilty of the very same incitement, is no less deserving of denunciation.

Nor do the Freiheit editors stop with this. They also single out the Communist Party of Israel for a vile, slanderous attack, stating: "Zhukov claims...with the help of RAKACH quotations, and in the style of the anti-Semitic Protocols of the Elders of Zion, that the Jews dominate the world." But one needs only to examine the writings of the CPI on Zionism to find that they contain no such "quotations." And in fact none are given, either by Zhukov or by the Morning Freiheit. The editors' venom is really directed against the consistent and principled anti-Zionist stand of the CPI, which it attempts on that account to smear as spreading anti-Semitism.

With this disgraceful anti-Soviet campaign the Morning Freiheit and its supporters have descended to the level of the Zionist calumniators of the Soviet Union. That they defame Lenin by doing so in the name of "Leninism" only adds to their baseness and hypocrisy.

At a time when growing numbers among those who had formerly supported the Zionist-inspired aggressive policies of the Israeli government are changing their views and leaning toward a genuine policy of peace in the Middle East, the editors of the Morning Freiheit have chosen instead to follow the path of reactionary Jewish nationalism and opportunism to its end. They have chosen the path of the degenerate MAKI, which has now declared itself to be a Zionist party and has become affiliated to the World Jewish Congress. They have chosen the path that leads into the bog of vile anti-Sovietism.

The Morning Freiheit does not place the burden of its anger on the Zionist enemies of the Soviet Union. About their anti-Soviet machinations it has relatively little to say. It is also remarkably soft-spoken when it comes to protesting Israeli attacks on civilians in Lebanon or the brutal repression of the people in the occupied territories. And it is remarkably placid in the face of the suicidal policies of the Rabin government, which can lead the Israeli people to war and catastrophe.

The Morning Freiheit, it appears, is really roused to action only by manifestations of so-called "Soviet anti-Semitism." In this it resembles the Zionists and their anti-Soviet supporters, who can organize big demonstrations for the phony cause of "saving Soviet Jewry" but can muster only the weakest of protests against the real anti-Semitism of a General Brown, and then only with the reservation, widely expressed in Zionist circles, that we must not be too hard on him since he is a "friend of Israel."

Under the pretext of "fighting anti-Semitism" the Morning Freiheit is giving aid to the forces of reaction. It is directing its main fire not at the real peddlers of the lies of the Protocols but at that country which has smashed these lies, which has abolished forever the plague of tsarist anti-Semitism and placed Soviet Jews on a par with all other Soviet citizens, and which in World War II shattered the power of Hitlerism. It is because the Soviet Union has wiped out all national oppression, including anti-Semitism, that it stands forth today as the world's most powerful bulwark of peace, freedom and progress. And it is because of this that the forces of imperialist reaction never cease to press their anti-Soviet campaigns. It is to this unholy crusade that the Morning Freiheit is lending itself.

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Editorials

A Year of Memorable Anniversaries

It is now 32 years since the launching, on April 19, 1943, of the unforgettable Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Time has not dimmed the memory of this heroic struggle nor has it diminished the glory of the Jewish martyrs who carried out this magnificent act of resistance to the Hitlerite monsters. The commemoration of this anniversary is as pertinent as ever and its lessons have lost none of their cogency.

In itself the uprising was but a single incident in the vast panorama of the anti-fascist war, a struggle which made its own unique contribution to the victory over fascism, but whose full significance can be understood only in relation to the whole. And this fact is brought home with special force in the present year, when the Warsaw Ghetto anniversary is combined with a more momentous occasion--the 30th anniversary of the defeat of Hitler fascism.